

EASTERN LADAKH Coordinated patrolling by India, China troops begins

THE HINDU ONLINE

The coordinated patrolling by the armies of India and China has started in Demchok, Army sources said yesterday. Patrolling in Depsang will also commence soon, the source confirmed.

The development comes after the completion of disengagement in both areas in Eastern Ladakh on Wednesday. It marked the completion of disengagement from all the friction points of the stand-off that began in May 2020.

Troops of India and China exchanged sweets at several border points along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) on the occasion of Diwali on Thursday. “The exchange took place at five Border Personnel



Meeting (BPM) points along the LAC,” an Army source told PTI.

Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri said on October 21 in Delhi that an agreement was finalised between India and China following negotiations over the past several weeks and that it would lead to a resolution of the issues that arose in 2020.

The agreement was firmed up on patrolling and disengagement of troops along the LAC in eastern Ladakh, a breakthrough to end the over four-year standoff.

Four years ago, 20 Indian and four Chinese soldiers were killed during border clashes. The two sides then stopped patrolling several points on the border in Ladakh to avoid new confrontations, while moving tens of thousands of new troops and military equipment closer to the freezing mountainous region, reports Reuters.

The thaw is expected to boost economic ties that were hurt by the border tensions, although Indian officials said New Delhi would move cautiously given the trust deficit that has built up.

Time for girls

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Cricket Board (BCB) also announced a reward of Tk 20 lakh.

The felicitation of the champions is still far from over as they are scheduled to meet with Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus at his Jamuna residence at 11:00 AM today.

But even amidst this outpouring of appreciation from all corners, Sabina, who has led the side in both championship-winning campaigns, had an eye on the future.

Sabina strongly feels that the time has come for Bangladeshi players to get a taste of the European club scene and wants the federation's help to make it happen.

“We cannot afford to lag behind anymore,” Sabina told the media at the BFF headquarters yesterday. “It’s time for the girls to go beyond South Asia. I have a good rapport with the Pakistan captain. She told me that many of us have the capability to play for European clubs. I would like to draw the federation’s attention to this matter.”

The entire country had similarly rejoiced after they had won their maiden SAFF title back in 2022 also in Nepal, but the enthusiasm fizzled out soon after.

The erstwhile BFF president Kazi Salahuddin had made many lofty promises to the players, most of which he could not keep as the federation seemingly lacked the desire to help take this talented group of players to the next level.

Salahuddin’s 16-year tenure as BFF president has ended now and Tabitha Awal was recently elected as his successor.

Sabina hopes that Tabitha, who is currently in South Korea for an AFC event, will be able to meet the many requirements of the players and help them take the next step.

“There are definitely things that we want [from the new BFF president]. We want our salaries to be increased, to get our salaries in a timely manner. We want the women’s league to take place regularly and want the season to last longer. We want regular matches. Also, we want to play more international matches.

“I have seen many of his [Tabitha’s] interviews in which he spoke about the development of women’s football. He spoke about working separately on women’s football. I hope that he can fulfil our financial and other related demands,” she added.

According to Sabina, their dream of “elevating” to the Asian level will only turn into reality with proper assistance and guidance from the country’s football authorities.



Firefighters pump out the floodwater from a tunnel where vehicles are piled up, after heavy rains in Alfafar, in Valencia, Spain yesterday. Spain sent more troops to help search for dozens of people still missing after devastating floods that have killed 205 people, with hopes of finding survivors fading three days after the disaster.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Israel pounds south Beirut with powerful strikes

REUTERS, Beirut

Israel pounded Beirut’s southern suburbs with a series of powerful airstrikes early yesterday morning after issuing evacuation orders to residents, in the first such strikes in days targeting the dense urban area, Reuters witnesses said.

The Israeli military said it was targeting Hezbollah facilities and assets, an assertion that it has repeated over the course of dozens of strikes over more than a month in the neighbourhood where the Iran-backed group holds sway.

Thousands of Lebanese fled the southern suburbs after fresh Israeli evacuation orders. The strikes followed a renewed but as yet of fruitless bout of US-led diplomacy aimed at getting a ceasefire in Gaza and Lebanon to stop over a year of fighting between Israel and Iran-backed groups Hamas and Hezbollah.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken

said on Thursday that Israel and Lebanon were moving toward understandings on what is required for implementing a long-violated UN resolution, 1701, that would be the basis for ending the current conflict.

But Lebanon’s Prime Minister Najib

Strikes suggest Israel’s ‘rejection’ of truce: Lebanon
Death toll in Lebanon rises to 1,829

Mikati yesterday criticised Israel’s “expansion” of its attacks on his country, saying they indicated a rejection of efforts to broker a truce after more than a month of war.

Four Thai nationals were killed and one was injured by rocket fire near the town of Metula, close to the border

between Lebanon and Israel, Thai Foreign Minister Maris Sangiampongsa posted on the social media platform X yesterday.

Since fighting in Lebanon escalated on September 23, after tit-for-tat cross-border exchanges which Hezbollah said were in support of Hamas, the war has killed at least 1,829 people in Lebanon, according to the health ministry figures.

The United Nations children’s agency Unicef said Thursday that the war has caused the death of a least one child per day and wounded an average of 10 daily since October 4. Israel’s military says 37 soldiers have been killed in Lebanon since ground operations began on September 30.

Lebanon’s National News Agency (NNA) said the Israeli army carried out strikes on east Lebanon’s main city of Baalbek on Thursday, two hours after it issued an evacuation order.

Polybag producers

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that strict actions would be taken if polythene bags are found during future inspections, according to a media release from the ministry.

Instructions have been issued to deputy commissioners and DoE field officers in all districts to ensure compliance.

Although mobile courts were not being operated yesterday and today due to the weekend, monitoring would continue, Tapan said.

He called for public cooperation in eliminating polythene bag use, the press release said.

Joint Secretary Mohammad Rezaul Karim, Deputy Secretary Rubina Ferdousi, DoE directors Rajinara Begum and Mohammad Masud Hasan Patwari, and the officials concerned were also present.

3 Jubo Dal men

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Lalmonirhat district unit and convener of its Lalmonirhat Municipality unit; Mominul Islam Momin, joint convener of the municipality unit; and Sumon Mia, organising secretary of Ward 7 Jubo Dal.

According to BNP sources, the three leaders were detained by the army on Wednesday noon for their alleged involvement in tender manipulation at Lalmonirhat Sadar Hospital.

Mominul and Sumon were released on the spot, while Jahangir was handed over to Lalmonirhat Sadar Police Station and later released the same night.

Minhajul said Jubo Dal central committee president and general secretary ordered the expulsions, stripping the local leaders of all positions, including primary membership.

5 schoolchildren

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Although cases dropped in 2023 to six, from 20 in 2022, the prime minister’s office says there are currently 41 active cases in Pakistan.

Pakistan and Afghanistan remain the only countries where polio is endemic. Islamist militants have previously targeted polio teams, spreading false conspiracy theories that the vaccinations are part of a Western sterilization program.

US PRESIDENTIAL RACE

High early voter turnout gives both sides hope

AFP, Washington

More than 62 million US voters have already cast their ballots in the 2024 election, breaking records in some states and leading both sides to hope it gives them an edge – even as experts warn the data is difficult to interpret.

Opinion polls show Democrat Kamala Harris and Republican Donald Trump running neck-and-neck, including in the seven battleground states likely to decide the national vote.

Harris’s campaign has encouraged early voting, with her running mate Tim Walz, outgoing President Joe Biden and former president Barack Obama all having already cast their ballots.

Trump had earlier cast skepticism – without proof – over the fairness of early voting, but has since embraced it, encouraging his supporters to cast ballots whenever suits them.

As of Thursday, at least 62.7 million people had cast votes early, accounting for almost 40 percent of the total vote count in 2020.

In Georgia, for example, more than 3.5 million people had voted, or 45 percent of registered voters – a record, according to Republican Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger.

He added that he expected up to 70 percent of Georgians to vote early in this election.

US, Moscow on ‘brink’ of direct conflict: Lavrov

AFP, Ankara

The United States and Russia are very close to engaging in “direct military conflict,” Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov warned in an interview published yesterday in a Turkey daily, just days ahead of a US presidential election.

“Under the current president (Joe Biden), who has taken the downward spiral of Russophobia in the US to its logical conclusion, our countries are on the brink of direct military conflict,” he told the Hurriyet daily, without elaborating.

Asked about next week’s US election pitting former Republican president Donald Trump against Democratic nominee Kamala Harris, Lavrov said the outcome would make little difference to Russia.

“We have no preference. When the Trump administration was in power, it adopted the highest number of anti-Russian sanctions compared to its predecessors,” he said.

“No matter who wins the elections, we don’t think the United States’ anti-Russian bent can change,” he added.

Adani halves power supply to Bangladesh

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The official added that they had submitted last week’s payment to Krishi Bank as well, but the bank failed to open a letter of credit against the payment due to a dollar shortage.

About the additional payment, he said, when the PDB raised a question on the coal pricing in February last year, they signed a supplementary deal. The deal obliged Adani to quote coal prices less than the rates charged by the other coal-fired power plants, such as Payra and Rampal.

After the tenure of the one-year supplementary deal, Adani again started charging as per the PPA. According to the PPA, coal prices are calculated based on the average price of the Indonesian coal index and the Australian Newcastle index, which increases the prices.

The Adani letter said the company once again requested PDB to expedite payments of “material defaults” no later than October 30.

It said Adani revised the deadline for the suspension of power supply to October 30 from October 20 in response to a PDB letter on October

17, which confirmed that the Krishi Bank agreed to issue LC within 10 business days.

“We reiterate that non-submission of LCs and non-payment of outstanding amount within due date are the material defaults of PDB under the PPA, which has adversely affected the performance of APJL to supply power to PDB,” it said.

“We have been facing tremendous difficulties in managing working capital for making payment to coal suppliers and operations and maintenance contractors on account of huge outstanding payments from the PDB and the non-availability of LC, as well as our Lenders having withdrawn the working capital support,” the letter added.

Adani said that during the period of suspension of supply, the company reserves its right to recover capacity payments under Section 13.2(l) of the PPA.

Adani has been pressing the interim government to pay the dues since they took charge. Gautam Adani, chairman of Adani Group, also wrote to Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus.

Russia hands former US consulate employee nearly 5-year jail term

AFP, Moscow

A Russian former employee of the US consulate in Russia’s Far Eastern city of Vladivostok has been sentenced to four years and ten months in prison for “secret collaboration with a foreign state”, Russian agencies said yesterday.

Robert Shonov worked for more than 25 years for the US consulate until 2021, when Moscow imposed restrictions on local staff working for foreign missions.

Afterward, he worked as a private contractor compiling press accounts from publicly accessible Russian media, according to the US State Department.

He was arrested in 2023 on suspicion of passing secret information about Russia’s war in Ukraine to the United States in exchange for money.

According to the judgement published on the website of Primorye’s regional court, 400,000 roubles (€4,000) and an electronic device were seized.

In September 2023, Russia also expelled two US diplomats it accused of acting as liaison agents for Shonov.

The US State Department said that Shonov worked as a private contractor compiling press accounts from publicly accessible Russian media, “in strict compliance with Russia’s laws and regulations”.