



A truck carrying the coffin of Indian army officer Colonel B. Santosh Babu arrives in Suryapet, about 140 kms from Hyderabad, India on June 18. Babu was among the twenty Indian troops who were killed in the clash Monday night that was the deadliest conflict between the sides in 45 years. India on Thursday cautioned China against making "exaggerated and untenable claims" to the Galwan Valley area even as both nations tried to end a standoff in the high Himalayan region where their armies engaged in a deadly clash. (AP)

News in Brief

SEOUL, South Korea: South Korea said Thursday it hasn't detected any suspicious activities by North Korea, a day after it threatened with provocative acts at the border in violation of a 2018 agreement to reduce tensions.

North Korea said it would send troops to mothballed inter-Korean cooperation sites on its territory, rebuild guard posts and restart military drills at the northern side of the border with South Korea. Those steps would nullify the 2018 deals that ban both Koreas from taking any hostile acts against each other.

Kim Jun-rak, a spokesman at Seoul's Joint Chiefs of Staff, told reporters that there have been no signs indicating North Korea had started to carry out its threats. He said South Korea will maintain a firm military readiness to deal with any situations.

On Wednesday, South Korea's military warned North Korea will face unspecified consequences if it violates the agreements.

The rivals have intensified their animosities in recent days, with Pyongyang unleashing fiery rhetoric over propaganda leaflets that South Korean activists have launched aboard balloons toward North Korea. North Korea on Monday destroyed an empty inter-Korean liaison office, built by South Korean money but located on its territory. (AP)

MOSCOW: Russian nuclear-capable strategic bombers have flown near Alaska on a mission demonstrating the military's long-range strike capability.

The Russian Defense Ministry said Wednesday that four Tu-95 bombers have flown over the Sea of Okhotsk, the Bering Sea, the Chukchi Sea and the Northern Pacific during an 11-hour mission. The ministry said the bombers were shadowed by US F-22 fighters during part of their patrol.

Lt Gen **Sergei Kobylash**, the commander of Russian long-range aviation, praised the bombers' crews for their "excellent" performance. He added that Su-35 and MiG-31 fighters jets escorted the bombers during "the most complicated stages of the route."

The US also scrambled its fighters when two groups of Russian warplanes neared Alaska last week.

Russia and the **United States** have regularly sent strategic bombers on training flights near each other's borders as their ties have sunk to post-Cold War lows after Moscow's 2014 annexation of Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula and Russian support for a separatist insurgency in eastern Ukraine. (AP)

KYIV, Ukraine: More than \$60 million worth of weapons and other equipment is going to Ukraine as part of the US security aid program with the country, the US Embassy in Kyiv said Wednesday.

The embassy tweeted that the equipment its Office of Defense Cooperation received Tuesday included Javelin anti-tank missiles, radios and ammunition.

"The **United States** stands strongly with Ukraine in support of its sovereignty and territorial integrity in the face of Russian aggression," one of the tweets said.

Ukraine has depended heavily on US support during a 6-year war with Russia-backed separatists in the east of the country that has killed over 14,000 people. Kyiv received the first batch of Javelin missiles in 2018.

In 2019, US military assistance to Ukraine became a cornerstone of a presidential impeachment case. US President Donald Trump was accused of withholding the aid in order to pressure Ukrainian President **Volodymyr Zelenskyy** to investigate **Trump's** rival, former US Vice-President **Joe Biden**, and Biden's son. (AP)

PARIS: French medical workers rallied Wednesday in support of a nurse who was dragged through the dirt by police and detained, amid mounting anger over brutal arrests.

Earlier, a few hundred police officers put down their handcuffs at Paris police headquarters Wednesday to demand better working conditions.

The demonstrations came in the context of intensified criticism of police brutality, racial injustice and despair among healthcare workers over the state of public hospitals that struggled amid the virus crisis.

About 50 people gathered in front of a police station on Paris' Left Bank to support the nurse, identified only as Farida, who was arrested during a medical workers' protest march Tuesday.

The woman's daughter, **Imen Mellaz**, announced that her mother had been released from custody just before Wednesday's gathering and charged with rebellion. Before her arrest, the nurse was seen throwing rocks at police.

"Maybe the charges were legitimate, but in no way was the violence proportionate," her daughter said.

In video of the incident shared widely online, police are seen dragging the nurse by her hair, she calls repeatedly for her inhaler, and her forehead is bloodied. The CGT union said one of her ribs was broken. Activists said that what happened to her was part of a pattern of disproportionate use of force by police.

French government spokeswoman **Sibeth Ndiaye** defended the nurse's arrest on Tuesday, alleging she had a history of aggressive acts. "The arrest was carried out based on the woman's prior behavior," Ndiaye said. (AP)

BRUSSELS: The proceeds of organized crimes within Europe have reached 110 billion euros (\$123 billion) a year and that confiscation rates remain very low, noted an EU Council of Ministers statement Wednesday.

Financial investigations are therefore of utmost importance for the European Union in preventing and combating organized crime and terrorism, it said. In recent years, the EU has significantly strengthened its legal framework for countering money-laundering and financing of terrorism, as well as for access of law enforcement authorities to financial information.

Nevertheless, further improvements may be considered, it added. (KUNA)

MANILA, Philippines: Philippine tycoon **Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco Jr.**, a key ally of the late dictator **Ferdinand Marcos** and a low-key businessman who led a food and beverage empire that produced San Miguel beer, has died. He was 85.

San Miguel Corp said Cojuangco, who served as its chairman and chief executive officer for decades, died Tuesday night, without providing other details. Presidential legal counsel **Salvador Panelo** said Cojuangco died of pneumonia and heart failure in a hospital in Manila.

Cojuangco had a net worth of \$1.1 billion, according to Forbes' list of the world's billionaires, with interests in cement-manufacturing, orchards, a stud farm and Australian wineries, aside from San Miguel. San Miguel, one of Southeast Asia's largest conglomerates, with a workforce of more than 28,000 people, has ventured into fuel and oil, power and infrastructure. (AP)

India cautions Beijing over clash area claim

Pakistan army says Indian fire kills 4 civilians in Kashmir

NEW DELHI, June 18, (Agencies): India on Thursday cautioned China against making "exaggerated and untenable claims" to the Galwan Valley area even as both nations tried to end a standoff in the high Himalayan region where their armies engaged in a deadly clash.

Twenty Indian troops were killed in the clash Monday night that was

the deadliest conflict between the sides in 45 years. China has not disclosed whether its forces suffered any casualties.

Responding to China's claim to the valley, India's External Affairs Ministry spokesman **Anurag Srivastava** said both sides agreed to handle the situation responsibly. "Making exaggerated and untenable claims is contrary to this understanding," he said in a statement.

Both sides accused each other of instigating the clash between their forces

'Japan unprepared'

Tokyo gov seeks 2nd term

TOKYO, June 18, (AP): Japan may have contained its coronavirus outbreaks for now but the country needs better crisis management and a digital transformation to prepare for future shocks, Tokyo Gov **Yuriko Koike** says.

"We have to sort out the problems and start preparing now for a possible next wave," Koike said in an interview with The Associated Press. "I will firmly strengthen the system."

Koike is favored to win a second term in a July 5 election after gaining respect for her proactive approach to controlling coronavirus outbreaks in Japan's capital.

As the pandemic deepened in the spring, Koike often upstaged fellow conservative Prime Minister **Shinzo Abe**, whose popularity has suffered from his handling of the crisis and its devastating impact on the economy, on top of a slew of scandals.

Koike is viewed as a potential candidate to succeed Abe when his term ends in September 2021. For now, she says she's focused on protecting Tokyo, a megacity with a \$1 trillion economy.

"Tackling coronavirus measures is an extremely big challenge, and it's more important than anything else," she said Wednesday on the eve of a 17-day campaign period for the election.

Taking care not to criticize Abe directly, Koike said she had to coordinate with him to get things done by requesting help on the national level, implying she would have handled things differently.

"There were times when Tokyo had to go ahead, in the spirit of encouraging the national government," she said. "It is my mission to protect the lives and health of the 14 million people in the city and I was doing everything I could."

Among other things, Koike says Japan should have its own version of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in the US to fight infectious diseases.

She noted that despite the country's high-tech image, as the pandemic took hold health centers were using fax machines to transmit medical data, slowing responses and information sharing. Although Japan has universal, relatively affordable healthcare and local health centers, unlike its neighbors it had not suffered major outbreaks of other infectious viruses such as SARS or MERS and was therefore unprepared to react quickly when cases began surfacing in January.

The health ministry set up a nationwide online data sharing system only after Tokyo had to make major corrections of coronavirus cases numbers in May amid mishandling of data transmitted by faxes.

Though Koike has not fully delivered



Tokyo Gov **Yuriko Koike** speaks during an exclusive interview with The Associated Press at her office of the Tokyo Metropolitan Government Building in Tokyo on June 17, ahead of a two-week campaigning for the election. (AP)

on promises to Tokyoites to get rid of packed commuter trains, ensure adequate availability of child and elder care facilities and end overwork, even her critics laud her handling of the pandemic.

Until late March, both Abe and Koike were insisting on the Tokyo Olympics would go ahead as planned in July. Once the games were postponed until July 2021, Koike began pushing for urgent measures to fight the pandemic and urged the government to declare a state of emergency. Abe appeared reluctant to do that, and has been accused of doing too little, too late.

Koike led a group of local leaders urging Abe to move more aggressively, frequently visiting his office to negotiate over policy. She led the way in arranging for hotels to take in quarantine patients with no or slight symptoms to free up hospital beds to prevent a collapse of the overwhelmed medical system in the capital region.

"Ms. Koike seems to have managed the coronavirus situation more smoothly than the national government," said **Ryosuke Nishida**, a professor at the Tokyo Institute of Technology, though he noted their roles were different.

Trump fine with camps

WASHINGTON, June 18, (AP): President Donald Trump told China's Xi Jinping that he was right to build detention camps to house hundreds of thousands of ethnic minorities, former US national security adviser **John Bolton** alleged in a new book that could make the president's tough-on-China mantra a hard sell.

At a summit in Japan in 2019, with only interpreters present, Xi gave Trump an explanation for the Chinese camps for Uighurs, who are ethnically and culturally distinct from the country's majority Han population and are suspected of harboring separatist tendencies, Bolton wrote.

"According to our interpreter, Trump said that Xi should go ahead with building the camps, which he thought was exactly the right thing to do," the book said.

That would be a stunning statement coming from the president of the United States, where the First Amendment protects the right to religious beliefs and practices and prevents the government from creating or favoring a religion. It could drive a wedge between Trump and his Republican China hawks on Capitol Hill.

It also could take some punch out of the Trump campaign efforts to portray former vice-president **Joe Biden** as soft on China. The Trump campaign released an online video last month that included clips of Biden previously describing that country as "not bad folks" and saying economic growth there was in the US interest.

The Associated Press obtained an advance copy of Bolton's book on Wednesday. It was the same day that Trump signed legislation that increases pressure on China over its crackdown in Xinjiang, where authorities have detained more than a million people - from ethnic groups that include Uighurs, Kazakhs and Kyrgyz - in a vast network of detention centers. Many have been subjected to torture and forced labor and deprived of adequate food and medical treatment.

The law imposes sanctions on specific Chinese officials, such as the Communist Party official who oversees government policy in Xinjiang.

in the valley, part of the disputed Ladakh region along the Himalayan frontier.

Meanwhile on Thursday, an Indian confederation of small and midsize companies called for a boycott of 500 Chinese goods including toys and textiles to express "strong criticism" of China's alleged aggression in Ladakh.

The call for a boycott followed protests Wednesday in New Delhi where demonstrators destroyed items they said were made in China while chanting "China get out." The Himalayan clash has fanned anti-Chinese sentiments already running high due to the coronavirus. India counts more than 366,000 cases and 12,237 deaths.

But a broader boycott could backfire for India if China chose to retaliate by banning exports to India of the raw ingredients used by India's pharmaceutical industry.

Media reports said senior army officers of the two sides met Wednesday to defuse the situation, but there was no confirmation from either side.

Indian security forces said neither side fired any shots, instead throwing rocks and trading blows. The Indian soldiers, including a colonel, died of severe injuries and exposure in the area's sub-zero temperatures, the officials said.

Also:

ISLAMABAD: Indian troops fired on villages along the border in the Pakistani-administered side of the **Kashmir** region on Wednesday, killing four civilians and wounding another, **Pakistan's** military said.

In a statement, it blamed India's army for initiating an "unprovoked ceasefire violation" and said Pakistani troops deployed in the disputed Himalayan region "effectively responded" to the Indian fire, without elaborating.

There was no immediate reaction from Indian officials.

Pakistan and India often trade fire in Kashmir, which is divided between them and claimed by both in its entirety.

The latest development comes two days after India and China clashed along a disputed border high in the Himalayas that left 20 Indian soldiers dead. Pakistan blames **New Delhi** for escalating tensions with China, a longtime friend of Islamabad.

Relations between Pakistan and India have been strained over Kashmir since last August when Indian Prime Minister **Narendra Modi's** Hindu nationalist-led government stripped the side of Kashmir its controls of its semi-autonomous status.