

Thai Elite Mourn Leicester City Owner Vichai at Elaborate Funeral



BANGKOK - The elaborate funeral of Leicester City's Thai owner and duty-free mogul Vichai Srivaddhanaprabha began at a Buddhist temple in Bangkok Saturday evening, as members of Thailand's business and political elite came in mourning garb to pay tribute to the well-connected billionaire.

The number two in Thailand's junta Prawit Wongsuwan and CP group's Dhanin Chearavanont, the

richest man in the country, were seen arriving at the week-long ceremony, which begins with three days of royally-sponsored bathing rites. Prominent figures in Thailand's music and sporting scene were also in attendance to honour the odds-defying life of Vichai, 60, who along with four others died in a helicopter accident moments after they departed the football club's pitch a week ago. (AFP)

Sri Lanka Rivals Target Defectors to End Political Crisis



COLOMBO - Attempts to win over MP defectors intensified in Sri Lanka's constitutional crisis Saturday amid growing pressure to let the suspended parliament hold a vote on the two rivals who each claim to be prime minister.

Ousted premier Ranil Wickremesinghe has refused to accept his surprise sacking by President Maithripala Sirisena, who named former strongman president Mahinda Rajapakse in his place.

Rajapakse has eaten into Wickremesinghe's majority amid warnings from pro-democracy and anti-corruption groups about the tactics being used.

A member of Wickremesinghe's United National Party, S.B. Nawinna, defected on Friday night and was rewarded with the cultural affairs portfolio in Rajapakse's government.

A deputy from a Tamil party sup-

porting Wickremesinghe also switched sides and was made a deputy minister.

"We are expecting a few more defections on Saturday," a source close to President Sirisena said.

Wickremesinghe has remained in the official prime minister's residence since his sacking on October 26.

He claims to have majority support in the 225-member parliament but is still seeking to woo MPs from the Sirisena-Rajapakse camp, his aides said. According to latest counts, Wickremesinghe has 103 MPs while Rajapakse and Sirisena together have 100. Most of the 22 remaining MPs are expected to back Wickremesinghe, observers said. (AFP)

(1) Ghani Renews...

Ghani asked elders of Paktika to encourage their youth to join the Afghan security and defense forces. The president said reopening roads in the province was his government's priority, but in this regard the role of people was crucial.

The president said the ground for peace had been paved politically and the Islamic world and the region was ready for peace.

Ghani said Afghanistan wanted peace with Pakistan and the neighboring country should realize that a stable Afghanistan was in their interest.

"The Taliban should be ready for intra-Afghan dialogue because we will not let others the authority of peace."

About the Wolesi Jirga elections, the president remarked the people's participation in the polls was commendable.

Later, the president also met with provincial security officials and said security forces who played an effective role in maintaining security should be appreciated.

He also asked the security organs to come up with plans on brigade and battalion levels in order to use the force effectively. Ghani said the Afghan National Army's 203 Thunder Military Corps should have a comprehensive plan on the zone level.

Later, the president met with Paktika provincial council members who urged the Afghan leader to upgrade Paktika from grade three to grade two province.

The public representatives also demanded reforms in the provincial education department, dispatch of an army battalion to Waza Khwa district, addition of more faculties to the provincial higher education institute and repair of roads to districts.

The president said security of Paktika districts, particularly those near the Durand Line, was being improved.

He said Paktika, Paktia and Ghazni provinces were connected from security perspective and it was being debated to enhance security for this region.

Ghani said construction of 6000 buildings for schools had been launched and it would resolve the lack of school buildings in Paktika.

He also promised to add another faculty to the higher education institute and upgrade Paktika to a second grade province. (Pajhwok)

(2) NATO SCR Praises...

during a gathering to observe the International Day to End Impu-

nity for crimes against Journalists on Thursday, Vice President Danish said the journalists and media activists still face threats and risks despite the government has taken major steps to resolve the issue. (KP)

(3) U.S. Armed Forces...

and the wounded service member was in a stable condition, but did not release the identity of the service member who had been killed.

U.S. Defense Secretary James Mattis said in September that training and vetting of Afghan forces was being stepped up to minimize insider attacks and some training and advisory operations have been scaled back while security is assessed. Last month, the NATO commander in Afghanistan, General Scott Miller, escaped unhurt when the bodyguard of a provincial governor opened fire on a group of U.S. and Afghan officials in the southern province of Kandahar. (Reuters)

(4) Farah's Voters List...

together when the one crashed. Najibi said at least 20 people were on board the chopper at the time of the crash including Farah provincial council members and Zafar Military Corps officials. Najibi said there were no survivors. (Tolo news)

(5) 49 Cases...

were wounded and in total 169 cases of violence were recorded against journalists. This year, as we are now in 10th month, we have lost 14 journalists and media workers," said Wahida Faizi, member of Journalists' Safety Committee.

In the meantime, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) marked the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists profiled 10 journalists including Samim Faramarz, Jamal Khashoggi, James Foley, Daphne Galizia who have lost their lives in the line of duty in recent years.

"If the National Unity Government counts itself as a supporter of media and freedom of expression, it should at least investigate one of two of the cases publicly," Shafiq Mohammadi, a journalist said.

US ambassador to Kabul John R Bass said US will work with its international partners to decrease violence against journalists in Afghanistan.

"Journalists have a very dangerous profession. It is too dangerous in some places like Afghani-

stan, because of the violence from conflict, but we are determined to continue to work with our friends and partners in the international community to reduce the number of cases where journalists are facing violence, facing threats, facing intimidation simply for doing their work," said Bass. (Tolonews)

(6) Sami ul Haq's...

discussed in Saturday's Wolesi Jirga (Lower House of Parliament) session, where MPs also raised questions about what the consequences could be for the region.

Some MPs said Sami ul Haq had not been an important figure and that Taliban's war against the Afghan government was being managed by other elements and not by people such as Sami ul Haq.

"The Taliban war is being managed by others. They (Sami ul Haq) only speak and are not important. It is known who makes the decisions and who administers (the war) and where the Taliban's sanctuaries are; the westerners (Americans) know it," MP Nazir Ahmad Hanafi said.

But other MPs felt differently. "I see Sami ul Haq's assassination as a positive step toward maintaining peace. Anyone who creates obstacles in the way of peace, will have a destiny like Sami ul Haq," MP Lalai Hamidzai said.

"Remain loyal to your country, otherwise the countries will use you and in the end will kill you like this (like Sami ul Haq)," MP Aryan Youn said.

Meanwhile, Abdullah Gul, the son of Pakistan's former chief of Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) Gen. Hamid Gul, was also attacked on Friday night - an hour after the assassination of Sami ul Haq.

Abdullah Gul had been on his way to Islamabad when he was shot at.

"As the attack was managed against Maulana, who was killed, I was also attacked on my way to Islamabad. Two vehicles in front and behind opened fire on me (my vehicle), but I arrived here safely," said Abdullah Gul. Taliban meanwhile said in a statement that Sami ul Haq's assassination was a big loss for Pakistan.

The Pakistani's also see it as a big loss for their country.

"I think all Pakistan belongs to his party. Not only Pakistan, but Afghanistan's people also belong to him (his party)," Hafiz Muhammad Saeed, chief of Jama'at-

ud-Da'wah said.

"His death is a loss for Pakistan, because he was playing a role in talks with the Taliban. Recently, he had taken on the job to talk with Taliban. He went to Kabul and participated in the talks. His death is a big loss for Pakistan and the US peace process in the region," Chaudhary Javed, a Pakistani journalist said.

During the 1980s, Sami ul Haq served as a senator for two terms in Pakistan's upper house and fully supported action against Afghanistan's governments.

Darul Uloom Haqqania in the northern town of Akora Khat-tak was founded by his father in 1947.

Thousands of students attend this Darul Uloom and also senior Afghan Taliban leaders such as Mullah Omar, Mullah Akhtar Mansour and Jalaluddin Haqqani attended this Darul Uloom while reports indicate hundreds of students from his madrassa have fought and are still fighting against the Afghan government. Sami ul Haq was 80 years old and according to his relatives, recently received death threats. However, so far no one and no group has claimed responsibility for his assassination. (Tolo news)

(7) Indonesian...

regards and best wishes to the Secretary General of the OIC Yousef Al Othaimen and through him to Muslim Ummah. Religious scholars attend a two-day International Ulema Conference for Peace and Security in Afghanistan in Saudi Arabia in July and issued a declaration calling for an end to the war in the country.

They also called on the Taliban to denounce violence and come to the peace talks tables. (Tolo news)

(8) Moscow Meeting...

reshuffle in the Afghan government and agree on another date for consultations in Moscow through diplomatic channels. Later on, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Igor Morgulov said that Russia hoped to hold a Moscow-format meeting by the end of the year. (TASS)

(9) Cold Weather...

factories, dilapidated roads and highways, the lack of market and attention from the government to problems of farmer were some of the reasons being faced by the farmers in Daikundi.

On the other hand, farmers and sellers of almond in Nelli and other parts of the province com-

plained against the lower price of the fruit and added the price of almond had declined by 300 Afghanis this year compared to the price last years.

Rahmatullah, one of Daikundi farmers, said: "Every year we collected up to nine tonnes of almond and earned up to \$600 net income from the almond yield, but this year the production of almond and its price declined." (Pajhwok)

(10) Militants Suffer...

but the security situation of the province has deteriorated during the recent years.

The anti-government armed militants including Taliban militants often attempt to carry out attacks against the government and security forces. (KP)

(11) 7 Taliban Killed...

district late on Friday, the governor's spokesman said.

Asadullah Dawlatzai added the foreign forces target Taliban hideouts in Shamkat area of the district.

Meanwhile, police spokesman Shafiullah said the foreign forces also carried out airstrike in Qalatak area of the Alishang district. He said seven rebels; including two commanders were killed in the both strikes.

The officials confirmed civilians suffered no casualties in the airstrikes.

Taliban and Daesh have not yet commented in these regards. (Pajhwok)

(12) Petrol Price Down...

same amount of African black tea 300afs -- same prices as last week's.

Ahmad Wali Panjsheri, who owns a grocery store in Dahn-i-Bagh area of Kabul, sold a 50-kg sack of Kazakhstani flour for 1,400afs, a 49-kg bag of sugar for 1,800afs, 24-kg of Pakistani rice 2,400afs a 16-litre tin of ghee for 1,150afs, one-kg of Indonesian green tea for 300afs and the same amount of black African tea for 350afs—higher than wholesale rates.

Haji Fawad Ahmad Salehzada, a jeweler in Timor Shahi area of Kabul, said the price of one gram of Arabian gold was increased from 2,400afs to 2,450afs while the same quantity of Russian variety from 1,850af stood at 1,900afs.

According to Haji Mir Hus-sain Sadaqat, owner of Sadaqat Money Exchange Services in Kabul, one US dollar accounted for 75.27afs and 1,000 Pakistani rupees 572afs against last week's 75.25afs and 575afs. (Pajhwok)