

South Korea prez stuns world with martial law

Army takes control; Parliament passes resolution seeking its lifting

SEOUL

South Korea's National Assembly passes resolution calling for lifting of martial law.

Earlier, South Korea's President Yoon Suk Yeol on Tuesday declared martial law, accusing the opposition of being "anti-state forces" and saying he was acting to protect the country from "threats" posed by the North.



People gather in front of the main gate of the National Assembly in Seoul after martial law was imposed in country | AFP

Hundreds of protesters gathered outside parliament demanding to be let inside as police guarded the building and special forces attempted to enter.

Yoon's stunning announcement - South Korea's first declaration of martial law in more than 40 years - came as his party and the opposition bicker over the budget.

"To safeguard a liberal South Korea from the threats posed by North Korea's communist forces and to eliminate anti-

state elements plundering people's freedom and happiness, I hereby declare emergency martial law," Yoon said in a live televised address to the nation.

Yoon did not give details of the North's threats, but the South remains technically at war with Pyongyang.

"With no regard for the livelihoods of the people, the opposition party has paralysed governance solely for the sake of impeachments, special investigations, and shielding their leader from justice," he added.

"Our National Assembly has become a haven for criminals, a den of legislative dictatorship that seeks to paralyse the judi-

cial and administrative systems and overturn our liberal democratic order," Yoon said.

With martial law imposed, all military units in the South have been ordered to strengthen their emergency alert and readiness postures, Yonhap news agency reported.

The decree by martial law commander Park also banned "actions that deny or seek to overthrow the liberal democratic system, including the spread of fake news, public opinion manipulation, and false propaganda".

The president labelled the opposition, as "anti-state forces". AFP

In tit-for-tat, China bans mineral export

BEIJING

BEIJING said on Tuesday it would restrict exports to the United States of some key components in making semiconductors, after Washington announced curbs targeting China's ability to make advanced chips.

Among the materials banned from export are metals gallium, antimony and germanium, Beijing's commerce ministry said in a statement that cited "national security" concerns.

Exports of graphite, another key component, will also be subject to "stricter reviews of end-users and end-uses", the ministry said.

"To safeguard national security interests and fulfill international obligations such as non-proliferation, China has decided to strengthen export controls on relevant dual-use items to the United States," Beijing said. "Any organisation or



individual in any country or region violating the relevant regulations will be held accountable according to the law," it added. In its own latest curbs, Washington on Monday announced restrictions on sales, without additional permission, to 140 companies including Chinese chip firms Piotech and Si-Carrier. They also impact Naura Technology Group, which makes chip production equip-

ment, according to the US Commerce Department.

The move expands Washington's efforts to curb exports of state-of-the-art chips to China, which can be used in advanced weapons systems and artificial intelligence. The new US rules also include controls on two dozen types of chip-making equipment and three kinds of software tools for developing or producing semiconductors.

Beijing swiftly vowed to defend its interests, saying the United States "abuses export control measures" and has "hindered normal economic and trade exchanges".

And on Tuesday, China said Washington had "politicised and weaponised economic, trade and technological issues" as it unveiled its own export curbs. The moves also restrict the exports of "dual-use items to United States military users or for military purposes", Beijing said.

China accounts for 94% of the world's production of gallium - used in integrated circuits, LEDs and photovoltaic panels - according to a report by the European Union published this year.

For germanium, essential for fibre optics and infrared, China makes up 83% of production.

Beijing last year had already tightened restrictions on exporters of the metals. AFP

No massive pay package for Musk, reaffirms judge

DOVER

A Delaware judge reaffirmed her ruling that Tesla must revoke Elon Musk's multimillion-dollar pay package.

Chancellor Kathaleen St. Jude McCormick on Monday denied a request by attorneys for Musk and Tesla's corporate directors to vacate her ruling earlier this year requiring the company to rescind the unprecedented pay package. McCormick also rejected an equally unprecedented and massive fee request by plaintiff attorneys, who argued that they were entitled to legal fees in the form of Tesla stock valued at more than \$5 billion.

The judge said the attorneys were entitled to a fee award of \$345 million. The rulings came in a lawsuit filed by a Tesla stockholder who challenged Musk's 2018 compensation package.

Following the original court ruling, Tesla shareholders met in June and ratified Musk's 2018 pay package for a second time, again by an overwhelming margin.

Defence attorneys then argued that the second vote makes clear that Tesla shareholders, with full knowledge of the flaws in the 2018 process that McCormick pointed out, were adamant that Musk is entitled to the pay package. They asked the judge to vacate her order directing Tesla to rescind the pay package.

McCormick, who seemed skeptical of the defense arguments during an August hearing, said in Monday's ruling that those arguments were fatally flawed. "The large and talented group of defence firms got creative with the ratification argument, but their unprecedented theories go against multiple strains of settled law," McCormick wrote in a 103-page opinion. AP

Hamas, Fatah to jointly run post-war Gaza: Plan

CAIRO

HAMAS and Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas's Fatah party have agreed to create a committee to jointly administer post-war Gaza, negotiators from both sides said.

Under the plan, which needs Abbas's approval, the committee would be composed of 10 to 15 non-partisan figures with authority on matters related to the economy, education, health, humanitarian aid and reconstruction, according to a draft of the proposal.

Following talks in Cairo brokered by Egypt, the two rival Palestinian movements agreed the committee would administer the Palestinian side of the Rafah crossing with Egypt, the territory's only one not shared with Israel.

Fatah's delegation, led by central party committee mem-

ber Azzam al-Ahmad, will return to Ramallah on Tuesday to seek Abbas's final approval, the negotiators said.

Wassil Abu Yusef, member of the executive committee of the Palestine Liberation Organisation which includes Fatah, will convene later on Tuesday to decide whether to approve the committee arrangement or not. Hamas's delegation was led by politburo member Khalil al-Hayya.

However, Jibril Rajoub, Fatah's number three and secretary-general of its central committee, expressed doubts the deal would ever get over the line. "What committee is this? It is wrong to even discuss this issue," Rajoub said in the West Bank city of Ramallah. Rajoub said that he did not favour any deal that would lead to separate political systems in Gaza and in the occupied West Bank. AFP

No lawyer in Dhaka wants to appear for Hindu monk Das

DHAKA

A Bangladesh court on Tuesday deferred to next month a hearing on the bail petition of Hindu monk Chinmoy Krishna Das, arrested on a sedition charge, as no lawyer appeared on his behalf.

Swatantra Gauranga Das, an associate of the monk, claimed that no lawyer represented the Hindu leader due to threats from a 'politically motivated lawyers' group.

The bail hearing at the Chattogram court has now been postponed to Jan 2.

Das' arrest on Nov 25 had triggered demonstrations by supporters of the monk, who was previously with the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON). In Chattogram, an assistant government prosecutor, Saiful Islam Alif, was killed in a protest after the monk was denied bail. The arrest also intensified the row between India and Bangladesh over attacks on Hindus after Sheikh Hasina was ousted as prime minister and an interim government headed by Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus took over.

A government prosecutor told reporters that the court of Metropolitan Sessions Judge Mohammad Saiful Islam rescheduled the bail hearing after a plea by the prosecution side 'as no lawyer appeared as defence counsel'. There was heavy security in the Chattogram court area for the bail hearing. Das was not brought to the court for the hearing. A Chattogram Bar Association leader and other lawyers were seen holding a protest march on court premises. PTI

EXPRESS READ

France headed into a new political crisis

Paris: France headed into a new political crisis on Tuesday as opposition lawmakers vowed to topple the minority government of Prime Minister Michel Barnier in a no-confidence vote after just three months in office. A standoff over an austerity budget, which has caused jitters on financial markets, follows months of tension since President Macron appointed Barnier in Sept.

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