

Lankan parties back talks with Tigers

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lanka's bitter political rivals showed rare unity to call for urgent talks with Tamil Tiger rebels to end the latest cycle of violence that has killed at least 140 people, officials said yesterday.

Representatives of 15 parties, including the ruling coalition and the main opposition, agreed during a meeting late Thursday to support immediate negotiations with the Tigers, officials present at the meeting said.

Diplomats and officials involved in the process said that the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) had also confirmed that their supreme Velupillai Prabhakaran would meet with Norway's peace envoy Erik Solheim next week.

two sides were moving towards talks, the Colombo Stock Exchange rallied Friday while Scandinavian truce monitors resumed work they had suspended earlier this week in a troubled region.

The Norwegian-led Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) went into action again late Thursday in the northeastern port district of Trincomalee after a bomb blast there wounded 13 people, local officials said.

The SLMM on Tuesday said their first ever suspension of work in an entire district followed an escalation of violence culminating in a bomb attack against a navy bus.

The positive political developments saw the All Share Price Index move up 3.66 percent to close Friday at 1,910.47, the stock exchange said.

called Thursday's meeting of political parties as part of efforts to agree a consensus among the majority Sinhalese groups before entering into a dialogue with the LTTE.

The meeting came hours after four more people were killed and 40 wounded by bombs in the northeast in attacks blamed on the Tigers.

"All political parties attending the meeting were unanimous that peace talks should commence without further delay," spokesman Chandrapala Liyanage said. "They were keen to convey this as their common agreement."

A statement from Rajapakse's office said he would take unspecified steps to speed up talks.

"The president stated that all practical measures will be taken to commence peace talks immedi-

ately," the statement said.

"He also stated that he would consult and exchange views with these political parties and others at all stages of the peace process."

Opposition leader Ranil Wickremesinghe said he backed talks and was keen for the government to resume a discussion with the Tigers as soon as possible.

"The leader (of the opposition) wants the government to get on with talks," his spokesman Saman Athaudahetti said. "He was keen not to get distracted by other issues such as the controversy over the venue."

The government and the Tigers have not been able to agree on a venue for their talks, with the guerrillas insisting on Oslo, the capital of peace broker Norway, and Colombo insisting that it be an Asian venue.



Nepalese soldiers stop a bus as they patrol a deserted street during a daytime curfew in Kathmandu yesterday. Police and soldiers were out in force on the streets of the Nepalese capital after the government imposed a daytime curfew and rounded up political activists in a bid to foil planned anti-king protests.

Kashmir bus plunge claims 53 lives

AP, AFP, Jammu

A crowded bus veered off a steep mountain road in Indian-controlled Kashmir yesterday, killing at least 53 people, police said.

The bus was negotiating a steep curve near the town of Sainganji when it swerved off the road and fell 400 feet into a gorge, said J.B. Singh, a local police superintendent.

Villagers and police were helping to pull survivors from the wreckage of the bus, Singh said. Sainganji is northwest of Jammu, the winter capital of India's portion of Kashmir.

The bus, which was carrying around 70 passengers, hurtled into the 400-foot (120-meter) gorge after the driver lost control of the vehicle on a hairpin mountain curve in the southern Rajouri district.

"We have recovered 52 bodies so far from the wreckage," a police official told AFP, adding the death toll was likely to rise.

Blind woman in Britain recovers sight after heart attack

AFP, London

A 74-year-old woman who had been blind for 25 years awoke in a British hospital after suffering a heart attack and could see again, telling her husband: "You've got older," a newspaper reported yesterday.

Doctors were at a loss to explain how Joyce Urch, who lived in a world of shadows and near darkness since 1979, had recovered her sight after the heart attack 16 months ago, the Daily Telegraph reported.

Urch, who was treated at Walgrave Hospital in Coventry, where doctors spent three days battling to save her life, called it a "miracle," the newspaper said.

The newspaper showed the white-haired Urch, bright eyed and beaming, in the arms of her husband Eric after celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary last weekend.



Pakistani people watch Indian well-wishers (C) gather around the first bus of the service between Lahore and Amritsar as it enters the Indian Wagah Border Post yesterday.

New Indo-Pak bus joins two Punjabs

REUTERS, Lahore

Pakistan and India launched a third cross-border bus service yesterday Friday, the latest new transport link aimed at building confidence to spur their slow-moving peace process.

Drummers and dancers bade farewell to a Pakistani bus carrying 26 passengers, who included a leading folk singer and a dance troupe, as it left the eastern city of Lahore for Amritsar.

"This service is a step in right direction. Such steps will promote love and affection between the people of two countries," folk singer Reshma, who is popular on both sides of the frontier, said before boarding the bus. "I hope and pray that relations between Pakistan and India further improve."

Reshma plans to stay five weeks in India, giving performances in New Delhi and other towns.

A small group of well-wishers saw off the bus, sprinkling passengers with rose petals as they headed

towards the green and white bus emblazoned with the slogan "Dosti" (Friendship) and flags of both countries.

Traditional Punjabi dancers and drummers were waiting on the Indian side to receive the bus at the Wagah crossing point.

"The bus journey will go a long way to improve people-to-people contact and restore confidence among people who share a common ethnic, cultural and social background," said S.K. Sharma, a resident of Amritsar, the Sikh holy city.

A bus service between Lahore and Delhi resumed in July 2003, but this is the first direct link between the two sides of Punjab since Pakistan and India won independence from Britain in 1947.

The launch of the new bus service came two days after India and Pakistan made a fresh commitment to push forward their peace process, despite reiterating differences over ways to end their enmity over the divided Himalayan region of Kashmir.

Chirac threatens nuclear strikes against 'terrorist' attacks

AFP, Paris

President Jacques Chirac for the first time Thursday raised the threat of a nuclear strike on any state that launches "terrorist" attacks against France.

He also said France's doctrine of nuclear deterrence has been extended to protect the country's "strategic supplies", taken to mean oil.

"Leaders of any state that uses terrorist means against us, as well as any that may be envisaging -- in one way or another -- using weapons of mass destruction, must understand that they would be exposing themselves to a firm and appropriate response on our behalf," he said.

"That response could be conventional, it could also be of another nature," Chirac said in a clear reference to nuclear weapons during a visit to a French nuclear base in the northwestern region of Brittany.

India & Iran's nuke plan can't be compared: US

AFP, New Delhi

The United States said yesterday that comments by Iran's top nuclear negotiator that New Delhi received preferential international treatment on nuclear proliferation issues were "outrageous".

"We have seen the comments. They are outrageous," US Undersecretary of State Nicholas Burns said in response to last week's comments by Iranian official Ali Larijani that Iran had a right to pursue peaceful nuclear activities.

Larijani said that Iran submits to international inspections while several nations that already possess nuclear weapons do not.

"Countries that produce nuclear weapons are neither members of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) nor signatories to the (nuclear) Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)," Larijani said, according to a report published on the web site of the English-language Tehran Times newspaper.

According to Indian foreign

ministry notes, Larijani in an interview with CNN made a specific reference to India at the end of the interview.

"Americans say (to Iran) 'we doubt and we suspect your intentions, you may in future develop nuclear weapons,' while IAEA reports say that Iran is 10 years away from being capable of developing weapons," Larijani reportedly said.

"But compare that to India, it does have nuclear weapons but they have extensive relations in the nuclear field. This dual standard is detrimental to international security."

Burns, who held talks with Indian foreign secretary Shyam Saran on a landmark nuclear deal between India and the US signed in July, said India could not be compared to Iran on the nonproliferation issue.

"How is it possible to compare India with Iran? India has been very careful with its nuclear programme," he said, adding that Iran has been conducting secret nuclear research for 18 years.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
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INVITATION FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI) FOR PRIVATE AGENCIES/FIRMS

Memo No. Paribesh/Biosafety/Subcontract/2006/06 Dated: 19/01/2006

1. The Department of Environment (DoE), under the Ministry of Environment and Forest (MoEF), The People's Republic of Bangladesh is inviting proposals for sub contract under the cost of generating information related to Biosafety from a grant received from the UNEP-GEF for the project "Development of the National Biosafety Framework (NBF)" (Project No.GP/2716-01-4319), in compliance to the Cartagena Protocol on Biodiversity (CPB).

2. The objectives of the project are:

- o To prepare a draft National Biosafety Framework for Bangladesh (NBF) in order to monitor and regulate the possible potential threats and hazards to human health and biodiversity on the environment due to the introduction of GMOs/LMOs;
- o Create awareness among different stakeholders on Biosafety and Biotechnology through workshops, seminars and training courses;
- o Develop human resource on Biosafety related issues through Information sharing and collaboration at the regional and sub-regional level;
- o Promote collaboration with other organizations to assist capacity building on Biosafety Protocol.

3. The main elements of this National Biosafety Framework are:

- a. A regulatory system;
- b. An administrative system;
- c. A decision making system that includes risk assessment and management;
- d. Mechanisms for public participation and information.

4. Interested private agencies/firms that possess specific technical expertise are requested to submit their EOI indicating their desire to provide the services stated below:

- Survey on existing mechanisms for harmonization of risk assessment/risk management, mutual acceptance of data and data validation;
- Survey on the extent and impact of release of LMOs and commercial products;
- Identify information for input in the Biosafety Clearing House (BCH) and for promoting public participation;
- Create a database, listing national experts in fields related to biotechnology and biosafety, as well as in fields relevant to risk assessment and risk management of LMOs;
- Prepare a National Biosafety Framework including procedure for the safe application of biotechnology in accordance with the Cartagena Protocol.

5. Interested private agencies/firms must provide the following information with the EOI:

- a. The application must have the names and address of the firm, copies of registration documents, yearly financial turnover including telephone numbers, e-mail address and facsimile numbers.
- b. The private agency/firm must submit necessary printed brochures showing organizational background and related experiences in providing the desired services. The proposal must include CVs with academic background and experiences of individuals/personnel involved in the field of Biosafety/Biotechnology.

6. The proposal should include a work plan stating completion and compilation of data within 60 days of receipt of the assignment.

7. The private agencies/firm will be selected in accordance with the procedures set out in the Public Procurement Regulation 2003.

8. The technical proposal and financial proposal must be in separate envelopes marked with "EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI) FOR INFORMATION COLLECTION AND INVENTORIES ON NATIONAL BIOSAFETY FRAMEWORK IN BANGLADESH." are to be submitted latest by 5.00 pm on 06.02.2006 to the office of the Project Director, Department of Environment, Dhaka Divisional Office, Room No. 201, Paribesh Bhaban, E-16 Agargaon, Shre-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207 by mail or courier service.

9. The authority reserves the right to accept or reject any or all EOI proposal without showing any reason whatsoever.

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Laden seeks to silence rumours of his demise

US rejects al-Qaeda kingpin's truce proposal

AFP, Dubai

A recording from Osama bin Laden, his first message for over a year, is aimed at quashing rumours of his death and warning the Western world its most wanted man remains a major threat, analysts said Friday.

"There is nothing really new in the message. The real objective is to say that he is alive, still the leader of al-Qaeda and a main player in world politics," London-based al-Qaeda expert Abdel Bari Atwan told AFP.

In an audiotape broadcast Thursday by the Al-Jazeera satellite television and authenticated by the CIA, the al-Qaeda chief warned of pending attacks in the "heartland" of the United States.

But he also offered a "long-term truce" if US troops were pulled out of Iraq and Afghanistan -- a proposal promptly rejected by the White House which said: "We do not negotiate with terrorists."

US Vice President Dick Cheney

said Thursday the audiotape was "a ploy" and that "this is not an organisation that is ever going to sit down and sign a truce. I think you have to destroy them. It's the only way to deal with them."

Cheney also said bin Laden's terrorist network had been driven "underground" although he warned al-Qaeda was still lethal.

The new tape marks the first time that bin Laden has been heard from in more than a year, his silence adding to feverish speculation about the fate of the man behind the September 11, 2001 attacks on the United States.

US intelligence officials believe bin Laden is holed up in a remote mountainous region on the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan.

"Bin Laden basically wants to respond to those who have claimed that he was either sick or dead, as for about a year it has been his deputy (Ayman) Al-Zawahiri who had been putting out tapes," said Atwan.

Syria backs Iran's nuke ambitions

AP, Damascus

Syria asserted Thursday that Iran had a right to atomic technology and said Western objections to Tehran's nuclear ambitions were not persuasive.

President Bashar Assad of Syria, a longtime Iranian ally facing its own international criticism, said he backed Tehran's moves toward nuclear power and wanted to strengthen ties.

"We support Iran regarding its right to peaceful nuclear technology," Assad said at a news conference with Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad at the start of two days of meetings. "It is the right of Iran and any other state to own nuclear technology for peaceful purposes. Countries that object to that have not provided a convincing or logical reason."

Russia's Foreign Minister Thursday called for a cautious approach to the mounting crisis over Iran's renewal of nuclear research, while a senior US envoy accused Tehran of deceiving the world about its intentions.

The US and key European nations have been pushing for Iran's referral to the UN Security Council, a first step toward possible sanctions over Iran's unsealing equipment earlier this month and announcing the start of small-scale experimental uranium enrichment, a potential step toward nuclear weapons.

Syria is facing its own international condemnation, over its reluctance to cooperate with a UN investigation implicating it in the assassination of former Lebanese prime minister Rafiq Hariri. Damascus has denied any role.

Ahmadinejad said the two countries needed to coordinate their positions.

"Considering that Syria is the steadfast party confronting Israel, and Iran is the defender of the Islamic revolution, this obliges us to have more consultation and cooperation," the Iranian president said in Farsi comments translated into Arabic.

"The circumstances in the region dictate on us such strengthening (of ties)," he said.

More Pak protests against US airstrike

AP, Peshawar

About 8,000 Islamic hard-liners yesterday protested a US missile strike that targeted al-Qaeda leaders in a Pakistani village, chanting their support for holy war and burning an effigy of President Bush.

Protesters marched from two mosques to the centre of the northwestern city of Peshawar, chanting "Death to America" and "Jihad is our way." Speakers railed against last Friday's attack near the Afghan border that killed 13 civilians and possibly several top al-Qaeda operatives.

"Are you ready for jihad against America?" asked Dost Mohammed, a leader of the opposition Islamic coalition that was organising demonstrations around Pakistan.

Hundreds of bearded protesters, most wearing white prayer caps, put their hands up.

"America is attacking Muslims in such a cowardly manner, attacking them in the middle of the night," said another speaker, local poet Afzal Khan.

বাংলাদেশ বনশিল্প উন্নয়ন কর্পোরেশন
৭৩, মতিঝিল বাণিজ্যিক এলাকা, ঢাকা
নং-সদ/ডিবি/ডি(৭)/০৫/৫ তারিখঃ ১৭-০১-০৬

গোলকার্ঠ ক্রয়ের টেন্ডার বিজ্ঞপ্তি সংশোধনী

এতদ্বারা সংশ্লিষ্ট সকলের অবগতির জন্য জানানো যাইতেছে যে, বাংলাদেশ বনশিল্প উন্নয়ন কর্পোরেশনের জন্য গর্জন, পোলকার্ঠ ক্রয়ের দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি ফিডকর নং-৫০/২০০৫-০৬ ডেইলী স্টার পত্রিকায়, ৫-১-০৬ইং তারিখে প্রকাশিত হয়। উক্ত বিজ্ঞপ্তির ১৭ নং ক্রমিক টেন্ডার বাস্তব খোলার তারিখ ৩০-১-০৬ইং এবং ১৯ নং ক্রমিক টেন্ডার খোলার স্থান (ক) পরিচালক (উৎপাদন ও বাণিজ্য), বশিউক, ৭৩, মতিঝিল, ঢাকা এবং (খ) মহাব্যবস্থাপক (ভারপ্রাপ্ত), বশিউক, রাবার বিভাগ, এফ-১২, চান্দগাঁও আবাসিক এলাকা, চট্টগ্রাম উল্লেখ করা হয়েছিল।

এক্ষণে পত্রিকায় প্রকাশিত উক্ত টেন্ডার বিজ্ঞপ্তির ক্রমিক নং-১৭ ও ১৯ আংশিক সংশোধনক্রমে টেন্ডার খোলার তারিখ ও সময় ৩১-১-০৬ইং, দুপুর ১২.০০ ঘটিকা এবং সকল টেন্ডার খোলার স্থান পরিচালক (উৎপাদন ও বাণিজ্য), বশিউক, সদর দপ্তর, ৭৩, মতিঝিল বাণিজ্যিক এলাকা, ঢাকা হইবে।

এম আলী আহম্মেদ
পরিচালক
(উৎপাদন ও বাণিজ্য)
ফিডকর: ৫৬/২০০৫-০৬
সি-১১১
টেলিফোন নং-৯৫৫২৫২৮ (অফিস)