SOUTH ASIA



King of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, (C-R), who was the chief guest at India's Republic Day celebration, and Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh (C-L) at Rajpath in New Delhi yesterday. India showcased its military might and cultural diversity in its annual Republic Day parade under high security.

Blasts, strike mark Indian Republic Day

Republic Day yesterday with a series of attacks across the east of the country which killed two peoole, but the rest of the nation marked the occasion peacefully.

Hozen coal-laden trucks in a village in Chhattisgarh state before firing indiscriminately on passing vehicles, killing two people, police said. "It was a hit-and-run strike on a

highway running through a very remote corner of the state," Chhattisgarh police inspector general A.N. Upadhyay said, without giving further details.

India has been on high alert for Republic Day, with tight security in New Delhi, Kashmir and the east and remote northeastern region -all prime targets for separatist anti-India militants or leftist guerrillas. In the capital New Delhi, Prime

Minister Manmohan Singh took the salute at India Gate, a memorial for Indian soldiers, as troops blew bugles.

Across the sprawling city, thou-sands of police checked vehicles and guarded key buildings to thwart a possible strike by Islamic militants opposed to Indian rule in Kashmir. In October, 66 people were killed by three bomb blasts in New Delhi blamed on Pakistan-

In the eastern state of Bihar, Maoists blew up a bridge over a river near Gaya, about 100km from Patna, the state capital at around midnight, police said. The bridge was on one of the main rail links to east and northeastern India.

Maoist rebels -- who say they are fighting for the rights of landless labourers and poor peasants -- set off a series of blasts on road bridges and rail tracks.

Overnight, the rebels also sur-rounded a police station in Palamu district in Jharkhand and blew up a portion of the building. A firefight took place between federal police and Maoists

AFP, REUTERS, Washington/ United Nations The United States and United Nations welcomed an agreement by

the Sri Lankan government and Tamil Tiger rebels to resume peace talks and urged them to take imme-

Norway on Wednesday broke a near three-year deadlock in the peace process by clinching a deal for the warring parties to meet face-toface in Geneva by mid-February. Shares soared in Sri Lanka yes

terday as fears of a return to fullscale war faded after the government and Tamil Tiger rebels agreed to their first face-to-face meeting in The announcement that Norwegian-brokered talks would take place next month in Geneva

reversed sharp falls on the stock market registered since President Mahinda Rajapakse came to power in November, traders said. "The United States remains fully committed to the Sri Lankan peace process," State Department spokesman Sean McCormack said, com-mending Norwegian special envoy Erik Solheim for his effort to advance "this positive develop-

"We call on both the government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam) to take immediate action to prevent vio-

lence and to uphold the terms of the ceasefire agreement, "he said. UN Secretary General Kofi Annan on Wednesday hailed the Norwegian-brokered accord under which Sri Lanka's warring parties are to meet for direct peace talks after a near three-year dead-

"The Secretary General is very pleased to learn that, for the first time since April 2003, the government of Sri Lanka and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) have agreed to hold direct talks in mid-February in Geneva," a UN statement said. Annan also welcomed Norway's renewed efforts to facilitate the resumption of talks between Colombo and Tamil separatists.

US, UN hail Lankan | Musharraf Urges India Over Kashmir Row

peace breakthrough Grasp the moment

President Pervez Musharraf called yesterday on India to join Pakistan in working out a mould-breaking solution to their Kashmir dispute that could lead to self-governance and make the Line of Control "irrelevant."

In comments on the margins of the World Economic Forum in Davos, Musharraf urged a step-bystep approach that would start with defining Kashmir's borders and end with a joint cross-border administration.

"I am extremely flexible, and I am bold enough to go for an out-of-the-box solution," he told report-

"But we cannot clap with one hand. I expect India to join."

"Grasp these fleeting moments at this time," he went on. "Fleeting moments come and go. It is incumbent on all leaders to grasp these moments, otherwise they are not

Pakistan and India, regional and

month to implement fresh measures to lower tensions over Kashmir, a dispute that has soured bilateral ties for almost six decades and triggered two of their three wars since 1947. The countries each hold part of the Himalayan region but claim it in full, while an insurgency in the Indian-held part has claimed more than 40,000 lives

since 1989. Pakistani officials with Musharraf at the annual gathering of political and business heavyweights in Davos, Switzerland, said that his comments Thursday were his clearest to date.

He said that once Kashmir's geographical status had been defined, the whole province would be demilitarised.

It would then get a selfgoverning administration -- short of independence but more than autonomy -- and officials from Kashmir, India and Pakistan would jointly manage the area on both sides of the current Line of Control.

made the Line of Control irrele-

The Pakistani leader warned that if a solution did not come

soon, political changes could make it impossible later. "We need to move forward. If we do not do that, permanent peace cannot be guaranteed in the

region. No leader is permanent." On January 19, after the latest round of talks in New Delhi, the Pakistani and Indian foreign ministers said that they had, for the first time, discussed the possibility of creating a military "disengagement

Pakistan's Riaz Mohammed Khan also said then that Islamabad had asked India to allow selfgovernance for Kashmir.

zone" in Kashmir.

While both sides confirmed a commitment to keeping the peace process going, India criticised its neighbour for not doing enough to stem a flow of Islamic militants into Kashmir to feed the insurgency.

Veteran Pak

Maoist rebels ushered in India's The rebels set ablaze more than a based militants.

Armed rebels earlier stormed a small station at Rafiganj.

In neighbouring Iharkhand,

some 150km northwest of Ranchi.

Maoist rebels have traditionally boycotted Republic Day, often using the day to carry out strikes. More than 9,000 Maoist rebels

operate in at least nine Indian states, mainly in the country's south and east, officials say. Further north in turbulent Indian Kashmir, shops and busi-

nesses were closed and people stayed indoors in the region's main city of Srinagar following a strike call by separatists. There was no militant violence

reported in Kashmir, police said. Officials in India's only Muslim-

majority state appealed for peace in the region where more than 45,000 people have died in a separatist revolt since 1989.

Enough blood has been shed already ... I appeal to militants to shun the path of violence and give peace a chance," Deputy Chief Minister Muzaffar Hussain Beig said during his speech at a heavily guarded stadium in Srinagar.

Empty streets in Nepal as strike bites

REUTERS, Kathmandu

Baton-wielding riot police guarded key government buildings and patrolled deserted streets across Nepal, as a nationwide strike began yesterday against municipal elections and King Gyanendra.

The dawn-to-dusk closure across the restive Himalayan kingdom was called by the country's main political parties, who have organised fierce, often violent, street protests to press the monarch to restore multi-party democ-

Thursday's strike coincides with the day when contestants for Feb 8 elections for 58 municipal councils were expected to file nomination

papers.

"We'll demonstrate in front of the election office to urge people not to stand (for the elections)," said Minendra Rijal, a spokesman of the Nepali Congress (Democratic) party, a member of the seven-party, anti-king alliance. In Kathmandu, hundreds of

helmeted police patrolled the

streets to avoid trouble.

Residents in Nepalgunj in west Nepal, the tourist town of Pokhara and the business centre of Biratnagar, said businesses, schools and colleges were shut and streets deserted.

There were no reports of vio-

Hundreds of activists have been detained and dozens injured over the past several days as police used batons and fired teargas shells to break up anti-king rallies.

The government has ordered businesses and transport operators to ignore the strike, saying it would pay compensation if they are attacked.

But residents were not convinced.

"How can I be sure when many government officials themselves leave their cars at home and walk to work?" asked taxi-driver Kanchha Khadka, standing in front of his garage in a Kathmandu suburb.

In the past, activists have stoned cars or smashed shops which



Nepalese demonstrators shout slogans and wave flags as they take part in a rally during a day-long general strike in Kathmandu yesterday. The strike was called by the seven alliance political parties on the first day of candidate registration for the forthcoming municipal elections.

Khan no more AFP, Peshawar Veteran Pakistani politician and nationalist ethnic Pashtun leader

politician Wali

Abdul Wali Khan, who had close ties with Moscow and New Delhi, died yesterday, his party said. He was 89. Khan had been in a coma since

suffering a stroke three days ago and died at a hospital in Peshawar, capital of North West Frontier Province bordering Afghanistan, a spokesman for his Awami National Party said. Khan strongly opposed Pakistan's support for Afghan Mujahedin fighting against the

1979-89 Soviet occupation of Afghanistan and forged friendly ties with Moscow as a result. He was the son of Abdul Ghaffar

Khan, known as the "Frontier Gandhi" for his friendship with India's freedom movement leader Mahatma Gandhi.

The party spokesman said delegations from India and Afghanistan were expected to attend Khan's funeral in his home town of Charsadda on Friday, but gave no immediate details.

"আর্থিক প্রতিষ্ঠান সমূত্রে সাথে আলোচনা করুন" "SME व्यारिकिश सम्मिद्कि

আসুন এবং SME ব্যাংকিং সম্পর্কে জানুন

অংশগ্রহন করুন ফ্রি ট্রেনিং-এ

- = "কিভাবে SME লোন পেতে পারেন?"
- "আর্থিক প্রতিষ্ঠান সমূহ কিভাবে লোন প্রাপ্তি মূল্যায়ন করে?"
- = "মহিলা উদ্যোক্তাদের জন্য ব্যাংকিং"

ফ্রি ট্রেনিং-এ যোগ দিতে ফোন করে রেজিট্রেশন করুন (মোবাইল এবং টি এও টি ইনকামিং)

०১१৫-৮৮৮०১৮, ०১৯১-৪১৮৩५७ এই नमस्त অথবা নিম্নবর্ণিত ব্যাংক এবং লিজিং কোম্পানী সমূহে যোগাযোগ করুন :

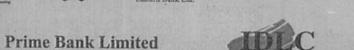




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সকাল ১০.০০ টা থেকে সন্ধ্যা ৭.০০ টা পর্যন্ত







KATALYST is a development project funded by European donors. The Industry and Rural Services Division of KATALYST works in different sectors of Bangladesh with an aim to improve the growth and competitiveness of enterprises in those sectors. This Division is looking for dynamic, independent, hardworking professionals, who have the vision to contribute to the growth of the business sector of Bangladesh, for the following positions:

> Research Specialist (1 position) Communications Specialist (1 position) Business Consultant - Monitoring & Evaluation (1 position) Business Consultant - Rural sectors (2 positions) Business Consultant - Industrial sectors (1 position)

Required qualifications:

All candidates are required to have the following:

- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills
- Must be able to communicate effectively in English and Bangla
 - Excellent team playing aptitude
 - Computer literacy is must

Research Specialist (1)

- At least a graduate degree in business, social sciences or a closely related field from a reputed university in Bangladesh or abroad
- At least 5 years of practical experience in planning, designing and executing qualitative, quantitative research, particularly in social and economic research
- Experience in Monitoring & Evaluation of development projects, understanding of market development and how
- market development projects work will be an added advantage Willing to travel extensively to different parts of the country

Communications Specialist (1)

- At least a graduate degree in business, mass communication, journalism or a closely related field from a reputed university in Bangladesh or abroad
- At least 3 years of practical experience in writing social and economic reports for different audiences, publication designing, advertising and creative writing
- Understanding of market development and of market development projects, particularly in terms of communications will be an added advantage

Business Consultant (4)

(for Industrial sectors, Rural sectors and Monitoring & Evaluation)

Willing to travel extensively to different parts of the country

- At least a graduate degree in business, engineering or relevant field from a reputed University in Bangladesh
- Excellent analytical skills with capacity of doing research and produce quality reports Able to manage mini-projects

 Knowledge of agricultural markets will be an added advantage for those applying for rural sectors Attractive compensation and benefit packages will be offered to the deserving candidates.

If your profile fits one of the above positions, you are requested to send a resume with 1 passport size photo and a cover letter stating suitability for the position, addressed towards the Manager, Industry & Rural Services Division to the following address:

KATALYST House # 20, Road # 6 Baridhara, Dhaka

Only short-listed candidates will be contacted for interviews. Telephone enquiries or any form of persuasion will lead to disqualification. Please mention the name of post applied for on the top left corner of the envelop. Please submit applications by 11 February 2006.