

Putin makes debut on Western stage amid protest on Chechnya

Presidential polls in Chechnya within two years

LONDON, Apr 17 : Russian President-elect Vladimir Putin made his debut on the Western stage here today in a visit marked by human rights protests over his country's role in Chechnya, reports AFP.

Putin kicked off his 24-hour stay by meeting British business leaders at the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) in central London.

He was later due in Downing Street for talks with Prime Minister Tony Blair on issues including Russia's relations with Europe, Chechnya and Kosovo, disarmament, drugs, international crime and terrorism, and British investment in Russia.

Putin arrived in London late Sunday, vowing that presidential elections would be held in Chechnya within the next two years.

Human rights groups are expected to protest outside Downing Street, the prime minister's official residence.

The human rights groups have condemned Blair for hosting the Russian leader while his country faces international criticism over alleged human rights abuses in the separatist republic of Chechnya.

But Foreign Office minister Keith Vaz defended the visit and said Blair would be raising the issues of Chechnya and human rights with Putin.

"These issues are important and they will be discussed. They also have to be seen, however, in the context of the wider relationship," he told the BBC.

"It is extremely important that Britain and the European Union engage with Russia. Russia is the EU's largest trading partner," he said.

"There is a new generation of leaders emerging in Russia and it is very important that we should be there at the start, building up that very strong relationship."

The Muslim Council of Britain also spoke out against Putin's visit Monday. Secretary General Iqbal Sacranie said the government was doing business with a man with "blood on his hands."

"The dead, maimed and injured of Chechnya cry out for justice every bit as much as the dead of Kosovo, Bosnia or Rwanda," he said.

Amnesty International urged Blair to use Putin's visit to press for a UN inquiry into Russia's brutal military crackdown in the Caucasus republic.

While the opposition Conservative Party's foreign affairs spokesman Francis Maude said: "Tony Blair needs to send a clear message -- for long-term partnership with the West, Vladimir Putin must become the first Russian leader to offer his people the rule of law and an open economy, not a back to the future scenario of rigged capitalism, thuggish authoritarianism and military adventure."

He also told journalists Blair's action could pave the way for improved relations with other Western countries.

"Tony Blair extended his hand to Russia and showed that he was ready to talk... If other countries follow the path begun by the British prime minister, we would be delighted," he said.

The Russian leader views Britain as an important go-between in Russia's international relations, notably with the United States and Europe.

While in London, Putin is expected to honor Soviet soldiers killed during World War II by placing a wreath at the Soviet War Memorial.

He will also be received by Queen Elizabeth II at Windsor Castle.

Russia allows civilians to reenter Chechen capital

Meanwhile, Russian troops today reopened roads to the Chechen capital Grozny to civilian traffic, the ITAR-TASS news agency reported, citing military sources.

Defense Secretary Orlando Mercado has described overloading of ferries as "rampant."

But ship operators argued if the death penalty was to be introduced it would have to include government officials as well.

"In my opinion, I think that proposed measure will not help," said Nelson Morales, head of safety management at Sulpicio Lines Inc., one of the country's leading shipping operators.

"The best way to do it is to have a law wherein government authorities will also be included (in the death penalty) like inspectors and agencies that give licenses to captains," he told AFP.

He said Rivera's proposal could be tantamount to "economic sabotage" since it could scare prospective investors from the shipping industry.

"If I were a ship owner and that becomes a law then I would go out of this business," Morales said.



Ethnic Albanians sit near the border in Morina as they are about to visit Kukes in Albania Sunday. More than 1,000 Kosovo Albanians set off by bus on Saturday for the Albanian border town of Kukes in memory of the hundreds of thousands deported last year by Serb forces.

Strike cripples Indian state of Tripura

AGARTALA, India, Apr 17: India's northeastern state of Tripura came to a near standstill today as a strike called to protest against the massacre of 12 people took hold, reports Reuters.

Government offices, businesses, shops, schools and colleges were shut because of the 24-hour strike called by political parties including the state's ruling Communist Party of India (Marxist) to press for federal help in dealing with militancy.

Suspected separatist guerrillas of the National Liberation Front of Tripura (NLFT) killed 12 people and wounded eight in a village market in Kalyanpur, 95 km (60 miles) northeast of the state capital, Agartala.

Tripura's ruling Communist Party said it had urged the federal government to send reinforcements to help quell the rebellion.

The centre (federal government) should cooperate with the state in dealing with the menace," the party said in statement.

"The gunbattle is still continuing and some houses in the village have been damaged," the spokesman said.

4 killed in Kashmir

SRINAGAR, India, Apr 17: Four Muslim separatists were killed and three Indian soldiers injured in separatist-linked violence in the disputed Kashmir region, police said today, reports AFP.

The militants were killed in a gunbattle with the Border Security Force at Burzham village, 12 kilometers (7.4 miles) south of Srinagar overnight Sunday, a police spokesman said.

No money in Moscow to destroy chemical arms

MOSCOW, Apr 17 : Russia does not have the money to destroy its 40,000-tonne chemical weapons stocks by the year 2007 as promised, the officer commanding anti-chemical warfare defence forces said today, reports AFP.

"There's a delay of roughly four years in the programme," said General Stanislav Petrov, quoted by Interfax agency.

"Russia is technically capable of destroying its chemical arms in time, but lack of funds will prevent this," the officer added.

Vajpayee urges Commonwealth nations to lead global fight against gender inequality

NEW DELHI, Apr 17: Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee today urged the Commonwealth nations to lead a global fight against gender inequality, reports AFP.

"The Commonwealth represents today's world, transcending barriers of the North-South Divide and the distance that separates developing economies from developed countries," Vajpayee told Commonwealth ministers responsible for Women's Affairs here.

"It can show the way to the need for cooperation among nations and open society within nations so that a just and equitable social order can be ensured in which women (do not) suffer from the disability on account of their gender identity," Vajpayee said.

Vajpayee said India, the largest member of the Commonwealth, had played a major role in promoting gender

equality but admitted there was a lot more to be done.

"We take pride in the fact that we are the world's largest democracy... In the 21st century, we are faced with new challenges, as are other countries," Vajpayee said.

Vajpayee said many of the challenges had a direct bearing on women.

"For instance, the challenge of ensuring sustainable development and coping with the socio-economic impact of globalisation and structural adjustment," he said.

"Our aim is to remove barriers and roadblocks so that new avenues are opened to a new world of opportunities for women," the prime minister said.

He said although India had made significant progress in the elimination of discrimination against women we acknowledge that a lot more

remains to be done."

Vajpayee said that after the 1995 Beijing UN World Conference on Women, Equality and Peace "it would be worthwhile to take stock of the status of women across the world and this meeting provides an opportunity for this purpose."

Commonwealth Deputy Secretary General, Dame Veronica Sutherland over the weekend had said that privatisation in many developing countries had led to cuts in public expenditure on education and health which hit women the hardest.

Sutherland said the three-day meeting here would focus on bridging the gender gap, violence against women and ensuring that both the sexes benefit from the opportunities arising from globalisation.

The meeting comes ahead of a special session on women scheduled during the UN General Assembly in June.

BRIEFLY

Lankan PM marks 84th birthday:

Sri Lankan Prime Minister Sirima Bandaranaike, who became the world's first elected woman prime minister in 1960, celebrated her 84th birthday Monday, AFP reports from Colombo.

104 died in Kinshasa depot blaze:

At least 104 people were killed and 237 injured in last week's explosion and fire at an arms depot at Kinshasa International Airport, Governor Theophile Mbemba Fundu said Monday, AFP reports from Kinshasa.

Japan hails 2nd female governor:

The Japanese government Monday hailed the weekend election of the nation's second female governor, saying her victory with the ruling coalition's backing was a boost ahead of general elections, AFP reports from Tokyo.

"It was a very good result," Chief Cabinet Secretary Mikio Aoki said of Yoshiko Saito's landslide election Sunday as governor of southern Japan's Kumamoto prefecture. The victory of the 61-year-old former social worker, who worked as a deputy to her deceased predecessor Joji Fukushima, follows the February election of Fusae Ota as governor of Japan's second largest city Osaka.

Passenger ferry sinks as Manila mulls death penalty law

MANILA, Apr 17 : Reckless ship owners in the Philippines were threatened with the death penalty today, as the second ferry to sink in five days went down, government officials said, reports AFP.

All 137 people on board the Penafrancia were rescued when hit by an uncharted underwater hazard as it sailed into the port of Batangas, south of here at 2:00 a.m. (00:00 BST Sunday), the coastguard said.

Last week, the overloaded Anahada sank off the southern island of Sulu, claiming at least 139 lives.

Transportation and communications secretary Vicente Rivera ordered the Maritime and Industry Authority on Monday to be more "vigilant" in ensuring passenger safety at sea.

He warned ship owners that the transportation department was drafting a law that would make "reckless imprudence by ship owners a heinous crime" punishable by death.

Rivera, who did not say when the proposed legislation would be sent to Congress, ac-

cused owners of allowing vessels to sail with passenger numbers beyond their capacity.

Defense Secretary Orlando Mercado has described overloading of ferries as "rampant."



Actor/director Antonio Banderas poses for photographers with the two ALMA awards he garnered for outstanding actor in a feature film for his role in "The 13th Warrior" and for outstanding director of a feature film for "Crazy in Alabama" during the fifth annual American Latino Media Arts Awards Sunday in Pasadena, California.

The awards honour the positive portrayal of Latin Americans in films, television and music and will be telecast in the US on June 17.

— AFP photo

Bin Laden calls on Muslim youths to fight US

ISLAMABAD, Apr 17: Circulating in Pakistan's deeply conservative Northwest Frontier Province is a call to Muslim youth from suspected terrorist, Osama bin Laden, to wage war against the United States, reports AP.

The message, addressed to "dear youths of the Muslim world," condemns the presence of US troops in Saudi Arabia and vows to wage a jihad or holy war against the US until they are withdrawn.

"The youth should contact us as soon as possible. Territorial boundaries have no importance in our eyes. All the land belongs to God," says bin Laden's message written in Urdu, Pakistan's national language.

The small poster-size message on a glossy background depicts burning US Indian and Israeli flags, as well as a cocked and ready to fire kalashnikov rifle.

"Our jihad (holy war) will continue until America is expelled from Saudi Arabia and other countries of the world," says bin Laden.

"It is our responsibility to free the world from their (US) control," he said. "The non-Muslim world should know it well that a Muslim is always ready to die in the name of God."

Bin Laden also vowed to continue his battle against the US.

"I am not afraid of America. I will continue my work. No one can stop me," he said.

Also circulating in Pakistan is another glossy poster-size message, this one from the Taliban's supreme leader, Mullah Mohammed Omar.

The message is for the US Administration and US President Bill Clinton in particular.

Referring to Clinton as corrupt, Omar in his message vows never to hand over bin Laden to the United States.

Bin Laden also vowed to continue his battle against the US.

Washington accuses bin Laden of masterminding the 1998 twin attacks on its embassies in East Africa.

The US wants bin Laden to stand trial on terrorism charges either in the US or in a third country. The Taliban have flatly refused.

Omar accused the US of planning further action against the Taliban. The US in 1998 fired Tomahawk cruise missiles at alleged training camps operated by bin Laden's Al-Qaida group. Last year the US barred all investment in and trade with the Taliban. The United Nations followed in November 1999 with limited sanctions against the Taliban also to press for bin Laden's extradition.

"I am very well aware that America is making some plans against us, which may create problems with our Islamic activities," wrote Omar, without specifying either the US plans or what Islamic activities may be affected.

"I want to tell America in very clear words that they can do whatever they want but we will do what we like."

Europe's immigrant influx rankles some, but others see salvation

ROME, Apr 17: The new Europeans stake their turf where they step off the train: The blocks around Rome's rail station bustle with Chinese hawkers the latest in plastic goods, video stores wallpapered with veiled Punjab poster beauties, Senegalese shivering over counters of withering tropical fruit-in-exile, reports AP.

East Asians dominate the immigrant enclave but not yet in such numbers it can properly be called a Chinatown. It's a China-Philippines-India-Nigeria-Morocco-Bangladesh Town, heterogeneous nationalities huddling together in homogeneous Rome.

The incense stores, Nike-knockoff emporiums and tropical-fruit vendors of Rome's estimated 210,000 legal immigrants sprawl over only a few blocks. But 10 years ago, few, if any, were there.

It's already all too much for Andrea Salvatucci, a handyman finding his own comfort in numbers among fellow Italians in a neighbourhood video-game room.

"Italy isn't Italy anymore," Salvatucci says, gazing out at the busy street while he whiles away a rainy afternoon. "There are too many, too many. We are full."

In fact, Italy — and all of Europe — may just have started reeling.

With the ranks of Europeans dwindling as the birth rate heads down to half that of its death rate, Europe is caught in a demographic dilemma that the United Nations suggests might best be solved by a mass influx of immigrants.

A UN population report released in March projects Italy would need to let in up to 2.2 million new immigrants every year just to keep its labour pool filled and its pension system manageable. That would be an annual influx about twice the total number of immigrants now in Italy.

Germany would need even more — up to 3.4 million every year, the report said.

The population crunch stands to bite hardest in Italy, whose birth rate vies with Spain for the lowest in Europe as Italians increasingly trim their family size. The UN study said Italy's population could drop 28 per cent by 2050, from 57 million people to 42 million.

high 14 per cent of gross domestic product to 17 per cent or 18 per cent, absent unprecedented economic growth, the country's Statistics Bureau says.

Italy would have to raise the retirement age to 77 to maintain the current ratio of four workers for every pensioner, the UN report said.

But don't look for Italy to throw its borders open any time soon or start setting up all-roads-lead-to-Rome employment booths in Albania or Nigeria.

This is a land that last took in mass numbers of outsiders back when the Roman Empire needed slaves, and the feared costs of immigrants to the Italian culture outweighs any hoped-for gain to the Italian economy.

That would be dangerous to our society," Interior Undersecretary Alberto Maritati said in rejecting the kind of influx envisioned by the United Nations.

"It's an exaggerated number of foreigners that could not be integrated into our society. It would cause rejection, insecurity."

So new to newcomers that it didn't even have an immigration law until 1983, Italy already has seen its population of legal immigrants more than double since 1993.

They still make up just 2.2 per cent of Italy's people — small even by western European standards. But to Italians accustomed only to Italians, the boat people washing up nightly on their southern shores or the Poles and Filipinos filling piazzas of northern cities on Sundays, already can seem like an invasion.

Italy's right wing is as least as outspoken on the subject as Austria's where Joerg Haider's rightist party won a spot in the coalition government in part by drawing on voters' resentment toward immigrants.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Bangladesh Television
121, Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue
Shahbagh, Dhaka-1000

Re-Tender Notice No TV (Engg).04.Comp.05/99 (3rd time)

Quotations are invited from experienced & reputed suppliers/manufacturers' representatives for purchase of (one) Photocopier & 1(one) Fax machine on payment in local currency basis for Bangladesh Television's Computer System Introduction Project. Tender schedule can be purchased on cash payment of Tk 500.00 (five hundred) only (non-refundable) from the Finance Section of Bangladesh Television at the abovementioned address within office hours. Quotation should be dropped in the box kept at the office of Chief Engineer, BTV at the same address by 12.00 Nor , of 24 April, 2000. The quotations received will be opened on the same day at 12:10 PM in presence (if any) of the tenderers. No schedule will be sold on 24 April, 2000. Terms & conditions of tender are stated in detail in the schedule. Earnest money at the rate 2% (two per cent) of quoted value in the form of Bank Draft/Pay Order should be enclosed with the quotation.

Bangladesh Television authority can reject any or all quotations without assigning any reason.

Syed Lutf Ali
Project Director
Bangladesh Television's
Computer System
Introduction Project.

DFF-8534-12/4
G-683

মেঘনা পেট্রোলিয়াম লিমিটেড
(বাংলাদেশ পেট্রোলিয়াম কর্পোরেশনের একটি অংশ প্রতিষ্ঠান)

৫৮, আশাবাদ বা/এ
চট্টগ্রাম

দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

নং পারঃ ১৯৭

এতদ্বারা প্রকৃত ও অভিজ্ঞতাসম্পন্ন প্রকৃতকারকদের নিকট হইতে ১ লিটার ধারণক্ষমতাসম্পন্ন প্রাস্টিক ক্যানসমূহ সরবরাহ করার জন্য সীলমোহরকৃত দরপত্র আহ্বান করা যাইতেছে।

আগ্রহী দরদাতাগণকে দরপত্র জমা করার সময় হাল নাগাদ বাণিজ্যিক অনুমতিপত্র, ব্যাংক সঞ্চালতার সনদপত্র, আমকর রেজিস্ট্রেশন সনদপত্র ও ভাট রেজিস্ট্রেশন সনদপত্র অবশ্যই প্রদান করিতে হইবে। বিস্তারিত বিবরণ সম্বলিত দরপত্রসমূহ আমাদের ক্রয়/কাশ বিভাগ, ৫৮, আশাবাদ বা/এলাকা, চট্টগ্রাম ও আবারিক বাবস্থাপকের অফিস, মেঘনা ভবন, ১৩১, মতিঝিল বা/এলাকা, ঢাকা হইতে নগদ ১০০০/= (একহাজার) টাকা মূল্যে প্রদানে প্রতিদিন অফিস চলাকালীন সময়ে রবিবার হইতে বুধসপ্তাহের বেলা ১০০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত সম্ভব করিতে পারিবেন।

দরপত্রদাতাগণকে ২টি ভিন্ন নামে একটি কারিগরি দরপত্র এবং অন্যটি মুদ্রাস্থিত দরপত্র প্রদান করিতে হইবে। দরপত্রসমূহ (কারিগরি ও মুদ্রাস্থিত) আমাদের উপরোক্তিত দপ্তরে বিকৃত টেন্ডার বাবে আগামী ০৩-০৫-২০০০ইং বেলা ১০০০ ঘটিকার মধ্যে ফেলিতে হইবে যাহা একই দিনে বেলা ১৫:১৫ ঘটিকার সময় দরপত্রদাতাদের সম্মুখে যদি কেহ উপস্থিত থাকেন। শুধুমাত্র কারিগরি দরপত্র খোলা হইবে। কারিগরি দরপত্র খোলার পর নিম্নীকায় উল্লিখিত সকল দরদাতাগণকে তাদের মুদ্রাস্থিত দরপত্র খোলার তাবিপ পক্ষে মাধ্যমে জানানো হইবে। দরপত্র খোলার দিন কোন টেন্ডার সিডিউল বিক্রয় করা হইবে না।

অন্যান্য শর্তাবলী দরপত্রে উল্লেখ আছে।

কোন কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকে যে কোন টেন্ডার যত্ন কিংবা সকল দরপত্র বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা অত্র কোম্পানীর সংরক্ষিত।

জিডি-৩৫১

Bangladesh University of Engineering & Technology
Dhaka

No EU/P&D/FP-1321/99-00/Ten-2/D-2179(3) Dated: 13.4.2000
"International Tender Notice for Purchase of Scientific Instruments"

Sealed tenders are invited from the reputed indentors/suppliers for the supply of Scientific instrument, Lab. equipments, etc against cash foreign exchange for the various department/office of this University. Tender schedule together with terms and conditions will be available from the undersigned by showing the receipt of Tk 1000/- (one thousand) only (Non-refundable) deposited in the Sonali Bank, BUET Branch, Dhaka. Each tender must be accompanied by a Bank Guarantee/Bank Draft or PO from any Nationalised/Scheduled Bank of Dhaka in favour of the "Comptroller, BUET, Dhaka" amounting to 2% of the total quoted C&F value as bid bond/earnest money without which no tender will be considered for acceptance. Tender will be received by the undersigned up to 2-30 PM on 22.5.2000 and will be opened at the same time in presence of the tenderers.

The University reserves the right to accept or reject any tender without showing any reason thereof.

No tender form will be sold against Pay Order, DD, Money Order and on the day of opening of the tender.

Deputy Director
Planning & Development

GD-350

Bangladesh Export Processing Zones Authority
Zones Authority
222 New Eskaton Road
Dhaka-1000

No: BFPZA-CE-09/99/32 Dated: 17-04-2000

Short Tender Notice

No: 32/99-2000

Sealed tenders are hereby invited from prequalified contractors for Construction of Multi-storied BEPZA Complex at 19/D, Road No-6 (old), Dhanmondi, Dhaka at an estimated cost of Tk 4,95,09,976.00.

Tender documents may be obtained from the Accounts Department of BEPZA Executive Office, 222, New Eskaton Road, Dhaka-1000 during office hours on all working days on payment of Tk 2000/- (non-refundable) only up to 26th April, 2000.

Earnest money as prescribed in the tender document shall have to be submitted along with the tender in the form of Bank Draft/Pay Order from a scheduled bank favouring Bangladesh Export Processing Zones Authority (BEPZA).

Tenders in sealed cover shall be received in the tender box kept in the office of the undersigned at BEPZA Executive Office, 222, New Eskaton Road, Dhaka up to 12:00 Noon on 27th April, 2000 and shall be opened on the same day at 12:30 PM in presence of the tenderers (if any).

The tender accepting authority reserves the right to accept any or to reject any or all the tenders without assigning any reasons whatsoever.

Abu Reza Khan
Chief Engineer

GD-352