

Pakistan protests over US sting

BBC ONLINE

Pakistan has protested to the United States over what it says was an FBI sting operation involving a fake plot to kill Pakistan's UN envoy.

Islamabad called the operation bizarre and mind-boggling.

A spokesman said it had endangered the life of Munir Akram, Pakistan's permanent envoy to the United Nations.

Two men are being held in the US for allegedly laundering money for an agent posing as a militant who wanted to use a missile to kill Akram.

Pakistani foreign ministry spokesman Masood Khan asked why the US authorities had not picked an American "target" instead.

"It is mind-boggling why they could not use the name of an American functionary," he told a news conference.

He said that Pakistan had spoken to the US embassy in Islamabad and that it hoped America would "realise its mistake and give instructions for rectify-

ing this faulty methodology".

Two leaders of a mosque in Albany, New York, were arrested this month on charges of money-laundering and providing support to terrorism after a sting operation.

Yassin Aref, the imam of the mosque, and Mohammed Hossain, the mosque's founder, allegedly laundered money for a man who they believed had purchased a shoulder-fired missile to assassinate Akram.

In fact, the man was working undercover for the US government as part of a surveillance operation going back a year.

Khan said Pakistani diplomats were at greater risk as a result of the operation.

"This technique and methodology is tantamount to auto-suggestion and could have endangered the life of our ambassador," he said.

Pakistan has been a close ally of the US in its "war on terror".

Iran plays down Iraq rift, seeks hostage release

REUTERS, Tehran

Iran yesterday played down fresh accusations that it was stirring up violence in Iraq and sought to secure the release of an Iranian diplomat seized by militants in Iraq five days ago.

The charges leveled by Iraqi Defense Minister Hazim al-Shalaan and the kidnapping of Iran's consul to Kerbala highlighted growing mistrust between the two neighbors which fought each other to a standstill in a bitter 1980-1988 war.

Political analysts said the mounting

tensions reflected the desire of Iraqi officials to assert their independence from Shi'ite Muslim Iran which, in turn, is divided over how best to exert influence in its western neighbor.

Shalaan, who has previously branded Iran as Iraq's "first enemy," said Shi'ite Muslim rebels were using arms obtained from Iran to wage a bloody uprising in Najaf where U.S. forces say at least 360 rebels have been killed since Thursday.

Asked if he still thought Iran was Iraq's prime enemy, he told Al Arabiya: "The facts we have say that what has happened to the people of Iraq happened from a number one enemy."

US team in city

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stringent laws and the infrastructural improvements we have made."

"We have passed laws which were internationally accepted, but as US had made it clear the infrastructure and implementation of the law may have been lacking," said Morshed. "(But) There has been tremendous improvement in the last couple of months," he added.

An inter-ministerial committee, headed by the home secretary, was formed on June 27. The committee set up a police monitoring cell, opened new courts on trafficking and an advisory committee to take preventive measures.

The home secretary told the US team yesterday 60 out of the 88 rescued trafficked victims have been rehabilitated and 20 cases specified by the US have been looked into, with one case already resolved.

Foreign ministry officials also said diplomatic missions in trafficking destinations in the Middle-East and South Asia have been alerted to keep a close watch over trafficking, especially in the Arab countries where children are used as camel-jockeys.

According to the letter to the foreign ministry, any re-assessment would follow if Bangladesh is judged to have made a "significant effort" to comply with the related US laws on trafficking, Morshed told reporters.

On demands for the refutation of the US report some NGOs made on Sunday, Morshed said, "We are saying the current progress is satisfactory and the implementation will be strengthened."

"What some NGOs say or the US say are not as important as the realities on the ground," said Morshed. If the US assessment team does find something contrary to Bangladesh's progress on prevention of trafficking in humans then "they'll have to substantiate their findings".

The assessment team will go to Jessore today to see on the ground immigration and other facilities on the India-Bangladesh border. It is expected to stay in Bangladesh till tomorrow.

The US State Department report's chapter on Bangladesh states, "The government does not adequately monitor its borders; corruption among border guards is a major obstacle to anti-trafficking progress."

"The government has failed to make a priority of protecting trafficking victims or prosecuting their exploiters," the report adds.

Bangladesh was relegated to Tier 3 of the US State Department's "Human Trafficking in Persons Report 2004" on

June 14. Among the other nine countries on tier 3 are North Korea, Cuba, Sudan and Bangladesh's neighbour, Myanmar.

One of the three visiting State Department officials, meanwhile, said it is still uncertain if the country would get out of the lowest rating at Tier 3 despite the progress, according to UNB.

The official, preferring not to be quoted by name, however did say they were impressed with some progress made by the government. "It is remarkable in some areas," he added and cited acceleration of trial of human-trafficking cases and setting up of a monitoring cell.

The official also met with some NGOs engaged in the sector and expressed interest in working closely and collaborate with Bangladesh to intensify current efforts for improvement on prevention of trafficking, including offers for technical assistance for training police, paramilitary forces and other security officials.

Six get death

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government steps to ensure their security.

Convict Milan and Mithu's mothers, who were present in the court, fainted and relatives of the other convicts burst into tears.

Earlier, the prosecution and the defence completed their arguments and the court recorded statements of 14 out of 22 prosecution witnesses.

In the case filed with Sutrapur Police Station, it was alleged that Mohammad Faruq Hossain with his daughter Maria in his lap went to a shop at Tipu Sultan Road to buy iftar items at around 4:30pm on November 27, 2002. A gang of about seven criminals chased him and started firing shots and hurling bombs from behind. One bomb hit Maria killing her on the spot. Faruq was also injured in the incident.

Later, Faruq came to know from locals that Momin and his accomplices attacked him. The attack was a sequel to previous enmity, he said.

Faruq filed a case accusing Momin and six others.

Police arrested six accused while Hatem went into hiding. Milan, Mithu and Swapan gave confessional statements to magistrates.

Police also filed two cases against Momin on charge of firing shots and throwing bombs at them when they went to arrest him in connection with Maria murder case.

False alarm panics bank staffers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Bomb scare at the American Express Bank's Agrabad branch forced the staffers to escape the office yesterday morning, police and witnesses said.

Acting Commissioner of Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP) Amjad Hossain said "An anonymous phone call caused the panic among the workers and employees of the bank at 10:15am yesterday."

"The anonymous caller told the bank's receptionist that a bomb might go off inside the office. As the receptionist raised an alarm, everybody left the office in panic," the commissioner added.

"But it was a false alarm and we found nothing in the bank after thorough search by members of Special Branch of Police by metal detectors."

After the search, the workers and employees returned to the office and resumed work.

When contacted over telephone, officials of the bank in Agrabad commercial hub declined to talk to the press.

Sylhet halts

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government sent police reinforcements to beef up security.

A court placed expatriate Bangladeshi SM Nunu Miah, who was arrested soon after the blast in the car he was using, on a three-day remand and police interrogated hotel staff Belal and Shamsul and Manik Miah, driver of the damaged car.

Police dismissed the claim of city Mayor Badaruddin Kamran that he was the main target of the bomb attack.

The four-party alliance at a press conference said the explosion was the act of AL activists and accused the party of creating anarchy with an ulterior motive.

But the AL dismissed the allegation and said the blast was part of a government plan to kill all top leaders of the party across the country.

"Not only the city mayor, other top leaders of the party were the targets of the Saturday's blast," AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil told reporters emerging from a meeting of AL Central Working Committee in Dhaka.

AL President Sheikh Hasina will visit Sylhet on August 12 to see the injured at Osmani Medical College Hospital and attend some protest programmes of other party.

The Sylhet city AL yesterday unveiled a four-day protest programme including a mourning procession on August 11 and mass contact at upazila level on August 12 and 13.

Meanwhile, the family of slain AL leader Ibrahim said they could not receive his body and complete the funeral yesterday as Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP) said they would not hand over the body without a post-mortem, although the examination was carried out in Sylhet on Sunday.

Draft of consumer

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ministry for further scrutiny.

"We will again place the draft law before the cabinet as soon as possible after scrutiny for vetting. We will also review relevant laws in different countries," Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Moudud Ahmed told reporters after the meeting.

After the final approval of the cabinet it will be placed before parliament to make it a law.

According to the draft law, a national consumer council will be set up to formulate policies to protect consumers' rights. A consumer bureau will investigate allegations by consumers and if it finds any proof, the matter will be sent to tribunal.

The cabinet yesterday decided to increase the proposed six-member council and asked the law ministry to act in line. The council members will be mainly from the private sector.

The cabinet also discussed a draft law on electing 45 lawmakers to the reserved seats for women in parliament. But it did not approve the draft because of insufficient discussion.

The Jatiya Sangsad passed an amendment to the constitution on May 16 with a provision to introduce women's seats again.

The cabinet reviewed the current flood situation and relief activities in affected areas and directed the ministries concerned to expedite relief operation and health services.

Indigenous people

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Forum, called on the government to withdraw army camps from Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) without delay and said: "The army is trampling the rights of indigenous people in the CHT."

"The Awami League government did not implement the CHT peace accord in about four years in office after signing it. It could have implemented the agreement at the time," he said.

"Is there any part in Bangladesh where the army dominates other people? If the government doesn't respond positively, we have to realise our demands anyway," Larma said, indicating a hard line on the issue.

Larma, also president of Parbatya Chattagram Janasanghati Samity, also criticised the BNP-led coalition government for not implementing the CHT peace accord.

"The extreme nationalist government has a stubborn attitude towards the life and livelihood of ethnic groups. The indigenous people suffer because of the outlook of the government. Our achievement in a decade is nothing to mention."

Deputy Minister of CHT Affairs Mani Swapan Dewan said the state has to show respect to the cultural diversity of Bangladesh to maintain democratic norms.

Speaking at the discussion as the chief guest, Gono Forum President Dr Kamal Hossain said the indigenous people have to unite to achieve their rights, adding they also struggled for the country.

United Nations Development Programme Resident Coordinator Jorgen Lissner said education for indigenous people is central to achieving their rights and emphasised their land has to be protected by the constitution and laws.

Students

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vehicles including two buses of Ababil Bus Service.

Thousands of vehicles around Mohakhali got stuck in traffic for over a couple of hours. Gulshan police charged baton on the students to take the road under their control.

Cantonment police seized the bus on Sunday and produced its driver Shah Alam Hossain, 30, before court yesterday.

PDB picks UAE firm

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But the proposal neither spells out Nishoiwai's stake in the Meghnaghat-2 power project nor seeks to justify why Belhassa should be considered technically qualified for the scheme.

"In fact, Nishoiwai's role in the bid proposal appears to be that of a financial consultant than a partner," said a power board source.

Sources said, none of the four bidders actually qualify for the PDB's standard. But in November last, the PDB pre-qualified Belhassa and Malakoff of Malaysia, dropping Paddy Power of Ireland and Summit International of Bangladesh. Like Belhassa, Malakoff also used the power project profile of its sub-contractor.

"There is a lack of participation in new power projects because of confusing signals from the government, frequent retendering and strong lobbying for certain groups. Besides, global energy investment is also in a state of depression. As a result, genuine bidders are avoiding Bangladeshi schemes," said an industry insider.

But a PDB high official, unwilling to be named, defends the Meghnaghat-2 bidding process, saying "There is nothing wrong in Belhassa's proposal. They comply with our standard."

After the pre-qualification, Belhassa and Nishoiwai formed a joint venture in Dhaka in early December showing Nishoiwai as the lead sponsor. But again Nishoiwai made no legal commitment in this joint venture deed that was submitted to the PDB the same month. The PDB accepted this deed although it violates the bid procedure.

"The government has recently cancelled bidding for the Sirajganj 450 megawatt plant because the PDB did not maintain the government bidding standard," a PDB source pointed out.

The Meghnaghat-2 bidding also violates the government standard."

Agri ministry decides

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the doorsteps of the farmers.

Distribution of seeds of transplanted aman among 4.32 lakh farmers will start on August 15 and run through August 25. Seedlings for the crop will be distributed between August 25 and September 10.

The farmers are to start getting *maskhkolai* (pulse) seeds from September 1 to September 15, maize from September 7 to October 30, mustard seed and wheat from October 1 to October 30 and *boro* from October 1 to November 20.

A farmer will get seeds and fertilisers for only one crop, the meeting decided. It reviewed the status of listing of the farmers and the DAE officials said that listing of farmers of 16 of the 46 flood-affected districts has been complete. The rest will be done by August 15.

The block supervisors are preparing the list of farmers with the help of Union Parishad chairmen and mem-

bers, the meeting was told.

The ministry at a meeting on Sunday decided to distribute seeds and fertilisers to help the flood-affected farmers go for cultivation immediately after the recession of floodwaters.

The floods have damaged agriculture on 8.30 lakh hectares in 46 districts and 295 upazilas, affecting 46.50 lakh farmers and making the farm sector count as much as Tk 1.87 crore in losses, according to an estimate of the agriculture ministry. The government has earmarked Tk 130 crore for the programme and the Finance Division has released Tk 48 crore.

State Minister for Agriculture Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir told reports after the meeting the nine mobile teams of the agriculture ministry will closely monitor the seeds and fertiliser distribution alongside the rehabilitation committees at the districts, upazilas and unions to check pilferage, corruption and other irregularities.

Hunger-weary

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UP Chairman Golam Rasul Peter said only 25 tonnes of rice have so far been distributed in the area in the last two and a half months of flooding that submerged the area 10-foot deep for more than one month. As many as 46,000 people could not get aid from private relief operations due to communication breakdown. NGO relief and rehabilitation programmes are mostly restricted to the organisation members.

"Whenever I visit my area, people crowd around me hoping I've brought them relief. They've no strength left due to hunger. I don't know what to do," said Peter, adding, nine villages of the union were devoured by the Jamuna river and the victims have taken refuge on the embankment.

Weavers and peasants of Koizuri said they need food to survive and money to repair their handlooms. Akmal Mia, a weaver from Lohindakandi, said every person in his village is now starving. "We can't work until our handlooms are

repaired," he said standing on the Kojjuri Bridge Sunday.

All along the 40km-long Shahjadpur road through Enayetpur, hundreds of people congregated for relief at different flood centres Sunday. Lawmaker from Sirajganj-6 constituency Major (ret'd) Manzur Quader was distributing relief at a centre in Enayetpur in Chouhali upazila with a medical team.

Outside the building, a group of about 50 women, looking exhausted, complained of not receiving any relief and was begging for food. "We've come from Khamar Gram, where no-one turned up. But here they are giving rice to the well off," alleged Rahela. Seven of her family members are starving, she said.

Manzur said he supervised distribution of 10 tonnes of rice among the listed people that day. "I'm on a 10-day tour around my constituency and I want to ensure transparency in relief distribution. All the distressed will receive relief and come under rehabilitation programmes," he added.

Pabna Jubo Dal leader shot dead

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Pabna district Jubo Dal leader Ehsan Alam Siddique Liton, 32, was shot dead by unknown assailants at Pakshey Paper Mill gate Sunday evening.

Police said a gang of criminals swooped on Liton when he reached the mill gate by his

Motorbike at around 6:30pm. They hit Liton with sharp weapons, shot him in the chest and left the scene. Liton died instantly.

District union of the BNP yesterday condemned the killing and demanded immediate arrest of those involved.

Sylhet blast

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would hunt down the culprits and bring them to book," Bhuiyan told the reporters.

"We have also sought technical assistance from Britain to ensure proper enquiry into all these incidents," the local government minister added.

The two also discussed the flood situation.

Choudhury told the reporters the British authorities have already given Bangladesh relief materials worth Tk 110 crore for the flood-affected people and would give more aid for post-flood rehabilitation based on the government requirements.

DCC starts

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During the flood, the DCC deployed 450 foggermen for 90 wards but later when flood waters began to recede they lowered the number to 90.

"We didn't want the costly medicine to wash out in the rains," said Colonel Azizul Haq. "We are working according to an well-organised plan. If the DCC men failed, we will axe them," he said.

Meanwhile, residents from different areas alleged that the foggermen deployed by the DCC do not spray medicine unless they are bribed.

HC asks govt

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The Mujibnagar employees who were not absorbed filed the writs challenging the stoppage of the process. The matter rolled to the SC that ordered for absorption of 1,632 employees against vacancies.

The government had absorbed some of them but the maximum still remains jobless.

PM not seeing

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start building and repairing the damaged roads, bridges and culverts as soon as the floodwaters recede.

The prime minister also thanked all those who have come forward in aid of the flood-affected people.

On her way to Kamrangir Char, the prime minister distributed cooked food among the flood affected people at Kanakuli School, Bhagalpur Primary School and Kamrangir Char Power Station premises.

Communications Minister Nazmul Huda, Dhaka City Mayor Sadek Hossain Khoka, Prime Minister's Political Secretary Harris Chowdhury, Musaddek Ali MP, Nasir Uddin Ahmed Pintu MP and City BNP Secretary Abdus Salam were present among others.

From Kamrangir Char, the prime minister went to different flood centres in Shahjahanpur and Khilgaon areas. She visited Mirza Abbas Women's Degree College, Khilgaon Model College, Ali Ahmed School and College, Razarbagh Abhoy Binodon School, Mugda Community Centre, Maniknagar Govt. Primary School and Dhalpar and distributed relief among the flood refugees.

Housing and Public Works Minister Mirza Abbas was present during the relief operation.

Donors

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exchange rate has depreciated by 3 and 6 percent in real and nominal terms since taka was floated in May last year, the report observed.

Significant cut in restrictions on the import of textiles beyond the back-to-back LC (letter of credit) regime has been stressed to make the RMG sector resilient. Regulatory safeguards are being developed to prevent illegal transactions and limit the scope of capital outflows.

The IMF also wants the government to lift the restriction on the advance import payments by the end of the year and review restrictions on non-resident taka account by June next year.

It has asked the government to constitute a large taxpayers unit (LTU) for VAT by next month. It has to set the LTU coverage of the VAT at a minimum of 50 percent of total VAT collections by the NBR, covering at least 100 largest VAT filers.

The government also needs to enhance enforcement by setting up a commissionerate for enforcement and by imposing stricter penalties for non-compliance.

4 die in Japan

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plant in Fukui prefecture, 320 km (200 miles) west of Tokyo.

Television showed emergency workers in hard hats clustered around the exit of the facility.

An official at Kansai Electric Power Co. Inc., which runs the plant, said the 826,000 kilowatt nuclear generation unit at the facility shut down automatically when the steam leaked from the turbine, which is in a separate building. The company was unsure when it would restart.

"We are now investigating the cause," the official told a news conference. The temperature of the leaking steam was 142 Celsius (287.60F).

He said the workers involved, who were preparing to shut down the plant for maintenance, were all contractors, and 221 people were in the building at the time.

A trade ministry spokesman briefing reporters said there was no technical problem with the core nuclear reactor at the plant.

Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi said he had not heard details of the accident. "But I think we must do our best to investigate the cause, to prevent a repeat and to implement safety measures," he told reporters.

Chief cabinet secretary Hiroyuki Hosoda told a news conference: "I think the cause will become clear within several days."

The only previous fatal accident at a Japanese nuclear power plant was in 1967, in a fire at a plant in Ibaraki prefecture just north of Tokyo. There was no radiation leak.

The worst previous incident at a nuclear facility was at a uranium processing plant in Tokaimura, a town north of Tokyo.

That took place on September 30, 1999, when an uncontrolled nuclear chain reaction was triggered after three poorly trained workers used buckets to mix nuclear fuel in a tub.

The resulting release of radiation killed two workers and forced the evacuation of thousands of nearby residents.

In a separate incident involving a nuclear facility, Tokyo Electric Power Co. (TEPCO), Japan's biggest power producer, said on Monday it had shut a nuclear power generation unit at its Fukushima-Daini plant due to a water leak.

TEPCO was forced to close all its 17 nuclear power plants temporarily by April 2003 after admitting it had falsified safety documents for more than a decade, revelations that severely undermined public confidence in the nuclear industry.

A number of towns in Japan have held referendums in the past few years and voted against construction of more nuclear plants.

The Mihama plant was the first nuclear plant built by Kansai Electric. The No. 1 reactor began service in November 1970.

A Tokyo-based oil trader said it was unlikely the shutdown of the plant would have an impact on oil demand or prices because Kansai tended to use liquefied natural gas as an alternative source of fuel when its nuclear plants were offline.

"I think the impact (on the oil market) will be small," the trader said.

Iraq dy governor

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received two of the dead. It was not immediately clear whether they were police or civilians.

Meanwhile, four Iraqi security guards were killed and nine other people wounded, including three US soldiers, when insurgents attacked the district council building in Baghdad's Shia Muslim stronghold of Sadr City, prompting the Iraqi government to impose curfew there between 4:00 pm (1200 GMT) and 8:00 am (0400 GMT).

"The curfew will be on during this period till further notice," said Sabah Kadhim, an interior ministry spokesman said.

The US military said in Baghdad yesterday insurgents attacked the council building at about 1:30 pm (0930 GMT) Sunday.

"The building received rocket-propelled grenade fire and small-arms fire," its statement said. On Monday, mortars were fired at the same building, but no casualties were immediately reported.

Also a US marine has been killed in the volatile Iraqi province of Al-Anbar, the military said yesterday.

The marine, assigned to the I Marine Expeditionary Force, was killed on Sunday while conducting what the military described as "security and stability operations".

A senior US military official said yesterday US forces had killed at least 360 loyalists from Sadr's Mehdi Army militia since the uprising in Najaf erupted on Thursday, but denied coalition forces were hunting the young firebrand Muslim cleric.

Meanwhile, a video purporting to show an Iraqi police general being held by Mehdi Army against the release of captured colleagues was shown Monday on Al-Jazeera television.

In Baghdad interior ministry spokesman Sabah Khadim admitted that a policeman had been abducted from a police station in the capital's Shia stronghold of Sadr City, but said, "He is not a high ranking officer."

Sadr's spokesman in Sadr City Abdul Hadi al-Darraj said he was not aware of the kidnapping.

A video aired by Al-Jazeera showed an officer identified as Brigadier General Raad Mohamad Khudr, former head of the Rasafa police station in Baghdad, sitting in front of masked gunmen.

Ahmad Chalabi, the one-time Iraqi exile opposition leader, was in Tehran, Iran, for an economic conference and said that despite his doubts about the Iraqi criminal system, he would return.

"I'm now mobilised on all fronts to rebut all these charges," Ahmad Chalabi told CNN. "Nobody's above the law, and I submit to the law in Iraq ... despite my serious and grave reservations about this court."

Salem Chalabi, head of the tribunal trying Saddam Hussein, was charged with murder after having been named as a suspect in the June murder of Haithem Fadhil, director general of the finance ministry. He said he too did not fear conviction.

"I don't think... that I had anything to do with the charges so I'm not actually worried about it," Salem Chalabi told CNN from London. "It's a ridiculous charge, that I threatened someone ... there's no proof there."

If convicted, Salem Chalabi, 41, could face the death penalty, which was restored by Iraqi officials on Sunday, judge Zuhair al-Malkiy said. His uncle, who is in his late 50s, would face a sentence determined by trial judges.

"They should be arrested and then questioned and ... if there is enough evidence, they will be sent to trial," al-Malkiy said about the warrants against each, which he disclosed Sunday.

Ahmad Chalabi was somewhat marginalised when he was left out of the new interim government that took power June 28 but has since worked to reposition himself as a Shia populist. At the helm of the war crimes tribunal for Saddam, the Ivy League-educated Salem Chalabi remains a central figure in Iraq.

In Washington, the Bush administration had no comment about the charges against the Chalabis. "This is a matter for the Iraqi authorities to resolve and they are taking steps to do so," White House spokeswoman Suzy DeFrancis.

Ahmad Chalabi was accused of counterfeiting old Iraqi dinars, which were removed from circulation after the overthrow of Saddam's regime last year.

Iraqi police backed by US troops found counterfeit money along with old dinars during a raid on Chalabi's house in Baghdad in May, al-Malkiy said. He apparently was mixing counterfeit and real money and changing them into new dinars on the street, the judges said.

The accusation is not Ahmad Chalabi's first brush with legal problems. He is wanted in Jordan for a 1991 conviction in absentia for fraud in a banking scandal. He was sentenced to 22 years in jail, but has denied all allegations.

Born in Baghdad, the younger Chalabi studied at Yale, Columbia and Northwestern, and holds degrees in law and international affairs. He served as a legal adviser to the interim Iraqi Governing Council and was a member of the 10-member committee framing the basic transitional law for the new interim government.

Ahmad Chalabi's star has steadily declined. He was once considered Washington's most likely choice for Iraqi president after Saddam's fall, but he was never popular in Iraq and ended up without a job in the new government.

A frequent guest on news talk shows in the United States, Ahmad Chalabi had significant, and controversial, influence on America's Iraq policy before the war. His network of Iraqi exiles in the Iraqi National Congress provided the Bush administration, and some news organisations, with reports on Saddam's purported weapons of mass destruction programs. (AP/AFR/REUTERS)

UN sends draft

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international community in emergency assistance.

The need assessors have taken into account agriculture, fisheries, livestock, households, educational institutions, embankments, and bridges and culverts that have extensively been damaged in the devastating floods, the source said quoting from the draft.

The draft has been prepared and assessment made on detailed information provided by 10 ministries, including the Ministry of Food and Disaster Management.

UN resident representative Jorgen Lissner, WFP Country Representative Douglas Casson Coutts and UNDAC leader Allan Matthews had a meeting with Food and Disaster Management Minister Chowdhury Kamal Ibne Yusuf on Sunday before finalising the draft.

Meanwhile, a source at the food and disaster management ministry said that a meeting has been convened for next

Sunday by the government to discuss the situation with ambassadors, mission chiefs and donor representatives.

Food and Disaster Management Minister Chowdhury Kamal Ibne Yusuf and Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan are likely to attend the meeting with the foreign diplomats and mission chiefs.

"The UN draft has been finalised for the first phase of the relief operation. The rehabilitation programme will be undertaken in the second and the third phases, and the government will seek assistance through the Economic Relations Division," the food minister said.

Meanwhile, the Canadian International Development Agency has doubled its food assistance (wheat) to 90,000 metric tons this year in view of the exigencies of flood.

The People's Republic of China has decided to provide \$100,000 in cash and construction material (C1 sheet) worth \$1 million.