

# 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-Shaalan 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

FROM PAGE 1

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 Jessor 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's 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

## 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

FROM PAGE 1

government sent police reinforcements to the scene.

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 Manik Miah, driver of the car.

Police dismissed the claim of 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 her 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.

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

FROM PAGE 1

government steps to ensure their security.

Convict Milan and Mithu's mothers, who were present in the court, 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 Suratpur 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 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.

### Draft of consumer

FROM PAGE 1

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 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.

2x3

## Indigenous people

FROM PAGE 1

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 Parbatty Chittagong 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 Swapna 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.

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

Thousands of vehicles around Mohakali 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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

The