

China, Pakistan to step up anti-terror cooperation

AFP, Beijing

China and Pakistan have vowed to step up anti-terrorism cooperation, saying both sides had been "deeply harmed" by extremism and separatism, state media reported yesterday.

"Terrorism has posed a grave threat to regional and world peace and stability. China and Pakistan have been deeply harmed by it," President Hu Jintao told visiting Pakistani Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz, the People's Daily said.

"The Chinese government is in firm opposition to terrorism in all forms and appreciates Pakistan's preventive measures in safeguarding the security of Chinese personnel and institutions in Pakistan," added Hu.

The agreement to enhance cooperation follows the killing of a Chinese engineer in Pakistan in October. He had been taken hostage by an al-Qaeda-linked militant group.

China is Pakistan's strongest ally and Islamabad relies heavily on Beijing for its defence needs.

Pakistan also borders China's Xinjiang region which is home to a largely Muslim Uighur community which is fighting for an independent state.

China says they are terrorists, and, according to rights groups, routinely pressures its neighbours for the return of those who have fled to places such as Pakistan.

'Militants planning big attacks in Bangkok'

'Thai officials responsible for Muslims' deaths'

AFP, Bangkok

Islamic militants were planning large-scale attacks in Bangkok and southern Thai provinces in January to mark the first anniversary of a violent separatist insurgency, a security source said yesterday.

The attacks would be staged in the five southernmost provinces of Yala, Pattani, Narathiwat, Songkhla and Satun, as well as in Bangkok in order to promote the struggle to carve out an independent Muslim state from the predominantly Buddhist kingdom, he said.

"According to their plan the large-scale attacks, by means of remote control bombs in five provinces and Bangkok, would be prolonged and severe, as they have stockpiled lots of ammunition," said the security source assigned to work on violence in the south.

"The reason why they have to stage attacks in Bangkok is to prevent the central government from sending additional troops to the south," the source told AFP on condition of anonymity.

The attacks were expected after the new year to mark the first anniversary of a brazen January 4 raid by masked assailants on a military base in Narathiwat, he said.

The raid saw assailants kill four soldiers and steal hundreds of assault rifles, while militants

believed to be linked to the same movement torched about 20 state schools in the south on the same night.

The events were widely seen as rekindling a separatist insurgency that has rumbled for decades in the south, parts of which were an independent kingdom before being annexed by Thailand in 1902.

Some 560 people have died in the violence this year, mainly in hit-and-run shootings of security personnel and government officials but also targeting Buddhist monks, teachers and villagers.

Meanwhile, a human rights commission investigating the death of more than 80 Muslim protesters in Thailand has concluded that some officials should be held responsible for the tragedy, the body's chairman said yesterday.

Pichet Soontornpitak told not identify who was to blame for the October deaths, since he was to present preliminary findings by the government-appointed independent commission to Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra later Friday.

The investigation focused on the events of October 25, when security forces broke up a riot in Tak Bai in southern Narathiwat, one of three provinces bearing the brunt of an Islamist insurgency that has left more than 560 people dead this year.

Pak court orders security for Zardari

AFP, Karachi

The husband of former Pakistani prime minister Benazir Bhutto said yesterday a court had ordered the government to give him police protection following his release from eight years in jail.

Asif Ali Zardari, who was freed on bail last month in the last of 17 cases of graft, murder and drug smuggling, said he told judges in Pakistan's largest city Karachi that he had received death threats.

Zardari told AFP he was granted an interim order that he should receive a police escort and be allowed to hire his own security guards, pending a formal hearing at a later date.

Bush to sign new intelligence reform bill

AP, Washington

President Bush is signing into law the largest overhaul of US intelligence gathering in 50 years, hoping to improve the spy network that failed to prevent the Sept. 11 attacks.

The 563-page bill, which endured a tortured path to congressional passage, also aims to tighten borders and aviation security. It creates a federal counterterrorism center and a new intelligence director, but Bush was not expected to fill that post at Friday's bill signing.

UN shrugs off US demands to boost Iraq presence

AFP, Washington

The United States failed to win a promise from the United Nations to increase its staff in Iraq ahead of elections as Washington stepped up its charges that Damascus was sheltering insurgent leaders.

The violence that threatens to mar Iraq's historic January 30 elections showed no sign of abating, with an Italian hostage reported killed and more US and Iraqi troops losing their lives in attacks.

Meanwhile, ousted president Saddam Hussein met his family-appointed legal counsel for the first time since his capture, and was said after the four-hour meeting to be in good health.

In Washington, outgoing US Secretary of State Colin Powell and his designated successor Condoleezza Rice pressed for greater UN involvement in next month's elections.

However Secretary General Kofi Annan remained cautious about prospects for augmenting UN staff, saying that "from a technical point of view, we have done all that we need to do."

The world body has an international staff of about 50 in Iraq, including less than two dozen electoral experts working on next month's vote, which has been clouded by mounting concern over security.

And an Islamist group in Iraq claimed it had killed an Italian



Iraqi children wave the red communist party flag during its first electoral meeting at al-Shaab Stadium - previously known as Saddam Stadium - in Baghdad yesterday. The meeting was held to launch a campaign by the communist party for Iraq's landmark elections next month.

hostage identified as Salvatore Santoro, Al-Jazeera television reported, saying it had a videotape. In Rome, the foreign ministry said it believed the body was that of Santoro, an Italian national.

Al-Jazeera broadcast pictures of Santoro's passport and showed him

sitting bound and blindfold in a ditch with a gun to his head. In separate footage, four masked and armed men were shown reading a statement.

Quoting from the statement, Al-Jazeera said Santoro had been killed after his captors found evidence that

he supported the Americans. It did not give further details.

The bodies of two more men apparently executed by insurgents were found, in the area just south of Baghdad near the Sunni rebel stronghold of Mussayeb dubbed the triangle of death, residents said.



French President Jacques Chirac (L) chats with UN Secretary General Kofi Annan (C) and Dutch Prime Minister Jan Peter Balkenende during the family picture of a EU summit yesterday in Brussels. EU leaders scrambled for a last-ditch deal to save a crucial summit that has offered Turkey EU membership talks from next year, after Ankara dug in its heels over a demand that it first recognise the Greek Cypriot government.

War fears rise in Lanka as peace effort fails

AFP, Colombo

A top Norwegian envoy who failed in his latest effort to revive Sri Lanka's peace talks has warned both parties to honour a truce or risk a return to full-scale war, diplomats said yesterday.

Oslø's envoy, Erik Solheim, ended his mission Friday, a day after talks with President Chandrika Kumaratunga, but was unable to win agreement on ending a 20-month deadlock on restarting the talks, diplomats said.

"It is true that the peace process is at a low ebb, but we take a long-term view," Solheim told reporters late Thursday. "This has been going on for three years and there is no peace process that did not last longer."

However, he said he stressed to both the government and the

Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) that they must exercise maximum restraint and abide by the Oslo-brokered truce that has been in place since February 2002.

Solheim was due to travel to India Friday to brief New Delhi on Sri Lankan developments. Norway has kept India informed as it is considered the major regional player with an interest in the peace process.

Asian diplomatic sources close to the process said conflicts within Kumaratunga's coalition were hampering progress and had heightened fears of a return to war.

As Solheim began his latest salvage attempt earlier this week, international aid donors pressed the president to rein in her Marxist coalition partner, the JVP or People's Liberation Front which is bitterly opposed to the Tigers.

EU finally opens door for Turkey

AP, Brussels

After 40 years of trying, Turkey got its foot in the door of the European Union after EU leaders grudgingly agreed to open membership talks with the overwhelmingly Muslim nation next year.

The challenge of integrating a poor and populous country most of it in Asia and with a predominantly Muslim population will be formidable, and EU leaders warned the negotiations would not necessarily be successful.

Some said it would likely take another decade before Turkey will be fully ready for membership.

"Tonight the European Union has opened its door to Turkey," European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso said late Thursday. "This is an offer that Turkey should be glad to accept."

The 25 EU leaders are keeping Ankara at arm's length by imposing a series of stringent conditions, none tougher than the insistence on de facto recognition by the Oct.

EU to work for lifting China's arms ban

AFP, Brussels

EU leaders were set to declare their "political will" to lift an arms embargo on China but stressed Beijing must respect human rights and regional stability, a draft summit text said yesterday.

The Council of European Union leaders said they were "looking forward to further progress in all areas" of the 25-nation bloc's relationship with China, including on the economic front.

"In this context the European Council reaffirmed the political will to continue to work towards lifting the arms embargo," the draft summit conclusions obtained by AFP said.

At an EU-China summit in The Hague this month, diplomats said a campaign against the embargo was gaining momentum inside the 25-member bloc, 15 years after it was imposed in the wake of the Tiananmen Square massacre.

Countries like France and

Germany agree with China that the ban is "outdated".

But in a sign of disquiet in other EU countries, including Britain and the Nordic states, the EU leaders' summit text also suggested that any lifting of the arms ban would be purely symbolic.

The leaders "underlined that the result of any decision should not be an increase of arms exports from EU member states to China, neither in quantitative nor qualitative terms", the draft said.

The leaders "recalled the importance of the criteria" of a new EU code of conduct on arms exports, "in particular criteria regarding human rights, stability and security in the region and the national security of friendly and allied countries".

They also stressed the importance of the "early adoption" of the revised code of conduct and an accompanying "toolbox" of measures to regulate any arms exports to China.



Muslim Kashmiri separatists from the hardline faction of the All Party Hurriyat Conference (APHC) shout anti-Indian slogans during a protest in Srinagar yesterday. The demonstration was held to protest against alleged human rights violations by Indian troops in the restive Himalayan state.

Impact of Iraq war failing US National Guard in its recruitment drive

AFP, Washington

The US National Guard has fallen some 10,000 people below its authorized strength of 350,000 in part because fewer soldiers are joining the guard on leaving active duty, a military spokesman said Thursday.

"It's short by approximately 10,000. The number right now is just around 340,000," said Lieutenant Colonel Michael Milord, a spokesman for the National Guard bureau.

The National Guard also fell some 7,000 people short of its goal of recruiting 63,000 people in fiscal 2004, he said.

The declines suggest that the Iraq war is beginning to have a long-term impact on a part of the force that the army in particular has drawn on heavily for both support and combat troops.

Milord said several factors were

believed to be contributing to the drop-off.

"We have the active duty army that is growing by 30,000. So obviously we're all looking at the same pool for the same people," he said.

Another factor was the imposition of stop-loss orders, which bar servicemembers in units deploying to Iraq or in Iraq from leaving the service for three months after their return even if they are due to retire or their term of enlistment is up, Milord said.

"Part of it is soldiers who normally or typically come off active duty into the guard... are not doing that in as big a number," he said.

The National Guard is responding to the slide by increasing reenlistment bonuses to as much as \$15,000 dollars for recruits with prior military service, increasing college tuition bonuses and by fielding more recruiters, Milord said.

'CIA has run secret prison at Guantanamo'

REUTERS, Washington

The Central Intelligence Agency has run a secret prison for valuable al-Qaeda captives within the Pentagon's detention complex at the US naval base in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, The Washington Post reported yesterday.

Citing military officials and current and former intelligence officers, the newspaper said the CIA facility was built over the past year within a larger complex where the Defence Department houses high-value detainees and those awaiting military trials.

Officials said the CIA buildings were shrouded by high fences covered with thick green mesh plastic and ringed with floodlights, according to the report.

The Post said it was unclear whether the CIA facility was still in operation. But it cited sources as saying that detainees from Pakistan, West Africa, Yemen and other countries have been housed there under the strictest secrecy.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Local Government Engineering Department
Office of the Upazila Engineer
Jagannathpur, Sunamganj

Memo No-LGED/Jag./Sunam/2004/2032

Dated: 13-12-04

Rural Transport Improvement Project (RTIP)

Invitation for Bids (IFB)

Tender Notice No: 02/2004-2005

01. The People's Republic of Bangladesh has received for a credit from the International Development Association (hereinafter referred to as the IDA) towards the cost of the Rural Transport Improvement Project (RTIP) and intends to apply part of the funds to over eligible payments under the contract(s) as mentioned in para-2. Bidding is open to all bidders from eligible source countries as defined in the Guidelines Procurement under IBRD loans and IDA Credits.

02. The Local Government Engineering Department (LGED), Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, represented by the Upazila Engineer, LGED, Upazila-Jagannathpur, District-Sunamganj, invites sealed bids from eligible bidders for the following works.

Name of the work	Contract		Bid security in Taka	Time of completion	Price of bidding document (Tk)
	Package No	Slice No			
1	2	3	4	5	6
01. Const of 2x4.5x5.0m box culvert on Teghoria-Sananpur-Goalabazar Road under Syedpur UP at ch. 700.00m	SUN/SUR-172	SUR-172.1	22,672.00	60 days	500.00
02. Const of 2x4.5x4.5m box culvert on Teghoria-Sananpur-Goalabazar Road under Syedpur UP at ch. 910.00m	-	SUR-172.2	21,178.00	60 days	500.00
03. Const of 2x4.5x4.5m box culvert on Teghoria-Sananpur-Goalabazar Road under Syedpur UP at ch. 1120.00m	SUN/SUR-30	-	21,178.00	60 days	500.00

03. The bidders may inspect the bidding documents, obtain further information and clarification at the office of the Upazila Engineer, LGED, Upazila-Jagannathpur, District-Sunamganj, Tel-08727-56088 or the office of the Project Director, RDP-26, LGED Bhaban (Level-5), Agargaon, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207, Tel-9122435, 8152579. For award of contract, the bidder must be qualified in post qualification as specified in the bidding documents.
04. A pre-bid conference will be held on 01-01-2005 at 10.00 AM in the office of the undersigned and all bidders are requested to attend the conference on time.
05. A complete set of bidding documents may be purchased by any eligible bidder from the office of the Executive Engineer, District Sunamganj or Upazila Nirbahi Officer, Jagannathpur, Sunamganj or Officer-in-Charge (OC), Upazila-Jagannathpur, Sunamganj or undersigned upon payment of a non-refundable fee as mentioned in para-2 for each set in the form of Pay Order/Bank Draft from any scheduled bank in Bangladesh drawn in favour of the Upazila Engineer, LGED, Jagannathpur, Sunamganj. Additional sets of bidding documents may be purchased at the same price. The bidding documents will be available during office hours from 02-01-2005 to 12-01-2005.
06. All bids must be accompanied by a bid security of amount as mentioned in table, para-2, in the form of Bank Draft/Pay Order/Demand Draft/Unconditional Bank Guarantee drawn in favour of the Upazila Engineer, LGED, Jagannathpur, Sunamganj.
07. All bids must be delivered to the office of the Executive Engineer, LGED, Dist-Sunamganj (only for Sadar and any upazilas where bid documents could be sent from XEN office within one hour of bid receiving), or Upazila Nirbahi Officer, Jagannathpur, Sunamganj or Officer-in-Charge (OC), Jagannathpur, Sunamganj or the undersigned on or before 1.00 PM of 13-01-2005.
08. Bids will be opened at 2.00 PM on 13-01-2005 at the office of the undersigned in presence of the bidders or their authorised representatives who choose to attend.
09. Bidders may deliver/submit bids personally or by registered mail or by courier services, etc and bids must reach to the office(s) mentioned at para-7 on or before 1.00 PM of 13-01-2005.
10. A General Information regarding the bidding will be available at the LGED Web site (<http://www.lged.org>).
11. The authority reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids without assigning any reason.
12. Tender shall be valid for a period of 119 days after bid opening and must be accompanied by the tender security specified in section-2.
13. The bidder must submit the following papers with bid documents
- (a) Trade Licence (b) Vat registration (c) TIN number (d) Nationality certificate (e) Business address (f) Declaration about legal capacity to enter into the contract (g) Bank statement with a minimum cash flow of 2,75,000.00 taka only.
14. The successful bidder must deposit 10% performance security of the contract amount as PO/BD in favour of competent authority before the work order issue.

Upazila Engineer,
Jagannathpur, Sunamganj

GD-796