



Editor of India's "Tehelka" (sensation) newspaper, Tarun Tejpal shows the copy of newspaper after a press conference in New Delhi on Tuesday. Tehelka reported that Zaheera Sheikh, who claims to have witnessed the brutal massacre of 14 Muslims, including her father, during the 2002 Gujarat riots, was bribed and threatened to frequently retract her statements.

Pak passenger planes avert midair collision

AFP, Karachi

An investigation was under way Thursday after two Pakistani planes together carrying hundreds of passengers including a government minister narrowly avoided a midair collision, officials said.

A Pakistani International Airlines (PIA) jet en route to the southern city of Karachi from Islamabad had a near miss at 11,200 metres (37,000 feet) late Wednesday with an AirBlue plane heading the opposite way towards Lahore.

"It was just a matter of seconds

between life and death," Information Minister Sheikh Rasheed, who was on board the PIA Airbus, told AFP after landing.

Passengers were having dinner when the plane started jerking up and down, throwing trays and plates up to the ceiling and causing general panic and trauma, he said.

"I heard an old woman tell her grandson that she was praying for his life. Passengers were scared," he said, adding that a doctor who was on board gave medical attention to a few passengers and a stewardess.

"When I inquired from the pilot

he informed me that a major disaster was averted," Rasheed said.

The 179 passengers on the PIA flight also included former senate chairman Waseem Sajjad, supreme court judge Deedar Hussain Shah and a senior legislator from the Muttahida Qaumi Movement political party, Khanwar Khalid Yunus.

Warning signals were given to both pilots after they found themselves in the same air corridor over Rahim Yar Khan district in central Punjab province, said Samina Paracha, a spokeswoman for the state-run airline.

Request for Expressions of Interest (invitation for application)

BANGLADESH BANK
CENTRAL BANK STRENGTHENING PROJECT (Cr.3792-BD)
RESEARCH ECONOMIST (NATIONAL)

The Government of People's Republic of Bangladesh has received a credit from the International Development Association (IDA), and intends to apply part of the proceeds of this credit to payments under the contract for hiring a number of Research Economists in Bangladesh Bank under the Central Bank Strengthening Project.

The Research Economists would be positioned at the Research Department of Bangladesh Bank to strengthen its capability for applied research and policy analysis. The core areas of research in the Bank are macroeconomics, including monetary, fiscal and exchange rate policies, international trade and finance, and economic modeling and forecasting. These positions thus provide a unique and challenging opportunity for competent research economists to contribute to policy analysis and policy-making in the central bank of the country. The tasks would include developing research projects and working in a team of research economists with varied academic background and capabilities. The selected economists will work with Bangladesh Bank for a fixed term assignment covering approximately 3 (three) years. Candidates for the position should have the following qualifications and experience:

- At least a Masters degree in Economics/Finance/Econometrics, from a well-recognized University. Strong quantitative skills and some experience in empirical macroeconomic policy analysis are required.
- Minimum 3 years work experience at financial institutions, research organizations and/or Universities. Familiarity with financial markets would be considered an added qualification.
- Some research publications in refereed journals, preferably on macroeconomic and monetary policy issues in developing countries, including Bangladesh.
- Excellent oral and written communication skills, including in particular report writing skills in English.
- Demonstrated ability to work effectively in teams and strong interpersonal skills.
- Demonstrated ability to work hard and under pressure and deliver quality output in a timely manner.

The Bangladesh Bank now invites eligible candidates (who should be Bangladesh nationals) to indicate their interest in providing the services. Interested candidates must provide information indicating that they are qualified to perform the services (CV/Resume shall include - academic qualifications, work experiences, research publications, two sample copies of recent research papers and the names, addresses and contact details of three professional referees, etc.).

Bangladesh Bank officials having requisite qualifications and experience are also eligible to apply for the position.

Selected candidates will be paid a negotiated consolidated salary depending on qualification and experience, not exceeding Tk. 45,000 per month. Selection for the position will be made in accordance with the procedures set out in the World Bank's Guidelines: Selection and Employment of Consultants by World Bank borrowers, January 1997 (revised September 1997), January 1999, and May 2002.

Interested candidates may obtain detailed TOR and further information at the address below on working days within working hours, or from Bangladesh Bank website at www.bangladesh-bank.org.

Expression of interest must be delivered to the address below by February 15, 2005.

DPRP: 4/2004-2403
Date : 20-12-2004

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Executive Director
Bangladesh Bank, Head Office
Motijheel, Dhaka
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GD-808

Gujarat riot witness denies taking bribe

AFP, Mumbai

A key witness in the trial of 21 Hindus accused of massacring 14 Muslims during sectarian riots in Gujarat state in 2002 denied Wednesday media reports she took a bribe to change her testimony.

Zaheera Sheikh, 23, was originally a star witness for the prosecution in the case against a mob of Hindus alleged to have methodically burned the Muslims at her family's Best Bakery in Baroda.

But after identifying 21 people allegedly involved in the massacre she changed her key testimony during the first trial last year, which later collapsed.

That led to an order by the Supreme Court to move the case from the western state of Gujarat to neighboring Maharashtra for a retrial because of concerns of witness intimidation.

Sheikh appeared before the court in Bombay, capital of Maharashtra, Wednesday as a hostile witness and said she was hiding on the top of her house when the neighboring bakery was attacked and could not identify any of the accused.

At the same time, the Tehelka newspaper on Wednesday released a print story and video tape of secretly recorded conversations with some politicians, including Madhu Srivastava, a Hindu nationalist legislator in Gujarat, who said Zaheera had pestered him for money to change her testimony and that he eventually paid her.

Srivastava denied the accusation in a statement to Aaj Tak television and confronted with the bribery charges in court Wednesday by the prosecutor, Zaheera was evasive.

Maoists torch trucks, block highways

AFP, Kathmandu

Maoist rebels burned 18 trucks and blocked traffic along two highways in and out of the Nepalese capital Thursday to protest the disappearance of activists in army detention, rebels and transport owners said.

The rebels said the blockade of Kathmandu's main north and west arteries would continue indefinitely for all vehicles, including those carrying tourists northeast to the Tibetan border and west to the Pokhara valley.

A third highway, the Mahendra which heads east from the capital and links the country to India, is partially blocked at locations in the southeast of the country, transport owners said, adding that most traffic

to and from Kathmandu had been brought to a halt.

The move by the rebels -- who are fighting to abolish the monarchy and create a communist republic -- comes as King Gyanendra was scheduled to visit India starting Thursday for 11 days.

But it has been postponed after the sudden death of former Indian prime minister Narasimha Rao yesterday, officials said.

A Maoist spokesman said road-blocks were already disrupting the movement of hundreds of vehicles on the Arniko highway to the northern Tibetan frontier and the Prithvi highway to picturesque Pokhara, 225 kilometres (140 miles) west of the capital.

Bus and truck owners have halted operations in the absence of security, the head of the Kathmandu Transport Entrepreneurs Coordination Council, Punya Lal Pradhan, said.

rebels," Home Ministry spokesman Gopendra Bahadur Pandey said.

The road closures had affected the movement of most vehicles coming and leaving Kathmandu, National Transport Federation official Sitaram Paudel said.

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Ulfa wants political settlement

AFP, Guwahati

An armed separatist group in India's northeastern state of Assam yesterday urged New Delhi to find a political solution to the decades-old insurgency.

"We want New Delhi to bring about a political solution to the conflict in Assam rather than trying to resolve the issue militarily," said Arabintha Rajkhowa, head of the outlawed United Liberation Front of Assam (Ulfa).

Ulfa, which has been fighting for an independent Assamese homeland since 1979, earlier this month rejected an offer by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to hold peace talks if the group renounces violence.

"We know war is not a solution to our various grievances. But we were forced to wage an armed struggle after all doors for a negotiated settlement were closed," the separatist leader claimed in a statement.

Pakistan hangs 3 rapists

AFP, Multan

Three Pakistanis convicted of gang-rape of a housewife at gunpoint were hanged yesterday, officials said.

The men were executed at the central jail in Bahawalpur, a rural town in central Punjab province, a superintendent at the prison told AFP by telephone.

They had broken into the victim's home in 1998, held her hostage with her husband and eight-year-old son then tied her up and assaulted her, he said.

Gang-rape is punishable by death under special laws introduced by Pakistan in 1993.

LTTE rebels reject offer to revive peace talks

AFP, Colombo

Tiger rebels have rejected Sri Lanka's new proposal to revive peace negotiations despite international pressure to save the Norwegian-backed initiative, Tamil sources said Thursday.

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) told Tamil journalists late Wednesday that they did not accept the latest offer made through peace broker Norway, the sources said.

"The Tigers do not see any real substance in the proposals and consider it an attempt to deflect

international public opinion that is building against the government," a source close to the Tigers said.

He said the government was willing to consider "interim arrangements" to administer the island's troubled northeast region, but there was no specific mention of the LTTE's proposal for self-rule.

"It is not clear whether this is a climb down by the president or an attempt to introduce it when talks resume," the Tamil source said.

LTTE supremo Velupillai Prabhakaran last month warned the "freedom struggle" would be resumed unless Colombo agreed to discuss his self-rule plan for an "Interim Self-Governing Authority."

Tamil sources said there was no

The PM who led India to economic reform

AFP, New Delhi

and the government after Rajiv's widow Sonia turned down an offer to step into her late husband's shoes.

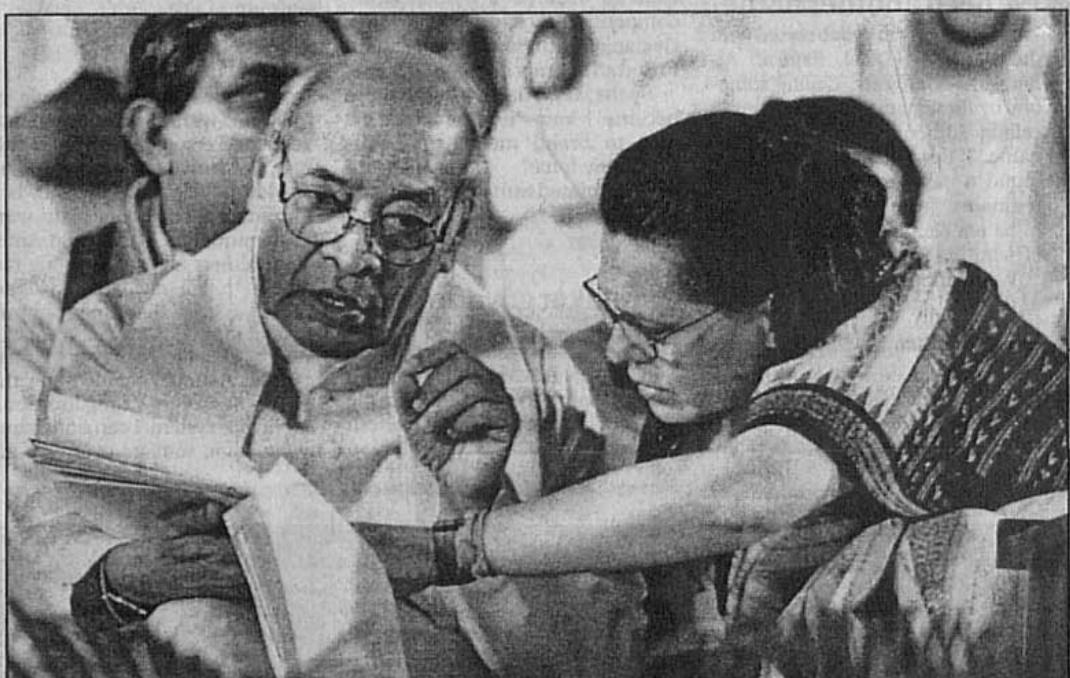
There was plenty of goodwill but few expectations of dynamic leadership from a man with a reputation as a well-meaning but ineffectual figure, more at home spouting philosophy than taking hard decisions.

Rao became prime minister in 1991 with India on the edge of bankruptcy and the Congress, the country's oldest political party, in crisis following the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi in May that year.

When he stepped down as leader of the world's largest democracy the economy was back on the growth track, but the Congress was in turmoil following its poorest performance at the ballot box since independence from Britain in 1947.

The 83-year-old Brahmin from southern India was in the twilight of a political career spent in the shadow of the Nehru-Gandhi dynasty when he was called upon to take the helm of the Congress.

Rao assumed the reins of the party



In this picture taken on 17 March 2001, India's Congress Party President Sonia Gandhi speaks with former Indian Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao, who died yesterday, two weeks after suffering a heart attack.

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

BETS, a leading Multidisciplinary Consulting Firm working in diversified development sectors at home and abroad is looking for immediate appointment for the following positions:

1. Socio-Economist

- Master Degree in Social Science (Economics/ Agro-Economics).
- Minimum 5 years experience in social survey and studies, economic and statistical analysis etc. with excellent capability of writing reports in English.

2. Senior Financial Analyst

- Master of Commerce in Accounting/ BBA/MBA (Major in Finance or Accounting). Candidates with CA/CMA course completed or partly qualified will get preference.
- At least 5 years experience in relevant field; Skilled in financial statement analysis; Proven skills in monitoring and reporting on project finances.

3. Junior Financial Analyst

- Bachelor Degree in Accounting/BBA/MBA (Major in Finance).
- At least 2 years experience in the relevant field; Skilled in preparing financial statement and analysis.

4. Research Officer (PR)

- The ideal candidate will have a degree in Journalism and Mass Communications with a strong interest in exciting new projects. Fresh graduates from the above mentioned field may also apply.
- 2 years experience in conducting qualitative and quantitative research in the field of market research, public's opinion, new products development and service delivery is preferable.

Common Requirements for all Positions: Strong Analytical Skills; Strong interpersonal and communications skills; should be able to work independently; Energetic, enthusiastic and strong work ethics; Excellent writing skills in English; Computer literacy is a must.

The successful candidates will be provided with a competitive remuneration commensurate according to their experience and qualification.

To apply, please send your detailed CV with a forwarding letter and a passport size photograph. The position applied for must be clearly mentioned on top of the envelope. The application should be reached on or before 5th January '2005 to:

General Manager (A&GS)
Bangladesh Engineering & Technological Services Ltd
House # 10, Road #135, Gulshan-1, Dhaka-1212.

Any direct contact for the job shall be treated as disqualification.

ওয়াসা

অবৈধ মধ্যোগ ও গভীর নলকূপ বৈধ করার বিশেষ মুদ্যোগ গ্রহণ করলেন

- সম্মানিত গ্রাহক সাধারণের অনুরোধে অবৈধ পানির সংযোগ অথবা অবৈধভাবে স্থাপিত গভীর নলকূপ বৈধ করার বিশেষ সুযোগ আগমণী ৭ জানুয়ারী ২০০৫ পর্যন্ত বৃক্ষ করা হয়েছে।
- ঢাকা মহানগরীতে আবাসিক, শিল্প ও বাণিজ্যিক হোল্ডিংয়ে অবৈধ সংযোগের মাধ্যমে পানি ব্যবহার ও পয়ঃ নিকাশন সুবিধা ভোগ এবং ঢাকা ওয়াসা আইন, ১৯৯৬ এর পরিপন্থী ও শাস্তিযোগ্য অপরিবাধ। সম্মানিত গ্রাহকদের মধ্যে যারা অবৈধ পানির সংযোগ গ্রহণ করেছেন বা অবৈধভাবে গভীর নলকূপ স্থাপন করেছেন, তাদেরকে আগমণী ৭ জানুয়ারী ২০০৫ তারিখের মধ্যে জোনাল রাজ্য কর্মকর্তা/প্রকল্প ব্যবস্থাপক এর কার্যালয়ে নির্ধারিত ফরমে আবেদন করে অবৈধ পানি ও পয়ঃ সংযোগ এবং অবৈধভাবে স্থাপিত গভীর নলকূপ নিয়মিত করার জন্য অনুরোধ জানান যাচ্ছে।
- আবেদনপত্র ১০০/- (একশত) টাকার বিনিময়ে জনতা ব্যাংকের ফিকেরিপুল শাখা, পোস্টা শাখা, মোহাম্মদপুর শাখা, মিরপুর সেকশন-১ শাখা ও মহাখালী কর্পোর