

Maldives fears
disease from
washed up
corpses

AFP, Male

The Maldives fears the bodies of Asia's tsunami victims will wash up on its pristine beaches and increase the risk of disease, a minister said Thursday.

"There had been two or three bodies washed ashore, but we can't be sure if they are of our own people or not," the tiny Indian Ocean holiday spot's defence minister Ismail Shafeeu told AFP here.

"The currents move in such a way that people washed into the sea in other countries could end up here."

"These bodies also bring the risk of disease."

He said those bodies, possibly from the December 26 tsunami that struck across 11 nations in and around the Indian Ocean region, were too badly decomposed for identification.

Manmohan to
head national
AIDS panel

PTI, New Delhi

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh will head the National Council on AIDS, the highest policy making body in the effort to control the spread of HIV in India.

Manmohan Singh has agreed to take on the job at the behest of the health ministry, an official statement said Wednesday.

According to the health ministry, the move would bring about necessary inter-sectoral coordination in the campaign against AIDS and make it more effective.

Will tsunami bring
peace in Lanka?

AFP, Kilinochchi

The Indian Ocean tsunami which battered Sri Lanka has opened up a window of opportunity for a renewal of dialogue between the government and Tamil Tiger rebels but has also exposed the tensions that exist between the two sides.

The behemoth that crashed into the ethnically-torn island on December 26 swept away Sinhalese and Tamils alike and treated government troops and Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) rebels with equal ferocity.

Before the tsunami, tension was mounting between the two camps, which had been at war from 1972 until they signed a truce in February 2002.

But peace talks, always delicate, were suspended in April 2003 though since then both sides have

continued to hold the truce.

The tsunami, when it wreaked devastation along the island's coastlines and killed thousands, forced both sides to reassess.

In the aftermath of the tumult, there has been some cooperation, at local level at least. In the Tamil zones controlled by the army, soldiers and LTTE cadres looked after survivors and searched at the same time for bodies of victims from both communities.

"Sometimes we work together to recover the bodies, sometimes the LTTE finds Sinhalese bodies which they hand over to the soldiers. There are some exchanges," said Thaya Masta, communications chief of the LTTE's political office in the northern town of Kilinochchi.

In all the Tamil districts, under the control of rebels or the army, the LTTE has established special task forces to coordinate aid to those

displaced by the tsunami in which local government agents are working alongside Tamil Tiger rebels and members of non-governmental organisations.

Last week, Sri Lankan President Chandrika Kumaratunga proposed establishing mechanisms including members of all parties to manage relief and long-term reconstruction.

Kumaratunga appealed for unity to rebuild the ethnically-divided nation, calling on all to "stand together as one country and one people, irrespective of all differences, transcending the boundaries that divide us."

LTTE political chief S.P. Thamilselvan responded: "If the intentions are translated into action definitely there could be a positive step towards building confidence and will definitely have a positive impact on the peace process as a whole," he said.

India satisfied
with relief
measures

AFP, New Delhi

India says its go-it-alone relief policy is working amid an all-out push to help nearly 400,000 survivors of the tsunami disaster which left a trail of damage assessed at over 1.18 billion dollars.

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh called a morning meeting of a newly-formed group of ministers to take stock of the situation, which officials say is under control.

The massive aid operation, including all wings of the armed forces, is shifting from the immediate first response phase to rehabilitation and reconstruction, officials say.

Singh was expected to visit the devastated Andaman and Nicobar islands where some 6,000 people remain missing, most presumed dead.

"India's response to the disaster was extremely prompt," Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran said late Wednesday. "We're confident we have the capabilities and resources to overcome it."



PHOTO: AFP

Indian tsunami survivor Mari breaks down in tears after discovering a picture of Mari and Abdul's dead three-year old daughter, Maheswari, at a centre for missing persons where pictures of unidentified persons who died in last week's tsunami are put on display for identification in Valankani, yesterday.

Divisions weaken opponents
of Musharraf in Pakistan

REUTERS, Islamabad

President Pervez Musharraf's decision to go back on a pledge to give up the post of army chief has incensed opponents in Pakistan, but they remain too divided to mount a strong campaign against him, analysts say.

Musharraf, who had promised to quit the army by the end of last year, has exploited this division between liberal opponents and hardline Islamists, recognising that while they share opposition to his rule, they seem able to agree on little else.

Both groups plan protest campaigns in coming weeks, but have been unable to agree a common front and so pose little immediate threat to the general who took power in a bloodless coup in October 1999, analysts say.

Farhatullah Babar, spokesman for the Pakistan Peoples Party of opposition leader-in-exile Benazir Bhutto, said he saw little chance of a joint campaign by liberals like the PPP and the six-party Muttahida

Majlis-e-Amal Islamic alliance.

At the weekend, the Islamists unveiled a plan of action that includes a campaign against Musharraf's moves to relax hardline Islamic laws.

However, the PPP and other liberal opponents of Musharraf also oppose punishments such as flogging and stoning for breaches of Islamic law, making a united front impossible.

"These are not our issues. We asked them to keep to a one-point agenda - his uniform," Babar said.

The PPP also wants the Islamists to disown the constitutional amendment they agreed with Musharraf in late 2003 that gave him sweeping powers to dismiss parliament and the government in return for his pledge to give up his army post.

"This is the root cause of the problem, but they are not willing to do so," Babar said.

Khalid Rehman of the private Islamabad-based Institute of Policy Studies, said Musharraf had shrewdly exploited opposition

divisions by offering concessions to the liberals.

In November, Bhutto's husband, Asif Ali Zardari, was released on bail after spending eight years in jail on charges ranging from murder to corruption.

Last week, the government issued Zardari a passport to allow a reunion with Bhutto for the first time in five years and made a similar gesture to a nephew of Nawaz Sharif, another former prime minister in exile.

Analysts said that while the opposition might not be overly optimistic about reconciliation with Musharraf, such moves had muted their criticisms of him in recent weeks.

In addition, both liberals and Islamists remained wary of outright confrontation, fearing that if pushed too far, Musharraf might use his powers to dissolve parliament.

For the Islamists, this would mean losing control of the assembly in North West Frontier Province and shared control in neighbouring Baluchistan won in elections in 2002.

Thousands homeless
as slums razed
in Bombay

REUTERS, Bombay

Recent slum demolitions in Bombay have left tens of thousands of people without a home as the government tries to free up valuable space for development in India's crowded financial capital.

Local officials said that more than 45,000 shanties had been demolished in just over three weeks as police and state workers used earthmovers and bulldozers to clear 200 acres of illegally occupied government land.

The demolition comes as the state is rolling out an ambitious 260-billion-rupee infrastructure plan to "turn Mumbai into Shanghai", with better roads and public transport and more green spaces.

Among the more than 200,000 people displaced, many are angry with the government for reneging on an election promise and excluding them from its grand plan for the city.

"This is an inhuman way to deal with the poorest of the poor," said Jockin Arputham, president of the National Slum Dwellers' Federation. "The government had falsely assured them and has not provided an alternative. Where will these people go?"

Distraught families have put up tents near where their flimsy tin and tarpaulin dwellings have been

smashed, while others have started building again on the same spot with material salvaged from the wreckage. Others have simply moved to another slum.

More than half the city's 17 million people live in slums or on pavements below gleaming high-rises. Apartments are largely unaffordable for the many poor rural migrants seeking work in the wealthy commercial centre of Mumbai, as Bombay is now known.

The Maharashtra state government said last month all slums built since 1995 would have to go.

The previous government, led by the Shiv Sena party, had legalised slums up to 1995, and Congress party candidates had, prior to winning the May election, promised to do the same for slums built up to 2000 in aid to secure votes.

Of the estimated half a million shanties in the city, nearly 80 per cent are on municipal and government-owned land and pose a challenge to development plans.

"They have to leave Bombay as they are staying on government land illegally," said Prakash Patil, the assistant municipal commissioner, admitting that demolition is expensive and not always effective, as shanties often reappear just as fast.

Buddhists to
sell temple for
tsunami relief

IANS, Vancouver

A Buddhist congregation in Canada's British Columbia province will sell its temple to raise \$1 million for tsunami relief efforts, reports UPI.

Thich Nguyen Thao, the abbot of the Vietnamese group, said the temple has been on the market for the past year and the highest bid for the building on two acres was \$500,000.

Thich said there had been dissent among the 40-member congregation about donating the temple, but all have now come around to the idea.

Indian FM to
visit Pakistan

AFP, Islamabad

Indian External Affairs Minister K. Natwar Singh will visit Pakistan next month at the invitation of his Pakistani counterpart Khurshid Mehmood Kasuri, Online news agency reports.

Foreign office spokesman Masood Khan said on Wednesday that the dates for Singh's visit were being worked out through diplomatic channels.

During his visit to Pakistan, Singh would meet President Pervez Musharraf and Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz and hold talks with Kasuri.



PHOTO: AFP

Indian fishermen form a queue as they cross the Wagah Border Post between Pakistan and India following their release from Pakistani jails yesterday. A total of 266 Indian fishermen, who were arrested last year for illegally fishing in Pakistani waters, were returned to their homeland.

Supreme Court
demands specific
proof against seer

PTI, New Delhi

The Supreme Court in India, which began hearing on the Sankaracharya's bail plea in the Sankararaman murder case, yesterday asked the Tamil Nadu police to "pinpoint" the evidence linking the seer to the offence.

Repeated queries by a Bench headed by Chief Justice R.C. Lahoti evoked little response from the counsel for the Tamil Nadu Government which is opposing the bail.

"We only want to know whether you have a case against the Sankaracharya and if so, what are the pieces of evidence against him, apart from the motive arising from the letters written by the deceased levelling wild allegations against the pontiff," the Bench asked.

Appearing for the Tamil Nadu Government, K.T.S. Tulsi, who handed over the case diary and other evidence in a sealed cover, said the prosecution has "direct evidence" linking the seer to the conspiracy.

Appearing for Sankaracharya, senior advocate Pail Nariman said that even on basic facts like payment of money to the assailants, the Tamil

Nadu police has been changing its stand. He said first, the police claimed that Rs 50 lakh was withdrawn from the Mutt's ICICI bank branch for the purpose of giving payments to the assailants.

Nariman said when the Mutt pointed out that no such money was ever withdrawn from the ICICI Bank, the police changed its stand and claimed the money was received from a land sale agreement and was kept in the seer's room till its dispersal after the murder in September.

He pointed out that one of the Managers of the Kanchi Mutt, who is under arrest at present, has told the trial court that the money received from sale of land was deposited in Indian Overseas Bank in May last year, much before the murder.

Faced with this kind of contradiction, Tulsi made a statement that accounts of the Mutt appear to have been tampered with and the police is yet to find the truth in it.

The Court asked the counsel to show specific evidence against Sankaracharya. "What are the specific pieces of evidence against the Sankaracharya. Let us pinpoint the evidence. What is the grave motive for commission of crime?"



WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION
VACANCY NOTICE: BANTUB/GFATM-CE & STC/2004/29
DATE OF ISSUE : 06 January 2005

TITLE: Consultant Epidemiology and Surveillance Tuberculosis Control (Re-Advertisement)
GRADE: Special Services Agreement (SSA) for 12 months
OFFICIAL STATION (COUNTRY): National Tuberculosis Control Program, DGHS Dhaka
ORGANIZATIONAL LOCATION/UNIT: WRO, Bangladesh

Objective of the Programme: To devise methods, guidelines and tools to strengthen TB control management to increase the detection of TB cases, maintain high TB cure rates and improve the quality of the control services in order to reach the targets of the control programme.

DUTIES: Under the supervision of WR, and the direct supervision of WHO Medical Officer (TB), the incumbent will assist the national authorities in achieving the following objectives and carry out the following work related to each of these:

- 1) Monitor the results of TB case detection and treatment
- 2) Identify districts/upazila/urban areas that need strengthening
- 3) Plan and implement strategies and activities to strengthen case detection and / or case holding in collaboration with NTP partners
- 4) Develop and implement monitoring guidelines for quarterly district review meetings, monitor the reports of these meetings and make recommendations, if required
- 5) Prepare quarterly and annual statistical reports
- 6) Prepare data required for workshops, meetings, conferences
- 7) Identify requirements for training
- 8) Assist with preparation of Plans of Action, annual reports and monitoring and evaluation reports
- 9) Develop guidelines for TB Drug Resistance Surveillance (DRS); plan, implant and monitor DRS
- 10) Any other duties assigned by WR

QUALIFICATIONS REQUIRED:

Education and Skills: Medical degree with post graduate degree in Public Health, epidemiology or chest diseases

Experience: At least 10 years of working experience in communicable disease control.

Knowledge, abilities & skills, including personal qualities & human relationships: High level analytical and organizational skills applied to planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of health care, particularly TB services. Skills in communication and facilitating coordination among decision makers and NTP partners. Languages required and the level & nature of their use: High level of proficiency in English and Bengali. Skills in report writing. Proficient at using a computer to produce reports, prepare correspondence, compose e-mails and prepare multi-media presentations. Knowledge of Acrobat Reader, Microsoft Word, Excel and Power Point.

Current annual salary: Up to Tk 480,000/- per annum plus applicable allowances.

APPLICATIONS SHOULD BE TRANSMITTED IN TWO COPIES QUOTING VACANCY NOTICE NUMBER.
CLOSING DATE FOR APPLICATIONS: 16 January 2005.

NOTE:

Applicants should submit a brief resume of their relevant experience and other qualifications together with completed personal history form and give reasons for being suitable for the post. A Personal History Form and detailed vacancy notice can be downloaded from www.who.int or can be obtained from WHO. Applicants are advised to send their applications by registered mail to: The WHO Representative, House No.12, Road No.7, Dhanmondi R.A., Dhaka 1205. A written test and a computer software skill test using MS Office will be held only for the short listed candidates. We regret that due to large volume of applications normally received, applications cannot be acknowledged individually.

Please note that applicants need not to apply those who have applied before.

SMOKING IS BANNED ON WHO PREMISES

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Local Government Engineering Department
Office of the Executive Engineer
District: Comilla

Memo No. LGED/XEN/COM/T-02/2004/5694 Dated: 30-12-2004

Rural Transport Improvement Project (RTIP)
Invitation for Bids (IFB)
IFB No-28/FY 2004-2005

1. The People's Republic of Bangladesh has received 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 cover 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.
2. The Local Government Engineering Department (LGED), Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, represented by the Executive Engineer, LGED, District: Comilla invites sealed bids from eligible bidders for the construction and completion of the following works.

Name of the works	Contract Package No.	Bid Security in Taka	Time for Completion (days)	Price of Bidding Document (Tk.)
Improvement of Nangalkot Bazar under Nangalkot Upazila	Com/GCM-20	55,000.00	365	1,000.00
Improvement of Gouripur Hat under Daudkandi Upazila	Com/GCM-24	91,000.00	365	1,000.00
Improvement of Daudkandi Ghat under Daudkandi Upazila	Com/JR-10	80,000.00	550	1,000.00
Improvement of Homna Hat under Homna Upazila	Com/GCM-18	59,000.00	365	1,000.00

3. The bidders may inspect the bidding documents, obtain further information and clarification at the office of the Executive Engineer, LGED, District: Comilla, Tel: 081-68960 or the office of the Project Director, RDP-26, LGED Bhawan (Level-5), Agargaon, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207, Tel: 9122435, 8152579. For award of contract, the bidder must be eligible in post qualification as specified in the bidding documents.
4. A pre-bid conference will be held on 03-02-05 at 12.00 Noon in the office of the undersigned and all bidders are requested to attend the conference on time.
5. A complete set of bidding documents may be purchased by any eligible bidder from the office of the Project Director [Address: LGED Bhawan (Level-5), Agargaon, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207] or Deputy Commissioner, District: Comilla or the Superintendent of Police, District: Comilla or the Upazila Engineer, Upazila: Comilla Sadar, District: Comilla or office of the undersigned on submission of a written application upon the 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 Executive Engineer, LGED, District: Comilla. Additional sets of bidding documents may be purchased at the same price. The bidding documents will be available during office hours from 10-01-05 to 14-02-05. The bidder may wish to compete for one or more slices and/or package as a whole.
6. 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/Bank Guarantee drawn in favour of the Executive Engineer, LGED, District: Comilla.
7. All bids must be delivered to the office of the Deputy Commissioner, District: Comilla or the Superintendent of Police, District: Comilla or the Upazila Engineer, Upazila: Comilla Sadar, District: Comilla or office of the undersigned on or before 1.00 PM of 15-02-05.
8. Bids will be opened at 2.00 PM on 15-02-05 at the office of the undersigned in presence of the bidders or their authorised representatives who choose to attend.
9. 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 15-02-05.
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.

DFP-74-4/01/05
G-32

Executive Engineer
LGED, Comilla