

Untouchables forced out of Indian camps by higher caste

AFP, Keshvanpalayam

India's untouchables, reeling from the tsunami disaster, are being forced out of relief camps by higher caste survivors and being denied aid supplies, activists charged yesterday.

Kuppuswamy Ramachandran, 32, a Dalit or untouchable in India's rigid caste hierarchy, said he and his family were told to leave a relief camp in worst-hit Nagapattinam district where 50 more families were housed.

"The higher caste fishing community did not allow us to sleep in a marriage hall where they are put up because we belong to the lowest caste," Ramachandran said.

"After three days we were moved out to a school but now the school is

going to reopen within three days and the teachers drove us out," he said.

"Where will I take my family and children? The school had no lights, toilets or drinking water," available for the displaced.

More than 6,000 people died when tsunamis struck this southern Indian coastal district on December 26 and activists said that included 81 Dalits, who were daily wage earners working in agricultural lands.

The ferocious wall of sea water destroyed swathes of farm land and the Dalits no longer have any employment.

At Keshvanpalayam, the Dalits had only flattened homes to show while survivors elsewhere enjoyed relief supplies such as food, medicines, sleeping mats and kerosene.

Indo-Pak water-sharing talks run aground

AFP, New Delhi

Pakistan yesterday said that talks with India on resolving a river water-sharing row in disputed Kashmir had failed and that it may now approach the World Bank for mediation.

"It was the final attempt but the situation is the same. Matters could not be resolved and our issues were not addressed," Pakistan's secretary for water and power, Ashfaq Mehmood, told a news conference at the end of three days of talks.

"We have done everything to resolve it bilaterally but it has not resulted in success. So the next step is obvious as provided by the Indus

Water Treaty ... go for appointment of neutral experts," he added.

There was no official comment from the Indian side. The two neighbours were due to address a joint news conference on Friday but it was cancelled.

The dispute centres around India's plans to construct a dam over the Chenab river in Indian-controlled Kashmir's Jammu region. The hydro-electric Baglihar dam is being built in two 450-megawatt phases.

Pakistan says the dam violates the 1960 Indus Water Treaty on water sharing, one of the nuclear rivals' most enduring agreements that has survived two wars.

Annan wonders where are the people?

REUTERS, Banda Aceh

UN Secretary General Kofi Annan toured Indonesia's tsunami-ravaged Aceh province yesterday, flying by helicopter to the razed town of Meulaboh, beyond which is a black hole of devastation.

"I must admit I have never seen such utter destruction, mile after mile. You wonder, where are the people?," said Annan on his return to the provincial capital, Banda Aceh.

Meulaboh on the west coast of the island of Sumatra is just 93 miles from the epicenter of the undersea earthquake that sent a tsunami across Asia killing more than 153,000 people.

The United Nations estimated that one-third of Meulaboh's 120,000 people were killed when the giant waves ripped through the town on Dec. 26.

"I am deeply overwhelmed with

the misery I just saw with my own eyes," said an emotional Tadao Chino, president of the Asian Development Bank who accompanied Annan, along with the leaders of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

But 12 days after the tsunami hit, and with aid merely trickling in to Meulaboh aboard US military helicopters, Annan said survivors were starting to rebuild their lives.

"We saw people beginning to pick up the pieces of their lives and that tells us something about the resilience of the human spirit," Annan told reporters at a brief news conference.

"They will need help for post-traumatic stress. They are going to need help to build their houses ... they are going to need help to build boats so they can go back to fishing."

The UN chief has called on world leaders to honor their pledges of nearly \$5 billion, citing the failure of

nations to fully deliver on promised aid after previous disasters, such as the earthquake which hit the Iranian city of Bam in late 2003.

Aceh province bore the full brunt of the tsunami, with 100,000 known dead or two-thirds of the victims across Asia, but the coastal area south of Meulaboh remains a black hole.

"We have no information at all below Meulaboh, it is a big worry," said Michael Elmquist, UN relief chief in Banda Aceh.

Satellite photographs of the area beyond Meulaboh on the west coast of Sumatra showed an "area that used to be land is now sea," Elmquist told Reuters.

There are at least 20,000 people around Meulaboh in desperate need of aid and, with outlying areas still cut off, the number of dead, injured and homeless will rise, the United Nations says.



PHOTO: AFP

US Secretary of State Colin Powell (R) shakes hands with a Sri Lankan tsunami victim during his visit to a Red Cross aid center at the coastal city of Galle yesterday. Powell has arrived in Sri Lanka for a day-long tour of the devastation caused by the December 26, 2004 tsunami that killed 30,600 people on the island.

US soldier at center of prison abuse goes on trial

REUTERS, Ft. Hood, Texas

US Army Spc. Charles Graner, the accused ringleader of the Iraq prisoner abuse scandal that outraged the world, goes on trial yesterday ready to offer a defence that he was just following orders.

Graner and Pvt. Lynndie England, with whom he fathered a child and who is also facing a court-martial, became the faces of the Abu Ghraib prison scandal after they appeared in photographs that showed degraded, naked prisoners.

Orphans launch drive to help tsunami victims

AFP, Tokyo

Children orphaned in tragedies from diverse corners of the globe came together yesterday to launch a fund-raising campaign for Asian tsunami orphans, saying they understood the trauma of suddenly losing parents.

Fifty-three children aged between 10 and 18 whose parents died in war, attacks, natural disasters or from AIDS are gathering in Japan for 13 days of rallies, meetings and a camp to share their experiences.

The gathering was originally aimed at commemorating the 10th anniversary of the Kobe earthquake, which killed more than 6,000 people and devastated the western Japanese port city.

But in the wake of the giant waves that left more than 165,000 dead, the participants decided to turn the event into a drive to raise donations for the newly orphaned children.

"We can understand their sadness and difficulties," said Ammar Nima Farhan, an 18-year-old high school student who lost his father in air strikes in Baghdad in March 2003 shortly after the US-led invasion of Iraq began.

"We would like to offer support to tsunami orphans," he told AFP. "I hope to visit there and meet with them and share experience with them so that we can strengthen our solidarity."

At the opening ceremony of the

event, children -- some of them carrying their countries' flags and others in ethnic clothes -- offered a silent prayer for the tsunami victims.

"It is horrible, but it cannot be helped because no one can predict a natural disaster," said Chan Kai-Chun, a 13-year-old Taiwanese boy who lost his father in the island's 1999 quake, which killed some 2,400.

"I want to tell tsunami orphans, 'Hey, hang in there. Let's work together'," he said.

The orphans include 20 Japanese children who lost their parents in the January 17, 1995, earthquake at Kobe. Other earthquake orphans meeting in Japan were from Algeria, Colombia and Turkey.

The meeting has also drawn war orphans from Afghanistan as well as children who lost their parents in the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, in the United States.

"Children are always the first and serious victims in any disasters," said organiser Satoshi Tanaka, representative of a Japanese orphan support group called Ashinaga.

"The meeting is especially meaningful as it takes place just right after the tsunami, which created another group of disaster orphans," he said.

"The Kobe and other orphans have received a lot of support," he said. "So it is a good chance for them to return the favour by raising their voice for the sake of other young victims including the newly created orphans in Asia."

Congress certifies Bush's win amid protest

REUTERS, Washington

The US Congress on Thursday formally certified President Bush as the victor of the November elections after two Democrats symbolically stalled the event in protest at alleged voting irregularities in Ohio.

California Sen. Barbara Boxer and Ohio Rep. Stephanie Tubbs Jones, formally lodged objections because of Ohio, although they said they recognized Bush had won and were not trying to overturn the results.

Kerry visits troops in Mosul

AFP, Baghdad

Former US presidential hopeful John Kerry visited US troops stationed in the northern Iraqi city of Mosul, scene of a major suicide attack against a US base in December, the US military said yesterday.

Kerry ate dinner on Thursday with soldiers at Camp Freedom, a former Saddam Hussein palace, and met with Brigadier General Carter Ham, commander of troops in northern Iraq, and local provincial governor Duraid Kashmula, it said in a statement.

Palestinian election campaign winds up

Abbas challenger arrested

AFP, Jerusalem

The main challenger to Palestinian presidential hopeful Mahmud Abbas was arrested by Israel yesterday as candidates in the race to succeed the late Yasser Arafat wrapped up their election campaigns.

While Palestine Liberation Organisation chairman Abbas appeared set to cruise to a comfortable victory in Sunday's polls, his main rival made an aggressive bid to close the gap on the last day of campaigning.

Mustafa Barghouti, an independent candidate who has a permit to be in the polls by a huge margin, was arrested by the Israeli security services in occupied east Jerusalem as he was on his way to Friday prayers at the revered Al-Aqsa mosque.

"You are arresting a presidential candidate who has a permit to be in east Jerusalem," Barghouti said as he was dragged into a white van by two Israeli civilian-clothed agents.

At a press conference earlier, Barghouti had announced his intention to take part in prayers at the mosque, the third holiest site in Islam and the symbol of the Palestinian struggle for independence.

Israeli police spokesman Shmuelik Ben Ruby confirmed that Barghouti had been detained and charged that he had violated an agreement by trying to reach the compound.

During an address in English to reporters, Barghouti presented himself as the "leader of the democratic opposition" and hailed Sunday's vote as possibly the first fully democratic election in the Arab world "in a thousand years".

Meanwhile, Abbas, the official candidate of the ruling Fatah party he co-founded with Arafat in the late 1950s, was ending his campaign in a more low-profile fashion.

He reportedly renounced a planned visit to the Al-Aqsa mosque in order not to be seen escorted by the Israeli security services.

Abbas is already perceived as having the tacit backing of Israel and the United States, and his calls for an end to the armed intifada have triggered furious reactions from Palestinian militant organisations.

Arafat's likely successor kicked off the final day of campaigning with meetings in the West Bank town of Ramallah, and the nearest he was scheduled to come to Jerusalem on Friday was during a visit to the West Bank Jerusalem suburbs of Al-Ram and Bir Nabala.

"Arafat reminds us the huge sacrifices made by the Palestinian people to free his land and obtain an independent state. We will never forget our martyrs and wounded who gave their lives for the land," Abbas said as he laid a wreath on Arafat's tomb in Ramallah for "Martyrs Day".

US general to review Iraq policy: NY Times

REUTERS, New York

A retired four-star US general will travel to Iraq next week at the behest of the Pentagon to review the US military's policy there, The New York Times reported yesterday.

Gen. Gary Luck, who formerly headed US forces in South Korea and is now a senior adviser to the military's Joint Forces Command, will be looking at issues including troop levels, training of Iraqi security forces and the strategy for fighting a bloody guerrilla war, senior Defence Department officials told the newspaper.

Luck's trip highlights how concerned senior Pentagon officials and top US commanders are over the situation in Iraq, members of Congress and military analysts said, according to the Times.

Luck, who will lead a small team of military specialists, was told on Thursday by Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld to report back in a few weeks with a confidential assessment, senior defence officials told the paper.

"He will have a very wide canvas to draw on," the Times quoted Lawrence Di Rita, the Pentagon spokesman, as saying of Luck's mandate.

The Times also reported that the Pentagon is considering increasing the amount of time for which reservists can be called up for total active service; the limit is currently 24 months.

A Defence Department spokesman was not immediately available for comment to Reuters on the report.



PHOTO: AFP

In this image made available by the US army yesterday Massachusetts Sen. (D) John Kerry stops to greet Soldiers of Task Force Olympia, the command and control element of Multi-National Brigade Northwest, in Mosul Thursday. The purpose of Kerry's visit was to meet with local government leaders and have dinner with TFO Soldiers.

CIA REPORT SAYS

Top officials failed to prepare for 9/11

AFP, Washington

A still classified internal CIA investigation has determined that its former chief George Tenet and his deputy James Pavitt failed to heed to the threat posed by terrorism before the September 11, 2001, attacks, The New York Times newspaper said yesterday.

Commissioned by a Congressional panel, the report -- six weeks from being completed -- said the spy chiefs "failed to meet an acceptable standard of performance" and recommended that Pavitt's conduct be assessed for possible disciplinary action, officials who had read the document told the daily.

The officials did not say whether the report, drawn up by Central Intelligence Agency inspector general John Helgerson -- who reports to Congress, singled out Tenet for possible disciplinary action as well.

Tenet and Pavitt resigned in mid-2004, and Tenet in December was awarded a Medal of Freedom by President George W. Bush.

The current and former government officials who read the report and who remained anonymous said its conclusions could still change on the basis of pending responses Helgerson has solicited from Tenet and Pavitt.

The CIA report's conclusions echo those reached by two previous investigations of the 9/11 attacks by a joint Congressional panel and by an independent commission, said the daily, but its criticisms of senior CIA officials are more direct and personal.

Neither the CIA, Tenet or Helgerson commented on the report, the daily said, but Pavitt confirmed he had read parts of it and disagreed with its findings "on many accounts."

Mohespur Pourashava

District: Jhenaidah

Invitation for Bids (IFB)

Memo No. MP-61/BMDF/05/17

Date: 03.01.2005

IFB No. MP/BMDF-01

Date: 03.01.2005

IDA Credit No: 3177-BD

Credit Name: Municipal Services Project (MSP), BMDF

- The People's Republic of Bangladesh has received a credit from the International Development Association (IDA) in various currencies towards the cost of Municipal Services Project (MSP), Bangladesh Municipal Development Fund (BMDF) and intends to apply part of the credit proceeds to cover eligible Municipalities for Infrastructure & Service Development.
- The Assistant Engineer, Mohespur Pourashava, District: Jhenaidah invites sealed bids for the installation, testing & commissioning of production tubewell, supply & laying of water supply pipeline works as monitored below. Procurement is open to all bidders from eligible source countries as defined in the IDA's Procurement Guidelines. However, countries not eligible under the project also include: The Bahamas, Bahrain, Barbados, Brunei Darussalam, Cyprus, Kuwait, Qatar, Singapore, United Arab Emirates.

Contract Package No.	Name of the work	Bid security (Taka)	Time for completion of work (days)	Price of bidding documents (Taka)
W-149/BMDF-52-Mohes-04-30-WS/01	a. Installation of water supply pipeline in Mohespur, Jallipur and Nawdagam areas, (WS1). b. Installation of production tubewell (PTW) including pump house, pump, associated pipelines, etc. at Jallipur Bazar (WS2).	140,000.00	180	7,000.00

- Bidding documents (and additional copies) may be purchased from the office of the Assistant Engineer, Mohespur Pourashava, District: Jhenaidah on submission of a written application upon the payment of a non-refundable fees mentioned in the above table for each set in the form of Pay Order/Bank Draft from any schedule bank in Bangladesh drawn in favour of Chairman, Mohespur Pourashava, Jhenaidah during normal office hours on all working days upto 05.02.2005. Interested bidders may obtain further information from the same address during office hours up to 05.02.2005.
- The provisions in the instruction to bidders and in the conditions of contract are the provisions of the Standard Bidding Documents: Procurement of Works (SBD), National Competitive Bidding (Trial Edition-January 1998, revised February 2003), issued by the World Bank Office, Dhaka.
- Bids shall be valid for a period of 91 days after bid opening and must be accompanied by a bid security as mentioned in para 2 above in the form of Bank Draft/Pay Order/Bank Guarantee drawn in favour of Chairman, Mohespur Pourashava, Jhenaidah. Bids must be delivered to the Office of the Assistant Engineer, Mohespur Pourashava, District: Jhenaidah on or before 06.02.2005 by 1:00pm.
- Bidders may deliver their bids by either in person or by courier service or by mail, which must reach the above office before the deadline for submission of bids. Bids received after the deadline will not be accepted.
- Bids will be opened in the presence of the bidders' representatives who choose to attend at 2:00pm on 06.02.2005 at the Office of the Assistant Engineer, Mohespur Pourashava, District: Jhenaidah.
- A pre-bid conference will be held on 27.01.2005 in the office of the undersigned at 11:00am. The bidders are requested to attend the conference in time.

Assistant Engineer
Mohespur Pourashava
District: Jhenaidah



আশুগঞ্জ পাওয়ার স্টেশন কোম্পানী লিমিটেড

Ashuganj Power Station Company Limited

P.O. Ashuganj, District : Brahman Baria

(An Enterprise of Bangladesh Power Development Board)

সূত্র নং-এপিএসসিএল/ক্রম-০২/২০০৫/৪৮৬০ তারিখ : ০৪/০১/২০০৫ইং

“দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি”

আশুগঞ্জ পাওয়ার স্টেশন কোম্পানী লিমিটেডের (১) বি-টাইপ আবাসিক এলাকার ৬নং ভবনের সম্মুখে ক্ষতিগ্রস্ত নিরাপত্তা প্রাচীর সংস্কার করণ (২) বি-টাইপ আবাসিক এলাকার মেইন গেইটের সন্নিহিত নিরাপত্তা প্রাচীর সংস্কার করণ (৩) ৩য় ডিসচার্জ চ্যানেলের উপর নির্মিত Foot Bridge নির্মাণ (৪) বি-টাইপ আবাসিক এলাকার ১০ ও ১১ নং ভবনের সম্মুখস্থ রাস্তা নির্মাণ কাজ সম্পন্ন করার নিমিত্তে বাংলাদেশের প্রকৃত/প্রতিষ্ঠিত ঠিকাদারী প্রতিষ্ঠানের নিকট হইতে সীল মোহরকৃত খামে খোলা দরপত্র আহবান করা যাইতেছে। সংশ্লিষ্ট কর্মকর্তার অনুমতিক্রমে (ক) প্রধান প্রকৌশলী (উৎপাদন), বিউবো, ওয়াপদা ভবন, মতিঝিল, ঢাকা এর দপ্তর হইতে আতগঞ্জ পাওয়ার স্টেশন কোং লিঃ এর অনুকূলে ইস্যুকৃত ব্যাংক ড্রাফট/পে-অর্ডারের মাধ্যমে অথবা (খ) উপ-পরিচালক (হিসাব) আশুগঞ্জ পাওয়ার স্টেশন কোং লিঃ, আতগঞ্জ, বি-বাড়িয়া এর নিকট হইতে ব্যাংক ড্রাফট/পে-অর্ডার/নগদে দরপত্রের মূল্য বাবদ ক্রমিক নং- ১ এর জন্য টাঃ ৩০০.০০ (তিনশত), ক্রমিক নং- ২ এর জন্য টাঃ ৩০০.০০ (তিনশত), ক্রমিক নং-৩ এর জন্য টাঃ ১,০০০.০০ (এক হাজার), ক্রমিক নং- ৪ এর জন্য টাঃ ৪০০.০০ (চারশত)মাত্র পরিশোধ পূর্বক আগামী ০৫-০২-২০০৫ইং তারিখ পর্যন্ত অফিস চলাকালীন সময়ে দরপত্র দাখিল ক্রয় করা যাইবে। ০৬-০২-২০০৫ইং তারিখ বেলা ১২:০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত সীলমোহরকৃত খামে নিম্নবন্ধনকারী দপ্তরে রক্ষিত টেন্ডার বাক্সে দরপত্রসমূহ গ্রহণ করা হইবে এবং এদিন বেলা ১২.১৫ ঘটিকায় অগ্রাহী দরদাতাগণের উপস্থিতিতে দরপত্র বাক্স খোলা হইবে। কার্যাদেশ প্রাপ্ত সংশ্লিষ্ট ঠিকাদারী প্রতিষ্ঠানকে সিডিউলে বর্ণিত শর্তাবলী মোতাবেক সরবরাহ কাজ সম্পন্ন করিতে হইবে। কর্তৃপক্ষ কোন কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকে যে কোন/সকল দরপত্র গ্রহণ/বাতিল করার অধিকার সংরক্ষণ করেন।

আহবায়ক
প্রকিউরমেন্ট কমিটি
আশুগঞ্জ পাওয়ার স্টেশন কোং লিঃ
আতগঞ্জ, বি-বাড়িয়া।

নং-১৮/২০০৫ইং