British troops reduce presence in Basra

Iraqi city refuses to work with UK soldiers

AP, REUTERS, *Baghdad*

British troops in the tense southern city of Basra greatly reduced their presence in the streets yesterday, apparently responding to a call from the provincial governor to sever cooperation until London apologised for storming a police station to free two of its soldiers.

For the second day, no British forces were seen with accompanying Iraqi police on patrols of Basra, as they routinely had in the past.

Elsewhere, a roadside bomb hit a US convoy in southern Baghdad, killing one soldier and wounding six others Wednesday. Suspected insurgents gunned down at least eight Iraqis in four separate attacks yesterday, officials said.

In an interview with Associated Press Television News in Baghdad Thursday, Iraqi National Security Adviser Mowaffak al-Rubaie called Monday's attack by British forces on a police station in Basra "a flagrant violation of Iraqi sovereignty."

At least five Iraqis were killed during a day of clashes between British forces and Iraqi police and demonstrators on Monday. British armour crashed into a jail to free the two soldiers who had been arrested by Iraqi police and militiamen. Earlier, a crowd attacked British troops with stones and Molotov cocktails.

The fighting has raised concern over the increasing boldness of Shia militias in the south of the country and the challenge they pose to the 8,500-strong British force in the region. As recently as Wedne-sday, Britain vowed to keep its troops in the country until they no longer are needed, but also has leaked information recently about planning for a troop reduction. The Shia militias complicate the British role no matter which way it moves.

City authorities say British troops killed two Iraqi police during the raid.

On Wednesday, hundreds of Iraqi civilians and policemen, some waving pistols and AK-47s, rallied in Basra, Iraq's second largest city, to denounce "British aggression" in the rescue of the two British soldiers.

Earlier the Iraqi city of Basra said yesterday it would not cooperate with Britain until it received an apology and compensation after a British raid to free two soldiers.

"The governing council met yesterday and decided to stop all cooperation with the British until they meet three demands," Basra governor Mohammed al-Waili told Reuters.

"To apologise for what happened, to guarantee that it does not happen again, and third, to provide some compensation for all the damage they did during the operation," he said.

PHOTO: AFP

A Pakistan woman walks past a destroyed market place after a bomb blast in a shopping area of Lahore yesterday. Two bicycle bombs exploded minutes apart in the eastern Pakistani city killing at least six people and injuring more than 20, police and security officials said.

Italy extradites London bomb suspect Issac

AFP, *Rome*

Hamdi Issac, one of four men suspected of carrying out the failed July 21 London bomb attacks, was extradited yesterday from Italy to Britain, where he faced charges of conspiracy to murder and attempted murder.

A plane carrying the 27-year-old Briton of Ethiopian origin, also known as Osman Hussain, left Rome's Ciampino airport shortly after midday (1000 GMT) after he was handed over to British police officers at the capital's Rebibbia prison.

Dressed in jeans, a dark shirt and a hooded jacket, he boarded the plane in handcuffs.

London's Metropolitan Police said its officers would arrest Issac on arrival on suspicion of conspiracy to commit murder, attempted murder and alleged offences under the Explosive Substances Act.

He would then be taken to a London police station to be formally charged, a statement added.

Mexican anti-drug minister dies in chopper crash

AP, *Mexico City*

A cabinet minister who helped lead Mexico's anti-drug fight, his deputy and seven others died in a helicopter crash in the mountains west of Mexico's capital on Wednesday. There were no survivors.

While one official aboard the craft had received death threats from a drug trafficker, authorities said the crash appeared to be an accident caused by poor visibility due to dense cloud cover.

The helicopter, carrying Public Safety Secretary Ramon Martin Huerta, Federal Preventive Police Chief Tomas Valencia, five other passengers and a crew of two, had taken off from a military parade ground in Mexico City.

Top Kyrgyz revolution leader killed

AFP, *Bishkek*

A top Kyrgyz lawmaker and key figure in this former Soviet state's popular revolution in March, Bayaman Erkinbayev, was shot dead outside his house late Wednesday in the Kyrgyz capital Bishkek, police officials said yesterday.

"When the deputy came out of his car in front of his house he was shot at from behind some bushes. He died from his injuries in intensive care at the national hospital," Interior Minister Murat Sutalinov told an emergency session of parliament.

PHOTO: AFP

An Indian man carries his pet dog as he wades through floodwaters in Khamam, some 225km south of Hyderabad yesterday. At least 64 people have died and hundreds of thousands displaced after powerful storms left a trail of devastation across the Indian and Bangladeshi coasts in the Bay of Bengal.

Storm-battered Andhra readies for massive reconstruction

AFP, *Hyderabad*

The southern Indian state of Andhra Pradesh was yesterday rushing experts to assess the devastation caused by powerful storms, which battered thousands of villages and towns on the coast of the Bay of Bengal, officials said.

While fresh rains drenched two adjoining states, the flood situation was easing in Andhra Pradesh where at least 58 people died and 150,000 others lost their homes or have been displaced since Tuesday, they said.

"The worst seems to be over as the levels of Godavari and Krishna rivers are receding and now there is no fresh threat of floods," Andhra Pradesh disaster management commissioner Shashank Goel told AFP in the state capital Hyderabad.

"If all goes well we'll start sending some of these displaced persons back home," Goel said of the tens of thousands of residents evacuated to 473 emergency camps in 10 of the state's 23 districts shattered by storms and rains.

The rains stopped Thursday in Andhra Pradesh but other officials said a heavy downpour in the swollen Godavari river's upper catchment areas in adjoining Maharastra state was causing concern.

"This is an issue of worry," an official from the state's agriculture ministry said as Karnataka, another province shouldering Andhra Pradesh, reported non-stop rains in its Bidar district for the third straight day Thursday.

Commissioner Goel said officials and engineers were being sent to the coastal region where 3,672 villages and towns were lashed by the storm, locally nicknamed "Pyaar" (Myanmarese for "flattened").

"The ... repair work will begin only after the water recedes," Goel said as normality gradually returned to the flooded Andhra cities of Vijaywada and Rajamundri.

The storm destroyed 275,000 acres (111,288 hectares) of farmland, breached 600 irrigation canals, swept away hundreds of bridges and roads and snapped electricity supplies across wide swathes of the state.

More than 9,700 houses were completely destroyed by the powerful winds that barrelled across the cotton- and rice-growing province off the Bay of Bengal.

Andhra Pradesh agriculture minister Raghuveera Reddy overnight said the rains accompanying the storms caused damage to the tune of 180 billion rupees (420 million dollars) to crops, state facilities and homes.

Reddy, in a memorandum to Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, who visited Andhra Pradesh Wednesday, sought federal assistance of 120 billion rupees.

"Apart from the financial assistance we have also sought 1.2 million tonnes of rice and the prime minister's response was quite positive," state chief minister Rajasekhara Reddy separately told reporters in Hyderabad.

In nearby Orissa, the administration overnight evacuated 12,000 people from low-lying areas in 10 of the state's 30 districts.

Indo-Pak Kashmiri leaders seek end to violence

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE, *New Delhi*

The first ever meeting of Kashmiri leaders from India and Pakistan yesterday called for an end to violence and reduction in the number of soldiers and paramilitary forces all across Kashmir.

The two-day "Intra J&K Heart to Heart Talk" also sought the reopening of "old historic routes to facilitate people to people contact".

A joint statement issued at the end of the meeting urged "all concerned to avoid all types of violence as it is detrimental to peace and stability in the region.

"It also recommends to both the governments to consider reducing the level of deployment of military and paramilitary forces on both sides."

These were among the 12 suggestions and recommendations made by the participants, who included Sardar Abdul Qayyum Khan, the Muslim Conference leader and a former 'prime minister' of Pakistan-administered Kashmir.

Pakistani politicians and leaders of Pakistani Kashmir had until now only sought withdrawal of troops from Indian Jammu and Kashmir.

Among the other key Kashmiri leaders who took part in the deliberations were Bhim Singh, the Panthers Party leader, former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister Farooq Abdullah, and Abdul Ghani Bhat and Sajjad Lone of the Hurriyat Conference.

The statement also urged India and Pakistan to pool in their resources and expertise to bring about development in Kashmir.

It backed greater contacts between students and MPs from both sides besides development of trade and tourism.

Summing up the deliberations, Khan said the participants felt that a joint mechanism should be established to provide social services in the entire Kashmir, especially in the Northern Areas comprising Gilgit and Baltistan in Pakistan.

The joint mechanism could look at providing services like electricity, water supply and medical care by sharing of resources and expertise, said Khan.

ANNAN TO NATIONS

Ratify nuke treaty

AP, *United Nations*

Secretary General Kofi Annan urged the United States and 10 other key countries to ratify the nuclear test-ban treaty so it can finally take effect, but like Pakistan, India, Israel and North Korea, the US administration refuses to do so.

Opening a conference Wednesday to spur the treaty's entry into force, Annan said all countries should be gravely concerned that nine years after the treaty was opened for signatures, it still hasn't entered into force.

"The longer entry into force of the treaty is delayed, the greater the risk that someone, somewhere, will test nuclear weapons," he warned. "That would be a major setback for the cause of non-proliferation and disarmament."

Since the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty opened for signatures in September 1996, it has been signed by 175 countries and ratified by 123 countries.

But it will only take effect when 44 countries that participated in the Conference on Disarmament in 1996 and possessed nuclear research and power reactors have ratified it. To date, 33 of the 44 countries have ratified the treaty, but there seems little prospects of getting all 11 holdouts to change their positions.

The United States has signed the treaty, but President Bush's administration opposes it and is boycotting the three-day conference.

Dutch Ambassador Jaap Ramaker, the special representative charged with promoting ratification, told the conference that Pakistan "does not give priority" to signing or ratifying the test ban treaty and India refused to see him.

Nepali Maoists abduct hundreds of students

Local polls in April 2006

AFP, AP, *Kathmandu*

Suspected Maoist rebels have abducted hundreds of students and teachers from dozens of schools in northwest Nepal, a human rights group said yesterday.

The abductions happened between Saturday and Wednesday in Accham district 400km northwest of the capital Kathmandu.

The students and teachers, mainly from secondary schools, were forcibly marched to an undisclosed location for indoctrination by the rebels, a human rights official said.

"We have received information from our bureau that the Maoists have abducted hundreds of students, teachers and other civilians from scores of villages in Achham district," said Subodh Pyakurel, president of the Informal Sector Service Centre human rights group.

Pyakurel said "they were taken as flocks of sheep to undisclosed locations."

Police also reported the abduction of 60 students from a school in Dolpa district, 475km northwest of Kathmandu on Wednesday.

"The Maoists selected 60 sturdy looking boys and girls of grades six to 10 and abducted them," police said after a teacher at the school reached the district headquarters Dunai on Thursday.

The rebels, who are fighting to install a communist republic, regularly abduct students for indoctrination sessions and normally release them several days later.

Local human rights groups and the United Nations Children's Fund have routinely condemned the abductions and have received pledges from the Maoists to halt the practice.

Pyakurel appealed to the rebels to release the children.

"We appeal to the Maoists to be sincere in their words and stop abducting docile villagers, students and other civilians," Pyakurel said.

Meanwhile, seven months after Nepal's king seized absolute power, its government announced Wednesday that the country will hold municipal elections by April 2006 and national elections within two years.

Foreign Minister Ramesh Nath Pandey told the UN General Assembly that King Gyanendra's commitment to multiparty democracy "is unflinching and total."

Troops mount raid in Pak tribal area

Ten suspects detained

AFP, *Miranshah*

Pakistani troops backed by helicopters arrested 10 suspected militants yesterday during a search in a tribal zone near the Afghan border, officials said.

The crackdown in the rugged region of North Waziristan came a week after the military said it had busted the biggest al-Qaeda base in the area.

"We have arrested 10 suspects and also seized seven passports," a military official said as several hundred soldiers surrounded three villages in the area. He did not give the detainees' nationalities.

Around 600 rounds of anti-aircraft ammunition were also recovered in the raids, the official said, requesting anonymity.

Earlier, soldiers in about 100 vehicles had cordoned off Tatta Khel, 35km west of the region's main town Miranshah, to hunt for militants after a series of rocket attacks, a local official told AFP.

One soldier was injured when the convoy came under fire from unknown gunmen, the official said, requesting anonymity.

Searches were also made in the nearby villages of Mizer and Hamzoi. Some ammunition and documents were uncovered but no arrests were made there.

Last week Pakistan said it had raided the largest al-Qaeda hideout in North Waziristan, arrested 35 people and recovered a huge hoard of weapons from a religious school compound owned by a Taliban sympathiser.

China rejects US call for democracy

AP, *Beijing*

China yesterday rejected a US call to adopt democracy, telling Washington to respect its communist path and brushing off warnings of retaliation for its huge trade surplus with the United States.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Qin Gang told reporters he had "taken note" of comments by US Deputy Secretary of State Robert Zoellick that China's one-party system was unsustainable, but insisted the country was stable and that communism had brought substantial benefits to its 1.3 billion people.

Zoellick on Wednesday made the Bush administration's most explicit call to date for a political transition in China, where the Communist Party will mark the anniversary of its 56th year in power on Oct. 1.

"Closed politics cannot be a permanent feature of Chinese society," Zoellick told a meeting of the National Committee on US-China Relations in New York. "It is simply not sustainable."

নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

একটি জাতীয় বেসরকারী উন্নয়নমূলক স্বেচ্ছাসেবী সংস্থা কারিতাস বাংলাদেশ, ঢাকা অঞ্চলের আওতাধীন উপজেলা পর্যায়ে নিয়োগ ও প্যানেল তৈরীর জন্য আগ্রহী প্রার্থীদের নিকট হতে নিম্নের শর্তাবলী সাপেক্ষে আগ্রহী প্রার্থীদের কাছ থেকে দরখাস্ত আহ্বান করা হচ্ছে।

ক্রম	পদের বিবরণ	শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা/অন্যান্য যোগ্যতা
০১	❑ জুনিয়র একাউন্টেন্ট-মাচ প্রকল্প (আঞ্চলিক অফিস পর্যায়) ❑ পদ সংখ্যা : ১ জন (পুরুষ/মহিলা) ❑ বয়স : ২৫-৩০ বছর। ❑ বেতন/ভাতা : শিক্ষানবীশকালে সর্বসাকুল্যে ৬,২০০/-(ছয় হাজার দুইশত) টাকা মাত্র।	● এম.কম (একাউন্টিং/ফাইনান্স/ম্যানেজমেন্ট বিষয়ে) ও সি.এ. সিসি/ আই.সি.এম.এ-সিসি প্রফেশনাল ডিগ্রীধারীদের অগ্রাধিকার। ● এন.জি.ওর হিসাব সংক্রান্ত কাজে ও বৎসরের অভিজ্ঞতা থাকতে হবে। ● প্রতিদিনের হিসাব সংক্রান্ত কাজে ম্যানেজমেন্টকে সহযোগিতা করা। অডিটার, শাপ বুক, লেজার লেখার পারদর্শী, আর্থিক প্রতিবেদন তৈরী ও ব্যাংকিং কাজে অভিজ্ঞ হতে হবে। ● কম্পিউটার এম.এস. ওয়ার্ড, এক্সেল ও টালী পরিচালনায় অভিজ্ঞ হতে হবে। ● মাঠ পরিদর্শনে যেতে হবে। ● প্রার্থীকে অবশ্যই বিনয়ী, সৎ ও আন্তরিক হতে হবে।
০২	❑ কৃষি সম্প্রসারণ কর্মকর্তা-মাচ প্রকল্প (শ্রীমঙ্গল উপজেলা) ❑ পদসংখ্যা : ১ জন (পুরুষ) ❑ বয়স : ২৫-৩৫ বছর। ❑ বেতন/ভাতা: শিক্ষানবীশকালে সর্বসাকুল্যে ৫,৬০০/- (পাঁচ হাজার ছয়শত) টাকা	● বি.এসসি-কৃষি/ডিপ্লোমা ইন কৃষি। মাঠ পর্যায়ে কৃষি ও সামাজিক বনায়ন কাজে ন্যূনতম ২ বৎসরের অভিজ্ঞতা, কৃষি ডিপ্লোমার ক্ষেত্রে ন্যূনতম ৫ বৎসরের অভিজ্ঞতা থাকতে হবে। ● মটর সাইকেল চালনায় পারদর্শী ও বৈধ লাইসেন্স এর অধিকারী হতে হবে।
০৩	সহকারী প্রকল্প কর্মকর্তা-আইসিডিপি,সিলেট ❑ পদসংখ্যা : ১ জন (পুরুষ/মহিলা) ❑ বয়স : ২৫-৩৫ বছর। ❑ বেতন/ভাতা: শিক্ষানবীশকালে সর্বসাকুল্যে ৫,০০০/- (পাঁচ হাজার) টাকা	● কমপক্ষে স্নাতক পাশ হতে হবে। রাষ্ট্র বিজ্ঞান/সমাজ বিজ্ঞানের প্রার্থীদের অগ্রাধিকার দেয়া হবে। ● এন.জি.ওর কাজে বাস্তব অভিজ্ঞতা থাকতে হবে। ● প্রতিদিনের হিসাব সংক্রান্ত কাজে ম্যানেজমেন্টকে সহযোগিতা করা। ● আর্থিক প্রতিবেদন সহ মনিটরিং কাজে অভিজ্ঞ হতে হবে। ● কম্পিউটার-এ এমএস ওয়ার্ড, এক্সেল জানতে হবে। ● মটর সাইকেল চালনায় পারদর্শী ও বৈধ লাইসেন্স এর অধিকারী হতে হবে। ● সমাজে পিছিয়ে পড়া আদিবাসীদের সাথে কাজ করতে আগ্রহী হতে হবে।
০৪	❑ সমাজ উন্নয়ন এনিমেটর-আইসিডিপি সিলেট/মৌলভীবাজার ❑ পদসংখ্যা : ৩ জন (পুরুষ/মহিলা) ❑ বয়স : ২৫-৩৫ বছর। ❑ বেতন/ভাতা: শিক্ষানবীশকালে সর্বসাকুল্যে ২,৮০০/- (দুই হাজার আটশত) টাকা মাত্র।	● কমপক্ষে এইচ.এস.সি পাশ। ● মাঠ পর্যায়ে ঋণ কার্যক্রম ও সাংগঠনিক কাজে বাস্তব অভিজ্ঞতা সম্পন্ন প্রার্থীদের অগ্রাধিকার দেয়া হবে। ● আদিবাসী জনগণের সাথে কাজ করার মানসিকতা থাকতে হবে। ● অধ্যয়নরত ছাত্র/ছাত্রীদের আবেদন করার প্রয়োজন নাই ● বৃহত্তর সিলেটের খাসিয়া বা সিলেটি ভাষা জানা আদিবাসীদের অগ্রাধিকার দেয়া হবে।
০৫	❑ সংগঠক-সমাজ উন্নয়ন ❑ পদসংখ্যা : ৫ জন (পুরুষ/মহিলা) ❑ বেতন/ভাতা : শিক্ষানবীশকালে সর্বসাকুল্যে ২,৭০০/- (দুই হাজার সাতশত) টাকা মাত্র।	● কমপক্ষে এইচ.এস.সি পাশ। ● মাঠ পর্যায়ে সাংগঠনিক কাজে বাস্তব অভিজ্ঞতা সম্পন্ন প্রার্থীদের অগ্রাধিকার দেয়া হবে। ● গ্রামীণ দরিদ্র জনগণের সাথে কাজ করার মানসিকতা থাকতে হবে। ● অধ্যয়নরত ছাত্র/ছাত্রীদের আবেদন করার প্রয়োজন নাই। ● হারমোনিয়াম বাজানোসহ গান, নাটক ও সংগীত চর্চায় পারদর্শী হতে হবে।

শর্তাবলী :

১. জীবন বৃত্তান্ত : ● প্রার্থীর নাম ● পিতা/স্বামীর নাম ● মাতার নাম ● জন্ম তারিখ ● স্থায়ী ঠিকানা ● বর্তমান/যোগাযোগের ঠিকানা ● শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা ও অভিজ্ঞতা ● ধর্ম ● জাতীয়তা ● দুই জন গণ্যমান্য ব্যক্তির নাম, ঠিকানা ও আবেদনকারীর সাথে সম্পর্ক উল্লেখসহ সাদা কাগজে নিম্ন স্বাক্ষরকারীর বরাবরে আবেদন করতে হবে।
২. আবেদনপত্রের সাথে সদ্য তোলা ২ কপি পাসপোর্ট সাইজের সত্যায়িত ফটো, শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা, অভিজ্ঞতা ও চারিত্রিক সনদপত্রের কপিসহ আবেদনপত্র আগামী ৩০/০৯/২০০৫ খ্রীষ্টাব্দের মধ্যে নিম্ন ঠিকানার ডাকযোগে পৌঁছাতে হবে।
৩. যারা ধূমপান ও নেশা জাতীয় দ্রব্য গ্রহণে অভ্যস্থ তাদের আবেদন করার প্রয়োজন নেই।
৪. প্রার্থীকে অবশ্যই বিনয়ী, সৎ ও আন্তরিক হতে হবে।
৫. ৪-৫ নং পদের জন্য কাজে যোগদানের পূর্বে ৪,০০০/- টাকা জামানত হিসাবে জমা দিতে হবে।
৬. ৫ নং পদের জন্য সকল শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতার মূল সনদপত্র ঢাকা আঞ্চলিক অফিসে জমা রাখতে হবে।
৭. ৪-৫ নং পদের জন্য বাইসাইকেল চালানো বাধ্যতামূলক।
৮. ৩-৪ নং পদের জন্য শুধু মাত্র বৃহত্তর সিলেট এলাকার আদিবাসীরা আবেদন করতে পারবেন।
৯. চাকুরীতে নিয়োজিত প্রার্থীদের যথাযথ কর্তৃপক্ষের অনাপত্তিপত্র তাদের সাথে সংযোজন করতে হবে।
১০. পদের উপর আবেদনকৃত পদের নাম উল্লেখ করতে হবে এবং শুধুমাত্র বাছাইকৃত প্রার্থীদেরকেই পরীক্ষার জন্য ডাকা হবে।
১১. এ বিজ্ঞপ্তি কোনরূপ কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকে স্থগিত বা বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা কর্তৃপক্ষ সংরক্ষণ করেন।

আঞ্চলিক পরিচালক
কারিতাস ঢাকা অঞ্চল
১/সি/১ডি, পল্লবী, সেকশন-১২, মিরপুর, ঢাকা-১২১৬।

Hurricanes hit Bush's Iraq war support base

AP, *Washington*

Hurricane Katrina and its wrenching aftermath have turned public attention and already-dwindling support away from President Bush's Iraq policy. And that was before Hurricane Rita took aim at Texas.

The devastating storms are increasing pressure around the country and in Congress for an Iraq exit strategy and prompting calls for reining in spending on an increasingly unpopular war, one which could bedevil Republicans in the 2006 midterm congressional elections.

"It's a tangled picture" that will get even more complicated as those elections near, said Stephen Cimbala, a political scientist at Pennsylvania State University. "It's like Osama bin Laden's running the weather," he added, referring to the fugitive al-Qaeda terror leader.

Bangladesh Foreign Minister M. Morshed Khan is holding talks with his Czech Republic counterpart Cyril Svoboda at the headquarters of United Nations recently.

Katrina donations found at official's home

AP, *Baton Rouge*

US police found cases of food, clothing and tools intended for hurricane victims at the home of the chief administrative officer for a New Orleans suburb, authorities said Wednesday.

Officers searched Cedric Floyd's home because of complaints that city workers were helping themselves to donations for hurricane victims. Floyd, who runs the day-to-day operations in the suburb of Kenner, was in charge of distributing the goods.

Police plan to seek a charge of committing an illegal act as a public official against Floyd, and more charges against other city workers are possible, police Capt. Steve Caraway said.

The donations filled a large pickup truck four times. "It was an awful lot of stuff," Caraway said.

The donated materials must be processed as evidence but eventually will be distributed to victims. "We have lots of families that are begging for these supplies," said Attorney General Charles Foti, whose office assisted in the investigation.

Attempts to reach Floyd were unsuccessful at home numbers listed under his name in Kenner. His office number went unanswered after business hours.

Philip Ramon, chief of staff to Kenner Mayor Philip Capitano, has said city officials were investigating the alleged pilfering but added that many employees were themselves hurricane victims.