



Pakistani paramilitary soldiers and police patrol a street on the first day of the holy month of Muharram in Karachi yesterday. Pakistani investigators said "tribal" elements were behind a suicide attack, which killed 22 policemen and four civilians as security forces went on high alert for the month of Muharram.

Tribal elements behind attacks on Pak cops

Forces on high alert for Muharram

AFP, Lahore

Pakistani investigators yesterday said "tribal" elements were behind a suicide attack, which killed 22 policemen, as security forces went on high alert for the holy month of Muharram.

But officers investigating Thursday's deadly blast on police in the commercial heart of Lahore said it was too early to determine who orchestrated the latest in a wave of suicide attacks which have rocked the country.

"It seems that the incident has links in the tribal regions and Thursday's blast was the handiwork of those who have carried out similar strikes in other parts of the country," senior police officer Aftab Cheema said.

"The inquiry team is looking into all aspects of the crime and we hope to reach the bottom of the incident and those involved in it very soon."

No one has claimed responsibility for the attack, which killed 26 people after a suicide bomber approached a group of about 60 riot police outside the Lahore high court and detonated a device packed with ball bearings.

The blast came two weeks to the day after the assassination of opposition leader Benazir Bhutto in a gun and suicide attack in Rawalpindi, and deepened fears of a blood-soaked build-up to crucial elections on February 18.

Pakistani leaders, backed by their close allies in the United States, said the bombing was a clear attempt to sabotage the democratic process in the nuclear-armed Islamic republic.

"We condemn this act of violence and any attempts to subvert the democratic process in Pakistan prior to elections," US National Security Council spokeswoman Katherine Starr said in Washington.

US seeks backing against Iran from wary Gulf

Iranian cleric urges Arabs to snub 'bankrupt' Bush

AFP, Kuwait City/Tehran

US President George W Bush arrived in Kuwait yesterday to rally the support of Arab allies against what he calls the Iranian "threat," after making a bold prediction for Middle East peace.

Bush flew in aboard Air Force One after his first presidential trip to the Holy Land, where he said he believed a peace treaty would be signed within a year and called on Arab nations to reach out to the Jewish state.

His tour of Washington's closest friends in the oil-rich Gulf region comes amid escalating tensions between the United States and Iran over a naval confrontation in the strategic Strait of Hormuz.

But several commentators in the region have voiced strong misgivings about his intentions, amid fears Washington could resort to military action in the long-running standoff over Iran's disputed nuclear drive.

Although Kuwait is welcoming Bush as a friend, officials have said the emirate will not allow the United States to use its territory as a launchpad for any strike against Iran.

"Mr President, the region needs smart initiatives not smart bombs," the Kuwaiti newspaper Al-Rai said in a front-page editorial.

Kuwait was a springboard for the 2003 US-led invasion of Iraq that toppled then dictator Saddam Hussein, whose forces had invaded his tiny neighbour in 1990 before the emirate was liberated by a US-led coalition in early 1991.

The Gulf monarchies, including Qatar, which Bush visited in 2003, all have close military ties with the United States and are major buyers of American weaponry.

Around 15,000 US troops are stationed in Kuwait, which hosts one of Washington's largest military bases in the region, Camp Arifan, and other smaller camps used as a transit point for US-led forces in Iraq.

Security will be tight for the visit, which will see Bush address troops on Saturday after talks on Friday with emir Sheikh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Sabah.

Meanwhile, a senior Iranian cleric on Friday urged Arab leaders to distance themselves from US President George W. Bush, who is set to visit Washington's Arab allies in a trip aimed at isolating Iran.

"We hope some Arab countries have the wisdom not to tie their fate to a pathetic and bankrupt president who will be finished in a year," headline cleric Ahmad Khatami said in his Friday prayers sermon carried live on state radio.

Suu Kyi meets Myanmar junta official

AFP, Yangon

Myanmar's democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi met for one hour Friday with a junta official, in what her party described as a positive sign nearly two months after her last contact with the regime.

The Nobel Peace Prize winner was taken from her rambling lakeside home in Yangon, where she has been held under house arrest for a total of 12 years, to meet Labour Minister Aung Mye Thazan on Friday at a nearby military facility, Myanmar officials said.

The minister was appointed by the junta to handle contacts with Aung San Suu Kyi in the wake of the regime's deadly crackdown on pro-democracy protests led by Buddhist monks in September.

Security was tight around the facility, and government officials declined to say what was discussed.

It was the fourth meeting between the pair since the military opened fire on peaceful protesters in the streets of Yangon, leaving at least 31 dead and 74 missing, according to a UN report.

Japan votes to return to US-led 'war on terror'

AFP, Tokyo

Japan voted yesterday to return to the US-led "war on terror" after a two-month gap as the government took the drastic step of overriding a rejection in parliament for the first time in the modern era.

Embattled Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda is expected to win praise from Western nations for restarting the mission, but analysts said he risked a domestic backlash by ramming the controversial legislation through parliament.

The opposition, which won control of one house of parliament last year, in November forced an end to the naval mission, under which Japan provided fuel in the Indian Ocean to coalition forces operating in Afghanistan.

The opposition-led upper house voted down legislation to restart the mission on Friday, the last day it had to take action on the bill.

But the move meant the bill returned to the lower house, where Fukuda's coalition still enjoys an overwhelming majority. The more powerful chamber immediately voted largely along party lines, 340-133, to approve the bill.

The disputed mission, which was a factor in the resignation of Fukuda's predecessor, is likely to resume as early as next month.

Fukuda argued that the mission was vital to show Japan's contributions to international security and had promised US President George W Bush in November to work to restore it.

"The refuelling operation contributes to the safety of sea lanes in the Indian Ocean. It contributes to our national interest as we depend on oil from the Middle East," said Kenji Kosaka, a lawmaker of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP).

The opposition countered that Japan, which has been officially pacifist since World War II, should not take part in "American wars." The upper house passed Friday an alternative bill calling for more civilian support to rebuild Afghanistan.

"The Japanese public don't want the refuelling mission to resume," opposition lawmaker Hiroe Makiyama said.

Kenya opposition to resume protests as talks fail

AFP, Nairobi

Kenya's opposition vowed yesterday to resume mass protests following the failure of international mediation to end the country's political crisis which has led to hundreds of deaths, a spokesman told AFP.

"We have recognised that the government is not interested in any mediated resolution to the crisis in our country," Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) spokesman Salim Lone said.

"We therefore resume with immediate effect our nationwide mass action and rallies that we had postponed," he added.

African Union Chairman John Kufuor had left Kenya on Thursday after failing to broker a deal between President Mwai Kibaki and opposition leader Raila Odinga.

Odinga says Kibaki robbed him of victory in December 27 presidential polls by rigging the vote count and has refused to recognise his re-election.

Kibaki's cabinet was sworn in on Thursday but Lone said ODM remained open to any future mediation by former UN chief Kofi Annan.



Jamling Tenzing, son of Tenzing Norgay, lights a lamp in front of a portrait of Sir Edmund Hillary to mourn his death in Thamel, Kathmandu yesterday. Nepal's Sherpa community was plunged into mourning over the death of Sir Edmund Hillary, a "second father" to a people whose sacred peak Everest he became the first man to conquer in 1953.

Nepali Sherpas mourn Hillary's death

AFP, Kathmandu

Nepal's Sherpa community was plunged into mourning Friday over the death of Sir Edmund Hillary, a "second father" to a people whose sacred peak Everest he became the first man to conquer in 1953.

The gritty mountain community said the larger-than-life New Zealander will be best remembered for his promotion of Nepal as well as his efforts to give something back to the impoverished villages nestled in the mountains.

"We consider him as a second father," Zimba Zangbu Sherpa, the vice president of the Nepal Mountaineering Association, told AFP.

"We are planning a memorial and thinking about a statue in the mountaineering park," said Sherpa, who attended one of the first schools set up by Hillary in the Solokhumbu region in Everest's foothills.

The Himalayan country's tourism minister said Hillary's death was a huge loss for Nepal.

"We have lost a dear friend of Nepal and a worldwide hero," Prithvi Subba Gurung, Nepal's Minister of Tourism, Culture and Civil Aviation, told AFP.

"He was an undecorated ambassador for Nepal. When Nepal was going through conflict, he still came and continued to promote Nepal," Gurung said, referring to the decade-long civil war with Maoist rebels that ended in late 2006.

Ang Rita Sherpa, the chief administrator of Hillary's Himalayan Trust he set up in the 1960s, said many Sherpas have benefited from the New Zealander's affection for the Solokhumbu region and Nepal.

"Thousands of Sherpas have been educated, and sponsored and gone on to become doctors, pilots, hoteliers and the like. It's all down to his contributions," he said.

"Despite what he achieved, he was always very humble and committed. There is no one who can fill his shoes," added Sherpa, who also attended one of Hillary's schools as a child.

Elizabeth Hawley, a legendary Himalayan chronicler and executive officer for Hillary's Himalayan Trust, said his affection for the Sherpas stemmed from his historic 1953 ascent with Sherpa Tenzing Norgay, who died in 1986.

Career Opportunity in Afghanistan

BRAC Afghanistan Bank, an international joint venture of BRAC Bangladesh, Triodos Bank of Netherlands and IFC, has been one of the premier private commercial banks of Afghanistan. BRAC Afghanistan Bank has been contributing to the development and prosperity of the people of Afghanistan by creating employment opportunities through its financial services. BRAC Afghanistan Bank is currently looking for energetic, target driven individuals for the following positions:

Position : Branch Manager

Description : To ensure service excellence, strict adherence to the KYC policy, compliance & sanctions, bank policy, Central Bank's rules & regulations, profitability and productivity, security measures and overall ownership of the Branch responsibility.

Key Performance : • Ability to grow both sides of the balance sheet • Ensure premises and security services are being well managed and controlled • Supervise the maintenance of adequate local and foreign currency for smooth branch operations • Recommend loan applications, branch level appraisals, and performance management of the team

Other Requirements : • Excellent interpersonal skills • Excellent computer skill • Strong leadership quality • High degree of knowledge on central bank's regulations including Negotiable Instrument Act, Foreign Exchange Guideline, Core Risk management, Anti Money Laundering Guideline and its implication to different accounts

Education : Bachelors in any discipline

Experience : Minimum 2-3 years of branch banking operations or in any related field

Age : Minimum 30 years

Position : Head of Distribution

Description : To lead Distribution channels of Retail Banking for the fastest growing bank in Afghanistan.

Key Performance : • Direct and guide different Retail Distribution Points to meet their target and achieve growth • Take steps to attain growth in liability as well as asset portfolio of the balance sheet • Take necessary step to coordinate the processes among different segments of Retail for better productivity and efficiency • Initiate new processes to improve services • Address Head of Retail from time to time about various issues that need to get attention of the Management

Other Requirements : • Good communication and presentation skills • Strong leadership quality to lead a diversified team • Basic computer skills: MS Word, Excel and Power point • Ability to focus & maintain attention and complete assignments on time • Knowledge on banking laws and regulations

Education : Bachelors/ Masters in any discipline

Experience : Minimum 5-7 years experience in branch banking with minimum 3 years experience as Branch Manager in any reputed bank.

Age : Minimum 32 years

Position : Head of Finance & Administration

Description : To prepare and provide all major financial information, analysis, statements and MIS of the bank on a timely, accurate and reliable basis for Management, customers and Regulatory Authorities.

Key Performance : • To develop proper accounting policy to run the bank in a systematic and efficient way according to the Central Bank's regulations • To manage the cost / profit center to determine the divisional cost / profit of the bank and subsequent improvement on Cost Center / Profit Center • To manage day to day financial activities for ensuring smooth operation of the bank • To manage annual audit and inspection for ensuring proper control • To ensure the compliance of the stakeholders • To ensure Tax, VAT and related legal compliance

Other Requirements : • Good communication and presentation skills • Basic computer skills • Strong leadership quality to work with a diversified team

Education : The jobholder should have good academic and professional qualifications, preferably a Chartered Accountant (to provide complete

information to the management). He/she should have good knowledge about fiscal and monetary policy, legal and regulatory matters to prepare realistic forecast of the bank.

Experience : The incumbent should have at least 5 years hands on experience in the relevant field to bear his/her responsibilities independently and carry out his/her duty efficiently.

Age : Minimum 32 years

Position : Officer, Internal Audit & Inspection

Description : To support the bank by managing risks to which it is exposed through inspection of SME loan proposals.

Key Performance : • Minimize credit risk, potential losses and ensure the asset quality • Identify deviation of rules, instructions and process and Create awareness and mitigate the operational lapses. • SME Loan Health Check • Inspection of unit offices / Branches • Prepare checklist of unit office / Branch / dept. for auditing • Investigation on fraud and forgery in case of misconduct of an employee or major violation of set rules • Supervision of work of Internal Auditors & Credit Analyst of the department

Education : Bachelors in any Discipline

Experience : 2-3 years of hands on experience in related field

Age : Minimum 25 years

Position : Head of Human Resources

Description : To work as a strategic partner with Management and to integrate HR strategies. Develop, review, implement, and update applicant tracking, employment practices, compensation, benefits, and human resources programs and methods on a regular basis.

Key Performance : • Employment planning, interview and selection for key positions • Work as a change agent to introduce, adjust and grow with the workforce and cultural conditions • Introduce Human Resources development strategies and update Management to ensure organizational development • Develop and implement Succession Planning with key personnel • Create and implement training and development programs for employees and organizations • Ensure that all relevant activities comply with Bank's policies and local laws

Other Requirements : • Excellent organizational and management skills • Strong problem solving, interpersonal and negotiation skills • Good English communication skills, and computer literacy • Knowledge of local employment, HR laws and legal requirements • Cross-cultural sensitivity, flexible worldview, emotional maturity and physical stamina

Education : Bachelors/Masters in HR management or in any related field

Experience : Minimum 5 years experience in Human Resources related fields in a large organization (Wide experience in leading HR strategic/development work as Manager/Leader in complex environment)

Age : Minimum 32 years

Position : Manager/Officer Credit

Description : To ensure proper credit analysis, approve loan proposals and reduce credit-related risks.

Key Performance : • Effective handling of client loan proposals with analysis of related documents and authenticity assessment • Take all necessary measures to ensure the viability of the projects/loans in terms of repayment and fund utilization as intended • Ensure that all security documentation are qualified for securing the loan • Ensure proper ratio analysis such as Debt Burden Ratio as per credit norm • Preparation and timely submission of all MIS related to Credit Approval, exception and deviation • Maintain correspondence with unit offices/branches related to loan disbursement and charge realization • Ensure enhancement, renewal and rescheduling of loans as per credit guideline

Other Requirements : • Excellent analytical & communication skills • Sound understanding of business nature • Able to work well under pressure

Education : Bachelors

Experience : At least 2-3 years of experience in Loan / Credit Division in any reputed Bank or Financial Institution. Experience in SME or Retail Credit will also be preferred.

Age : Minimum 25 years

Position : Manager/Sub Manager CSD

Description : To participate in daily routine work of Consumer Service Delivery and to ensure all account related entries in the system accurately.

Key Performance : • Ensure monthly KPI report and maintain DCFCL (Departmental Control Function Checklist) • Deal with Dormant/Earmarked Accounts & re-activation • Handle queries from branches and clients • Ensure all signatures/photographs are scanned/ edited/checked in the system and handle other information related to account opening • Ensure prompt response of all inquiries in a professional manner • Strong commitment and self-contribution to work in a most challenging environment to achieve departmental goal

Other Requirements : Basic computer skills

Education : Bachelors in any discipline

Experience : 3 years experience in related fields.

Age : Minimum 28 years

Position : Officer, Loan Administration

Description : To ensure proper query handling for SME/Retail loans, effective and timely disbursement of SME/Retail loans, proper documentation and vouchering, regular follow-up and monitoring of overdue SME/Retail loans, periodic review of deferral loan files and documentations.

Key Performance : • Check Audit Reports and PPG congruence to the respective SME/Retail loan files before disbursement. • Initiate and monitor security lien marking and activation of loan accounts after checking all activities of initial data entry, sanction and repayment stage. • Preparation and timely submission of all MIS related to loan disbursement, and maintain correspondence with branches/unit offices related to loan disbursement and charge realization • Ensure closing of Loan Accounts as per client request • Ensure enhancement, renewal and rescheduling of all loans after realizing appropriate charges • Ensure proper data entry of loans for Central Bank reporting

Other Requirements : • Excellent verbal and written communication skills • Proper time management • Basic computer skills

Education : Bachelors in any discipline, Preference will be given to Management & Accounting subjects.

Experience : At least 2-3 years experience in Loan or Credit Division in any Bank or Financial Institution.

Age : Minimum 25 years

Position : Officer, Communication & Network

Description : To support the Bank with continuous & smooth IT operations and to monitor the network performance, security and threats.

Key Performance : • Administrate, troubleshoot & configure LAN/WAN of the Bank, Network Monitor, Threat/ Fraud Detection • Maintain & configure Network / Communication Device • Advanced Knowledge in Advanced Series Cisco Router/Switch configuration, Security configuration of Router, VPN Tunneling, Site to Site Router Connectivity, WAN Connectivity between Head Office and Branch Office • Administrate, troubleshoot & configure IP Networks • Administrate, troubleshoot & configure Windows Server with different services such as DNS, DHCP, Web/File/Print/Wins Server.

Other Requirements : Preferably CISCO CCNA Certified Professional

Education : Preferably Bachelors in Computer Science/ Engineering

Experience : 2-3 years of hands on experiences in the related field. Experience in Bank IT department/ISP will also be preferred.

Age : Minimum 25 years

If you can fit yourself with any of the above positions, please apply with attested photocopies of all academic certificates/mark sheets and two recent passport size photographs to Head of Human Resources, BRAC Bank Limited, 1 Gulshan Avenue, Gulshan, Dhaka-1212, within January 16, 2008. Candidates having any third class/division in their academic careers may not apply. Please mark the position on top of the envelope.