

Myanmar shuns aid from US warships

AP, Yangon  
Myanmar shunned a US proposal for naval ships to deliver aid to cyclone victims yesterday, according to state-run media, dimming hopes that the vessels could provide a major boost to relief efforts.

The New Light of Myanmar, a mouthpiece for Myanmar's ruling junta, said that such assistance "comes with strings attached" that are "not acceptable to the people of Myanmar." It cited fears that Washington wants to overthrow the country's government and seize its oil.

The United States, as well as France and Great Britain, have naval vessels loaded with humanitarian supplies off the Myanmar coast, and had been waiting for a green light to deliver them. The article did not say whether the French and British supplies would be allowed.

The state media report said that other U.S. aid airlifted into the country was welcome, an apparent reference to ongoing relief flights, which land in the country about five times a day. American officials are required to hand the aid to Myanmar authorities upon landing in Yangon, from which it is a difficult journey to the Irrawaddy delta.

The four US warships were seen as a major potential boost for the relief effort with the capacity to deliver supplies to inaccessible areas of the delta, with 14 helicopters, two landing craft vessels, two high-tech amphibious hovercraft and about 1,000 US Marines.

The report gave no explanation why the regime was willing to accept aid flown on US planes, with US military personnel on board, but would not allow the warships and helicopters to deliver relief supplies.

India, Pakistan sign prisoner swap deal

Talks have made little headway on Kashmir

BBC ONLINE

India and Pakistan have signed a prisoner exchange accord and agreed to meet again in July after talks in the Pakistani capital, Islamabad.

The announcement came after two days of talks - the first since a new civilian government took over in Pakistan.

Officials from both sides were reviewing peace moves, which were suspended last year after political instability in Pakistan.

Four years of talks have made little headway on key issues such as Kashmir.

The nuclear-armed neighbours both claim the Muslim-majority Himalayan territory in its entirety. They came close to war following an attack on India's parliament in December 2001.

So far talks have produced a number of confidence building measures, such as transport links and nuclear safeguards.

There have also been a number of prisoner exchanges by both sides - yesterday's accord formalises procedures for such swaps.

Indian Foreign Minister Pranab Mukherjee kicked off yesterday's talks by meeting President Pervez Musharraf, before talks with his Pakistani counterpart Shah Mehmood Qureshi.

Mukherjee was visiting Islamabad after many months. "We approach the (talks) in a spirit of co-operation, trust and pragmatism," the Indian foreign minister said in a statement. "This is predicated on an atmosphere free from terrorism, violence and the threat of it."

The BBC's Barbara Plett in

Islamabad said the visit would review progress made in the last round of the peace process, and prepare for the next stage. But perhaps more importantly, our correspondent says, Pranab Mukherjee would be gauging the new government's policy towards India. Although little progress has been made on the status of the

Muslim majority region of Kashmir, which is divided between the two states, relations have improved.

President Pervez Musharraf has floated some new proposals on Kashmir, and he also reduced the infiltration of Islamist militants from Pakistan, who are fighting Indian rule in Kashmir.



Indian External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee and his Pakistani counterpart Shah Mehmood Qureshi (R) address a joint press briefing after the two-day peace talks at the foreign ministry in Islamabad yesterday

Strike paralyses life in Kashmir

AP, Srinagar

Most businesses and schools closed in the Indian-controlled part of Kashmir yesterday after a separatist group called for a general strike to mark the death anniversaries of two key Kashmiri leaders.

Unknown assailants killed Mirwaiz Mohammad Farooq, Kashmir's chief Islamic cleric, 17 years ago.

Abdul Ghani Lone, a high-profile separatist leader, was gunned down by unidentified attackers at a rally held to observe Farooq's death anniversary in 2002.

The daylong strike call was issued by Farooq's son, Mirwaiz Omer Farooq. He leads a moderate faction of Indian Kashmir's separatist alliance, the All Parties Hurriyat Conference.

He succeeded his slain father as the chief cleric of the Indian-held portion of Muslim-majority Kashmir, where more than a dozen rebel groups have been fighting since 1989 for the Himalayan territory's independence from predominantly Hindu India or merger with mostly Muslim Pakistan.

More than 68,000 people, mostly civilians, have been killed in the conflict. Kashmir is split between India and Pakistan, which both claim the entire territory and have fought two wars over it since their independence from Britain in 1949.

Mirwaiz Omer Farooq said yesterday that the struggle against Indian rule in Kashmir would go on.

"We want a just solution of the Kashmir issue, for which thousands have sacrificed their lives," he told the Associated Press.

PPP may give indemnity to Nov 3 actions

DAILY TIMES, Lahore

The government may give indemnity to President Pervez Musharraf's November 3, 2007, actions "if it is in the national interest", Law Minister Farooq H Naek told Dawn News on Tuesday.

He told the channel that the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) was preparing a draft constitutional reforms package and might consult the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and other parties after presenting it to the federal cabinet.

Sent to presidency?: Citing unidentified sources, Geo News said the PPP had sent the draft to the Presidency and has also consulted the presidential spokesman in this regard.

But the channel said PPP spokesman Farhatullah Babar and Law Minister Naek had denied that the draft had been sent to the Presidency.

Naek told Geo News that the package, prepared under PPP Chairman Asif Zardari's supervision, would balance the powers of the president and prime minister.

Coalition partners: According to Geo News, Zardari has discussed the draft with Maulana Fazlur Rehman and the party will also send the draft to its coalition partners the PML-N, the Awami National Party and the Muttahida Qaumi Movement and seek their suggestions on the proposed reforms package.

The PPP would discuss the draft of the package in its CEC meeting

scheduled for May 24, the channel said. It said the party would also finalise in the meeting its strategy on tabling the bill in the National Assembly.

Online said the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs had prepared the summary to summon the NA, and it is likely to dispatch it to the PM's Secretariat today (Wednesday).

Meanwhile, the PML-N reacted strongly to Naek's comments. PML-N spokesman Siddiqui Farooq and PML-N leader Ahsan Iqbal told Dawn News that giving indemnity to Musharraf was not in the national interest.

4 Palestinians killed in Gaza

AFP, Gaza City

A 13-year-old boy, two militants and another Palestinian were killed by Israeli forces in the Gaza Strip on Tuesday, as talks continued in Egypt on a proposed truce, medics and witnesses said.

The teenager, Majd Khalil Abu Okal, was killed in an air raid on Beit Lahiya in northern Gaza, said Muawiyah Hassanein, the head of Gaza emergency services. A second Palestinian, Ali al-Dahduh, 32, was killed by Israeli forces in central Gaza, and a militant was killed in Zeitun, in eastern Gaza, Hassanein said.

Environment polluters

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heavy metals such as lead, cadmium, and magnesium are causing serious pollution of Begunbari and Narai canals, leading to pollution of the Balu river, one of the major sources of water for Saidabad Water Treatment Plant", said AKM Shahiduddin, executive engineer of the drainage department of Wasa.

Saidabad Water Treatment Plant is the major source of treated safe water for the capital.

Human waste and industrial waste get dumped into Begunbari canal. Human waste is not that harmful for the environment since it is bio-degradable. But effluents from factories containing toxic materials deplete the level of oxygen in river water, and it is really difficult to treat waste water containing such toxic substances," said Waliullah Sikder, project director of the Rain Water Logging Project of Wasa.

The Environment Cell of Wasa sent samples of effluents that are dumped into Begunbari canal from Tejgaon Industrial Area, to the laboratory of the environmental engineering department of the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology

(Buet), for physical and chemical analysis in 2003.

The report revealed that the total suspended solids (TSS) in the samples were 16 times higher than the level allowed by international standards while the BOD was 11 times higher than the standards, meaning the effluents may cause serious ecological and environmental damage by polluting the water of Balu river and the canals.

The dumped effluents deplete the oxygen level in the water bodies to a point when no creature may survive in that water.

Nironjon Das, an ageing fisherman of Rajakhali, a village on the bank of river Balu in Demra, said, "We get only a few puti fish from the river now and that also only during the monsoon, but a variety of fish like foli, chital, bailla and boyal were available in the Balu before."

"The change in the environment of the river has also totally changed our livelihood. Many fishermen are now engaged in other professions", he added.

Residents of the area complained that they cannot use the polluted river water for household chores either. "The pitch black malodorous water gives itching skin rashes," said Ambia Begum.

Some four kilometres upstream from Rajakhali of Itkhola near Dasherbandi, where Narai canal meets the Balu river, the scenario is even worse.

"It's really difficult to survive next to Narai canal. We haven't been using water from the canal for the last 12 years. Moreover, it has become a breeding ground for a huge quantity of mosquitoes. The stinky canal has become a curse for us," said M Jahangir Alam, a local resident.

The 36 major polluters in Tejgaon Industrial Zone detected by Wasa had been established in the late 1980s, and they have been polluting the nearby canals, rivers, and the greater adjacent area since then.

Akhtar Hossain, a resident of Trimohoni where large amounts of the boro variety of rice is traditionally cultivated in the low lying areas, said, "The harvest rate has decreased over the last few years. Use of water from Narai canal for irrigation might be the reason for it. I can't comprehend why Wasa set up a water treatment plant here for supplying safe water to the city."

Engineers of Dhaka Wasa also said treating water collected from the Balu river is very difficult and cost intensive for Saidabad Water

Treatment Plant, especially during the dry season, because the plant has to use extra chlorine to treat the extremely polluted water. The treated water also smells of chlorine due to required heavy use of the chemical.

About possible solutions to the problem, a high official of Wasa said, "After the completion of Begunbari-Hatirjil Beautification Project, no drain will flow into Begunbari canal. We have asked for a fund to set up a waste treatment plant at Dasherbandi to preserve the water of river Balu, and we decided to start collecting water from the Meghna river for treatment in Saidabad Water Treatment Plant."

"But, installation of ETPs in industrial plants or installation of CEPTs (Common Effluent Treatment Plant) at five points of Tejgaon Industrial Area is a must for ameliorating environmental pollution in greater Dhaka," he added.

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Canadian High Commission, Dhaka  
Employment Opportunity

The Canadian High Commission in Dhaka has a vacancy for a full-time Migration Integrity Assistant - LES 05  
Eligibility: Open to internal and external candidates.  
Employment starting date: July 2008 (date to be determined)

Main duties:  
• Receiving phone calls and visitors and using specialized knowledge and experience to explain the services and procedures of the immigration program.  
• Preparing reports, letters, e-mails, memoranda, charts and tables, using suitable software.  
• Interpreting between the local language and one or both official languages of Canada at interviews, official meetings or seminars.  
• Translating texts between the local language and one or both official languages of Canada.  
• Examining for authenticity of various documents e.g. birth/death certificates, educational certificates, employment letter, bank certificates.

Basic requirements:  
Experience: Demonstrated experience working in a general office environment. Demonstrated experience working on a PC in a network environment. Experience in dealing with the general public.  
Language: Ability to read, write and speak local language(s) fluently. Ability to read, write and speak English fluently. Ability to communicate orally in other official Canadian language (French) is desirable.

Availability: Able to travel on short notice outside Dhaka.  
Rated Requirements:  
Knowledge:  
• Some knowledge of Canadian Immigration processing and procedures.  
• Knowledge of general office procedures and practices.  
• Knowledge of Microsoft Office.  
• Knowledge of society and customs of Bangladesh.

Abilities:  
• Ability to analyze and evaluate information relevant to immigrant and non immigrant authorization/eligibility and make sound recommendations.  
• Ability to provide administrative support services to the immigration officers.  
• Ability to adapt quickly to procedural and technological changes.  
• Ability to communicate orally and in writing.  
• Ability to establish effective interpersonal relationships within team and supervisory relationships.  
• Ability to communicate orally in other official Canadian language is desirable.  
Personal Suitability:  
Professional integrity, tact, dependability, judgement, initiative, adaptability, flexibility and effective performance under pressure. Capacity to establish and maintain effective and professional working relationships with clients, colleagues and supervisors.  
NOTE: An enhanced reliability check is required for this position.  
How to apply?  
Interested persons must submit their application by June 1, 2008. To apply, send your curriculum vitae AND a covering letter to the Canadian High Commission, Human Resources division, House 16/A, Road-48, Gulshan-2, Dhaka.  
Selection procedures:  
Only candidates selected for an interview will be contacted.  
If there is a need this competition may be used to fill other similar positions in the future.

UTTARA BANK LIMITED  
HEAD OFFICE  
90, MOTIJHEEL COMMERCIAL AREA, DHAKA.  
TENDER NOTICE

Sealed Quotations are invited by Uttara Bank Limited from bonafide Manufacturer, Distributor, Dealer to buy some UPS and Stabilizer for office use with following configuration and terms & conditions:

Configuration of the UPS:

| Description       | Specification                                |
|-------------------|--|
| Capacity          | : 1000VA                                     |
| Backup time       | : 30 minutes with full load                  |
| Input Voltage     | : 160V-275V                                  |
| Frequency         | : 50/60 Hz                                   |
| Output Voltage    | : 220V ± 5/6%                                |
| Transfer Time     | : <2ms                                       |
| Battery Type      | : Sealed Maintenance Free battery            |
| Display           | : LED/LCD                                    |
| Alarm             | : Beep (Mode : Battery Low, Overload, Fault) |
| Filter            | : EMI/RFI                                    |
| Protection        | : High & Low Volt, Surge, Spike              |
| Audible noise     | : <40db                                      |
| Relative Humidity | : 95% maximum no-condensing                  |

Configuration of the Stabilizer:

| Description    | Specification   |
|----------------|---|
| Capacity       | : 1000VA  |
| Input Range    | : 80V-260V  |
| Output Voltage | : 220V ± 5/6%   |
| Display        | : LED/LCD   |
| Protection     | : High & Low Volt, Surge, Spike                             |
| Alarm          | : Beep ( Mode : High Voltage, Low Voltage, Overload, Fault) |

Terms and conditions:  
1. The Bidders must have to submit certificates from the Corporate Body/Institution as to supply/installation of minimum 50 (Fifty) or more UPS and Stabilizer at a time with the sealed quotations.  
2. The Prospective Bidders must have manufacturing/assembly plant of the products in Bangladesh  
3. Warranty:  
a) UPS : Minimum 2(Two) years for whole system and 1 (one) year for battery.  
b) Stabilizer : Minimum 1 (one) year for the whole system.  
4. All sorts of costs (VAT and Taxes) are to be loaded in the quoted price.  
5. The tender to be dropped, complying all formalities, to the Tender Box placed at Uttara Bank Limited, MIS & Computer Department (6th Floor), Head Office, 90, Motijheel Commercial Area, Dhaka within 12 noon on 28.05.2008 and no tender to be received after the dead line. The tender to be opened at 12.30 PM on the same day in front of the representatives of the Bidders, if any, and the Members of the Tender Committee of the Bank.  
6. Uttara Bank Limited reserves the right to accept or reject any or all offers without assigning any reason.  
A.K.M. IDRIS ALI FAQUIR  
General Manager

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Position: Projects Coordinator

Handicap International (Bangladesh Country Office) is looking for a Projects Coordinator to Supervise the Management of Projects (PROXIMITY SERVICES, PROVAT, CSID AND PRSP).

Job Responsibilities: Overall responsibility of supervising projects implementation, follow-up of the implementation, monitoring / evaluation and reporting of projects. She/he will participate in Policy Advocacy Interventions, program strategic aspects, and new project development according to Handicap International's mandate and Bangladesh context. Maintain networking and relationship with Headquarter, Donors and Partners. This position will be under line management of Deputy Director Programme.

Educational Requirements:  
• Masters in Social Sciences or relevant field  
• Excellent language skills - English (written and spoken)

Experience Requirements:  
• At least 5 years experience in project management in development and humanitarian context  
• Experience on budget management  
• Experience on programmatic, Management and Financial approach on EU funded project.  
• Strong experience in proposal and reports writing

Additional Job Requirements:  
• Experience in partnership capacity building and managing project development in collaboration with Government / partners.  
• Experience in follow-up of the preparation phase of new project  
• Experience in developing concept note, project proposal, and partnership agreement.  
• Ability to organize technical support accordingly to the needs of projects  
• Knowledge in disability issues is preferred.  
• Very good knowledge on Microsoft Office (in particular Word, Excel and PowerPoint)  
• Strong communication & interpersonal skills, Dynamic, motivated, self-driven and pro-active  
• Strong capacity to lead and give concrete support to team members  
• Outstanding organizational skills  
• Strong conceptual, analytical and synthesising skills

Salary Range  
Tk. 60,000 - 75,000 per month. Initial contract will be for a period of One Year.

Job Location  
Dhaka (with frequent visit to project areas such as Savar, Gaibandha and Sylhet)

Submission of Application:  
Application should be submitted in English. Please add one recent passport size photograph, contact telephone number and current Resume along with contact details of two referees quoting the position on the cover letter and envelope. Please send the hard copy of the application to Handicap International, House # CES (D) 4, Road # 125, Gulshan - 1, Dhaka-1212 or e-mail: support@handicap-internationalbdg.org quoting the position on subject line on or before May 24, 2008. Only short listed candidate will be notified. Note: Candidates who have applied already do not need to apply again.

Handicap International is an equal opportunity employer. People with disabilities are strongly encouraged to apply.