

Pakistan wants solution to Kashmir dispute

AP, New Delhi

Pakistan's foreign minister said Friday his government was eager to find a solution at next month's peace talks to the disputed Himalayan region of Kashmir, which has been at the heart of the bitter rivalry between his country and India.

Negotiating teams from India and Pakistan will meet July 21 for a new round of peace talks, Indian Foreign Minister Pranab Mukherjee announced after meeting with visiting Pakistani Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi. It was their second meeting since a civilian government took power in

Pakistan in February.

The July talks, part of a peace process between the nuclear armed South Asian rivals that began in 2004, will include discussions on the future of Kashmir, their largest stumbling block, Qureshi said.

"They will be discussing a number of issues, and Jammu and Kashmir and peace and security are issues that will be focussed on during the talks," said Qureshi.

Expectations of progress on Kashmir have been dampened by the sidelining of Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf, who was instrumental in pushing for a solution to the Kashmir dispute.

Musharraf dominated Pakistan for eight years but gave up his post as army chief last year and has taken a back seat since the new government took power. It is unclear if he retains any influence over the peace process.

Musharraf had previously proposed various ideas for resolving the Kashmir dispute, including a possible joint administration of the region, but India reacted cautiously. A cease-fire line currently serves as a de facto border.

But Qureshi said the new, democratically elected Pakistani government was equally committed to finding a solution.

"I have come representing the

coalition of political parties that feels that a positive movement toward peace and security and normalisation is in our mutual interest," he said, adding that he had come to India with "a very positive agenda, with a very positive frame of mind."

Qureshi urged Mukherjee "to give serious thought to outstanding disputes that need our consideration."

India and Pakistan have fought three wars over Kashmir since gaining independence from Britain six decades ago, but relations have improved since they embarked on the peace process.

Kashmir a 'solvable problem' Says Zardari

PTI, London

Describing as "solvable" the Kashmir issue with India, Pakistan's ruling PPP chief Asif Ali Zardari has said the two countries should not allow slow progress on it to be an obstacle to work in other cooperative matters.

"We must make viable peace. This (Kashmir) is a solvable problem that must not take further lives," Zardari said in a 'special vision statement' read out at a conference organised by 'Tehelka' magazine in London on Friday.

Pending a final settlement, "we agree with the statement of our Prime Minister supporting an

autonomous Kashmir running much of its own affairs," Zardari said.

"A Commission can be established between the two countries and the leaders of Kashmir themselves to work out what should be done in foreign and defence affairs," he said.

The PPP Chairman said that while working out the solution to Kashmir, "we should not allow slow progress on it to be an obstacle to work in other cooperative matters."

"There are several ways to strengthen our relations. One important way is through economic integration and trade, busi-

ness cooperation, media exchanges, transportation links between our two countries, the energy requirements of our economies, sports and entertainment events, cooperation in the Information Technologies, the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, in medicine, education and agriculture," Zardari said.

He said the PPP believed that Indo-Pak relations could and should be creatively rediscovered.

"It is a matter of great satisfaction that today our political opponents as well as the military establishment in Pakistan realise the importance of peace -- for making or breaking nations."

US Senate moves to lift Mandela's 'terror' label

AFP, Washington

The US Senate has approved a bill to remove former South African president Nelson Mandela and his African National Congress from the US terror watch list, lawmakers said Friday.

"Today the United States moved closer at last to removing the great shame of dishonouring this great leader by including him on our government's terror watch list," said Senator John Kerry.

The bill now heads to the White House, where it is expected to be signed by President George W. Bush in time for the anti-apartheid leader and Nobel Peace Prize winner's 90th birthday on July 18.

Protests over shrine continue in Kashmir

AP, Srinagar

Tens of thousands of demonstrators paralysed cities in Indian-controlled Kashmir yesterday with protests against what they charge is a government plan to build Hindu settlements to change the religious balance in the Muslim-majority region.

Police used tear gas and fired live ammunition into the air in an attempt to disperse the crowds, which assembled for a sixth straight day in some of the largest protests against Indian rule since a separatist rebellion broke out in the Himalayan region nearly two decades ago.

Three people have been killed, hundreds have been wounded and scores of vehicles have been set on fire, said Prabhakar Tripathi, a spokesman for the Central Reserve Police Force. At least 12 paramilitary soldiers were injured Saturday in clashes with protesters, he said.

Syria unearths 2,300-year-old pharaonic Engraving

AFP, Damascus

Syrian archaeologists have unearthed a hieroglyph close to Damascus which dates back to the pharaonic period around 1,300 years BC, the official SANA news agency reported on Saturday.

"The antiquities department has discovered a hieroglyph on the outskirts of Damascus, 25 kilometres (15 miles) east (of the capital), engraved into a basalt stone slab (measuring) 70 by 50 cm (28 by 20 inches)," SANA said.



Pakistani troops jump from the patrolling vehicle upon arrival at Hayatabad near the Khyber tribal agency yesterday. Around 1,500 troops and police commandos were deployed along the Peshawar border with the Khyber tribal region and its suburbs to protect the north-western provincial capital from possible Taliban attack.

Guatemala minister and deputy die in chopper crash

AFP, Guatemala City

Guatemala's Interior Minister Vinicio Gomez and deputy minister Edgar Hernandez were among four people killed Friday in a helicopter crash, a presidential spokesperson said.

"We have confirmation the deceased in the accident were minister Gomez and deputy minister Hernandez, another yet unidentified person and the helicopter pilot," the spokesperson told AFP.

The helicopter was travelling to northern Peten department for a regional security meeting when it crashed at Purulha, in Alta Verapaz department, the official said.

18 bodies recovered from Indonesia plane

AP, Jakarta

Rescuers recovered all 18 bodies yesterday from the wreckage of an Indonesian military plane that crashed into a jungle-clad mountain, a military official said.

Air force spokesman Chaeruddin Ray said none of the victims had been identified.

Among the passengers were a Singaporean, an Indian and a Briton working for the Singapore-based company Credent Technology. They were testing new camera equipment on the Casa-212 plane when it went down Thursday during an aerial surveillance mission.

Taliban likely to step up Afghan attacks

AP, Washington

The Taliban has regrouped after its initial fall from power in Afghanistan and the pace of its attacks is likely to increase this year, according to a Pentagon report that offers a dim view of progress in the nearly seven-year-old war.

Noting that insurgent violence has climbed, the report said that

despite US and coalition efforts to capture and kill key leaders, the Taliban is likely to "maintain or even increase the scope and pace of its terrorist attacks and bombings in 2008."

The Taliban, it said, has "coalesced into a resilient insurgency."

At the same time, the Afghan Army and national police are progressing slowly and still lack the trainers they need.

The report was released Friday along with a separate plan for the development of Afghan security forces. They are the first two comprehensive Pentagon reports to evaluate progress in Afghanistan.

Vast problems corruption, the illegal poppy trade, human rights abuses and slow progress in reconstruction were detailed, as well as the struggle to train and equip the Afghan Army and police.



Indian Border Security Force (BSF) Deputy Inspector General GS Virk (2R) addresses reporters as Pakistan Rangers Brigadier Kaiser Khan Tareen (2L) listens at the India-Pakistan joint border check post at Wagah yesterday. Virk is leading a 9-member high-level delegation of Indian BSF officials to participate in an India-Pakistan quarterly meeting with Pakistani Rangers officials at Wagah, Pakistan, where a variety of border-related issues would be discussed.

30,000 troops heading to Iraq in 2009

AP, Washington

The Pentagon is preparing to order roughly 30,000 troops to Iraq early next year in a move that would allow the US to maintain 15 combat brigades in the country through 2009, The Associated Press has learned.

The deployments would replace troops currently there. But the decisions could change depending on whether Gen. David Petraeus, the top US commander in Iraq,

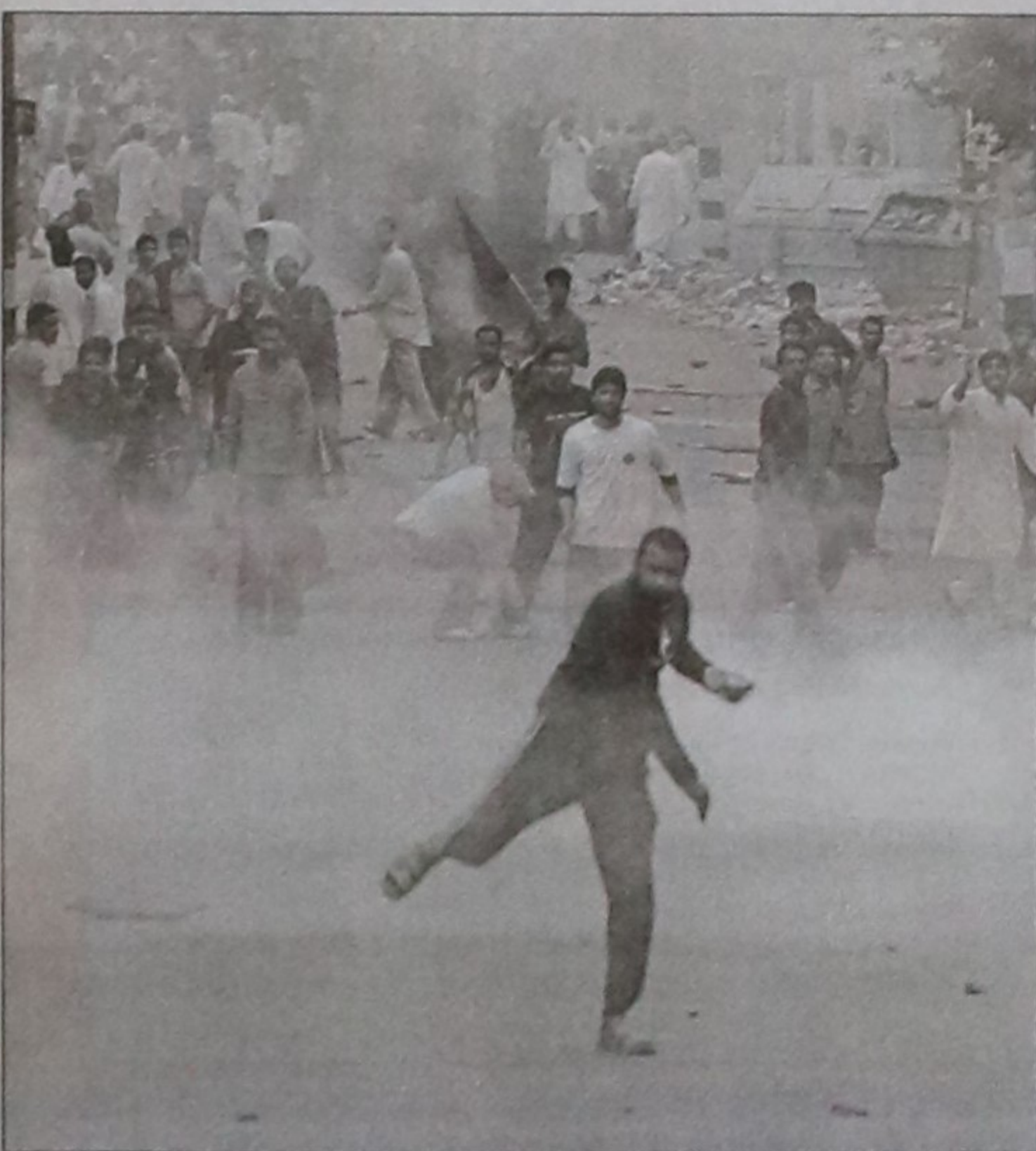
decides in the fall to further reduce troop levels in Iraq.

Several officials familiar with the deployments spoke on condition of anonymity because the orders have not yet been made public.

According to the officials, three active-duty Army brigade combat teams, one Army National Guard brigade and two Marine regimental combat teams are being notified that they are being sent to Iraq in early 2009. Officials would not release the specific units involved because the

soldiers and Marines and their families have not all been told.

The Guard unit, however, is the 56th Brigade Combat Team, 28th Infantry Division, from the Pennsylvania National Guard. Members of that unit a large brigade with heavily armoured Stryker vehicles were told last October that they should be prepared to deploy to Iraq early in 2009. The order this week is the formal notice that includes a more specific time frame.



Muslim youth pelt stones at police after a teargas shell was fired during a demonstration in Srinagar yesterday. Fifteen people were hurt when police and protesters clashed in Indian Kashmir as resistance to the provision of land to a Hindu pilgrim body deepened.

Chief of Iran's elite force issues new warning to Israel

AFP, Tehran

The chief of Iran's elite Revolutionary Guards has issued a new warning against Israel not to attack it, saying the Jewish state is well within range of its missiles, a newspaper reported yesterday.

"This country (Israel) is completely within the range of the Islamic republic's missiles. Our missile power and capability are such that the Zionist regime -- despite all its abilities -- cannot confront it," General Mohammad Ali Jafari told the conservative daily Jam-e-Jam.

"There is the possibility that by attacking Iranian nuclear sites the enemy wants to delay our nuclear activities, but any interruption would be very short since Iranian scientific ability is different from that of Syria and Iraq."


His comments came after US media reported that more than 100 Israeli warplanes staged a training

exercise with Greece earlier this month to prepare for a possible long-distance strike -- a manoeuvre seen as a warning to Tehran.

Iran has defied UN sanctions and international demands by pressing ahead with its disputed uranium enrichment programme, which both Washington and Israel fear would be used to build a nuclear weapon.


The authorities in Tehran deny seeking to manufacture an atomic bomb, and say the country's nuclear ambitions extend only to generating electricity for a growing population.

Israeli Infrastructure Minister Benjamin Ben-Eliezer, a former defence chief, said in an interview published in the Russian press on Wednesday that Iran would be "annihilated" if it tried to attack Israel.



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Career Opportunity



Chemonics International Inc. is recruiting for the following positions for the Smiling Sun Franchise Program. Smiling Sun Franchise Program is under Chemonics contract with the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). This program seeks to create a local social health franchise based on a franchise business model. Interested candidates should send their CV with a letter of interest highlighting their relevant qualifications for this job to jobs@smilingunhealth.com. Please specify the position of interest in the subject line. Closing date is July 6, 2008.

- 1. Procurement and Logistics Specialist:**
The procurement/logistics specialist will be supervised by the franchise operations officer and will purchase materials, equipment, and supplies for NGO clinics. S/he will work closely the other members of the franchise operations team to ensure that NGOs have access to the supplies and equipment they need to operate.
- Regular duties include:**
 - Establish and improve equipment/supply procurement, management and distribution systems for a franchise network of over 319 clinics;
 - Provide input to required project reports about equipment/supply purchase and distribution;
 - Identify supply chain management needs at all levels of the distribution chart; and
 - Provide technical assistance to clinics in the network on procurement, distribution, warehousing and logistics in general.
- Qualifications:**
 - 7-10 years experience in supply chain and logistics management positions;
 - Advanced degree in Economics, Marketing, Business or relevant experience;
 - Knowledge of USAID and the donor community/development sector in Bangladesh preferred; and
 - Ability to work with minimal supervision.
- 2. Business Planning/Market Research Specialist:**
The Business Planning/Market Research Specialist will assist NGOs develop and implement business plans and marketing strategies intended to expand clinic service base and increase client access to these high quality health services. Specific duties include.
- Regular duties include:**
 - Assist NGOs to develop business and marketing plan that will lead to the development of a responsive and efficient clinic system that is responsive to health needs of the target population and can generate sufficient revenue;
 - Make recommendations for survey research to determine client preferences and needs;
 - Transfer the capacity to develop and monitor the implementation of business plans to NGO members; and
 - Conduct market and financial research necessary to identify and launch new products and services.
- Qualifications:**
 - 7-10 years experience in the marketing field;
 - A degree in business, marketing or related field;
 - Must have excellent writing skills fluency in English and Bangla; and possess an ability to work as part of a team; and
 - Comprehensive understanding of both rural and urban health issues in Bangladesh.
- 3. Grants Specialist:**
The Grants Specialist reports directly to the grants manager and assists with the structuring and implementation of a \$33 million grant program to approximately 33 NGOs to provide health services. S/he ensures that recipient NGOs are adhering to USAID and SSFP grant guidelines.
- Regular duties include:**
 - Create and oversee overall policies, practices and procedures relating to all aspects of grants under the Smiling Sun Franchise Program;
 - Participate in the solicitation, selection, awards, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and close-out of grants;
 - Assist with the proper preparation and execution of grant documents and grant disbursements in line with USAID procedures and practices;
 - Ensure proper planning and preparation of synopses, agendas, minutes, and other materials for the Project Review Committee;
 - Analyze, assess, and assist with budgetary and financial aspects of grant proposals, recipient financial management capacities and needs, and disbursement of grants;
 - Ensure effective liaison between project staff and grant recipients; and ensure that recipients are provided with suitable technical advice and assistance in the fields of management, including financial management, financial sustainability and advocacy; and
 - Report to the grants manager and work closely with franchise manager and chief of party and other team members on all matters relating to grants.
- Qualifications:**
 - Minimum 5 years experience on Financial Management ;
 - Advanced degree in Finance/ Accounting / Management or relevant experience;
 - Knowledge of USAID and the donor community/development sector in Bangladesh preferred; and
 - Ability to work with minimal supervision.

"Women are especially encouraged to apply"