

20 Taliban killed in Nato strikes

Blast near Pak consulate in Afghanistan

AFP, Kabul/Herat

Nato-led ground troops backed by air power killed more than 20 Taliban-linked militants in a battle in central Afghanistan that erupted after a bomb wounded some soldiers, an official said yesterday.

Nato's International Security Assistance Force (Isaf) confirmed Wednesday's fighting in Ghazni province's Andar area, about 150km southwest of Kabul, but could not give details.

The fighting started after a roadside bomb hit an Isaf vehicle and slightly injured some soldiers,

Captain Mark Windsor said.

The spokesman could not say how many insurgents were killed when military forces hit back.

Ghazni province spokesman Ismail Jahangir said reports from the district were that more than 20 rebels were killed.

"The international forces had an operation against Taliban in Andar district yesterday. We have reports that more than 20 Taliban were killed," Jahangir told AFP.

It was not possible to independently confirm the figures because of the remoteness of the area, where Taliban extremists are

active.

The Taliban were ousted from government in a US-led invasion in late 2001 and are waging an insurgency to take back power.

The unrest has increased every year, with this year shaping up to be the most violent.

Meanwhile, a small bomb exploded yesterday near Pakistan's consulate in Afghanistan's western city of Herat, injuring a policeman and a woman, police said.

The bomb, attached to a bicycle, appeared to have been detonated remotely, deputy city police chief Ghulam Sarwar Haidary told AFP.

Nepali PM seeks to meet Manmohan on Saarc summit sidelines

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE, Kathmandu

Nepal's caretaker Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala, who is scheduled to attend the 15th Saarc Summit in Colombo this week amid uproar among the political parties, is seeking a bilateral meeting with his Indian counterpart Manmohan Singh on the sidelines of the regional meet.

The meeting between the two premiers is likely to trigger another controversy in Nepal with the Maoists regarding the wily politician, considered New Delhi's favourite, with wariness.

A chastened Koirala was forced to pare his jumbo 35-member delegation, which would have cost the cash-strapped nation dependent on foreign aid Nepali Rs 7.3 million, to only 10 members after an uproar on Wednesday among the major parties as well as in the caretaker parliament.

However, the team still includes his daughter, minister without portfolio Sujata Koirala, whose inclusion was opposed by the Maoists on the ground that she lost the April election. Koirala's personal physician, secretary and adviser on foreign affairs are also in the entourage.

Though officially Nepal wants to discuss enhanced investment and hydropower issues with India, the Maoists feel Koirala would also try to gauge the extent of Indian support for him and his Nepali Congress (NC) party.

The bilateral meeting between Koirala and Singh is likely to have a crucial effect on Nepal's future politics.

Indo-Pak FMs meet amid strains in peace drive

AFP, Colombo

The foreign ministers of India and Pakistan met yesterday in Sri Lanka amid new strains in their peace process caused by border clashes and a slew of deadly bomb attacks on Indian targets.

The closed-door talks between India's Pranab Mukherjee and Pakistan's Shah Mehmood Qureshi took place on the sidelines of an eight-nation South Asian gathering in Colombo, diplomats said.

Mukherjee shook hands with Qureshi ahead of talks that lasted about an hour, a source told AFP, but he declined to give details about the discussions.

The escalating tensions between India and Pakistan have cast a shadow over the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (Saarc) summit aimed at improving regional economic growth and cooperation, which begins Saturday.

Thursday's meeting, the second between the nuclear-armed rivals in a month, comes after New Delhi said the peace process begun in 2004 was "under stress" after a suicide bomb attack on its Kabul embassy in early July killed 41 people.

Afghanistan blamed the attack on Pakistan's intelligence agency, but Islamabad denied any role in the suicide bombing.

India has accused "elements" in Pakistan of responsibility for the attack.

The talks also follow a string of bomb blasts in India -- in the western commercial hub of

Ahmedabad and in the southern IT centre of Bangalore over the weekend that left at least 50 people dead and scores injured.

India has not blamed Pakistan for the blasts, but Indian officials suspect the attacks were supported by Pakistan intelligence, according to local media.

The talks between the ministers also came amid a sudden rise in reported ceasefire violations along the de facto border dividing the disputed Himalayan region of Kashmir.

Earlier this week, India accused Pakistani troops of crossing the Line of Control in Kashmir's Kupwara sector, the first incursion reported by New Delhi since 1999, when the rivals fought a mini-war in the Kargil peaks along the Line of Control (LoC) dividing Kashmir.

New Delhi also reported a second ceasefire violation in the Nowgam sector, north of Indian Kashmir's summer capital Srinagar, this week.

Pakistan has denied both incidents.

The two countries agreed to a ceasefire along the LoC in 2003.

Before the truce, the two armies regularly exchanged heavy artillery, mortar and machine gun fire

across the 740-kilometre (460-mile) LoC.

A separatist insurgency against New Delhi's rule in Indian-administered Kashmir has raged since 1989. Islamabad denies it is giving assistance to the Muslim rebels.

Indian and Pakistani prime ministers are also slated to meet in

Colombo this weekend for the highest level talks between the two countries in 15 months.

Levels of violence in Kashmir had been steadily declining since 2004 but the region has witnessed a sharp upsurge in recent weeks, including a bomb attack on an Indian army bus this month that killed nine soldiers.



Indian Foreign Minister Pranab Mukherjee confers with Foreign Secretary Shiv Shankar Menon during the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (Saarc) ministerial meeting in Colombo yesterday. The ministerial meeting paves the way for a summit of Saarc heads of government leaders over the weekend.

Pak troops vacate fort in tribal area

12 civilians killed in clashes

AFP, Peshawar

Pakistani officials said yesterday that troops were vacating a key fort in a tribal area bordering Afghanistan, identified by the United States as a haven for Islamic militants.

Earlier at least 12 civilians, including seven members of the same family, were killed yesterday in fresh clashes between troops and Taliban militants in northwestern

Pakistan, officials said.

Helicopter gunships pounded militant positions in the Swat Valley in a second day of fighting, which has brought a two-month-old peace deal in the former tourist region to the brink of collapse.

The civilians died when shells hit houses, gardens and even a golf course a day after five soldiers and 25 extremists were killed in a gunbattle sparked by a militant

attack on a checkpoint.

Residents said shells hit a house early Thursday in the Deolai area of Swat, killing five children and their parents.

The British-era fort in South Waziristan is being turned into a hospital for local tribesmen and some 300 troops have begun leaving, said Major General Mohammad Alam Khattak, head of the paramilitary Frontier Corps.

OPPORTUNITY FOR FELLOWSHIP IN NURSING

ICDDR,B offers Fellowship in nursing management of diarrhoeal diseases for one year, extendable for another year depending on placement opportunities and satisfactory performance. The fellowship is to strengthen the knowledge and skills in nursing management of diarrhoeal patient through practical training in Dhaka Hospital. Particulars of the fellowship are as follows:

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- Selected Fellows are required to perform shift duties and observe long duty hours.

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Interested candidates who fulfill the requirements should submit **online applications** using ICDDR,B website; however, candidates may also submit applications with detailed bio-data along with a recent passport size photograph and contact number to **Senior Manager, Human Resources (Recruitment)**, Box No. A-136, C/o. The Daily Star, 19, Kawran Bazar, Dhaka-1215 by **August 07, 2008**. Candidates who can join duties immediately should only apply.

Special information

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Visit ICDDR,B website on: www.icddrb.org



Pakistani lawyers and political activists march in support of sacked chief justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry during a protest in Lahore yesterday. Chaudhry was among dozens of judges fired by President Pervez Musharraf in November 2007 under emergency rule.

India to witness partial solar eclipse today

PTI, New Delhi

A partial solar eclipse will be seen in India on Friday while the north-eastern parts of the country will see quite a large fraction of the disc of the Sun, eclipsed by the Moon.

"The partial eclipse will be seen in the north-eastern region, starting from about 4 pm," Director Nehru Planetarium, Rathnasree, said.

The biggest and the last phase of the eclipse will be visible from most parts of the country, except Nagaland and Mizoram, where the eclipse ends after sunset, she said.

The maximum obscuration of the sun will occur at Sibsagar in Assam.

A total eclipse will be visible in Canada extending across northern Greenland, the Arctic, central Russia, Mongolia and China.

The next solar eclipse -- a partial one -- will occur on January 26, 2009, but the phenomenon will be marginally visible from eastern and southern India.

Bomb defused on Kashmir pilgrimage route: Police

AFP, Srinagar

Indian troops defused a bomb yesterday on a key Kashmir highway used daily by hundreds of Hindus to reach a revered shrine high in the Himalayas, officials said.

Discovery of the bomb came after the Indian cities of Bangalore and Ahmedabad were hit by a string of blasts last week that left 50 people dead and scores injured.

"Our men detected a powerful bomb planted on the pilgrimage route," Prabhakar Tripathi, spokesman for the paramilitary Central Reserve Police Force, told AFP.

Detection of the explosive also came after troops thwarted a rebel bid last week to attack a convoy of Hindu pilgrims returning from praying at the mountain grotto in mainly Muslim Indian Kashmir.

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Programme Schedule:

Dhaka

Seminar : 05th August 2008, 3.00 pm

Venue : Surma, Pan Pacific Sonargaon Hotel, Dhaka

Open day and

Individual Counseling : 08th August 2008, 10 am - 4.00 pm

Venue : Bangladesh Liaison Office

For further information and appointments:

Bangladesh Liaison Office, L 361, Pan Pacific Sonargaon Hotel, Dhaka 1215

Direct: 9122404, Facsimile: 9121028, Mobile: 01919101234 Email: bangladesh@londonmet.ac.uk

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Dhaka Electric Supply Company Ltd. (DESCO)

House # 3, Road # 24, Block-K, Banani Model Town, Dhaka-1213

Tel. No. 8859642, 8860341, 9880400, 8826206, Fax No. 8854648

E-mail: pcm.ho@desco.org.bd

Invitation for Tenders

1	Agency	Dhaka Electric Supply Company Limited (DESCO)				
2	Procuring Entity Name	Office of the Manager (Procurement & Contract Management), DESCO				
3	Procuring Entity District	Dhaka				
4	Invitation for	Procurement of Works and Related Services				
5	Tender No.	22/2008 & 23/2008				
6	Invitation Ref No.	DESCO/Procurement/Local Tender/2008/596				
7	Date	31/07/2008				
KEY INFORMATION						
8	Procurement Method	Open Tendering Method				
FUNDING INFORMATION						
9	Budget and Source of Funds	DESCO's own fund				
PARTICULAR INFORMATION						
10	Tender Name	Tender No. 22/2008: Extension of Existing Office Building at Baridhara Sales & Distribution Division Tender No. 23/2008: Repair Works of Damaged Distribution Transformers				
11	Tender Last Selling Date, Closing & Opening Date and Time	Tender No. 22/2008 23/2008	Last Selling Date 26/08/2008 27/08/2008	Closing & Opening Date 27/08/2008 28/08/2008	Closing Time 12.00 Noon 12.00 Noon	Opening Time 12.30 PM 12.30 PM
12	Name & Address of the office for selling Tender Document, receiving & opening tender	Selling Office of Deputy General Manager (Finance & Accounts), DESCO, House # 3 (4 th floor), Road # 24, Block - K, Banani Model Town, Dhaka – 1213.			Receiving & Opening Office of the Manager (Procurement & Contract Management), DESCO, House # 3 (5 th floor), Road # 24, Block - K, Banani Model Town, Dhaka - 1213.	
INFORMATION FOR TENDERER						
13	Eligibility of Tenderer	Tender No.22/2008	Contractors of Civil works having valid trade license, TIN & VAT registration from concerned authority of Bangladesh.			
		Tender No.23/2008	Contractors of Electrical works having valid trade license, valid electrical ABC contractor license, TIN & VAT registration from concerned authority of Bangladesh.			
14	Brief Description of works	Tender No.22/2008	Extension of Existing Office Building at Baridhara Sales & Distribution Division			
		Tender No.23/2008	Repair Works of 3-Phase & Single Phase Damaged Distribution Transformers of DESCO			
		Detail described in the tender document.				
15	Price of Tender Document (Tk.)	Tender No.22/2008	Tk. 2,000/- (Taka Two Thousand) Only payable in the form of Pay Order/ Bank Draft from any scheduled bank in Bangladesh in favor of 'Dhaka Electric Supply Company Limited (DESCO)'.			
		Tender No.23/2008	Tk. 2,000/- (Taka Two Thousand) Only payable in the form of Pay Order/ Bank Draft from any scheduled bank in Bangladesh in favor of 'Dhaka Electric Supply Company Limited (DESCO)'.			
16	Description of Package		Location of Delivery	Tender Security Amount (Tk)		Completion Time in months
	Tender No. 22/2008	Extension of Existing Office Building at Baridhara Sales & Distribution Division	Baridhara Sales & Distribution Division, Baridhara, Dhaka	Tk. 55,000/- (Fifty Five Thousand) only (Payable in the form of Bank Draft or Pay Order or Bank Guarantee in favor of 'Dhaka Electric Supply Company Limited (DESCO)'.)		06 (six) consecutive months from the date of commencement of work.
	Tender No. 23/2008	Repair works of the 3-phase & single phase damaged distribution transformers of DESCO.	DESCO's Central Work shop, Mirpur, Dhaka	Tk. 1,75,000/- (Taka One Lac Seventy Five Thousand) only (Payable in the form of Bank Guarantee/Bank draft/Pay order in favor of 'Dhaka Electric Supply Company Limited (DESCO)'.)		24 (Twenty four) consecutive months from the date of commencement of work.
PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS						
17	Name of the Official Inviting Tender		Khandaker Najibul Alam			
18	Designation of the Official Inviting Tender		Manager (Procurement & Contract Management)			
19	The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject any/all tender(s) without assigning any reason whatsoever.					
	Khandaker Najibul Alam Manager (Procurement & CM)					

Invitation for Consultancy Services

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is interested in hiring consultancy services for conducting a rapid appraisal of the livelihood capacity of Rohingya refugees living in Kutupalong and Nayapara camps in Cox's Bazar district. The result of the appraisal will be reviewed by the International Labour Organization (ILO) and UNHCR to develop strategies to address the gaps identified.

Objectives of the Study

1. To assess the livelihood capacity of the refugees realized through the economic transactions in the two camps; and
2. To identify gaps between the capacity the refugees currently possess and the capacity required for building self-reliant livelihood in the local economy of the district.

A national or international consulting firm currently working in Bangladesh or a group of consultants (hereinafter called "Consultancy Team") will be hired. Selection will be on the basis of technical and financial proposals. The contract period of the Study will be two months from the agreed start date.

The Consultancy Team leader must have the following qualifications.

- Advanced degree in business, economics, social science or other relevant field.
- At least eight years of research experience in the economic/business/social development fields.
- Experienced in field interview and case study techniques in the area of livelihood/small business/private sector development.
- Demonstrated ability in conducting exploratory interviews and compiling information in well-structured reports.
- Ability to discuss technical matters with senior experts and officials.
- Demonstrated ability to manage a team of consultants to deliver the required outputs in time.
- Experience in accounting and/or business consulting a plus.
- Experience in participatory appraisal and/or participatory observation a plus.
- Experience in Business Delivery Services projects a plus.
- Experience in microfinance a plus.

The Consultancy Team should have at least one person with Bengali language proficiency or with ability to understand Rohingya or Chittagonian language. A detailed Terms of Reference may be received online from Ms. Susana Camacho (camacho@unhcr.org) or by contacting the UNHCR Office (House No. NE (N) 8, Road 90, Gulshan - 2). The last date for submission of technical and financial proposals is 10 August 2008.