

Blair return would boost Britain's Labour Party: Poll

AFP, London

Tony Blair is the only senior figure from Britain's governing Labour Party who could revive its fortunes, according to a poll released yesterday.

None of those from Prime Minister Gordon Brown's Cabinet being touted as possible successors would improve the centre-left party's standing in the polls, a ComRes survey in The Independent newspaper suggested.

Their poll put the main opposition Conservatives on 44 percent, Labour on 25 percent and the Liberal Democrats on 17 percent.

Labour's rating would remain at 25 percent if Foreign Secretary David Miliband or Justice Secretary Jack Straw took over, sinking two points lower if Health Secretary Alan Johnson or Labour deputy leader Harriet Harman took charge.

17 killed in Pak suicide bomb attack

AFP, AP, Peshawar

At least 17 people were killed and around 80 injured Saturday when a suicide attacker rammed his bomb-laden vehicle into a security checkpoint in the northwestern city of Peshawar.

Police officials said the incident happened after officers had signalled the attacker to stop.

"Sixteen were killed and more than 80 people wounded," police officer Mohammad Ashraf told AFP.

"An explosive-laden vehicle blew up near the security checkpoint. The force of the blast destroyed a nearby market, bringing the building down," he said.

An AFP correspondent at the city's Lady Reading hospital said more than a dozen bodies and

scores of injured had been brought there.

Police said several people remained buried under debris from buildings rocked by the blast. Pictures broadcast from the area showed a scene of devastation, with the checkpoint flattened.

Eyewitness Ibrahim Khan said people were thrown into the air by the force of the explosion.

"It brought down a market and three other buildings adjoining it," he said, bleeding profusely from his left shoulder.

He said he was facing away from the market when he heard the blast, but he had been hit by shrapnel.

"Some blunt things pierced into my shoulder and I fell on the ground," he added.

Police in Peshawar, the capital

of North West Frontier Province, said they had sent teams to the area, which is near the tribal town of Darra Adamkhel -- where security forces carried out operations recently against Taliban rebels.

A security official said the attack could be part of a backlash against the military's intensified campaign in the tribal areas to root out Taliban-linked militants hiding in the lawless rugged region.

Provincial police spokesman Riaz Khan described Saturday's attack as "an act of terrorism."

Pakistan has been hit by a rising tide of Islamic militancy in the past year. The latest explosion happened on the same day as the country's lawmakers elected Asif Ali Zardari to succeed former president Pervez Musharraf.

Musharraf had been a key ally of the United States in its efforts to combat militancy on the Pakistani border with Afghanistan, a region Washington says is being used as a launching pad for rebel attacks on coalition forces.

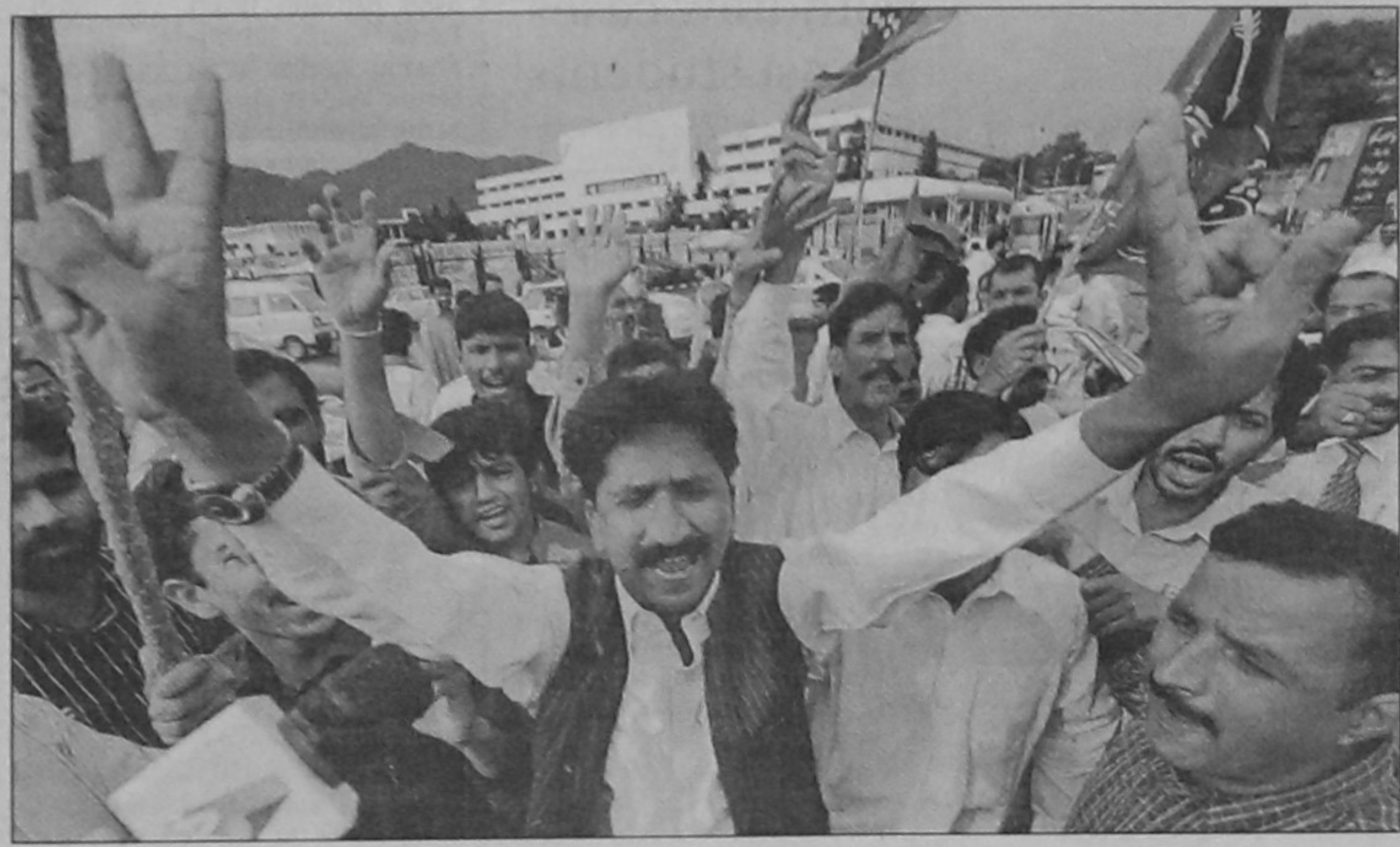
But Pakistan's fragile coalition government has been struggling to tackle the violence that has seen nearly 1,200 people killed in bombings and suicide attacks across the country in the past year.

The unrest has also been attributed to a backlash by militants angered over Musharraf's support for Washington.

The interior ministry last month announced that it was banning the main militant group behind the violence, Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan, which has threatened more suicide attacks.



Pakistani residents try to remove debris as they search for suicide attack victims at the attack site in Peshawar yesterday. At least 17 people were killed and about 80 wounded when a suicide car bombing ripped through a security checkpoint outside Pakistan's northwestern city of Peshawar.



Supporters of ruling Pakistan People's Party (PPP) celebrate after victory of the Asif Ali Zardari, widower of slain former prime Benazir Bhutto in the presidential election in Islamabad yesterday.

Indian military warns PM over poor wages

AFP, New Delhi

The Indian military on Friday took its long-running battle for higher wages to the prime minister, warning poor perks were hurting morale in one of the world's biggest armies.

A top commander representing the army, airforce and navy met Manmohan Singh to repeat demands for better pay for India's million-plus military.

The military has stepped up its demands after the government unveiled a hefty wage hike for some five million federal workers last month.

Navy chief Admiral Sureesh Mehta, who met with the premier, discussed the "core issue" of low salaries, a defence ministry official told AFP after the meeting.

The admiral handed over a memorandum to Singh which called for a review of the relatively modest perks offered to the military on August 14 when civilian government employees were given the 21-percent wage rise.

"The (wage hike) notification has unwillingly upset existing relatives between the defence forces and other central government officers," Mehta said in his appeal.

"This has not only resulted in lowering of their status, especially in the middle ranks, but also has an effect on the organisational structure in various fields where they work together," the admiral warned.

The Indian military, the world's fourth largest, has been campaigning for a 200-percent wage hike for non-ranking personnel.

Pakistan restores 3 more judges ousted by Musharraf

AP, Islamabad

Pakistan's Supreme Court on Friday reinstated three judges ousted by Pervez Musharraf, cementing political divisions in the country a day before it elects a new president.

Musharraf's purge of the court last year deepened his unpopularity and helped his political foes to a victory in February elections. Musharraf resigned under pressure last month.

However, the second-largest party then quit the ruling coalition over the failure to restore all the judges including the ousted chief justice, Iftikhar Mohammed Chaudhry.

Tassaddiq Hussain Jillani, Shkirullah Jan and Syed Jamshed Ali were sworn back into the court at a ceremony Friday.

Law Minister Farooq Naek said Chaudhry was also welcome to take a fresh oath, but said he could not return as chief justice because removing the judge who replaced him could trigger a "constitutional impasse."

"There cannot be two chief justices," Naek told reporters at the court.

The move deepens the rift between the ruling Pakistan People's Party of Asif Ali Zardari, the front-runner to become president in a vote by lawmakers on Saturday, and that of former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif.

PROFILE 'Mr Ten Percent' is new Pak president

AFP, Islamabad

Pakistan's new president Asif Ali Zardari was once so tainted by corruption allegations that he acquired the nickname "Mr Ten percent" among his countrymen and beyond.

But the judicial charges and political battles that saw Benazir Bhutto's widower spend 11 years in jail had no bearing on Saturday's presidential election here, and an amnesty last year cleared him of remaining charges.

A secret ballot of the country's two houses of parliament and four provincial assemblies saw Zardari succeed Pervez Musharraf, who was forced to resign last month under threat of impeachment.

Zardari's life journey has taken him from playboy to villain to political heir of the revered Bhutto, whose image still casts a shadow over daily life here nine months after her assassination.

Among the 168 million people of nuclear-armed Pakistan, however, there are doubts over Zardari's suitability for a role that would allow him to dismiss governments and appoint leaders of the country's powerful military.

"Mr Zardari has a controversial reputation. He has been charged, among other things, with corrup-

tion, extortion and murder," Shafqat Mahmood, a former MP and now political analyst, told AFP ahead of Saturday's vote.

"In the minds of many, he is neither clean nor innocent, and this is a huge drawback in his being a candidate for the highest office in the land."

Nor has Zardari overcome the view that he was heavily responsible for the ills that befell his wife as prime minister.

The 53-year-old has always maintained the cases against him were politically motivated, and none were proven.

When he married into the Bhutto dynasty in 1987, Zardari was the little-known scion of a land-owning polo-playing family from southern Sindh province.

But he quickly carved out a powerful position for himself as a government minister, taking a keen interest in the finance and environmental portfolios.

He was among the first people arrested when his wife's government was thrown out of office, in what remains an uncomfortable reminder of his notoriety.

The first time, in 1990, he spent three years in jail before rejoining Bhutto's second administration. But he was back behind bars within half an hour of that government's dismissal in 1996.

Troops, protesters clash in Kashmir: 1 killed

AP, Srinagar

Thousands of angry people took to the streets in Indian Kashmir to denounce the killing Saturday of a protester by government troops who fired rubber bullets and tear gas shells at Muslim demonstrators chanting anti-India slogans, an official said.

Shops and businesses were closed and public buses stayed off the roads across much of the Indian-administered region Saturday in response to a strike called by Muslim separatist groups

protesting Indian rule in the disputed region.

The strike was called by the Jammu-Kashmir Coordination Committee, whose members include Muslim separatist leaders and representatives of businesses, lawyers and government employees.

A few hundred protesters chanting "We want freedom" and other anti-India slogans clashed with government troops who tried to prevent them from marching, said Prabhakar Tripathi, a spokesman for the paramilitary Central Reserve Police Force.

Water starts receding in Indian flood zone

AFP, Purnia

Some villagers began trying to return to their flooded homes in eastern India yesterday as waters slowly receded, but officials warned the move was risky with a month of heavy rains still expected.

Almost 900,000 people have been evacuated to higher ground since flood defence walls broke upstream in Nepal almost three weeks ago, shifting the flow of the Kosi river away from its normal course and east onto farmland.

Large swathes of the impoverished state of Bihar were flooded. About 100,000 people remain marooned in village islands by the river, with most refusing to leave, while some evacuees are trying to head home.

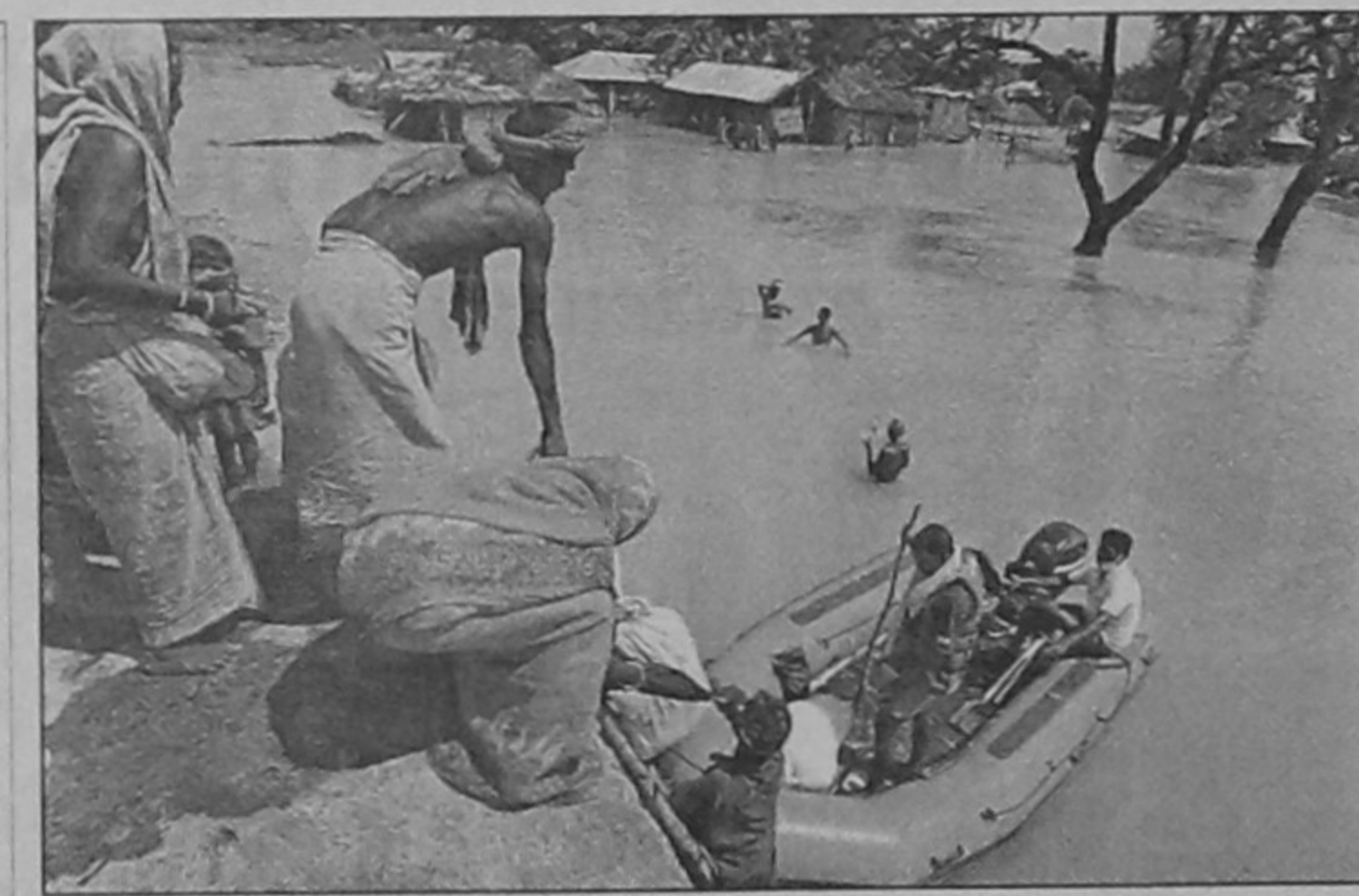
"We have reached a stage where people in the thousands are still left, but they are now refusing to come out," state disaster management official Pratyaya Amrit told AFP.

"People think the flood is over. In a lot of the camps people have

started moving back. In the last two to three days, at least 10,000 to 15,000 have gone back."

But India's monsoon season, when much of the country receives more than 90 percent of its rain, does not end till the close of September, and officials say the river could rise again.

About 1,100 square kilometres (440 square miles) of villages and farms remain underwater, even though levels have decreased by a foot (30 centimetres) or more in parts.



Indian flood-affected villagers are helped out of a rescue boat during a rescue operation by National Disaster Relief Force (NDRF) personnel in Kuwalapatti village, Madhepura district of India's northeastern state of Bihar yesterday.

India hails end to nuke pariah status

AFP, New Delhi

India's government hailed as "historic" a decision yesterday by nuclear supplier nations to end the country's nuclear pariah status and adopt a US initiative to allow atomic trade with New Delhi.

The 45-member Nuclear Suppliers Group, meeting in Vienna, agreed to end the 34-year-old ban on nuclear trade with India after Washington sought a waiver so it could share civilian nuclear technology with New Delhi.

The decision, clearing the way for finally sealing the US-India nuclear pact, "marks the end of India's decades-long isolation from the nuclear mainstream," said Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, who had risked his Congress-led government's future on the deal.

"It is a recognition of India's impeccable non-proliferation credentials and its status as a state with advanced nuclear technology. It will give an impetus to India's pursuit of environmentally sustainable economic growth," he said.

In a separate statement, the White House said US President George W. Bush and Singh had spoken by telephone and wel-

comed the "historic achievement."

Earlier, Indian foreign minister Pranab Mukherjee said the waiver would "open a new chapter in India's cooperation with other countries" in promoting the "peaceful use of nuclear energy."

Outside the headquarters of the ruling Congress party in the centre of the Indian capital, supporters danced in celebration.

"It's a historic day for the country," Digvijay Singh, a senior Congress lawmaker, told reporters.

"The world has accepted the credibility of this country, that we are serious as far as nuclear non-proliferation," he said, adding the pact would go a "long way towards bridging the gap between energy supply and demand in this country."

The landmark deal -- first agreed between Singh and Bush in 2005 -- has stirred huge controversy in India.

Both the main opposition Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party and the communists, who withdrew their support from the government over the agreement, have said it would bring India's foreign policy too much under US influence and curb its military strategic actions.



PUBALI BANK LIMITED

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY DIVISION

HEAD OFFICE, 26 DILKUSHA C/A, DHAKA

INVITATION FOR TENDERS

Sealed Tenders are hereby invited from the eligible Tenderers as mentioned in the tender documents of the under mentioned work as per terms & conditions stated below.

1. Procuring Entity : Pubali Bank Limited, Information Technology Division, Head Office, 26 Dilkusha C/A, Dhaka.
2. Tender Name : Establishing IT Enabled Research and Development Environment and Upgrading the Branch Infrastructure for Implementing Online Banking System
3. Time for completion of the work : 45 (Forty Five)-Calendar days.
4. Eligibility of Tenderers : i) The Tenderer shall have a minimum of 4 years of overall experience in the supply of goods and services.
ii) The Tenderer shall have a minimum of 3 years of specific experience in the supply of computer, server, switch related goods and related services.
iii) Having valid trade license, up to date income Tax clearance certificate and VAT registration certificate.
iv) The minimum supply value of goods under a single contract in the last five years is Tk. 50 Lakh
v) The minimum amount of liquid asset or working capital or credit facility is Tk. 50 Lakh
5. Price of Tender Document : Tk. 1,000.00 (Taka one thousand) only (non-refundable).
6. Amount of Tender security : Tk. 1,00,000.00 (Taka one lakh) in the form of Payment Order favoring Pubali Bank Limited, Head office, Dhaka.
7. Name and address of the office from where tender documents to be obtained : Pubali Bank Limited, Information Technology Division (10th floor), 26 Dilkusha C/A, Dhaka -1000.
8. Name and address of the office where tender documents to be submitted. : Pubali Bank Limited, Establishment Division (12th floor), 26 Dilkusha C/A, Dhaka -1000
9. Last date & time for selling tender document. : Up to 5:00 PM (BST), 23/09/2008
10. Last date & time for tender submission : Up to 11:00 AM (BST), 24/09/2008
11. Date and time for tender opening : At 11:15 AM (BST), 24/09/2008 in presence of bidder (if any).
12. Special Instructions : Pubali Bank Limited reserves the right to reject any/all tender(s) prior to acceptance. Tenderers must produce necessary papers along with tender.

M.A. Zubair
General Manager



PUBALI BANK LIMITED

ESTABLISHMENT DIVISION

(ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT)

HEAD OFFICE, 26 DILKUSHA C/A DHAKA

INVITATION FOR TENDERS

Sealed Tenders are hereby invited from the eligible Tenderers as mentioned in the tender documents of the under mentioned work as per terms & conditions stated below.

1. Procuring Entity : Pubali Bank Limited, Establishment Division (Engineering Department), Head Office, 26 Dilkusha C/A, Dhaka.
2. Tender Name : Supply and Installation of the Furniture, AC, Digital CCTV System, Electrical and Power Works, Lighting System, Sanitary Works, Smoke Detection System, Surge Suppression System, Local Area Network (LAN), Grounding / Earthing System, Raised Flooring and Associated Civil Works for the Data Center of Pubali Bank Limited.
3. Time for completion of the work : 60 (Sixty)-Calendar days.
4. Eligibility of Tenderers : i) 4 (four) years of overall experience of the Tenderer in the supply of goods and services.
ii) 3 (three) years of specific experience of the Tenderer in the supply of similar goods and related services.
iii) Having valid trade license, up to date income Tax clearance certificate and VAT registration certificate.
iv) The minimum supply value of goods under a single contract in the last five years is Tk. 75 Lakh.
v) The minimum amount of liquid asset or working capital or credit facility is Tk. 50 Lakh.
5. Price of Tender Document : Tk. 1,000.00 (Taka One Thousand) only (non-refundable).
6. Amount of Tender security : Tk. 1,00,000 (Taka One Lakh) in the form of Payment Order favoring Pubali Bank Limited, Head office, Dhaka.
7. Name and address of the office from where tender documents to be obtained. : Pubali Bank Limited, Establishment Division, Engineering Department (8th floor), 26 Dilkusha C/A, Dhaka-1000
8. Name and address of the office where tender documents to be submitted. : Pubali Bank Limited, Establishment Division (12th floor), 26 Dilkusha C/A, Dhaka-1000
9. Last date & time for selling tender document. : Upto 5:00 PM (BST), 23/09/2008
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Md. Rasul Amin
General Manager