

Afghanistan situation is rapidly worsening

Says US intel report; 27 militants, 10 civilians killed in clashes

AFP, Washington/Kabul

President George W Bush's administration has launched an urgent review of US policy in Afghanistan as US intelligence officials warn of a "downward spiral" in conditions there, US newspapers reported yesterday.

Coalition forces had killed 27 militants in clashes while local villagers had reported 10 civilians were killed in rebel gunfire nearby.

The papers cite officials familiar with a draft National Intelligence Estimate on Afghanistan, a comprehensive and classified report combining analyses of 16 US intelligence agencies that is due for completion after US elections in November.

The report concludes that Afghanistan is in a "downward spiral" and casts doubt on the ability of its government to stem the resurgence of Taliban influence there, the New York Times said.

"The classified report finds that the breakdown in central authority in Afghanistan has been accelerated by rampant corruption within the government of President Hamid Karzai and by an increase in violence by militants who have launched increasingly sophisticated attacks from havens in Pakistan," the Times said.

It also describes the impact of a heroin trade "which by some estimates account for 50 percent of Afghanistan's economy," the Times said.

According to The Washington Post, "analysts have concluded that reconstituted elements of al-Qaeda and the resurgent Taliban are collaborating with an expanding network of militant groups, making the counterinsurgency war infinitely more complicated."

"As the US presidential election approaches, senior officials have expressed worry that the situation in Afghanistan and Pakistan is so tenuous that it may fall apart while a new set of US policymakers settles in," when a new administration takes over in January, the Post said.

Earlier at least 27 Islamic militants were killed in military operations across insurgency-hit Afghanistan, authorities said

Thursday, while villagers reported that 10 civilians died in rebel gunfire.

The bloodshed in clashes on Wednesday underscored a deterioration in security this year that has led to new emphasis on a political solution to a Taliban-led insurgency launched after the extremist regime was toppled in 2001.

The claim of the heavy civilian death toll in Uruzgan province on Wednesday could not be independently verified because of the remoteness of the area.

Afghan and international troops were on patrol when they were attacked with guns, mortars and rocket-propelled grenades (RPG), a statement from the US Forces in Afghanistan said.

Pak military seeks politicians' support to fight militants

THE DAWN, Islamabad

The military took elected representatives of the nation into confidence on Wednesday about the worsening situation in Fata, NWFP and Balochistan and the US-led "war on terror" during a joint sitting of the two houses of parliament held in camera.

It was only the third secret session of parliament in the country's history.

The military leadership briefed

legislators about the source of arms supply and modern communications systems used by militants and the armed forces' "limitations" in coping with the airspace violations by US drones and helicopters.

A number of opposition lawmakers expressed dissatisfaction with briefing, saying it "lacked depth and diagnosis".

The meeting was attended by almost all MNAs and Senators.

The governors of Punjab,

Balochistan, NWFP and chief ministers of all the four provinces were also present.

Mian Nawaz Sharif, Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain and Gen Ashfaq Parvez Kayani, Chief of Army Staff, also attended the briefing.

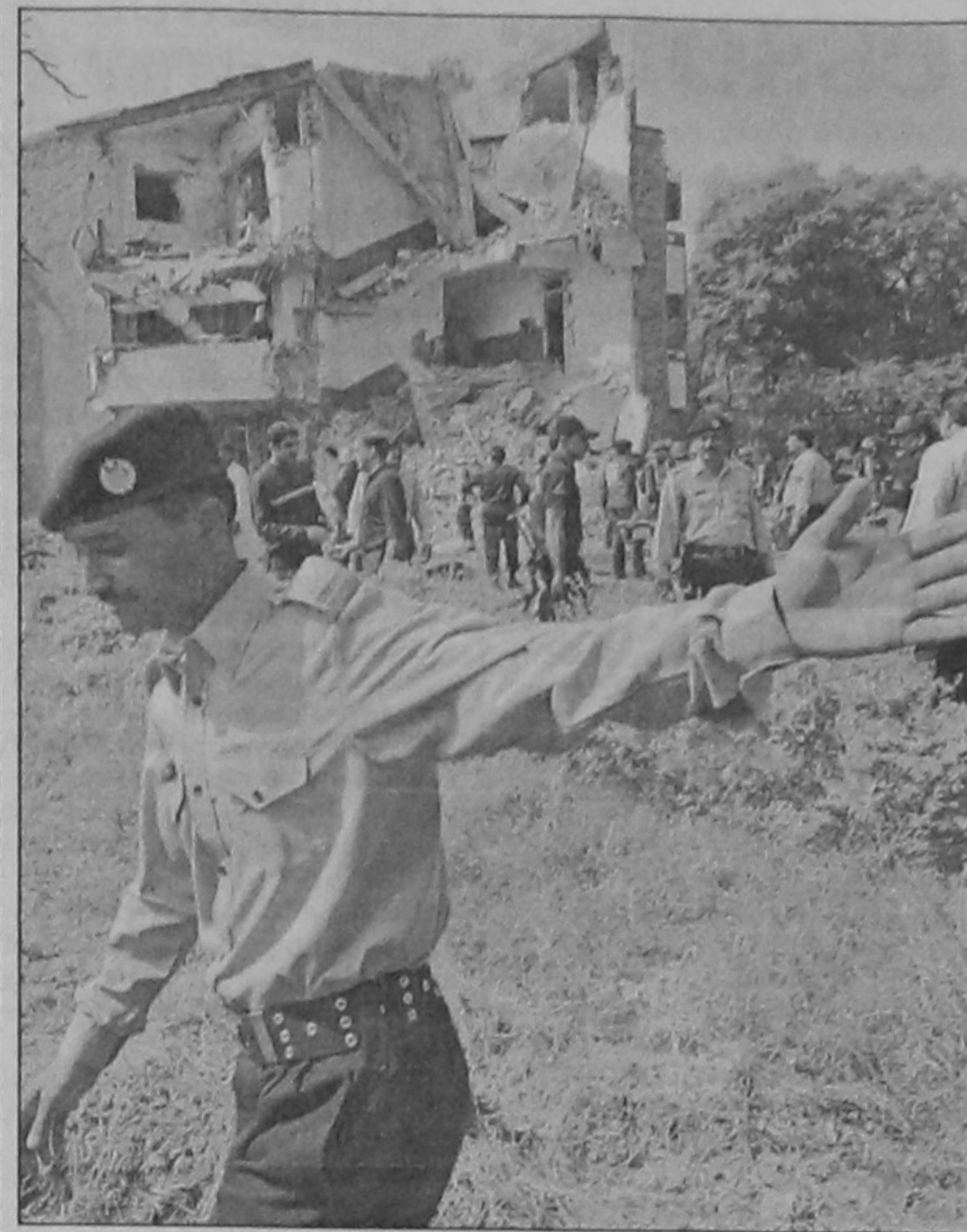
National Assembly Speaker Fehmida Mirza, who chaired the sitting, earlier held a meeting with the heads of parliamentary parties represented in the two houses to chalk out an informal agenda for the joint session.

Bajrang Dal dares govt to ban it

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE, New Delhi

The Bajrang Dal, the youth wing of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), has dared the Indian government to ban it, warning that the authorities would face the "consequences" if it was outlawed.

"We will fight the ban and we will go to the people to explain the injustice done to us. The elections are coming up soon and it (a ban) will prove costly for the government," Prakash Sharma, national convenor of the Bajrang Dal, told IANS.



A Pakistani policeman prevents pedestrians from entering the site of a car bomb blast at a police barracks in Islamabad yesterday. The car bombing at the police headquarters in the Pakistani capital has injured seven people.

Landmark Maldives vote goes to second round

AFP, Male

The first-ever democratic presidential battle in the Maldives is to go into a second round after Asia's longest-serving leader failed to deliver a knock-out blow to his rivals, officials said yesterday.

With most votes from Wednesday's polls counted, incumbent President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom -- who has run the Indian Ocean archipelago unchallenged for 30 years -- was ahead with 40 percent, but short of the majority needed to avoid a tough run-off.

He will have to face his most outspoken critic -- former political prisoner Mohamed "Anni" Nasheed -- who was in second place with 25 percent, election officials said.

Gayoom told reporters that he was "proud" of the result, even though he had predicted a first round win. He said he was in a strong position to win the second round, which must be held within 10 days.

But analysts say Gayoom will have a tough time fighting Nasheed in a run-off if supporters of the other opposition candidates rally behind the one-time Amnesty International "prisoner of con-

science." Nasheed's Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP) was also upbeat on his chances.

"Gayoom said he would win in the first round, but even with all his dirty tricks, he did not get a majority. That shows he can be beaten," a party official said.

Opposition parties had charged that large numbers of their supporters had been removed from voters' lists.

The landmark presidential vote was the first time Gayoom has allowed any competition. Rival political parties were only allowed to be formed on the islands two years ago.

The polls also marked the climax of an effort to bring political freedoms to the Muslim nation of 300,000 people in the wake of pro-democracy protests and international pressure.

Many Maldivians are eager to see a fresh face in charge of their atoll nation -- which despite its image as a beach paradise is beset by problems including a critical housing shortage, rising crime and drug abuse.

Political tensions have also been mounting.



Career Opportunity



Smiling Sun Franchise Program (SSFP), the flagship project of USAID-Bangladesh, is going to become the world's largest health social franchise. In the network of more than 300 clinics across the country, SSFP attaches paramount importance to quality of care in order to fulfilling this mission. Now, SSFP intends to hire 25 seasoned, competent and creative 'Monitoring Officers' under its Franchise Manager in order to maintaining and improving quality of the clinics under different clusters. Monitoring Officers will be posted in different districts of Bangladesh.

Competencies:

1. Able to conduct the process of Quality Monitoring and Supervision (QMS) in Smiling Sun clinics
2. Knowledgeable on quality of care in health service delivery
3. Knowledgeable on SSFP standards and ability to apply those in Smiling Sun clinics
4. Demonstrated technical expertise in providing 'on the job' training on components of essential service delivery
5. Fairly knowledgeable on identifying training need of the service providers
6. A proven leader, manager, and mentor with excellent interpersonal skills
7. Capable of directing and managing change for betterment of health services delivery
8. Capable of inspiring and motivating team members to achieve high performances
9. Must possess strong written and verbal communications skills in English
10. Have excellent analytical skill to utilize data for action
11. Able to coordinate with local health authority, other stakeholders and developing partners
12. Possess sound health to undertake extensive travel up to 65% of working time
13. Excellent Facilitation skills

Qualifications:

1. Medical graduate preferably with master in public health degree.
2. At least three years work experience with any development organization
3. Sound knowledge in implementation of project and management of staff is required.

Interested candidates are requested to send their CV in strict confidence, mentioning current salary by emailing to jobs@smilingunhealth.com. Please write "Monitoring Officer" in the subject line. Closing date is October 28, 2008. Compensation will be commensurate with qualifications and previous working experience.

"Women are especially encouraged to apply"

DFID Department for International Development

An Equal Opportunity Employer

Vacancy Announcement

Deputy Programme Manager – Pro-poor Growth Team

Department for International Development Bangladesh (DFIDB)

DFID Bangladesh is responsible for managing the UK's development programme in Bangladesh, the main aim of which is the elimination of poverty. The programme promotes participatory governance, economic growth and Human Development for the poor, working with government, the private sector and civil society. We now have a vacancy for a Deputy Programme Manager (Sub Band B1).

RESPONSIBILITIES:

The successful applicant will be working in a multi-disciplinary team of Administrators and Technical Advisers to assist the DFIDB Pro-poor Growth team deliver its targets and contribute to the achievement of DFIDB's Country Assistance Plan. Reporting to the Senior Livelihoods & Infrastructure Adviser, the Deputy Programme Manager will:

- Contribute to programme policy and strategy formulation;
- As Project Officer, manage and oversee the work of partners to successfully implement projects and programmes;
- Undertake cross-programme tasks in support of wider DFIDB programme initiatives such as coordination of particular development theme working groups;
- Ensure effective team work as a member of the Pro-poor Growth team, and have direct management responsibility for an administrative team of 3 staff members;
- Assist Advisers in the development and design of new project initiatives;
- Ensure financial monitoring and propriety of DFIDB's financial arrangements for the project portfolio;
- Engage in regular monitoring and evaluation of projects;
- Contribute to the achievement of DFID's corporate objectives and compliance with people management standards

The DPM will take direct responsibility for some projects as Project Officer. In those instances there will be a Lead Adviser supporting the DPM and usually a wider group of core Advisers. The DPM will liaise within their own and other teams to ensure a linkage and synergy on policy and programme issues.

PERSONAL SKILLS:

Candidates should be computer literate (proficiency in Microsoft Word, Outlook, Excel and PowerPoint is required) and have excellent skills in spoken and written English and Bangla. The selected candidate will be assertive, a self-starter and have excellent organisational, management, communication, financial, inter-personal, analytical and judgement skills. The post will involve occasional travel out of Dhaka usually requiring 2-3 nights away from home.

QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE:

The candidate should be a Graduate, preferably with at least an MBA or comparable qualification from an internationally recognised programme. A minimum of five years experience in staff and financial management, and at least two years experience of working in development or related organisation is required. For candidates with substantially greater experience, lesser educational qualifications may be accepted.

CONTACTS AND COMMUNICATIONS:

The selected candidate will be awarded an initial fixed term contract of 3 years based on satisfactory performance during a probationary period. A competitive salary starting at BDT 100,473 per month, with annual progression, plus a benefit package, will be offered. For an application form and the full job description, please e-mail: dfidb-recruitment@dfid.gov.uk and put "Request" in the subject box. The papers will then be sent to you electronically. Only applications made on the DFID application form and submitted in electronic copy will be considered. These should be e-mailed to the dfidb-recruitment@dfid.gov.uk e-mail address no later than 15:00 hours on Thursday 23 October 2008. Selection is on merit although you will need to hold Bangladeshi citizenship or have a Bangladeshi work permit. Applications are welcome from all ethnic groups, women and disabled people. Only short-listed candidates will be contacted for the selection process which will be through an Assessment Centre arrangement consisting of English Language and other exercises.



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DFID Bangladesh
British High Commission



Islamic Relief seeks a caring world where the basic requirements of people in need are fulfilled



ISLAMIC RELIEF

Islamic Relief is an International Development Organization based in UK and working in Bangladesh since 1991. Islamic Relief seeks to promote sustainable economic and social advancement by working with local communities through relief and development programs. IR aims to help the needy regardless of race, religion and gender.

IR is currently seeking highly motivated professionals to work under its Disaster Management, Preparedness and Response Unit for its new project "Unregistered Rohingya Refugee Operation" funded by European Commission Directorate-General for Humanitarian Aid - ECHO under the following criteria.

1. Water and Sanitation consultant/expert: 1 post, Project office, Teknaf – Cox's Bazar (Duration one year)

Responsibilities:

The Water and Sanitation Expert will be responsible for overall management for Water and Sanitation issues in the project area including budget preparation, coordination and report writing.

Competencies:

The incumbent should be experienced on WATSAN issues such as; water hydrological test, water purification & testing procedure, human garbage dislodging, solid water management, waste water disposal system, health/hygiene issues, awareness raising materials preparation and facilitation skills, budget preparation and control, communicate, coordinate, linkage, liaison with DPHE and similar organization. Proficient computer skills and use of other statistical applications. Teamwork – Good interpersonal skills. Good financial planning ability.

Qualification:

Post graduation degree in Public Health Engineering or other relevant discipline, or equivalent combination of education and experience in a related area.

Work Experience:

At least 8 years of experience in a similar position and preferably ten years of working experience in the NGOs sector.

Language: Fluent written and spoken English

Remuneration: IR will provide a competitive package depending on experience and professional background

Application Deadline: 30th October 2008.

2. Medical Officer (MO): 2 posts, Project office, Teknaf – Cox's Bazar (Duration 6 months)

□ M.B.B.S. degree with BMDC registration.

□ Capable to deal with preventive and primary health care delivery system. Mentality to work in the field with rural distressed and poor people. Good command on spoken & written English. Excellent communication skills & Exceptional IT skill

Remuneration: Taka 28,000/- to 30,000/- per month (consolidated)

Application Deadline: 30th October 2008

Interested persons are requested to send their letter of interest with detailed CV and a passport size photograph to the following address: IR, ISLAMIC RELIEF, House no. 21, Road no. 12, Block-K, Baridhara, Dhaka 1212.

Islamic Relief is an equal opportunity employer