



US Senator John Kerry (L) listens to Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh during a meeting in New Delhi yesterday. Kerry arrived in the Indian capital to hold discussions with Indian leaders on the situation arising out of the Mumbai terror strikes.

Israel turns back UN senior official

AFP, Jerusalem

Israel has turned back UN human rights envoy Richard Falk upon his arrival at Ben Gurion airport, authorities said on Monday, accusing him of "legitimizing Hamas terrorism."

"Israel has made clear that Mr. Falk was not invited, nor would be welcome in Israel, under his capacity as special rapporteur" for human rights, the foreign ministry said.

Falk, who is the UN's monitor of human rights in the Palestinian territories, last week prompted Israel's ire when he said its policies against people in the territories amount to a "crime against humanity."

Pakistan, India speak of improving relations

AP, Islamabad

Pakistan and India talked hopefully about improving relations yesterday as the nuclear-armed rivals appeared to be searching for a path away from confrontation following the Mumbai terror attacks.

Pakistan President Asif Ali Zardari downplayed reported violations of his country's airspace by Indian aircraft a day earlier. Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said he hopes relations can be "normalised" but not until "our neighbour stops allowing its territory to be used for acts of terrorism against India."

The two countries have fought three wars against each other since independ-

ence from Britain in 1947. Despite a peace process that began in 2004, tensions remain high, and each country wants to avoid showing any weakness to the other.

India has called on Pakistan to crack down on militant groups operating out of Pakistan, particularly Lashkar-e-Taiba, which has been blamed for the Mumbai attacks that left more than 160 people dead.

Pakistan has carried out raids on a charity believed to be linked to Lashkar, but also urged India to provide further evidence.

Abdullah Ghaznavi, Lashkar's chief spokesman, denied involvement in the Mumbai attacks, saying his group only targets Indian forces and Indian defence

installations as part of efforts to force India out of its portion of the disputed Kashmir region.

"This is a jihad, and it will continue," Ghaznavi told The Associated Press in a call Sunday from an undisclosed location.

He also claimed his group has "no direct or indirect links" with the Taliban or al-Qaeda.

"We neither finance them nor support them," he said.

Pakistani officials said Indian aircraft entered one to two to four km inside Pakistan's section of Kashmir and over the eastern city of Lahore on Saturday.

Pakistani jets chased the Indian aircraft back over the border, authorities here said.

Lanka claims taking another Tiger village

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lankan security forces captured another key village from Tamil Tiger rebels yesterday after heavy fighting as the air force kept up bombing more guerrilla targets, the defence ministry said.

Troops took control of the village of Ampakamam after hours of heavy fighting, the ministry said, adding that the area had been used by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) as an administrative hub.

Troops moved into the area as soldiers in the neighbouring Kilinochchi district were trying to take control of the

town of Kilinochchi, where the Tigers maintain their political headquarters.

The air force carried out several bombing sorties from Kilinochchi on Monday after an intense bombing drive over the weekend, the ministry said.

Last week, the military said it was within "kissing distance" of the town, but heavy rebel resistance and monsoon rains had slowed the army offensive.

Both sides have claimed inflicting heavy losses in the recent battles. However, it is not possible to verify casualty claims by either side as independent reporters and aid workers are banned from the north.

The Sri Lankan government pulled out of a Norwegian-brokered truce in January. The rebels are fighting for a separate state for ethnic minority Tamils from the majority Sinhalese community.

Meanwhile, Sri Lanka's Tamil Tiger rebels, losing territory in a major military offensive, have stepped up forced conscription of soldiers, including children, a rights group said yesterday.

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) has also tightened restrictions on civilians trying to flee the fighting in northern Sri Lanka, it said.

US Senator Kerry asks Pakistan to put ISI under control

AFP, New Delhi

US Senator John Kerry visited India yesterday and put fresh pressure on Pakistan over the Mumbai attacks, saying its powerful spy agency must be brought under control.

Ahead of talks with Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, Kerry said Pakistan's Inter Services-Intelligence (ISI) must stop operating independently of the government and end its links with militant groups.

"We would like to see an ISI that is reforming and brought completely under civilian control," Kerry told the Indian Express.

Kerry said the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) group, which India accuses of planning the Mumbai attacks, was set up by the ISI to fight Indian rule in Kashmir.

"They formed it and they know they formed it. But they didn't know that the LeT would graduate into an enterprise of its own," Kerry said, adding the ISI was not linked to Mumbai attacks "unless at some lower level".

Pakistan President Asif Ali Zardari tried to put the ISI under the control of the interior ministry in July but hastily reversed his decision after protests from Pakistan's military establishment.



Indian Christians offer prayers in Mumbai Sunday for those killed in the Nov 26 attacks. India accuses the banned Islamist movement Lashkar-e-Taiba of training and equipping the 10 militants who stormed India's financial capital and killed 172 people.

Dire consequences

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stand back if the election is not held as scheduled on December 29," she said.

The former premier addressed at least seven election rallies including one at Jessore Town Hall, one at Navarone, one at Satkhira, one at Dumuria and one at Bagerhat on the second day of her campaign in southern districts.

Khaleda told rallies that advisers to the caretaker government will be accountable for their "wrongdoings". "They will have to be accountable for their frequent foreign trips which cost the state money," she said.

"Leaders of my party, my sons and I were detained to make the country weaker and dysfunctional," she said.

"My sons were energetic and completely fit at the time of their arrest and they even got into the prison van on foot. But when they were released one was in a wheelchair while the other was in an ambulance with an oxygen mask," she said.

"What sort of justice is this? What was my fault," she said. She alleged that her sons were tortured in jail because she refused to go abroad.

"None of my sons and I were ever involved in corruption... I have no assets and properties anywhere else in the world. Bangladesh, where

I have been living since my birth, is my first and last address... I shall die here. I have no address in any foreign country," she said.

Criticising the politics of fear and poles, she said BNP does not believe in politics of chaos and violence.

She handed over sheaf of paddy, the BNP election symbol, to party candidates while introducing them to the crowd who thronged the rallies.

In Jessore, she introduced Tariqul Islam, Abu Sayeed, Maulana Azizur Rahman, Engineer TS Ayub, Mufti Mohammad Wakkas, Abul Hossain Azad as four-party candidates and urged all to vote for them.

In Satkhira, she introduced Habibul Islam Habib, Kazi Nazrul Islam, Maulana Abdul Khaleque and MA Riasat Ali.

In Dumuria, she introduced Jamaat nominee Mian Golam Parwar as the four-party alliance candidate.

In Bagerhat, Khaleda introduced four-party alliance candidates MA Salam, Sheikh Wadudur Rahman, Shahidul Islam and Wahiduzzaman Dipu.

In Khulna, she introduced Amir Ejaz Khan, Nazrul Islam Manju, Kazi Sikandar Ali Dalim, Mian Golam Parwar and Shah Mohammad Ruhul Quddus.

Having her dinner at Khulna Circuit House in the

evening she left for Faridpur to attend several road rallies.

As of filing of this report at 1:00am she was scheduled to return to Dhaka early today. However, she could stay in Rajbari if dense fog makes travelling in the dark difficult.

The BNP chairperson said leaders of a certain political party are yet to start their election campaigns in full swing as they apprehend that the result of 2001 elections will be repeated.

She claimed the present government patronised corruption instead of curbing it. She said the caretaker government tried to form a puppet and a subservient government. "Instead of arresting the real corrupt people, the government arrested her party leaders, activists and different politicians as part of its plan to banish politicians and control the country," she said.

She said the January 11, 2007, changeover was planned to make the country dysfunctional by destroying democracy, stopping development and creating a vacuum in politics.

She urged election officials to remain neutral while conducting the December 29 parliamentary elections. She said whoever comes to power through a free and fair election would work for the welfare of the country.

BNP sketchy about crucial issues

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accusing some quarters of tarnishing the national image. It says, "All evil activities to portray Bangladesh as a militant, extremist and corrupt country will be strongly resisted," adding that Bangladesh's true image of being a non-communal and liberal country will be effectively publicised and restored.

The manifesto expresses determination to resist rise of any terrorist group using religious cover. The BNP ensured public safety by arresting and trying religious extremists and it will continue to do so, it claims. The party will seek international help if necessary to combat terrorist activities, the document adds.

But that raises a big question since former BNP deputy minister Abdus Salam Pintu is one of the accused in the case in connection with the August 21, 2004 grenade attack on an Awami League rally, in collaboration with banned Islamist militant organisation Harkatul Jihad. Pintu had been nominated by BNP to contest in the upcoming parliamentary election, but finally the EC did not accept the nomination since there was another party nominee ahead of him on the list.

Moreover, since another banned Islamist militant organisation Jamaatul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) had orchestrated countrywide bomb blasts in August 2005, its leaders were openly helping top BNP leaders in north Bengal in physically destroying political opponents.

The manifesto praises BNP's successful anti-crime drive, Operation Clean Heart, and the formation of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab). In both of which cases, human rights groups alleged gross violation of human rights in the form of extra-judicial killings in 'crossfire', illegal detentions, and use of torture. In addition, the BNP was accused of repression on journalists who had written against its regime or leaders. But the party brushes those allegations aside.

In another part of the manifesto, the party says that human rights have been severely violated in the last two years. If voted to power, it will implement the UN's universal declaration on human rights, and help smooth functioning of the Human Rights Commission. It is the present caretaker government which set up the Human Rights Commission. The BNP ignored setting it up when it had the chance, although the demand for it

had been decades old.

The manifesto also lacks sensitivity towards the minority nationalities and the indigenous population who feel offended if they are referred to as 'tribal people'. But it cavalierly keeps terming the indigenous population as 'tribal' ('upojati' in Bangla) while saying that the party will ensure communal harmony and offer special benefits to backward 'tribal communities'.

Although the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) were destabilised by Aiyub Khan's military regime during the Pakistani eras by pushing the indigenous people out of their homes and promoting migration of 'plainlanders' into those areas, the BNP during its successive rules since the late seventies has not tried to resolve the mistrust and conflict. Rather its local leaders have been continuing to promote further encroachment of land of the indigenous people.

The manifesto criticises the current caretaker government's handling of the judicial system and says the BNP will restructure criminal and civil courts to speed up trial procedures, undertake structural reforms to end the scope of corruption in the judiciary,

and introduce information technology in the judicial administration and other judicial activities.

The judiciary became most controversial during the BNP rule. Such controversies hovered around appointments of judges ignoring the chief justice's recommendations, and even around the appointment of a partisan judge having a fake educational certificate. But above all, throughout its five-year rule the BNP delayed separation of the judiciary from the executive branch of the government using all kinds of excuses. The BNP's interference with judges' retirement age also triggered conflict with the Awami League over the appointment of the chief adviser to the 2006 caretaker government, which ultimately led to the events of 'one-eleven'.

The BNP manifesto also promises setting up an independent secretariat under the Supreme Court to ensure complete independence of the judiciary. But Alas! The promise comes too late. The caretaker government on Monday already approved the Judicial Service Secretariat Ordinance to set up such a secretariat.

আমার ভোট আমি দেবো
দেখে শুনে জেনে দেবো

ভোটটা দিলে সেইজনকে দেবো

১২৯-০৩/১২/০৮

NATIONAL TUBES LIMITED
(An Enterprise of Bangladesh Steel & Engineering Corporation)
131-142 TONGI INDUSTRIAL AREA
GAZIPUR-1710.
API LICENSEE AND ISO-9001:2000 CERTIFIED COMPANY

“আদমজী পাইপ” নামে খ্যাত এনটিএলের জিআই/এমএস/এপিআই পাইপ ব্যবহার করুন যা দীর্ঘস্থায়ী, পুনঃ ব্যবহারযোগ্য, নির্ভরযোগ্য ও নিরাপদ।

INTERNATIONAL TENDER NOTICE

Sealed offers are invited by Managing Director, National Tubes Ltd. for supply of Hot Rolled Steel Strips for manufacturing of Water Line Pipe, on C&F(C) Chittagong & C&F(C) Benapole basis :

Reference No.	Quantity and description of goods	Earnest Money	Price of Tender documents	Closing / opening date and time	Source of finance
COM(I)STRIPS-1000/Tender-05/08	1000 M/Tons 'A' Class Hot Rolled Steel Strips (Quantity may be increased or decreased)	US\$ 10,500.00 Or Tk. 7,50,000/-	Tk. 1000.00 (Take one thousand only) (non-refundable)	Closing 15-01-2009 at 11:00 A.M. Opening on the same day at 11:15 A.M.	Cash / Any unsecured Credit

In case of unavoidable circumstances the offer will be received on the next working day and opened on the same place and time. Tender documents may be obtained during working hours (excepting on opening date) on cash payment from the following offices & the offers will also be received and opened in the Purchase Deptt. of the same offices :

- The Controller of Accounts, Bangladesh Steel & Engineering Corporation, "BSEC BHABAN", 102 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka-1215
- The Dy. Chief Accounts Officer, National Tubes Ltd., Tongi, Gazipur.

(DR. MD. AMIRUL MOMIN)
Addl. Chief Engineer (Commercial)
Phone : 9802737

Request for Proposal (RFP)

Promotion of Development and Confidence Building in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT)

The Chittagong Hill Tracts Development facility (CHTDF) United Nations development Program (UNDP) Bangladesh, seeks proposal from interested and well qualified organizations to "Provision of consultancy to design a sustainable program that will enhance the use and profitability of Non Timber Forest Products, including Bamboo and Rattan for the program of Economic Development" under UNDP-CHTDF. The solicitation documents have been uploaded in the UNDP website http://www.undp.org.bd/proc_more.php

The deadline for submission of RFPs will be 04th January, 2008 05:00 pm.

Vacancy Announcement

Promotion of Development and Confidence Building in the Chittagong Hill Tracts

United Nations Development Programme in Bangladesh announces vacancies for the following position for "UNDP-Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Facility" under "Service Contract" modality. The duration of the contract is one year initially and subject to renewal on an annual basis upon satisfactory performance.

1. Radio Operator

For details of the Terms of Reference and instructions to apply, please visit our website: <http://www.undp.org.bd/jobs>. Hard copies of the TOR's can be collected from UNDP-CHTDF Offices of Dhaka, Rangamati, Khagrachari and Bandarban. Applications should be submitted no later than 29th December, 2008.

"Only short-listed candidates will be contacted. Submitted documents will not be returned to the applicants"

"Women are strongly encouraged to apply"