

Zardari betrayed us, says Sharif

Pakistan deploys troops after violent protests

ANI, AP, Islamabad/Lahore/Sheikhupura

Former Pakistan prime minister and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) chief Nawaz Sharif has said that President Asif Ali Zardari betrayed him and his brother Shabbaz Khan by enforcing a false decision of disqualifying them from contesting elections.

Addressing a public rally for the first time in Sheikhupura, after the Supreme Court's verdict, Sharif said: "We were betrayed not by the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), but by President Zardari."

Meanwhile, the PML-N has decided to stage nationwide protest rallies and meetings against the apex court's verdict

and imposition of Governor's rule in Punjab province.

Sharif termed the judges announcing the verdict as 'fake'.

"Shabbaz is still the legal and constitutional chief minister of Punjab as 'fake' judges could not declare him ineligible," The Daily Times quoted Sharif, as saying.

Sharif said Thursday, the people would not accept the Supreme Court ruling. He said no undemocratic action would be tolerated and the mandate of the people should be respected.

Addressing a massive public rally here, Nawaz said Pakistan is passing through hard times because of verdicts of the PCO judiciary.

Earlier, paramilitary troops were deployed in eastern Pakistan on Friday after supporters of Nawaz Sharif torched cars and stoned buildings to protest a court order that barred him from elected office.

The unrest and brewing political crisis risk distracting Pakistan's shaky government from the fight against al-Qaeda and the Taliban and the country's perilous economic situation.

He said that Shabbaz Sharif was still the Chief Minister of Pakistan Punjab province under the constitution. Nawaz said that long spells of dictatorship had been snubbing democratic process in the country. He urged people to raise their voice and play an active role in safeguarding Pakistan.



Pakistan's former premier Nawaz Sharif (L) holds a hand of a policeman as he addresses to PML-N supporters during a public meeting in Sheikhupura Thursday.

US, Britain caution their citizens against Pakistan travel

ANI, Lahore

The United States and Britain have warned their citizens against travelling to Pakistan, saying al-Qaeda and Taliban may target them during their visit to the troubled region.

The US State Department released a statement saying US citizens should not travel due to grave security risk from terrorist organisations.

"Presence of local Taliban and al-Qaeda in Pakistan's border areas is a real threat to US citizens," the Daily Times quoted it, as saying.

Earlier, the British Foreign Office had advised its citizens against travelling to Lahore and Rawalpindi.

UN braces for Lankans fleeing conflict

AFP, Geneva

The UN refugee agency said yesterday it was preparing for the arrival of tens of thousands of displaced people fleeing the conflict zone in northern Sri Lanka over the coming weeks.

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) said it had received three acres of land from the government to set up, by the end of the week, a camp for 42,000 people.

But it warned that it needs to double that capacity.

"UNHCR is urging the government to continue to make necessary preparations to receive and accommodate the large numbers expected in the coming weeks or

months," spokesman William Spindler told journalists.

Government forces have pushed Liberation Tiger of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) rebels into a shrinking strip of land in northeast and have said they hope to completely crush the guerrillas by April.

But tens of thousands of civilians are trapped behind the front line, according to relief agencies.

"Given the magnitude of the civilian population still trapped inside in the LTTE territory, and expected to flee into government-controlled areas as military operations advance, UNHCR has requested the government of Sri Lanka to provide another 300 acres to bring the total potential reception capacity to 85,000 persons," Spindler said.

Pak Naval chief denies Mumbai gunman entered from Pakistan

AFP, Karachi

Pakistan's naval chief Noman Bashir on Friday denied that Ajmal Kasab, the lone surviving alleged gunman in the Mumbai attacks, entered India from Pakistani territorial waters.

New Delhi blamed the attacks, which killed 165 people last November, on the Pakistan-based militant group Lashkar-e-Taiba (LET) and the siege soured a five-year peace process between nuclear-armed India and Pakistan.

"We have no evidence whatsoever that Ajmal Kasab had

gone to India from Pakistani territorial waters," Bashir told reporters in the port city of Karachi.

He was speaking one day after the top foreign ministry civil servants from India and Pakistan met in Colombo for the first time since the Mumbai attacks and agreed to keep the official channels of communication open.

"The Indian navy is much larger than ours and if Ajmal Kasab had gone from here then what were their coastguards doing and why they did not stop the terrorists?" said the naval commander.

US aid effort under fire in Pakistan border area

AP, Islamabad

A major US effort to erode support for the Taliban and al-Qaeda by pumping millions of aid dollars into the violence-wracked Afghan border region is being threatened by attacks on aid workers, corruption and layers of bureaucracy.

The Obama administration has pledged to use development aid as a foreign policy tool, and is expected to unveil a new hike in assistance before April. But there are concerns about how the money is being spent in remote valleys too dangerous for foreign aid workers to venture and where residents risk a beheading if they cross the militants.

A Taliban commander in the North Waziristan border region warned residents last month to shun the "sweet poison" of develop-

ment aid. "Wait for the consequences, if anybody accepts anything," Gul Bahadur warned in a leaflet.

Three years after the Bush administration pledged \$750 million for the impoverished tribal belt, people associated with the effort told The Associated Press that a clutch of education and road-building projects are finally getting underway.

Washington has cloaked its efforts in secrecy, foregoing an opportunity to show off a kinder American face in order to protect its staff and contractors.

The danger of operating openly was made brutally evident in November, when suspected militants killed American aid worker Stephen Vance as he drove to work in Peshawar. The top US diplomat there survived a similar attack in August.



Chairperson of India's United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government and Congress party president Sonia Gandhi (C) learns the steps of a traditional dance from tribal women during a public meeting in Kothagudem, some 270km from Hyderabad yesterday. India, the world's largest democracy with some 671 million voters, must go to the polls before May 2009, the end of the five-year mandate of the UPA government.

Pakistan world's main worry Says Afghan FM

AFP, Washington

Afghanistan's foreign minister said Thursday that Pakistan should be the world's main concern as the two countries held a three-way "war on terror" review with the United States.

US President Barack Obama is sending 17,000 more troops to Afghanistan, putting a new focus on fighting Islamic extremism in the mountainous nation as he winds down the controversial US military involvement in Iraq.

Afghanistan's Foreign Minister Ranganath Dadasa welcomed the deployment but said that "the main problem we have to face" lies across his nation's border.

"My thesis is that the main threat centre for instability in the world is not Iraq, it is not Afghanistan, it is much more Pakistan," Spanta said in Washington amid three-way talks with US and Pakistani counterparts.

He said Pakistan was worrying because of its giant population and because of its nuclear weapons.

Gunmen ambush Pak school minibus

AFP, Peshawar

Gunmen yesterday ambushed a minibus carrying children to school in remote northwest Pakistan, killing the driver, wounding two children and apparently kidnapping six others, police said.

The bus was ambushed outside the town of Hangu in the country's troubled North West Frontier Province, which borders Afghanistan and is plagued by sectarian violence as well as Taliban and al-Qaeda-linked militants.

"Unknown gunmen fired at the school van carrying Shia students. The driver was killed, two children were injured, while six appear to have been kidnapped by the attackers," local police station chief Saeed Khan told AFP.

Swat agreement: US to adopt a policy of wait and watch

PTI, Washington

The United States will adopt a policy of "wait and watch" on the peace agreement signed between the Taliban militants and Islamabad in Pakistan's Swat valley, Obama Administration's top military and defence leaders have said.

Defence Secretary Robert Gates and the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Mike Mullen during a Pentagon briefing yesterday said they had an intensive meeting with the visiting Pak Army Chief General Ashfaq Kiyani.

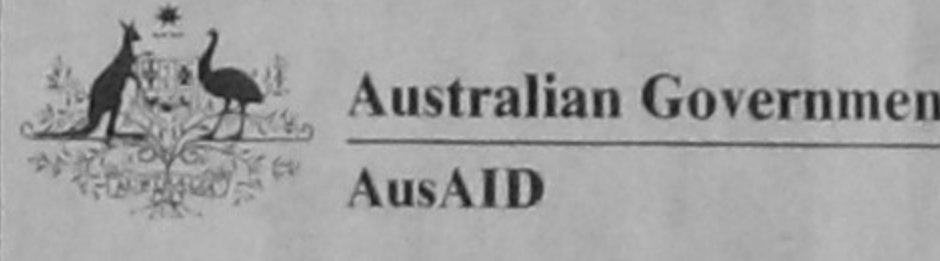
China rejects US rights report as interference

AP, Beijing

China and the United States have sparred again over human rights, just days after US Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton said she hoped the ever-prickly issue would not colour relations.

China's Foreign Ministry on Thursday blasted a US State Department report criticising its rights record, calling the claims groundless and accusing Washington of interfering in its internal affairs.

The report issued in Washington on Wednesday accuses China of stepping up cultural and religious repression of minorities in Tibet and elsewhere and increasing the detention and harassment of political dissidents.



Announcement for the Australian Development Scholarships (ADS) 2010 Intake

Under the 2010 Australian Development Scholarships (ADS) program the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) is pleased to invite applications from interested candidates who are committed to contribute towards the development of Bangladesh.

The Australian Development Scholarships (ADS) are the principal mechanism by which Australia provides scholarship assistance for individuals from developing countries to undertake studies at Australian education institutions. The goal of the scholarships program is to help meet the human resource development needs of developing countries. Scholarships also play an important role in fostering and sustaining Australia's relations with developing countries, particularly in the Asia-Pacific region.

Australian Development Scholarships (ADS) are open to candidates from the following institutions:

- Government of Bangladesh* (Application will be received by AusAID, Dhaka)
- ICDDR,B (Applications will be received by ICDDR,B)

* Candidates from all government departments such as autonomous, public service commission, corporate and constitutional institutions are also eligible to apply for the ADS scholarship. All GOB applicants should provide a forwarding letter from the relevant attached Ministry or Government Department with the completed application form.

All female candidates and indigenous candidates from the above organisations are especially encouraged to apply.

NOTE: Public University employees are not eligible to apply for ADS. However, the Australian Leadership Awards (ALA) and other streams of Australian Scholarships are open for ALL. Please visit the Australian Scholarships website <http://www.ausaid.gov.au/scholar> for more details regarding Australian Scholarships.

Eligibility Criteria

- You must be less than 40 years old at the time of the application.
- You must have a completed university level qualification which is at least equivalent in standard to an Australian Bachelors degree. Candidates with high level academic results in one or more university level degrees are encouraged to apply.
- You must nominate only one field of study from the list provided in the Australian High Commission website (www.bangladesh.embassy.gov.au). The field of study can not be changed once you have been short-listed.
- You must have at least two years of work experience relevant to the field of study for which you are applying.
- You must submit the results of IELTS Academic Test. The overall test score must be at least 6.5 with no individual band being less than 6.0, and the test date should not be earlier than 1 November 2007. IELTS test taken earlier than 1 November 2007 will not be accepted and the application will be disqualified.

In addition to the above, the short listing process will take into account the following factors:

- Fifty percent of scholarships will be awarded to female candidates and fifty percent will be awarded to male candidates.
- Favourable consideration will be given to candidates with disabilities; candidates from indigenous communities; candidates who have not previously undertaken post-graduate studies abroad; and candidates who are not dual nationals of an OECD country.

You will not be eligible if you:

- Are holding or have been nominated to receive another scholarship;
- Are a permanent resident or have applied for permanent residency in Australia;
- Are married or engaged to be married to a person who holds or who is eligible to hold Australian or New Zealand citizenship or permanent residence status.

If you meet all the eligibility criteria and are working with any of the organisations listed above, kindly visit the official website of the Australian High Commission: www.bangladesh.embassy.gov.au to download the application form and for detailed information and instructions. Hard copies of the application forms are also available at the Australian High Commission, 184 Gulshan Avenue, Dhaka. Please carefully read the instruction and other relevant information before sending your application.

The deadline for submitting applications is 30 April 2009.

Please Note: The ADS-Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) component for 2010 is also open. Details of the program are available in the newspapers and the Australian High Commission website. The selection process for the ADS-CHT intake is managed by UNDP. Please contact UNDP for further information.

NOTE: THE PREVIOUS ADVERTISEMENT WAS PUBLISHED ON 14 FEBRUARY 2009



Vacancy for Program Officer, Bangladesh

The Australian Government, through the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID), is seeking to fill in the position of Program Officer, based at the Australian High Commission, Dhaka, Bangladesh. Under the supervision of the Senior Program Manager, the Program Officer's duties will support the development and management of Australian aid program activities, with primary responsibility for the Australian scholarships program. AusAID also works in health, education, extreme poverty and humanitarian emergencies. The Program Officer will also have the opportunity to be involved in these sectors and other emerging aid priorities.

The salary range for this position is Taka 50,000 to 60,000 per month, plus annual bonus, depending on the qualifications and experience of the applicant.

ESSENTIAL SELECTION CRITERIA

- Three or more years of professional experience in the development related work
- Demonstrated understanding of development issues
- Experience in managing programs and projects
- Demonstrated skills in research and analysis
- Ability to work independently and to exercise a high level of judgment, maturity, and flexibility and initiative
- Excellent written and oral communication skills in English and Bengali
- Demonstrated teamwork skills
- Experience with MS word, Excel, using e-mail and the Internet

DESIRABLE SELECTION CRITERIA

- Masters level educational qualifications in relevant subjects such as social sciences
- Knowledge of the Australian Government's aid policy and programs

APPLICATIONS

- Interested applicants should submit their CV and a statement, outlining their suitability for the position, by 4:00 pm on Thursday, March 12, 2009.
- Statements should not exceed two pages AND MUST DIRECTLY ADDRESS THE 'ESSENTIAL SELECTION CRITERIA' ABOVE. Statements not addressing the selection criteria will not be considered.
- Please address applications to hr.ausaid@dfat.gov.au and clearly mention 'Program Officer' in the subject line.
- All applications will be treated on merit and in strict confidence.
- Only short listed candidates will be contacted.