

Europe praises Obama, pledges few troops for Afghanistan

AP, Strasbourg

European leaders enthusiastically praised President Barack Obama's new Afghan strategy at a Nato summit Saturday but held their ground on a central disagreement and offered only military trainers and extra security forces for upcoming elections.

Violent anti-war protests that marred the alliance's 60th anniversary celebrations were a stark reminder that much of Europe has no appetite for the other, costlier half of Obama's Afghan equation: more combat troops.

"I am pleased that our Nato allies pledged their strong and unanimous support for our new strategy," Obama said. "We'll need more resources and sustained effort to achieve our ultimate goals."

As protesters battled police outside, Nato risked angering Muslims around the world by

giving the post of secretary-general to the prime minister of Denmark, who fuelled anger three years ago by backing a Danish newspaper's right to publish cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad. The 28 leaders at the summit also approved measures to repair ties with Russia virtually frozen since the Russo-Georgian war in August.

Afghanistan is seen as a crucial test of the power and relevance of the alliance, which was founded at the height of the Cold War to counter-balance the Soviet Union and now is struggling against a rising insurgency far beyond its borders.

The escalating war has highlighted doubts in Europe about the ability of Nato's 58,000 troops to stem the Taliban insurgency. Worries about casualties and costs have contributed to opposition to a conflict many Europeans see as an unnecessary distraction during economic crisis.

Courtroom ready soon for Mumbai trial

AFP, Mumbai

The trial of the suspect charged over the Mumbai attacks would start soon as the court being built for the case was nearing completion, the special public prosecutor said yesterday.

Mohammed Ajmal Amir Iman, also known as Kasab, will be tried in a reinforced, high-security courtroom inside the Indian city's Arthur Road prison, where he is currently being held.

"The construction of the court's slab is still on and the work is expected to be completed in six to seven days," special public prosecutor Ujjwal Nikam told the Press Trust of India news agency, without giving further details. A bomb-proof tunnel

linking Iman's cell to the courtroom has been built after he reportedly received death threats.

Iman, charged with "waging war against India" over the Islamist attacks that killed 165 people, is the only alleged member of the 10-man team of militants captured alive during the November 26-29 siege.

New Delhi blamed the assault on the Pakistan-based group Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and "official agencies" in Pakistan -- a reference to the country's spy service.

Iman told the Mumbai court during his last video link appearance two weeks ago that he was from Pakistan, contradicting Islamabad's repeated denials of his nationality.



Congress President Sonia Gandhi addresses a rally in Varanasi yesterday. India holds its 15th parliamentary general elections in five phases on April 16, April 23, April 30, May 7 and May 13 and the new Parliament will be constituted before June 2.

UPA is very much intact Says Pranab Mukherjee

PTI, New Delhi

Asserting that UPA is not disintegrating, Minister for External Affairs Pranab Mukherjee today said that it "was very much intact" while at the same time the NDA is breaking.

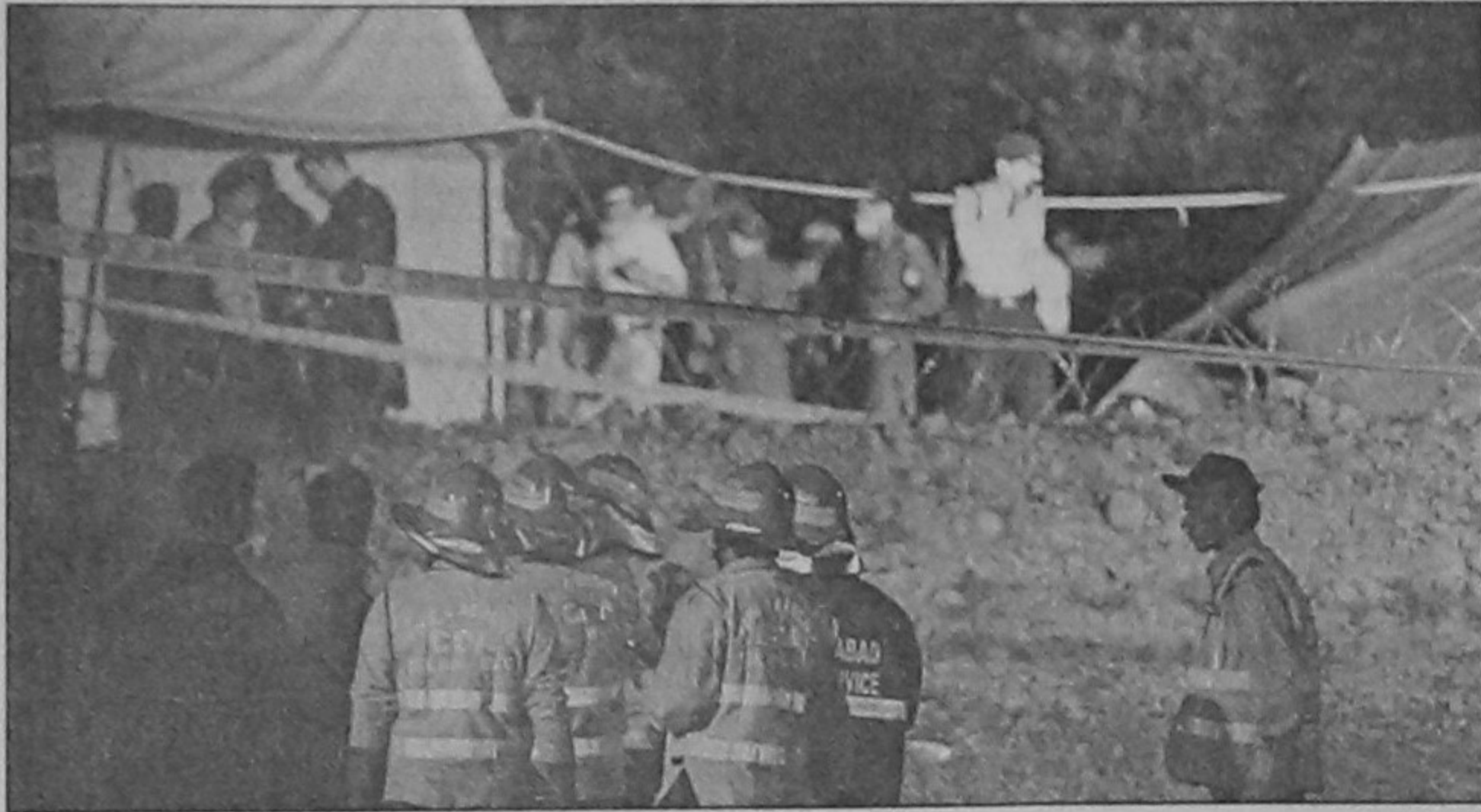
Addressing a press conference in New Delhi, Mukherjee said, "UPA is not a political entity and it is very much intact... it is not disintegrating."

The veteran Congress leader said even though there were hiccups in seat sharing talks between Congress and its alliance partners like Samajwadi Party and RJD in UP and Bihar respectively, the alliance was still in place.

"During their press conference held recently in Lucknow, SP chief Mulayam Singh Yadav, RJD supremo Lalu Prasad and LJP leader Ram Vilas Paswan, have reiterated their support to UPA. Therefore it is not disintegrating," Mukherjee said.

He added that at the same time, Mamata Banerjee's Trinamool Congress, Biju Janata Dal and Telugu Desam Party, all these have left the NDA, which is breaking.

"Sonia Gandhi as chairperson of UPA is coordinating at her level while I as floor leader in Lok Sabha, am trying to coordinate with other floor leaders in both Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha, to strengthen the UPA," Mukherjee said.



Pakistani investigators and security personnel gather at the suicide blast site at the Frontier Constabulary camp in Islamabad on Saturday. A suicide bomber has killed up to eight paramilitary police at the tent camp in Pakistan's capital, the second such attack in Islamabad in less than two weeks.

Pak kidnappers set free American UN official

AFP, Quetta

The American UN official kidnapped in Pakistan two months ago was released unharmed yesterday, ending the most high profile hostage ordeal for a Westerner here since Daniel Pearl's 2002 killing.

John Solecki, the local head of the UN refugee agency (UNHCR), was snatched at gunpoint in Quetta, the capital of the southwestern province of Baluchistan, on February 2. His driver was killed during the abduction.

"I can confirm that he has been released," UN spokes-

woman Jennifer Pagonis told AFP. "A UN team has met him. He seems all right. The priority will be to get him medical attention."

Pagonis later said that Solecki had already left Pakistan. "He is on his way home. He was flown from Quetta," she told AFP, declining to give any further details.

Pakistan's interior ministry chief, Rehman Malik, confirmed that Solecki had been released after an ordeal lasting nearly nine weeks and said that preparations were being made to reunite him with his family.

Setback for BSP as 6 of its MLAs join Cong in Rajasthan

PTI, New Delhi

With Bollywood actor Sanjay Dutt out of contention, social activist Nafisa Ali was on Sunday announced as the Samajwadi Party candidate from the Lucknow Lok Sabha seat.

"Nafisa Ali is a personal friend, and when I asked her whether she would come to Lucknow as SP's candidate or would like to represent a party (Congress) which has no political base in Uttar Pradesh, she said that she has full faith in SP chief Mulayam Singh Yadav's secular ideologies and is ready to contest elections from Lucknow as SP candidate," party General Secretary Amar Singh stated.

CNN IBN, Jaipur

Six Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) MLAs in Rajasthan have joined the Congress, giving the ruling party a majority in the state assembly.

This significant development came as a relief to the Congress after its powerful legislator in Rajasthan Kiron Lal Meena's wife, who is also a minister, threatened to leave the party. Kiron Lal was upset with the Congress for not fielding him from Dausa.

"He wanted to contest from Dausa so the Congress has agreed to this. I am happy that the Congress wants to have a stable government in Rajasthan and work for the welfare of the people in Rajasthan," says Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot.

Pakistan finds 46 dead Afghans in container

AFP, Quetta

Pakistani and Afghan officials were Sunday preparing to send home the bodies of 46 Afghans found crammed into a truck container believed to have been bound for Iran, officials said.

The container carrying around 110 people was found about 20 kilometres (15 miles) south of Quetta, capital of oil

and gas rich Baluchistan province, which borders Afghanistan and Iran, police said. "The death toll is 46," police official Ghulam Dastagir told AFP from the southwestern province after the bodies were found Saturday.

"(Another) 45 people were unconscious and have been admitted to hospital," the

official added. The investigation into the matter had been handed over to Pakistan's Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), which deals with immigration matters.

"We are investigating the matter and have contacted the Afghan consulate in Quetta, who have visited the hospital," FIA director Shahab Azeem told AFP.

India welcomes US bill linking Pak aid to anti-terror steps

PTI, New Delhi

India yesterday welcomed the introduction of a bill in the US Congress which links financial aid to Pakistan to the condition that it stops supporting terror groups active across the border.

"Any effort by the international community to ensure that Pakistan fulfills its inter-

national obligations is welcome," External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee told reporters here.

Mukherjee was asked about a US bill seeking to triple non-military aid to Pakistan to a whopping USD 1.5 billion annually while asking Islamabad to stop supporting terror groups active in India.



US special envoy for Afghanistan and Pakistan Richard Holbrooke (R) speaks during a press conference as the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Mike Mullen (L) looks on at the US embassy in Kabul yesterday. The top US military commander and special envoy arrived in Kabul for high-level talks, a US official said, after Nato backed a new US strategy for the region.

New Afghan policy of US could fail Says governor of Pak province

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE, Islamabad

The new Afghan policy of the US will remain ineffective and further multiply problems for the Nato forces until a solution to the war was found through political means, governor of Pakistan's restive North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) has said.

NWFP Governor Owais Ahmed Ghani urged American

and western powers fighting Taliban and al-Qaeda in Afghanistan to address issues through political means.

Ghani warned at a seminar in Peshawar University that a surge in the use of force would further deteriorate law and order situation in Afghanistan. The News reported.

He said it was not possible to address the 30-year-old problem in Afghanistan in a few days.

Lashkar chief challenges detention in Pak court

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE, Islamabad

Chief of the banned Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) militant outfit Hafiz Mohammed Saeed, who is the alleged mastermind of the Mumbai terror attacks, has moved the Lahore High Court challenging his detention.

Saeed, who now heads the outlawed Jamaat-ud-Daawa (JuD) which is the front charity organisation of the LeT, has said he was being detained unlawfully, according to The News.

Three other JuD leaders, Col. (ret'd) Nazeer Ahmed, Mufti Abdul Rehman and Ameer Hamza, have also challenged their arrest.

Saeed, Hamza, Ahmed and Rehman were placed under house arrest Dec 12 last year.

Saeed's name figures in the list of terrorists India accuses of orchestrating the November 2008 terror attacks on Mumbai. At least 170 people were killed in the carnage.

The petitioner's counsel submitted that there was no allegation on record against Saeed or his organisation.

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SOCIAL MARKETING COMPANY INVITATION FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI) Social Marketing Company invites application from the qualified individual willing to provide consultancy on a short-term basis for developing communication on generic Family Planning Campaign activities. Social Marketing Company (SMC) is dedicated to provide opportunities for better family health for the people of Bangladesh by addressing the issues of social priority, in family planning, health and nutrition sector in particular by complementing public sector program through private sector social marketing model. As a part of SMC's ongoing strategy for further strengthening of its nationwide behavior change communication activities, SMC invites EOI from qualified individuals willing to provide consultancy on a short-term basis. SCOPE OF WORK The broad scope of work for the consultancy is to work with SMC to prepare a Strategic Communication Plan for Generic Family Planning Program and guide in developing communication materials and monitoring tools. Specific major activities for the consultant will include: Assist in developing a communication campaign on family planning through mass media and other media options. Assist in developing a monitoring process including timeframe and conduct pre-testing of communication materials. Help liaison with GOB, International agencies, NGOs and other stakeholders. Interested individuals may send their EOI to General Manager, Administration, Social Marketing Company, SMC Tower, 33 Banani C/A, Dhaka-1213, Bangladesh in an envelope superscribed "Expression of Interest". The EOI must be accompanied by the individuals updated Curriculum Vitae highlighting the consultant's skill areas and previous related experience. DUE DATE WITHIN : 1600 Hrs on 13th April, 2009 Please note that SMC reserves the right to reject any/all proposal(s) if found not meeting the requirement, without showing any reason & justification.

www.new7wonders.com/nature বাংলাদেশের পর্যটন করপোরেশন পূর্ত বিভাগ সেতু ভবন (৬ষ্ঠ তলা) নিউ এয়ারপোর্ট রোড বনানী, ঢাকা। নিখ নং পূর্ত-০৭/২০০৯/ তারিখ: ৩১-০৩-২০০৯ জরুরী টেন্ডার বিজ্ঞপ্তি এতদ্বারা বাংলাদেশ পর্যটন করপোরেশন কর্তৃক নিম্নে বর্ণিত কাজের জন্য বিভিন্ন সরকারী/আধাসরকারী/স্বায়ত্বশাসিত প্রতিষ্ঠানে তালিকাভুক্ত ১ম শ্রেণীর ঠিকাদারী ফার্ম/প্রতিষ্ঠানসমূহের নিকট থেকে PPR-2008 অনুযায়ী সীলনোহরিত দরপত্র আবেদন করা যাচ্ছে।

১।	মন্ত্রণালয়/বিভাগ	বেসামরিক বিমান পরিবহন ও পর্যটন মন্ত্রণালয়
২।	এজেন্সী	বাংলাদেশ পর্যটন করপোরেশন
৩।	প্রকল্পের নাম	বাংলাদেশ পর্যটন করপোরেশন
৪।	প্রকল্পের একটি কোড	প্রযোজ্য নয়
৫।	প্রকল্পের একটি খেলা	ঢাকা
৬।	দরপত্র আহ্বান	বাংলাদেশ পর্যটন করপোরেশন এর কক্সবাজারস্থ মোটেল উপলব্ধ ছাদ মেয়ামত ও অভ্যন্তরীণ রাস্তার কাপোর্টিং কাজ।
৭।	দরপত্র স্বাক্ষর নং	পূর্ত-০৭/২০০৯
৮।	তারিখ	৩১ মার্চ ২০০৯
৯।	প্রকল্পের একটি মেসজ	খোলা দরপত্র।
১০।	অর্থের উৎস	নিষ্কাশ
১১।	দরপত্র বিক্রয়ের সর্বশেষ তারিখ	১৯ এপ্রিল ২০০৯ অফিস চলাকালীন সময়।
১২।	দরপত্র গ্রহণের সর্বশেষ তারিখ ও সময়	২০ এপ্রিল ২০০৯ বেলা ১১:৩০টা পর্যন্ত।
১৩।	দরপত্র খোলার তারিখ ও সময়	২০ এপ্রিল ২০০৯ বেলা ১২:০০টা।
১৪।	দরপত্র বিক্রয়কারী অফিসের নাম ও ঠিকানা	অর্থ ও হিসাব বিভাগ, বাংলাদেশ পর্যটন করপোরেশন, প্রধান কার্যালয়, ঢাকা।
১৫।	দরপত্র গ্রহণকারী অফিসের নাম ও ঠিকানা	বাপক, প্রধান কার্যালয় এর পূর্ত বিভাগে রক্ষিত টেন্ডার বাক্সে।
১৬।	দরপত্র খোলার স্থান	বাপক, প্রধান কার্যালয়ের সম্মেলন কক্ষ।
১৭।	দরপত্র দাখিল যোগ্যতা	(ক) ট্রেড লাইসেন্স (২০০৮) (খ) যে কোন সরকারী/আধাসরকারী/স্বায়ত্বশাসিত প্রতিষ্ঠানে তালিকাভুক্ত ১ম শ্রেণীর ঠিকাদার। (গ) যে কোন সরকারী/আধাসরকারী/স্বায়ত্বশাসিত প্রতিষ্ঠানে একক কার্যাদেশে কমপক্ষে ৫ লক্ষ টাকার উর্ধ্বে উপরোক্ত- রিত দরপত্র কাজ সম্বন্ধে জরুরীভাবে শেষ করা সত্ত্বেও সনদ পত্র (কার্যাদেশের কপি সহ) যথা গড় ৫(পাঁচ) বছরের মধ্যে সম্পূর্ণকৃত। (ঘ) PPR এর অন্যান্য শর্তাবলী প্রযোজ্য হবে।
১৮।	কাজের বিবরণ	বাংলাদেশ পর্যটন করপোরেশন এর কক্সবাজারস্থ মোটেল উপলব্ধ ছাদ মেয়ামত ও অভ্যন্তরীণ রাস্তার কাপোর্টিং কাজ।
১৯।	দরপত্র সিডিউলের মূল্য	১,০০০/- (এক হাজার টাকা) মাত্র।
২০।	টেন্ডার সিডিউলের পরিমাণ	১৫,০০০/- (পনের হাজার টাকা) মাত্র।
২১।	কার্যসম্পাদনের সময়	৪৫ (পঁয়তাল্লিশ) দিন।
২২।	দরপত্র আহ্বানকারীর পদবী	মহা-ব্যবস্থাপক (পূর্ত)
২৩।	দরপত্র আহ্বানকারীর অফিসের ঠিকানা	সেতু ভবন (৬ষ্ঠ তলা), বনানী, ঢাকা।

বাংলাদেশ পর্যটন করপোরেশন কর্তৃক কোন কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকে যে কোন দরপত্র গ্রহণ অথবা সকল দরপত্র বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করে।

৩১/৩/০৯  
(আবুল কাশেম)  
মহা-ব্যবস্থাপক (পূর্ত)

GD-1792