



Nepalese police charge baton against women activists of the Unified Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) during a protest against the Nepalese President Ram Baran Yadav in Kathmandu yesterday. Thousands of Maoist demonstrators have been taking part in a wave of protests on the streets of the capital after the collapse of the ex-rebels' government following a bitter stand-off with the army chief.

Nepal deploys more troops to quell Maoist protests

AP, Kathmandu

Riot police beat back hundreds of women from Nepal's communist party who protested Thursday in front of the president's house in the capital to demand that he fire the country's army chief.

Nepal's communist Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal sparked a national crisis Monday when he resigned and pulled his party from the ruling coalition in protest over the army chief's failure to integrate former communist rebels into the military.

Some 500 protesters from the women's wing of Dahal party marched on President

Ram Baran Yadav's residence Thursday, chanting slogans while police used bamboo batons to beat back activists who tried to break through a cordon. Some of the women were lightly injured.

Dahal's supporters are angry that Yadav overruled Dahal on Sunday when the former prime minister tried to fire army chief Rookmangud Katawal.

The tussle between the prime minister and president has shattered the Himalayan country's fragile stability achieved three years ago after Maoist guerrillas ended their 10-year insurgency, laying down their arms and joining a political peace process.

LTTE using suicide bombers to hold back govt forces

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lanka's Tamil Tigers are using suicide bombers to hold back government forces who are close to overrunning the last patch of rebel-held territory, the military said yesterday.

The Tigers have deployed hundreds of suicide bombers to devastating effect in the past 20 years, claiming several high-profile victims, including the then president Ranasinghe Premadasa in 1993.

Military spokesman Brigadier Udaya Nanayakkara said advancing ground troops had been confronted by suicide attacks, but gave no

details on whether there had been any casualties.

The government estimates that up to 20,000 civilians are being held in the less than five-square-kilometre (two-square-mile) area where the rebels are holed up. The United Nations has said the number could be as high as 50,000.

President Mahinda Rajapakse, under pressure over allegations that his troops have been shelling civilians, Wednesday invited UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon to visit the island.

A UN document circulated among diplomats in Colombo last month said as many as 6,500 civilians may have been

Obama applauds Pak-Afghan cooperation to fight terror

AP, Washington

President Barack Obama is applauding Pakistan and Afghanistan for their commitment to helping the US fight terrorists holed up in their territory, but he also is cautioning that the path to success is slow and unsure.

"The road ahead will be difficult," Obama said Wednesday after a series of meetings with Afghan President Hamid Karzai and Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari that yielded few announced new commitments. "There will be more violence, and there will be setbacks."

Obama added, "The United States has made a lasting commitment to defeat al-Qaeda, but also to support the democratically elected sovereign governments of both Pakistan and Afghanistan. That commitment will not

waver, and that support will be sustained."

Obama's national security adviser, Gen. Jim Jones, told reporters later that Obama was clear in his support for Zardari, who has come under heavy US criticism for doing too little to combat a Taliban insurgency. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, for example, told Congress last week that Pakistan was "abdicated" to the Taliban extremists.

"The president pledged to do whatever we could, to do what we can as quickly as possible to help the Pakistani government, and said this type of aid would not just be restricted to military," Jones said. "Miracles will not happen, so this won't happen quickly. But with a common focus, we can make strides hopefully in the near future."

Wednesday's meetings,

which began at the State Department and then moved to the White House, had the added complication of reports that US airstrikes on Sunday had killed dozens of civilians in western Afghanistan. The top US commander in Afghanistan suggested that the Taliban might be to blame, but Obama and Clinton felt compelled to respond sympathetically.

Obama expressed US regret, promising to "make every effort" to avoid further tragedies as allied forces press the fight against a rising Taliban insurgency.

Obama also used the occasion to laud "unprecedented cooperation" between Afghanistan and Pakistan, which share a long, poorly demarcated and porous border.

"Along the border, where insurgents often move freely, we must work together with a

renewed sense of partnership to share intelligence and to coordinate our efforts to isolate, target and take out our common enemy," Obama said in a statement delivered at the White House with Karzai and Zardari at his side.

Obama took no questions from reporters and neither of the other leaders spoke. Obama met separately with Karzai and Zardari, followed by a three-way session.

The latest report of Afghan civilian casualties came at an especially awkward time for the administration, which is stepping up its military campaign inside Afghanistan while also seeking to emphasise the importance of nonmilitary efforts to stabilise the country. The administration has pledged, for example, a major increase in civilian expertise in farming and other specialties.



Displaced Tamil civilians are seen inside the hospital of the northern Sri Lankan town of Vavuniya yesterday. Tamil Tigers are using suicide bombers to hold back government forces who are close to overrunning the last patch of rebel-held territory, the military said.

Palestinian president to form new government

AP, Ramallah

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas plans to ask his prime minister within the coming week to form a new government without the Gaza Strip's Islamic Hamas rulers, a senior aide said yesterday.

Months of power-sharing talks between Abbas' Fatah movement and Hamas have gone nowhere. "If they continue like this, it could last for

years," aide Yasser Abed Rabbo said.

Formation of a new government enjoys "external support," he added, referring to Egypt, which has mediated the floundering power-sharing talks. There was no immediate comment from Egyptian officials.

Abed Rabbo said the next round of Egyptian-brokered contacts would take place on May 16 as planned. But Hamas shared his pessimism regard-

ing their outcome.

"There are no signals on the horizon of a power-sharing deal with Fatah," said Mahmoud Ramahi, a Hamas leader.

Fatah insists that Hamas yield to international demands to recognise Israel, renounce violence and accept existing agreements between Israel and the Palestinians, "which the movement will not accept under any condition," Ramahi said.

South African lawmakers elect Zuma as president

AP, Cape Town

South Africa's parliament elected Jacob Zuma as president Wednesday, celebrating the astonishing rise of a self-educated teenage goatherd who transformed himself into the charismatic leader of Africa's economic powerhouse.

Zuma will be inaugurated Saturday, the culmination of a remarkable comeback for the former underground leader who survived prison under the former apartheid government, a rape allegation and corruption scandals on his way to the top job.

"I hope to lead the country on a path of friendship, cooperation, harmony, unity and faster change," said Zuma, declaring himself overwhelmed and humbled by a thundering outbreak of applause that greeted his election.

Tamils pray for peace, change

AFP, Colombo

Bare-chested Tamil men push a chariot bearing a statue of Lord Vishnu through Sri Lanka's tightly guarded capital, an annual religious event marked this year by an upsurge in the island's ethnic war.

Members of the minority group lined up along the route of the statue of the Hindu pre-

server of peace, which was decked with flowers and fairy lights -- and the focus of intense prayers for greater rights and an end to the bloodshed.

"We are just praying for peace," said Vignesh, a trustee of the Vishnu temple in Colombo's commercial hub of Pettah as the annual "ther," or Chariot festival, was held this week.

As the chariot made its way through the crowded streets,

priests accepted offerings of fruit, flowers and incense and blessed shopkeepers and bystanders in Colombo's Tamil quarter.

Security in the city has been stepped up as government forces are in what the military says is the final phase of an offensive against Tamil Tiger rebels, now cornered in a small strip of coast in the island's northeast.

"With the end of the war, we hope that things will be better. We need a political settlement," said Rajah, a textile trader in Colombo.

The island's ethnic war has its roots in its colonial past, with the Sinhalese majority, most of whom are Buddhists, believing that the mostly Hindu Tamils were favoured by the British in education and employment.

UNICEF Vacancy Announcement

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) is seeking applications from Bangladeshi Nationals to fill the following position. For detailed Terms of Reference, please visit our website: www.unicef.org.bd

1. Knowledge Management Officer, NO-B level, PME Section

Last date of receiving applications: 24 May 2009

QUALIFIED FEMALE CANDIDATES ARE ENCOURAGED TO APPLY

www.unicef.org.bd

unite for children

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

ICDDR,B invites applications from suitable candidates for the position of **Field Research Officer (2 positions)** with the Programme on Infectious Diseases & Vaccine Sciences under the Health Systems and Infectious Diseases Division. The appointments will be made on a Fixed Term basis for 1 year.

Duty Station - Dhaka.

Salary - Annual Tk.309,700/- inclusive of house rent and conveyance allowances with other admissible benefits.

Benefits/facilities - 14.8% retirement fund contribution by the Centre, Children allowance @Tk.1,420/= per child per month, medical facilities for dependent spouse and children, free group life insurance, and subsidized transport, canteen, daycare facilities.

For detailed job profile and requirements, please visit our website: www.icddr.org. Interested candidates who fulfill the requirements should submit an **online application** by **14 May 2009**.

Only short-listed candidates shall be invited for the interview.

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KNOWLEDGE FOR GLOBAL LIFESAVING SOLUTIONS

US national swims across lake to see Suu Kyi

AFP, Yangon

Myanmar authorities have arrested a US national after he swam across a lake to meet opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi at the off-limits compound where she is under house arrest, officials said Thursday.

State media said the man, identified as John William Yeattaw, spent two days at the house in the main city of Yangon before security forces plucked him from the water as he left at dawn on Wednesday.

US security firm Blackwater ends Iraq operation

AFP, Baghdad

A key contract for US security firm Blackwater ended in Iraq on Thursday, a US embassy official said, closing a controversial era for the company whose guards shot dead 17 civilians in Baghdad in 2007.

"The task order for security protection operations held by Blackwater comes to an end today in Baghdad," American embassy spokesman Susan Ziaadeh said, adding that security firm Triple Canopy would replace it.

Triple Canopy, a Virginia-based firm, was appointed at the end of March by the US State Department to take over the multi-million-dollar government contract to protect US government personnel working in Iraq.

inter cooperation Swiss Foundation for Development and International Cooperation

Job Vacancy

INTERCOOPERATION (IC), a Swiss Foundation for Development and International Cooperation, implements Livelihoods, Empowerment and Agroforestry (LEAF) and Sustainable Access to Agroforestry, Knowledge, Technology and Information (SAAKTI) projects funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) in the districts of Sunamganj and Rajshahi division. The overall development goal of LEAF is to make a substantial contribution to the long-term reduction of poverty through the more sustainable and intensified use of local resources, and that of SAAKTI is to contribute to long-term poverty reduction through creating a sustainable access of small farmers to appropriate and up-to-date knowledge, techniques and technologies on Agroforestry production, processing and marketing in partnerships and collaborations government, non-government and private sector organisations. INTERCOOPERATION invites applications for the following positions:

1. Advisor-Market Development and Service Provision for SAAKTI project.

Advisor-Market Development and Service Provision is responsible to develop and implement the concepts and strategies for promoting markets and services for the poor and extreme poor following BDS approaches considering different levels' market actors and service providers. S/he is responsible to provide advisory and backstopping supports to the regional teams so that the concepts and strategies of the value chains and service provision are translated into practices at all levels, and the poor and extreme poor producers get access to input, output and service markets. S/he is responsible to contact, negotiate and contract with the market actors in order to create the output markets for the products at national/international level. S/he is responsible to develop functional relationship and maintain regular liaison with the project partners including KATALYST, counterparts, service providers, and government and private sector stakeholders. Required qualifications, experiences and competencies for the position are as follows:

- Masters degree in relevant subject
- 5 years of experience in the relevant fields
- Knowledge and skills in developing training curriculum/modules
- Interpersonal skills and a good team player
- Exposure in dealing with private sector
- Experience in promoting BDS, Market Development and MSEs
- Experience in value chain/sub-sector analysis
- Understanding in promotion of private local service provision
- Communication, linkage and networking capability with private and public institutions
- Good negotiation skills
- Analytical and report writing skills
- Operational skills of commonly used computer software including internet and websites

The position is based in Rajshahi with frequent visits of at least 60% of the time to the field and other different places like Dhaka to contact relevant stakeholders.

2. Manager-Admin and Finance for LEAF and SAAKTI Projects.

Manager-Admin and Finance is responsible to establish and ensure a standard financial management and accounting system at the partner organisations, regions and projects levels. S/he is responsible to prepare budgets, disburse fund to the regions and partner organisations and monitor the expenses on a regular basis, and to ensure regular financial reporting at all levels. S/he is responsible to ensure proper transaction and procurement procedures, and external and internal audits of the projects and partner organisations. S/he is also responsible to establish and ensure maintaining a proper filing system and a transparent inventory management system at the projects, regions and partner organisations levels. S/he is responsible to supervise and provide capacity building supports to the admin and finance personnel at the projects, regions and partner organisations levels. Required qualifications, experiences and competencies for the position are as follows:

- Masters degree in Accounting/Finance/Management or completed CA course.
- At least eight years experience in administration, financial operation & management in international development organisations.
- Analytical skills on financial statements.
- Experience in voucher preparation, data entry and data checking.
- Skills in budget preparation, expenditure monitoring and report writing.
- Experience in external and internal audit management.
- Knowledge about NGO Bureau, Board of Investment, National Board Revenue, etc.
- Good communication skills in English
- Excellent interpersonal and team building skills
- Operational skills in MS-Excel, MS-Word, Power Point, Internet and accounting software

The position is based in Rajshahi with regular visit to the regional offices and partner organisations. Candidates fulfilling the above criteria should submit their applications with a CV (maximum 3 pages) and a recent passport size photograph.

Candidates should submit their applications to: *Project Coordinator, LEAF and SAAKTI Projects, House 2F NE (D), Road 73 G, Gulshan-2, Dhaka 1212* (E-mail: info@intercooperation-bd.org) by 18th May 2009.

Candidates must mention their expected salary in their application and the envelope should be marked with the position the candidates applied for.

Women are strongly encouraged to apply
Only short-listed candidates will be called for interview.