



A Pakistani policeman (C) searches internally displaced Pakistani civilians, fleeing military operations against Taliban militants in South Waziristan, in a queue outside a registration office in Dera Ismail Khan yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Pakistan police launch anti-Taliban crackdown

Attack thwarted as Taliban gang detained

AFP, Karachi

Pakistan police announced yesterday a series of arrests following sweeps for suspected Taliban in major cities, while forces press a separate major ground and air assault in the northwest.

In the country's largest city Karachi, security forces arrested a Taliban leader along with three other militants, averting a major attack, police said.

"The terrorists were planning for a big attack but the city has been saved from a major disaster," said Karachi city police chief Waseem Ahmed.

Akhtar Zaman and his

three colleagues were captured in a raid in the neighbourhood of Sohrah Goth on Sunday. Weaponry including an anti-aircraft rocket launcher was seized, said Ahmed.

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three colleagues were captured in a raid in the neighbourhood of Sohrah Goth on Sunday. Weaponry including an anti-aircraft rocket launcher was seized, said Ahmed.

Police described the hitherto unknown Zaman as the head of Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan in Karachi, but the organisation has a cell structure in the city and no official local leader.

"High explosive weighing 75 kilograms (165 pounds), two suicide jackets, an anti-aircraft launcher with one rocket and grenades have been recovered from them," said Ahmed.

Taliban terror spree forces closure of schools, colleges in Pakistan

ANI, Islamabad/Kohat

In the wake of a series of terror attacks across Pakistan, the federal government has decided to close all schools and colleges for at least a week.

According to the Daily Times, all government-run educational institutions and prestigious private colleges have been ordered to remain shut in all major cities, cantonments, Fata, Gilgit-Baltistan and Pakistani-occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

Meanwhile, the City

Gilani makes surprise visit to Imran's residence

ANI, Islamabad

Pakistan Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani's sudden visit to former cricketer turned politician Imran Khan's Bani Gala residence on the bank of picturesque Rawal Lake is being seen as an important political event.

People belonging to all shades of life were invited except President Asif Ali Zardari. Khan sarcastically said on the podium that he deliberately avoided inviting Zardari because of the enormous security involved.

Had he (the president) been invited and something happened to him, he (Imran) would have been the prime suspect in the case, he remarked.

Discarding the advice of the security personnel, Gilani decided to attend the launching ceremony of the Namal Knowledge City, The News reported.

UN polls probe orders vote invalidation

Afghan crisis over election intensifies

AFP, AP, Kabul

Afghanistan's UN-backed Electoral Complaints Commission (ECC), publishing a report into mass allegations of vote fraud, on Monday ordered that ballots from 210 polling stations be invalidated.

The ECC said it found "clear and convincing evidence of fraud" at the polling stations, which were across the country.

The ECC said it ordered the Independent Election Commission (IEC), which is the final arbiter of the election results, "to invalidate a certain percentage of each candidates' votes in six separate categories."

The findings of the ECC's investigations into widespread fraud allegations in Afghanistan's August 20 poll could see the IEC forced to call a run-off between President Hamid Karzai and his main rival, Abdullah Abdullah.

The Afghan electoral crisis intensified further yesterday as officials responsible for declaring final results from the August presidential ballot refused to accept findings of a UN-backed investigative panel that would force a runoff, those involved in the process said.

The Electoral Complaints Commission completed its investigation last week into allegations of ballot-stuffing and intimidation in the Aug. 20 vote.

Two international officials who have seen the results said enough votes for President Hamid Karzai were thrown out that his totals dropped below the 50 percent threshold needed to avoid a runoff with top challenger Abdullah Abdullah.

The officials spoke on condition of anonymity. One of them said the findings were "incontrovertible."

However, the separate Independent Election Commission which is dominated by Karzai allies has rejected the data, the officials said. Karzai spokesman Waheed Omar said the president will not commit to accepting the findings until they are publicly released.

That has raised fears that Karzai may refuse to go along with a runoff even after the figures are announced further delaying formation of a government that the US believes is needed to help combat the growing Taliban insurgency.

A protracted crisis could also lead to political unrest. Hundreds of Karzai supporters protested in the south over the weekend, calling for the electoral commission to release results quickly and saying they will reject a second round.

They gathered in the main street of the southeastern city of Spin Boldak on Sunday, shouting, "We want the result!" and "Karzai is our leader!"

Pak parliament to examine 37 Musharraf-era ordinances

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE, Islamabad

Pakistan's National Assembly is to meet Nov 2 to examine 37 ordinances promulgated by former president Pervez Musharraf, including the one granting immunity to politicians, military officers and bureaucrats charged with corruption, media reports said Monday.

Key among these is the National Reconciliation Ordinance (NRO) Musharraf promulgated in October 2007 to enable the return from exile of former prime minister Benazir Bhutto and her husband Asif Ali Zardari, who is now the president of Pakistan. Both were in exile facing corruption charges.

The Supreme Court in its July 31 judgement had ruled as unconstitutional the emergency Musharraf had declared Nov 3, 2007 and fixed Nov 30 as the deadline for the approval or rejection of the 37 ordinances by parliament.

"The government tabled the ordinances at the end of the National Assembly and Senate sessions on Oct 16 apparently to gain time to drum up maximum support for their passage," Dawn said Monday.

Quoting parliament sources, report said the ordinances could become law if they are approved by a simple majority of National Assembly and subsequently endorsed by the Senate.

BNP's amended charter

FROM PAGE 16
had decided to bestow life-long chairpersonship on Khaleda Zia, giving rise to scathing criticisms from all quarters of the society. The following day, in the face of a whirlwind of disapproval, Khaleda declined the offer.

Meanwhile, although Tarique had announced his retirement from active politics before leaving the country for London on September 11, 2008, soon after the present government assumed power this year, BNP leaders started to propagate that he actually had not quit.

The national standing committee appointed Tarique, who is still in London, as the senior joint secretary general of the party in June, 2002 without any council, although there was no such post in the party constitution back then. The party seems to finally remedy the anomaly by incorporating the new post in its amended constitution ahead of the council.

The amendments which are supposed to have validity until August 16 this year, were recently published, and have to be approved by the upcoming national council.

But according to some senior leaders the chairperson has all the authority to

amend the constitution, if she feels necessary for the sake of the party, and those amendments will not require the national council's ratification.

BNP also newly included in its central executive committee, posts of a deputy treasurer, an assistant publicity secretary, and a fisheries affairs secretary for the first time. The numbers of organisational secretaries, assistant organisational secretaries, and internal affairs secretaries were also increased.

Talking to The Daily Star, Standing Committee Member Dr RA Gani however said some changes in the constitution were brought in line with the Representation of the People Order, and the council will approve those in a proper way. Then he went on to add, "According to the existing constitution, the chairperson may bring necessary changes to it."

But, Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain, another member of the standing committee, seemingly did not have the same enthusiasm. "Ask the secretary general or the party spokesperson, only they know, don't ask me," he quipped to The Daily Star, when asked about the amendments.

According to the latest

BNP constitution, the president and the general secretaries of executive committees of upazilas, thanas, municipalities, districts, and city committees, two female members from each district and city, members of the parliamentary party, members of the national executive committee, and members of the standing committee will be councillors at the national council.

Under this provision, Tarique, who had been arrested on charges of corruption during the immediate past military backed caretaker government, and was later released on bail, will be treated as a councillor, since owing to the new constitutional amendment he is now the unencumbered senior joint secretary general of the party.

The chairperson of BNP also has the authority to add as councillors her own choice of people, whose number can be as high as ten percent of the total number of regular councillors.

Jatiyatabadi Chatra Dal, a student organisation, and Sramik Dal, a workers' organisation, are identified as associate bodies of the party in the new constitution, and they will be run according to their own constitutions.

Excessive foreign trips

FROM PAGE 1
workshop or on study tour that is not related to their business," the notification said.

And the selfsame officials are going abroad repeatedly to attend same kind of programmes. "As a result, the expected pace of governmental activities is being hampered."

The PMO authority gave some directives to the ministers/state ministers and secretaries or acting secretaries to follow during their foreign trips.

The directives are: the minister/state minister and secretary/acting secretary of a ministry have to avoid foreign trips together. If any trip is essential to serve national interest, a proposal/summary of the trip has to be clearly

mentioned to justify it.

Secretary or acting secretary of a ministry and joint secretary of a ministry or department and chief of the subordinate office of the ministry concerned has to avoid foreign trips together unless it has utmost importance for national interest. If any joint trip is necessary, the cause has to be clearly mentioned.

In the restrictive orders, the government asked the secretaries or acting secretaries not to go for foreign trips more than four times a year.

But this quota can be exceeded if a trip is essential for national interest and the person concerned is to attend the function ex-officio for any kind of negotiation, signing any memorandum of understanding, agreement signing

and it is compulsory to represent any international organisation. In this connection, it has to be clearly stated what for the trip is unavoidable.

To attend any kind of seminar and workshop by a secretary or acting secretary, the official concerned has to attach the invitation from the invitee organisation in order to know officials of which levels they invited.

Above all, the government asked secretaries or acting secretaries to avoid participation in foreign seminar, symposium, workshop, study tour, familiarisation programme and the like.

They have rather been advised to send lower orders of the bureaucracy if such functions are to be attended after all.

Nato chief welcomes Pak offensive

AFP, Brussels

Nato Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen yesterday welcomed Pakistan's offensive against Taliban fighters near the border with Afghanistan, saying it was crucial for regional stability.

Rasmussen expressed his "appreciation of the increased efforts by the Pakistani military and the Pakistani government in the fight against terrorists in the border regions".

"We really appreciate that very much. It is crucial for stability in the whole region that the

Pakistani government and military succeed in their endeavours," he told reporters at Nato headquarters in Brussels.

Pakistan vowed Monday to target the Taliban leadership, massing troops on the outskirts of their home town in South Waziristan and poised to storm the landmark after claiming 78 militants had been killed.

Concerns are mounting that the assault, which presents the military with its biggest challenge yet in the war against militants, will spark another refugee crisis ahead of heavy snow in a bitterly cold winter.

60 Taliban leaders have escaped to ME

ANI, Karachi

Around 60 of the Taliban's second-cadre leaders - who fled Swat during the army's 'Operation Rah-e-Rast' - have used Karachi as a transit route to head out to Middle East countries, the Daily Times has learnt.

When armed activists of Sindh's nationalist parties blocked roads on the Punjab-Sindh border in a bid to stop the influx of internally displaced persons - fearing that several of them could be Taliban in disguise - the Taliban's second-cadre lead-

ership travelled to Karachi by trains and then flew to Middle Eastern states via Karachi airport.

Reliable sources told Daily Times that sleeper cells of the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) in Karachi facilitated at least 60 leaders of the Taliban and arranged for tickets to the Middle East.

Some of those who travelled to the Middle East were close to Taliban leaders Muslim Khan and Maulana Fazlullah and were part of the TTP's decision-making processes because of their influence.

World has less than 5 years to stop uncontrollable climate change

ANI, London

The World Wildlife Fund (WWF) has warned that the world has less than five years to get carbon emissions under control or runaway climate change will become inevitable.

Scientists generally agree that the world could keep temperature rises below a dangerous level of two degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees F) if greenhouse gas emissions are halved by 2050.

However, according to the Telegraph, a new report from the WWF found that

this will require a "green industrial revolution" by 2014, with heavy investment in moving from fossil fuels to 'low carbon alternatives' like wind, solar, nuclear and clean coal.

It will also mean switching to electric cars and other green technologies and improving energy efficiency by insulating our homes and wasting less electricity.

The stark warning comes as ministers and officials from around the world meet in London for the Major Economies Forum.

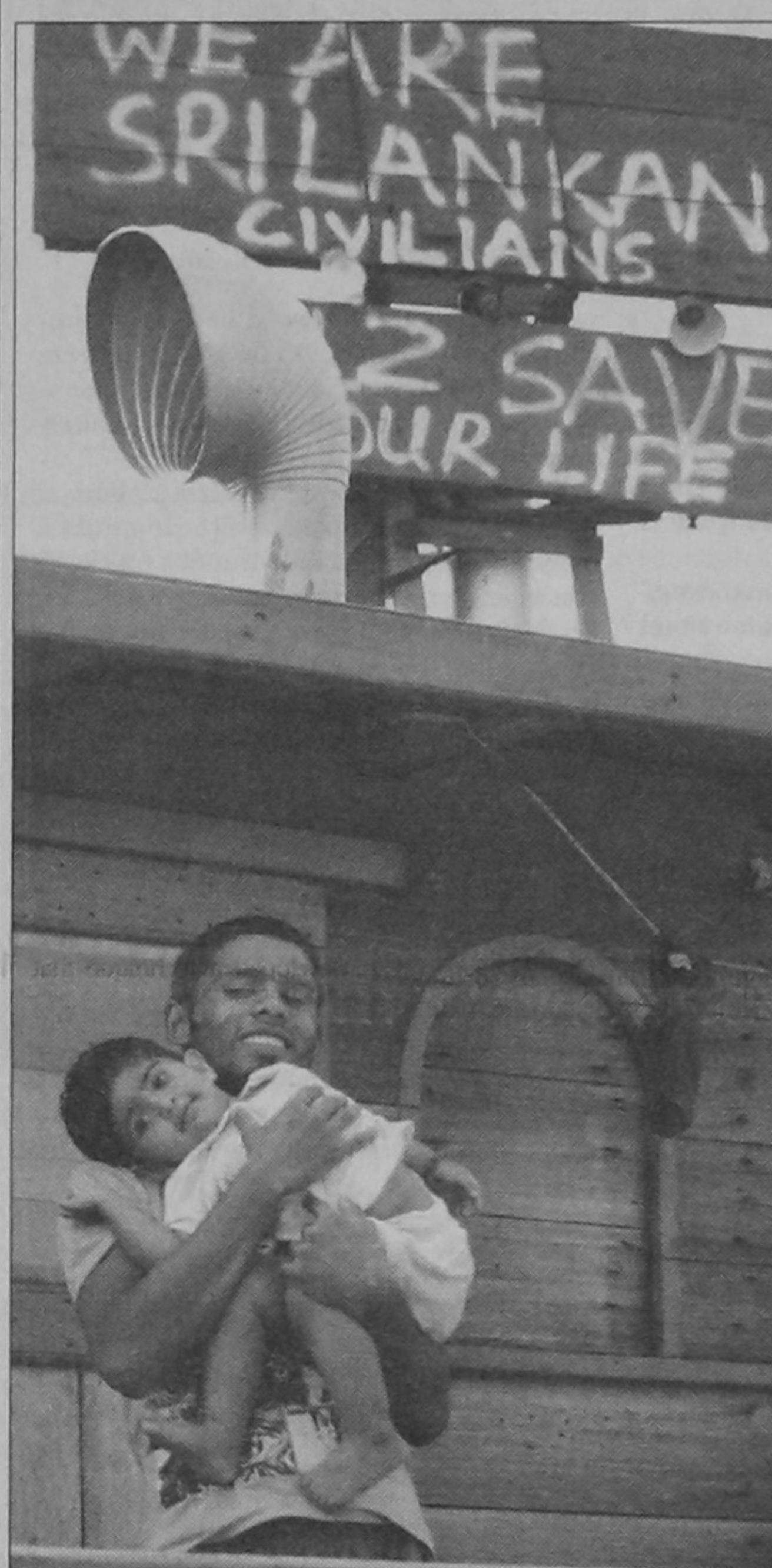


PHOTO: AFP

Sri Lankan asylum seekers remain on their wooden boat at Merak seaport in Serang District on Indonesia's Java island yesterday after their boat bound for Australia was seized by Indonesian authorities last week.

INVITATION FOR TENDERS

Cowater International Inc.

Strengthening Comptrollership and Oversight of Public Expenditure (SCOPE) Project

CONTRACT NO: CIDA Project No. 7049333

Supply, Installation and Configuration of a wide area network and related information systems for the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General of Bangladesh

Under an agreement between the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh and the Government of Canada, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) has provided funds for the **Strengthening of Comptrollership and Oversight of Public Expenditure (SCOPE) Project.** The SCOPE project intends to apply part of the allocation of this credit to payments under the contract for: **Supply, Installation and Configuration of a wide area network and related information systems for the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General.**

Cowater International Inc., the Canadian implementing agency of the SCOPE project now invites sealed tenders from eligible bidders for the supply of related goods/services. The Tender package describes three sub-systems. Bidders are required to submit bids for all sub-systems together as one proposal.

A complete set of bidding documents in the English language will be available upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Taka Three Thousand, for which a receipt will be issued. Bidding documents are available at the address below, during working hours:

SCOPE Project
c/o CIDA Project Support Unit
House 19, Road No. 3
Block K (Off Park Road),
Baridhara, Dhaka-1212,
Bangladesh Tel: 8824740-44

BIDS WILL BE ACCEPTED UNTIL 2:00 p.m. THURSDAY 19 NOVEMBER 2009

Site visits may be arranged by contacting the following:

Mr. Peter Armstrong
Field Project Manager
SCOPE Project
2nd 12-Storeyed Government Building (9th floor)
Segunbagicha Dhaka-1000,
Tel: 9335363 or 9335357