



Britain's Prime Minister Gordon Brown (R) talks with US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton as UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon (L) and Afghan President Hamid Karzai look-on inside 10 Downing Street ahead of the Afghanistan Conference at Lancaster House, in central London yesterday.

# Karzai urges West to help woo Taliban 'brothers'

Afghan transition plan is not exit strategy, says Hillary at London conference

AFP, London

Afghan President Hamid Karzai urged Western partners to help him woo moderate Taliban insurgents as an international fund to pay them off was launched at a major conference yesterday in London.

Opening the 70-nation conference, Karzai said Afghanistan and its Western supporters must "reach out to all of our countrymen, especially our disenfranchised brothers who are not part of al-Qaeda".

British Prime Minister Gordon Brown said the conference marked "the beginning of the transition process" under which responsibility for security will gradually be transferred from international to Afghan control.

Brown added that a district-by-district, province-by-province handover would start later this year and warned al-Qaeda militants in Afghanistan: "We will defeat you."

But US Secretary of State Hillary

Clinton stressed that Afghans and extremists needed to understand that the handover of security responsibilities was "not an exit strategy".

"We... support the Nato transition plan," Clinton was to tell an international conference on Afghanistan in London, according to prepared remarks.

"But I want to make clear -- to Afghans, to our partners, to our citizens, and to the extremists who hope for our failure: This is not an exit strategy," she was to say.

Brown announced the international fund, believed to be worth 500 million dollars (360 million euros), to back a reintegration plan to give jobs to Taliban fighters who are prepared to renounce al-Qaeda.

The United States, Germany and Japan are among nations that have voiced support for the Afghan-led plan.

Karzai said he would establish a national council for peace, reconciliation and reintegration and call a "peace jirga," or traditional gathering of Afghans. He

reiterated a call for Saudi King Abdullah to play a role.

"We ask all neighbours, particularly Pakistan, to support our peace and reconciliation endeavours," he added. "We are looking forward to the international community supporting this."

Iran was the most notable absentee from the conference, with Britain accusing Tehran of missing an opportunity to play a constructive role.

Afghanistan accuses Pakistan of sheltering Taliban and al-Qaeda militants who have been fighting his government -- and attacking the international forces that support it -- for nearly eight years.

The United Nations mission in Afghanistan welcomed the conference's focus on peace.

"We've always said there is a clear need for a peace process to begin. We are encouraged by the attention this has been given," spokesman Aleem Siddique told AFP.

# Fonseka goes into hiding

He shouldn't leave Lanka, says president's brother

AFP, INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE, Colombo

Sri Lanka's defeated presidential candidate who failed in a bid to unseat incumbent Mahinda Rajapakse was in hiding yesterday in Colombo after warning of possible attempts on his life.

Former four-star general Sarath Fonseka was resoundingly defeated in the country's first post-war election and was then stripped of his 80-strong state security team, which he said he needed to keep him safe.

"We have moved to a house in Colombo, but I can't tell you the location for obvious reasons," one of Fonseka's bodyguards told AFP late Wednesday.

In a day of high drama Wednesday that followed a bitter and vitriolic contest between the former allies, Fonseka rejected Rajapakse's victory and said he would mount a legal challenge.

Throughout the day, he was surrounded by heavily armed soldiers in a luxury hotel in central Colombo and he claimed he was unable to leave because he would be arrested or assassinated.

He eventually slipped out unimpeded after

dark.

But brother of President Mahinda Rajapakse said on Thursday that Fonseka should not leave Sri Lanka as he needs to answer "a lot of allegations against him."

"He should remain in the country," Basil Rajapakse, who advises the president on political affairs, said in a telephonic interview, a day after incumbent Mahinda Rajapakse trounced former army chief Fonseka in one of the most hotly contested presidential elections in Sri Lanka.

"He (Fonseka) has to answer the people. We have a lot of allegations against him," the younger Rajapakse told IANS from Colombo.

He did not say what the charges were, who had levelled them, and whether Fonseka, who is not even an MP, would face trial and, if so, when.

Asked to comment on statements that Fonseka feared for his life, Basil Rajapakse thought for a moment and answered, "No... I don't think so."

Rajapakse rode a wave of support among the majority Sinhalese population in the south to win the election, but he lost out to Fonseka in the Tamil areas in the north.

# US urges Lanka to probe charges of vote fraud

AFP, Colombo

The United States yesterday congratulated Sri Lanka's president on his re-election but urged authorities to probe allegations of vote fraud and ensure the safety of defeated candidates.

"The United States congratulates Sri Lanka for the first nationwide election in decades and President (Mahinda) Rajapakse on his victory," the US embassy said in a statement.

Rajapakse was re-elected with 57.9 percent of the vote in Tuesday's poll, defeating his former army chief Sarath Fonseka, who said he would contest the result because of fraud and legal violations.

"We urge a thorough investigation of these allegations in accordance with Sri Lankan law and in keeping with the democratic traditions of the country," the US embassy said.

"We urge the authorities to ensure the safety and security of all candidates and campaign workers," it also said, adding that the United States looked forward to "continuing the partnership" with Sri Lanka.

Fonseka spent much of Wednesday holed up in a luxury hotel in central Colombo surrounded by armed troops, and expressed fears of assassination or arrest.

Sri Lanka's ties with the United States had chilled over US allegations that security forces were guilty of war crimes under Rajapakse during the government's final campaign against Tamil Tiger rebels last year.



Relatives of Ethiopian plane crash victim Tony Elias Zakhem mourn his death as they attend his funeral in the northern Lebanese hometown of Diddeh yesterday.

# Suu Kyi rejects minister's release comment

AFP, Yangon

Myanmar's detained pro-democracy icon Aung San Suu Kyi yesterday described as "unfair" a minister's comment that she would be released in November as it pre-empted a court decision, her lawyer said.

Home Affairs Minister Maung Oo reportedly told a meeting of local officials in central Myanmar last week that the release of the 64-year-old, who has been in detention for 14 of the past 20 years, would come in November.

Suu Kyi said "the home affairs minister's comment was totally unfair," her lawyer, Nyan Win, told AFP after meeting her on Thursday.



Activists and students march towards the presidential palace during a protest against Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and Vice President Budiono in Jakarta yesterday condemning their performance after first 100 days in office.

# 20 insurgents killed in Afghan clash: Nato

AFP, Kunduz

Afghan and Nato forces called in air support after coming under attack from a "large number" of militants in northern Afghanistan and killed up to 20 insurgents, officials said Thursday.

The warplanes were scrambled when combined forces patrolling in the northern province of Baghlan late Wednesday were attacked by rockets and machine-gun fire, Nato's International Security Assistance Force (Isaf) said.

"Isaf air assets bombed and strafed the insurgents... Afghan national security forces estimate 12-20 insurgents were killed," Isaf said in a statement.

Afghan army General Murad Ali Murad confirmed the incident to AFP and said it occurred along the Kabul-Kunduz highway, a key supply route for the international forces.

The clash came as Afghan leaders and their international backers were set to hold a major conference in London later Thursday to chart the future of operations in the strife-torn nation.

From their strongholds in the south, Taliban insurgents waging war against US-led forces and the government of President Hamid Karzai have expanded into northern and western parts of the country in recent years.

# Talk less, act more

Voters to US president

AP, Las Vegas

When Al Melquist voted for Barack Obama in 2008, the unemployed software engineer was drawn to the politician's charisma and promise of solutions for the nation's economic woes and wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

In the time since, Melquist has given up looking for work. The house in Las Vegas where he lived sits empty and bank-owned after his landlord didn't make mortgage payments for 13 months. He is burning through his savings and doing Website work to make ends meet for his family of five, while working on his own startup.

Millions of Americans like Melquist tuned in to the president's State of the Union address Wednesday night, aching for solutions but wary aware that in too many places voters are no better off today than when they lifted Obama into the White House.

"He just says so many things," the 41-year-old Melquist said of Obama. "I just don't trust what he says is actually going to happen."

# Tungipara still reels

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Bangabandhu in a coffin. Initially, it was kept at the rest house of the local district office, he said.

"We were asked to bury him at gunpoint by the military. The army officers seemed to be in a hurry as they ordered us to finish burying as fast as possible. I think they wanted to avoid public gathering," he recalled.

"Though literally trembling with fear and overwhelmed with grief, I protested that Bangabandhu should not be buried without proper rituals as a Muslim," sexagenarian Abdul Hai continued, adding that he and his fellows - Idris Ali, Akbar Kazi, Tota Mia, Jorshis Mia and Johur Mia -- asked a little time to observe the rituals.

At one stage Abdul Hai called the local Imam (religious leader) to make his point. The imam convinced the officers saying that body of a Muslim couldn't be buried without a bath and namaz-e-janaza (funeral prayers).

"We were allowed 10 minutes for the bath and another 10 minutes for funeral prayers for our

great leader," Hai recalled. Aiyub Ali Sheikh, who opened Bangabandhu's coffin, said they gave the last bath to the father of the nation with a cheap 570 brand Tibet soap. Meanwhile, the army men managed a sari from a local hospital to wrap the body.

During the wash the imam noticed that a bullet pierced through Bangabandhu's left back bringing his entrails out, said Aiyub, adding that the right part of the body contained nine shots, veins of his both legs were cut and his iconic index finger, the symbol of independence and anti-colonialism, was shot off.

Bangabandhu's namaz-e-janaza was held at his home in Tungipara 24 hours after his brutal killing. A few brave men attended the janaza. The military men left immediately after Bangabandhu's burial beside his parents' graves, Aiyub Ali recalled.

Meanwhile, in his testimony before the court, one of the witnesses of Bangabandhu murder case, Havilder (ret'd) Md Quddus Sikder said Md Mohiuddin and Lt

Sekandar took Bangabandhu's body to Tungipara by a helicopter in the afternoon.

On the night of August 15, 1975, Bazlul Huda, recently executed Bangabandhu killer, took him to a carpenter shop on Sher Shah Suri road, Mohammadpur to order for 10 coffins. Huda asked to deliver the coffins at Dhanmondi road No 32.

The coffins were delivered accordingly the next day. After the Fazr prayers Huda and a team of Supply Transport Company took all the dead bodies, except Bangabandhu's, from the Dhanmondi-32 house.

While the top military brasses were busy in the cantonment to grab a piece of the coup's spoil, the body of the father of the nation was kept in a coffin in his garage with troops of the army's artillery and armoured corps on guard.

Sometime between 9:00 and 10:00am Huda came back and took Bangabandhu's body to the airport on a pick-up truck.

# Hillary says she won't serve eight years

AFP, Washington

US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has said she would not serve a full eight years if President Barack Obama wins another term, hoping eventually to retire to writing and teaching.

Hillary, who has spent two decades in the national spotlight and narrowly lost her own bid to be president in 2008, said she enjoyed her job as the top US diplomat but found it physically grueling.

Asked by talk-show host Tavis Smiley if she would serve eight years, she replied: "No, I really can't."

"The whole eight -- that would be very challenging," she said in the interview broadcast Wednesday on public television.

"It's a 24-7 job and I think at some point, I will be very happy to pass it on to someone else," Hillary said.

Hillary repeated that she would not run again for president, saying she wanted a private life after a career in which she has served as first lady and a US senator.

**Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation (PKSF)**  
 PKSF Bhaban, E-4/B, Agargaon Administrative Area  
 Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207  
 Phone: 9126240-3, 9140056-9 Website: <http://www.pksf-bd.org>

**Vacancy Announcement**

Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation (PKSF) is inviting applications for the following posts for a DFID funded project titled "Promoting Financial Services for Poverty Reduction (PROSPER)" programme, which is being implemented by PKSF. The project has two components: Learning and Innovation Fund to Test New Ideas (LIFT) and "Programmed Initiatives for Monga Eradication (PRIME)". The project is planned for continuing up to 2013.

**1. Coordinator: 1 (for PRIME)**  
**Responsibilities:** To coordinate PRIME programme activities which include implementation, supervision, and monitoring of the project activities; preparing annual action plan and evaluating the progress of the project implementation; counseling & helping the Partner Organizations (POs) in preparing and implementing budget and work plan; trouble shooting; and in other activities and developing reporting formats and preparing periodic reports.  
**Qualification:** MSS/MSc/MCom/MBA/Masters degree in Agriculture from any renowned university with minimum 2 first division/class. Third division/class in any examination will not be acceptable. PhD degree will be an additional qualification. Adequate knowledge & skills in computer literacy and fluency in writing and oral English is essential.  
**Experience:** 12+ years' experience of working with poor and in higher decision making position in relevant public and private sector with marketing and diversified professional knowledge.  
**Duty station:** Rangpur with frequent field visits to the project areas.  
**Salary:** Consolidated Tk. 75,000 - 80,000/- per month (Negotiable).  
**Age:** Below 50 years.

**2. Manager (Technical): 1**  
**Responsibilities:** Design a database and produce output and construct output table from database; prepare and update various reports; prepare applications specially in web environment (PHP, ASP.Net); Coordinate activities related to data entry, data analysis and checking data consistency; Maintaining data archive and database administration.  
**Qualification:** MBA (MIS/IT) or M.Sc/B.Sc. (Computer Science & Engineering) from any renowned university with minimum 2 first division/class. Third division/class in any examination will not be acceptable. Expertise in Oracle, My SQL, visual basic and MS Access, PHP, ASP.Net. Candidate should have adequate skill & knowledge on software development, data preservation, process, analysis and interpretation.  
**Experience:** At least 5 years' experience in the relevant field.  
**Duty station:** Dhaka with frequent field visits to the project areas.  
**Salary:** Consolidated Tk. 35,000 - 40,000/- per month (Negotiable).  
**Age:** Below 40 years.

Women are especially encouraged to apply for both the positions. The appointment would be on a contract basis for an initial period of one year and extendable, subject to satisfactory performance and requirement of the project.

Interested persons are requested to send their CV capturing detailed working experience related to the position together with all copies of the certificates and two copies of recent passport size photographs to the undersigned on or before February 20, 2010. Please write the name of post applied for on top of the envelope.

Any persuasion will disqualify the candidature. Only the short-listed candidates would be called for participating in the selection process.

This vacancy announcement can also be seen on the web site of PKSF.  
 Deputy General Manager (Admin.)