



Indian Foreign Secretary Nirupama Rao and her visiting Pakistani counterpart Salman Bashir address media prior to their meeting in New Delhi yesterday. India and Pakistan held their first official talks for 14 months, seeking to put their volatile relationship back on a stable track after it was derailed by the 2008 Mumbai attacks.

PHOTO: AFP

Myanmar court to rule today on Suu Kyi appeal

AFP, Yangon

Myanmar's Supreme Court will rule today on detained pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi's appeal against an 18-month extension to her house arrest, a court notice said.

The 64-year-old Suu Kyi had her detention extended in August after being convicted over a bizarre incident in which an American man swam to her house, while a lower court rejected an initial appeal in October.

The court will issue its verdict at 10:00 am (0330 GMT), said the notice posted outside the court building in Yangon on Thursday.

If the Supreme Court turns down her case, Nobel Peace laureate Suu Kyi can make a final appeal to Myanmar's chief justice. She has already spent most of the last 20 years in jail or under house arrest.

US, Israel resume 'strategic dialogue' on Iran's nukes

Hillary hopes for sanctions move at UN in 30-60 days

AFP, Jerusalem/Washington

The United States and Israel yesterday resumed a "strategic dialogue" over Iran's nuclear programme for the first time since US President Barack Obama assumed office, officials said.

US Deputy Secretary of State James Steinberg met with Israel's Deputy Foreign Minister Danny Ayalon to pick up the regular consultations, which were held during the Bush administration.

"During this meeting, the first at this level since the (2009) beginning of President Barack Obama's administration, strategic issues of prime importance will be discussed," foreign ministry spokesman Ashley Perry told AFP.

Another Israeli official said the talks would focus primarily on Iran's nuclear programme, which Israel considers its greatest strategic threat.

A US official described the consultations as a "regularly scheduled annual dialogue" covering a range of regional and security issues not tied to specific events.

The talks are part of "an ongoing process that the United States values as a meaningful tool to discuss a wide range of issues that con-

cern both of our countries," the State Department said.

The meeting came during a visit to the United States by Israeli Defence Minister Ehud Barak in which he was to meet with several top US officials.

Israel has called for tough international sanctions on Iran's energy sector to persuade Tehran to halt its nuclear enrichment programme, which Israel and the West suspect is aimed at creating an atomic weapon.

Iran has insisted the programme is purely for civilian purposes.

Israel, the region's sole if undeclared nuclear power, has viewed Iran as its greatest threat because of the nuclear issue and Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's repeated predictions of the Jewish state's demise.

On Wednesday, US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said she hoped to see a UN Security Council resolution on new sanctions against Iran over its contested nuclear programme in the "next 30 to 60 days."

The chief US diplomat said President Barack Obama's administration has gained greater international support for tougher action against Iran because of its offer to engage rather than isolate the Islamic Republic.

NEWS ANALYSIS

Indo-Pak talks a 'political risk' for Manmohan

ANI, New York

As India and Pakistan returned to the dialogue table after a 14-month long hiatus on Thursday, analysts believe resuming deliberations with Islamabad after the Mumbai terror attacks has become a personal priority and a political risk for Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh.

A large part of the population in India is unhappy over its overtures towards Pakistan, and they add that merely returning to formal diplomacy would only stir domestic controversy as well as confusion, The New York Times reports.

Former top Indian diplomat Lalit Mansingh said that while Dr Singh has been trying hard to restart talks between both countries, he has somehow failed to garner support of people in the country.

"He looks at India in the long term. But tactically, he has been unable to take the country along when it comes to specific issues like the dialogue with Pakistan. This is where political skill comes in," Mansingh said.

"To me it is possible to explain this to the public. But it hasn't been done. That, to me, is the

biggest weakness," he added. According to Gopalapuram Parthasarathy, former Indian High Commissioner to Pakistan, by moving forward with the talks, the Congress-led government is 'undercutting' its 26/11 stance that it will only restart the dialogue with Islamabad when it comes down hard on terror groups based on its soil, whose prime target is India.

Parthasarathy, who is considered as a hard-liner on defence and security issues, underlined that talks would not receive much support from political quarters in India.

"Yes, you have to talk to a neighbour, but the question is: On what? And how? Believe me, the dialogue process is going to have a very thin membrane of political backing in India," he said.

However, some experts are of the view that India's offer to talk is in a right direction, as there are no other means through which both the nuclear power nations could resolve issues that have been lingering for decades.

"It is the right step. There's no other way that India and Pakistan can address their issues. This can only fester if they are unaddressed," said Salman Haider, former foreign secretary.

Offensive against Ulfa to go on despite peace move

Says Assam CM

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

The Indian government is ready to hold talks with Assam's insurgent group Ulfa without their demand for sovereignty of state and ruled out immediate suspension of operations against the banned outfit, Assam Chief Minister Tarun Gogoi said yesterday.

Meanwhile, Ulfa Publicity Secretary Mithinga Daimary who was released from jail on Thursday, said peace talks could not take place if the outfit's top leaders were kept in jail.

"All our top leaders, including Chairman Arabinda Rajkhowa, are in jail and it is not possible to hold talks unless they are released," Daimary told reporters outside Guwahati Central Jail.

Talking to reporters after a meeting with Indian Home Minister P Chidambaram, Gogoi told reporters "the government is ready for talks with Ulfa but there will be no discussion on sovereignty issue. Also, there is no plan to suspend operations against the group now."

On participation of Ulfa leaders in the talks, he said the government will try to bring everyone to the negotiating table.

"We will even try to bring ('military chief') Paresh Barua. But if he does not come, we will go ahead," he said.

According to him, the indication from the Ulfa is positive and the government is hopeful of initiating the dialogue process soon. But he did not specify any timeframe for the talks.

During the meeting with Chidambaram, Gogoi discussed modalities of the talks and also briefed the Home Minister about the state's preparedness for the discussions.

Bangladesh Investment Climate Fund (BICF)

Managed by IFC in partnership with DFID and the European Union
REQUEST FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (REOI)
FOR COORDINATION CONSULTANT

BICF invites eligible consultants to indicate their interest in providing their services by submitting a response to this Request for Expressions of Interest (REOI) for "Coordination Consultant".

Qualified consultants are requested to visit the "Opportunities with IFC Bangladesh" section of www.ifc.org/bangladesh for detailed REOI.

The deadline for submission of REOI is "March 7, 2010".



Vacancy with Oxfam GB

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Postgraduate degree in relevant subject, at least 3 years experience on donor & grant management in international or national NGO or private sector. Candidate should have ability to give input in quality project development, budget analysis, basic numeric and accounting knowledge, strong communication skill in written and verbal Bengali and English, ability to work in a diverse team, good analytical and conceptual thinking skill.

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If you feel you can make a difference, please collect the Oxfam application form and job profile from Oxfam GB, House # 4, Road # 3, Block # 1, Banani, Dhaka -1213, Bangladesh. You may also write to us at the above address or to bahmed@oxfam.org.uk. The closing date for applications is March 15, 2010. Please note only short listed candidates will be contacted due to limited resources. Women are especially encouraged to apply.



Care

Call for Expressions of Interest for Baseline Research Component: Enhancing Mobile Populations' Access to HIV & AIDS Services Information and Support (EMPHASIS)

CARE International UK (CIUK) is implementing a multi-country programme to reduce the vulnerabilities to HIV & AIDS of mobile populations crossing borders of Bangladesh and Nepal to and from India. EMPHASIS is a 5-year (August 2009 – July 2014) programme funded by the Big Lottery Fund UK (BIG), the largest distributor of the United Kingdom National Lottery funding. BIG is responsible for giving out half the money raised for good causes by the National Lottery. To implement the project, CIUK works in partnership with CARE Country Offices in Bangladesh, India and Nepal. A Regional Secretariat to oversee the project has been established in Nepal. A central feature of the programme is research to inform project design as well as evidence-based advocacy on reducing vulnerability to HIV & AIDS among mobile populations.

The implementation of the research will be carried out by national research institutes in India, Nepal and Bangladesh. Although for logistical reasons, separate research institutes in each of the three countries will be hired, the methodology used in the three countries will be as similar as possible in order to ensure comparability and to assist joint analysis. Various mechanisms will be put in place to facilitate this comparability, including a joint start-up workshop and joint analyses and dissemination workshops.

This call for EOIs is for research institutes in India, Nepal and Bangladesh interested in carrying out the baseline research.

For a complete Request for Expressions of Interest, including submission guidelines, please contact Mr Ramesh Bista by email only ramesh.bista@co.care.org

The deadline to submit expressions of interest is 19th March 2010 at 17:00 Nepal time (16:45 India, 17:15 Bangladesh)

Employment Opportunity (1st Phase)

For Machine Readable Passport / Visa Project In Bangladesh

We are offering the following positions to deserving candidates for Data Center (Dhaka):

| Job Title | Job Description | Qualification |
|---|---|---|
| Data Center Manager (1 position) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manage and coordinate a state-of-the-art Data Centre Perform additional IT related jobs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimum 4 years BSc in CSE or equivalent from any reputed university (MSc will be an added advantage) Preferably five years work experience in relevant field MCSA / RHCE certifications required |
| System Administrator (2 positions) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manage active directory and other domain servers Configure and troubleshoot Windows and Linux Manage different servers (Proxy, File, Web, DNS, etc.) Operate and maintain system management software | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimum 4 years BSc in CSE or equivalent from any reputed university Preferably three years work experience in relevant field MCSA / RHCE certifications required |
| Database Administrator (1 position) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Configure and troubleshoot databases Manage data replication, backup, archiving and other database operation Ensure data security Operate and maintain database management software | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimum 4 years BSc in CSE or equivalent from any reputed university Preferably three years work experience in relevant field OCIP (DBA Track) certification required |
| Network Administrator (1 position) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Setup and configure network Maintain and troubleshoot network related issues Ensure network security Design and configure security policies Configure network management software | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimum 4 years BSc in CSE or equivalent from any reputed university Preferably three years work experience in relevant field MCSA and RHCE certifications required |
| Network & Security Engineer (1 position) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Setup and configure network Maintain and troubleshoot network related issues Ensure network security Design and configure security policies Configure network management software | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimum 4 years BSc in CSE or equivalent from any reputed university Preferably three years work experience in relevant field MCSA (including MCP on implementing and administering security) certifications required |
| Hardware Engineer (1 position) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Setup, configure, maintain and troubleshoot hardware items Manage SAN Operate and maintain hardware management software | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimum BSc in CSE or equivalent from any reputed university Preferably two years work experience in relevant field A+ certification will be preferred |

We are also offering the following positions to deserving candidates for the Application Receiving Centers at the following districts and upazillas:

Barisal, Bogra, Brahmanbaria, Chandgaon, Chandpur, Chittagong, Comilla, Cox's Bazar, Dhaka, Dinajpur, Faridpur, Feni, Gopalganj, Hobigonj, Jessore, Khulna, Kishoregonj, Kushtia, Manikganj, Mansurabad, Moulvibazar, Munshigonj, Mymensingh, Narsinghdi, Noakhali, Pabna, Patuakhali, Rajshahi, Rangamati, Rangpur, Sirajgonj, Sylhet and Tangail.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Site Resource Manager (34 positions) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supervise, coordinate and document technical team | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimum BSc / BBA or equivalent from any reputed university Preferably two years work experience in relevant field Management skill is necessary Excellent oral communication skill in English |
| Technical Support Executive (34 positions) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Configure and manage items Ensure operation and security | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimum BSc in CSE or equivalent from any reputed university / Diploma in NT from reputed institution Preferably one year work experience in relevant field Vendor certification will be preferred Minimum HSC level Strong working knowledge of computer applications (MS-Word and MS-Excel) Preferably two years work experience in relevant field Excellent typing speed (40/30 WPM) in both English and Bengali mandatory |
| Enrolment Executive (300 positions) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carry out computerized data entry Verify and validate data quality | |

Attractive package will be offered to the deserving candidates. Interested candidates are requested to submit resumes at iris_jv@yahoo.com or mail their resumes along with two passport size photographs to HR Manager, IRIS JV, GPO Box 2929, on or before March 07, 2010. Please mention the name of the position and your preferred location on the envelope.



Fonseka to contest parliamentary election

AP, Colombo

Sri Lanka's ex-army chief who was detained on accusations of sedition after losing presidential elections is set to lead a new opposition coalition in an April parliamentary vote, a party official said yesterday.

Retired Gen Sarath Fonseka has signed nomination papers to contest a seat in the capital Colombo, representing the Democratic National Alliance at the nationwide polls on April 8, party official Vijitha Herath said. His papers will be submitted Friday.



PHOTO: AFP

Ukraine's President Viktor Yanukovich holds a Bulava, a historical symbol of power, after taking oath in the parliament in Kiev yesterday.

Yanukovich inaugurated as Ukraine president

AP, Kiev

Viktor Yanukovich was inaugurated as Ukrainian president on Thursday, six years after massive protests over vote fraud got his first election victory tossed out.

This time the pro-Russian leader promised to make Ukraine a European nation outside of any bloc.

Yanukovich took the oath of office in the Verkhovna Rada, the Ukrainian parliament that has been the scene of intense maneuvering over the future of his rival Yulia Tymoshenko, who aims to stay on as prime minister.