

Maoists gather in Kathmandu to 'topple govt'

AFP, Kathmandu

Tens of thousands of Maoists gathered in the Nepalese capital of Kathmandu yesterday ahead of a mass protest aimed at toppling the government, police said.

The Maoist party, which has the largest number of seats in parliament, is demanding that the ruling coalition be replaced by a new, Maoist-led national administration.

Maoist leaders vowed that Saturday's protest would be peaceful, but security forces have been put on high alert as tension in the city rises in the run-up to the May Day rally.

"More than 40,000 Maoist supporters have entered the Kathmandu valley over the last three days," District Superintendent of Police Kedar Dhakal told AFP yesterday.

"We have mobilised a lot of security personnel. We will be vigilant about doing our duty and hope that we do not have to resort to using force."

Members of the Young Communist League, an aggressive youth wing of the Maoists, have been openly exercising in public grounds and school compounds in Kathmandu, causing concern among residents.

"We have been training our cadres with physical exercises in order for them to be better able to control the crowd if the protests turn nasty," Maoist leader Pushpa Kamal Dahal told reporters on Tuesday.

"But our protest will be peaceful. We will not use violence," Dahal said, adding that the government would be responsible if protesters were suppressed and clashes erupted.

Dahal -- who is commonly known as Prachanda -- also warned that if Maoist demands were not met, they would enforce a nationwide indefinite strike from May 2.

Nepal's lawmakers have until May 28 to complete a new constitution that analysts say is key to ensuring lasting peace after the decade-long civil war between the left-wing Maoists and the state ended in 2006, having claimed at least 16,000 lives.

They must also reach agreement on the integration of nearly 20,000 former Maoist fighters languishing in cantonments around the country.

"This is a very dangerous moment. Maoists have mobilised their people in an unprecedented scale," political commentator Prashant Jha told AFP on Thursday.



Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh (L) and his Pakistani counterpart Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani shake hands prior to bilateral talks on the sidelines of the eight-nation South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation (Saarc) summit in Thimphu yesterday. The prime ministers of two nations sat down face-to-face fuelling hopes of movement in the rival nations' glacial progress towards resuming a substantial peace dialogue.

Nato raids Afghan MP's home

AFP, Surkh Rod

Nato-led troops raided the home of a prominent Afghan lawmaker overnight; killing one of her relatives, local police and the MP said yesterday.

Nato's International Security Assistance Force (Isaf) confirmed an operation in eastern Nangarhar province's Surkh Rod district and said that troops killed an "individual" because he was carrying a gun.

The soldiers were "pursuing a Taliban facilitator" in the area, Isaf said in a statement, without mentioning the MP.

Safia Sidiqi, a member of the Afghan parliament representing Surkh Rod, told AFP that the troops entered her home without warning.

"My brothers thought they were thieves," Sidiqi told AFP, adding that she had not been at the house at the time.

"One of my relatives took a shotgun and walked out of the room. The troops shot him dead," she said. The victim had been visiting the family for the night, she said.

Pak Taliban chief now believed alive

AP, Islamabad

Pakistani Taliban chief Hakimullah Mehsud is now believed to have survived a US missile strike earlier this year, but has lost clout within the militant network, a senior intelligence official said yesterday.

The revelation contradicts initial confidence among US and Pakistani intelligence officials that the brash militant leader had been killed in a mid-January missile attack in the Waziristan stretch of the northwest tribal belt bordering Afghanistan.

The Taliban consistently denied Mehsud was killed, but declined to offer evidence he was alive, saying it would compromise his safety.

The latest independent investigations and reports from multiple sources in the field led Pakistani intelligence to conclude Mehsud had indeed survived, though with some slight injuries, the official told The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because of the topic's sensitivity.

But Mehsud's power has lessened, and other Taliban commanders, such as Waliur Rehman, are now overshadowing him, the official said.

Two other intelligence officials in the northwest told The Associated Press over the past several days that they had determined that Mehsud was alive. They spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak to media on the record.

The officials were vague about the evidence they had now that made them doubt earlier conclusions that Mehsud was dead. At the time, officials also did not elaborate on why they believed the militant had been killed.

Getting accurate, verifiable information independently from Pakistan's tribal regions is very difficult. The area is remote, dangerous, and there are legal restrictions on who can visit.



Taliban 'reappear' in Swat valley

BBC ONLINE

Taliban militants have resumed targeted killings of local leaders in Pakistan's troubled Swat valley, officials have told the BBC.

Pakistan's army declared the Swat valley free of militants after carrying out an anti-Taliban operation in 2009.

A Pakistani army spokesman said three people had died in attacks over the last 10 days. Local journalists say that seven have died in 15 days.

The militants were effectively in control of the region from 2007.

In 2009, they started to expand their power across North West Frontier Province, prompting the army to launch its offensive.

"There have been three incidents of targeted killings," Col Akhtar Abbas, head of the army public relations in Swat, told the BBC.

"But these incidents do not mean that the Taliban can return in any organised form to the Swat valley. The army is confident of this."

Some of those killed are members of a local peace committee, which is supported by the military.

Suu Kyi asks SC to stop party dissolution

AFP, Yangon

Pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi filed a lawsuit with Myanmar's Supreme Court yesterday in an attempt to prevent the dissolution of her party under a controversial new election law.

The detained pro-democracy icon's lawyer said two suits were submitted against the top junta leader Senior General Than Shwe, one on behalf of Suu Kyi herself and the other by her party, the National League for Democracy (NLD).

The Nobel peace laureate asked the court to annul the part of the election law that would have forced the party to oust its detained leader in order to participate in the first polls to be held in two decades.

Instead, her party decided last month to boycott the elections, which are expected to be later this year. The NLD faces dissolution if it fails to re-register by May 6.

In addition, the lawsuits asked for the formation of a parliament made up of lawmakers who won in 1990 elections, her lawyer Kyi Win told reporters.

The Supreme Court is expected to announce Friday whether it will accept the request to hear the matter, he said.

Suu Kyi's party won a landslide victory in the 1990 polls, but the junta never allowed it to take office, and placed her under house arrest for 14 of the next 20 years.

Myanmar's new election law nullifies the result of the 1990 polls.

"You can't change the rules during the game," Kyi Win said of the new legislation. "We have to say these matters at the high court if we are allowed."

In February the Supreme Court rejected an appeal by Suu Kyi against her extended house arrest.

The 64-year-old opposition leader had her incarceration lengthened by 18 months in August after being convicted over a bizarre incident in which an American man swam to her lakeside home in Yangon.

CAREER OPPORTUNITY



English in Action (EIA) is a nine-year English language education programme implemented through a partnership between the UK Government and the Government of Bangladesh. The goal of EIA is to contribute to the economic growth of Bangladesh by providing English language as a tool for better access to the world economy. EIA works to reach a total of 25 million primary and secondary students and adult learners through communicative language learning techniques and the use of ICT, textbooks and supplementary materials in an innovative way.

EIA is looking for qualified and pro-active individuals for the following two positions:

- 5 Teacher Development Coordinators (TDCs)
- 1 Communications Officer

Teacher Development Coordinators

TDCs support teachers and other education professionals to create an interactive English language learning environment and support teachers across Bangladesh to further develop and change their teaching practices. The main tasks of the TDCs are to organise and provide training and ongoing support for educators (including teacher trainers) and to support assessing the effectiveness and impact of EIA's interventions at the classroom level. TDCs will also contribute to the review of audio, visual and written educational materials produced by the Programme. TDCs liaise with a wide range of stakeholders including local partners, institutions, trainers and teachers at primary and secondary levels and Upazilla authorities.

- Essential:**
- Masters Degree in Education, English Language, Linguistics or a social science
 - Minimum 5 years of working experience in the education sector in Bangladesh, either as a teacher or working with teachers
 - Knowledge about the local and national education sector context of Bangladesh
 - Excellent English language skills, both spoken and written
 - Thorough understanding of pedagogy and classroom practices
 - Sound ICT skills and understanding about the role ICT can play in development
 - Good interpersonal and presentation skills
 - Ability to work independently, pro-actively, collaboratively and under pressure
 - Excellent planning, coordination and reporting skills
 - Strong analytical skills
 - Readiness to undertake extensive field visits
- Desirable:**
- Expertise in the area of English Language Teaching (ELT)
 - Experience of the development or review of educational materials

Our TDCs are a diverse team, so we welcome applications from candidates with different levels of experience and backgrounds. As part of the package we will offer TDCs the professional opportunity to take part in an internationally accredited training programme.

Communications Officer

The current stage of EIA implementation, as well as the size, scope and innovative nature of the programme's interventions in the education sector in Bangladesh, has generated the need to recruit a Communications Officer based in the EIA Dhaka office. The Communications Officer will be responsible for external as well as internal communications. The external communications part of the job will focus on planning and coordinating EIA's external communications activities, developing and producing visibility materials (including writing content), managing the EIA website, organising external events and maintaining good relations with external stakeholders, including the media. The internal communications side will be around supporting innovative ways of sharing knowledge within the international EIA partnership and ensuring effective ways of organising and storing data using various systems, including a project-wide MIS. This position will require occasional field travel to gather information of project activities at Upazilla level.

- Essential:**
- Masters Degree in the field of Communications, Journalism, Management, Business Administration, or a Social Science
 - Minimum 3 years of practical experience in the field of communications
 - Excellent ICT skills and understanding about the role ICT can play in development
 - Experience in working with project-related Management Information Systems (MIS)
 - Excellent English and Bangla language skills. This includes the ability to write attractive and professional texts for external audiences in English
 - Experience in maintaining excellent relations with external stakeholders, including government institutions, development partners and media
 - Experience in organizing visibility events
 - Excellent interpersonal and presentation skills
 - Enthusiastic and communicative personality with an ability to enthuse and motivate others
 - Ability to work independently, pro-actively, collaboratively and under pressure
 - Excellent organisational skills with an eye for detail
- Desirable:**
- Experience in the education sector in Bangladesh.



If you are looking to join a dynamic team, please send your updated CV by 10 May 2010 to English In Action (EIA), P.O. Box 6141, Gulshan, Dhaka clearly mentioning the position you apply for.