

War on Maoists needs fighting poverty first

Says Sonia Gandhi

AFP, New Delhi

India's ruling Congress party chief Sonia Gandhi has spoken out in a mounting debate over a deadly Maoist revolt, saying poverty was at the root of the insurgency.

"While we must address acts of terror decisively and forcefully, we have to address the root causes" of the revolt, wrote the widow of assassinated former prime minister Rajiv Gandhi in an open party letter.

The Maoists' growing strength highlights the need for development efforts to reach the "most backward districts," Sonia said in the latest issue of the Congress party journal "Congress Sandesh," which appeared at the weekend.

Sonia is the president of the Congress and regarded as the power behind the government.

Analysts see her intervention as a sign the leadership is uneasy with the government's "action-first" approach, in an increasingly heated party debate on ending the unrest that has spread to 20 of India's 29 states.

The rise of the Maoists reflects the need "for



Sonia Gandhi

our development initiatives to reach the grassroots," said Sonia, who has aggressively championed the left-leaning party's pro-poor programmes.

Maoist influence is greatest in impoverished, remote areas, fuelling the arguments that growing social disparities thrown up by India's blistering economic growth has been a major factor behind the rebels' expansion.

Late last year, the Congress-led coalition government launched a large-scale offensive involving six states worst-hit by Maoist violence.

But the rebels' superior knowledge of local terrain has thwarted efforts to take them on in large numbers.

In April, the insurgents massacred 75 policemen in a jungle ambush in central India, the deadliest attack by the Maoists in a single day.

The rebels insist they are fighting for the rights of the poor in India's hinterland.

Sonia Gandhi has been seeking to strengthen the party's pro-poor credentials in time for crucial state elections, which may attract Maoist sympathisers or supporters.



A pro-government Sufi-sect Ahlusunna militant mans a checkpoint at a frontline near southern Mogadishu's Bakara neighbourhood yesterday. The group deployed hundreds of its fighters in the capital recently to help the transitional government fight Al-Qaeda linked Islamist insurgents.

Nepal govt rules out emergency after May 28

PTI, Kathmandu

As the deadlock over the promulgation of a new constitution continued in Nepal, the government yesterday ruled out the imposition of emergency even after the expiry of the term of the current Constituent Assembly on May 28.

There will be no emergency rule in the country even after the Constituent Assembly's term expires on May 28, said Shanker Pokharel, the Information and Communication Minister and government spokesman.

Even if the political parties fail to reach an understanding to extend the tenure of the 601-member Constituent Assembly, the government will not be dissolved and the status quo will be maintained, he said.

He said the government will do everything to avert a constitutional crisis and there is no need to worry about what happens after May 28.

'Terror attack' kills policeman in Hyderabad

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

One policeman was killed and three others were injured in a suspected terror attack in the southern Indian city of Hyderabad on Friday evening.

Witnesses said two people, riding a motorcycle, opened fire on a police picket at Shahali Banda in the Old City area of Hyderabad, the capital of Andhra Pradesh state.

Police suspect involvement of a terror operative Vikar Ahmed in the incident.

The policemen were deployed as part of enhanced security arrangements ahead of the third anniversary of the blast at the Mecca Masjid on May 18.

The assailants fled after the attack. Constable Ramesh, of the Andhra Pradesh Special Police (APSP), died while being taken to Osmania Hospital while three other policemen were being treated for their injuries.

Last year, on the second anniversary of the blast, a policeman was killed and another injured in a similar attack when assailants opened fire on police at Falaknuma area of the old city.

A resident of Old Malakpet area in the city, Vikar was also associated with a city-based rightwing group Darsghah Jihad-o-Sahadath (DJS).

28 killed in Madhya Pradesh as bus hits voltage wire

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

At least 28 people, mostly women and children, were killed when a bus carrying marriage ceremony guests hit a high-tension electricity wire in the central Indian state of Madhya Pradesh on Friday.

The accident took place near Surajpur village in Mandla district, around 450 km from the state capital Bhopal.

District police superintendent KK Sharma said a steel wardrobe had been kept on the roof of the bus, which came into contact with high-voltage electricity line, leaving the vehicle completely charred.

He said the people on board the bus were returning after attending a marriage ceremony.

At least 30 militants dead in Afghan, Nato raids

AP, Kabul

Afghan and coalition forces conducted sweeps across Afghanistan that left at least 30 militants dead, while insurgents in the east killed five security guards in an ambush on a vehicle convoy, officials said yesterday.

Before dawn on Friday, international and Afghan forces carried out an operation in the Sangin district of Helmand province and 10 insurgents were killed, said Daud Ahmadi, a spokesman for the regional governor.

Mullah Mohammed Hassan, a "prominent" Taliban commander who was involved in many insurgent attacks in northern Helmand province, was captured in the Sangin village of Pirqadam Kariz during the raid, Ahmadi said.

No security forces or troops were injured in the operation, he said. Nato did not provide immediate comment.

In southern Zabul province, a bridge on a highway linking the province with neighboring Kandahar, was blown up with explosives,

according to Mohammad Jan Rasooly, spokesman for provincial governor of Zabul. Traffic was being diverted around the explosion site in Shahrasafa district. No one was injured.

Violence in southern Afghanistan has been on an upswing in recent weeks, following a broad operation in the town of Marjah in Helmand province and as Nato and Afghan forces ramp up security efforts in neighbouring Kandahar.

Eastern Afghanistan, along the Pakistani border, and parts of northern Afghanistan have also faced numerous attacks in recent weeks.

Also Friday, insurgents led an ambush of a vehicle convoy between the Gelan and Muqur districts of eastern Ghazni province, killing five private security guards working as escorts, the Interior Ministry said in a statement.

Three oil tankers in the convoy burned during the fighting, the ministry said.

For its part, the Defense Ministry said Afghan National Army troops and national police tracked the insurgents who led the ambush and killed six in an ensuing gunbattle.

Former vice-president of India passes away

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

India's former vice president and senior Bharatiya Janata Party leader Bhairon Singh Shekhawat died yesterday of lung cancer arrest, two days after he was admitted to a hospital with cardiac and chest infection.

87-year-old Shekhawat breathed his last at 11:10am at the Swai Man Singh Hospital in Jaipur, the capital of his home state Rajasthan. He leaves behind his wife Suraj Kanwar and daughter Ratan Kanwar and three grandchildren.

The Congress government in Rajasthan declared a three-day state mourning for Shekhawat who had wide acceptability to parties outside BJP also.

A former policeman, he joined politics in 1952 and was the chief minister of BJP government in Rajasthan thrice from 1977 to 1980, 1990 to 1992, and 1993 to 1998.

Shekhawat shifted to the national scene when he was elected vice president of India in 2002 when BJP was in power in India. He had defeated Congress candidate Sushil Kumar Shinde, now India's power minister, by a margin of 149 votes out of the 750 votes polled.

Born on October 23, 1923, Shekhawat was the 11th vice president of India and had served in that position from August 2002. He was elected for a five-year term following the death of Krishan Kant and resigned on July 21, 2007 after losing the presidential election to incumbent President Pratibha Patil.



PHOTO: AFP

A Muslim woman stands next to a placard with the slogan "boycott them" during a demonstration in the Jordanian capital Amman yesterday against trade exchange with the Jewish state. The campaign was launched on the day of "Naqba" or the "catastrophe" which marks the birth of Israel.

Palestinian woman returns to childhood home

AFP, Jerusalem

Diana Safieh was just seven years old when her family fled their west Jerusalem home on a spring night in 1948 in fear of bloody clashes between Jewish and Arab forces.

Now at nearly 70, she wants to catch at least a glimpse of a fading memory.

"My father would say, 'We will never leave Jerusalem,'" the elegant and sprightly Palestinian

woman from an upper middle-class Christian family tells AFP on an emotional journey of return.

Yesterday, the Palestinians were in mourning to mark the "Naqba," or catastrophe, of Israel's establishment 62 years ago in British-mandated Palestine and with it the exodus of hundreds of thousands of Arab inhabitants.

Safieh remembers that on the morning of May 13, 1948, she was picking flowers for the nuns of Saint Joseph convent.

Iranian cleric wants creation of 'Greater Iran'

AP, Tehran, Iran

A radical cleric called yesterday for the creation of a "Greater Iran" that would rule over the entire Middle East and Central Asia, in an event that he said would herald the coming of Islam's expected messiah.

Ayatollah Mohammad Bagher Kharrazi said the creation of what he calls an Islamic United States is a central aim of the political party he leads called Hezbollah, or Party of God, and that he hoped to make it a reality if they win the next presidential election.

Kharrazi's comments reveal the thinking of a growing number of hard-liners in Iran, many of whom have become more radical during the post-election political crisis and the international standoff over the country's nuclear program. Kharrazi, however, is not highly influential in Iran's clerical hierarchy and his views do not represent those of the current government.

Kharrazi's comments were published yesterday in his newspaper, Hezbollah.

He said he envisioned a Greater Iran that would stretch from Afghanistan to Israel, bringing about the destruction of the Jewish state.



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TENDER NOTICE

SEALED TENDERS are hereby invited in two (2) separate envelopes - one containing the "Technical Offer" and the other containing the "Financial Offer" by the undersigned for Construction of **Multistoried Building to be known as 'MTB Tower' of Mutual Trust Bank Ltd. (Phase-II: Superstructure)** at 111, Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka.

The intending Tenderers shall have to apply to the Chairman, Dexterous Consultants Ltd. at 86, Dhanmondi R/A, Road No. 9A, Dhaka 1209 along with attested copies of the following documents in support of primary eligibility for issuance of the Tender Documents:

- Copy of registration certificate/incorporation certificate evidencing minimum fifteen (15) years age of the firm.
- Copy of completion certificate of at least one twelve (12) storied Commercial/Office Building of Govt./Semi-Govt./Autonomous/Private/NGOs/Banks/Financial Institutions/Insurance Companies/Reputed Private Organization costing minimum Tk. 15.00 crores.
- Documents in support of having the following personnel under full time employment.
 - At least two Graduate Civil Engineers - one with minimum 15 years experience and the other with minimum 12 years experience. These engineers must have specific experience in construction of minimum 12 storied Commercial/Office Building with basement.
 - At least one Graduate Electrical Engineer having minimum 10 years experience with specific expertise in electrical work for multistoried Commercial/Office Buildings.
 - At least two Diploma Civil Engineers, each with minimum 10 years experience in construction work.
 - At least one Diploma Electrical Engineer with minimum 10 years experience in building work.

CVs and Declaration of the above staff must be submitted along with the documents.

- Contractors who do not have the primary eligibility as stated under para 1 to 3 above need not to apply for issuance of Tender Documents.
- Tender Documents (Vol. I & Vol. II) shall be issued only to the Tenderers having primary eligibility, as stated above from the office of the Consultant, Dexterous Consultants Ltd. at 86, Dhanmondi R/A, Road No. 9A, Dhaka 1209 and the office of the Deputy Managing Director, Mutual Trust Bank Ltd. at 68, Dilkusha C/A, 2nd floor, Dhaka 1000 on payment of Tk. 10,000/- (taka ten thousand only non-refundable) from Thursday, May 20, 2010 to Sunday, June 6, 2010 during office hours.
- No Tender Document shall be issued after Sunday, June 6, 2010, 5:00 PM.
- Tenders will be received at the office of the undersigned at the Corporate Head Office of Mutual Trust Bank Ltd. at 68, Dilkusha C/A, Dhaka 1000 on Sunday, June 27, 2010 up to 12:00 noon. The Technical Offers will be opened on the same day at 5:00 PM in the presence of Tenderers, who wish to be present at the opening of the Technical Offers while the unopened Financial Offers shall be retained with Mutual Trust Bank Ltd.
- After evaluation of the Technical Offers, only the Financial Offer of the Tenderers whose Technical Offers evaluated as 'Substantially Responsive' shall be opened in presence of the Tenderers, at a later date, to be notified in due course.
- Tenderers must visit the site and get acquainted with the premises, environment and conditions, the scope of work, service facilities available for the proposed construction, space available for loading/unloading of construction materials, movement of construction equipment, etc. at the site before submitting tenders. No objection shall be entertained regarding the conditions of the site regarding the above mentioned/any other points later on.
- For any clarification regarding preparation and submission of Tender, the Tenderers may contact the Consultant, Dexterous Consultants Ltd. at 86, Dhanmondi R/A, Road No. 9A, Dhaka 1209, Telephones: 912 3154 & 811 9087.
- The work must be completed in all respects within twenty four (24) calendar months.
- Mutual Trust Bank Ltd.** reserves the right to accept any tender or reject any or all tenders without assigning any reason whatsoever.

Engr. K.C. Sharma
Sr. Asstt. Vice President
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INDEPENDENT UNIVERSITY, BANGLADESH

Request For Proposal (RFP)

Invitation for selection of Caterer for the Cafeteria at IUB new campus, Bashunthara, Dhaka

Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB) is hereby inviting sealed tenders from the bonafide/ reputed firms/ companies/ organizations/ caterers interested to operate a Cafeteria at the IUB campus, Bashunthara, Dhaka to cater to the students, faculty members and employees.

Interested bidders are requested to apply in their official letterhead to the undersigned to collect the Tender Schedule from the office of the undersigned between 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. from 16 May 2010 to 27 May 2010 (except Friday & Saturday) on payment of Taka 2,000/- (Two thousand) only in cash (non-refundable) for each schedule.

Bidders are requested to submit Taka 50,000/- (Fifty thousand) only as Earnest Money in the form of pay order / bank draft from any scheduled bank drawn in favour of Independent University, Bangladesh along with their offer. The sealed quotation must be submitted on 31 May 2010 by 2.00 p.m. at the office of the undersigned and shall be opened at 2.30 p.m. on the same day at the same place in presence of participating bidders.

IUB reserves the right to accept or reject any / all the tenders without assigning any reason whatsoever.

Director, Planning and Development Department
Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB)
Plot # 16 Block-B Bashunthara, Dhaka
Tel: 8401790 & 8401991