

US red faces over Queen's birthday blunder

BBC ONLINE

The US State Department has been left red-cheeked after sending birthday greetings to the Queen a week early.

The diplomatic faux pas was admitted by spokesman PJ Crowley, who said: "Better a week early than a week late."

The message from US secretary of state Hillary Clinton on behalf of President Obama also honoured the "special relationship" between the US and UK.

Buckingham Palace said no offence had been taken, and that it had been a "genuine mistake". In the premature message, Clinton said: "On this celebratory occasion, we pay tribute to the Queen's life and legacy and honour the special relationship between our two nations."

The statement noted, "the young Princess Elizabeth has remained a beacon of integrity and resolve ever since".

Karzai orders review of Taliban detentions

Afghan interior minister, secret service chief resign, police nets dozens for jirga plot

AFP, Kabul

Afghanistan's president yesterday ordered a review of the cases of hundreds of prisoners linked to the Taliban and other militants in a first step to fulfilling the demands of a landmark peace conference.

"(Hamid) Karzai has ordered a review of the cases of persons in detention for links with the armed opposition", his office said, indicating that a committee would be set up to oversee the investigation.

The three-day "jirga" in Kabul wrapped up on Friday with a 16-point resolution, which included a call for the release of prisoners allegedly detained without any evidence proving their links to insurgents.

A committee led by the justice minister will look into the cases of people detained for links with militants without "sufficient legally binding criminal evidence", Karzai's office said.

RESIGNATION
Afghanistan's interior minister and secret

service chief resigned after security failings at a "peace jirga" in Kabul that came under militant attack, President Hamid Karzai's office said yesterday.

The resignations came after Karzai called in the pair to account for a rocket attack by suspected Taliban rebels on the landmark meeting in Kabul last week intended to set out a plan for ending the insurgency.

Karzai "accepted the resignation letters of the minister of interior Hanif Atmar and of the chief of the National Directorate of Security Amrullah Saleh," his office said in a statement.

JIGRA PLOTTERS CAPTURED
The Afghan government said yesterday it has captured more than a dozen militants, including a Russian national, suspected of plotting attacks to disrupt a landmark peace conference in Kabul last week.

"Four suicide terrorist groups planned to carry out attacks during the three days of the peace jirga," interior ministry spokesman Zemarai Bashary told reporters in Kabul.

Cyclone closes in Rains kill four in Pakistan

AFP, Karachi

Heavy rains and winds lashed the port city of Karachi yesterday, killing at least four people as Cyclone Phet swirled along Pakistan's coast after claiming the lives of 15 people in Oman.

Provincial health minister Saghir Ahmad told AFP at least four people had been killed by electrocution in Karachi since rains started lashing the city on Saturday night. Such deaths typically occur as a result of fallen power lines or faulty equipment becoming damp.

Tens of thousands of people have already been evacuated from vulnerable coastal villages in the southern province of Sindh, of which Karachi is the capital, but thousands more are refusing to abandon their homes.

"Cyclone Phet is expected to landfall near Karachi sometime Sunday evening packed with maximum winds of 100 kilometres (60 miles) per hour," chief meteorologist Mohammad Riaz told AFP.

Pakistan to increase defence spending

BBC ONLINE

Pakistan has announced it is to increase defence spending by 17% in the coming year, with analysts saying much of it will be used to combat militants.

In his budget speech to parliament, Finance Minister Abdul Hafeez Shaikh said security forces should know they had the support of MPs.

Defence spending will rise to more than \$5bn a year from next month.

Pakistani forces have carried out major offensives in the north-west over the past year.

However, there has also been a wave of deadly attacks by Islamic militants throughout the country.

"I think security is our topmost issue," said Shaikh.

"We are facing a situation in which our armed forces, paramilitary forces and security forces are laying down their lives. They are bearing pain for the country and the people, I salute them. They should know from this house that we all stand by them."

In the past three years more than 3,400 people have been killed across Pakistan in bomb blasts and suicide attacks blamed on Taliban militants.

Last week more than 90 people were killed in co-ordinated attacks on two mosques of the minority Ahmadi Islamic sect in Lahore.

Pakistan, a vital ally for the US, has been heavily burdened by the cost of fighting Taliban insurgents along its Afghan border. Shaikh said government policies had reined in inflation - from 25% down to 13% - and brought economic stability.

Gilani and Qaisrani win by-polls

THE DAWN ONLINE, Multan

Pakistan People's Party's Syed Ahmad Mujtaba Gilani defeated Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz's Nagma Mushtaq Lang in the by-election in the PP-206 constituency on Saturday.

In another by-election in the PP-240 constituency PML-N candidate Mir Badshah Qaisrani defeated independent candidate Khwaja Salahuddin Akbar.

According to the unofficial results received at about 11pm, Gilani got more than 38,000 votes and Lang more than 32,000 votes. Turn out remained at 40 per cent.

Although police and Rangers were deployed heavily at Jalalpur Pirwala to maintain law and order, supporters of Gilani and Lang clashed at several places, leaving at least five injured.

Lang came under fire and her vehicle was completely damaged. In reaction, PML-N activists surrounded Gilani's vehicle and attacked it with clubs and iron rods.

US allows India to grill Mumbai attack suspect

THE DAWN ONLINE, Washington

The United States has finally given India access to a US national accused of planning the Mumbai terror attacks two years ago, a senior White House official said on Saturday.

David Coleman Headley, 49, whose father was a Pakistani, has confessed to his role in the Mumbai attack. The United States was earlier reluctant to allow Indian officials to interrogate him because Headley is a US citizen.

But US National Security Adviser James Jones told reporters on Saturday that the Obama administration had accepted an Indian request to allow their officials to interrogate Headley.

Author fights to publish book on Sonia Gandhi

AFP, New Delhi

The author of a "fictionalised biography" of Sonia Gandhi, the Italian-born power broker of Indian politics, has vowed to fight attempts to stop it being published.

Javier Moro said allies of Gandhi were "taking lines out of context and manipulating the text" as part of a campaign by India's elite to have the book banned and protect her from scrutiny.

Gandhi is the widow of assassinated former prime minister Rajiv Gandhi and -- as president of the ruling Congress party -- is widely thought to be preparing the way for her son Rahul, 39, to become the country's next leader.



In this May 24, 1991 photograph, Sonia Gandhi (C), the Italian-born widow of late Indian Premier Rajiv Gandhi, her daughter Priyanka (2 R) and son Rahul (2 L), turn to chanting mourners during the funeral of Rajiv Gandhi in New Delhi. The author of a "fictionalised biography" of Sonia Gandhi, Javier Moro has vowed to fight attempts to stop it being published, according to comments quoted in Indian media yesterday.

India's once-powerful Communists fight for survival

AFP, New Delhi

Tagged as the world's most electorally successful Communist party, the Marxist leaders of West Bengal might finally be nearing the end of more than three decades of uninterrupted power.

The Communist Party of India (Marxist), or CPI-M, which has won every election in the eastern Indian state since 1977, is suddenly fighting for survival after suffering a crushing defeat in municipal elections last week.

The party's nemesis is India's Minister of Railways Manmohan Banerjee, who heads the Trinamul Congress, a relatively new regional party intent on ending the Communists' long-running monopoly on power in West Bengal.

Banerjee's party swept the polls in the state capital Kolkata, winning 95 of 141 seats, with the CPI-M left with just 33 -- its worst-ever showing and one that was repeated in cities across the state.

To many observers, the result was confirmation that India's once-powerful Left is now in a state of terminal decline.

"For the first time in decades, the Marxists are facing a credible threat. They are looking vulnerable in their bastion," said Saroj Giri, a professor of political science at Delhi University.

The CPI-M has now lost three straight elections in West Bengal in a row -- council, parliamentary and municipal -- and there is little to suggest the result will be any different in state polls due next year.

For years, the Marxists had avoided the sort of anti-incumbency sentiment behind the rise and fall of other state governments, but analyst BG Verghese suggested that 33 years had finally taken their toll.

Judgement on Bhopal gas tragedy today

PTI, Bhopal

After a trial lasting more than two decades, the judgement on Bhopal Gas tragedy, the world's worst industrial disaster, which killed and maimed thousands of people, would be pronounced today. Chief Justice Magistrate (CJM) Mohan P Tiwari will pronounce the judgement after a 23-year-long trial in the toxic leak case from the now defunct Union Carbide factory on the intervening night of December 2-3, 1984.

During the trial, a total of 178 prosecution witnesses were examined and 3008 documents were produced while eight defence witnesses deposed in the court. Out of the nine accused tried for the offences, R B Roy Choudhary, the then former Assistant Works Manager Union Carbide India Ltd (UCIL), Mumbai, died during the trial.

No clear signs Myanmar wants help with polls: Asean

AFP, Ho Chi Minh City/ Geneva

Myanmar has given no clear signs that it would welcome regional help with its elections expected later this year, its Southeast Asian neighbours said yesterday.

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) and the European Union have urged Myanmar to ensure the elections are "credible and transparent".

Asean secretary general Surin Pitsuwan told reporters on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum on East Asia: "We don't have any clear signal that member states of Asean will be asked to help but the offer is on the table."

Surin said in Madrid late last month that the election "won't be perfect" but would be the start of a process that could lead to real democracy.

Asean groups Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

State media in military-ruled Myanmar reported last month that the country has no need for foreign observers to monitor its first elections in two decades, despite international concerns that the polls will lack legitimacy.

The National League for Democracy (NLD) of detained democracy icon Aung San Suu Kyi has been forcibly dissolved under widely criti-

cised laws governing the elections.

The NLD refused to meet a May 6 deadline to re-register as a party -- a move that would have forced it to expel its own leader -- and boycotted the vote.

Suu Kyi, a Nobel peace laureate, has been held in detention for 14 of the past 20 years.

Meanwhile, International Labour experts warned yesterday that Myanmar's military is still resorting to forced labour despite signs of progress with civilian labour authorities.

An International Labour Organisation (ILO) committee backed calls for the release of six people who have been imprisoned for up to 18 months after they sought the help of the agency's office in the country, and renewed criticism of Myanmar's military, ILO officials said.

"There is an indication that the use of forced labour systematically by civilian authorities in some areas is reducing," Steve Marshall, liaison officer for the UN labour agency in Myanmar, told AFP.

"The other side is there is no evidence of any change in attitude to the use of forced labour by the military," he added.

The 183-nation ILO's committee on standards has assessed Myanmar's record with forced labour annually since an inquiry concluded that the practice was widespread and systematic there.

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4. Engineer (Grade-II), Shift

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Eligibility: CMA Intermediate / CA(PE-1/PL-2) or MBA with major in Finance having at least 7 years of experience gained from a highly complex organization. Ability to independently prepare accounts consistent with IAS / IFRS requirements. Conversant with companies law, income tax, VAT & other commercial mercantile laws. Shall have strong command in MS Office packages along with good communications and presentation skill.

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7. Technician (Mechanical/Electrical)

Eligibility: Diploma Engineering in Mechanical / Power / Marine / Electrical/ Electronics with minimum 5 years experience preferably in power plant maintenance.

8. Assistant Technician (Mechanical/Electrical)

Eligibility: Diploma Engineering in Mechanical / Power / Marine / Electrical with some or no experience; or SSC having Trade certificate in Power / Electrical / Marine / Mechanical with minimum 3 years experience.

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Sale of Used Vehicle

Eastern Bank Limited (EBL) will dispose off a used vehicle through tender as-it-is-where-it-is basis. The list of the vehicle is as follows:

Sl.	Brand	Model	CC	Registration No.
01.	Mercedes Benz Car	2003	1984	DM-GA-15-7436

It is to be noted that the vehicle can be inspected at the basement of EBL Corporate Head Office at Jiban Bima Bhaban, 10, Dilkusha C/A, Dhaka-1000. The above mentioned vehicle will be available for inspection on any working day starting from 07 - 13 June 2010 (Time: 11.00 am - 3.00 pm). Earnest money (refundable) @ 10% of the quoted price favoring Eastern Bank Limited, in the form of Pay Order/Draft shall have to be deposited along with the Quotation. Necessary applicable AIT & VAT on the quoted price will be borne by the successful bidder as per Tax Rules. Tender Schedule will be available at EBL Corporate Head Office, Administration Department, Dhaka. Sealed Quotation is to be dropped from 11.00 am to 02.00 pm on 14 June 2010 in the Tender Box to be kept in the EBL Corporate Head Office (Ground floor) at Jiban Bima Bhaban, 10, Dilkusha C/A, Dhaka-1000. Sealed Quotation will be opened on the same day at 03.00 pm in presence of the bidders or their representatives, if any.

The Bank reserves the right to accept or reject any or all quotations. The decision of EBL Management shall be regarded as final in all respect.

Transport Officer Head of Administration