

Naga groups call off Manipur blockade

REUTERS, Guwahati

Naga groups on Monday agreed to suspend a two-month-long blockade of a vital highway that has caused food and fuel shortages in the troubled northeastern state of Manipur.

The Naga Students Federation, one of the main groups behind the blockade, announced the suspension after meeting Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in New Delhi on the same day the government announced it would send troops to end the standoff.

Tribal groups from Nagaland blocked supplies to neighbouring Manipur, home to more than 2.5 million people, for preventing their separatist leader Thuingaleng Muivah from visiting his birthplace.

Insurgency has long plagued Manipur as well and dozens of tribal insurgent groups still exist, though violence levels in the region have fallen.

The Manipur stand-off is seen as a new security headache for the central government which is already struggling with a growing Maoist insurgency.

The Nagas have been fighting Indian forces for a free Nagaland state carved out of the northeastern region, including parts of Manipur.



Kashmiri school children shout slogans against security forces in Srinagar yesterday during a protest over the killing of Tufail Ahmad Matoo. Protests continued for the fourth consecutive day in parts of Srinagar after the death of the teenager on June 11. Relatives and protesters claim Tufail was killed when police fired upon an anti-India protest in Srinagar after Friday prayers.

NEPAL'S POLITICAL CRISIS Don't think of PM post

Prachanda to Bhattarai

THE INDIAN EXPRESS ONLINE, ANI, Kathmandu

With murmurs of a revolt getting louder in his party, Maoist chief Prachanda on Monday met his long-time associate-turned-rival Baburam Bhattarai, and asked him not to stake claim for the PM's post when the National Unity government is formed.

According to sources in the Unified Communist Party of Nepal-Maoists (UCPN-M), Prachanda invited Bhattarai to his residence and asked him not to project himself as the PM candidate as that may cause fissures in the party.

Bhattarai, backed by at least half-a-dozen senior politburo and central committee members, has been insisting that the UCPN-M find an alternative to Prachanda for the PM post, if other parties, mainly the Nepali Congress and the CPN-UML, are comfortable with that.

His line is being taken as a challenge to Prachanda's leadership in the party.

Prachanda's meeting with Bhattarai came in the midst of a damaging campaign against the latter within the party, with a section owing allegiance to Prachanda calling him an 'Indian agent'.

There are no indications yet that Bhattarai has given up his ambition as senior leaders have asked him not to 'succumb to Prachanda's pressure any more', party sources said.

Meanwhile, Prachanda has claimed that he was forced to resign from the post of prime minister.

According to him he was forced to resign because he tried to find out the whereabouts of the people who forcibly disappeared during the decade long insurgency.

Speaking at a program here on Monday, Prachanda said that the Maoist led government had initiated process to find out the position and whereabouts of the disappeared people but they did not succeed.

Nepalnews quoted Prachanda as, saying that he wanted to bring to book those responsible for forcibly disappearing the people and also democratise the Nepal Army. These tasks were incomplete as he was forced to resign.

US 'Bin Laden hunter' held in Pakistan

REUTERS, Chitral

Pakistan detained an American armed with a dagger, a pistol and night vision goggles for allegedly trying to sneak into Afghanistan to hunt and kill al-Qaeda head Osama bin Laden, police said yesterday.

California Gary Faulkner, 40, was caught in the Brumboret Valley near the border of Afghanistan's Nuristan province and was being questioned, Chitral police Chief Jaffer Khan said.

"He was roaming in the security zone in a suspicious manner. He had a dagger and night vision goggles with him. He is being investigated," Khansaid.

Mumtaz Ahmed, a senior police investigator, said Faulkner was also carrying a pistol and was hunting bin Laden because he suffered personal losses in the September 11, 2001 attacks.

An intelligence official in Chitral, who asked not to be identified, said Faulkner shouted "Don't come closer to me or I'll open fire!" when approached.

Pakistan rubbishes LSE reports on ISI training Taliban

THE INDIAN EXPRESS ONLINE

Pakistan Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi dismissed a report that the Inter-Services Intelligence agency is funding, training and guiding the Taliban in Afghanistan as "rubbish", saying Talibanisation is not good for both countries.

Qureshi said he was "surprised and shocked" that an institution like the London School of Economics had prepared a report that alleged the ISI had links with the Afghan Taliban.

He said Western countries had, in their official communications, praised the role of the ISI and Pakistan's armed forces in the war on terror.

Describing the report prepared by researched Matt Waldman as "rubbish", Qureshi said Talibanisation is not good for Pakistan or Afghanistan.

"Pakistan's elected government has a clear 'hands off policy' on Afghanistan, he said.

The government had not interfered in Afghanistan's internal affairs and was instead cooperating with the neighbouring country, he added.

Western countries have acknowledgement Pakistan's sacrifices and economic losses due to the war on terror, and the US and Britain have launched a strategic dialogue with Pakistan, Qureshi told a TV news channel.

Asked about an allegation in the LSE report that President Asif Ali Zardari and an ISI official had met arrested Afghan Taliban leaders, Qureshi said: "For the past two-and-half years, Zardari has been accused of toeing the line of the US, Britain and the West. It is strange that for first time he has now been linked to the Taliban. This shows what importance should be attached to this report."

Qureshi claimed knowledgeable circles were aware of the ISI's cooperation and sacrifices in the war on terror.

"Who has captured more terrorists than the ISI?" he asked.

He pointed out that militants had even attacked the ISI's offices in Lahore, Peshawar and Multan.

Zardari not US national, clarifies PPP

ANI, Islamabad

The Pakistan People's Party (PPP) has said its leader and Pakistan President Asif Ali Zardari is a citizen of Pakistan, and denied reports claiming that he was an American national.

PPP Secretary Information Fauzia Wahab said that the PPP strongly condemned the news on a website- Notable Names Database (NNDB), which claims to contain details of over 35,000 prominent world personalities and describes Zardari as a US citizen of Asian/Indian race.

She said that the aim of the news was to make President Zardari controversial and put the interests of Pakistan at stake.

Wahab also criticised a Pakistani newspaper for publishing the report on its front page without investigating the matter. "If this website was looked at closely the journalist who filed the story would have known that on it the creator of Pakistan's nuclear programme Dr Abdul Qadeer Khan had been called a spy," The News quoted Wahab, as saying.

Apart from Zardari's family background and other details, the website also claimed that the Pakistan President suffers from diabetes and is a patient of depression.

International envoys arrive as Lanka defends war

AFP, Colombo

A host of international figures, including a US war crimes investigator, landed in Sri Lanka yesterday for visits expected to focus on alleged atrocities committed during the country's civil war.

As the separate US, Japanese and United Nations officials arrived in Colombo, the government furiously denied that any war crimes were committed during the final months of fighting last year.

The US embassy in Colombo said the two advisors had been sent by President Barack Obama to discuss issues including the military offensive that ended the decades-long war with separatist Tamil rebels in May 2009.

Samantha Power, special assistant to the president on multilateral affairs and human rights, and David Pressman, national security council director for war

crimes and atrocities, will hold four days of meetings in Sri Lanka.

The embassy said the visit followed last month's meeting in Washington between US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Sri Lanka's External Affairs Minister G.L. Peiris.

The US has been pressing for an independent war crimes investigation into the final phase of fighting that ended with the Tamil Tigers' defeat.

Sri Lanka this week is also hosting two other international envoys to discuss peace and reconciliation and alleged human rights abuses during the war.

UN chief Ban Ki-moon's top political adviser, Lynn Pascoe, and Japan's special envoy to Sri Lanka, Yasushi Akashi, were due Tuesday for talks with Sri Lankan officials.

Defence Secretary Gotabhaya Rajapakse said those making war crimes

allegations had failed to prove their claims.

"I challenge them to produce evidence," he told the Sinhalese-language Lankadeepa newspaper. "There is no point in giving photographs and videos to the media. We have an established legal system. Use it."

Sri Lanka has denied any civilians were killed during the final offensive against the rebels last year, although the United Nations reported that at least 7,000 Tamil civilians perished in 2009.

Both Pascoe and Akashi are expected to push Sri Lanka to improve ethnic reconciliation a year after the defeat of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) guerrillas, who were fighting for a Tamil homeland.

Ban is due to appoint a panel on Sri Lanka following widespread allegations that both sides in the war were responsible for crimes against humanity.

US child activists launch appeal for Bhopal victims

AFP, PTI, New York/ New Delhi

US child activists made an impassioned plea Monday for the 90-year-old former boss of Union Carbide to help victims of the deadliest ever industrial disaster in Bhopal, India.

The Indian government said last week the chemical group's former CEO, Warren Anderson, was still open amid outrage over the lenient sentencing of some of the culprits.

Dow Chemical purchased Union Carbide in 1999, but says all liabilities related to the accident were cleared in a 470-million-dollar out-of-court settlement with the Indian government in 1989.

Young activists from the New York-based group, "Kids for a Better Future," failed to gain access to the Dow headquarters here and instead read out a statement from the group's 12-year-old founder Akash Mehta on the street.

"Mr Warren Anderson, today you are known only for your role in the disaster, your name is met only with hatred by hundreds of thousands of Bhopalis, and people all over the world," it said.

"The only way that you can change that, to clear your name, is to make a moral statement for justice in Bhopal."

Indian Maoists attack police station, torch bank

IANS, Patna

Maoist guerrillas in Bihar set ablaze a railway station and a bank as well as attacked a police station and a camp of the Special Auxiliary Police to enforce their two-day shutdown, officials said yesterday.

The incidents took place late Monday. Guerrillas on the tony Ismailpur railway station in Gaya district on the Gaya-Mughalsarai rail route, disrupting train services for several hours. Long route trains, including the Rajdhani Express, were affected.

"Maoists first attacked the Ismailpur railway station and forced the railway officials to vacate the place. They then torched the railway station. The documents of the record room were completely destroyed," a police official in Gaya, about 100 km from here, told IANS.

No casualties were reported.

In Jamui district, Maoists set on fire a branch of the State Bank of India. 'Maoists set ablaze an SBI branch at Khadigram under Barhat police station,' an official said.

In another incident, over 100-armed guerrillas attacked a police station and a camp of the Special Auxiliary Police in Rohtas district.

Vacancy Announcement



UNDP
Bangladesh

UNDP in partnership with the Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) and UN-Habitat is implementing the **Urban Partnerships for Poverty Reduction Project (UPPR)** in 6 City Corporations and 24 Pourashavas. The project is being implemented over 7 years, up to 2015. UNDP is looking for potential candidates to fill vacant positions of UPPR project as well as to create a roster of suitable candidates for future openings:

1. Extreme Poverty Coordinator

2. Financial Services Expert

3. Procurement Expert

4. Human Resources Expert

5. Admin Expert

6. Finance Accountant Expert

7. Town Manager

8. Urban Agricultural Expert

9. Socio Economic Expert

10. Settlement Improvement Expert

11. Finance Accountant Expert

12. Settlement Improvement Assistant

13. Socio Economic Assistant

14. Secretary

15. Community Organizer

16. Driver

17. Messenger

For Community Organizers: Minimum High School Certification (HSC) but preferably a Bachelors' Degree in Social Science. At least 3 years relevant experience in urban community development or urban poverty reduction programme in donor, NGO or the government sector is required. Full job description is available in the website.

For Drivers: Minimum Secondary education or equivalent level, with at least 3 years relevant experience. The incumbent must have a valid heavy / light vehicles driving license. Adequate knowledge and skills in vehicle maintenance and minor repair are essential. She / he must have working knowledge of communicative English, and must possess good manner. Full job description is available in the website.

For Messengers: At least Secondary education or equivalent level plus minimum of 2 years experience in a similar position, preferably with international organizations. Full job description is available in the website.

Submission of Application: Candidates interested to apply for positions 1 - 14 must apply online (hard copy applications will not be considered). Detail Terms of Reference and online application instructions can be found in our website: <http://www.undp.org.bd/jobs>. Applications should be received no later than **30th June, 2010**.

Interested candidates for the position of **Community Organizer, Driver and Messenger** are requested to send hard copy applications including updated Curriculum Vitae, copies of academic and experience certificates, copy of Driving License(Drivers only) and a recent passport-size photograph in A4 size envelope marking 'Confidential' and the position title on the envelope addressed to the **HR Specialist, UNDP Bangladesh, GPO Box: 224, Dhaka-1000**, or deposit at the Deposit Box at the **IDB Bhaban (Ground Floor), Begum Rokeya Sharani, Agargaon, Dhaka-1207**. Applications will be received until close of business hours on **30th June, 2010**.

CAT - ACCA

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