

US and Russia in Vienna spy swap

BBC ONLINE

The US and Russia have taken part in the biggest spy swap since the Cold War, in an exchange at Vienna airport.

One plane brought 10 Russian agents deported from the US after a court hearing at which they admitted being agents for a foreign country.

The other was said to have brought four people convicted of spying in Russia but given a presidential pardon after they signed to admit their guilt.

Both planes took off again after about 90 minutes.

The Russian Yakovlev Yak-42 plane said to be carrying the four people pardoned by Moscow had landed at Vienna airport at about the same time as the Vision Airlines Boeing 767-200 from New York, carrying the Russian agents.

Television pictures showed the two aircraft parked side-by-side on the run-

way. Covered aircraft stairs were brought up to both planes and none of the agents could be seen being transferred.

The BBC's Bethany Bell in Vienna says a swap on the runway would mean that no-one had officially entered the country.

The next destinations of the planes have not been confirmed.

However, a senior Russian official was earlier quoted by Agence France-Presse news agency as saying the Russian agents were expected to arrive back in their homeland yesterday.

The lawyer for nuclear specialist Igor Sutyagin, one of those released by Russia, confirmed that his client had left Moscow, Austrian media said.

Russia's foreign ministry acknowledged the swap, saying it would mean the "return to Russia of 10 Russian citizens accused in the United States, along with the simultaneous transfer to the United States of four individuals previously

condemned in Russia".

'CONSPIRACY'

The 10 Russian agents earlier pleaded guilty in New York to "conspiracy to act as a registered agent of a foreign country". More serious money laundering charges against them were dropped.

Their New York court appearance was the first time they had all appeared in public together since being arrested last month.

Prosecutors said the accused had posed as ordinary citizens, some living together as couples for years, and were ordered by Russia's External Intelligence Service (SVR) to infiltrate policy-making circles and collect information.

BBC Washington correspondent Kevin Connolly says there is broad agreement in the US that the agents are being deported swiftly because neither government wants this to damage attempts to reset their often prickly relationship.

Suicide bomber kills six in Baghdad

AFP, Baghdad

A suicide bomber blew up a vehicle at an Iraqi army checkpoint in Baghdad yesterday killing six people, including three soldiers, and wounding 18 others, an interior ministry official said.

The attack struck at 7:00am (0400 GMT) in Ghazaliyah, a Sunni majority neighbourhood and former stronghold of insurgents in the west of the capital.

Although overall levels of violence in Iraq have fallen markedly since their peak in 2006 and 2007, deadly attacks against civilians and security forces in Baghdad occur almost every day.

On Thursday, the United Nations warned in its latest human rights report that although unrest in the country had declined since 2008, "attacks deliberately targeting religious and ethnic groups continue unabated."

A string of attacks against Shiite pilgrims between Tuesday and Thursday killed 70 people in Baghdad, security officials said, highlighting the continued ability of insurgents to inflict bloodshed.

First Indo-Pak peace talks since 26/11

REUTERS, New Delhi

India and Pakistan next week take the first step in trying to revive a peace process broken off after the 2008 Mumbai attacks, but no one is realistically expecting dramatic progress.

The meeting comes at a time when India has sent in the army to control weeks of violent anti-government protests in the Himalayan region of Kashmir, at the core of its dispute with Pakistan.

The July 15 talks between the foreign ministers could see them framing a new format to replace a broad 2004 peace process, known as the composite dialogue, which India suspended after the Mumbai attacks that it blamed on Pakistan-based militants.

That new format could free up the peace process from a political bind. India could not be seen as reviving the old peace process until Pakistan punished the planners of the Mumbai attack that killed 166 people, a demand Islamabad has yet to meet.

At the same time, both sides have been under pressure from Washington to reduce tension because their rivalry spills over into Afghanistan and complicates efforts to bring peace there.

Before the 2004 talks stalled, they came close to agreement under the composite dialogue on a maritime border dispute in the area of Sir Creek estuary and on the Siachen glacier in the Himalayas.

"I think the old composite dialogue which

had eight issues is dead," said Lalit Mansingh, a former Indian foreign secretary.

"They will probably come up with a new format that will include new issues such as water sharing (from common rivers) that Pakistan will want to raise."

KASHMIR PROTESTS
But given their unmitigated mistrust of each other since gaining independence from Britain in 1947, no one is expecting rapid progress in the talks.

And Foreign Minister SM Krishna and his Pakistani counterpart, Shah Mehmood Qureshi, will have to sidestep another danger, getting bogged down in a game over ongoing anti-government protests in a part of Kashmir held by India.

Violent anti-government protests have swept India-controlled Kashmir for almost a month. The region is under an army lockdown.

The nuclear-armed rivals fought two of their three wars over Kashmir, which they claim in full but control in part. A separatist revolt broke out in the Indian held part in 1989, a conflict New Delhi says is fuelled by Pakistan.

Islamabad says it only lends moral support to what it calls an independence movement by Kashmiris.

In comments that could reverberate in the talks, Indian officials said the protests might have been incited by Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba militant group that Delhi has blamed for the Mumbai attacks.



Pakistani locals try to remove a blast victim's body from the rubble after a suicide bomb attack in the district of Mohmand yesterday. A suicide bomber drove a motorbike into a crowd of Pakistanis in a busy market outside a local government office in the lawless northwest, killing 56 people and flattening rows of shops.

Peacekeepers urge calm in Lebanon

ALJAZEERA, Com

The head of the UN peacekeeping force in southern Lebanon has made a public appeal for co-operation from the local community after recent confrontations between angry residents and his troops.

In an open letter to the residents of southern Lebanon, Major-General Asarta Cuevas called for calm after villagers seized weapons from peacekeepers and wounded a patrol leader last week.

"As you all know, some recent incidents have cast a shadow on the positive environment in which UNIFIL peacekeepers have been working, in close co-ordination with the Lebanese army, for your safety and security," the letter said.

Cuevas went on to call for issues with troops to be resolved through discussion, not through "obstructing the work of the peacekeepers or by beating them".

60 anti-India protesters arrested in Kashmir

AP, Srinagar

Government forces arrested over 60 suspected separatist activists across Indian Kashmir in an attempt to stem deadly civil unrest that has continued despite a curfew that was in its third day, police said yesterday.

The arrests, carried out during overnight raids by police and paramilitary soldiers, were designed to put a lid on nearly three weeks of violent anti-India protests in which at least 15 people have died. Residents blame security forces for the deaths.

At least 30 separatist activists who had participated in recent street demonstrations were arrested in Anantnag, 35 miles (55 kilometers) south of Srinagar, the main city in Indian Kashmir, said a police officer who spoke on condition of anonymity as he was not authorized to speak to the media.

Hezbollah denounces firing of CNN Mideast editor

AP, Beirut

The Lebanese militant Hezbollah has denounced CNN's decision to fire a Middle East editor for posting a note on Twitter expressing admiration for the country's late top Shia cleric.

Octavia Nasr later apologised for her tweet in which she described Grand Ayatollah Mohammed Hussein Fadlallah as "one of Hezbollah's giants I respect a lot." But CNN officials said her credibility had been compromised.

Hezbollah's spokesman Ibrahim Moussawi says CNN's decision amounts to "intellectual terrorism" and reflects the West's "double standards" in dealing with the Mideast.

He said in a statement issued yesterday that the decision to fire Nasr -- a Lebanese who worked for CNN for two decades -- exposes America's false claims regarding freedom of expression.



Request for Expression of Interest

Katalyst requests expression of interest for the following activities as part of its tourism sector activities.

1) Website Development on Bangladesh Tourism:

Katalyst is facilitating activities by private sector partners to enhance information flow to tourists and promote Bangladesh as a prominent travel destination through a comprehensive web portal of international standard. The basic premise of this intervention will be to disseminate tourism and travel related information (for example existing tourist destinations, historical significance, different forms of tourism possibilities, availability of facilities, means of travel, packages/offers of tour operators, hotel reservation systems, contacts, etc) through the web portal that will act as a central hub. The content of this portal will be developed and maintained by a service provider from the private sector. It will also act as an attractive promotional tool to highlight the different tourism possibilities, fairs and festivals, culture and history of different destinations to the international and domestic travelers.

To ensure that the target group benefits from this service, it is essential to develop a user-friendly and interactive website that is internationally and locally accessible. In this regard, Katalyst is inviting Expression of Interest from website designer and developer companies that collect, collate, validate and manage digitized information for a specified target audience. Katalyst is interested to partner with an eligible private sector company meeting the following criteria.

1. At least 2 years experience in content development and maintenance, graphic design and e-commerce programming
2. Adequate investment and HR capacity to envision, design, deliver and maintain the web portal
3. Capacity of existing facilities to support the volume of content
4. Reasonable and sound knowledge about information and content need of the target group within the tourism sector
5. Mechanism to collect updated information
6. Strong network software with the capability of offering other augmented services (e.g. hotel reservation systems through online payment)
7. Established network with relevant government and private sector actors
8. A write-up outlining the major features of the concept for the website and describing how it will maintain its commercial viability

Commercial content service providers with ready content pertinent to information on travel and tourism will be given preference. Interested parties are requested to mail/drop the expression of interest including their **company profiles, experiences and the website concept** in the tender box at Katalyst, House 20, Road 6, Baridhara, Dhaka-1212, with the title of the EOI on top of the envelope, by no later than 5:00 pm of **25 July 2010**.

The shortlisted firms will be provided with a 'Terms of Reference' detailing out the scope of work, on the basis of which firms will be required to prepare a proposal and make a presentation to Katalyst.

2) Offering Tourism Products and Services of Selected Regions of Bangladesh

Katalyst intends to facilitate the creation of new tourism products and enhancement of the existing ones. The basic idea is to stimulate the design of innovative products and services in specific regions of the country based on in-depth understanding of changing consumer demand and the unique tourist attractions that each destination has to offer. The objective of the intervention is to enrich the overall tourist experience and provide tourists with sufficient incentive to extend stays by offering tailored packages.

In this regard, Katalyst is inviting Expression of Interest from interested tour operators of Bangladesh; to design and implement enhanced value added products and services with particular focus on incorporating the local community and informal enterprises. Katalyst is interested to partner with tour operators meeting the following criteria:

1. Prior experience in carrying out similar projects
2. Adequate human resource capacity and understating of end-consumer needs to envision and design innovative products and services
3. Sufficient presence and outreach in particular regions to deliver and implement the products and services
4. Established network with relevant government and private sector actors.
5. Sufficient investment capacity
6. A feasible business plan including the potential number of tourists and beneficiaries as well as revenue sharing mechanism

Interested parties are requested to mail/drop the expression of interest including their **company profiles, experiences, product idea and the aforementioned information** in the tender box at **Katalyst, House 20, Road 6, Baridhara, Dhaka-1212**, with the title of the EOI on top of the envelope, by no later than 5:00 pm of **25 July 2010**.

The shortlisted firms will be sent a 'Request for Proposal' detailing out the scope of work following which, proposals will be sought and the firm that will be involved in this intervention will be selected.

3) Development of a Comprehensive Promotional Publication on Bangladesh Tourism

Katalyst intends to facilitate activities by private sector partners to enhance information flow to tourists regarding attractive tourist spots in different districts through the development of comprehensive promotional publications. The basic premise of this intervention will be to disseminate tourism-related information (e.g. availability of amenities, complementary packages and activities in different destinations) through a series of publications made available in strategic touch points. The project will require identification and promotion of unique selling points of each destination with respect to different seasons in order to increase degree of tourists' attraction throughout the year. The objective of the intervention is to generate awareness regarding the significance of various historical and archaeological sites by ensuring the availability of customised information on places of interest. It will also act as an attractive promotional tool to highlight the different tourism possibilities, fairs and festivals, culture and history of different destinations to international and domestic travelers.

In this regard, Katalyst is inviting Expression of Interest from interested firms with the relevant expertise and infrastructural support required to collect, validate, update, compile and disseminate customized tourism-related information for a specified target audience. Katalyst is interested to partner with eligible private sector company (ies) meeting the following criteria:

1. Reasonably sound knowledge about the sector and different destinations of Bangladesh
2. Capacity to maintain the publication on a commercial basis
3. Network and communication with the industry players to update information as and when needed
4. Investment and fund raising capacity for printing and publishing

Interested parties are requested to mail/drop the expression of interest including their **company profiles, experiences, project idea and the aforementioned information** in the tender box at **Katalyst, House 20, Road 6, Baridhara, Dhaka-1212**, with the title of the EOI on top of the envelope, no later than 5:00 pm of **25 July 2010**.

The shortlisted firms will be provided with a 'Terms of Reference' detailing out the scope of work, on the basis of which firms will be required to prepare a proposal and make a presentation to Katalyst.

Katalyst has the right to cancel a bidding process, accept or reject bids without notifying any reasons to the bidders. Queries through any medium will not be entertained and will lead to an automatic disqualification.

INDEPENDENT UNIVERSITY, BANGLADESH



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B.Sc in Environmental Science & Management

- Environmental Science
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Last date of Application: **Sunday, 1st August 2010**

Admission Test: **Tuesday, 3rd August 2010**

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Admission forms are available on the IUB website. Submit the form duly filled in via postal mail with a bank draft of Tk.500/- in the name of Independent University, Bangladesh