

US mission in Iraq to end on Aug 31: Obama

AFP, Washington

The United States will end its combat mission in Iraq as scheduled on August 31 despite a recent flare-up in violence, President Barack Obama said in a speech prepared for delivery yesterday.

"Shortly after taking office, I announced our new strategy for Iraq and for a transition to full Iraqi responsibility," Obama will tell a national convention of Disabled American Veterans in Atlanta, Georgia, according to excerpts of his speech released by the White House.

"And I made it clear that by August 31, 2010 America's combat mission in Iraq would end," the president continued. "And that is exactly what we are doing, as promised, on schedule."

When he became president, Obama inherited a security agreement with Baghdad that calls for all US forces to pull out by the end of 2011. He has ordered the force to draw down to 50,000 by September 1.



A Palestinian woman (R), whose house has been occupied by Israeli settlers, carries her child and holds her national flag as a Jewish settler and her child step out from the disputed house yesterday in the east Jerusalem neighbourhood of Sheikh Jarrah during a protest to mark one year since the Palestinian family was evicted from the house.

PHOTO: AFP

Ahmadinejad calls for TV debate with Obama

REUTERS, Tehran

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad called on US President Barack Obama yesterday to face him in a televised one-on-one debate to see who has the best solutions for the world's problems.

The provocative proposal comes as Iran deals with a new wave of international sanctions -- driven by Washington -- aimed at putting pressure on the Islamic Republic over its nuclear program.

"Toward the end of summer we will hopefully be there for the (UN) General Assembly and I will be ready for one-on-one talks with Mr Obama, in front of the media of course," Ahmadinejad told a conference of Iranian expatriates in Tehran.

"We will offer our solutions for world issues to see whose solutions are better."

Ahmadinejad suggested such a debate last September, which was not taken up by Washington. He said Obama's predecessor, George W. Bush, had declined similar invitations because he was "scared".

Iran, the world's fifth-largest oil producer, says its nuclear program is a peaceful bid to produce electricity. But its uranium enrichment activities, a process which can have both civilian and military uses, has fed fears in some countries that it is trying to build a nuclear weapon.

In his speech, the president mocked the sanctions and the potential for a military strike against Iran's nuclear facilities, an option that the United States and Israel say they do not rule out.

Australian polls result on a knife's edge

AFP, Sydney

Australian Prime Minister Julia Gillard's party has lost its lead in the polls against its conservative rivals ahead of August 21 elections, putting the outcome on a 50-50 knife edge, a poll showed yesterday.

The new Newspoll for The Australian newspaper showed Gillard's Labor Party neck-and-neck with the opposition Liberal Party, with 50 percent of the vote each, down from the government's 52-48 percent lead a week ago.

The latest bad news for Gillard, who took power five weeks ago in a party coup against former leader Kevin Rudd, came two days after a Nielsen poll showed Labor heading for defeat with 48 percent of the vote to the Liberals' 52.

Labor's vote has collapsed amid a series of damaging high-level Labor leaks against Gillard and after unpopular announcements about how she intends to tackle the key issues of climate change and boat people heading to Australia.

But Gillard retained her strong opinion polls lead against opposition leader Tony Abbott as preferred

prime minister, scoring 50 percent support against the gaffe-prone Abbott's 35 percent.

Gillard on Monday overhauled her campaign strategy to take advantage of that lead, scrapping the traditional highly-stage managed party approach and opting instead to cast the election as a simple choice between her and Abbott.

But Labor's primary vote -- the tally that does not take into account Australia's highly complex system of party preferences -- has also suffered, down three points in a week to 37 percent against the opposition's 44 percent.

Some 42 percent of the 1,717 people polled by telephone across Australia between Friday and Sunday said they were satisfied with Gillard's performance against 44 for Abbott.

Those polled said that of the three most crucial electoral issues, Gillard was ahead of Abbott only on climate change policy and was trailing on economic management and the issue of stemming the flow of boat people to Australia.

The poll's margin of error was plus or minus 2.4 percent.

Noman wins

FROM PAGE 1
Ramon Magsaysay Award 2010 for his relentless efforts for the rights of the challenged.

Six other Asians -- Tadatoshi Akiba of Japan, Christopher Bernido and Ma. Victoria Carpio-Bernido of the Philippines, and Huo Daishan, Pan Yue and Fu Oiping of China -- have also received the prestigious award this year for their contribution in different fields.

Noman Khan is the ninth Bangladeshi to win the award regarded as Asia's equivalent to Nobel prize.

The Ramon Magsaysay Foundation featured Noman Khan as a pioneer mainstreaming the challenged in the development process of Bangladesh and working vigorously with all sectors to build a society that is truly inclusive and barrier free.

There are around 13 million physically and mentally challenged people in Bangladesh, a country where being challenged is considered a charity or social welfare issue, not rights, the foundation observed.

In his first reaction to winning the award, Noman Khan told The Daily Star, "It was a surprise. This is an achievement of my organisation as we the members of CDD work like a family."

"The award will promote rights of the challenged and encourage those who work in the field," said an elated Noman, adding that perhaps this was the first time that the

award had focused on the challenged.

In a meeting with his colleagues at CDD, Noman Khan announced to donate the prize money for the welfare of the challenged through his organisation.

"The money will be spent for the welfare of the disabled and we will sort out a way to use the fund," said Noman.

The prize money is \$50,000, worth about Tk 34 lakh.

Noman founded CDD in 1996 along with seven colleagues in the development field based on the concept "community-based rehabilitation" (CBR).

Later, the organisation devised a strategy Community Approaches to Handicap in Development (CAHD) to encourage communities to address the needs and rights of a challenged person and capacity building of NGOs to include these issues in their development work.

CAHD has been adopted in Nepal, India and the Philippines. CDD has also shared the strategy with organisations from Pakistan, Cambodia, China, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Indonesia, Japan, England, Germany, and many more countries.

Besides training development workers, CDD has developed Bangla Braille software and sign language. The organisation produces low-cost books and slate for the visually impaired and campaigns for the challenged people's access to information and communication technology.

The other Ramon Magsaysay laureates include Prof Muhammad Yunus, Editor of the daily Prothom Alo Matiur Rahman, Brac Chairman Fazle Hasan Abed, Founder of Bishwa Sahitya Kendra Prof Abdullah Abu Sayeed and Jafarullah Chowdhury.

OTHER RECIPIENTS
Tadatoshi Akiba has won the prize for his campaign to create a world free of nuclear war while Christopher Bernido and Ma. Victoria Carpio-Bernido jointly for ensuring innovative, low cost and effective basic education even under Filipino condition of great scarcity and daunting poverty.

Huo Daishan was awarded the prize for his relentless effort to save the river Huai in China and the people dependent on it while Pan Yue and Fu Oiping for their exemplary vision and zeal in advocating the inseparability of development and improving Chinese people's standard of living.

US military chief admits to Iran attack plan

AFP, Washington

The top US military officer says he has a plan to attack Iran if needed to prevent it from getting nuclear weapons, but is "extremely concerned" about the possible repercussions of such a strike.

Admiral Mike Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said military action against Iran could have "unintended consequences that are difficult to predict in what is an incredibly unstable part of the world."

But, speaking on Sunday's "Meet the Press" program on NBC, Mullen said allowing Iran to develop a nuclear weapon was also unacceptable.

"Quite frankly, I am extremely concerned



Admiral Mullen

about both of those outcomes," he said.

Mullen held out hope that a combination of international diplomatic efforts and sanctions against Iran would lead Tehran to suspend a nuclear enrichment program that many believe is a clandestine bid to develop nuclear arms.

"I am hopeful (it works)," he said.

At the same time, though, he said "the military options have been on the table, and remain on the table".

"I hope we don't get to that, but it's an important option and it's one that's well understood," he added.

Asked if the military has a plan to strike Iran, Mullen replied, "We do".

CAREER OPPORTUNITY

A K Khan Foundation was established in 1991 by the Founder Chairman Late Mr A K Khan, as an organization to engage in philanthropic activities in health, education, skills development and social welfare.

We are seeking to employ a dynamic individual who will take over the position of 'Executive Director' for driving the Foundation activities as a frontline leader in our Foundation Office located in Chittagong.

The Role:

- > Oversee and direct the various projects being developed by the Foundation.
- > Responsible for administration and management of all activities of the Foundation.
- > Identify and select organizations for charitable works.
- > Implement the role of Corporate Social Responsibility [CSR] and communicate its importance to the Foundation.
- > Fund Management and Process Development of the Foundation.
- > Prepare Annual Operating Plan, Budget, Business Plan and Progress Report of the Foundation.
- > Research and evaluate the beneficiaries of the Foundation and maintain regular contact with the beneficiaries.
- > Provide timely updates to the Executive Committee and the Board of Trustees.
- > Ensure and maintain all Accounts & Finance related issues of the Foundation.
- > Compile Annual Report for the Foundation.
- > Network with other organizations with similar objectives.

The Person:

- > Masters in Social Science, MBA or other discipline from any reputed university.
- > Minimum 8-10 years professional experience in relevant area preferably in any national or international NGO or development organization.
- > Have outstanding interpersonal and managerial skills in resolving strategic issues.
- > Computer skills (MS Word, MS Excel, MS Power Point etc.).
- > Should have strong leadership and people management skills to develop employees in line with organizational values and competencies.
- > Must be a strong team player who reflects a positive & assertive mind set while acting as an agent of change.
- > Former Government Officials working in Social Services sector will also be considered.

Interested candidates, eligible to work in Bangladesh, should send a Curriculum Vitae with a recent passport size photograph addressed to Managing Trustee, Attention: Senior Manager, Human Resources Department, A K Khan Foundation Head Office, Batali Hills, Ambagan, Chittagong 4000 or rsharif@akhan.com not later than **August 12, 2010**.

A commensurate compensation package is to be negotiated with Management.

Applications will not be acknowledged. Only short listed candidates will be contacted.

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

An internationally funded project under the BWDB is looking for the following Posts:

A. Environmental expert.

Main duties

- Preparation of feasibility studies and Environmental Management Plans in FCD schemes
- Preparation/implementation of collective action plans in the domain of Environment
- Monitoring & reporting on Environmental Management Plans

Qualification

- M.Sc. in relevant subject (Agriculture (Extension), Soils, Chemistry, or Biology).
- Age 45-55
- Reporting skills in English
- Computer literate

Experience in

- Feasibility studies, IEE, EIA, EMP
- Beneficiary participation & training
- Environmental monitoring & reporting
- PRRA, use of aerial photo's or satellite imagery

B. Agricultural (Extension) expert.

Main duties

- Preparation of feasibility studies in FCD schemes
- Preparation/implementation of collective action plans
- Monitoring & reporting

Qualification

- MSc in Agriculture (Extension) preferred, BSc in Agriculture (extension) required.
- Age 45-55
- Reporting skills in English
- Computer literate

Experience in

- Feasibility studies
- Beneficiary participation & training
- PRRA, Land-use surveys with aerial photo's or satellite imagery
- Hands-on crop husbandry measures (cropping, application of agro-chemicals, etc.)

C. Three Field Assistants for monitoring the social mobilization process.

Main duties

- Inspect and monitor the organizational papers of the respective Water Management Organizations (WMOs)
- Check & monitor the cash books, general ledgers and bank accounts of WMOs
- Monitoring implementation of the work plans of WMOs
- Reporting on monthly WMO meetings

Qualification

- M.S.S (Master of Social Science) in relevant subject.
- Age 30-45
- Reporting skills in English
- Computer literate
- Field oriented
- In possession of motorbike

Experience in

- Beneficiary participation/ community work (5 years)
- Monitoring & evaluation
- PRRA, social surveys

Women are encouraged to apply. The duration of the assignment would be about 18 months in Narail/Jessore. The candidates will be selected by the Project Director and international consultants.

Incumbents may apply within 10 days to the project office manager by email, submitting their CV and expected salary at dhaka.jessore@yahoo.com

Request for Proposal (RFP)

Digital Information Display system
(Readvertisement)



Bangladesh

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Bangladesh seeks proposals from interested and well qualified organization/firms for Digital Information Display system.

Submission of Proposal: The envelope should state "Proposal for Digital Information Display system" and should be marked as 'Confidential' and addressed to the **UNDP Procurement Unit, IDB Bhaban (12th Floor), Begum Rokeya Sharani, Agargaon, Dhaka-1207**. The deadline for submission of Proposal is **June 21, 2010, 13:00 AM**. Proposals should be submitted to **REGISTRY in IDB Bhaban (12th Floor), Begum Rokeya Sharani, Agargaon, Dhaka-1207**.

All interested firms may request the Bidding Documents from procurement.bc@undp.org by formal request to UNDP or can download from website http://www.undp.org.bd/proc_more.php

Submission Procedure: The offer should comprise of 2 copies for each 2 separate envelopes of technical and financial proposals.