

Nepal's Maoists seek support to lead govt

AFP, Kathmandu

Nepal's Maoist party scrambled yesterday to win fresh support for its bid to head the next government, a day ahead of parliament's seventh attempt to elect a new prime minister.

Nepal has been without a government since June 30, when former prime minister Madhav Kumar Nepal stood down under pressure from the opposition Maoist party to pave the way for a new power-sharing administration.

Since then, political leaders have been unable to agree on the shape of the new government and six earlier attempts to choose a new prime minister have failed, with neither of the two candidates securing an absolute majority.

The Maoists, who fought a decade-long civil war against the state before transforming themselves into a political party and winning a 2008 election, hold the largest number of seats in parliament, but not enough to govern alone.

Their candidate, party chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal, won 240 votes in the latest vote, held on Sunday. His only opponent Ram Chandra Poudel, chairman of the second-largest party in parliament, the centrist Nepali Congress, took 122.

But the Maoists now say they are close to winning the support of an alliance of four smaller parties for Dahal, better known by his nom de guerre Prachanda or "the fierce one".

The four parties represent Nepal's Madhesi ethnic minority and hold 82 of the 601 seats in parliament, enough to secure a victory for the Maoists.

Party leaders are reported to be in talks about forming a coalition government, although no deal has yet been done.

"We have asked the Madhesi parties to vote for us in the next election to end the stalemate," Maoist chief whip Post Bahadur Bogati told AFP.



PHOTO: AFP
Relatives mourn the death of Kashmiri youth Showkat Ahmed at his residence in Patan Palhalan some 30kms north of Srinagar yesterday. Three people were killed when Indian security forces opened fire on stone-throwing protesters during fresh demonstrations against Indian rule in Kashmir, police said, totalling the death toll to 68 during the recent unrest.

Troops kill 3 protesters in Kashmir

AP, Srinagar

Government forces fired on protesters hurling stones at them in Indian Kashmir yesterday, killing three people and wounding at least 17 other demonstrators, police said.

For the last three months, the mostly Muslim Kashmir region has been roiled by demonstrations and clashes between protesters opposed to Indian rule and government forces. The deaths bring to 68 the number of people killed in the civil unrest.

Three people, including a 17-year-old boy, were killed when government forces fired live ammunition to disperse protesters in Palhalan, a village north of Srinagar, Indian Kashmir's main city, said a police officer. He spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to release information to the media.

Local residents said there was no clash with the troops, but soldiers fired when the protesters refused to disperse. The state government has ordered a probe into the shooting incident.

"A clash had occurred near a highway in the morning and much after that we were peacefully protesting in the village," said resident Meraj-ud-Din.

Later, as news of the shooting spread, thousands of people from Palhalan and neighbouring villages chanting "Go India, go back" and "We want freedom" marched to a nearby highway and blocked it.

Police and paramilitary soldiers fired warning shots and tear gas to quell those protests, said the officer. There were no reports of injuries.

Police launched a probe into Monday's shooting. "Senior police officers have taken a serious view of the firing. Ammunition of the policemen is being checked to fix the responsibility," an official statement said.

Maoists free Indian cop hostages

AFP, Patna

Maoist rebels in eastern India yesterday released three policemen held hostage, three days after the guerrillas killed another abducted officer, officials said.

The four men were taken captive in the state of Bihar on August 29 during a Maoist raid on security forces that left 10 policemen dead.

"I can confirm the release of the three abducted policemen early this morning," additional director general of Bihar police PK Thakur told AFP.

Bihar state chief minister Nitish Kumar, who came under severe criticism for his handling of the hostage drama, told reporters: "Finally it is over now and we are happy for that."

He denied any deals had been done with the rebels.

Celebrations broke out in the officers' home villages, with residents distributing sweets, setting off fire crackers and offering prayers of thanks.

"We were blindfolded early today and made to walk through hills and forests and finally they released us," one of the officers told reporters.

Graft, threats of violence cloud Afghan vote

REUTERS, Kabul

Taliban threats, shuttered polling centres and warnings of widespread fraud are clouding hopes for Afghanistan's September 18 parliamentary election, a key test of an already fragile democracy, observers have warned.

With the poll less than two weeks away, the UN-backed Electoral Complaints Commission said it has already received 1,503 complaints, ranging from public resources being given to preferred candidates to interference by government officials.

Early signs for a smooth and fair process are not promising.

"Things are getting worse. Many (politicians) are just after making themselves rich and working for their own interests," said Azizullah, a 32-year-old Kabul civil servant.

"I do not want to vote, because I have lost my trust in the government, parliament and election under the current situation," he said.

The election is a litmus test of stability in Afghanistan before US President Barack Obama conducts a war strategy review in December that will examine the pace and scale of US troop withdrawals from July 2011.

Graft and cronyism are major concerns ahead of the vote after last year's fraud-marred presidential election in which a third of the votes for President Hamid Karzai were tossed out as fake.

According to the government-appointed Independent Election Commission, preliminary results should be available four days after the vote but final results may not be out until October 31.

Those dates depend on the number of complaints received, which promises to be high given the number already lodged and that 2,500 candidates are vying for 249 seats in the Wolesi Jirga, or lower house of parliament.

WARLORDS, MILITIAS

Seventy-six candidates have already been disqualified, according to the IEC, for offences ranging from improper registration to links with warlords and private militias.

"The parliamentary elections (have) to be a step forward, and my fear is that we might miss this opportunity once again, and it might turn into a curse," former foreign minister Abdullah Abdullah said on Sunday.

At about the same time Abdullah was speaking, the Taliban further clouded an already grim picture by issuing its first explicit threat to disrupt the poll, vowing to target foreign troops and then Afghans who take part.

At least four candidates have been killed so far, according to the United Nations and government officials, and dozens of campaign workers wounded. Some of the attacks have been blamed on the Taliban and other insurgents.

The Taliban mounted about 130 attacks against last year's election. While failing to disrupt the process significantly in much of the country, but voter turnout was low in the ethnic Pashtun south, where the Taliban are strongest.

The threat of poor security has already forced the IEC to close 938 out of 6,835 polling centres across the country, potentially disenfranchising thousands of Afghans even though they will be able to vote in other centres.

Pakistan races to protect two towns from surging floods

AFP, Karachi

Pakistani authorities were racing to protect two southern towns and their 360,000 residents from surging floods, as the nation struggles to cope with its worst natural disaster in living memory.

A month-and-a-half after monsoons caused devastating floods throughout the country, submerging an area the size of England, eight million people remain dependent on handouts for their survival, which many say are too slow coming.

Advancing floodwaters continue to threaten towns in Sindh province, where 19 of its 23 districts have been deluged, displacing more than 2.8 million people, according to provincial authorities.

"The situation is a bit serious in Johi town and Dadu. We are taking all-out measures to save them from ravaging floodwaters," provincial irrigation minister Jam Saifullah Dharejo told AFP.

"The water is 20 kilometres away from Dadu city but we cannot rule out a serious threat to this city," one of the largest in the north of Sindh, Dharejo said.

Nato eyes 2,000 extra troops for Afghanistan

AFP, Brussels

Nato may send 2,000 extra troops to Afghanistan, mainly to train Afghan security forces, following a request from war commander David Petraeus, a Nato official said yesterday.

The mission, which would include 750 trainers for Afghan forces, is in addition to the troop surge strategy, said the official, who requested anonymity.

"There is now a discussion under way for additional resources, principally trainers, that could be sent to Afghanistan to bolster the mission," he said.

The US general's request was relayed to the transatlantic alliance's 28 members and it is up to individual governments to decide on whether to make contributions, the official said.

"That discussion will play out over the coming weeks and months and will be led by Nato's military authorities," he said, adding that a CNN television report that the troops could leave in the coming weeks was "not realistic."

The war is nearing the end of its ninth year, with international troops at almost full strength of 150,000, from the United States and Nato.

The deployments include 30,000 US troops ordered up by President Barack Obama last December as part of a new counter-insurgency strategy aimed at speeding an end to the war.

Getting Afghan security forces trained so they can take over security responsibilities is a paramount condition for the withdrawal of foreign troops from the war-scarred nation.

Nato chief Anders Fogh Rasmussen, who will meet Obama at the White House on Tuesday, said last week he hoped that foreign troops can begin to gradually hand security responsibilities to Afghan forces next year.

Indian warship foils Somali pirate attack

AFP, New Delhi

An Indian warship on Sunday foiled an attempt by Somali pirates to hijack merchant vessels off Somalia's coast in the Gulf of Aden, a navy spokesman said yesterday.

PVS Satish said marine commandos on board the destroyer-class warship boarded a high-speed boat after it tried to close in on 12 merchant vessels including an Indian ship in the piracy-infested waters.

The vessel deployed in the Gulf of Eden on an anti-piracy mission since July was escorting the flotilla when the rogue boat was spotted some 180 kilometres (112 miles) off the Somali coast, Satish said.

"A cache of arms and several fuel drums and ship boarding equipment were found," the spokesman said in a statement issued from New Delhi, adding that seven Somalis and a Yemeni national on board the boat were disarmed.

"This is the 16th piracy attack that has been prevented and not a single ship under escort of Indian navy has fallen prey to pirates," the statement added.

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01.	IMP/RM/SEM/07 2010-2011 Dated : 05/09/2010	Pharmaceutical Raw Materials : 01. Dried Aluminium Hydroxide BP2010 02. Magnesium Hydroxide Powder BP2010 03. Mannitol BP2010 04. Avicel HP 101 BP2010 05. Avicel RC-591 BP2010 06. Avicel PH 102 BP2010 07. Aerosil 200 BP2010 08. Aspartame BP2010 09. Benzyl Benzoate BP2010 10. Cetrinide Strong Solution 40% BP2010 11. Chlorhexidine Gluconate Solution 20% BP2010	Tk. 2500.00/ set Equivalent to US\$ 36.00 Non-refundable	Closing : 03/10/2010 At : 11.00 AM. Opening : 03/10/2010 At : 11.15 AM.
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Tender schedule will be sold from the Accounts Department of Essential Drugs Company Limited, Dhaka on payment as stated above during office hours on all working days (except Friday, Saturday and Govt. Holidays). No tender schedule will be sold on the opening date of the tender. EDCL authority reserves the right to accept or reject any or all the tenders without assigning any reason whatsoever.

N. B. : This Information is also available at our Website: www.edcl.gov.bd

(Md. Feroze-ul-Alam)
Director Operation & Incharge,
Planning & Procurement Deptt.
For : Managing Director.



PHOTO: AFP
Japanese freelance journalist Kosuke Tsuneoka speaks to reporters upon his arrival at the Kansai International Airport in Osaka, western Japan yesterday after five months' captivity in Afghanistan. Tsuneoka, 41, said his kidnappers were not Taliban but corrupt Afghan soldiers.

Junior school

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at the Bangladesh Secretariat yesterday.

From now on, there will be no junior scholarship exams or class final exams for class VIII students, ministry officials said.

Announcing the exam date, the minister said the number of examinees might increase, as many students are yet to complete their registration.

"The examinations would be considered as a public exam like that of Secondary School Certificate," Nahid said, hoping that the examinations would make a positive impact on overall education of the country.

The results would be in grading system, he said.

According to the schedule, the JSC examinations would be held in two shifts - morning and evening. The duration of the morning session exam will be from 10:00am to 1:00pm while the evening session exam from 2:00pm to 5:00pm.

The JSC examinations will be held on nine subjects, each for 100 marks. Bangla 1st paper exam will be held in the morning session while Bangla 2nd paper in the evening session on the same day. Similar schedule will be followed for English 1st paper and 2nd paper exams on the same day.

The JDC examinations will be held on 10 subjects. The duration of all JDC exams will be from 10:00am to 1:00pm.

The JSC and JDC examinations will conclude on November 14 and November 15 respectively.

All the examinees will have to collect their admit cards from the respective school heads three days before the examinations. The students can use scientific calculator in the examinations, according to the examination schedule.

Prof Fahima Khatun, chairman of Dhaka Education Board, said the results would be published within December 31.

They have already framed a policy guideline outlining the detailed plan of the examinations, she said.

The number of examinees has already been increased in view of a large number of examinees, she added.

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01.	IMP/RM/SEM/09 2010-2011 Dated : 05/09/2010	Pharmaceutical Raw Materials : 01. Propylene Glycol BP2010 02. Cetyl Alcohol BP2010 03. Phenoxymethyl Penicillin Potassium BP2010 04. Sodium Lauryl Sulphate BP2010 05. Polysorbate BP2010 06. Sodium Saccharin BP2010 07. Sulphamethoxazole BP2010 08. Trimethoprim BP2010 09. Sucrose BP2010 10. Citric Acid Monohydrate BP2010 11. Talcum Powder BP2010 12. Sorbitol BP2010	Tk. 2000.00/ set Equivalent to US\$ 29.00 Non-refundable	Closing : 05/10/2010 At : 11.00 AM. Opening : 05/10/2010 At : 11.15 AM.
02.	IMP/RM/SEM/10 2010-2011 Dated : 05/09/2010	Pharmaceutical Raw Materials : 01. Terpineol BP2010 02. Liquid Paraffin BP2010 03. White Soft Paraffin BP2010 04. Chlorpheniramine Maleate BP2010 05. Ciprofloxacin Lactate INN 06. Sodium Chloride BP2010 07. Doxycycline HCl BP2010 08. Tri-Ethanolamine BP2010 09. Hyoscine Butyl Bromide BP2010 10. Lignocaine HCl BP2010 11. Zinc Sulphate Monohydrate BP2010 12. Levofloxacin Hemihydrate INN	Tk. 2800.00/ set Equivalent to US\$ 41.00 Non-refundable	Closing : 06/10/2010 At : 11.00 AM. Opening : 06/10/2010 At : 11.15 AM.

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