

Karzai admits receiving 'bags of money' from Iran

BBC ONLINE

Afghan President Hamid Karzai has acknowledged that his office has received cash from Iran, but insists it was part of a "transparent" process.

Karzai was responding to a report in the New York Times that Tehran had been passing bags stuffed full of cash to Karzai's aides.

The cash was intended to promote Iran's interests in Kabul, the report said.

However, Karzai said the money was not for an individual but to help run the president's office.

Speaking at a news conference, he said many countries had given money to Afghanistan in this way, including the US.

"The government of Iran has been assisting us with five or six or seven hundred thousand euros once or twice every year, that is an official aid," he told reporters, according to the AFP agency.

He said his chief of staff, Umar Daudzai, "is receiving the money on my instructions".



"The cash payments are done by various friendly countries to help the presidential office and to help dispense assistance... in various ways to the employees around here, to people outside, and this is transparent," he said.

"This is something that I have also discussed... at Camp David with President Bush. This is nothing hidden.

"We are grateful for the Iranian help in this regard. The United States is doing the

same thing, they're providing cash to some of our offices."

The New York Times report said that last August, at the end of an official visit to Iran by Mr Karzai, a large bag of euro notes had been passed to Mr Daudzai by Iran's ambassador to Afghanistan, Feda Hussein Maliki.

It was part of a "secret, steady stream of Iranian cash to buy the loyalty of Mr Daudzai and promote Iran's interests in the presidential palace", the report said, citing Afghan and Western officials.

The officials alleged that the payments, totalling millions of dollars, had been used to pay Afghan politicians, tribal elders and even Taliban commanders to secure their loyalty.

"It's basically a presidential slush fund," one Western official is quoted as saying.

The BBC's Quentin Sommerville says Mr Karzai's comments will do little to reassure many of his foreign supporters who are concerned about fraud within his government as well as Iran's growing influence in the country.

India accuses Pakistan of cease-fire violation

AP, Srinagar

India yesterday accused Pakistan of violating a cease-fire agreement in Kashmir after an Indian army soldier was killed in gunfire from Pakistan's side of the disputed Himalayan region.

Army spokesman Lt Col Biplob Nath said that Pakistani soldiers fired machine guns and rockets on an Indian military post late Sunday night, killing the soldier near the frontier.

Pakistan's army could not immediately be reached for comment Monday.

India and Pakistan have fought two wars over Kashmir since they gained independence more than 60 years ago, but their forces have observed a cease-fire there since November 2003, albeit one punctuated by occasional incidents of shooting.

Blast at Pak Sufi shrine kills 6

BBC ONLINE

Six people have been killed in a bomb outside a famous Sufi shrine in Pakistan's Punjab province.

Two young men left the device in a milk churn on a motorbike near the gate of the shrine of Baba Farid, a 12th century Sufi saint, in Pakpattan.

The bomb exploded minutes later killing at least one woman and leaving 15 other people wounded, some critically.

It is the latest attack on Sufis, who follow a mystical strand of Islam, but are deemed heretical by extremists.

Witnesses said the bomb caused a huge fireball as it went off after morning prayers, which hundreds of people were attending.

Police suspect the device, which also damaged several shops, was detonated by remote control.

The marble mausoleum of Baba Farid itself was largely unscathed, said police.

TV footage showed the twisted and charred motorcycle on which the bomb was planted, and debris from the shops damaged by the explosion.

A doctor at the local hospital told the Associated Press news agency that two women were among the dead.

A prominent Sufi scholar, Mufti Muneer Rehman, accused the government of not doing enough to protect his community.

"Our rulers are too busy serving foreign masters and have not prioritised protecting the people and sacred places from terrorists," Mr Rehman told reporters.

NEWS IN brief

15 dead in Nato air strike

REUTERS, Kabul

At least 15 insurgents were killed in a Nato air strike overnight in southern Hermand province, a spokesman for the alliance said yesterday.

US Spokesman Ryan Donald, a spokesman for the Nato-led International Security Assistance Force (Isaf), said he had heard allegations of civilian casualties but they had not been backed up by reports to date.

"Current reports show we only killed Taliban. We are aware of allegations of civilian casualties," he said, adding that in addition to the 15 dead, six insurgents were detained.

A spokesman for the provincial governor said initial reports showed up to 25 militants may have died, including two Taliban commanders, and he had not received reports of any civilian deaths.

Japan protests to China over boats near islands

AFP, Tokyo

Japan said yesterday it had lodged a protest with Beijing after spotting two Chinese fisheries patrol boats near a disputed island chain at the centre of a bitter row between the Asian giants.

"Last night around 9:00 pm (1200 GMT) our coast-guard sighted them and afterwards the two (Chinese ships) left here and sailed north toward China," Japan's top government spokesman Yoshito Sengoku said.

"After the incident we launched a protest through diplomatic channels," Sengoku, the chief cabinet secretary, told a regular press conference.

Beijing and Tokyo have been locked in their worst spat in years that started after Japan arrested a Chinese trawler captain on September 8 near the uninhabited island chain in the East China Sea.

Major 7.5 quake strikes Indonesia

AFP, Jakarta

A major 7.5-magnitude earthquake struck the west coast of Indonesia yesterday, seismologists said, but there were no reports of damage or casualties and an earlier tsunami warning was lifted.

The undersea quake hit Indonesia's Kepulauan Mentawai region at 9:42 pm (1442 GMT) at a shallow depth of 14.2 kilometres, the US Geological Survey said.

The area is 245 kilometres west of Bengkulu on Sumatra island and 280 kilometres south of Padang -- an area popular with tourists.

The Indonesian Geophysics and Meteorology agency lifted an earlier tsunami warning.

A lady Dalai Lama will be more striking: Dalai Lama

PTI, Toronto

The Dalai Lama, who wound up his three-day visit here by leading prayers at the newly opened Tibetan cultural centre, doesn't rule out a female successor.

The purpose of the Dalai Lama's reincarnation is to serve the Buddha, the 14th Dalai Lama told a week-end audience of more than 15,000 at the city's Rogers Centre.

"If a female reincarnation is more useful - why not?" he retorted when asked if the next Dalai Lama could be a female.

In his typical jovial style, he explained the two advantages of having a female Dalai Lama.

The first advantage, he said, is that females are "biologically more sensitive about others' pain" than males.

The other advantage of having a female Dalai Lama is that she would be a lot more attractive than him, he said amid peels of laughter.



A handout picture obtained yesterday by AFP from the Israeli human rights organization Breaking the Silence allegedly shows an Israeli soldier pointing his assault rifle at the face of a blindfolded detainee at an undisclosed location. Breaking the Silence, a group of Israeli veteran combat soldiers who collect testimonies and photos of troops who have served in the Palestinian territories, published new photos of soldiers posing with detainees and vandalising Palestinian homes that appear to have been taken during the 2008-2009 Israeli "Operation Cast Lead" in the Gaza Strip.

Pakistan has a role in Kashmir: CM Omar

PTI, Srinagar

Supporting Centre-appointed interlocutors for their comments on involving Pakistan, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah today said the neighbouring country has a role in Jammu and Kashmir which cannot be ignored.

"Nothing what the interlocutors had said with regard to Pakistan's role in Jammu and Kashmir is wrong.

After Simla agreement whenever talks were held with Pakistan, Kashmir has figured in it," he told reporters here. Parliament had passed a resolution in 1995 calling for withdrawal of Pakistani troops from PoK, Omar said on the sidelines of a function here.

"Rightly or wrongly, is it not making Pakistan a party. Pakistan has a role in Jammu and Kashmir."

How can you ignore it?" asked the Chief Minister. Reacting to BJP criticism of Dileep Padgaonkar, head of the interlocutors' team, for his comments, Omar said it was their habit to create an issue by listening to half the story.

"(Then Prime Minister Atal Bihari) Vajpayee went to Lahore and spoke about resolution of Kashmir," he said. Yesterday, the BJP slammed Padgaonkar for his comments on involving Pakistan in resolution of the Kashmir issue and demanded the PMO to clarify if this was part of the brief of the team.

The 'Great Game' bubbles under Obama's India trip

NEWS ANALYSIS

REUTERS, New Delhi

Touted as a visit with an emerging economic power, US President Barack Obama's trip to India in November will also be about how New Delhi deals with that elephant in the room - the Pakistan-Afghanistan conundrum.

After nine years of war, there are signs the United States and President Hamid Karzai are reaching out to talk to the Taliban, and New Delhi wants to ensure any eventual settlement protects India from the risk of militant groups on its doorstep.

That could mean India reaching out for regional initiatives to ensure a stable Afghanistan, including closer ties with Iran and Russia -- all Afghan neighbours worried about the Taliban in their backyard - if Washington cuts and runs.

"There is a realisation in India that the

United States is not going to preserve your interests. You are going to have to," said Srinath Raghavan, a senior fellow at the Centre for Policy Research in New Delhi.

"India is looking more at having an insurance policy in Afghanistan rather than playing an active role"

India and the United States largely see eye to eye over a range of issues as the former Cold War ally of the Soviet Union increasingly turns to the West. The two may see their interests diverge over Afghanistan, although it is little threat to wider ties, as Obama's trip -- his longest presidential trip to any one country -- shows.

India is Afghanistan's biggest regional aid donor and its \$1.3 billion of projects, from building a parliament to a highway to Iran, shows how New Delhi seeks to counter the Taliban.

Washington has been happy to see that

aid, but not its ally Pakistan, India's archrival and fellow nuclear power, especially the Pakistan military which sees Afghanistan as its own backyard.

"India thinks that the US is placing too much reliance on Pakistan in Afghanistan, and it's not to be trusted," said Walter Andersen, a former US State Department official now at Johns Hopkins University's School of Advanced International Studies.

He said Obama could take advantage of India's rivalry with Pakistan to pressure Islamabad to do more on Afghanistan. "I've often wondered why he didn't do it earlier," Andersen said.

What India fears most is a return to the 1990s, when the Pakistan-backed Taliban's rule coincided with a spurt in cross-border militant attacks in India, and a sense that militants could act with impunity in the region.

Train Accident

FROM PAGE 16

The commission will submit a report to BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia after conducting an investigation. She will disclose it before the nation," said commission chairman Khandaker Mahbub Hossain.

Five people were crushed to death by Dhaka-bound Drutajan Express from Dinajpur as it ploughed through a BNP rally that spilled onto railroad tracks near Bangabandhu Multipurpose Bridge in Sirajganj on October 11.

Angry BNP supporters threw stones at the train and set it on fire leaving more than a hundred passengers injured.

Mahbub, also president of the Supreme Court Bar Association, said the formation of a probe committee by the government was a "one-sided affair."

He said if invited, they would join an all-party inquiry committee to ensure a fair and neutral probe into the incident.

Referring to the law minister's question about formation of BNP's mass inquiry commission, Mahbub Hossain said, "We are not going to hang anyone after conducting a probe. Everyone has the right to make public the facts. We are doing just that."

Khaleda formed the commission on October 17 expressing doubts about the fairness of a government inquiry into the incident. Commission members ABM Obaidul Islam, general secretary of Dhaka University Teachers Association; Sanaullah Mian, president of Dhaka Bar Association; and Fahima Nasrin

Munni, vice president of National Female Lawyers' Association, were also present.

33 BNP MEN GET BAIL

The High Court yesterday granted six months' anticipatory bail to 33 BNP leaders and activists in nine cases filed for torching Drutajan Express.

An HC bench of justices Shamim Hasnain and Rezaul Hasan issued nine rulings upon the government to explain within four weeks why the accused should not be granted regular bail in the cases.


BNP standing committee members Nazrul Islam Khan, Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain and Brig General Hannan Shah, party's Joint Secretary General Amanullah Aman and BNP chairperson's adviser Iqbal Hasan Mahmud Tuku, among others, received bail.

The accused appeared before the bench and filed nine petitions seeking anticipatory bail in the cases.

Assistant Public Prosecutor Golam Haider and the railway authorities filed the cases on October 12 for attacking the train and setting it ablaze near the venue of a BNP rally the day before.

Advocate Khandker Mahbub Hossain and barrister Badruddoza Badal appeared for the petitioners.

Our Sirajganj correspondent adds: The district chief judicial magistrate granted bail to Tuhin and Rokanuzaman, students of Sirajganj SB Railway Colony High School, in a case filed with links to the burning of the train.




Export Promotion Bureau
TCB Building [1st floor], 01# Kawran Bazar, Dhaka

Invitation for Tender

1	Ministry/Division	: Ministry of Commerce
2	Procuring Entity Name & District	: Export Promotion Bureau, Dhaka
3	Invitation for	: Printing of souvenir for DITF - 2011
4	Invitation Ref No	: EPB/Info/Publication/DITF-2011/08/(03)/10/ date 20-09-2010
5	Procurement method	: Open Tendering method
6	Budget and source of Funds	: Own source of fund
7	Tender Publication Date	: 22-10-2010
8	Tender last selling date	: 10-11-2010
9	Tender Closing Date and Time	: 11-11-2010 and 12.00 hrs
10	Tender Opening Date and Time	: 11-11-2010 and 12.15 hrs
11	Name & Address of the Office & Receiving Tender Document	: Information Division of Publication Section of Export Promotion Bureau 1 st Floor EPB, TCB Building, 1, Kawran Bazaar, Dhaka- 1215.
12	Selling & Opening Tender Document	: Deputy-Director Finance, EPB 4th floor, TCB Building 1, Kawran bazaar Dhaka- 1215.
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GD-4525



Request For Proposal (RFP)
RFP for the Joint Programme on Gender Based Violence

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Bangladesh seeks proposals from interested and well qualified organization/firms for RFP for the Joint Programme on Gender Based Violence.

The JP is anchored in the Bangladesh's National Priority 5 (Gender Equity and Advancement of Women), and is fully aligned with Poverty Reduction Strategy of GoB. In order to bring about a holistic and lasting change in reducing violence against women the JP will intervene at policy, behavior, and protection levels. Vendor/s who will not meet the eligibility criteria mentioned in the RFP shall not be considered for further evaluation.

There will be a pre bid meeting held at the address mentioned in the RFP with all the interested parties for the clarification of the document submission on the 2-11-2010 at 11.00 AM

Submission of Proposal: The envelope should state "RFP for the Joint Programme on Gender Based Violence" 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 **11 November 12:00 AM. Proposals should be submitted to REGISTRY in IDB Bhaban (12th Floor), Begum Rokeya Sharani, Agargaon, Dhaka-1207.**

All interested firms may obtain the Bidding Documents from website http://www.undp.org.bd/proc_more.php or email to the following email address procurement.bc@undp.org

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