



A diver dressed as Santa Claus, or Father Christmas, high-fives a visiting girl at an aquarium during a show at Aquaria KLCC underwater park in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

Confidence falling in Nepal

Say foreign donors

AFP, Kathmandu

USAID, the European Union and other foreign donors yesterday expressed concern over the slow pace of Nepal's peace process, saying a political deadlock was draining confidence.

Nepal has been without a government since June, when the prime minister stood down under pressure from the main opposition Maoist party, and 16 attempts to elect a successor have failed.

"The donor community remains committed to supporting Nepal through this challenging time," the donor group's statement said, adding that "continued vacancies in senior positions reduce donor confidence".

Rebels forcibly recruit DR Congo youth: HRW

AFP, Kinshasa

Rogue army officers, local militias and Rwandan Hutu rebels have been forcibly recruiting hundreds of young men and boys in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, Human Rights Watch said yesterday.

The New York-based rights watchdog said the wave of recruitment, which began in September, "signals a possible collapse in eastern Congo's peace process."

HRW said it had interviewed dozens of escaped recruits, as well as teachers and local officials, who had described the forced or underage recruitment of more than 1,000 young men and boys, including at least 261 minors, since September.

"Armed groups in eastern Congo are pulling youths from schools, homes and fields and forcing them to fight," Anneke Van Woudenberg, HRW's senior Africa researcher, said in a statement. "The Congolese government should urgently stop this recruitment and prosecute those responsible."

HRW said the recruitment was taking place in the Nord and Sud Kivu provinces by the

National Congress for the Defence of the People (CNDP), a former rebel group that integrated into the Congolese army in early 2009, as well as by the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR), a predominantly Rwandan Hutu rebel group, and by local Mai Mai militias.

Youths have been taken from their homes, from the fields and as they walked to and from school, HRW said, adding that "those who resist risk severe punishment or even death."

Among the recruiters are Congolese army general and former rebel leader Bosco Ntaganda and officers loyal to him, HRW said.

Ntaganda was the military leader of the CNDP, a former rebel group supported by neighbouring Rwanda that agreed in early 2009 to give up its rebellion and integrate into the Congolese army's ranks. HRW said Ntaganda however maintains a parallel chain of command operating outside of the army's military hierarchy.

The International Criminal Court (ICC) has issued an arrest warrant for Ntaganda for war crimes of enlisting and conscripting children as soldiers, but Kinshasa has refused to arrest him.

Militants destroy Nato trucks in Pakistan

AFP, Peshawar

Taliban militants in northwest Pakistan attacked NATO oil supply trucks with rockets and assault rifles yesterday, destroying two vehicles, officials said.

Militants fired rockets and then started shooting at the vehicles with assault rifles in Katakash town near the town of Jamrud in lawless Khyber tribal district, tribal administration official Arshad Khan Afridi told AFP.

"An oil tanker carrying fuel for NATO forces in Afghanistan caught fire after militants attacked with rockets and assault rifles," Afridi said.

Another oil tanker in the convoy of four trucks also caught fire and was destroyed, he said.

"A driver and his assistant were wounded and shifted to hospital," he said.

Local intelligence officials confirmed the attack. There was no claim of responsibility for the attack but intelligence officials blamed the Taliban.

The bulk of supplies and equipment required by foreign troops in Afghanistan is shipped through the Khyber region, although US troops increasingly use alternative routes through central Asia.

Ahmadinejad appoints 4th woman to cabinet

AFP, Tehran

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad sacked the head of Iran's National Youth Organisation yesterday and appointed a woman to the cabinet post, official media reported.

Ahmadinejad removed Mehrdad Bazrpash and named Farahnaz Torkestani as the head of the National Youth Organisation, the official IRNA news agency said.

As such, Torkestani also becomes one of Iran's 12 vice presidents.

She is the fourth woman to join the government, which includes a woman health minister and two female vice presidents for legal affairs and science and technology.

The report did not give a reason for the dismissal, the second in a week following the dismissal last Tuesday of foreign minister Manouchehr Mottaki.

Iran's atomic chief Ali Akbar Salehi was sworn in as new foreign minister on Saturday.

Don't tinker with START

Russia warns US

AFP, Moscow

Russia said yesterday that any attempts by US Republicans to "fix" the new START treaty would spell the end of the historic nuclear disarmament pact between the two former Cold War foes.

The US Senate was expected to hold a vote on the nuclear arms control pact Tuesday despite a last-minute bid by Republicans to change the text's wording to make sure it does not block the deployment of a missile shield in Europe.

Russia has resisted the systems as potentially harmful to its own nuclear deterrence and said yesterday that any tinkering with the wording would effectively kill the pact.

"The START agreement, which was drafted on the basis of strict parity, completely meets the national interests of both Russia and the United States," Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov told the Interfax news agency.

US President Barack Obama has argued that the agreement not only makes the world safer but also improves ties with Russia and bolsters the position of President Dmitry Medvedev as a modernising force in Washington.

Ease passage for Christmas

Israel tells troops

AFP, Jerusalem

Israel has ordered its soldiers to ease the passage of Christian tourists and pilgrims through military checkpoints during the Christmas period.

Israelis serving across the Palestinian territories are being handed manuals explaining the importance of Christmas to local and foreign Christians and urging them to avoid unnecessary confrontations at military checkpoints.

The city of Bethlehem, where Christians believe Jesus Christ was born, sits behind an Israeli checkpoint through which all visitors, including foreign tourists and Palestinians, must pass.

"During the Christmas period, the eyes of the Christian world look to the city of Bethlehem, in which religious ceremonies are being held," says a copy of the manual seen by AFP.

2G SCAM

Indian PM Singh has 'nothing to hide'

BBC ONLINE

Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has said he has "nothing to hide" from an investigation into the sale of phone licences for a fraction of their value.

He told a party meeting he was ready to be questioned by a parliamentary panel in the so-called 2G spectrum inquiry.

Ex-telecoms minister A Raja, who resigned over the scandal, is expected to be questioned soon by India's top investigation agency, the CBI.

Parliament has been deadlocked over opposition demands for a major inquiry.

Addressing the ruling Congress party's first plenary session since 2006, attended by about 15,000 members, Mr Singh rejected suggestions that he had turned a blind eye to the scandal.

"I have nothing to hide from the public at all," Mr Singh said yesterday.

He said he was writing to notify the chairman of a parliamentary committee that he would be happy to appear before it.

I sincerely believe, like Caesar's wife, the prime minister should be above suspicion."

A cross-party parliamentary public accounts committee is currently examining the federal auditor's report into the scandal.

But the opposition has been demanding that the matter be investigated by a joint parlia-



mentary committee, which has more scope.

The BBC's Soutik Biswas in Delhi says it was an unusually combative defence by the Mr Singh, who has been seen as reticent and low-key since he became prime minister in 2004.

"I sincerely believe, like Caesar's wife, the prime minister should be above suspicion, and it is for this reason that I am prepared to appear before the Public Accounts Committee,"

he said.

Mr Singh also said he was ready to implement a five-point action plan to fight sleaze, unveiled on Sunday at the plenary meeting by Congress party president Sonia Gandhi.

Congress Party President Sonia Gandhi listens to Manmohan Singh (unseen) in Delhi on 20 December 2010. Congress party president Sonia Gandhi said corruption was a disease in India.

In her speech, she said graft was a "disease spreading through our society".

Her proposal includes fast-tracking graft probes against civil servants and politicians, state-funding of elections, greater government transparency and cutting back on politicians' discretionary powers to allot land.

Meanwhile, the former telecommunications minister, Mr Raja, who was forced to quit last month, but has always denied any wrongdoing, remained defiant yesterday.

BATTLING FOOD SHORTAGE Sri Lanka bans felling coconut trees

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lanka's government yesterday banned the felling of coconut trees as the island battled a severe shortage of nuts -- a dietary staple -- and ordered imports for the first time.

Coconut development minister Jagath Pushpakumara said the government had outlawed the cutting down of coconut trees in a bid to maintain local production that has been falling steadily in recent years.

"With immediate effect, we have banned the felling of coconut trees," the minister said.

The coconut is so important to national cuisine that shortages in the past have had serious political implications and have even been blamed for the downfall of governments.

Last week, the government set a ceiling retail price of 30 rupees (27 US cents) per coconut in a network of state-owned stores, but stocks quickly sold out and then reappeared at more than double the price on the black market.

The trade ministry has already placed orders to import coconuts from India.

Coconuts have traditionally been a key Sri Lankan export, after tea and rubber, but the conversion of plantations for housing development and increased consumption has led to severe shortages.

Amnesty calls on Iraq to protect Christians


AFP, Baghdad

Amnesty International yesterday called on Iraq's government to step up protection of Christians, after 44 worshippers were killed in a late October attack on a Baghdad church.

Amnesty "called on the Iraqi government to do more to protect the country's Christian minority from an expected spike in violent attacks as they prepare to celebrate Christmas," the rights group said in a statement.

"Attacks on Christians and their churches by armed groups have intensified in past weeks and have clearly included war crimes" Malcolm Smart, Amnesty's director for the Middle East and north Africa, said in the statement.

"We fear that militants are likely to attempt serious attacks against Christians during the Christmas period for maximum publicity and to embarrass the government," Smart said.



Chittagong University of Engineering & Technology

Chittagong-4349, Bangladesh

Invitation for Tenders (IFT)

1	Ministry/Division	Ministry of Education.
2	Agency	University Grants Commission.
3	Procuring entity name	Chittagong University of Engineering & Technology.
4	Procuring entity district	Chittagong.
5	Invitation for	Procurement of Goods/Works.
6	Invitation Ref. No. & date	CUET/Engg/2010-2011/T-04 Date: 14/12/2010.
7	Procurement method	Open Tendering Method (OTM).
8	Budget and source of funds	GOB.
9	Tender package No.	PG-15, PW-16, PW-17, PW-18.
10	Tender publication date	15/12/2010.
11	Tender last selling date	09/01/2011.
12	Tender closing date & time	11/01/2011 Time: 01.00pm.
13	Tender opening date & time	11/01/2011 Time: 03.00pm.
14	Name & address of the office(s):	
	Selling tender document (principal)	Engineering Office & Comptroller Office, CUET, Chittagong-4349. (Except govt. holidays and weekly holidays Friday & Saturday).
	Selling tender document (others)	Engineer's Institution, SS Khaled Road, Chittagong. (05/01/2011 & 09/01/2011, Time: 01.30pm to 04.30pm).
	Receiving tender document	a) Engineering Office & Comptroller Office, CUET, Chittagong-4349. Up-to-date: 11/01/2011, Time: 01.00pm. b) Engineer's Institution, S S Khaled Road, Chittagong. Date: 11/01/2011, Time: 09.30am to 12.00 noon. c) Tenders can be delivered by hand, mail & courier services within due date & time.
	Opening tender document	Office of the Chief Engineer, CUET, Chittagong-4349.
15	Place/date/time of pre-tender meeting	Office of the Chief Engineer, CUET, Chittagong-4349. Date: 04/01/2011, Time: 11.00am.
16	Eligibility of tenderer	Enlisted at any Government, semi-government or autonomous body for Package PW-16, PW-17, PW-18.
17	Brief description of goods and works:	
	Package No.	Identification of package
		Location
		Price of tender document in Taka
		Tender security amount in Taka
		Completion time
	PG-15 2010-11	Exchange Rate & Commission for Purchase of Books
		CUET
		Tk. 20,000.00 (twenty thousand) only
		60 (sixty) days
	PW-16 2010-11	Repair & Renovation of Cha, Chaa Type Building
		CUET
		1,500.00
		Tk. 1,00,000.00 (one lac) only
		60 (sixty) days
	PW-17 2010-11	Repair & Renovation of Ja Type Building
		CUET
		1,500.00
		Tk. 90,000.00 (ninety thousand) only
		60 (sixty) days
	PW-18 2010-11	Repair & Renovation of Ga, Gha Type Building
		CUET
		1,000.00
		Tk. 50,000.00 (fifty thousand) only
		60 (sixty) days
18	Name of official inviting tender	Engineer Md. Serajul Islam.
19	Designation of official inviting tender	Chief Engineer, CUET, Chittagong-4349.
20	Address of official inviting tender	CUET, Chittagong-4349 Tel. 031-715584, Fax- 031-714910 E-mail: chiefengineer@cuet.ac.bd
21	This IFT will be available in the website of → www.cuet.ac.bd.	
22	The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject any or all tenders.	
23	The price of tender document (non-refundable) should be paid by Pay-Order/Bank Draft in favour of "Vice-Chancellor, CUET" from any branch of Sonali Bank Ltd. of Bangladesh.	

Chief Engineer
CUET, Chittagong-4349

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প্রথম ধাপ (এইচ.ডি.এ): বিমস্ হচ্ছে আই.সি.এ.ই.ডব্লিউ অনুমোদিত শিক্ষা প্রতিষ্ঠান। আই.সি.এ.ই.ডব্লিউ কর্তৃক অনুমোদিত হওয়ার ডিপ্লোমা-ইন-একাউন্টিং (এইচ.ডি.এ) কোর্সটি সম্পন্ন করলে সি.এ. সম্পন্ন করা যাবে। দ্বিতীয় ধাপ সম্পন্ন করতে এই ধাপটি শেষ করতে সর্বনিম্ন ১ বছর সময় লাগতে পারে।

দ্বিতীয় ধাপ (ডি পেরীক্ষা): দ্বিতীয় ধাপে আই.সি.এ.ই. ডব্লিউ এর (সি. এ. কোর্সের) ডি পেরীক্ষা (৪টি এপ্লিকেশন লেভেল পরীক্ষা ও ২টি টেকনিক্যাল ইন্টিগ্রেশন পরীক্ষা) সম্পন্ন করতে হবে। এই ডি পেরীক্ষার জন্য সার্বিক পড়াশোনা বিমস্-এ অথবা দুবাই কিংবা যুক্তরাজ্যে সম্পন্ন করা যাবে। দ্বিতীয় ধাপ সম্পন্ন করতে ১ থেকে ২ বছর সময় লাগতে পারে।

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