

# New warzone envoy may mean new tact for US

AFP, Washington

In appointing Marc Grossman as the new special envoy for Afghanistan and Pakistan, the United States is turning to a consummate diplomat who may change tact in two deeply complex relationships.

Grossman's methodical, behind-the-scenes approach marks the polar opposite from that of his hard-charging predecessor Richard Holbrooke, who relished his role on the center-stage and rarely hesitated to ruffle feathers.

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton announced Grossman's appointment during a speech in New York in memory of Holbrooke, who suddenly died of a torn aorta in December at age 69.

Grossman "knows our allies and understands how to mobilize common action to meet shared challenges," Clinton said at the Asia Society. "I am



Marc Grossman

absolutely confident in his ability to hit the ground running."

Grossman, a Los Angeles native, served at the US embassy in Pakistan from 1977 to 1979 and rose steadily through the ranks of the US Foreign

Service. He assisted Holbrooke in the Dayton peace talks that ended the Bosnian war.

Grossman served as undersecretary of state for political affairs -- the top position for a career diplomat -- from 2001 to 2005, when he faced the tough challenge of mending US relationships overseas during the Iraq war.

While Grossman has managed the inner workings of the State Department, Holbrooke brazenly skirted the hierarchy. When appointed at the start of President Barack Obama's administration, diplomats wondered whether Holbrooke was overriding the authority of embassies in Islamabad and Kabul.

Holbrooke had an uneasy relationship both with some US military officers running the Afghan war and with Afghan President Hamid Karzai, who was widely accused of rigging 2009 elections.

## Dreams shattered

FROM PAGE 20

He took shelter at a dormitory where he saw some 21 other Bangladeshis like him - jobless. Hoping for a job, Momin stayed there for six months and after spending all his cash, he returned home in November 2008.

In Tarash upazila of Sirajganj, he used to work as a mechanic of shallow tube wells and earn yearly 200-300 mounds of paddy worth about Tk 2 to 3 lakh. When he was abroad, some other locals took over the job.

He had borrowed Tk 2 lakh to pay the broker and now he has no way to repay the loan, Momin told The Daily Star.

The money he had spent to get a job in Singapore could buy him around 300 decimals of land, he said.

"I lost all hopes of getting out of my suffering. I am now struggling to feed my five-member family."

Momin has recently filed a complaint with the Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training (BMET) with the assistance of Shikha Shasthya Unnayan Karzakram (Shishuk).

He is one of the thousands of migrant workers who fell victim to the similar situation in 2008 and 2009, and returned home from Singapore, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Malaysia.

Sultana Adnan, then welfare coordinator of Singapore Bangladesh Samity, said some Singaporean employment agencies with the help of some Bangladeshis hired workers from here without assessing the market demand during the recession.

Many illegal brokers also joined in the process to make money.

"In a few months, the workers were sent back. But by the time they have already given Tk 4 to 5 lakh to those unscrupulous people," said Adnan, who along with others, had provided food and shelter to the jobless in Singapore.

## Pak court reissues Musharraf arrest warrant

AFP, Rawalpindi

A Pakistani anti-terrorism court has reissued an arrest warrant for former president Pervez Musharraf over the assassination of ex-prime minister Benazir Bhutto, according to a prosecutor.

Musharraf, who was president when Bhutto was killed in December 2007 in a gun and suicide bomb attack, is in self-imposed exile in London and his spokesman has said he will not be going back to Pakistan for any court hearing.

"Last week the court had issued the arrest warrant but it could not be served at Musharraf's residence in Islamabad and we were told that he does not live there," special prosecutor Chaudhry Zulfiqar Ali told AFP on Saturday.

"Today the court reissued the warrants and adjourned the hearing till March 5."

"We do not have his address, but we came to know through media and officials who went to serve the warrant that he is in UK. We will get his address and serve the notice on it," he added.

The former president and military ruler is alleged to have been part of a "broad conspiracy" to have his political rival killed before elections, though the exact nature of the charges against him is not clear.

Bhutto was killed after addressing an election campaign rally in the garrison city of Rawalpindi, near the capital Islamabad, on December 27, 2007.

Her widower, Asif Ali Zardari, led her Pakistan People's Party to election victory in February 2008 and is now president.

In April, a UN panel accused the government of failing to provide Bhutto with adequate protection and said investigations were hampered by intelligence agencies and other officials who impeded "an unfettered search for the truth".

Former military leader Musharraf has lived in London since he was replaced by the elected Zardari.



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Hon'ble Ambassador of Thailand

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## Afghans need political solution: Hillary

AFP, New York

US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said Friday that only a political solution will end the war in Afghanistan as she voiced hope for splitting off rank-and-file Taliban from Al-Qaeda extremists.

In a speech at the Asia Society in New York, Clinton reaffirmed US plans to start reducing troops in July and complete the drawdown by the end of 2014 as Afghans take charge of their war-torn country.

Hillary said the surge in US-led troops over the past year was part of a strategy to "split the weakened Taliban off from al-Qaeda and reconcile those who will renounce violence and accept the Afghan constitution."

The relationship between al-Qaeda and the Taliban has long been a source of contention within US policy circles. Hillary said the surge in US-led troops over the past year was part of a strategy to "split the weakened Taliban off from al-Qaeda and reconcile those who will renounce violence and accept the Afghan constitution."

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## Jatrabari-Gulistan flyover

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flyover requires over 200 such pillars.

Against the target of doing less than 200 pilings by the same deadline, 230 have so far been done, Salman added.

Pillars are being erected on heavily-built platforms each on a number of pilings after successful tests of load-bearing capacity.

A total of 233 spans will be built and fixed on top of the pillars with crane, trailer and launching girder to make up the flyover.

"We hope to start casting of spans by the end of March," said Salman, adding, "Our aim is to open the facility for public in January, 2013."

However, the work is going on in full swing without supervision of an independent consultant (IC) of the executing agency Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) as required by the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) rules.

Prof Jamilur Reza Chowdhury, noted civil engineer and currently involved with Dhaka Elevated Expressway, said quality control by an IC is vital.

The Consulting Engineering Services (CES) of India was earlier appointed the IC for the project, said Md Abul Kalam Azad, chief executive officer of DCC.

Later, following certain changes in the length and structural design of the flyover, DCC needed to settle down new rate of man-

month and conditions with CES and it caused delay in reappointment, said Azad.

A DCC team was scheduled to leave for India on February 13 to negotiate with CES.

Salman Karim said they have their own lab facilities to carry out regular testing of the construction materials on the site.

"That apart, we get each consignment of the materials tested at the Buet laboratory," he said, "The cement [Holcim and Scan] are of international standard."

For engineering supervision, Lea Associates South Asia, design consultant of the concessionaire, keeps a constant oversight on the construction, he said.

Ashiqur Rahman, superintending engineer of DCC and project director (PD) of Jatrabari flyover, said he has formed a quality control team with representatives of contractor, concessionaire's design consultant and the concessionaire.

Though the detailed drawing of the flyover is submitted to the DCC, it has not been able to approve it in absence of the IC though the prime minister formally inaugurated the project in June, said Rahman.

The flyover includes the length of 11 ramps and will have a four-lane carriageway. It will stretch from Dhaka-Chittagong highway towards Palash through Gulistan and Kaptan Bazar.

## Demand for Bangla

FROM PAGE 1

April 26, 1952, as Abul Maal Abdul Muhith reports in his State Language Movement in East Bengal 1947-1956, a non-communal organisation going by the name of East Pakistan Students' Union was established. Alongside the emergence of the organisation came the fact of leading progressive Bangali thinkers getting together sometime in the middle of the year to form the Pakistan Shabtiya Parishad.

An especially enlightening happening was the decision by the East Pakistan Muslim Students' League to turn itself into a non-communal organisation. This was done in 1953, at a time when politics at the national level in Pakistan was passing through a critical phase with dramatic changes in the power structure in Karachi. Between August 22 and 24, 1952 the East Pakistan Cultural Conference was held in Comilla, where the focus was on a reassessment of the language issue.

The meeting was presided over by Abdul Karim Shahityabishar, who made it clear that Bangla was the language of the people of East Bengal. He was emphatic in his assertion that Bangla was the symbol of the culture of the people of East Bengal.

The shootings of February 21, 1952 had a pronounced impact across the spectrum in the province. At Dhaka University hall elections, progressive students' groups turfed out groups which had so far had the support of the ruling classes. The first anniversary of the shootings went off peacefully on February 21, 1953. There was, reportedly, an understanding reached between the chief secretary to the provincial government and student leaders on the need to observe the day peacefully. One of the songs was, of course, Abdul Gaffar Chowdhury's 'Amar bhaiyer rokete rangano Ekushey February / Aami ki bhuli te paari...'

A significant offshoot of February 1952 was the appearance, in March 1953, of Hasan Hafizur Rahman's (then a rising poet and student leader) Ekushey Shonkolon. It was, however, swiftly banned and would not reappear until years later, in 1965 and 1968.

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