

PAK-US CONFLICT
Kerry warns of 'critical moment'

AFP, Kabul

US Senator John Kerry said yesterday relations with key ally Pakistan were at a "critical moment" as he headed from Kabul to Islamabad as the first senior US visitor since the death of Osama bin Laden.

Kerry said he was ready to listen to Pakistan's leaders but he said talks had to "resolve some very serious issues."

Pakistan's government, intelligence services and military have been widely accused of incompetence or complicity over the presence of bin Laden, who was killed by US commandos in a covert raid on May 2.

"We need to find a way to march forward if it is possible. If it is not possible, there are a set of downside consequences that can be profound," said Kerry.

ISI stops intelligence sharing with CIA

US administration divided over future relationship

AGENCIES

Pakistan's spy agency has stopped sharing intelligence with the CIA following the unilateral US operation to kill Osama bin Laden as a report revealed.

Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) agents, who had earlier been credited with helping spot targets for drone strikes and give data to the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), have now started to withhold crucial operational details about militants, The Sunday Telegraph reported.

The media report said the ISI has now broken off relations with the CIA.

"They are furious. They handed over telephone intercepts in 2009 that were crucial in leading to bin Laden's courier - the key breakthrough in the hunt," a source was quoted as saying.

"Then four months ago they were told there was nothing in it, it was what

the Americans called a 'cold lead'. Since then they have been left out completely out of the loop."

Lieutenant General Talat Masood, a military analyst, said: "There are implications for both the US and international forces in Afghanistan, so the Americans will be very interested in getting the relationship back on track."

In US, the Obama is divided over the future of its relationship with Pakistan following the killing of al-Qaeda founder Osama bin Laden, The Washington Post reported yesterday.

US commandos killed bin Laden in an urban compound only 55 kilometers from the Pakistani capital Islamabad on May 2.

The newspaper said that some officials, particularly in the White House, have advocated a strong US response.

"You can't continue business as usual," the paper quotes one of several senior administration officials as saying.

ing who discussed the sensitive issue only on the condition of anonymity.

"You have to somehow convey to the Pakistanis that they have arrived at a big choice."

"People who were prepared to listen to (Pakistan's) story for a long time are no longer prepared to listen," the official went on to say.

But few officials are willing to consider the alternatives if Pakistan makes the wrong choice, the report said.

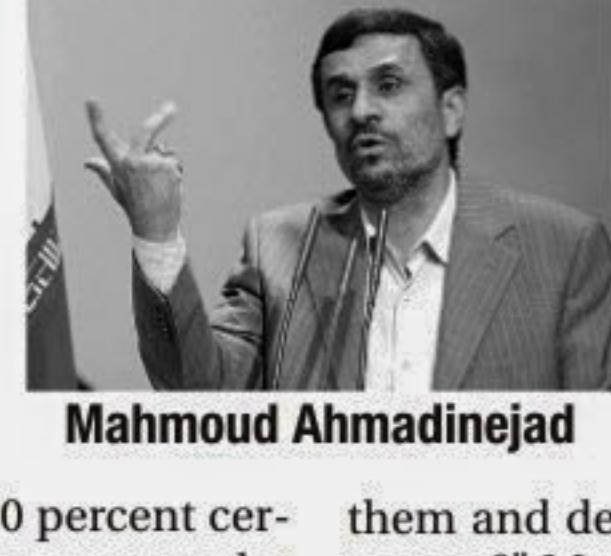
Every available option -- from limiting US aid and official contacts to unleashing more unilateral ground attacks against terrorist targets -- jeopardizes existing Pakistani help in the war on terror, The Post noted.

Military success and an eventual negotiated settlement of the Afghanistan war are seen as virtually impossible without some level of Pakistani assistance, the paper pointed out.

Iran's president 'under a spell'

Claims top cleric

AFP, Tehran



Mahmoud Ahmadinejad

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has been put "under a spell" by his chief of staff Esfandiar Rahim Mashaei, an ultra-conservative cleric was quoted by local media yesterday as saying.

"I've told some of my close

friends that I am more than 90 percent certain that (Ahmadinejad) has been put under a spell. This is not natural at all," Ayatollah Mohammad Taghi Mesbah Yazdi, believed to have once been a mentor of the president, told the weekly Shoma.

"No sane person does such things unless his free will has been taken away," Mesbah

Yazdi said in reference to a crisis that has erupted since mid-April between Ahmadinejad and the hard-line conservative camp close to supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

"His actions have no justification. When he has 10 friends... does it make sense to constantly defy nine of them and defend (the actions of the) tenth person?" Mesbah Yazdi asked in an allusion to Mashaei.

Mashaei, the president's top advisor and close relative who has worked alongside Ahmadinejad for more than 25 years, has been the target of a barrage of criticism from the conservative camp in past weeks.

Thailand interested in Australian asylum deal

AFP, Sydney

Thailand is interested in an asylum seeker deal similar to the one Canberra plans with Malaysia as Prime Minister Julia Gillard reiterated yesterday that new boat people will not be processed in Australia.

A week ago Australia announced alterations to its immigration policy designed to break people-smuggling and stem the number of boats carrying asylum seekers to its shores.

Under the changes, Australia has proposed sending 800 asylum seekers to Malaysia for processing and in return it will accept 4,000 people already assessed by the latter to be refugees for resettlement over four years.

Despite the Malaysia plan sparking criticism that Australia is returning to a disputed policy of banishing boat people to poor neighbours, Thai Foreign Minister Kasit Piromya said his country would be interested in a similar deal.

20 gave 25 days more to complete the investigation, which expired on Sunday.

With this, the CID has been given 22 months in 10 phases to probe the case.

Meantime, Huji Nayeb-e-Ameer Abdul Hannan Sabbir was placed on a four-day fresh remand in the case.

Earlier, he was taken on 10 days' remand in connection with the CPB rally bomb blast case following his arrest on April 25 from a residence in Keraniganj.

Meanwhile, Jamaat acting Secretary General ATM Azharul Islam in a statement yesterday condemned the arrest order against Mojahed in the grenade attack case.

Azharul said the AL government arrested Mojahed to take political revenge.

According to the statement, Jamaat had condemned the attack on the AL rally on Bangabandhu Avenue and demanded punishment of the attackers.

Detained Mojahed

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The IO, in his plea mentioned that chief of Harkatul Jihad al Islami (Huji) Mufti Abdul Hannan in his statement on April 7 disclosed five names, including Mojahed, who were involved in the attack.

The four others are former DGFI director Rezzakul Haider Chowdhury, former NSI director general Abdur Rahim, acting Huji chief Maulana Shawkat Osman and its Nayeb-e-Ameer Maulana Abdul Hannan

Sabbir, he said. During investigation they also revealed the names of the grenade suppliers and the patrons of the attack that killed 23 people including AL leader Ivy Rahman and injured many including Sheikh Hasina, the then opposition leader.

Al Markajul Islam Vice-chairman Maulana Abdul Rashid also gave statements before a magistrate in connection with the attack.

A process is underway to

quiz Mojahed, who was then social welfare minister, at the jail gate in this connection.

Meantime, Judge Mohammad Zohurul Haque of Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court granted the CID 20 days more to complete further investigation into the case.

The CID sought 30 more days saying it needs the time to arrest those still on the run.

The same court on April

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Supam killed 'for property'

FROM PAGE 20
Government School in this year's SSC examination.

Nazrul told journalists that Sagar, his brother-in-law Selim, and two criminals hired by Sagar strangled Supam with a belt and threw his body off the hill. He, however, could not identify the two goons.

On May 8, they arrived in Chittagong with Supam and stayed the night over at Sagar's house, Mahmudul said.

On the following afternoon, they went to Naga Jhiri near Meghla Parjatan Kendra, about five km away from Meghla, he said.

"Sagar struck Supam's head to overpower him and then we tied his shirt and belt around his neck and strangled him," said Mahmudul, adding, "Then

we pushed his body off the hill."

Sunil Das, cousin of Supam's late father and Mizan, son of Dharmapur's chairman in Satkaniya hired them for the abduction and killing, claimed the detainees.

"Sunil and Mizan promised to pay us Tk 2 lakh for killing the boy," they said.

On Friday evening, police arrested Sunil Das from his residence after a murder case was filed accusing seven people with Double Mooring Police Station.

Police sought remand for 10 days to interrogate Sunil, sources said.

SM Tanvir Arafat, assistant commissioner of Double Mooring Zone, said he suspects Sunil and

Mizan masterminded the killing to grab the boy's property.

"We also think Sagar is a professional killer," he said.

Police are trying to track down Mizan and the others, he added.

While talking to The Daily Star, the victim's mother Papia Sen demanded exemplary punishment to the killers.

On May 8, Mahmudul Islam, brother-in-law of the victim's friend Sohel invited him and his friend to go on a trip with Mahmudul to Bandarban.

Papia lodged a general diary on May 11 as she could not reach her son over the phone.

Police recovered Supam's decomposed body at Naga Jhiri on May 12.

ommend that the government make investor friendly securities rules and ensure accountability at the bourses.

"We will take steps to save the investors from deception and regulate the stockmarket according to the market fundamentals."

Akter H Sannamat, a market analyst, said, "It is a good sign that the government has appointed a new SEC chairman."

Sannamat, former managing director of Prime Finance and Investment Ltd, said, "The chairman should work free of influence and hold meetings with the central bank, bourses, merchant banks and other market stakeholders to find out the problems and take measures for a better coordination among them."

He said the government should fill the vacant posts of three SEC members as soon as possible to boost the investors' confidence.

Dhaka Stock Exchange gained 175 points yesterday for the first time since the probe report on market debacle was published on April 30.

S E C m e m b e r s Mohammad Anisuzzaman resigned on May 8 and Muhammad Yasin Ali the next day, claiming that they were forced to quit.

Chittagong University teacher Helal Uddin Nizami was appointed SEC member on May 7 while the three other posts of SEC member remain vacant.

Wishing anonymity, a finance ministry official said another SEC member might be appointed today.

SEC gets new chief

FROM PAGE 1

Khairol replaces Ziaul Haque Khondker, who took charge of the SEC on May 3, 2009.

The new SEC chairman had been serving as chairman of state-run Investment Corporation of Bangladesh (ICB) from September 15, 2009.

The establishment ministry yesterday sent a letter to Ziaul Haque Khondker, who has been attached to the ministry.

Khairol, also former teacher of finance department at Dhaka University (DU), went to his new office at 4:00pm on receipt of release orders from the ICB and the DU.

"We will work to restore investors' confidence and establish a transparent, vibrant and investor friendly capital market," said the new chief of the regulatory body that has drawn flack for its failure to oversee the market.

He said the SEC will recruit

Indian soldier killed in Kashmir

AFP, Srinagar

An Indian soldier was killed when Pakistani snipers allegedly shot across the sensitive border in divided Kashmir, an Indian paramilitary official said yesterday, leading to a gunfight.

The incident occurred late Saturday in Indian Kashmir's Suchetgarh area, a Border Security Force (BSF) official said after the shooting shattered more than a year of calm along the militarised border in the Himalayan region.

"Pakistani snipers fired when a BSF party was on patrolling duty," said the Indian officer, who did not wish to be named.

BSF troopers retaliated, leading to a brief exchange of gunfire. It was not immediately known if Pakistani soldiers suffered casualties.

LADEN KILLING AFTERMATH

Hopes for bumper tourist season in Abbottabad

AFP, Abbottabad

Pakistani hoteliers in the now notorious town where Osama bin Laden was killed by elite US forces are praying the views and balmy weather still reel in bumper tourist numbers this year.

Considered one of the quietest towns in the northwest, nestled in pine-dotted hills and popular with day-trippers from the capital, Abbottabad is listed on Pakistan's official tourism website as a "popular sum-

US ship on which Qaeda chief was buried anchors in Philippines

AFP, Manila

The US Navy ship from where Osama bin Laden was buried at sea arrived in the Philippines for a port call yesterday, but the crew avoided any mention of the historic incident.

Crewmen of the USS Carl Vinson aircraft carrier said they were in good spirits but parried questions about the slain al-Qaeda leader in a meeting with journalists yesterday.

Asked how it felt to be part of history, Rear Admiral Samuel Perez, head of the Carl Vinson's carrier group, said: "I am not going to comment on that. Everyday you are a sailor in the US Navy, you are a part of history."

POST BIN LADEN

China-Pakistan alliance strengthened

AFP, Beijing

Tensions between the US and Pakistan over the killing of Osama bin Laden and a speedier US withdrawal from Afghanistan are likely to reinforce China and Pakistan's already strong ties, analysts say.

When Chinese leaders welcome Pakistani Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gilani to Beijing this week, they will likely praise Sino-Pakistani "friendship" over the past 60 years -- a stark contrast to recent Western criticism of Islamabad.

Analysts say Gilani's visit starting Tuesday will help Islamabad deflect mounting pressure from Washington and elsewhere, as Pakistan stands shoulder-to-shoulder with its long-time ally and neighbour.

"China is the only country that has taken a sympathetic stand for Pakistan after the bin Laden operation," Talat Masood, a political analyst and retired Pakistani general, told AFP.

"If US and Indian pressure continues, Pakistan can say 'China is behind us. Don't think we are isolated, we have a potential superpower with us,'" Masood said.

"This visit is important in the sense that it could counter (US) pressure on Pakistan. It shows Pakistan wants to say we also have some cards to play."

China has shown unwavering support for Pakistan since US special forces killed bin Laden at a compound near the country's top military academy on May 2.

Foreign ministry spokeswoman Jiang Yu pointed out a few days after the al-Qaeda chief's killing that Pakistan was nevertheless "at the forefront of the

international counter-terrorism effort".

Beijing's goodwill has not gone unnoticed.

"At this crucial juncture of history, I cannot say anybody is standing with Pakistan except for China," Pakistan's popular opposition leader Nawaz Sharif told reporters.

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