

ALL-PARTY MEET ON LOKPAL IN INDIA

Logjam continues as talks fail

PTI, New Delhi

All-party meeting tonight failed to reach consensus on Lokpal Bill with parties voicing divergent views on key elements like inclusion of PM and lower bureaucracy, even as Indian PM Manmohan Singh sought cooperation to ensure its passage during the current session.

Singh said the "momentous" Lokpal Bill should not become a subject of party politics as the government was keen to get it passed in Parliament based on consensus that is driven by the House as the "custodian of legislation".

Seeking "guidance and cooperation in this matter of paramount importance", Singh said, "I am personally keen that this momentous legislation should be passed on the basis of consensus among all parties as far as possible and that this should not be subjected to party politics in any way."

Asking everyone to "keep the interests of the country foremost in our minds", he said

"the government is also keen that we must make all efforts to pass a Lokpal Bill in this very session that is based on consensus and that is driven by Parliament as the custodian of legislation."

The nearly three-hour long meeting, however, saw divergent views being aired by leaders of the parties, with BJP pitching for inclusion of Group C and D employees under the Lokpal, a stand staunchly opposed by CPI.

BJP and other opposition parties also demanded that CBI's investigative wing should come under Lokpal, sources said.

However, both the Left and Right were on the same page with regard to inclusion of PM under the Lokpal, they said.

CPI leader Gurudas Dasgupta said his party feels that Group C and D cannot be brought under Lokpal because there are crores of such employees.

There should be separate mechanism to deal with them, he told reporters.



PHOTO: AFP

In this photograph taken on December 13, 2011 a group of arrested Indonesian punks are jailed in Bandah Aceh police station in Aceh province. After being arrested at a punk rock concert in the provincial capital Banda Aceh Saturday night, 59 male and five female punk rock fans have been forced to have their hair cut, bathe in a lake, change clothes and pray, an AFP correspondent on the scene said yesterday.

US clarifies aid to Pakistan not cut

APP, Washington

The US State Department yesterday clarified that the US had not cut \$700 million in aid to Pakistan but noted that there was a congressional move seeking such a step.

State Department spokesperson Victoria Nuland confirmed AFP.

"What we have is something on the defence authorisation bill, which is currently moving in the Congress, which would require the Department of Defence to continue providing a strategy on how we will use certain military assistance and measure its progress, in particular on progress that we are making with Pakistan on the IED (Improvised Explosive Device) issue," she explained, replying to a question.

A Congressional panel had on Monday reported an agreement on freezing \$700 million in aid to Islamabad.

The panel said that Pakistan should stop the movement of fertilizers that militants in Afghanistan use in IEDs to target American troops.

"If this legislation becomes law, we'll work with the government of Pakistan on how we can fulfil the requirements. But this requires us to maintain a strategic perspective and to be clear with our Congress about the strategy," she said.

The spokesperson would not make any specific comments on the outcome of a conference of Pakistani diplomats, which, reviewed relations with Western countries.

Thai flood death toll exceeds 700

AFP, Bangkok

The death toll from months of flooding in Thailand has risen above 700, although the waters have receded in many parts of the country, the government said yesterday.

Monsoon rains in the south of the kingdom which began in late November have killed 10 people, in addition to 698 who have perished in central and northern provinces since the crisis began in July, officials said.

The floods, the worst to hit the country in half a century, continue to affect nine of Thailand's 77 provinces. In total 65 provinces have seen flooding this year, the Interior Ministry said.

More than 2,200 homes have been destroyed and almost 100,000 partially damaged, it reported.

Protest for honour

AFP, Seoul

South Korean women forced into wartime sexual slavery held their 1,000th weekly protest outside Japan's embassy Wednesday, demanding compensation and an apology from Tokyo as they have since 1992.

"Apologise!" shouted five women in their 80s or 90s and an estimated 500 supporters, waving banners reading "Compensate" and "Admit the war crime".

Demonstrators campaigning to publicise World War II crimes braved near-freezing temperatures to unveil a "peace monument" across the street from the mission, despite protests from the Japanese government over the statue.

The five former sex slaves known euphemistically as "comfort women" hugged the replica of a teenage Korean girl in traditional costume.

"Young girls were dragged to other countries as slaves of the Japanese military," said a frail Kim Bok-Dong, 85. "I demand that the ambassador of Japan tell the Japanese government to apologise before we all die."

The oldest of the Korean former "comfort women" died aged 94 earlier this month and another aged 87 died Tuesday, leaving just 63 survivors out of 234 who had registered with the Seoul government.

Historians say that during World War II, about 200,000 women from Korea, China, the Philippines and other countries were drafted to work in Japanese military brothels.

The issue came to widespread notice in the early 1990s after some victims found the courage to go public.

US winning war in Afghanistan

Says US secretary of defence

AFP, Fob Sharana

US Defence chief Leon Panetta told US troops yesterday they were winning the 10-year war in Afghanistan, during a visit focused on handing security to Afghans as US troops withdraw.

Panetta is in Afghanistan to review the war effort with the United States, which is on track to recall 33,000 troops by the end of the next year and is shifting its focus to an advisory role in training Afghan security forces.

"We're moving in the right direction and we're winning this very tough conflict," he told troops at Forward Operating Base Sharana, 56 kilometres from the Pakistan border, in the eastern province of Paktika.

In October, the Pentagon said that Taliban attacks were down for the first time in five years but that insurgent sanctuaries in Pakistan were feeding violence on the border and threatening the war effort.

The UN disagrees with US military figure of causalities. UN said the number of civilians who were killed increased by 15 percent in the first six months of this year.

Saying there are still complex challenges ahead, he said "ultimately..., we will be able to establish a country that is able to govern and secure itself, we will make sure that the Taliban will never be able to find safe haven in Afghanistan, that al-Qaeda will never again be able to find safe havens here."

Panetta said it was important to make sure Pakistan could secure its side of the border.

America's alliance with Pakistan is in crisis over a Nato strike that killed 24 Pakistani soldiers near the Afghan border on November 26.

Islamabad has shut the US supply line into landlocked Afghanistan and forced Americans to leave a base widely reported to have been a hub for CIA drones.

5 desperados drown in sea

FROM PAGE 1

Local fishermen saw five dead bodies floating near the island yesterday morning.

Police and Navy officials, however, could not confirm the incident.

Officer-in-Charge of Teknaf Model Police Station Mahbubul Haque said, "I have heard that a Malaysia-bound trawler has capsized. None has complained to me yet. We can't confirm the incident."

Survivors Mohammad Ibrahim, Ismail and Noor Hossain of Teknaf said they were going to Malaysia to secure jobs with the help of local manpower brokers Firoz, Ismail, Sharif Hossain, Golam Hossain, Yunus and Dholu Hossain.

The trawler started from Cox's Bazar with 45 passengers. Around 85 more boarded it from Shah Parer Dwip in Teknaf around 10:00pm on Tuesday.

Resuming its journey the vessel overturned within half an hour.

"There were some Myanmar nationals among the passengers. The rest were from different parts of Cox's Bazar. So we didn't know all of them," said a survivor.

Badiur Rahman, Amir Hossain, Kabir Ahmed, Kala Mia, Idris Mia, Sirajul Islam, Ahmed Hossain, Kamal Hossain and Kadir Hossain of Teknaf were missing, he added.

Illegal and risky journey

by engine-powered boats to Malaysia and Thailand has been a common phenomenon in the area for the last couple of years. People take the journey in winter when the sea remains calm, according to local law enforcement officials.

The route runs through the Bay of Bengal to Thailand. From there, the jobseekers are taken to Malaysia overland.

Over the years, many boats capsized killing passengers. The Indian and Thai coast guards arrested many of the fortune-seekers.

On December 28, 2008, the Indian coast guard rescued 105 illegal migrants from the high seas off the coast of Andaman. Most of

them were stranded Rohingyas from Cox's Bazar, according to newspaper reports.

An estimated 2 lakh Rohingyas live in Cox's Bazar illegally, while another 24,000 are registered in refugee camps in the district.

The members of the Muslim ethnic group of Myanmar's Arakan state trespassed into Bangladesh territory due to alleged persecution of them by the junta of Myanmar.

Desperate local unemployed people quite often fall prey to manpower brokers who offer them overseas jobs in exchange for Tk 20,000 to Tk 30,000.

Social Development Foundation (SDF)

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Tel-880-02-8963946, 8959581, 8959368, Fax-880-02-8961096, E-mail: md@sdfbd.org

Date: 14/12/2011

IFT No.: SDF/ENJ/ Proc-G-1.1(ENJ) / 1280

Invitation for Tenders

(Goods-Single Lot)

GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH

1	Ministry/Division	Ministry of Finance.		
2	Agency	Social Development Foundation (SDF),		
3	Procuring Entity Name	Managing Director, SDF		
4	Procuring Entity Code	Not used at present		
5	Procuring Entity District	Dhaka, Bangladesh		
6	Invitation for	Supply of Goods of individual package: Invitation for Tender for Supply and fitting fixing of Furniture with all accessories for National, Region, District and Cluster Offices under Empowerment and Livelihood Improvement- Nuton Jibon Project, SDF during the year of 2011-2012. [Package No. G-1.1(ENJ)]		
7	Invitation Ref No	IFT No.: SDF/ENJ/ Proc-G-1.1(ENJ) / 1280		
8	Date	Dated: 14/12/2011		
9	Procurement Method	NCT(Open Tendering Method-OTM)		
10	Budget and Source of Funds	IDA Credit no. 4757-BD .		
11	Development Partners	IDA		
12	Tender Packages Nos.	G-1.1(ENJ)		
13	Tender Packages Name	Supply and fitting fixing of Furniture with all accessories for National, Region, District and Cluster Offices.		
14	Tender Publication Date	15/12/2011		
15	Tender Last Selling Date	Date: 08/01/2012		
16	Tender Closing Date and Time	09/01/2012 2:30 PM		
17	Tender Opening Date and Time	09/01/2012 3:00 PM		
18	Name & Address of the office(s)	Address - Selling Tender Document Social Development Foundation (SDF) House # 4, Road # 21, Sector # 4, Uttara Model Town, Dhaka-1230. - Receiving Tender Document Social Development Foundation (SDF) House # 4, Road # 21, Sector # 4, Uttara Model Town, Dhaka-1230. - Opening Tender Document Social Development Foundation (SDF) House # 4, Road # 21, Sector # 4, Uttara Model Town, Dhaka-1230.		
19	Place/Date/Time for Pre-Tender meeting	Conference Room, SDF, 26/12/2011, 11:00 AM.		
20	Eligibility of Tenderer	All Countries are eligible except Israel and IDA non-eligible countries		
21	Brief Description of Goods or Works	Supply and fitting fixing of Furniture with all accessories for National, Region, District and Cluster Offices.		
22	Brief Description of Related Services	Needs after sales services (fitting fixing of Furniture) with genuine accessories including warranty.		
23	Price of Tender Document (Tk)	Tk.100.00 (Taka one thousand only) for this Package, Non-refundable.		
G-1.1(ENJ)	Lot No	Identification of Lot	Tender Security Amount (Tk)	Completion Time in Weeks / Months
G-1.1(ENJ)	1	Supply and fitting fixing of Furniture with all accessories for National, Region, District and Cluster Offices.	3,00,000.00	8 Weeks
24	Name of Official Inviting Tender	Mr. Md. Nurul Islam Sardar		
25	Designation of Official Inviting Tender	Managing Director, SDF		
26	Address of Official Inviting Tender	Social Development Foundation (SDF), Dhaka House # 4, Road # 21, Sector # 4, Uttara Model Town, Dhaka-1230.		
27	Contact details of Official Inviting Tender	Ph.: 880-02-8963946, 8959581, 8959368 FAX: 880-02-8961096		
28	Special Instructions:	(i) Tender Security money must be submitted along with the tender through Pay Order/Bank Draft/Bank Guarantee in favor of the "Managing Director, SDF". (ii) Manufacturer's Authorization must be submitted along with the tender. (iii) ISO Certificate must be submitted along with the tender. (iv) The Tenderer shall have a minimum of 5 years of overall experience in the supply of goods and related services. (v) The Tenderer shall have a minimum of 3 years of specific experience in the supply of similar goods and related services. (vi) The satisfactory completion of supply of similar goods of value stated in the TDS (Tender data sheet) under a single contract in the last five years; and (vii) Availability of minimum liquid assets or working capital or credit facilities from a Bank, as specified in the TDS (Tender data sheet). (viii) The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject any or all tenders without any reason there of prior to acceptance. (ix) This tender shall be governed by the PPR 2008.		

(Md. Nurul Islam Sardar)

Managing Director

Social Development Foundation (SDF), Dhaka

Zardari to leave Dubai hospital today

AFP, Islamabad

Pakistan President Asif Ali Zardari is to be discharged from a Dubai hospital today after more than a week, but will remain in the Gulf emirate to rest with no date fixed for his return home.

The government made the announcement eight days after the president flew suddenly to the United Arab Emirates in the midst of a political scandal, forcing aides to deny that he was seriously ill or about to step down.

Zardari would leave hospital for his house in Dubai, but presidency spokesman Farhatullah Babar declined to comment on when the 56-year-old head of state would return to Pakistan.

Nor has any definitive diagnosis of Zardari's condition been made public.

We are now requesting proposals from reputed steel drum manufacturers/its associates with proven track record for installing the plant on turn-key basis. The proposal must reach the undersigned by December 31, 2011.

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