

Annan starts Syria mission

EU opposes military intervention

AFP, Damascus

Former UN chief Kofi Annan held crucial talks in Damascus on Saturday with the hopes of the world pinned on his bid to prevent a nearly year-old uprising spiralling into all-out civil war.

State media reported the start of talks between President Bashar al-Assad and Annan, on his first visit since being named international envoy on the conflict.

President Bashar al-Assad told UN/Arab League envoy Kofi Annan that no political solution was possible in Syria while "terrorist" groups were destabilizing the country.

"Syria is ready to make a success of any honest effort to find a solution for the events it is witnessing," state news agency SANA quoted Assad as telling his guest.

"No political dialogue or political activity can succeed while there are armed terrorist groups operating and spreading chaos and instability," the Syrian leader said after about two hours of talks with the former UN secretary-general.

There was no immediate comment from Annan after the meeting, aimed at halting bloodshed that has cost thou-

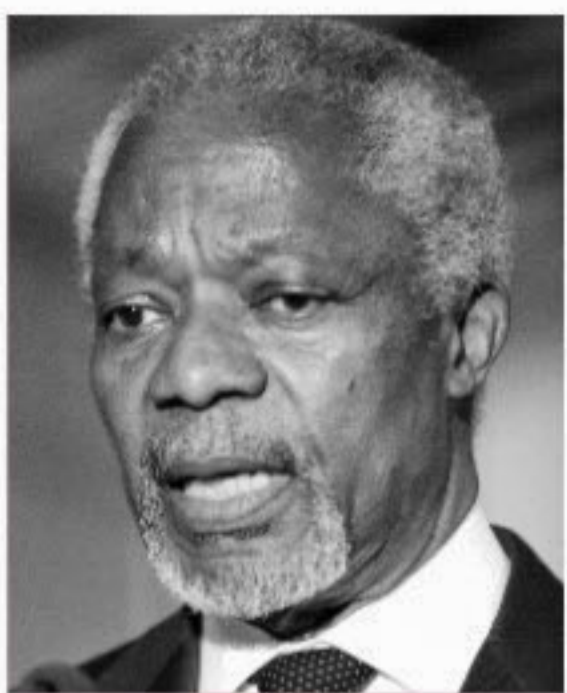
sands of lives since a popular uprising erupted a year ago.

It came as a human rights group reported fierce shelling of Idlib in northwest Syria and a day after another 70 civilians were killed in the regime's crackdown on dissent.

Sixteen rebel fighters, seven soldiers and four civilians were killed in the Idlib fighting, according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, which said 15 other people, including three soldiers, had been killed in violence elsewhere.

Human rights watchdogs say the conflict has cost more than 8,500 lives since last March.

Emissary of the United Nations and the Arab League, Annan has the support of Damascus allies Beijing and Moscow and his mission has been



Kofi Annan

welcomed by the both the Syrian government and opposition.

But Russia said its Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov made clear to Annan at a meeting earlier in Cairo that Moscow was opposed to "crude interference" in Syria's affairs.

His call was echoed by EU foreign ministers.

They warned against the temptation of military intervention in Syria despite the growing human suffering, saying boots on the ground could ignite "a large-scale fire".

Germany's Guido Westerwelle, arriving for talks with his European Union counterparts, said any talk of military intervention was "counterproductive".

However Qatari Foreign Minister Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim al-Thani yesterday told a meeting of Arab foreign ministers in Cairo that it was time to send Arab and foreign troops to conflict-stricken Syria.

Annan's visit comes a day after UN humanitarian chief Valerie Amos left Damascus following a hard-won but troubled mission to secure relief access to protest centres such as Syria's third-largest city Homs.

Israeli air strikes kill 14 in Gaza

AFP, Gaza City

Israeli air strikes on Gaza killed 14 Palestinians, including a militant group chief, medics said yesterday, in the deadliest flareup in more than three years.

The Israeli military said earlier the air force carried out 13 attacks on a range of targets, including the militant leader, and that militants had by midday fired at least 70 rockets and mortar rounds into southern Israel.

Fourteen Palestinians were killed and at least 20 others wounded in the string of Israeli air strikes on the Gaza Strip on Friday and yesterday, Palestinian medics said.

The Palestinian barrage, which started on Friday morning, injured four people, one of them seriously, Israeli military sources said.

One of the retaliatory air strikes killed the head of the Popular Resistance Committees (PRC), Zohair al-Qaisi, and fellow member Mahmud Hanani, the ultra-hardline militant group said.

Akhilesh Yadav to take UP helm

STAR REPORT

A fresh young star was chosen yesterday to take power in India's most populous and politically key state after dealing a stinging electoral humiliation to the Nehru-Gandhi dynasty scion Rahul Gandhi.

Charismatic politician Akhilesh Yadav, 38, is credited with crushing Gandhi's hopes of reviving the national ruling Congress party's fortunes in impoverished Uttar Pradesh ahead of national elections due in 2014.

In a generational change of leadership, Akhilesh Yadav, son of Samajwadi Party supremo Mulayam Singh Yadav, was chosen to be the new and youngest chief minister of India's most populous state.

The decision to nominate 38-year-old Akhilesh, an engineer by training, was taken unanimously at a meeting of newly-elected legislators of Samajwadi Party.

The party secured majority on its own with 224 members in the 403-strong state legislature in recent assembly elections in politically the most crucial state, which elects the largest number of members to parliament.

Some senior leaders of the party had reservations about Akhilesh, who has no experience



in administration, becoming the chief minister but in the last two days Mulayam persuaded them about anointing his son in the throne.

Meanwhile, the Congress and the Bharatiya Janata Party yesterday welcomed Akhilesh Yadav's elevation to the chief minister's post in Uttar Pradesh and hoped that he would fulfil his poll commitments.

"I congratulate Akhilesh Yadav as new chief minister of UP. He has got the mandate to be the chief minister and I hope whatever commitment he has made and his party has made will be implemented and he will learn a lesson from the past," Congress spokesperson Rashid Alvi said in Delhi.

The BJP also congratulated Yadav and hoped that he would fulfil his poll promises.

Akhilesh, who made his extensive tour of Uttar Pradesh to spearhead the party's campaign in the elections, was instrumental in the Samajwadi Party shedding its image of being opposed to use of computers and English with promise of free laptops for students.

Congress scored disappointing results in the recently ended six-state elections, only winning a clear majority in the far-flung northeastern state of Manipur.

PM worried

FROM PAGE 1

are worried about how to ensure protection for lives and properties of people," she said.

Hasina, also the ruling Awami League president, was speaking at a view-exchange meeting with the party leaders and activists of Comilla district (north) unit at Gono Bhaban. Media was allowed to cover the event.

"Although Khaleda Zia has said her party will observe the programme peacefully, we are apprehending anarchy because she (Khaleda) does just opposite of what she says," said Hasina.

"We had the experience after the 2001 polls as to how dangerous she [Khaleda] can be," the premier said.

Referring to news reports that Pakistan's intelligence agency Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) gave Khaleda Zia 5 crore rupees to help her win the 1991 parliamentary polls, Hasina alleged that BNP is hatching conspiracy to destroy the country's democracy taking money from Pakistan.

"They [BNP] are playing

with the fate of people taking money from those who were defeated in 1971. Nothing is more embarrassing and barbaric than taking money from Pakistan. I think BNP took money from them [Pakistan] also before the elections of 1996 and 2001," she said.

Talking about the previous parliamentary elections, Hasina said, "Before the 2001 polls, I was not agreeable to sell gas from the country. That is why ISI, Indian Raw and America became unified and we could not assume power."

She alleged that BNP founder Ziaur Rahman had killed over 2,000 military persons during his tenure.

She urged all the party men to beef up the organisational strength to resist the conspiracy against democracy.

Deputy Leader in parliament Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury, party's General Secretary Syed Ashraf Islam, presidium member Matia Chowdhury and dozens of leaders and activities of Comilla attended the meeting.

Hawks dominate

FROM PAGE 1

civil disobedience movement launched by Bangabandhu earlier in the month. By now it had become clear that all sections of Bangalees and all professional groups in the province had linked up in a mass movement for democracy to be established on the basis of the Six-Point programme.

Away in Rawalpindi, however, the military establishment was swiftly getting to be dominated by the hawks. Men like General Abdul Hamid Khan, chief of general staff of the Pakistan army, General Gul Hassan and General SGM M Peerzada were clearly of the opinion that the Bangalees' movement had to be crushed and Sheikh Mujibur Rahman severely dealt with.

Interestingly, not one among the military hierarchy thought it necessary to condemn Zulfikar Ali Bhutto for having pushed the country into such a deep crisis. All that they were concerned with was the humiliating loss of authority in Bangladesh on

the part of the regime. President Yahya Khan appeared dazed and unable to take any decision. It was clear that authority was slipping from his hands and a small coterie of generals was beginning to assert itself.

Another intriguing circumstance was the consistent encouragement the army was giving the non-Bangalee population in Dhaka's Mohammadpur and Mirpur areas. Although the entire province was scrupulously observing the general strike, indeed the non-cooperation movement called by the Awami League, the Bihar community by and large refused to see the movement succeed in Mohammadpur and Mirpur. In fact, many Bangalee families inhabiting these two areas were intimidated, with some being forced to look for residential accommodation elsewhere.

There were, however, groups of enlightened Biharis vocal in their support for the movement and readily identified with it.

10 Tahrir

FROM PAGE 1

Mohakhali area around 2:30am and detained the 10.

Searching residences of three of the arrested, the officers found books, leaflets, banners and copies of constitutions of the Islamist organisation, Rab-1 officers add.

Lt Commander Rashidul Alam, commanding officer of Rab-1, told The Daily Star that most of the arrestees are students of different educational institutions in the capital while a few are service holders.

The Rab handed over the detainees to Gulshan police and filed a case under Anti-Terrorism Act implicating them in anti-state activities, he added.

Since the government banned Hizb-ut-Tahrir on October 22, 2009 on charges of militancy, around 600 leaders and activists have been arrested for carrying out organisational activities.

The detained are Zayem Abdullah, 21, his brother Nayeem Abdullah, 22, of Baitul Aman Housing Society in Mohammadpur, Robin Miah, 17, of Kuril in Badda, Sohel Rana, 24, of Gupipara in Badda, Parvez Sikder, 16, of North Badda, Towfiq Ashraf, 33, of Mirpur Section-1, Zahid Hasan, 21, of Nodda in Gulshan, Mahmudul Alam Anik, 18, of Bashundhara Residential Area in Badda, Nurul Amin Emon, 19, of Kalachandpur in Badda, and Tanveer Hossain, 17, of Nodda.

TRIPLE-DISASTER ANNIVERSARY

Challenges ahead of Japan

AGENCIES

A year ago, it was hard to know what to expect. The three disasters that blindsided Japan on March 11, 2011a 9.0 earthquake, a massive tsunami and a triple nuclear meltdown created an unprecedented crisis for which there was no rulebook. After the water receded that Friday afternoon, leaving as many as 20,000 dead and tens of thousands of homes and businesses in ruins, a terrible stillness settled over Japan's northeast coast.

A dusting of snow fell onto empty highways, void of aid vehicles carrying food, fuel, water and blankets. Tsunami warnings were still in effect, keeping search-and-rescue teams away from obliterated seaside neighborhoods. As workers at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant scrambled to get the damaged reactors under control, loud-speakers echoed onto empty streets, instructing people to stay indoors to avoid radiation exposure.

Soon enough, of course, Japan emerged from its state of shock: Self Defense Forces, aid workers and hundreds of thousands of volunteers poured into the region to help. But a year later, the region's physical recovery is not as far along as one might hope. Only 5% of the nearly 23 million tons of debris have disposed of, the looming piles at the edge of the sea a daily reminder of the huge task ahead. Town councils still argue over how and where to rebuild, and inside the closed-off evacuation zone around the crippled plant, policeman still search for victims whose remains were never recovered.

The Red Cross warned Friday that communities in Japan destroyed by the tsunami are years away from being righted.

Rebuilding all that was lost will take time, but other things will take longer. In two towns in Miyagi prefecture, one of the worst-hit areas, 20% of residents report having chronic insomnia, and 5% report having a member of their household who is suicidal or having serious psychiatric



Relatives of the deceased pay tributes to their dear ones in Japan yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

problems. The crushing loss of life, community and faith in the nation's public institutions all fuel a dark mood, and the dwindling spirit of volunteerism is reinforcing the feeling that Japan is fated to slip ever further from the perch of power and vitality it enjoyed in the late 20th century into a rudderless murk in which things are getting worse and may not get better.

Others are optimistic. Most of the countries in the world might not have the courage the destructive force Japan had faced. But the nation doesn't know the way to bow down. After the Second World War, it came surging with surprising force. And it's no wonder that many count on the unique strengths of the Japanese.

Career with ASA

ASA, one of the leading and sustainable Microfinance Institution (MFI) has extensive credit program all over Bangladesh and extending technical service globally. Now, ASA is seeking applications for the following positions from competent, dynamic, experienced and self motivated individuals.

No.	Name of the Position	No. of Posts	Eligibility	Age	Salary
01	Sr. Deputy President	01	Former Secretary of the Govt. of Peoples Republic of Bangladesh.	Maximum 62 yrs.	Negotiable
02	Deputy President (Program)	01	Total 35 years of experience with any reputed Micro Finance Organization including at least 10 years service in top management or Head of Operations.	Maximum 55 yrs.	Tk. 1,00,000-1,20,000 per month
03	Executive Vice President (Operation)	02	Masters in Economics/ Management. Total 30 years of experience with any reputed Micro Finance Organization including at least 10 years service in Director level position.	Maximum 55 yrs.	Tk. 75,000-85,000 per month
04	Director (Legal Affairs)	01	Rtd. DIG of Bangladesh Police	Maximum 62 yrs.	Tk. 60,000-65,000 per month
05	Director (Security)	01	Rtd. Lt. Colonel of Bangladesh Army	Maximum 55 yrs.	Tk. 60,000-65,000 per month
06	Director (Program)	02	Masters in Economics/ Management. Total 20 years of experience with any reputed Micro Finance Organization including at least 05 years service in top management level.	Maximum 50 yrs.	Tk. 60,000-65,000 per month
07	Director (Research & Publications)	01	Masters in English with minimum 10 years of experience in research & publications.	Maximum 45 yrs.	Tk. 45,000-50,000 per month
08	Assistant Director (Public Relations)	01	Masters in English/ Journalism with minimum 05 years of experience in the related field.	Maximum 35 yrs.	Tk. 35,000-40,000 per month

Employment Type: Sl. No. 1 to 5: Contractual basis.

Sl. No. 6 to 8: One year will be probation period and after successful completion of the probationary period the jobs will be under regular salary structure of ASA.

Salary: Sl. No. 1 Negotiable & Sl. No. 2 to 8 will be consolidated salary. If more experienced and suitable personnel is found for position of Sl. No. 2 to 8 then the salary may be negotiated.

Condition: Sl. No. 3 Executive Vice President being one of the top executives of operation department must keep close supervision over field and frequent field visits are required.

Job Location: The working place of all the positions will be in Dhaka Central Office. Sl. No. 6 have extensive field visit at least 15-20 days per month.

Please apply through our e-mail at jobs@asabd.org or send your detailed CV and a cover letter along with two recent passport size colored photographs addressing to the President, ASA, 23/3 Khilji Road, Shyamoli, Mohammadpur, Dhaka-1207 no later than 30/03/2012.

Care for Mother Earth! Build Your Career with Green Jobs !!

NORTH SOUTH UNIVERSITY

Department of Environmental Science & Management (DESM)

Pioneer in Bangladesh in providing environmental education

Environment is a major challenge of the 21st century. More environmental professionals are needed both nationally and internationally to address the ever-increasing pollution and climate change issues of the present world.

Master in Resource and Environmental Management (MREM)

- MREM program is run in partnership with the University of Manitoba, Canada
- Scholarship from CIDA's Building Environmental Governance Capacity (BEGCB) project
- Prospect of Higher studies at reputed universities in Canada or other countries
- Evening/weekend classes, with provision of course exemption for deserving students

CIDA SCHOLARSHIP FOR MREM STUDENTS

Admission Requirement: Four-year Bachelor degree in any discipline. Experience in environmental fields a plus. NSU students and students from environment background may be exempted from admission test. Special arrangement of admission for foreign students

Application Deadline: 05 April 2012 | Admission Test & Viva: 06 April 2012

B Sc in Environmental Science and B Sc in Environmental Management

- Interdisciplinary program, state of the art labs, excursions, environmental club and scope of attending conferences
- A large proportion of DESM graduates study abroad at reputed foreign universities with scholarship

Application Deadline: 21 March | Admission Test: 24 March 2012

DESM Speciality

- Outstanding Faculty profile: PhD from internationally acclaimed universities and with diverse backgrounds as Engineering, Economics and Natural Science. DESM has plan to offer Environmental Engineering course very soon
- Jobs at national & international environmental & development agencies, NGOs, corporate bodies and industries
- Financial support up to 100% of tuition fee or scope to work as Graduate Assistant (GA)/ Teaching Assistant (TA)

Application forms are available at UCBL Bank, Bashundhara Branch, Dhaka with a fee of TK. 800/= or contact office.

Contact Information

DESM, North South University, Bashundhara, Dhaka 1229, Tel: 88 02 8852000, ext. 2201, 2202, 01732604068 (MREM), and ext. 2059, 01817640355 (DESM)

E-mail: mrem@northsouth.edu, sirajul@northsouth.edu, Web: <http://www.desmnsu.org> or www.northsouth.edu/html/mrem.pdf