

US drone strikes could end in Pakistan: Kerry

Secretary of State John Kerry yesterday said that US drone strikes in Pakistan could end "very soon", in unusually outspoken remarks welcomed in Islamabad but immediately downplayed by American aides. It is the first time such a senior member of the US administration has indicated there could be a definitive end to the programme, which the CIA has in the past called an effective counter-terrorism weapon. But the strikes are a major thorn in often fractious ties between Islamabad and Washington, and are officially condemned by Pakistan as a violation of sovereignty and international law. Kerry waded into the row at the tail end of a visit to Islamabad, in which he announced that Washington was reviving strategic dialogue with Pakistan for the first time after a series of crises in 2011. Asked in an interview by state-run PTV whether the strikes could end, Kerry said: "I think the program will end as we have elimi-

nated most of the threat and continue to eliminate it." Pressed on whether a timeline was envisaged, Kerry replied: "Well, I do. And I think the (US) president has a very real timeline and we hope it's going to be very, very soon." Pakistan's top diplomat Sartaj Aziz yesterday demanded a halt to drone strikes that have already decreased. But US officials immediately sought to downplay Kerry's remarks. State Department spokeswoman Jen Psaki said that the number of drone strikes had declined owing to the drawdown of American troops from Afghanistan and because of progress in curtailing the al-Qaeda threat. "Today the secretary referenced the changes that we expect to take place in that programme over the course of time, but there is no exact timeline to provide," she said. Kerry's visit announced the resumption of so-called strategic dialogue between Pakistan and the United States, and he invited the newly elected Sharif to hold talks with US President Barack Obama in the autumn.



US Secretary of State John Kerry, left, meets with Pakistan's Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif in Islamabad yesterday. PHOTO: REUTERS

NEWSIN brief

Australia sends asylum-seekers to PNG
BBC ONLINE
Australia has transferred the first group 40 of asylum-seekers to Papua New Guinea under its new offshore resettlement policy, officials say. Under a deal signed on 19 July, asylum-seekers arriving by boat in Australia will be sent to PNG for processing. The asylum-seekers will have no right to settle in Australia.

Qaeda vows to free Gitmo inmates
THE GUARDIAN ONLINE
The al-Qaida leader Ayman al-Zawahiri has denounced US treatment of hunger-striking inmates at Guantanamo Bay, saying his organisation will spare no effort to free them, according to a recording posted online on Wednesday. He did not elaborate on what al-Qaida intended to do, but militants have in the past kidnapped westerners and sought to trade them for jailed comrades.

Uruguay set to fully legalise Marijuana

Members of Uruguay's House of Representatives have passed a bill to legalise marijuana. If it goes on to be approved by the Senate, Uruguay will become the first country to regulate the production, distribution and sale of marijuana. The measure is backed by the government of President Jose Mujica, who says it will remove profits from drug dealers and divert users from harder drugs. Under the bill, only the government would be allowed to sell marijuana. Buyers would have to be registered on a database and be over the age of 18. They would be able to buy up to 40g per month in specially licensed pharmacies or grow up to six plants at home. Foreigners would be excluded from the measure. The bill was approved by 50 of the 96 MPs in the lower house following a fierce 13-hour debate in the capital, Montevideo.

MANNING SENTENCING Wikileaks 'strained' US-Afghan ties

The Wikileaks disclosures strained US-Afghan relations, a retired US Army general said at the sentencing hearing of Pte First Class Bradley Manning. Brig Gen Robert Carr said documents Pte Manning leaked named hundreds of friendly Afghan villagers, putting their lives at risk. On the first day of the sentencing hearing in a military court in Fort Meade, Maryland, the prosecution sought to demonstrate the extent of damage caused by the 2010 leaks. Gen Carr, an intelligence expert who led a Pentagon task force investigating the damage done by the leaks, testified that protecting the Afghan population was one of the US military's primary missions. The general testified that US relationships with other countries suffered as a result of the leaks. He said some of the exposed diplomatic cables were "very blunt" and made it harder to communicate with other nations. But Gen Carr acknowledged that no-one named in the Afghan war logs was killed. More than 20 witnesses are expected to be called for the sentencing hearing, which could take weeks. On Tuesday, a military judge convicted Pte Manning of 20 out of 22 counts, including espionage and theft of government data. Manning faces up to 136 years in prison after his conviction for espionage and 19 other charges. He had admitted passing hundreds of thousands of documents to Wikileaks.

New Indian foreign secy takes charge

Career diplomat Sujatha Singh yesterday took over as India's third woman Foreign Secretary and said that on top of her agenda is improvement of relations with neighbouring countries. "My immediate priorities would be in our immediate neighbourhood. That is where our immediate interest lies and that is where our most intent interactions are", said Singh, who assumed charge as foreign secretary. She hinted at resuming talks with Pakistan that stalled over clashes earlier this year in the disputed region of Kashmir. She said India would like to have a cooperative relationship with Pakistan in a terror-free environment. "It has always been India's policy to develop peaceful and cooperative relations with Pakistan. Naturally, this pre-supposes an environment free of violence and of terror," 59-year-old Singh, who was earlier India's Ambassador to Germany, said. "Dialogue with Pakistan was resumed in 2011. Two rounds have been held since then and we will be picking up the threads. There is a new government in Pakistan now. We will be picking up the threads from where we left off with the old government," she told reporters here. Pakistan's newly elected PM Newaz Sharif yesterday repeated his call for rapprochement. "We will boost trade, we will boost business and will boost investment with India," the premier told reporters in Karachi. Singh, a 1976 batch Indian Foreign Service officer, succeeds Ranjan Mathai and will have a fixed tenure of two years. As Foreign Secretary, Singh's first official visit would



Sujatha Singh

NOTICE International Crimes Tribunal-1

Old High Court Building, Dhaka, Bangladesh
ICT-BD Case No. 04 of 2013
[Notice under Rule 31 of the Rules of Procedure 2010 requiring the appearance of accused before the Tribunal]

Whereas cognizance of offences as specified in Section 3(2) of the International Crimes (Tribunals) Act 1973 (Act No. XIX of 1973) has been taken under Rule 29(1) of the Rules of Procedure 2010 considering the formal charge submitted by the Chief Prosecutor under Section 9(1) of the said Act of 1973 before this Tribunal against the accused Zahid Hossain Khokon @ M A Zahid Hossain Khokon @ Khokon Matubbar @ Khokon, Son of Late-Abdul Motaleb Mia @ Motaleb Matubbar @ Motaleb Dafader, Village-Nagarkanda, Post Office-Nagarkanda, Police Station- Nagarkanda, Dist-Faridpur and since now this Tribunal has reason to believe that the said accused against whom warrant of arrest have been issued under Rule 22 of the Rules of Procedure by this Tribunal have absconded or concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant;

Notice is hereby made and published under Rule 31 of the Rules of Procedure 2010 of the Tribunal requiring the said accused to appear before this Tribunal within 10 (ten) days from the date of publication of this notice. In default, he shall be tried in absentia under Section 10A of the International Crimes (Tribunals) Act 1973.

Given under my hand and the seal of the Tribunal-1 as directed, this the 31st day of July of 2013.

By Order of the Tribunal-1
Deputy Registrar-1
International Crimes Tribunal
Old High Court Building, Dhaka
GD-2898

Modi set to be BJP's PM candidate: Reports

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is set to announce Narendra Modi as its prime ministerial candidate for the upcoming 2014 general elections, according to a NDTV report. The formal announcement of Modi's anointment will be made by September before the crucial assembly polls to be held in five states. According to sources, a crucial RSS-BJP meeting on August 1 will finalise the future course. The party president Rajnath Singh may anoint Narendra Modi as BJP's PM candidate after meeting with top RSS leaders. The BJP for long had attempted to divert attention from the issue of PM candidature, and said that it has been working to root out misgovernance and corruption from the country. According to a report, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) has also conveyed its support for naming Modi as the prime ministerial candidate and has tried to bring BJP veteran Lal Krishna Advani on board to back the proposal.



N. TNN, Ahmedabad

Modi eyes Obama in battle for cyber world

Gujarat chief minister Narendra Modi seems out to prove he is more popular than US President Barack Obama -- at least on social networking sites. Having faced a defeat at the hand of the US president in November 2011 when Modi lost following a last-minute spurt in negative votes in the fifth annual Mashable awards in the category of 'Must-Follow Politician On Social Media', the Gujarat CM now wants to get back. By January, Modi's cyber-army is scripting an architecture that would ensure that his likes on Facebook and followers on Twitter cross Obama's score -- 3.64 crore 'likes' on Facebook and 3.45 crore followers on Twitter. A fortnight ago, the close-knit IT cell of the BJP had sent special online forms to all Modi fan pages on Facebook asking them to 'merge' into the main parent fan page. This would mean all the 'likes' on various individual pages run by Modi fans would get converted into 'likes' on the Gujarat CM's FB page. The BJP team had held meetings with administrators of various Facebook fan pages in Delhi recently and have sought their approval -- a move to ensure that the 'likes' increase on Modi's fan page.

Gorkhaland's call for statehood intensifies

Going back on its call for an indefinite shut down in Darjeeling in view of the Eid festival, the Gorkha Janmukti Morcha yesterday announced a four-day bandh from Saturday to demand a separate Gorkhaland. "In view of Eid, we are making some relaxation and calling a 96-hour bandh in the hills from Saturday to demand a separate Gorkhaland state," GJM general secretary and spokesman Roshan Giri told reporters here. He said that a GJM delegation would visit Delhi Friday to press for separate Gorkhaland. The agitation in the hills has been sparked after Congress and its allies unanimously decided to create Telangana state out of Andhra Pradesh. On the next course of action, Giri said it would be announced by party president Bimal Gurung, who would address a rally on August 11. To another query, he said that GTA members and GJM MLAs would resign when instructed by the party chief. Gurung has resigned as CEO of the Gorkha Territorial Administration, the hill council that runs the administration in the hills. Meanwhile, Darjeeling Superintendent of Police Kunal Agarwal said steps were being taken so that those willing to work, could do so in Darjeeling.

High Commission of India Dhaka

Fully sponsored short-term advanced training courses for Bangladesh nationals

Under its flagship Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) Programme, Government of India offers fully sponsored short-duration (3 months -1 year) specialized training courses for Bangladeshi professionals working in Government and private institutes in India. All expenses including travel, board and lodging of the selected candidates will be borne by the Government of India. Money for out of pocket expenses is also provided.

Eligibility
Eligible applicants are invited to forward their applications to the High Commission of India, Dhaka along with a letter of recommendation from their parent organization.

How to apply
Applicants working in the Government are required to route their applications through the Economic Relations Division (ERD), Ministry of Finance or the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Government of Bangladesh.

Applicants who are not in the Government may send their applications directly to the High Commission of India, Dhaka.

Details of all courses on offer for the year 2013-2014 and application forms can be downloaded from the ITEC website www.itec.mea.nic.in or from the website of the High Commission of India www.hcidhaka.org. For further enquiries, please contact the High Commission of India at 9890226, extension 111 or e-mail to commerce@hcidhaka.org.

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations Vacancy Announcement

Issued on: 2 August 2013
Deadline for Application: 18 August 2013
The FAO Representation in Bangladesh is inviting applications from qualified candidates to the following vacant position for its project "Strengthening the Environment, Forestry and Climate Change Capacities of the Ministry of Environment and Forests and its Agencies (GCP/BGD/053/USA)" to be filled as soon as possible:

- Senior Project Advisor cum National Team Leader (UN Salary scale and benefits for similar position apply).

Interested qualified candidates will find the post descriptions, the link to the Personal Profile Form (PPF) and the information on how to apply in the following web link: <http://www.fao.org/asiapacific/bangladesh>. All applicants must submit their PPF to: FAOBD-Vacancies@fao.org by close of business on 18 August 2013.

INVITATION TO BID (ITB)

ITB-BGD-2013-003
Oracle Software

UNDP Bangladesh seeks quotations from interested Companies for procurement of Oracle Software. All interested companies may download the Bidding documents (ITB) from http://www.undp.org.bd/proc_more.php through a formal registration process that will register bidders into participants list, so any correspondence, questions regarding the bidding documents and respective answers can be sent to all bidders.

Submission of Proposal: The envelope should state the tender subject mentioned above and should be submitted to the UNDP -Registry, IDB Bhaban (12th Floor), Begum Rokeya Sharani, Agargaon, Dhaka-1207.

The deadline for submission of proposal is August 21, 2013, 01.00 p.m. Bangladesh Time.

