

## Sanctions on Iran 'a real possibility'

Warns Bush, Senate condemns Tehran for nuke plan

AFP, Washington/Davos

US President George W. Bush said Friday that sanctions against Iran were "certainly a real possibility" if Tehran does not do enough to ease fears that it is trying to develop nuclear weapons.

"A free world cannot allow Iran to have a nuclear weapon; not just the United States, but those of us who value freedom," Bush told CBS television in an interview.

"And that is why our strategy is to present and hold together a united front, to say to the Iranians: Your designs to have a nuclear weapon or your desire to have the capability of making a nuclear weapon is unacceptable."

Asked whether sanctions would work against Iran, Bush replied: "I have said that is certainly a real possibility."

Asked whether he had reviewed plans for possible military action, Bush said: "I think it's best I just leave it that all options should be on the table, and the last option is the military option."

"We've got to work hard to exhaust all diplomacy. And that's what the country is seeing happen," said the president.

Washington accuses Iran of using its civilian nuclear programme to hide a quest for atomic weapons. Tehran denies the charge.

Bush has endorsed diplomatic efforts led by Britain, France and Germany to resolve the impasse, as well as thrown his weight behind a Russian compromise to keep some sensitive nuclear activities on its own soil.

Meanwhile, the US Senate voted unanimously Friday to condemn Iran's nuclear programme and to support referring Iran to the UN Security Council for allegedly violating nuclear nonproliferation obligations.

The resolution, adopted without debate, condemned "the many failures of the government of Iran to comply faithfully with its nuclear nonproliferation obligations" and its commitments to suspend uranium enrichment and reprocessing.

The Senate also urged the International Atomic Energy

Agency, which meets February 2, "to order that Iran's noncompliance with its safeguards obligations be reported to the United Nations Security Council."

The senators further called on UN Security Council members, particularly Russia and China, to quickly "consider any report of Iran's noncompliance in fulfilment of the mandate of the Security Council to respond to and deal with situations bearing on the maintenance of international peace and security."

Russia and China have expressed reservations about having the Security Council take action on Iran, appearing hesitant to have the council become locked into any path that could force sanctions to be applied on Tehran.

The White House on Friday accused Iran of playing "games" with the international community by not accepting a Russian compromise aimed at allaying US concerns that Tehran seeks nuclear weapons.

## SAUDI KING WRAPS UP TRIP

### India, KSA to fight terror together

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

King Abdullah on Friday wrapped up the first visit by a Saudi Arabian monarch to India in half a century as the two countries agreed to actively cooperate to fight terrorism and develop a strategic partnership in energy sector.

In an unprecedented gesture, the king himself signed along with Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh the landmark "Delhi Declaration" which noted that terrorism is a scourge for the entire mankind and the two countries agreed to "closely and actively cooperate to fight the menace."

They also agreed to cooperate in dealing with other transnational crimes like money laundering, drugs and arms smuggling in a "sustained and comprehensive manner" and this would include intelligence-sharing, the declaration stated.

India and Saudi Arabia also committed themselves to making efforts for a Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism, which will be placed before the United Nations General Assembly and jointly work for

setting up of an International Counter Terrorism Centre. The joint Declaration also committed Saudi Arabia, which supplies 14 percent of India's crude oil to energy, to increase shipments of oil to meet growing Indian economy, the fastest growing in Asia after China, through long-term contracts.

"This is the first time I'm going to sign an agreement with any country," King Abdullah told the media just before signing the declaration with the Indian prime minister at Hyderabad House here.

This was also the first time that India and Saudi Arabia signed a joint declaration. "I don't know how many countries will be jealous of you (India)," Indian prime minister's media advisor Sanjay Baru quoted King Abdullah as saying.

When pointed out that other countries might seek such joint declarations with Saudi Arabia, the monarch reportedly said "other countries are not India."

Reflecting the close bond between India and Saudi Arabia, Manmohan Singh, in a special gesture to the monarch, received and saw him off at the airport.



Supporters of the mainstream Palestinian Fatah movement bring down Hamas flags in Gaza City yesterday. Tensions mounted yesterday between Fatah and Hamas following a night of protests and armed clashes in the wake of the radical Islamist faction's landslide election victory.

## Fatah-Hamas tension mounts after clashes

AFP, Gaza City

Tensions mounted yesterday between the mainstream Fatah movement and Hamas following a night of protests and armed clashes in the wake of the radical Islamist faction's landslide election victory.

The turmoil, which risks intensifying with further demonstrations planned for Saturday, came as the United States threatened to slash aid unless radical Hamas renounces violence.

Thousands of supporters of Fatah, humiliated by a crushing defeat that has ended their decade-long dominance on power, demonstrated for the party leadership, including Palestinian Authority president Mahmud Abbas, to resign.

Burnt debris still littered the streets around the parliament building in Gaza City on Saturday after one such protest, the fragments of torched tyres lying in the road.

Another rally was scheduled in Gaza City on Saturday to refuse any participation in the new administration, albeit as Hamas officials have vowed to appeal for Fatah members to join them in a national unity government.

Dozens of Fatah supporters closed off streets in the central Gaza Strip town of Deir al-Balah Saturday morning, burning tyres and calling for the resignation of the party's central committee, eyewitnesses said.

The Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, a splintered radical Fatah offshoot that has been responsible for dozens of deadly attacks, was to stage a separate rally in the troubled northern West Bank city of Nablus.

Around 200 masked gunmen from the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades marched through the West Bank town of Bethlehem, the birthplace of Jesus Christ, to protest against the Fatah party leadership over the election defeat.

Palestinian security forces are

heavily infiltrated by Fatah elements, provoking fears that spiralling chaos in the territories can only disintegrate amid deteriorating relations between Fatah and Hamas militants.

Nine people, five of them security officers, were wounded in shootouts between Fatah and Hamas gunmen in the volatile southern Gaza Strip on Friday, the day after the official election results were published.

Hamas, which calls for the destruction of Israel and has waged scores of suicide attacks, is to be tasked with forming a government, throwing hopes of Middle East peace into turmoil and triggering widespread alarm in the West.

In the West Bank, a senior member of Fatah, Sakher Bssiso, told AFP that the revolutionary council had decided to implement an earlier decision to sack dozens of party members who ran as independents in Wednesday's election.

## Tigers accuse Lankan military of bad faith after deal for talks

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lanka's Tamil Tiger rebels yesterday accused government forces of harassing civilians despite this week's breakthrough in their stalled peace process.

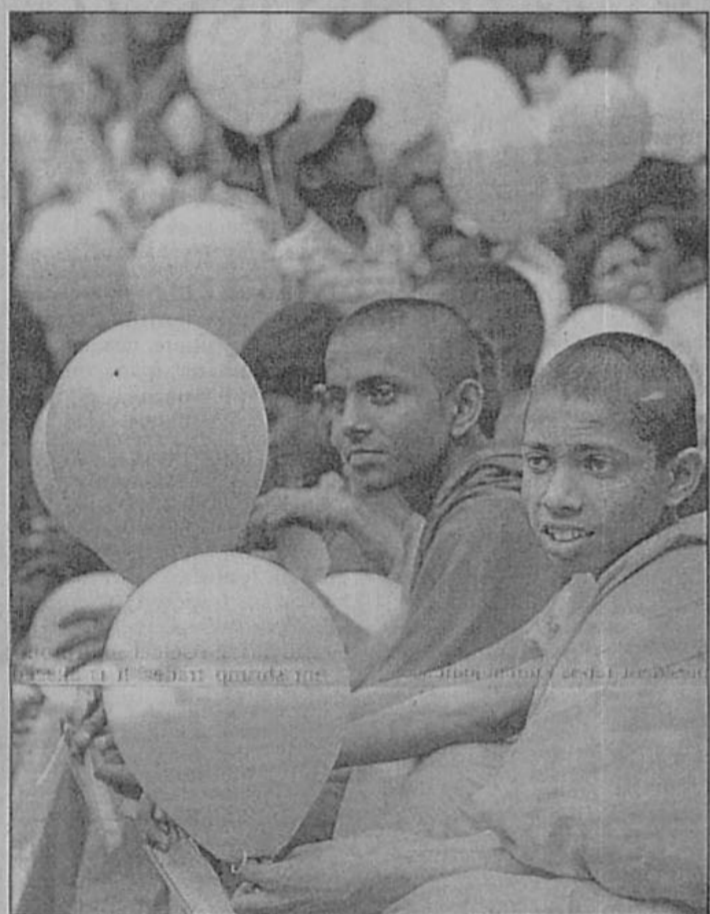
The rebel Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) said government troops had conducted a cordon-and-search operation in the northern Jaffna peninsula on Friday, despite Wednesday's agreement to hold face-to-face talks next month.

The charge was made as the LTTE's London-based chief negotiator Anton Balasingham returned home Saturday after five days on consultations with Tiger chief Velupillai Prabhakaran in rebel-held areas of the island's north.

Prabhakaran and Balasingham told Norway's special peace envoy Erik Solheim Wednesday they were ready to end the near three-year deadlock in the peace process by agreeing to meet with government officials in Geneva next month.

The talks are aimed at cementing a shaky ceasefire put in place in 2002.

The government had expressed "major relief" over this week's deal for a face-to-face meeting to stem a wave of killings that has left at least 153 people dead since December.



Sri Lankan Buddhist monks hold balloons as they take part in a demonstration in Colombo yesterday to show their support to peace talks between the government and Tamil Tiger rebels. The two sides are expected to end a three-year deadlock in peace talks and enter face-to-face negotiations in Geneva next month.

## Nepal govt gathers polls candidates in 'safe houses'

REUTERS, Kathmandu

Nepal's royalist government has gathered dozens of candidates for next month's municipal polls -- into "safe houses" to protect them from Maoist rebels.

"This is a precautionary measure keeping in view the security threats to candidates from the Maoists," a government official said from Sarlahi district, a rebel stronghold in the east.

In several areas regarded as highly dangerous, candidates for the Feb. 8 polls for 58 municipal councils, which the rebels have vowed to fight, were taken to heavily guarded public buildings near army or police posts after filing their nominations.

"We have provided separate security guards to those who are unwilling to stay in groups," another official said.

The rebels, fighting to topple the world's only Hindu monarchy and impose a communist state, have threatened candidates and called a week-long strike from Feb. 5 to disrupt the polls the first of any

kind since national elections in 1999.

"Candidates in security camps," read a front page headline in the Kathmandu Post daily.

In places, weeping relatives pleaded with candidates not to go ahead with their nomination, local newspapers said.

In Gulerja in west Nepal, Maoists kidnapped a politician who had planned to contest the elections. On Sunday, suspected rebels killed another politician who had declared his intention to stand in the southeasterly town of Janakpur.

And at least 11 rebels and two soldiers were killed overnight when Maoists stormed an army base in Bhojpur, 400 km east of Kathmandu, the army said.

Nepal's main political parties protesting against King Gyanendra, who seized power last year, are boycotting the polls, saying they are aimed at legitimising his regime.

The European Union has urged the government to consult the parties or risk further polarisation.

## India backs Russian efforts on Iran crisis

REUTERS, New Delhi

India said on Friday it backed Russia's proposal to resolve Iran's standoff with Western governments, which suspect Tehran of secretly planning to build a nuclear bomb.

Russia has suggested that Tehran's uranium fuel be enriched on Russian soil rather than in Iran, a proposal backed by China, which also wants other countries to consider the plan.

"India welcomes all initiatives, including from Russia, which could enable a consensus to be reached on this issue and urges further intensive efforts in that direction," its foreign ministry spokesman said in a statement.

India is in a tight spot over the Feb. 2 meeting at the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) on the issue after it surprised Tehran

in September by siding with the West when the nuclear watchdog declared Iran had failed to comply with its international obligations.

That stand triggered a domestic furore with coalition allies as well as opposition groups accusing India of selling out to the United States.

The United States and its European Union allies say the IAEA should send Iran's file to the United Nations Security Council.

India's woes were further compounded this week after the US ambassador to New Delhi, David Mulford, linked India's vote to clinching landmark civilian nuclear energy cooperation deal between New Delhi and Washington.

Although Mulford expressed regret over his comments following protests by New Delhi, India's role at the IAEA meeting is being keenly watched.

## Attack on gas field, rail track in Pakistan

AFP, Quetta

Suspected tribal rebels yesterday fired rockets at a major gas field, blasted a main power line and tried to blow up a rail track in the restive southwestern Pakistani province of Baluchistan, officials said.

Rockets fired by suspected insurgents damaged the water pumping station at the Pirkoh gas field, located some 370km south-east of Quetta, local administration chief Abdul Samad Lasi told AFP.

Pakistani forces shot dead 12 suspected tribal militants near the same gas field earlier this month after a roadside bomb blast killed three soldiers.

Tribesmen also bombed and damaged two main water supply lines which feed the gas field, Lasi said.

Meanwhile, Quetta police Saturday defused a three-kilo (6.6-pound) bomb planted at a main

railway track just an hour before two passenger trains were due to pass, police official Khalid Garamkani told AFP.

"We have averted a major disaster and the early detection of a bomb planted on the track has saved the lives of passengers," Garamkani said.

Elsewhere, power was cut off to thousands of people when suspected rebels bombed a main electricity pylon near the town of Rakhni, some 400 kilometres south-east of Quetta, power company spokesman Gebraill Khan told AFP.

Nobody immediately claimed responsibility for the various attacks, but tribesmen demanding a bigger share of sparsely-populated Baluchistan's natural resources are waging an insurgency in the province.

They are demanding autonomy and oppose the setting-up of military garrisons.

**Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh**  
Kurmitola, Dhaka-1229

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Sealed tenders are hereby invited for the undermentioned works as per following terms & conditions:

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02.	Source of funds	CAAB own fund				
03.	Tender package no.	No. 29/CAAB/EM-I (O&M)/2005-2006				
04.	Invitation for tenders ref. & date	No. CAAB/EM-I/Accts-2/ dated -01-2006				
05.	Procurement method	Open tender				
06.	Eligibility of tenderers	CAAB enlisted "C" Class & above E/M contractors/govt/semi-govt/autonomous body's similar nature of contractors having "C" Class electrical contractor & supervisory licence & having experience of E/M works.				
07.	Name & address of the office(s) selling tender document	Tender papers will be available from the Office of the Superintendent Engineer, E/M Circle, Director CEMSU, Executive Engineer, E/M Division-I, CAAB, PA to Member (Ops & Plans), PA to Chief Engineer & PA to Director, ZIA, CAAB during the office hours. Up-to-date enlistment renewal fee receipt (for CAAB enlisted contractor, VAT registration certificate, income tax, TIN & experience certificates in original must have to be shown at the time of purchasing the tender document.				
08.	Name & address of the office receiving tender	Office of Executive Engineer, E/M Division-I, CAAB, Kurmitola, Dhaka.				
09.	Name & address of the office opening tenders	Office of Executive Engineer, E/M Division-I, CAAB, Kurmitola, Dhaka.				
10.	Last date & time for selling tender document	In all working days up to 1700 hours on 13-02-2006.				
11.	Last date & time for submission of tender	Up to 1200 hours on 14-02-2006.				
12.	Date & time for opening of tender	At 1230 hours, 14-02-2006. The tenderers & their authorized representatives are allowed to attend.				
13.	Brief description of goods & services (Works & Services)					
	Lot No	Identification of works	Location	Price of tender document in Taka	Tender security amount in Taka	Time for completion in weeks/months/days
	1.	Providing & fitting/fixing of Energy Saving Lamp, Dimmer Switch, light fittings in the different room of VVIP Terminal Building	VVIP Terminal Building	Tk. 250/- (two hundred fifty) only (non-refundable)	Tk. 5,900/- (Taka five thousand nine hundred) only	7 (seven) days
	2.	Painting of Lighting Circuit Bay of Passenger Terminal Building	Passenger Terminal Bldg	Tk. 250/- (two hundred fifty) only (non-refundable)	Tk. 4,300/- (Taka four thousand three hundred) only	7 (seven) days
14.	Special condition	The procuring entity reserves the right to accept any tender or part thereof or reject all the tenders without assigning any reason whatsoever.				

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Sk. Golam Quddus  
Executive Engineer  
E/M Division-I, CAAB, Dhaka

## Indo-US nuke pact may not be ready during Bush trip

AFP, Washington

The United States indicated Friday that a controversial civilian nuclear agreement with India might not be ready by the time US President George W. Bush makes his first visit to New Delhi in March.

"It's very hard to say," Nicholas Burns, the chief US negotiator of the deal, told reporters in Washington, when asked how far along would the landmark bilateral pact be when Bush made the trip.

But he said that a complex plan requiring India to separate civilian and military nuclear programmes, a key component of the agreement, "might happen before the president's visit."

Bush and Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh agreed on the

basic outline of the civil nuclear cooperation initiative in Washington in July last year and the two countries had hoped to seal an agreement before the president's visit.

"That remains our plan. And I've been in touch with the Indian government this week. I expect to be in touch with them in the coming days, and we hope to reach that goal," Burns said.

"If we can reach it, then, of course, that will be part of what the president discusses in Delhi. If we cannot, I assume then we'll keep on working, as diplomats do, to resolve the problem," he added.

The United States came under fire this week after its envoy in New Delhi warned that the nuclear deal could be scuppered if India voted against Western wishes to refer

Iran's nuclear programme to the UN Security Council.

The Indian foreign ministry summoned US ambassador David Mulford and told him that the comments were "inappropriate and not conducive" to US-India relations, India's foreign ministry said on Thursday.

India has said its decision on how to vote on the Iran nuclear issue within the IAEA would be based on its "own independent judgement."

Mulford later said his remarks were "taken out of context" and expressed "sincere regrets."

The bilateral deal would give India access to civilian nuclear technology it has long been denied for conducting nuclear tests and refusing to sign on to the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

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