

Hamas edges toward recognising Israel

AP, Jerusalem

Hamas edged toward recognition of Israel, a key international demand, in an agreement worked out by Hamas and Fatah leaders in an Israeli prison, mentioning a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza while refusing to renounce violence.

Israel refused to comment on the document on Thursday, and the Hamas leadership in Damascus were also silent but there was little reason to believe either would welcome it.

Hamas leaders in Gaza and the West Bank have hinted they might abandon the group's call for the destruction of Israel, but Khaled Mashaal, the Syria-based leader of Hamas, has rejected any suggestion of moderation.

Also, the document included key Palestinian demands Israel has

always rejected return of millions of refugees to their original homes in Israel and complete Israeli evacuation of the West Bank, Gaza Strip and east Jerusalem.

Since Hamas won Jan. 25 parliamentary elections, the Palestinian government has grown increasingly isolated. Western nations, which list Hamas as a terror group, cut off all funding to the Palestinian Authority, and the Israeli government froze its monthly transfer of \$55 million it collects in taxes for the Palestinians.

The economic boycott has left the Palestinian government unable to pay its 165,000 workers, causing a deepening financial crisis throughout the West Bank and Gaza.

The draft agreement was negotiated over the past month by militants held in Hadarim Prison next to the seaside Israeli city of Netanya, including Marwan Barghouti, a leader of Abbas' Fatah Party, and

Abdel Khaled Natche, the top Hamas militant held by Israel.

The proposal calls for the establishment of a Palestinian state "in all the lands occupied in 1967," a reference to the West Bank, Gaza Strip and east Jerusalem. The document does not include explicit recognition of Israel, but even the implied recognition would mark a major breakthrough for Hamas.

Mushir al-Masri, a Gaza-based Hamas spokesman, praised the prisoners' effort but refused to commit to the agreement.

"It could be a good base for a national platform and a national dialogue, but it still needs more discussion," he said Thursday.

Abbas said he backs the draft, which also authorises him to lead

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Rains swamp city areas

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The capital and different parts of the country yesterday experienced downpour that disrupted normal life, economic activities and road communications in many areas.

A number of areas in the capital went under ankle-to-knee deep water resulting in sufferings to people. Traffic movement was greatly affected due to submersion of many roads.

Rainwater inundated Bangladesh Secretariat compound, the VIP Road in front of the Prime Minister's Office and many other major roads including Manik Mia Avenue, Bijoy Sarani, Dar-us-Salam Road, Airport Road, Mirpur Road, Outer Circular Road and Bijoynagar road.

Due to heavy rain, a Dhaka-Kolkata flight was delayed for around two hours while a flight from Kolkata landed at Zia International Airport (ZIA) four hours behind schedule. Domestic flights however operated as scheduled, ZIA sources said.

The downpour also hampered normal functioning of Dhaka Medical College morgue with its floor going under ankle-deep water. Autopsies of only two

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Indigenous Moorangs slaughter a cow as part of a traditional rite at Memloon Para under Ali Kadam upazila in Bandarban yesterday. The cow represents a mythical ancestor, which the tribe believes 'ate up' its alphabet, keeping the people illiterate to this day.



Yunus nominated for World Information Society Award

BDNEWS, Dhaka

Prof Muhammad Yunus, managing director of Grameen Bank, has been nominated for the World Information Society Award 2006 by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU).

The ITU also nominated

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Price hike, law and order slide create instability: Hasina

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina yesterday said price hike of essentials, dwindling investment, retrenchment of workers, militancy and deteriorating law and order under the present government have created a state of uncertainty and instability in the country.

"The people want to get rid of such a miserable situation. But the alliance government has resorted to election engineering as part of its plot to undo people's right to bring a change of power through proper exercise of franchise. This has to be resisted," said Hasina, also president of the Awami League (AL).

The AL chief was addressing the inaugural session of a two-day 13th

Annual District Convention 2006 of the Lions Club International District 315 B2, Bangladesh, at Sonargaon Hotel in the capital.

"To make democracy more functional, the people must have the democratic right to change a government through votes," said the opposition leader, who is also a member of the Lions Club.

The former prime minister said many of the goals of Liberation War are yet to be achieved even 35 years after independence. A huge number of people are still illiterate and are living in extreme poverty. During the previous AL rule, they had taken various measures to improve the lot of the masses. She

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AL-BNP clash leaves 40 hurt in Comilla

UNB, Comilla

At least 40 people were injured in a clash between Awami League (AL) and BNP activists at Choumohani in Muradnagar upazila yesterday.

Police said the trouble began at around 2:00pm as AL leader Yusuf Abdullah Harun along with his supporters started a mass contact programme at Panchpukuria of the upazila.

Outraged by this, police said, local BNP men swooped on the AL men, triggering a fierce fight. Twenty-one minibuses used for the mass contact were also damaged.

Fifteen of the injured were admitted to Muradnagar health complex where condition of an AL activist was stated to be critical.

US must talk directly to Iran: Annan

Ahmadinejad blasts American 'propaganda war'

AFP, Vienna/Jakarta

The United States must talk directly to Iran about its disputed nuclear programme because Tehran will not negotiate seriously if Washington is not involved, UN Secretary General Kofi Annan said yesterday.

"As long as the Iranians have a

sense that they are negotiating with the Europeans ad referendum (needing referral for a final decision), and what they discuss with them will have to be discussed with the Americans, and then come back again to them, I am not sure they will put everything on the table," Annan told reporters in Vienna.

European Union efforts since 2003 to win guarantees that Iran is not making nuclear weapons have foundered, with Iran pushing ahead since April on enriching uranium for what can be nuclear

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Dhaka-Sylhet long march today

BDNEWS, Dhaka

Jatiya Oikya Mancha, Bikalpa Dhara Bangladesh (BDB) and Bangladesh Tarikat Federation will launch a Dhaka-Sylhet long march today in protest against grenade attack at the shrine of Hazrat Shahjalal, price hike of essentials, and power, water, fertiliser and diesel crises.

The long march will begin at 8:00am from the city's Muktagong

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Kushtia journalists demand withdrawal of case by BNP MP

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Kushtia journalists yesterday demanded immediate withdrawal of the cases filed against three journalists by ruling BNP lawmaker Shahidul Islam and another leader of the same party.

In a meeting at Kushtia Reporters Unity office to protest the 'false cases filed to harass the journalists', they announced programmes including human chain on the Kushtia Public Library premises and submitting memorandum to the deputy commissioner and superintendent of police on Sunday.

Journalists of local and national dailies and electronic media addressed the meeting chaired by Amanur Aman, acting president of the unity.

In the case filed by ruling party lawmaker Shahidul Islam of Kushtia-2 (Mirpur-Bheramara) constituency on Tuesday, the lawmaker alleged that the journalists

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PHOTO: STAR

Noted artist Ferdousi Mojumder receives Meril-Prothom Alo Lifetime Achievement Award from Prof Zillur Rahman Siddiqui at the Bangladesh-China Friendship International Conference Centre in the capital yesterday.

Mortar shell found at shrimp bed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Police recovered an 18-inch-long unexploded mortar shell yesterday from a shrimp enclosure at Beel Dakatia under Dumuria upazila of Khulna district.

The live mortar shell is exclusively meant for the army, police said.

Vigorous investigation is going

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4 US Marines killed in Iraqi accident

AP, Baghdad

Four Marines drowned when their tank rolled off a bridge and plunged into a canal, the military said yesterday, adding that while the accident occurred in a Sunni insurgent stronghold, it was not the result of an enemy action.

The deaths brought to at least 12 the number of US service members who have died in Iraq this week, according to an Associated Press count.

The accident occurred Thursday when the four Marines with Regimental Combat Team 5 were travelling in a US M1A1 Main Battle Tank near Karmah, 85km west of Baghdad in Anbar province. US-led coalition forces have seen heavy fighting in the area, known as the Sunni Triangle because it is rife with

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Father, son stabbed to death in Pabna

A CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Miscrants stabbed a father and his son to death at a village under Bera upazila of Pabna on Thursday night.

The dead are Moazzem Uddin, 65, and his son Yeakub Ali, 24, of Brishalika village.

Police and locals said a gang of 15 stormed into the house of Moazzem at about 11:00pm and tried to kidnap his son Yeakub. As Moazzem came forward to resist the kidnap bid, the gang stabbed him and his son. Both died on the spot.

On information, police went to the village yesterday morning, recovered the bodies and sent them to Pabna General Hospital morgue for autopsy.

No one was arrested in connection with the killing as of 6:30pm yesterday.

Prayer Timing		
May 13		
Azan	Jamaat	
Fair	4-10	4-45
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-36	6-40
Esha	8-00	8-30

Source: Islamic Foundation