



PHOTO: AFP

Palestinian President Mahmud Abbas (glasses) and Prime Minister Ismail Haniya inspect the destroyed Gaza City office of Haniya yesterday, which was struck by Israeli planes during a new wave of night-time air raids.

Israel asks army to use 'all its might'

Hamas seeks int'l action

AFP, Jerusalem

Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert said Sunday he had ordered the military to use "all its power" against Palestinian "terrorists" in order to secure the release of a captured teenage soldier.

"I ordered the army and security forces to act with all their might to pursue terrorists, their ideologists and those who offer them protection," he said at the start of the weekly Israeli cabinet meeting.

Israel struck at the heart of the Palestinian government on Sunday, hitting the Gaza office of the Hamas prime minister in a new wave of air

raids, ratcheting up the pressure to rescue the abducted Israeli soldier.

Palestinian Prime Minister Ismail Haniya urged the international community to end Israel's offensive in the Gaza Strip as he visited the site of an air strike that hit his office yesterday.

"It's an attack against a Palestinian symbol. We ask the international community and the Arab League to take its responsibilities towards our people and intervene to bring an end to this aggression," he said.

He described the massive operation launched by Israel in the Gaza

Strip to free one of its soldiers captured a week ago by Palestinian militants as "an insane policy".

An Israeli air raid struck the premier's office early Sunday, causing a fire but no casualties, witnesses and security sources said.

In an almost simultaneous air strike in the northern Gaza Strip town of Jabaliya, a Hamas militant was killed and another wounded, medical sources said.

The armed wing of Haniya's governing Hamas movement was one of the three groups that claimed responsibility for the abduction of 19-year-old Gilad Shalit on June 25.

Tough to beat Musharraf in polls: Imran Khan

PTI, London

Pakistan's cricketer-turned politician Imran Khan has said that it was not easy to win against Pervez Musharraf in the general election scheduled for 2007.

He reasoned that it would be "run by the security services", but vowed to launch a "street movement" against the military ruler.

"Well, it is not easy to win against a military dictator in an election that is being run by the security services," Imran Khan said in an interview published in a local daily on Sunday.

Khan said that over the past 10 years he had been invited by Nawaz Sharif to be the Prime Minister under Musharraf and to be Deputy Prime Minister.

He claimed to have refused on both occasions because he did not

want to be tainted by corruption.

Asked about how he aimed to change things at the 2007 polls, he said, "my contention now is that there is no way anyone should fight an election while Musharraf is in charge."

"Therefore, I will be out on the streets from September against him. It is the only way. I am preparing my party for a street movement. What we are hoping is that the other parties will come out too."

Noting that Imran Khan was more than just Pakistan's former cricket captain, the Observer newspaper described him as a warrior, an ambassador and a playboy of the Western world.

But after retirement and divorce from one of Britain's most glamorous heiresses, he has dedicated his life to saving his country from political corruption.

Iran rejects deadline for nuclear response

AFP, Tehran

Iran again rejected yesterday a deadline to respond to an international offer aimed at resolving a nuclear standoff, saying it would answer during the next Iranian month, which begins July 23.

"A deadline is not an issue. We think such statements are not constructive and they will not help resolving the problem. We will respond next month," foreign ministry spokesman Hamid Reza Asefi told reporters.

World powers on Thursday gave Iran one more week to provide a "clear and substantive response" to an international proposal over the crisis.

The five permanent UN Security Council members -- Britain, China,

France, Russia and the United States -- plus Germany have offered Iran a package of incentives that includes multilateral talks if it agrees to temporarily halt uranium enrichment.

That work is at the centre of fears the hardline regime could acquire nuclear weapons, although Tehran insists the project aims only to provide fuel for nuclear energy.

Rejecting allegations that Iran was seeking to buy time, Asefi said: "it is not a question of tactics and wasting time. It is a multi-dimensional package and takes time to examine".

"There are ambiguities (in the package) which need to be discussed with the Europeans".

He said several committees were studying the offer and that Iran

would deliver its response "some-time" after July 23.

"We will submit a logical response considering our country's rights and interests," he said, referring to the demands for a freeze in enrichment, a process, which provides fuel for nuclear plants but can also form the core of an atomic bomb.

"Alleviating the West's concerns should not be interpreted as sacrificing our interests," Asefi added.

Iran's top nuclear negotiator Ali Larijani and the EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana are to meet Wednesday on the international package.

"The two sides will talk about their views on removing ambiguities and reaching a result," Asefi said.

Guantanamo decision puts limits on Bush's executive power

AFP, Washington

By saying no to military tribunals at Guantanamo, the Supreme Court has clipped US President George W. Bush's wings after he sought to assert his authority in the name of security following the attacks of September 11, 2001.

The court's ruling Thursday "marked the end of the national security 'state of emergency' that has prevailed for nearly five years," commentator David Ignatius wrote in the Washington Post.

"We can now see that after Sept. 11 there was a grab for unlimited executive power, led by Vice President (Dick) Cheney and his lawyer, David Addington," Ignatius said.

"They intimidated or ignored critics within the White House and created a secret system unchecked

by the other two branches of government."

The landmark 5-3 decision held the administration violated the Geneva Conventions and the US military code of justice by setting up military tribunals, or commissions, to try detainees held at a US naval base in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

The ruling "showed that even the president must yield to the rule of law," said Jonathan Turley, a law professor at George Washington University.

The Guantanamo case "has more to do with the president's attempt to redefine the presidency than it does to military commissions themselves," Turley said.

But Bush's supporters in the Republican party dismissed suggestions that Bush had suffered a major defeat.



PHOTO: AFP

A combo picture shows from (L to R) Saddam Hussein's former deputy Izzat Ibrahim al-Duri, a painting of Saddam's first wife Sajida and Saddam's eldest daughter Raghda. Sajida and Raghda Saddam Hussein, both living in exile, figured yesterday on a new list of 41 most wanted fugitives unveiled by Iraq's national security advisor.

Saddam's wife, daughter on most wanted list

REUTERS, Baghdad

Iraq yesterday named Saddam Hussein's eldest daughter and his first wife on a list of 41 "most wanted" in connection with terrorism.

Saddam's daughter, Raghda, has taken a leading role in organising her father's legal defence for crimes against humanity. She is believed to spend much of her time in neighbouring Jordan.

Her mother Sajida is also on the list topped by former Saddam deputy Izzat Ibrahim al-Douri and including the new head of al-Qaeda in Iraq, Abu Ayyub al-Masri.

"These people you see here carry out the majority of what you see in bombings," National Security Adviser Mowaffaq al-Rubaie told a televised news conference in Baghdad.

Rubaie announced the list one day after a car bomb killed more than 60 people in a crowded market in a Shia district in eastern Baghdad in the bloodiest attack in three months.

Rubaie urged countries "harbouring these people to hand them over to the Iraqi people for a fair trial."

The list included senior members from Saddam's Baath party and al-Qaeda militants. Some like Douri are still on the three-year-old "deck of cards," a list of 55 wanted Baathist officials issued by the US military.

After a US air strike killed al-Qaeda in Iraq leader Abu Musab al-Zarqawi on June 7, the group named Masri as its successor. al-Qaeda has vowed to avenge Zarqawi's death.

Car bombs, attempt on MP jolt Baghdad

AFP, Baghdad

Three car bombs and an assassination attempt against a moderate Shia MP jolted Baghdad on Sunday one day after a devastating car explosion in a busy market in the capital killed at least 66.

The stepped-up violence in the capital came as al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden, in an Internet audiotape attributed to him, warned of retaliation against Iraqi Shias, who he said have been waging a campaign of "genocide" against Sunnis.

It also coincided with a visit by Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki, a Shia, to neighbouring Sunni Arab-dominated Saudi Arabia to garner its support for his national reconciliation plan.

Three car bombs went off in Baghdad's central Karradah district killing at least three people and wounding 16 according to a preliminary toll provided by a security official.

One of the explosions was directed against a police patrol in the area's busy Arasat street killing a policeman and wounding three civilians.

In nearby Hurriyah square in the Jadriyah neighbourhood a roadside bomb exploded in the path of a convoy carrying Iyad Jamaledin, a turbaned Shia MP with the Iraqi National List parliamentary bloc of former premier Iyad Allawi.

That attack wounded three passersby said a security official.

Jamaledin had called recently for reconciliation with members of the former ruling Baath party of ousted leader Saddam Hussein, a position strongly opposed by hard-line Shias in parliament and Maliki's government.

The attempt on his life came a day after Taiseer Najeh Awad al-Mashhadani, an MP from the National Concord Front, the largest Sunni Arab bloc in parliament, was seized in Baghdad along with eight of her bodyguards.