

# Israeli heads new peace drive with Palestinians

AFP, Jerusalem

Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni is spearheading a new peace initiative between Israel and the Palestinians that seeks to address the most contentious issues such as that of refugees, she said in an interview published Thursday.

"I am not talking about simply a vision. I am talking about a detailed operative plan. I will not reveal now all of its details, but I can tell you that as far as I'm concerned I know exactly what has to be done," she told the liberal Haaretz's weekend magazine.

"The vision is a state of Israel as national home for the Jewish people... and on its side a Palestinian state which is the Palestinians' national home which offers a complete solution to the problem of the

Palestinian people and the Palestinian refugees," she said.

"It is my moral obligation to make it happen," the 48-year-old minister said. "My vision says that the two nation-state principle is not only an Israeli gift to the Palestinians but advances Israeli interests."

Peace talks between Israel and the Palestinians have made no progress since January 2001, but hopes have been revived in recent months, mostly following Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's meeting with Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas in Jerusalem last week.

Livni offered only broad outlines of her initiative.

When asked whether Israel's controversial security barrier in the West Bank would be "the reference border for dividing the land," she

said "yes."

A large part of the security barrier snaking throughout the occupied West Bank lies on the Palestinian side of the so-called Green Line -- Israel's borders prior to the 1967 Six Day War.

Palestinians want a full Israeli withdrawal from territory occupied during that war in a final negotiated deal.

Livni also hinted that in contrast with previous Israeli declarations that there would be no negotiations as long as Palestinians continue attacks, she was ready hold negotiations under fire.

"Already under (Ariel) Sharon's government I claimed we should not say we would not talk under fire, but that we will not make concessions under fire."



Wearing shrouds, a faction of BNP activists stage a demonstration at Mukhtangan in the city yesterday urging its Chairperson Khaleida Zia not to nominate a candidate of their rival faction from Dhaka-4 (Demra-Shyampur) constituency.

# 16 killed in Brazilian bus attack

AFP, Rio De Janeiro

Sixteen people were killed and 23 injured in attacks by armed gangs against civilian buses and police stations in Rio de Janeiro, officials said Thursday.

In one of the deadliest attacks gang members torched a bus, killing at least seven passengers, according to local media, which also reported that gang members opened automatic fire on five police stations across the city, killing at least two police officers.

Witnesses told Brazilian media that eight heavily armed men attacked the bus that was coming from the neighboring state of Espirito Santo with 28 passengers aboard. The bus was travelling on major avenues around the northern Rio shanty town of Cordovil at the

time of the attack, according to the report.

Several police vehicles were also damaged in the shooting, according to the report.

Three other buses were set ablaze in Bagu, in western Rio, where the city's maximum security prison is located.

Three suspects were arrested, police said.

A string of similar violent attacks since May in Sao Paulo, Brazil's financial capital, was blamed on an organized crime group known as the First Capital Command (PCC), a powerful syndicate that operates from the prisons.

More than 170 people were killed in a mid-May wave of attacks in Sao Paulo blamed on the PCC, and nine more were killed in July 11-14 violence.

# Extreme weather on rise in China Say experts

AFP, Beijing

China experienced some of its deadliest weather in years in 2006 and climate experts expect the extreme conditions to continue, state media reported Thursday.

Typhoons, floods and droughts claimed 2,704 lives and inflicted economic losses of 212 billion yuan (27 billion dollars) this year, the highest tolls in nearly a decade, Xinhua news agency said.

"The losses China suffered this year were second only to those inflicted in 1998, when an extremely severe flood ravaged the country," said Qin Dahe, director of the China Meteorological Administration, in comments

quoted by the agency.

The grim figures come a day after China's first national climate change assessment predicted the country faced rising temperatures and more extreme weather phenomena in the years ahead, as global warming increases.

Qin said both the intensity of the weather and the damage caused in 2006 were "rare" in the country's history.

Seven typhoons and another seven strong tropical storms hit the Chinese mainland this year, including Typhoon Saomai, which killed 460 people and was the strongest in China since the founding of the People's Republic in 1949, Xinhua said.

Eighteen sandstorms scoured

northern China this spring, the most in six years, while the worst droughts in several decades ravaged southwestern China, it added.

China's worsening pollution problems added to its woes, with northern China experiencing its worst acid rain in 14 years.

National climate Centre Director Dong Wenjie predicted the weather also would be worse than normal in 2007, Xinhua said.

The government's climate change report released Wednesday warned that rising temperatures would lead in the future to excessive precipitation in some areas, while drought, heat waves and other extreme weather would ravage others.

# Aggrieved left-outs clash with rivals

FROM PAGE 1 that left about 20 hurt.

Hundreds of BNP activists in Demra thana staged a demonstration at Mukhtangan in the capital demanding former lawmaker Salah Uddin Ahmed's nomination cancellation and nomination of someone with better reputation for the Dhaka-4 constituency. They later brought out a procession with brooms against Salah Uddin Ahmed, infamous for his role during the mass movement in Shonir Akhra.

Rivals of BNP nominated candidates yesterday clashed at Rupsha in Khulna that left at least eight activists injured. Supporters of central JCD President Azizul Bari Helal and Khulna district BNP President Mazedul Islam clashed with each other while in a separate showdown, activists of Khulna 3 BNP brought out a procession in favour of city Mayor Tayabur Rahman.

Supporters of Akhtarul Islam, who filed the nomination paper for Chuadanga 2 with BNP ticket, yesterday attacked the motorcade of another BNP aspirant candi-

date and former lawmaker Haji Mozammel Haque.

Rival groups led by Ataur Rahman and Masud Hilali of Kishoreganj 3 engaged in a chase-counter chase as both leaders demanded party tickets to contest the election. Also, the supporters of Idris Ali Bhuiyan of Kishoreganj 1 attacked the motorcade of Abdus Salam.

Supporters of Motiur Rahman Moti of Mymensingh 2 staged a demonstration demanding his nomination from the party and engaged in a clash with police while supporters of district BNP general secretary held a rally and formed a human chain demanding cancellation of nomination of Delwar Hossain Khan Dulu of Mymensingh 4.

Activists of Ekhlas Uddin Mollah, Monowar Hossain Dipjol and Ahsan Ullah Hasan brought out processions near Hawa Bhaban for nomination as the party had nominated SA Khaleque to contest Dhaka 11.

Nolchhiti upazila BNP general secretary Ohidul Islam Badol

issued a legal notice to former lawmaker Elen Bhutto of Jhalokathi 2 for creating confusion over the nomination.

Supporters of TS Ayub enforced a road blockade demanding his nomination by BNP for Jessore 4.

A group of BNP activists in Chandpur observed a half-day hartal yesterday and brought out a procession against former lawmaker GM Fazlul Haque. They demanded the party change its decision and nominate Sabur Khan for Chandpur 3.

Chandpur district BNP led by Shafiqur Rahman brought out a broom procession against former lawmaker SA Sultan Titu of Chandpur 4.

Supporters of Nasir Uddin Bishwas staged a demonstration and demanded cancellation of former lawmaker Reza Ahmed Bachchu's nomination for Kushtia 1.

BNP activists of Manikganj 2 and 3 brought out a procession against former BNP minister Harunur Rashid Khan Monno and his daughter.

# Passengers foil Russian plane hijack

REUTERS, Prague

Passengers overpowered a Russian man who tried to hijack an Aeroflot plane on Thursday and the aircraft safely made an emergency landing in Prague, airline officials said.

"One of the passengers on board the Moscow-Geneva flight said he had an explosive device and ordered (the crew) to change course," Lev Koshlyakov, deputy general director of the Russian airline, told Reuters.

"There are reasons to believe that this was an act of hooliganism," he added.

The Airbus A-320 flying

from Moscow to Geneva made an unplanned landing in the Czech capital after the pilot declared an emergency on board. Russia's Transport Ministry said there were 168 people on board.

"A drunk person was on board. He provoked a brawl with passengers, threatened to damage the plane and demanded that it change the course," Itar-Tass news agency quoted Viktor Parkhimovich, an Aeroflot representative in Prague, as saying.

Czech police spokesman Pavel Hantak said the man was subdued on the plane and no passengers were injured.

"The suspect, a male of Russian nationality, is in the hands of the Czech police," Hantak said. The name of the suspect was not released.

The plane landed in Prague at 10:42 a.m. (0942 GMT) and was directed to an outer area of the airport, where it was surrounded by emergency vehicles.

A Reuters witness said a bus approached the plane and the passengers were led off the aircraft and taken to a controlled area of the airport terminal.

Koshlyakov said the plane was preparing to continue its journey to Geneva.

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