Israeli heads new peace drive with Palestinians

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

The vision is a state of Israel as national home for the Jewish people... and on its side a Palestinian 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

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

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

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 negoti-

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

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

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

Hundreds of BNP activists in

Demra thana staged a demonstra-

tion at Muktangon in the capital

demanding former lawmaker Salah

Uddin Ahmed's nomination cancel-

lation 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

dates vesterday 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

vesterday attacked the motorcade

of another BNP aspirant candi-

Chuadanga 2 with BNP ticket Dhaka 11.

BNP brought out a procession in Mollah, Monowar Hossain Dipjol

Supporters of Akhtarul Islam, nomination as the party had nomi-

Rivals of BNP nominated candi-

that left about 20 hurt.

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

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

Aggrieved left-outs clash with rivals

date and former lawmaker Haji

Rival groups led by Ataur

Rahman and Masud Hilali of

Kishoregani 3 engaged in a chase-

counter chase as both leaders

demanded party tickets to contest

the election. Also, the supporters of

Idris Ali Bhuivan of Kishoregani 1

attacked the motorcade of Abdus

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

favour of city Mayor Tayabur and Ahsan Ullah Hasan brought out Ahmed Bachchu's nomination

who filed the nomination paper for nated SA Khaleque to contest and 3 brought out a procession

secretary Ohidul Islam Badol

Nolchhiti upazila BNP general

processions near Hawa Bhaban for for Kushtia 1.

Supporters of Motiur Rahman

Eighteen sandstorms scoured

Mozammel Haque.

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.

issued a legal notice to former

lawmaker Elen Bhutto of Jhalokathi

2 for creating confusion over the

Supporters of TS Ayub enforced

A group of BNP activists in

a road blockade demanding his

nomination by BNP for Jessore 4.

Chandour observed a half-day

hartal yesterday and brought out a

procession against former law-

maker GM Fazlul Haque. They

demanded the party change its

decision and nominate Sabur Khan

Shafiqur Rahman brought out a

broom procession against former

lawmaker SA Sultan Titu of

tion of former lawmaker Reza

BNP activists of Manikganj 2

against former BNP minister

Harunur Rashid Khan Monno and

Activists of Ekhlas Uddin tion and demanded cancella-

his daughter.

Chandpur district BNP led by

Supporters of Nasir Uddin

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

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 Geneva

"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

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 onened 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

Several police vehicles were also damaged in the shooting

according to the report. Three other busses 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

AL candidature: Resentment In another last-minute change,

FORM PAGE 1

aspirants in each constituency. Some in the AL high-command and a number of mid-level leaders told The Daily Star yesterday that they are not happy with at least 20 seats allocated for the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) as these seats will not come to any electoral use for the AL and may take up crucial cabinet roles if they win the elections

They believe there were competent AL candidates who could have easily won from those constituencies, benefiting from the BNP's loss of votes to the LDP in those seats.

The AL insiders fear the benefit would be lost now and some of the LDP candidates might not be strong or popular enough to win in those

Locals alleged that the AL decision to nominate unknown Jatiya Party candidate Bakhtiar Uddin instead of local AL leader Col (retd) Ishaaq has spoilt a good chance of winning in Barisal-3 arising out of a rift among the local BNP leaders.

Meanwhile, the AL nominations board has initiated a process to change some 30-40 candidates in a last-minute reshuffle. The changes are to come following protracted negotiations with the nominees and continuing protests both in their constituencies and in front of Sudha Sadan in Dhaka as there are several AL candidates for each of at least 100 seats.

AL Joint General Secretary Obaidul Quader told The Daily Star, There are more than one candidate for several seats and we will choose the best, withdrawing the rest."

The AL is also learnt to have filed nominations for all 300 seats, in case any party in the grand alliance decides to contest the elections

ndependently Some AL nominations have already been changed due to intense pressure from within the party and its alliance.

AL President Sheikh Hasina herself initiated a move Wednesday night to persuade businessman Nur Ali to withdraw his nomination from Dhaka-2 to allow another businessman and LDP candidate Nurul Islam grand alliance.

AL's 14-party alliance partner Workers' Party got nomination in four seats with Rashed Khan Menon in Barisal-2. Fazle Hossain Badshah in Raishahi-2 and two others. Ganatantri Party President Nurul

Islam was also nominated in Noakhali-3 instead of AL candidate HM Ibrahim. Our Khulna correspondent

reports: AL leaders of six unions in Koira upazila have boycotted the grand alliance candidate for Khulna-6--LDP Presidium Member and former speaker Sheikh Abdur Razzak. They believe AL's Nurul Huq has a better chance of winning from the seat.

Protests against nominating Islamist party leaders have already forced the AL to nominate former home minister Maj (retd) Rafigul Islam by withdrawing Islamic Front Bangladesh's Bahadur Shah in Chandpur-5 seat, sources said. A few AL leaders said they were

in favour of Afghan war veteran and militant Maulana Habibur Rahman, a Bangladesh Khelafat Majlish leader. Meanwhile, some mid-level leaders alleged that a number of

trying to nominate AL central leader

Nurul Islam Nahid who was ignored

influential and self-interested AL leaders may have got nominations in exchange for favours and money. Party insiders also said a few lead-

ers, who have been away from their constituencies, have been nominated while those who have worked in their areas have been ignored. Some of these complaints are

against AL nominees such as Nure Alam Siddiqui from Jhinedah-2 and barrister Amir-Ul Islam from Kushtia-3 who allegedly did not visit their constituencies in recent years.

Meanwhile, Mahibur Rahman's supporters protested and succeeded in gaining his nomination from Sylhet-2 constituency. Supporters of former Al minister for land Rashed Mosharraf, in burial clothes, lay for hours in front of Sudha Sadan in protest at the AL decision to nominate Hamidul Hag Dulal from Jamalour-2 seat

7X3

8x2

8x3