

## International

# Israeli army ready to pull back if violence stops

Majority of Israelis back Palestinian state

JERUSALEM, Oct 27 : The Israeli army said today it is ready to pull back its forces from flashpoint areas in the Palestinian territories if violence drops, but is bracing for a prolonged cycle of unrest and possible terror attacks, reports AFP.

"In every area in which we see the degree of violence is coming down we shall redeploy the forces and take the tanks back," army spokesman General Ron Kitzky told reporters.

After two days marked by a sharp easing in the level of street violence in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, the army and police forces were nevertheless preparing for fresh clashes Friday, declared a day of rage by Palestinians.

Kitzky said the army had already pulled out several tanks from the Netzarim junction area

of the Gaza Strip which has been the scene of some of the fiercest fighting over the past month.

"We really try to signal to the Palestinians that we do have a deep wish to start talking again instead of continuing this violent dispute," he said, but added: "The basic assumption of the IDF (Israeli Defence Forces) is that the year 2001 will be a year of unrest."

And he said that over the last few days, there had been a dramatic increase in live shootings from the Palestinian side.

"The number of heavily populated violent waves of stone-throwing is being decreased in the last days but the number of live shootings has increased."

Kitzky also said Thursday's suicide attack by an Islamic Jihad militant against an army post in the Gaza Strip, which

killed the bomber and slightly wounded a soldier, "is not the last."

"We have 'hot warnings' of several attempts to cause as great a damage as possible to the Israeli population," he said.

The army had a constant flow of information about planned "terror" activities, he said, following the Palestinian Authority's release of militants from Islamic Jihad and its larger rival Hamas in recent weeks.

Israel was also preparing for tensions on the border with Lebanon and has closed the occupied Mount Hermon and Mount Dov areas to civilians, Kitzky added.

Meanwhile, a majority of Israelis back the creation of a Palestinian state, according to a poll published on Friday after a month of deadly clashes in the Palestinian territories.

The Gallup poll published in the Hebrew newspaper Maariv found that 57 percent supported the establishment of a state, up from 46 per cent three months ago, while 36 per cent were opposed, down from 41 per cent.

But a full 70 per cent of those surveyed said they backed Prime Minister Ehud Barak's decision to declare a "time-out" in the seven year Oslo peace process with the Palestinians because of the unrest, while 23 per cent were opposed.

Some two thirds of the 601 people questioned also said they backed Barak's idea of a "unilateral separation" between Israel and the Palestinians if there is no peace accord, and the number of those who support the peace process dropped to 59 per cent from 68 per cent last month, the poll found.



Democratic presidential candidate US Vice President Al Gore (L) stands on the stage with his daughter Kristin (R) prior to the start of a campaign rally in downtown Madison, Wisconsin, where over 30,000 supporters gathered on Thursday.

—AFP photo

## Musharraf thinking of ways to bring somebody who can run Pakistan better

ISLAMABAD, Oct 27 : Pakistani military ruler General Pervez Musharraf has admitted his popularity is waning and raised the prospect of inviting "somebody to run the government," reports AFP.

In a speech late Thursday the general, who seized power in a coup only a year ago, said "Pakistan is seriously ill but certainly not terminally ill."

"If we were not performing, I would be the first person to be thinking of ways to bring somebody who can run Pakistan better," he was quoted as saying in several English-language dailies here.

His comments followed a meeting of core military commanders last week in which the general came under intense questioning about his record in government and growing public frustration at the pace of reform, sources said.

Political and diplomatic sources told AFP the commanders discussed plans to appoint a civilian prime minister to deflect public anger from the military should the situation deteriorate further.

They said the regime was worried that Pakistanis had lost faith in Musharraf, who was broadly welcomed when he toppled the corrupt government of ousted prime minister Nawaz Sharif in October last year.

Despite Musharraf's personal popularity -- he is seen as sincere in his efforts to stamp out corruption and revive the economy -- the commanders were concerned that people no longer trusted the military to run the government.

A recent spate of resignations of cabinet ministers and regional governors has also fuelled speculation that Musharraf is losing his grip, to return Pakistan to full civilian rule by October 2002, with elections to new village councils beginning in December this year.



Chanting anti-India slogans, Kashmiri youths wearing chains symbolising 'subjugation', stage a protest rally in front of the United Nations offices in Islamabad yesterday. The rally was organised as Kashmiris observed a black day to protest 'illegal and forcible occupation' of the Himalayan state by Indian troops in 1947.

—AFP photo

## Tigers blame govt for prison slaughter amid strike

COLOMBO, Oct 27 : Shops and offices closed in eastern Sri Lanka today as a sign of protest against the massacre of 25 Tamil inmates at a detention centre, local officials said as funeral preparations got under way, reports AFP.

Transport came to a standstill in the Tamil-dominated Batticaloa and Trincomalee districts Friday as residents observed a one-day general strike, government officials said.

The work stoppage was to protest Wednesday's massacre of 26 Tamil detainees at what was considered a show-piece rehabilitation centre in central Sri Lanka. The victims had been held for their suspected links with Tamil Tiger rebels.

However, the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) said the victims were not members of their organisation, which is leading a drawn out campaign for an independent homeland in the island's north-east.

The LTTE in a statement received here from their London office said they believed the security forces were involved in organising, mobilising and instigating gangs from the majority Sinhalese community to launch the attack.

Hundreds of Sinhalese villagers attacked the inmates, all members of the minority Tamil community.

"The victims of this savagery are not members of the LTTE nor

are they surrendered child soldiers," the LTTE said.

"They are innocent Tamil youths arrested on suspicion and detained without trial under the notorious Prevention of Terrorism Act. These young detainees have been protesting against their unjust arrest and demanding release."

Police have rounded up an entire village as part of investigations into the massacre in the open prison at Bandarawela in central Sri Lanka, officials said.

Nearly 400 people, all from the majority Sinhalese community, were detained from the area surrounding the rehabilitation centre located 210 kilometres (131 miles) east of Colombo, police said.

"They were questioned and freed by Thursday evening," a police official said by telephone. "It was tense a situation as the interrogation process continued."

Judicial medical officials had also begun the grim task of conducting post-mortem examinations on the victims, who were beaten to death.

"The families of the victims have been informed," an official said. "We are going to send the bodies back to the relatives to hold separate funerals."

Police said initial investigations showed that some of the inmates had been deployed as labourers in local business establishments pointing to serious irregularities on the part of the

## Troops disperse anti-India protest march in Kashmir

Shabir Ahmed Shah arrested, 14 killed in violence

SRINAGAR, India, Oct 27 : Indian troops in Kashmir broke up a protest today and arrested a top Muslim separatist as he tried to lead a march through the streets of the state's summer capital Srinagar, reports AFP.

Shabir Ahmed Shah was arrested along with a dozen supporters. The protest coincided with a general strike in Srinagar to mark the 53rd anniversary of Kashmir's accession to India and the arrival of Indian troops.

The annual strike, supported by Muslim militant groups, was called by the All Party Hurriyat (Freedom) Conference, an umbrella organisation comprising around two dozen separatist parties.

The marchers, chanting slogans like "Indian army leave Kashmir," walked with black banners that read "27th October -- Black Day in Kashmir."

Some of the younger protesters also wore shackles and chains to symbolise what they view as India's repressive policies in Muslim-majority Kashmir.

There was little resistance when the police moved in to break up the march, even when Shah and his supporters were led away.

All schools and colleges in Srinagar, as well as shops and business establishments, banks and government offices remained closed Friday because of the strike call.

Maharaja Hari Singh of Kashmir signed the instrument of accession on October 27, 1947 after appealing for Indian help to ward off an invasion by Pakistani tribesmen.

The deployment of Indian forces erupted into a full scale war -- the first of two that India and Pakistan would fight over the disputed Himalayan region.

The day has been marked by a strike every year since 1989, when Kashmiri Muslims launched an armed insurgency against Indian rule. The decade-long violence has claimed 34,000 lives.

India accuses Pakistan of supporting the insurgency with arms and money. Islamabad denies the charge but extends open moral and diplomatic to what it sees as the Kashmiris' just struggle for self-determination.

Meanwhile, a dozen Muslim militants were among 14 people killed in the latest incidents of separatist-linked violence in Indian Kashmir, police said today.

## New Ivorian president to form multi-party govt

ABIDJAN, Oct 27 : Ivory Coast's new president Laurent Gbagbo was set today to form a new, interim government made up of several political parties, but his rival, former premier Alassane Ouattara, refused to accept his election and called for fresh voting, reports AFP.

Gbagbo was sworn in Thursday and immediately promised to restore democratic rule in an effort to end widespread violence which has claimed as many as 100 lives since controversial weekend elections.

In a radio address following his investiture, Gbagbo said he would form a new, interim government made up of several political parties Friday and would name his prime minister straight away.

The declaration came after Ivory Coast's military ruler, General Robert Guei, was swept from power by protesting Gbagbo supporters after he organised Sunday's presidential elections in which he unsuccessfully tried to have himself declared the winner. The turmoil caused by the disputed elections, however, opened a chasm of violence as Gbagbo's followers clashed with those of Ouattara, who had been barred from the polls and who was calling for a new election to be held.

In an interview with the French daily La Croix published Friday, Ouattara said: "We have nothing against Gbagbo but we do not recognise this electoral process that was corrupt from the start and totally anti-democratic."

Ouattara gave the interview just before Ivorian security forces attacked his residence.

"If we have all contributed to Guei's departure, it is to have elections and not to install somebody in particular," he said. "We want these elections soon."

Warning that demonstrations would continue if elections were not called, Ouattara said he thought that they could take place in three weeks.

At least 44 people were killed Thursday as the two sides attacked each other with wooden clubs and machetes in running street battles, according to witnesses. Ethnic overtones between Gbagbo's largely Christian camp and Ouattara's mostly Muslim supporters also fuelled the brutality.

Added to that toll is at least 60 other deaths Gbagbo previously said had already occurred in the wake of the uprising against Guei.

The national electoral commission Thursday announced officially that Gbagbo, head of the Ivorian Popular Front (FPI), had won the election with 59.36 per cent of votes against 32.72 for Guei.

A state of emergency was promptly reimposed and security forces were to be deployed across the nation.

## Nepali govt, Maoist rebels begin peace talks

KATHMANDU, Oct 27 : Unprecedented peace talks between the Nepalese government and the country's Maoist rebels began in the capital Kathmandu today, aimed at bringing an end to four years of fighting that has claimed more than 1,400 lives, reports AFP.

"The talks were held in a very cordial atmosphere," mediator and senior leader of Nepal Communist Party-Marxist and Leninist (NCP-ML) Padma Ratna Tuladhar told AFP.

Deputy Premier and Home Minister Ram Chandra Paudel and Rabinendra Shrestha, of the underground Nepal Communist Party-Maoist (NCP-M), held a two and a half hours of talks in the morning in a secret location in Kathmandu, Tuladhar said.

He added the talks were expected to develop into a formal dialogue in the "following weeks."

Earlier in the week, he warned: "If the government does not respond positively now, it may lose a good chance to solve the current political problem."

The talks were instigated at the request of both Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala and Paudel, and were organised by Tuladhar, who is also a human rights campaigner.

After a spell as a mainstream political party with nine members of parliament after the 1991

election, the NCP-M launched a bloody rebellion in February 1996, fighting for communist rule and the overthrow of Nepal's constitutional monarchy and multi-party democracy.

Since then more than 1,400 people, the vast majority rebels themselves, have been killed in clashes between police and the insurgents.

The Maoists' chief commander Pushpa Kamal Dahal -- also known as "Prachanda" -- has made clear his party agreed to Friday's informal dialogue on condition the whereabouts of three of his party's leaders and other activists arrested by the police are revealed.

Communist guerrilla leaders Dinesh Sharma, Danda Pani Neupane and Mukti Yadav and several other activists have disappeared since their arrest two years ago.

"The Maoist leaders have charged that hundreds of their activists and other senior leaders have been killed by the government without a judicial trial," Tuladhar said.

The Maoists earlier this year held informal meetings with a go-between appointed by the government but Koirala's administration refused to respond to two requests for face-to-face meetings.

## Estrada rejects plan for power-sharing Cabinet

MANILA, Oct 27 : Philippine President Joseph Estrada today rejected proposals to share power with the opposition as a mounting campaign to force his removal from office over alleged corruption turned violent for the first time, reports AFP.

A single gunshot rang out Friday as security guards armed with automatic rifles shoed away a small group of squatters who had vandalised the gate of the suburban Manila villa of Estrada mistress Laarni Enriquez. No one was injured.

The protesters banged on the metal gates and daubed it with the red-painted slogans "Oust Erap," referring to the president's nickname, and "Mistresses Have Houses, The Poor Do Not Have Any."

Estrada attended a special Roman Catholic mass inside the presidential palace to pray for national unity and the survival of his 28-month old regime.

He later rejected a proposal from a congressional ally that he share power with the opposition by taking some of them into a reshuffled cabinet.

"I have enough good men around me, including my economic managers," he told reporters.

His chief aide, Executive Secretary Ronaldo Zamora, said Estrada was mulling the convening of the advisory National Security Council, which includes key opposition figures such as Vice President Gloria Arroyo and former president Fidel Ramos.

"We are thinking of ways to get out of this logjam, and they must help us in this regard," he said.

The power-sharing proposal by Senator Francisco Tatad envisaged Arroyo in charge of the economy and Ramos as a roving trade ambassador to restore political confidence in the presidency and save the economy.

Arroyo quit the cabinet last week to distance herself from the corruption scandal, which centres on allegations by an estranged Estrada ally that the president received more than eight million dollars in kickbacks from illegal gambling bosses.

His principal accuser, provincial governor Luis Singson, has charged that Estrada used the money to build lavish homes for at least three mistresses.

Arroyo repeated her call Friday for Estrada to step down, saying that if he refused to go "then the economy goes down some more."

Estrada has offered to resign if it can be proven he took bribes, but has rejected the charges.

The House of Representatives is scheduled to begin hearings on November 6 on an impeachment motion lodged against him. Officials have warned the impeachment process could take months.



Kissinger hospitalised

NEW YORK, Oct 27 : Former US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger has suffered a "limited heart attack" and is recovering at a hospital here, officials announced Thursday, reports AFP.

"Kissinger was admitted to New York Cornell Medical Center of New York Presbyterian Hospital on Wednesday, October 25, for a limited heart attack," a hospital spokeswoman said.

She said Kissinger, 77, was "doing well" but was expected to remain in the hospital for a few days.

A former refugee from Nazi Germany, Kissinger rose to become President Richard Nixon's national security adviser and later US secretary of state.

## BRIEFLY

### Quake shakes N Australian city:

Buildings rattled in the city of Darwin on Friday as a strong earthquake shook northern Australia. There were no reports of damage or injury, AP reports from Darwin.

The Australian Geological Survey Organisation said the magnitude 5.8 earthquake struck at 8.14 a.m. (2244 GMT Thursday), a

**Mahathir to visit Brunei:** Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad will visit the oil-rich sultanate of Brunei for two days starting Sunday and hold talks with Sultan Hassanah Bolkiah, the Malaysian news agency Bernama reported, AP says from Kuala Lumpur.

**Ebola claims 5 more in Uganda:** Five more people died in an outbreak of Ebola in northern Uganda between 8:00 a.m. (1100 BST) on Thursday and 8:00 a.m. on Friday, the health ministry announced in a statement yesterday, AFP reports from Kampala.

The total number of cases of known victims of the gruesome disease also rose by nine to 191, with all the new cases admitted to Gulu and Lacor Hospitals in northern Uganda, the statement said.

## Birds learn to sing in sleep

WASHINGTON, Oct 27 : Young birds learn to sing by silently rehearsing in their sleep times they have heard adult birds sing, according to new research to be published today in the review Science, reports AFP.

"From our data, we suspect the songbird dreams of singing," said principal investigator in the study and associate professor of the University of Chicago's department of organismal biology and anatomy, Daniel Margoliash.

His team reached its conclusions using miniaturised neural recording gear to study the activity of individual brain cells in birds that were relatively free to move about and behave naturally.

The researchers recorded the firing patterns of individual premotor brain cells of four zebra finches, a songbird native to Australia, the male of which works hard to attract the female with his stereotyped song.

## 1 m Afghans at risk of starvation

ISLAMABAD, Oct 27 : The United Nations today said up to one million Afghans could die of starvation amid the worst drought in 30 years, although famine-related deaths were still difficult to assess, reports AFP.

UN World Food Programme (WFP) officer Pippa Bradford said between 500,000 and one million people could starve in the worst case scenario facing the country, already devastated by more than 20 years of war.

"In the worst case scenario we will definitely see famine deaths of between 500,000 and one million people if we are not able to intervene," she said.

She said there would also be a "large IDP (internally displaced people) population" in the worst-hit areas, particularly the west and north, above the hundreds of thousands of people who have already fled their barren villages.

She said the crunch time would come in February and March, the months ahead of the May-June harvest season when village stores would be at their lowest.

WFP Country Director Gerard van Dijk said the UN needed 115,000 tonnes of food worth about 54 million dollars simply to maintain "life-saving activities" until the end of next year.

"If the WFP does not receive fresh pledges soon it

will run out of food by February of next year," he said.

"We could see a widespread famine unless adequate preventive steps are taken."

"We have received some donations and pledges over the last few months but they fell short of our appeals... our resources are quickly depleting."

Senior UN sources in Afghanistan have complained about "donor fatigue" towards Afghanistan, with key programmes like demining and refugee assistance being cut back or threatened due to a lack of funds.

Afghanistan is ruled by the fundamentalist Taliban Islamic militia. Its ruler, Mulla Mohammad Omar, has said the drought is divine punishment because Afghans have not been praying five times a day.

The Taliban, who emerged from Islamic seminaries in Pakistan and Afghanistan in 1994 and now control 90 per cent of the country, are still battling resistance forces especially in the remote northeast.

The WFP officials said the Taliban were working with the UN to provide security and help bring food and water to drought affected people.

But they said problems remained, particularly concerning the UN's employment of Afghan women, and the militia's efforts were "difficult to quantify."

## Notice Inviting International Tender

Notice No: 04 of 2000-2001

Dated: 19-10-2000

- Sealed tenders in two envelope system in duplicate are hereby invited by Executive Engineer (RHD), Procurement & Storage Division, Tejgaon, Dhaka from manufacturer/supplier/Principal of all Countries in the World including Bangladesh except Israel through their appointed local agent in Bangladesh for supply of items listed below as per specification and terms & conditions attached with the documents:
  - "Deck mounted 360°" steerable outboard propulsion unit powered by 200-220 BHP Marine Diesel Engine with Remote Control for utility type-II (Imp.) Ferries of RHD, Qnty 5 (five) sets.
  - Sealed tenders will be received by the undersigned up to 1100 hrs (BST) on 06-12-2000. Technical offer will be opened first, financial offer will be noted and placed in a sealed box on the same day immediately after the dead line for receipt of the tenders, in presence of intending tenderers or their authorised agent (if there be any).
  - Complete offer (in original) shall be received via registered mail or in person by 1100 hrs (BST) on the abovementioned rate at the following address. In no case offer received late will be entertained regardless of the cause of delay.
- Executive Engineer (RHD)  
Procurement & Storage Division  
Tejgaon, I/A, Dhaka-1208
- Bid bond of Taka 6.50 (six lak fifty thousand) lac or its equivalent Foreign currency is required to be submitted alongwith the tender in the form of Bank Guarantee from any scheduled bank in Bangladesh on non-judicial stamp. Bid bond may be furnished either in local currency or in foreign currency.
- Tender schedule containing specification terms & conditions etc. will be available for sale up to 05-12-2000 on payment of Taka 2,000/= (Two thousand) only (non-refundable) or its equivalent in foreign currency per set (three copies of schedule) from the office of the Executive Engineer (RHD), Procurement & Storage Division, Tejgaon, Dhaka on all working days during office hours. No tender will be sold on the date fixed for opening of the tender.
- Each offer submitted shall be enclosed in a sealed envelope superscribed.
- 1) "Deck mounted 360°" steerable outboard propulsion unit powered by 200-220 BHP Marine Diesel Engine with Remote Control for utility type-II (Imp.) Ferries of RHD, Qnty 5 (five) sets. (Technical offer).
- 2) "Deck mounted 360°" steerable outboard propulsion unit powered by 200-220 BHP Marine Diesel Engine with Remote Control for utility type-II (Imp.) Ferries of RHD, Qnty 5 (five) sets (Financial offer).
- This purchase will be made under cash foreign exchange during the year 2000-2001 (Subject to the availability of fund).
- Roads & Highways Department reserves the right to accept or reject any or all the tenders & have the right to increase or decrease the quantity of the items of procurement without assigning any reason whatsoever.

Mohammed Zahir  
Executive Engineer, RHD  
Procurement & Storage Division  
Tejgaon I/A, Dhaka-1208  
Tel: 604680

DFP-25716-23/10  
G-1879