# INTERNATIONAL

# Mortar fire from Gaza amounts to declaration of war: Israel

Israeli rabbi whips up storm in call for annihilation of Arabs

AFP, Jerusalem

Israel yesterday said the firing of mortar bombs on its territory from areas run by Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat's self-rule authority amounted to a "declaration of war," adding that it would hit back without warning.

"Firing mortar shells from territory under the control of the Palestinian Authority towards areas in Israeli territory is similar to a declaration of war," Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's spokesman Raanan Gissin told AFP.

"It is obvious that we will respond to each of these attacks without warning, using constant military pressure as any other country would do if it was attacked in this way," he told AFP.

Four mortar bombs fired by Palestinians from the Gaza Strip struck Israeli territory near a military position near Nahal Oz, without causing any casual-

ties, one of several such incidents in recent days. Israel retaliated by firing rockets at an office of Arafat's Fatah movement and a police station, injuring four civilians, including a 10-year-old child,

and a Palestinian policeman, Palestinian officials said. Meanwhile, Israel said yesterday it has closed the Karni border crossing between Israel and the Gaza Strip because of "vandalism" at the site, accusing the Palestinians of causing the damage.

Yarden Vatikay, spokesman for the coordinator of Israeli activity in the Palestinian territories, said the Palestinians were "shooting their own foot" by vandalising the cargo crossing that brings essential supplies from Israel. "We have closed the passage and we are checking out the incident," he told AFP, describing the incident as "very severe."

were burnt and part the building damaged by fire.

Vatikay said Israel had reauthorised the transfer of construction materials via the Karni crossing two or three weeks ago.

There was no immediate comment from the Palestinians. Israel has imposed a crushing blockade on the Palestinian territories since a new uprising against Israeli occupation broke out six months ago,

imposing checkpoints and closing borders with the Palestinian territories. Meanwhile, Vatikay said some 200 Palestinian workers from the Gaza Strip had crossed into Israel after Israel agreed to ease restrictions on labour.

He said Israel would allow a total of 3,200 workers from the West Bank and Gaza Strip into the Jewish state from Monday, with around 1,400 permits issued.

Before the outbreak of the Intifada, more than 120,000 Palestinians worked at day jobs in Israel, mainly in the agriculture and construction industries.

Meanwhile, the outspoken spiritual leader of Israel's powerful ultra-Orthodox Jewish Shas Party whipped up a new storm yesterday over a sermon calling for the annihilation of Arabs.

"It is forbidden to be merciful to them, you must give them missiles, with relish -- annihilate them. Evil ones, damnable ones," Rabbi Ovadia Yosef was quoted as saying in a sermon ahead of the Jewish Passover holiday. "May the Holy Name visit retribution on the Arabs' heads, and cause their

seed to be lost, and annihilate them, and cause them to be vanquished and

cause them to be cast from the world," he said. Yosef, who is one of the most powerful figures in Israel as a former chief rabbi and founder of Shas, the third largest party in parliament which repre-He said equipment in the warehouse at the crossing was smashed, tyres sents the nation's Sephardic Jews, has made similarly vitriolic remarks in the past, several times calling Arabs "vipers."



Chinese President Jiang Zemin (L) is accompanied by Argentine Foreign Minister Adalberto Rodriguez Giavarini (R) after laying wreath at the monument to General Jose de San Martin in Buenos Aires yesterday. Jiang is on the second stop of a stx-nation tour of Latin American nations

#### Int'l confce of Islamic clerics opens in Peshawar

AFP Peshawar

An international conference of Islamic clerics organised by a Pakistani pro-Taliban party opened here yesterday to tackle issues of concern to Muslims worldwide.

The three-day conference marks the 150th anniversary of the founding of the prestigious Sunni Muslim seminary of Deoband and is being attended by leading scholars and politicians, organisers said.

The gathering is expected to draw tens of thousands of Muslim clerics who benefited from the teachings of the renowned institute \* in the Indian city of Depband, they

Around 10,000 volunteers were enforcing security, organisers said, while authorities have deployed scores of plainclothes policemen.

A special Sharia court, manned

by an Islamic judge, had been set up to mete out on-the-spot punish ment to people found guilty of pickpocketing, theft or other crimes, conference officials said.

# China tones down anti-US rhetoric, but seeks apology

PLA demands an end to spying on Chinese coast

AFP, Beijing

China yesterday toned down a week of vitriolic anti-American rhetoric, but reiterated uncompromising demands for an apology over the collision between a US spy plane said. and Chinese fighter jet.

facts, assume responsibility, apologise to the Chinese people and take measures to ensure that such incidents don't happen again," said Defence Minister Chi Haotian.

An editorial by the official Xinhua news agency carried in several dailies Monday repeated China's stance that the US EP-3 surveillance plane was to blame for the April 1 collision off the southern island of Hainan.

"It is clear that the US plane crew. broke flight rules and made dangerous movements, causing the crash of the Chinese jet and the disappearance of the Chinese pilot, violations of international and Chinese law," it

"As Chinese President Jiang "The United States must face the Zemin has said, the US side is fully responsible for the incident and should apologise to the Chinese people," it said.

China says the EP-3 deliberately rammed one of two Chinese fighter jets shadowing its movements in international airspace off Hainan, a charge rejected by the US side.

The EP-3 made an emergency landing on Hainan after the collision and China has yet to bow to US demands for the release of the 24 coast," he said,

Most Chinese dailies continued reports on the ongoing search for missing Chinese pilot Wang Wei, who parachuted from his damaged fighter jet following the collision but who is still missing.

Meanwhile, the United States must stop surveillance activities over the Chinese coast, a top general with China's People's Liberation Army said in Wellington yesterday.

General Zhang Wannian, vice chairman of China's powerful central military commission, made his comments after talks with New Zealand Prime Minister Helen Clark.

"To avoid such incidents from happening again in the future the United States should give up further surveillance activities near China's

### S Korea recalls ambassador to Japan over textbook row

AFP, Seoul

South Korea said yesterday it was recalling its ambassador to Japan in protest at Tokyo's decision to approve school history textbooks which gloss over Japanese wartime

Ambassador Choi Sang-Ryong had been ordered to return home by Tuesday, said foreign ministry spokesman Kim Eui-Taek as Seoul raised the stakes sharply in the row over the school books.

"The ambassador will stay at home temporarily to discuss the textbook issue," Kim told AFP.

The move was the toughest diplomatic action against Tokyo yet by the government of President Kim Dae-Jung, who has sought to warm up chilly ties across the Sea of Japan since taking office in 1998.

Tensions have risen anew after the Japanese government last week approved textbooks which avoid mention of Japan's pre-World War II invasion of neighbours and Japanese troops' use of sex slaves.

South Korean lawmakers on Monday called off an annual gathering with their Japanese counterparts, and protestors in Seoul and the southern port of Pusan burned a Japanese effigy in street rallies.

The Korea-Japan Parliamentarians' Union conference, scheduled to be held in Seoul from May 4 to 6, has been "delayed indefinitely," Park Sang-Cheon of the ruling Millennium Democratic Party said.

Park, the vice president of the lawmakers' union, told a news conference the move was in protest at the textbooks.

A four-member delegation of South Korean deputies led by Park would visit Japan on Tuesday and Wednesday to file a complaint, Park and Yoo Heung-Soo of the main opposition Grand National Party (GNP) said.

#### Clashes claim 11 in Colombia

REUTERS, Bogota

Colombian right-wing militias this week advanced toward an area the government wants to cede to leftist rebels as a venue for peace talks, sparking clashes that killed 11 people, local media said. The offensive by the outlawed

United Self Defence Forces of Colombia (AUC) came after President Andres Pastrana, struggling to end the country's 37-yearold war, pulled troops from the territory in Bolivar region, north of the capital, to begin talks with the National Liberation Army (ELN).

At least seven ELN rebels and four AUC combatants were killed in the week-long clashes, centered around the villages of Vallecito and Diamante, traditional ELN strongholds, the daily newspaper El Tiempo quoted Army Gen. Martin Carreno as saying. Pastrana wants to temporarily

grant a 4,000-square km swath of Andean mountains and rain forest to the 5,000-member ELN.

### 38 killed in Chinese coal mine blast

AFP, Shanghal

Thirty-eight miners were killed and 16 injured in an explosion at a coal mine in northwest China's Shaanxi province, state media reported yesterday.

Shaanxi province governor Cheng Andong went to the accident site to head the rescue work soon after the accident occurred Friday, the China Daily reported. A spokeswoman at the

Chenjiashan mine confirmed the death toll and said: "Local officials have already sent all the injured to hospital and are consoling the relatives of the victims." She added that local officials

would pay compensation to the victims' families in the near future, but gave no details on the exact amount expected to be paid out.

The explosion is the fifth large mining disaster this year in China,

the world's biggest coal producer and consumer, where independent analysts estimate mine deaths top 10,000 annually. A gas explosion in a coal mine in

the central Chinese province of Hunan killed 13 miners last month, while 37 miners were killed in a gas explosion at a coal mine employing prison labour in northeast China's Heilongjiang province in February.

Those accidents followed a coal mine flooding in south China's Guangxi region which left 21 dead.

The government has launched a campaign to shut thousands of coal mines, especially small and dangerous ones, to avoid overproduction, falling prices and to improve the industry's safety record.

But many of the mines simply reopen after brief closures as the owners are loath to give up a source of income and the lack of monitoring means the mines often operate

#### Troops kill 4 Abu Sayyaf men amid hunt for hostages AFP, Jolo

Four Muslim extremists have been killed on this southern Philippine island amid a major assault to rescue an American and a Filipino being held captive, the military said yesterday.

Soldiers raided a camp of the Abu Sayyaf group in the remote jungle village of Buhanginan before dawn Monday, triggering fierce clashes that left three rebels dead, regional army commander Brigadier General Romeo Dominguez said.

"The fighting was really fierce, there was a running gun battle," Dominguez said. "We killed three terrorists and recovered several weapons."

On Sunday, an Abu Sayyaf member was killed in a separate firefight in nearby Talipao town.

#### Sino-American scholar arrested in China AFP, Beijing

A third Sino-American researcher has been detained in China since December and is expected to face politically-motivated charges of "leaking secrets," a Hong Kongbased rights group said yesterday.

Qin Guangguang, vice president of a Chinese-American pharmaceutical company, is expected to be formally arrested and charged as early as next week, the Information Center for Human Rights and Democracy said.

An investigation by the Ministry of State Security, China's secret police, ended last week and the case is expected to be handed over to the Beijing procuratorate, or prosecutor's office, the center said.

#### Peru's election seems heading to 2nd round AFP, Lima

Frontrunner Alejandro Toledo was bound once again for the campaign rail yesterday, just hours after Peru's presidential balloting concluded without an outright victory.

This moment marks the beginning of my battle for the second round," Toledo, 55, told a crowd | anteethat, "he said. Sunday as it roared its support.

with you toward victory," he said as his supporters, who thronged a Lima square chanted: "Urgent, rejected the censure as "baseless", Toledo president.



Indonesian Vice-President Megawati Sukarnoputri shows the way to UNICEF goodwill ambassador and movie star Roger Moore at the start of their meeting at her office in Jakarta yesterday. Moore arrived in Indonesia on Sunday to raise awareness of the importance of iodized salt especially in the diet of children and pregnant women, to eradicate iodine deficiency, the most common cause of mental retardation.

## Megawati spells her terms for replacing Wahid

REUTERS, Jakarta

Indonesia's Megawati Sukarnoputri has set three conditions for running to replace embattled President Abudrrahman Wahid, including guarantees she won't be challenged role before her term ends, a newspaper said yesterday.

Vice-President Megawati, who has so far been guarded on her own ambitions, set the conditions during talks with political leaders working to topple Wahid, the Media Indonesia daily quoted an unnamed source close to the vice-president saying.

She is also demanding the vicepresidency be left vacant and that annual sessions of the top legislature which has the power to sack and appoint presidents be aban-

The source said leading politicians, who were not named, had agreed to two of the conditions.

"But regarding the issue that vice-presidency should be left vacant, it's tough. No one can guar-

Calls for the near-blind president "In a few weeks, we shall march | to resign have increased since parliament censured him in February over two graft scandals. Wahid has Wahid and several other political

leaders last week rejected a suggestion that one way out of the mounting political crisis would be to change the constitution to allow Megawati to run government and turn his job into a largely ceremonial

Fears are growing that as the political temperature rises, Wahid's sometimes fanatical supporters could turn violent.

Parliament is due to meet at the | was tricked into making the end of April to consider its response to Wahid's reply to the censure. A second formal reprimand, which could pave the way for an impeachment hearing by the top legislature, is considered almost inevitable.

But the source said Megawati and her Indonesian Democratic Party for Struggle (PDI-P) would even back away from the second censure if she did not win agreement that she could rule without a deputy if she replaces Wahid.

"From the very beginning, Megawati doesn't want any vicepresident," the source said.

Wahid last week proposed peace talks with Megawati and the heads of both legislatures to strike a compromise to end the political tensions crippling government and driving the stock market and rupiah to two-

# Vajpayee to call all-party meeting to end deadlock Kashmir negotiator tight-lipped about dates of talks

AFP, New Delhi

Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee will convene an all-party meeting this week to try and break an impasse in parliament over an arms bribery scandal, officials said yesterday.

"It will be our effort to ensure that parliament functions normally and many issues of concern to the people should be discussed," said George Fernandes, convenor of Vajpayee's ruling National Democratic Alliance (NDA).

"All parties should sit together and discuss the dates on which specific subjects can be debated," Fernandes told reporters after a meeting of NDA leaders. Parliament's budget session

resumes on Monday after a threeweek recess.

Parliamentary business was totally frozen for 10 days before the recess, with opposition MPs calling also been India's defence minister

The British media was questioning

the role and future of the monarchy

yesterday, amid a royal scandal over

ill-judged comments made by

Queen Elizabeth's daughter-in-law

unguarded comments about British

public figures by a News of the World

reporter posing as a wealthy Arab

sheikh who was offering her PR firm

viewers to take part in an opinion

poll on the question "Do we really

need a royal family?" while Channel

4 asked simply "Should we abolish

In the press, the tabloid Sun

accused "Silly Sophie," wife of the

Queen's youngest son Prince

Edward, of having "put the very

the World, which ran a transcript of

the Countess' taped remarks on

Sunday, "dramatically reopen the

increasingly bitter debate about the

whole future of the monarchy and

hangers-on like Sophie and her

husband," the Sun railed.

The revelations in the News of

future of the Royal family at risk".

Sky news television urged its

a lucrative contract.

the monarchy?"

Sophie, the Countess of Wessex,

to an undercover tabloid reporter.

British media mulls

'Sophiegate' scandal

monarchy's future after

for the government to resign over a video expose showing top politicians, civil servants and military officials apparently taking bribes from journalists posing as arms

The NDA has called on the main

opposition Congress party to allow

parliament to function properly and debate the bribery issue in the Meanwhile, the man designated by the Indian government to open a dialogue with militant outfits in Kashmir was yesterday tight-lipped

about the timeframe for beginning

"All I can say is that dialogue is a process, not an event," said K.C. Pant, deputy chairman of India's Planning Commission and the pointman appointed by the government to hold direct talks with Kashmir militants.

Pant, a seasoned politician, has

Sophie

London public relations company

said Prime Minister Tony Blair

thought he was a president and was

"ignorant" about the countryside.

think her husband's government

was going to last long so she'd have

to go back to work anyway."

called R-JH.

Sophie, 36, is a partner in a

In her published comments she

and is a member of the powerful cabinet committee on security, which takes all important decisions related to national security.

Last week, Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee appointed Pani as the key negotiator in the pro posed dialogue with Kashmir mili tants and separatist leaders. The move was seen as an attempt

initiative in Kashmir, which is due to expire on May 31. However, Pant's appointment and the offer of a dialogue was received with scorn by prominent militant groups like the Hizbul

to lend fresh impetus to the govern-

ment's four-month old ceasefire

Mujahideen and Lashkar-e-Taiba. "Such offers of bilateral talks have been made in the past, but proved to be just a bluff used by the Indians to hoodwink international opinion," Hizbul Mujahideen spokesman Salim Hashmi told AFP in Islamabad last week.

#### Doctors speak out against plastic surgery on teens

AFP, New York

The trend of adolescents undergoing plastic surgery has been heating up in the United States, angering some within the medical community, who blame parents for fanning

According to the American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery (ASAPS), nearly 171,000 Americans under the age of 18 had some form of plastic surgery in 2000 -- with the most common operation being rhinoplasty, or surgery to change the size or shape of the nose.

But some surgeons feel that teens are just too young to have these operations. "Adolescents are unable to make

sensible decisions about things as emotional as this. I turn them down," said Gerard Imber, a prominent New York plastic surgeon. "When they're older and able to make an intelligent decision, that's

fine," he said. "But not teens," Nonetheless, he said, parents often indulge their teenagers'

requests. Blair's wife Cherie worked as a Bombarded with media images lawyer because "maybe she didn't of actors and models with flawless features and picture-peffect bodies. many US teenagers turn to plastic surgery to try to enhance their own

appearance.

### Hundreds flee Borneo

A mass exodus kept up unabated vesterday as 1,300 settlers boarded a ship for Java amid tight security to flee the violence which has ravaged Indonesian Borneo since February police and officials said.

"They are still embarking, but the refugees leaving with the boat number around 1,300," said Suharyadi an official with the Kumai port

The KM Senopati would take the refugees to Semarang in Central Java

later Monday, he added. It will be the third boat to leave the port since Saturday after community leaders in Pangkalan Bun decided to temporarily evacuate all Madurese to other parts of Indonesia after the violence spread

to the town this month.

The violence between the settlers from the East Java Island of Madura and indigenous Dayak tribes people began in Sampit on February 18 and quickly spread to Palangkaraya, the capital of Central Kalimantan prov-



1. Tender No.

#### Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority

143 Motijheel Commercial Area, Dhaka Purchase & Storage Department, Dhaka

# **Tender Notice**

Purchase-9/2001

Sealed tenders in the authority's approved tender form are invited from bona fide importers/sole agents/suppliers for purchase of 6 (six) Automatic Voltage Stabilizers Capacity-5KVA.

	25.03.2001.
arnest :	2.5% of total amount quoted i
ioney .	tender (refundable) as earnes
	money should be submitted wit
	the tender in the form of Pay
	Order/Call Deposit/Bank Draf
	from any scheduled bank is
	favour of Bangladesh Inland
	Water Transport Authority.
rice of:	Tk 400/- (four hundred) only
nder	(non-refundable).
ender to be :	Accounts Department, BIWTA

Place, date & time submitting tender

had at

Dhaka-1000. Purchase & Storage Department, BIWTA, Regional Office, 1st floor, BIWTA Bhaban, 141-143 Motifheel Commercial Area, Dhaka & Room No 816 (9th floor), Building No 6, Ministry of Water Transport, Bangladesh Secretariat, Dhaka up to 15.00 hours of 16.04.2001.

9th floor, BIWTA Bhaban, 141-

143 Motijheel Commercial Area,

On the same day 16.04.2001 at Date & time 15-15 minutes in presence (if any) of opening of the attending tenderers. tender

No tender will be sold on the date of opening tender. No tender will be received after the prescribed time. The authority reserves the right to accept any tender or reject all tenders without assigning any reason.

PR-34/2001

Md Golam Mowla Molla DFP-8663-2/4 G-630

Director

Purchase & Storage Department