

Arab anger mounting

AFP, Paris

Anger is mounting in the Arab world over Israel's actions against the Palestinians, Egypt's Foreign Minister Ahmed Maher warned Saturday, stressing the need for the US to take a "more balanced position" in the conflict.

"There is a growing anger in the Arab world against the Israeli actions a fact which (Israeli Prime Minister Ariel) Sharon should take good notice of," Maher said in an interview on French television news channel LCI.

Maher, accompanying Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak on a trip to Paris, said Israel "can not continue to wage this clandestine undeclared war, but every day we see the effects on the Palestinian people".

Maher said Europe could do more "and could do better".

'No possibility of military rebellion in Venezuela'

AFP, Caracas

Venezuela faces no risk of military rebellion, President Hugo Chavez said late Saturday, in his first public comments on recent demands for his resignation by thousands of civilians led by a uniformed colonel.

"There is no risk" of a military uprising, Chavez said during a four-minute exclusive interview with Chilean National Television that was broadcast in Venezuela.

On Thursday, Air Force Colonel Pedro Soto publicly demanded Chavez's resignation and led a march of thousands of supporters to the presidential residence in Caracas.

Chavez called Soto, 49, a "traitor".

"This petition means that there is no serious opposition. It means that the opposition has no leadership, no alternative plan," said Chavez.

Parts of Jakarta again flooded

AFP, Jakarta

Parts of the Indonesia capital Jakarta were again under water Sunday after two days of rain, but the flooding was not as serious as that of two weeks ago, officials said.

"Several areas, especially in north Jakarta and at the outskirts of the city, have seen flooding again, but this time they are not as serious as the inundation earlier this month," said Jakarta Flood Center official Nizamuddin.

The water was on average around 50 centimeters (20 inches) deep but some areas in Tambora, West Jakarta and Lebak Bulus in South Jakarta were under about one metre of water, he said.

Nepali PM faces a turbulent parliament

AFP, Kathmandu

Nepal premier Sher Bahadur Deuba will be facing a turbulent winter session of parliament beginning Sunday when he is expected to face a two-pronged attacks from the opposition and his own party lawmakers.

"All the major political oppositions in the 205-member house of representatives are expected to press Deuba to end the state emergency imposed in November to combat the Maoists, and ask him not to extend it for another three months as per the constitutional provision," political analyst Hari C. Shrestha said.

The main opposition Nepal Communist Party-United Marxist and Leninist (NCP-UML) in the meantime placed some demands for constitutional amendment to let the political parties to exercise their constitutional rights as a precondition for supporting Deuba's emergency rule, NCP-UML spokesman Pradip Nepal told AFP.

Thousands of civilians flee Liberian fighting

AFP, Paris

Tens of thousands of civilians have been forced to flee "in total panic" following an upsurge in fighting in Liberia, humanitarian organisation Action Against Hunger (AAH) said Saturday.

"Today, the civilian population is trying desperately to reach safe areas, taking dirt paths to avoid military roadblocks," the Paris-based group said.

Expressing "great concern," the group said people "were forced to flee in total panic" following an attack by government forces Thursday night against the rebel-held town of Klay, 40 km from the capital, the organisation said in a statement.

US charts Iraq mission map

Israel gets green signal to hit back if attacked

AFP, Los Angeles

The administration of US President George W. Bush is engaged in a major Iraq policy review that may result in massive military action against the government of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, The Los Angeles Times reported Sunday.

The administration expects to complete this long-delayed Iraq policy review by the time Vice President Richard Cheney makes his Middle East tour next month, so that he can outline American plans to Arab leaders, the daily said, citing senior US officials.

The emerging new Iraq policy is based on two premises, according to the report.

First, the Iraq problem has to be solved, not simply managed as it was during the previous US administrations.

Second, Washington is prepared to push beyond the limitations imposed by international sentiment, Arab public opinion and even the original UN resolutions that opened the way for Operation Desert Storm 11 years ago, The Times said.

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