



Palestinian state by 2005 not 'realistic'

Bush says to Egyptian newspaper

REUTERS, Cairo

US President George W Bush says the establishment of a Palestinian state might be delayed as a 2005 deadline under an internationally backed peace roadmap is no longer realistic.

Bush's comments in an Egyptian newspaper interview riled Palestinian leaders, who said the deadline was realistic if talks with Israel were accelerated.

Bush told the al-Ahram daily in an interview published yesterday: "I readily concede the date has slipped some."

"I think the timetable of 2005 is not as realistic as it was two years ago. Nevertheless, I do think we ought to push hard as fast as possible to get a state in place."

The comments came amid new anger in the Arab world over the US role in Iraq, as details emerged of the abuse of Iraqi prisoners by Americans, and accusations Washington's Middle East policy is slanted towards Israel.

Bush told the semi-official Egyptian daily that it "may be hard" to achieve the 2005 deadline due to flareups of Israeli-Palestinian violence and the collapse of

Palestinian Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas's reformist government last year.

But he added the United States was committed to the road map and he would make this clear in a letter to Palestinian Prime Minister Ahmed Qurie, who replaced Abbas late last year.

The road map charts reciprocal steps towards the establishment of a viable Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip in 2005, including demands the Palestinians

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Muralitharan on top of the world

REUTERS/BBC, Harare

Sri Lanka's Muttiah Muralitharan on Saturday became the most successful bowler in the history of cricket when he captured his 520th victim on the third day of the first Test against Zimbabwe.

The off-spinner beat the previous

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AL MP KILLING Jalil bins govt claim of intra-party feud

AGENCIES, Dhaka

The Home Ministry in a press note on Friday night described the death of Awami League (AL) lawmaker Ahsanullah Master as an outcome of intra-party conflict, which Awami League General Secretary Abdul Jalil yesterday rejected, saying it is a concocted story of the ministry to protect the killers and mislead people.

In the press note, the home ministry said a number of persons, including Awami League lawmaker Ahsanullah Master, received bullet

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PHOTO: STAR

Three key leaders of the Bikalpa Dhara Bangladesh -- former president AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury, right, retired army major Abdul Mannan, centre, and Mahi B Chowdhury, left, -- confer before the launch of the party from a press conference at Dhaka Reporters Unity yesterday.



PHOTO: STAR

A black cab along with dozen others bear the brunt of angry Awami League activists after the janaza of Ahsanullah Master, MP at Paltan yesterday.

Mob beats 2 to death at Tejgaon

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A mob in city's Tejgaon area yesterday beat two youths to death.

Police said employees and students of Sher-e-Bangla Agriculture University caught Mohammad Rafiq, 22 and Mohammad Masud 23 while they were fleeing with the valuables after robbing a house of an employee of the university at about 1:00pm.

The locals battered the two till

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Killing of AL MP condemned

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Different socio-political organisations yesterday strongly protested the killing of Awami League lawmaker Ahsanullah Master and expressed grave concern over the alarming slide in law and order.

The lawmaker was gunned down by unknown assailants at a rally in Tongi on Friday.

In a statement, the Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) said the government has now been trying to shield the real culprits by saying that he was killed due to intra-party feud.

Chief Whip of the Opposition in

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India readies for final lap of polls

AFP, New Delhi

Indian political leaders yesterday made fervent last-ditch appeals for support ahead of the final and biggest round tomorrow of the country's marathon general elections.

The politicians criss-crossed 12 states and four territories yesterday, which marked the close of campaigning to woo 215 million voters in a race that looked to be tighter than

pre-election opinion polls had forecast.

Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee was hitting the hustings in the northern state of Punjab state while opposition Congress party leader Sonia Gandhi was seeking support in the Indian capital New Delhi.

Vajpayee's deputy and senior leader of the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Lal Krishna Advani, was wooing votes

for the ruling coalition in Kerala state in the south.

"The alternative to Vajpayee is chaos and national degradation," Advani said as he appealed to voters to give the BJP a clear mandate.

Domestic financial markets have been on a knife edge over the outcome of the vote, fearful the elections will produce an unstable

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Power cut hits Dhaka

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Residents of different areas in the capital yesterday experienced severe power disruptions as Dhaka Electric Supply Authority (Desa) shed about 50 Megawatt of electricity.

Excessive loads on the power cables between Dhanmandi and Ulan grid stations were responsible for the power failure, Desa officials said.

Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Karwan Bazar, Green Road, Indira Road, Kalabagan, Tejturi Bazar, Monipurpara and Tejkunipara

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British troops face Shia wrath

AGENCIES, Najaf/ Miami

Gunmen loyal to radical Shia cleric Muqtada al-Sadr yesterday rampaged through Basra and another southern Iraq city, attacking British patrols and government buildings a day after a Sadr aide offered worshippers money for capturing or killing coalition soldiers.

At least two Iraqis were killed and three British soldiers were wounded in the fighting, a British military spokeswoman said.

Hundreds of Sadr's Mehdi Army militiamen armed with assault rifles

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Azad returns, blames Jamaat for attack

DU CORRESPONDENT

Eminent linguist, writer and Dhaka University teacher Prof Humayun Azad on his return home yesterday again blamed the Jamaat-e-Islami fundamentalists for the attack on him.

"Jamaat-e-Islami lawmakers Delwar Hossain Saidee and Motiur Rahman Nizami should be brought to justice for the attack on me," Azad told reporters at Zia International Airport (ZIA) after his arrival at 11:30am. He received 48-day treatment for his injuries at a Bangkok hospital.

"If Saidee and Nizami are caught, I will sue them."

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PHOTO: STAR

An army of newsmen, family members and admirers greet prominent writer Humayun Azad on his arrival at Zia International Airport yesterday after 48-day treatment at a Bangkok hospital.

CTG AMMO HAUL

Court okays use of arms

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A court here yesterday authorised the government to use the huge arms and ammunition seized from Chittagong Urea Fertiliser Ltd (CUFL) jetty recently and directed to specifically decide which of the forces should be given those arms.

Public Prosecutor (PP) advocate Abdus Sattar on behalf of the home ministry filed a petition Thursday seeking permission from the Court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate (CMM) to use the seized arms and ammunition by the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) or armed forces. The CMM's Court referred the case to the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's court.

"Metropolitan Sessions Judge Fazlul Karim yesterday in his judgment asked the government to make final decision in this connection since the appellant didn't specify any single name of the elite forces in his petition," said a court source to this correspondent yesterday afternoon.

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Prayer Timings

May 9

	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-15	4-50
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-34	6-38
Esha	8-00	8-30

Source: Islamic Foundation