

Palestinians angry at security overhaul

Arafat, Qureia hold talks, Peres calls for faster Gaza pullout

AP, REUTERS, Gaza City
Gunmen burned down the offices of Yasser Arafat's Palestinian Authority in Gaza yesterday, as anger spread over the Palestinian leader's overhaul of his security forces...

Dozens of militants belonging to an extreme offshoot of Arafat's Fatah movement stormed an office building in the southern Gaza city of Khan Younis shortly after midnight to protest Arafat's appointment of his cousin, Moussa Arafat, as chief of security.

the corruption and cronyism of the Palestinian Authority. Dissatisfaction with Arafat's reforms spread throughout the Palestinian territories, though violence was confined to the Gaza Strip.

chanted: "Listen, listen Abu Amr, we don't agree with your decisions and we don't agree with the appointments."

In the West Bank city of Ramallah, Arafat met his prime minister, Ahmed Qureia, about the political crisis that erupted over the continuing violence in Gaza and Qureia's attempt to resign as head of the Palestinian government.

One security guard was wounded in a gunbattle with the militants, who seized control of the building, stole weapons, and set fire to two offices and several cars parked nearby, witnesses and officials said.

They said Sharon, who seeks to bolster a coalition shaken by far-right rejection of his plan to pull soldiers and settlers out of Gaza by the end of 2005, ducked agreeing to a new timetable at the meeting with Peres.

The issue will be discussed during formal negotiations due to open later in the day between Sharon's right-wing Likud and Peres's center-left Labour Party, the sources said.

In Gaza late Saturday, an estimated 2,000 protesters many of them armed marched to the Palestinian Legislative Council building. Referring to Arafat, they

6 Pak militants among 10 killed in Kashmir

AFP, Srinagar

Indian troops killed 10 suspected militants in Kashmir, including six cross-border guerrillas from the Pakistani zone of the divided Himalayan territory, police said Saturday.

The six were gunned down after they sneaked into Indian Kashmir's northern Kupwara and southern Poonch districts on Friday night, a police spokesman said.

"Five of the infiltrators were shot dead early Saturday in the Shahpur area of Poonch district," said a police spokesman, referring to southern Poonch district, which borders Pakistan-administered Kashmir.

"The militants were killed during a fierce encounter that erupted as soon as they infiltrated our territory," he said, adding that a soldier was seriously wounded in the gunbattle.

BENAZIR SAYS Pakistan bought missile tech from N Korea

REUTERS, AFP, Tokyo

Pakistan's former prime minister, Benazir Bhutto, said her nation bought long-range missile technology from North Korea in the 1990s, but there was no exchange of nuclear technology in return, a leading Japanese daily reported yesterday.

"We did not obtain them in exchange for nuclear technology. We bought them with money," she said. "Through my visit to North Korea in December 1993, we managed to obtain long-range missile technology," Benazir was quoted as saying in a Japanese-language translation.

she lives in exile, that people had proposed to the government that Pakistan sell its nuclear technology to other nations.

It is widely believed that a series of Pakistan's Ghauri missiles are based on North Korea's Nodong missile.

Benazir served as prime minister from December 1988 to August 1990 and from October 1993 to October 1996. She told Sky News earlier this month she was confident of clearing her name over corruption charges and refused to rule out a return to politics in her homeland.

But Benazir told Asahi that she had not approved of any sales of nuclear technology while in office. Asked about speculation that Pakistan had exported nuclear technology, Benazir said it was true that while she was in office there were unspecified people who had proposed this to the government as a way of raising foreign currency, but that she persuaded them not to.

Asahi said that the original English text of the interview was not immediately available.

Philippines to pull out all troops from Iraq today

AFP, Manila

The remaining members of the tiny Philippine police and military contingent in Iraq are to withdraw today, Foreign Secretary Delia Albert said yesterday.

The change in foreign policy was made last week to save the life of truck driver Angelo de la Cruz, held hostage by Iraqi militants who threatened to behead him unless Arroyo recalled the contingent a month ahead of schedule.

The first batch of the 51-member contingent had already pulled out on Friday, and those remaining in Iraq are "finalizing the turnover of their responsibilities", Albert said.

President Gloria Arroyo's special envoy to the Middle East, Roy Cimatu, is to accompany them for an "exit call" to the new commander at Camp Charlie, in Iraq's Babil province on Monday.

"After the call, the remaining contingent will then proceed to Kuwait and from there return to Manila by commercial flight," she said.



PHOTO: AFP

Volunteers of Indian NGO Rama Krishna Mission distribute food among flood victims in Samastipur, some 110km north of Patna yesterday. Another five people drowned in floods ravaging South Asia while authorities in India's eastern Bihar state called for more troops amid widespread looting of government food stores.

Indian flood victims loot food stores

AFP, Patna

Another five people drowned in floods ravaging South Asia, police said yesterday, while authorities in India's eastern Bihar state called for more troops amid widespread looting of government food stores.

affected or displaced by the flooding, which began with the annual monsoon rains in mid-June. The chief magistrates of Rosera and Samastipur districts of Bihar sent calls Sunday for more army help as the flood situation deteriorated, officials said.

Similar incidents of the looting of food were reported from Samastipur, Darbhanga and Madhubani districts as flood victims complained of poor relief distribution, police said.

The latest deaths, in India's northeastern Assam and Meghalaya states, brings to at least 356 the number of people killed in the floods affecting Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal, according to the authorities in the various countries.

In Rosera, hundreds of flood victims looted supplies from government relief centers Saturday evening, the office of the district magistrate said.

Hundreds of soldiers using 40 boats are already distributing flood relief but with more than 12 million people affected, many in remote areas have yet to be reached, a disaster management official said.

The money is aimed at combating widespread erosion in central Myanmar caused by deforestation and drought, according to the semi-official weekly to be published Monday.

The victims also staged protests outside the offices of the sub-divisional officer and deputy superintendent of police, trapping them inside for hours, an official in the state capital Patna said.

The army has so far air-dropped 226 tonnes of food materials in some 210 sorties with the help of seven helicopters in Bihar, a government spokesman said.

Japan pledges aid to Myanmar despite Suu Kyi's detention

AFP, Yangon

Japan is to provide 344 million yen (3.1 million dollars) in aid to help Myanmar battle environmental degradation, the Myanmar Times said, despite the ongoing detention of opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi.

Japan last year threatened to suspend aid to Myanmar if the junta did not release pro-democracy icon Aung San Suu Kyi from house arrest, where she currently remains.

The weekly said the aid pledge had been signed under the Japanese government's grant aid scheme by ambassador Yuji Miyamoto.

Nepal aims to bring Maoists to talks table

AFP, Kathmandu

Nepal's deputy prime minister Saturday said the government's central goal was to bring Maoist rebels to the negotiating table and end a deadly revolt that has sapped the country's already poor economy.

"Our main aim is to bring the Maoist rebels to the peace table to end the conflict in the country," Deputy Prime Minister Bharat Mohan Adhikari told a news conference.

Adhikari, who is also finance minister, made the statement as he gave more details about the national budget he released Friday which increased defence and security spending by 13 percent but also allocated money to set up a "peace secretariat."

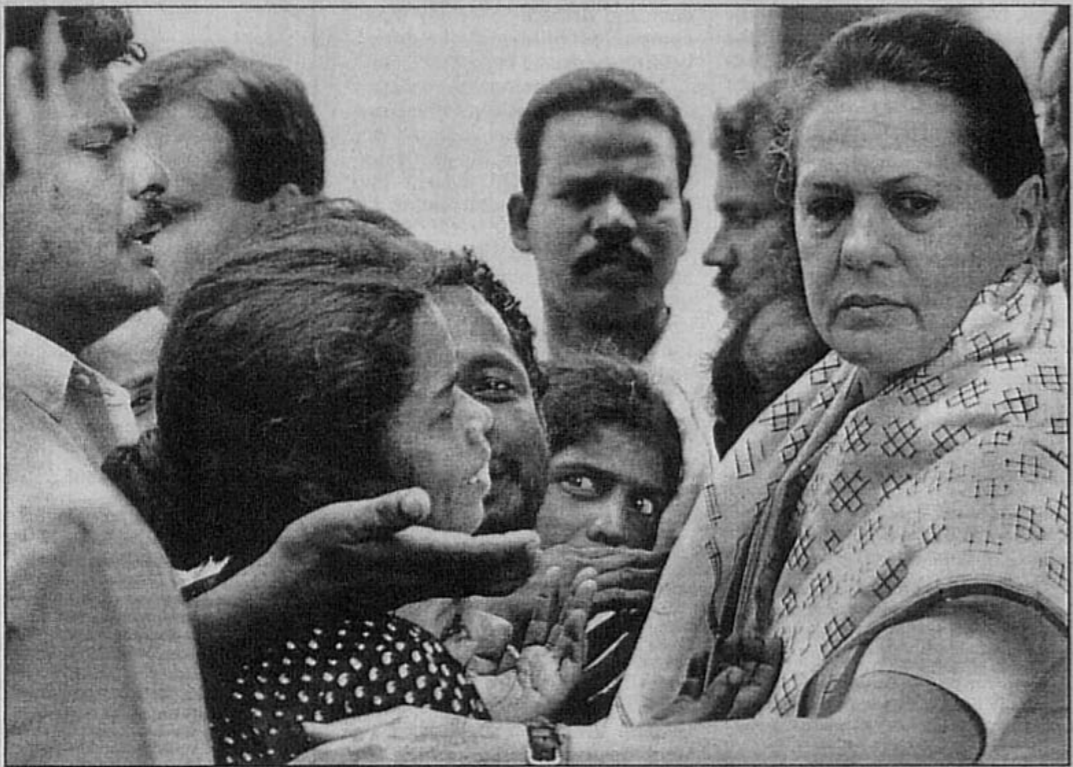


PHOTO: AFP

Indian Congress Party President Sonia Gandhi (R) meets grieving parents of children at the Saraswati Primary School in Kumbakonam, some 350km from Chennai in Tamil Nadu yesterday. A fire, which started as lunch was being prepared, destroyed the school on July 16, killing 90 young children in the small Indian town. Sonia announced a Rs one crore special package for the victims on behalf of UPA government for relief, rehabilitation and safety measures.

Yemen vows to quell uprising by preacher

90 rebels killed in last 3 days

AFP, Sanaa

Yemen's president vowed yesterday his forces would stand their ground in a bloody uprising led by a Muslim preacher that has left some 300 people dead in the past month.

"We will never give up, whatever our sacrifices," Ali Abdullah Saleh said, as a military source reported that more of rebel preacher Hussein Badr Eddin al-Huthi's supporters had been killed by the Yemeni army since Thursday.

"Almost 90 supporters of al-Huthi have been killed in violent battles with army forces over the past three days," said the source, who was among the army troops in the remote mountainous area of Maran near the border with Saudi Arabia.

"Dozens were killed and wounded among the armed forces, who since Thursday have launched an offensive to take control of the last hideouts of al-Huthi, whose supporters continue to put up a tough resistance," the source said.

Huthi, the self-styled "Emir al-Mumineen" or Prince of Believers, launched an uprising on June 18 and is believed to be holed up in the Maran area in northern Yemen with as many as 3,000 armed supporters.

The president accused Huthi, a former MP, and his supporters of being "foreign agents", and made references to "foreign intelligence services" without identifying them.

The signs have started to become clear and they will be made public," said Saleh, quoted by the state news agency Saba in comments marking 26 years of his presidency.

Thailand resumes talks with separatists

AFP, Bangkok

Thai officials have resumed peace talks with a prominent separatist leader living in Malaysia, a Thai defence source said yesterday after the government scrapped plans for similar dialogue last month.

Thai military officers representing the defence ministry had met recently with Bersatu leader Wan Kadir Che Man for talks aimed at ending violence in the Muslim majority south, the defence department source said.

"There are talks between Thai officials and Wan Kadir... the talks are ongoing at an official level," the source told AFP, without indicating when the low-level talks had resumed.

Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra had agreed to the initial meeting in May saying the government was not recognising the group but wanted to obtain information to help it quell the violence which has killed more than 200 people.

However the proposal met with resistance, particularly from Deputy Prime Minister Chavalit Yongchaiyudh who is responsible for security affairs and who said the talks were dangerous and would boost the status of the separatists.

'Sept 11 plotters may have passed thru' Iran before attack'

REUTERS, Tehran

Iran acknowledged yesterday that some al-Qaeda members involved in the Sept. 11 attacks on the United States may have passed through the country shortly beforehand.

US government sources have said a bipartisan commission's report this week on the Sept. 11 attacks will mention that some of the hijackers transited through Iran on their way to the United States.

"We have long borders and it is not possible to fully control them," Foreign Ministry spokesman Hamid Reza Asefi told a weekly news conference when asked about the commission's report.

"It is normal that five or six people who cross the border illegally over a period of five or six months may evade our attention. The same happens on the border between Mexico and the United States," he added.

Most Britons would not trust Blair in another war: Poll

AFP, London

Almost six out of 10 Britons would not trust Prime Minister Tony Blair to lead the country into another war following intelligence failures over Iraq's weapons of mass destruction, a poll showed on Saturday.

The opinion poll for the Sunday Times newspaper found that 57 percent of people would not trust Blair were he to take Britain into another conflict, with a mere 31 percent saying they would.

The figures are a damning indictment of how far public belief in the prime minister has plummeted in the wake of last year's US-led war in Iraq, which Blair strongly backed despite widespread domestic opposition.

Blair had argued that Saddam Hussein's weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) made the Iraqi leader an immediate threat and that he had to be removed, but no such weapons have been found in the 15 months since Baghdad fell.

Iran denies US accusations that it has collaborated with and harbored al-Qaeda members fleeing Afghanistan after the fall of the Taliban. The hard-line Islamic movement was overthrown in a US-led war at the end of 2001.

Tongi Pourashava Tongi, Gazipur Invitation for Bids (IFB)

Memo No. TPS/Eng/Bid/2004-2005/443 Date: 15-07-2004
IFB No. BMD/SP-Tongi/2004/01 Date: 15-07-2004
IDA Credit No.: 3177-BD Credit Name: Municipal Development Fund

- 1. The People's Republic of Bangladesh has received a credit from the International Development Association (IDA) in various currencies towards the cost of Municipal Development Fund (MDF) and intends to apply part of the Credit proceeds to cover eligible Municipalities for Infrastructure & Service Development.
2. The Superintending Engineer, Tongi Pourashava, District: Gazipur invites sealed bids for the improvement of road and drain as mentioned below. Procurement is open to all bidders from eligible source countries as define in the IDA's procurement guidelines, however, countries not eligible under the project also include: The Bahamas, Barbados, Darussalam, Cyprus, Kuwait, Qatar, Singapore, United Arab Emirates.

Table with 5 columns: Contract Package No., Name of the work, Bid security (Taka), Time for completion of work (Days), Price of bidding documents (Taka). Rows include W-41/BMD/03-Tong-04-79-RD/01 with sub-items a-e.

3. Schedule documents (and additional copies) may be purchased from the Office of the Deputy Commissioner, Dist-Gazipur, Upazila Nirbahi Officer, Gazipur Sadar, Dist-Gazipur. Executive Engineer, LGED, District: Gazipur & Superintending Engineer, Tongi Pourashava, Tongi, Gazipur on submission of a written application upon the payment of a non-refundable fees mentioned in the above table for each set in the form of Pay Order/Bank Draft from any scheduled bank in Bangladesh drawn in favour of Chairman, Tongi Pourashava, Tongi, Gazipur during normal office hours on all working days up to 17-08-2004. Interested bidders may obtain for the information from the same address during office hours up to 17-08-2004.

- 4. The provisions in the Instruction of Bidders and in the Conditions of Contract are the provisions of the Standard Bidding Documents (SBD); Procurement of Work, National Competitive Bidding (Trial Edition January 1998, received February 2003), issued by the World Bank Office, Dhaka.
5. Bids shall be valid for a period of 91 days after bid opening and must be accompanied by a bid security as mentioned in para 2 above in the form of Bank Draft/Pay Order/Bank Guarantee drawn in favour of Chairman, Tongi Pourashava, Tongi, Gazipur. Bids must be delivered to the office of the Deputy Commissioner, Dist: Gazipur, Upazila Nirbahi Officer, Gazipur Sadar, Dist-Gazipur, Executive Engineer, LGED, District: Gazipur & Superintending Engineer, Tongi Pourashava, Tongi, Gazipur on or before 18-08-2004 by 2:00 PM.
6. Bidders may deliver their bids by either in person or by courier service or by mail, which must reach the above office before the deadline for submission of bids. Bids received after the deadline will not be accepted.
7. Bids will be opened in the presence of the bidders' representatives who choose to attend at 3.00 PM on 18-08-2004 at the Office of the Superintending Engineer, Tongi Pourashava, District: Gazipur.
8. A pre-bid conference will be held on 09-08-2004 in the office of the undersigned at 11:00 AM. The bidders are requested to attend the conference on time.

Mir Rezaul Karim Superintending Engineer Tongi Pourashava District: Gazipur