

Palestinian polls campaign begins today

Little doubt over outcome

AFP, RAMALLAH, West Bank

The contest to succeed the late Yasser Arafat as Palestinian Authority president is set to formally begin on Saturday with the election of Mahmoud Abbas a seemingly foregone conclusion.

Abbas, who has already succeeded Arafat as chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organisation, is the overwhelming favourite to sweep to victory on January 9 after his chief rival Marwan Barghouti dropped out and the radical Islamist movement Hamas decided to boycott the ballot.

The 69-year-old former prime minister is expected to try and associate himself strongly with

Arafat's legacy during the campaign but also send a message to the international community by calling for an end to the armed uprising which has left more than 4,600 people dead -- more than three-quarters of them Palestinians.

While his image as a dour bureaucrat is never likely to inspire the kind of devotion among the Palestinians that Arafat enjoyed, Abbas is hoping to tap into a growing level of disillusionment after four years of violence.

In a speech on Tuesday to mark the end of the 40-day mourning period, Abbas eulogised his former boss for leading the Palestinians "to the doorstep of liberty and independence".

But he has also been pumping out a message in the lead-up to the official start of the campaign that the attacks by militants against Israel have been counter-productive and that weapons should only be borne by the security forces.

His comments in a newspaper interview earlier this month that "the use of weapons is harmful and it should stop" drew predictable condemnation from the likes of Hamas who argued that it was unreasonable to expect the Palestinians to lay down their arms while Israel continues to occupy the West Bank and Gaza.

But as the candidate of Fatah, the movement founded by Arafat and which has dominated Palestinian

political life for the last four decades, Abbas can withstand such criticism without worrying about a reversal at the ballot box.

With Hamas deciding to boycott what it sees as an illegitimate contest, the only real danger lurking for Abbas was from Barghouti, Fatah's leader in the West Bank who is currently serving five life sentences.

Barghouti did formally register himself just before the close of nominations but a concerted campaign by the Fatah leadership persuaded him to withdraw his candidacy within days.

None of the other six candidates, four of whom are independents, has registered double figures in the opinion polls.

2 convicted for attempts on Musharraf

REUTERS, Islamabad

A Pakistani military court convicted two low-ranking army officers on charges of involvement in assassination attempt on President Pervez Musharraf last year, a military spokesman said on Friday.

Spokesman Major-General Shakir Sultan said one of the convicts, a sepoys, was given the death penalty, the other was sentenced to 10 years in jail.

The military court handed down the sentences a few days ago and the trial of up to four other junior army officers and six air force officers was underway, Sultan said.

Musharraf, a key ally in the U.S.-led war on terror, survived two assassination attempts in December last year in the garrison city of Rawalpindi, near Islamabad.

Sultan did not say in which of the attempts the two had been involved.

The announcement of the verdicts came on the first anniversary of the second attempt on Musharraf's life in which 15 people were killed.

Russia sends food, water to astronauts in orbit

REUTERS, Moscow

A Russian spaceship blasted off on Friday carrying vital food and water to two astronauts whose supplies have been rationed because they were running so low.

Russian cosmonaut Salizhan Sharipov and American Leroy Chiao are eagerly awaiting the Christmas-time arrival of the Progress M-51, which launched from the Baikonur cosmodrome in Kazakhstan that Russia rents from its ex-Soviet neighbor.

"Everything went really well," a mission control spokesman said. "The spacecraft has now reached its orbit."

The craft is scheduled to dock on Dec. 26 with the International Space Station, where the two-man crew has been stationed since October.

A fortnight ago the astronauts were asked to cut their daily calo-

rie intake by around 10 percent because they only had enough food for a balanced diet for another month.

Russian officials accused the previous crew of overeating during their 6-month mission earlier this year, leaving a deficit of meat and milk and a surplus of juice and confectionary.

Apart from essentials such as food, water and fuel, the spacecraft is also delivering New Year presents to the crew from their families and extra food for a slap-up meal over the festive season.

"There are three parcels for the crew, carrying personal things such as letters, videos and photographs," Russian space agency spokesman said. "They make up 21 kg (44 pounds) of the load."

If the fresh supplies do not make it to the space station, the crew would have to evacuate the orbital outpost and return to earth almost two years ago.

Russia, with a space budget only a fraction the size of the United States', has often complained of its financial struggle to keep the \$95 billion station serviced single-handedly. Shuttle flights could resume in May, officials have said.

RHD Tender Invitation Notice

Bogra Road Division, Bogra

1. Employer : Ministry of Communication.
 2. Agency : Roads and Highways Department.
 3. Procuring entry name : Executive Engineer, RHD, Bogra Road Division, Bogra.
 4. Procuring Entry Code : Not use at present.
 5. Procuring entry district : Bogra.
 6. Invitation for : Shifting and re-construction of boundary wall, bath room, water tank, septic tank and painting work/re-construction of office boundary wall/supplying breaking hard stone boulders, pea-gravels for repairing damage pavement.

7. Invitation reference No : 3068.
 8. Date : 30-11-2004.
 9. Procurement method : Open tendering method (As per the Public Procurement Regulation-2003).
 10. Budget & source of fund : 4936 (168-RBF).
 11. Development partners (if applicable) :
 12. Project/programme code :
 13. Project/programme name :
 14. Tender package No. :
 15. Tender package name :
 16. Tender publication date :
 17. Tender last selling date : Up to office hours of 29-01-2005.
 18. Tender closing date and time : Up to 12:00 Noon of 02-02-2005.
 19. Tender opening date & time : On 02-02-2005 at 12:15 PM.
 20. a. Name and address of the selling tender document (Principal) : Road Division, Bogra.
 b. Selling tender document (others) :
 c. Receiving tender document :
 d. Opening tender document :
 21. Eligibility of tenderers : Any individual(s)/firm(s) who fulfil the qualifications criteria stipulated in the tender data sheet (TDS) and other conditions of the tender(s) document(s).
 22. Brief description of goods or works : Re-construction of boundary wall/supplying breaking hard stone boulders, pea-gravels for repairing damage pavement.
 23. Brief description of related services : Re-construction of boundary wall/supplying breaking hard stone boulders, pea-gravels for repairing damage pavement.

Lot No	Description and location of works	Tender security	Time completion	Price of tender documents
68.	Shifting and re-construction of boundary wall, bath room, water tank, septic tank and painting due to widening of Banani-Matidali Road (including Station Road) at 4th (P) KM under Road Division, Bogra during the year 2004-2005.	Tk 15,000/-	30 (thirty) days	Per page x 2/- + 30/-
69.	Re-construction of office boundary wall due to widening of Banani-Matidali Road (including Station Road) under Road Division, Bogra during the year 2004-2005.	Tk 8,000/-	30 (thirty) days	Per page x 2/- + 30/-
70.	Supplying breaking hard stone boulders, pea-gravels for repairing damage pavement from 1st to 26th KM of Bogra-Sherpur-Chandaikona Road at Nishindara RHD stackyard under Road Division, Bogra during the year 2004-2005.	Tk 11,000/-	10 (ten) days	Per page x 2/- + 30/-
24. Name of official inviting tender	: AHM Mainul Islam Choudhury.			
25. Designation of official inviting tender	: Executive Engineer, RHD.			
26. Address of official inviting tender	: Executive Engineer, RHD, Road Division, Bogra.			
27. Contracts details of official inviting tender	: Tel No. 051-66304 Fax 051-66304.			
28. The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject all tenders.				

Note: 1. In under any unavoidable circumstances tender documents selling, receiving & opening disturbed, the next working day will be applicable for the same respectively.
 2. Tender No 69 & 70 will not be sold in the office of the Executive Engineer, RHD, Planning Division (P&D), Sarak Bhaban, Ramna, Dhaka & Road Division, Rangpur.

AHM Mainul Islam Choudhury
 Executive Engineer, RHD
 Road Division, Bogra.

World's biggest earthquake in four years hits off Australian coast

AFP, Sydney

The world's biggest earthquake in almost four years, measuring 8.1 on the Richter scale, struck off the coast of Australia's southern island state of Tasmania early Friday, but caused no damage or injury.

Seismological officials said it was felt throughout Tasmania and the South Island of New Zealand, but because it occurred at a depth of 10 kilometres (6.2 miles) and far from inhabited land, it was barely noticed even by the scientists or penguins near Macquarie Island.

Geoscience Australia said the epicentre of the quake, which struck at 1:59 am (1459 GMT), was 400 kilometres (250 miles) off Macquarie Island and 800 kilometres (500 miles) off the coast of Tasmania, about halfway between Australia and Antarctica.

Seismologist Cvetan Sinadinovski said it caused build-

ings to shake in the island state for up to 15 seconds, but did not cause a tsunami or unusual tidal activity because it was of horizontal rather than vertical displacement and struck off the coast.

"If it happened underneath a population centre in Australia, this would probably have destroyed a whole city," Sinadinovski said.

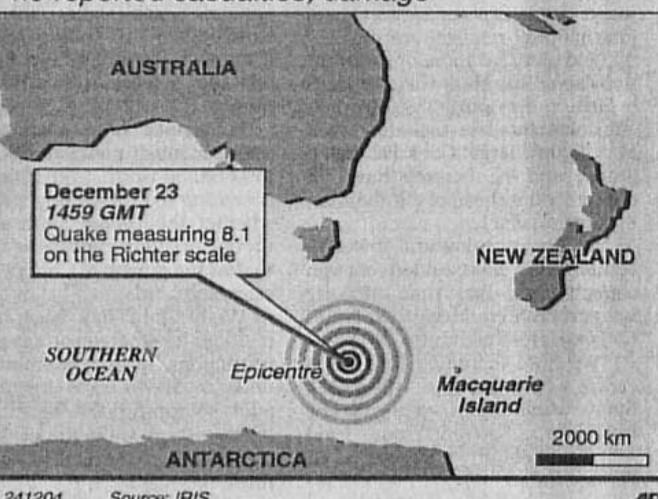
He described the quake as more than 30 times stronger than the earthquake that devastated the south-eastern Australian city of Newcastle in 1989, claiming 13 lives and injuring 160.

Friday's earthquake, which was initially registered as 7.8 on the Richter scale but later upgraded to 8.1, was the largest since one off the coast of Peru in early 2001, Sinadinovski said.

He said large earthquakes were common in the Macquarie Rise region, occurring every year or two.

Biggest quake in four years

But world record setting tremor causes no reported casualties, damage



Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Local Government Engineering Department

Office of the Executive Engineer, Faridpur

Memo No: LGED/EE/Farid/P-08/2004-2005/3067

Dated: 01-12-2004

Invitation for Tender (IFT)

Tender Notice No. 08/2004-2005

Sealed tenders are hereby invited from the eligible tenderers as defined in the tender documents for the undermentioned works as per terms and conditions stated below:

Sl. No.	Name of contract	Tender security (Tk.)	Time for completion (days)	Price of tender documents (Tk.)
01.	(Part-A) Periodic Maintenance of Shahasari Bazar to Shahasari Station road from ch.0.00m to 1150.00m = 1150.00m = 100.00Rm (Re-seal) under Boalmari Upazila, Dist. Faridpur.	36500.00	60	750.00
	(Part-B) Periodic Maintenance of Soalmari GC to Nagarkanda GC via Moyandia Bazar road from ch.0.00m to 3000.00m = 3000.00Rm (Re-seal) under Boalmari Upazila, Dist. Faridpur.			
	(Part-C) Periodic Maintenance of Satoir Bazar to Dadpur UP road from ch.0.00m to 700.00m = 700.00Rm (Re-seal) under Boalmari Upazila, Dist. Faridpur. Est. No. 09/2004-2005 (Code No. 200409).			
02.	(Part-A) Periodic Maintenance of Bahiria Bazar to Molikpur Bazar via Krishnanagar UP Office road from ch.10750.00m to 11750.00m = 1000.00Rm (Re-seal) under Sadar Upazila, Dist. Faridpur.	13800.00	45	300.00
	(Part-B) Periodic Maintenance of Karimpur Bridge to Kumar River road from ch.0.00m to 1400.00m = 1400.00Rm (Re-seal) under Sadar Upazila, Dist. Faridpur. Est. No. 10/2004-2005 (Code No. 2004010).			
03.	(Part-A) Periodic Maintenance of Bakhunda GC to Kanapuri GC via Tambulkhana road from ch.8400.00m to 9400.00m = 1000.00Rm (Re-seal) under Sadar Upazila, Dist. Faridpur.	12600.00	45	300.00
	(Part-B) Periodic Maintenance of Hogladangi village to Trimohona road from ch.100.00m to 1100.00m = 1000.00Rm (Re-seal) under Sadar Upazila, Dist. Faridpur. Est. No. 11/2004-2005 (Code No. 2004011).			
04.	Periodic Maintenance of Maniknagar R&H (Bazar) to Ramnagar Bazar via Ramnagar H/O Road from ch.0.00m to 5600.00m = 5600.00Rm (Re-seal) under Nagarkanda Upazila, Dist. Faridpur. Est. No. 12/2004-2005 (Code No. 2004012).	36900.00	45	750.00
05.	Periodic Maintenance of Hat Gozara GC to Hat Krishnapur GC road from ch.0.00m to 4150.00m = 4150.00Rm (Re-seal) under Nagarkanda Upazila, Dist. Faridpur. Est. No. 13/2004-2005 (Code No. 2004013).	37800.00	45	750.00
06.	Periodic Maintenance of Taima GC to Rosulpur GC Road from ch.0.00m to 5100.00m = 5100.00Rm (Re-seal) under Nagarkanda Upazila, Dist. Faridpur. Est. No. 14/2004-2005 (Code No. 2004014).	37100.00	45	750.00
07.	Periodic Maintenance of Sadarup H/O to Balishati GC via Dhekhali Bazar road from ch.0.00m to 2200.00m = 2200.00Rm (Re-seal) under Sadarup Upazila, Dist. Faridpur. Est. No. 15/2004-2005 (Code No. 2004015).	20200.00	45	500.00
08.	(Part-A) Periodic Maintenance of Krishnapur UP H/O to Shahapura road from ch.0.00m to 800.00m = 800.00Rm (Re-seal) under Sadarup Upazila, Dist. Faridpur.	32400.00	60	750.00
	(Part-B) Periodic Maintenance of Krishnapur UP H/O to Bhabukdia Bazar via Rothkhola Bazar at Loshkordia R&H road from ch.0.00m to 1200.00m = 1200.00Rm (Re-seal) under Sadarup Upazila, Dist. Faridpur.			
	(Part-C) Periodic Maintenance of Krish			