



PHOTO: AFP
National Democratic Institute election observers talk with a voter (L) as polls opened in Azariya on the outskirts of Jerusalem yesterday. (Left to right) Unidentified voter, former New Jersey governor Christine Todd Whitman, former Swedish prime minister Carl Bildt, former US president Jimmy Carter, and an interpreter.

Israel welcomes new era as a boost for ME peace

AFP, Jerusalem

Israel announced yesterday it was ready to meet the winner of the Palestinian presidential election, which the Israeli press hailed as the start of a new era and a boost to peace hopes.

"The prime minister intends to meet the elected Palestinian president as soon as possible," a senior adviser to Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon told AFP.

The source in Sharon's office stopped short of referring to Mahmud Abbas, but the head of the Palestine Liberation Organisation is the overwhelming favourite to win Sunday's vote and replace Yasser Arafat who died two months ago.

The source said such a meeting "would focus on security issues and security coordination between Israel and the Palestinian Authority" ahead of Israel's withdrawal from the Gaza Strip scheduled for this year.

Sharon, who long boycotted Arafat, has taken care not to be seen

as endorsing Abbas but has said recently he sees the coming year as an "opportunity for an historic breakthrough in relations between us and the Palestinians".

The peace process has been left in tatters by more than four years of deadly Israeli-Palestinian violence.

Israeli newspaper commentators from across the political spectrum voiced optimism over the election and the likely victory of the dovish Abbas.

"Two new governments will be established within the next few days, one in Jerusalem, one in Ramallah. The entire world is looking to these governments, and especially to their leaders. Great hopes, enormous dangers, heavy storms await them," Ben Caspit wrote in an editorial for the Maariv daily.

Caspit said both Abbas and Sharon "have their backs to the wall".

"The opposition is pressuring them, the extremists are threatening. Nevertheless, Sharon's situation is much better. He has a state, he

has an army, he has a public."

In an analysis entitled "An Optimist in a Pessimistic World" in the country's top-selling daily Yediot Aharonot, Roni Shaked also welcomed Abbas's rise.

"Abu Mazen, who is expected to be elected the Palestinian president today, is an optimistic man with good intentions," he said.

He wants to end terrorism, to rehabilitate the economy and to pull his people out of the deep mud into which they have sunk these past four and a half years. He even believes that he will be able to get along with Sharon," he wrote.

In the more left-leaning Haaretz daily, Zvi Barel also took heart in Abbas's likely accession to power, but warned the Israeli government should do its utmost to support his efforts.

"This turn allows (Palestinians) to say, loudly, that the armed intifada has failed, that the former leadership, that of Arafat, did not succeed in leading them to a solution," he said in an editorial.

Powell worried about future of Iraq

AFP, Washington

US Secretary of State Colin Powell admitted yesterday he is worried about the future of Iraq but said the United States could consider its mission there accomplished once a representative government and an Iraqi security force are in place.

Asked if he was concerned about elections deepening the conflict in Iraq, Powell said: "I think we all are worried about what's going to happen after the elections. But the elections are a necessary next step."

The January 30 vote will neither end the insurgency nor heal divisions between Shia and Sunni Muslims, but "those dangers don't go away by postponing or putting off an election," Powell said, according to an advance transcript of an interview with ABC's "This Week" program.

"We have to move in a direction where the Iraqi people have the opportunity to choose how they will be governed. What is the alternative to no election? Just continue going along with an appointed government? No, we need this election," Powell said.

US air strike hits wrong house in Iraq: 5 killed

5 other Iraqis, GI killed in fighting

AP, AFP, Baghdad

The United States military said it dropped a 500-pound bomb on the wrong house outside the northern city of Mosul on Saturday, killing five people.

The man who owned the house said the bomb killed 14 people, and an Associated Press photographer said seven of them were children.

The strike in the town of Aitha, 30 miles south of Mosul, came hours before a senior US Embassy official in Iraq met with leaders of the Sunni Arab community to apply political pressure against their threat to boycott Jan. 30 elections. The Arab satellite broadcaster al-Jazeera said the Sunnis asked the Americans to announce a timetable for a US troop withdrawal.

Violence also continued, with at least eight Iraqis killed.

A US soldier was killed in a bomb explosion while he was on patrol in Baghdad yesterday, the military said.

"A Task Force Baghdad soldier was killed at about 9 am (0600 GMT) on January 9 after a patrol was struck by an improvised explosive device," it said in a statement.

US troops opened fire after their convoy was struck by a roadside bomb at a checkpoint south of Baghdad, killing at least five Iraqis, including two policemen and three civilians, police said yesterday.

The firing occurred late Saturday near the police checkpoint in Yussifiyah, 15km south of Baghdad, Interior Ministry spokesman Col. Adnan Abdul-Rahman said. The US

military said it was investigating the report.

American officials repeatedly have insisted the vote go ahead, but it is an extremely delicate time, with Iraq's government perceived by many as closely tied to the US-led coalition.

Late Saturday, a US military statement said an F-16 jet dropped a 500-pound GPS-guided bomb on a house that was meant to be searched during an operation to capture "an anti-Iraqi force cell leader."

"The house was not the intended target for the airstrike. The intended target was another location nearby," the military said in a statement.

The homeowner, Ali Yousef, told Associated Press Television News that the airstrike happened at about

2:30 a.m., and American troops immediately surrounded the area, blocking access for four hours. The brick house was reduced to a pile of rubble, according to an Associated Press photographer at the scene.

An Associated Press photographer said from the scene that 14 members of the same family seven children, four women and three men were killed, and six people were wounded, including another child in the house and five people from neighboring houses. By evening, all 14 victims had been buried in a nearby cemetery, Yousef said.

The US military statement said coalition forces went to the area to provide assistance and said five people were killed. It said there was no other damage.

Storm pounds northern Europe: 14 killed

AFP, Stockholm

At least 14 people died, more than 1,000 homes were flooded and hundreds of thousands left without power after violent storms battered northern Europe over the weekend, bringing hurricane force winds and heavy rain.

Denmark, Sweden and the British Isles were worst affected, with 100 people forced to spend the night on a ferry after it ran aground Saturday in southwest Scotland, while a Dutch freighter issued a mayday call off the Danish coast.

The passenger ferry was later floated and towed to its berth after more than 30 hours at sea, with none on board injured, while the 15 crew members of the Dutch cargo ship which got into difficulties were rescued.

At least 11 people were reported dead in Denmark and Sweden, leaving 405,000 households without power, disrupting road and rail traffic and causing heavy damage.

In Britain three people were

found dead in Carlisle in northwest England, where one of the worst storms for decades brought flooding and high winds, police said, though they were unable to give the cause of death.

Some people in the town had to be rescued by helicopter from the roof of their houses surrounded by floodwater and cars were seen floating down streets.

Fifteen families had to be airlifted to safety while thousands of other people left their homes on their own initiative, police said.

Emergency services were still looking for two people carried away by floodwater, one by the river Aire at Apperley Bridge near Bradford and another near Forres in Scotland.

In southern Sweden, four motorists were killed when uprooted trees fell on their cars. A fifth was killed by a passing car when he tried to remove a fallen tree from a road, and another man sustained fatal injuries on his farm when bales of hay came crashing down on him during the storm.

S Asia faces challenge in absorbing tsunami aid

Rebels cast shadow over relief

AFP, REUTERS, Paris, Calle

The torrent of aid promised for reconstruction in South Asia in the wake of catastrophic tidal waves is likely to pose huge challenges to disaster-hit countries in ensuring that the money is spent effectively, past experience and analysts say.

One of the main lessons of experience is involving local community leaders in reconstruction, which could prove difficult in this disaster because many influential people in coastal towns and villages have probably been killed.

An unprecedented outpouring of government solidarity has so far raised pledges amounting to four billion dollars worldwide for the relief effort, according to UN figures.

At a donors' conference Thur-

sday in Jakarta, UN chief Kofi Annan said that 977 million dollars was needed immediately for specific projects to help five million people across 11 nations hit in the December 26 catastrophe.

But when the first-stage humanitarian effort begins winding down and the focus shifts to reconstruction, huge obstacles to implementing longer-term aid will have to be overcome, not least of which will be making sure that donors live up to their promises.

"It will be a very interesting experience to see the extent to which the pledges which have been made translate into actual, firm commitments and expenditures," said development specialist Hunter McGill at the Paris-based Organisation for Economic Cooperation

and Development.

Reuters adds: Long-running rebellions cast a shadow yesterday over relief efforts in Indonesia and Sri Lanka, nations badly struck by the tsunami two weeks ago.

Indonesia's military beefed up security in Aceh, the region worst hit by the Dec. 26 earthquake and tsunami, after gunfire erupted in the provincial capital Banda Aceh early in the day.

There were no casualties, but one policeman said it could have been related to a long-running insurgency in Aceh.

In Sri Lanka, UN Secretary General Kofi Annan said the government should use the world's support to heal the country's ethnic divisions and end a civil war with Tamil rebels.

India to install early warning system to detect disasters

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

In the backdrop of tsunami tragedy that killed over 10,000 people in India, an all-party meeting here yesterday agreed to set up an early warning system against the killer tidal wave and pass a law in parliament establishing a Disaster Management Authority to cope with calamity.

Briefing reporters after a four-hour meeting of all major political parties, Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee said the consensus emerged in the meeting suggesting the setting up of an early warning system to prevent further catastrophes like the tsunami which was promptly accepted by the govern-

ment.

A committee will be formed to select the best available technology for the early warning system, he said.

Mukherjee said the meeting also agreed on legislation in parliament for establishing a Disaster Management Authority. A bill for this will be brought in parliament in its forthcoming budget session beginning next month.

The meeting also decided that since 90 percent of tsunami victims in India's southern states of Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Pondicherry and Andaman and Nicobar islands directly administered by Indian government were fishermen, their houses should be rebuilt at a distance from the sea-shore.

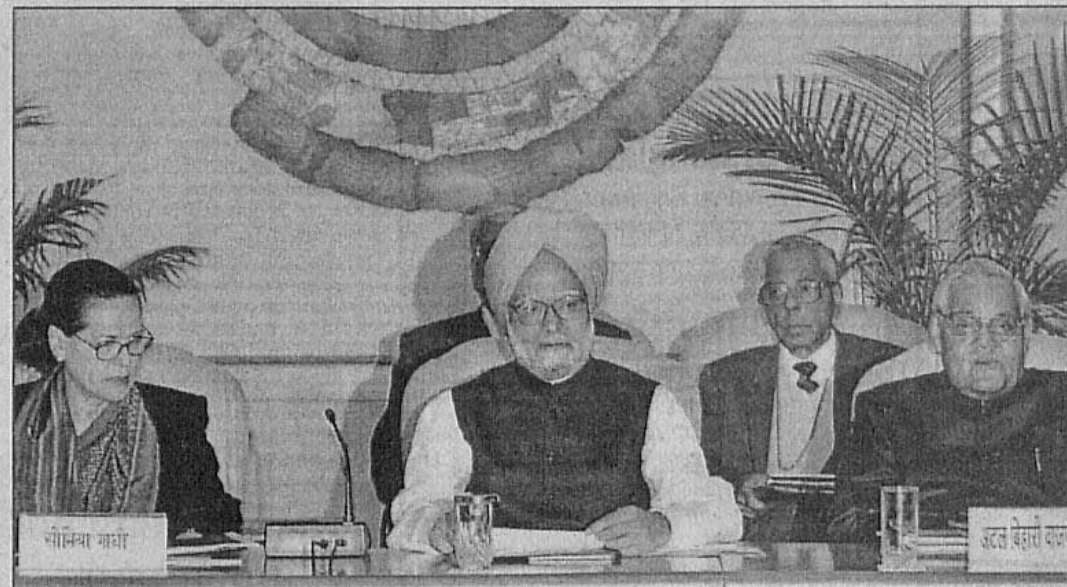


PHOTO: AFP
Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh (C) presides over an all-party meeting focusing on the tsunami disaster which hit the country two weeks ago as India's ruling Congress Party president Sonia Gandhi (L) and former prime minister Atal Behari Vajpayee (R) look on in New Delhi yesterday. The Indian navy's rapid tsunami rescue missions to Sri Lanka, the Maldives and Indonesia while turning down foreign aid has staked out to China New Delhi's dominant role in the Indian Ocean, analysts say.

Export Promotion Bureau
TCB Bhaban, 1, Kawan Bazar C/A
Dhaka, Bangladesh
Tel: 88-02-9144821-4 PABX
Fax: 88-02- 9119531
E-mail: epb.bd@aibd.net
Website: www.epb.gov.bd

Export to Russian Federation

If you are planning to export to Russian Federation, the Commercial Wing of the Embassy of Bangladesh in Moscow is ready to respond to your queries and assist in all possible ways. Please contact the following address and send your company profile with address, samples and product descriptions to our Mission in Russian Federation.

Mr. Mohammad Abdul Quadir
Commercial Counsellor, Commercial Wing
Embassy of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Moscow
Zemledelcheski Pereulok 6, Moscow-119121
Tel.: (7-095) 246-7900
Fax: (7-095) 248-3185/247-2887 (Defence Wing)
E-mail: bangla@com2com.ru

GP-28 EPB is committed to create wider market for Bangladeshi products.

Dhaka Electric Supply Company Ltd. (DESCO)
House # 3, Road # 24, Block-K, Banani Model Town, Dhaka.

Invitation of Bid, Notice No. 01/2005

- Dhaka Electric Supply Company Ltd., (DESCO) invites sealed bids from eligible bidders for the Civil Construction Works of Site Improvement and Construction of Guard shed at Sector-14, Uttara, Dhaka.
- Interested bidders may obtain further information on the bid from and inspect the bidding documents at the office of the Company Secretary, Dhaka Electric Supply Company Ltd., (DESCO), House # 3, Road # 24, Block-K, Banani, Dhaka, Bangladesh, Fax # 88-02-8854648, 88-02-8859642, Telephone # 88-02-8854648, 88-02-8859642.
- A complete set of bidding documents may be purchased by any interested eligible bidder on the submission of a written application to the above address and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Tk. 500/= (Taka five hundred) only in the form of Bank Draft or Pay Order from any scheduled bank of Bangladesh in favour of Dhaka Electric Supply Company Ltd.
- All bids must be accompanied by a fixed bid security of Taka 25,000.00 (twenty five thousand) in the form of Bank Draft or Pay Order from any scheduled bank of Bangladesh and must be delivered in accordance with the Instructions to Bidders at the above mentioned address.
- Bidding Document will be available for selling from 12/01/2005 to 08.02.2005 within office hour. Bids will be received till 12.00 hours on 09/02/2005 and will be opened on that day at 12.30 PM in presence of bidder's or their representatives, if any.
- Dhaka Electric Supply Company Ltd., (DESCO), will not be responsible for any costs or expenses incurred by bidders in connection with the preparation or delivery of bids.
- Dhaka Electric Supply Company Ltd., (DESCO) reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids without assigning any reason whatsoever.
- No bid will be received through Telex or Fax, by Post or by Courier Service.

Date: January 09, 2005 **A.H.M. Nurul Huda**
Memo No. DESCO/CS/2005/136 **Company Secretary**

Sudan govt, rebels ink peace accord

AP, AFP, Nairobi, Colombo

Sudan's vice president and the country's main rebel leader signed a comprehensive peace agreement to end Africa's longest-running conflict Sunday, concluding an eight-year process to stop a civil war in the south that has cost more than 2 million lives since 1983.

The lavish signing ceremony in neighboring Kenya where the talks were based was attended by Secretary of State Colin Powell and other top foreign diplomats.

The signatures by Sudanese Vice President Ali Osman Mohammed

Taha and John Garang, chairman of the Sudan People's Liberation Army, represented a breakthrough in efforts to end the north-south war that has pitted Sudan's Islamic-dominated government against rebels seeking greater autonomy and a greater share of the country's wealth for the largely animist south.

The conflict is blamed for more than 2 million deaths, primarily from war-induced famine and disease.

Meanwhile, UN Secretary General Kofi Annan said he was "excited" at the possibility of peace in Sudan.



PHOTO: AFP
Sudanese Vice President Ali Osman Taha (L) and the country's main rebel leader John Garang (R) exchange documents after signing the long-awaited peace accord as Kenyan President Mwai Kibaki watches in Nairobi Saturday amid calls for full respect for the deal and growing concern over the crisis in Darfur.

BIRDEM
An Enterprise of
Diabetic Association of Bangladesh
Ibrahim Memorial Diabetes Centre
122 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Shahbagh, Dhaka-1000

Tender Notice

Date of Receiving/Opening 17 February 2005 (Thursday)

Fresh sealed tenders are hereby invited from the reputed, bonafide, experienced manufacturers/suppliers/accredited agents, & general trading firms for the procurement of equipment as stated below. Detailed description of the equipment has been provided in the tender documents.

Tender No.	Name of tendered stores	Value of bidding documents in Tk. (non-refundable)
DAB/P(F)/074/2004-2005	Supply, Installation, Testing & Commissioning of Ophthalmic Operating Microscope.	2,000.00
DAB/P(F)/079/2004-2005	Supply, Installation, Testing & Commissioning of (a) Computed Radiography (CR) System; (b) Digital Color Doppler System with 4D & (c) Floor Top Heavy Duty Automatic X-Ray Film Processor.	5,000.00
DAB/P(F)/081/2004-2005	Supply, Installation, Testing & Commissioning of Central Monitoring System of ICU.	4,000.00

Salient Points:
Bidding documents are available in the Cash Section of BIRDEM (Room No. 208, OPD Building, 1st Floor) on all working days from 08 January 2005 to 16 February 2005 at 9.00AM to 12.00 hours (Noon) on cash payment of the scheduled value.
Tenders will be received in a tender box kept in front of the Room No. 224 on the receiving/opening date (17 February 2005) up to 12.00 hours (Noon) and offers will be opened at 12.30 hours (Noon) on the same day in presence of the tenderers (if any).
The association is not bound to accept the lowest offer and reserves the right to accept or reject the whole tender or any part of it or annul the bidding process without having any obligation to assign or communicate reasons thereof whatsoever and without any financial implications thereto.

Sajjad Hussain Khan
Director, Procurement

D-36