

Abbas's effort to bring Peace

RIGHT from the onset, the newly-elected Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas is finding himself in between rock and hard place. Though he is all buckled up for re-launching the peace talk, the Israeli counterpart is all set to upset his plan. But he is determined to see through his side of the plan. Abbas will arrive in Gaza on Monday afternoon to start ceasefire dialogue with Palestinian political powers and militant groups, official sources closed to Abbas said.

He would stay in Gaza for a few days talk with these groups, including Hamas and the Islamic Jihad, said the sources.

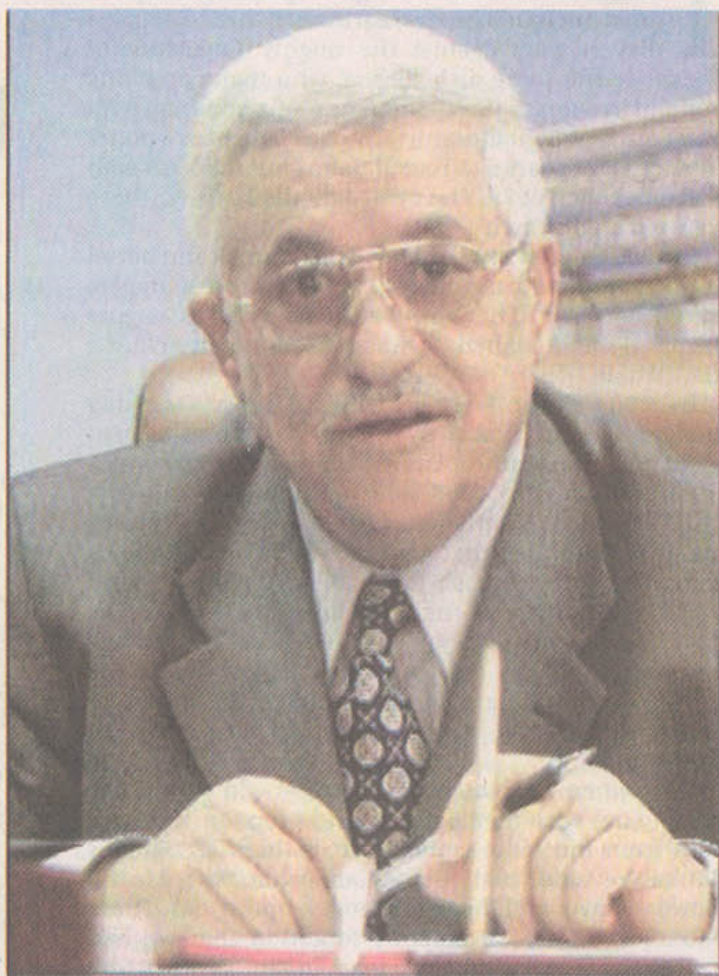
Abbas will ask the factions and their armed wings to halt attacks against Israel and give him a chance to bring Israel back to the negotiation table.

On the other side of the border, Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon is on the offensive. On January 15 he ordered all government officials to cut contacts with the Palestinian National Authority until it curbs violence, one day after militants killed six Israelis in the Gaza Strip.

Sharon also gave a free rein to the Israeli army to operate against militants in the Gaza Strip, accusing Abbas of not doing enough.

On the other hand, senior Jihad leader Nafez Azzam told reporters that his movement will study a ceasefire with Israel only if Israel immediately refrains from carrying out military actions in the Palestinian territories.

Mahmoud-al-Zahar, a top Hamas leader, said "it is the Zionists (Israelis) that are killing and



wounding civilians, we are only defending ourselves and our civilians."

He described the pressure imposed on Hamas to drop its arms and declare a unilateral ceasefire as unfair.

Life Sentence for Denying Paternity

A man by the name of Islam Ali received a sentence for life in jail and a fine of ten thousand for not acknowledging his son. And in the occasion of the failure to produce the thousand taka fine, the sentence is to be extended for another year. An additional session judge named Md. Shajahan Mojumdar of Jhenaidah gave the verdict.

Meanwhile, Ali's son, Milon was declared the offspring of Islam Ali and the daughter of Kashem Ali. The verdict entitles the child to maintenance till he reaches 21, which the government will provide.

According to the proceedings of the case, Islam Ali started a pre-marital relationship with the child's mother in the month of February, 2003. After the young woman became pregnant and gave birth to their love child, Ali denied having anything to do with the newborn and refused to marry the young women.

Kashem sued Islam Ali on behalf of his daughter in the court for Prevention of Repression against Women and Children. The recent verdict followed the accounts of ten witnesses who confirmed Ali having a relationship with the child's mother.