

US to defend Israel if Iran attacks: Bush

AFP, Jerusalem

US President George W Bush said Washington would defend its close ally Israel in the event of an Iranian attack, in remarks broadcast on Israeli army radio yesterday.

"Whether there's an imminent attack coming, I don't think so," Bush said in excerpts of an interview with an Israeli television station to be aired in its entirety later in the day.

"If Iran did strike Israel... We will defend our ally, no ands, ifs or buts," he said.

Bush's statements came just days before he arrives in the region for his first visit since taking office in January 2001 and the first trip by a sitting US president since December 1998.

The visit is aimed at boosting Israeli-Palestinian peace talks relaunched at a US conference in late November and at rallying regional opposition to Iran's controversial nuclear programme.

Israel considers the Islamic republic its main regional threat in the wake of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's repeated statements for it to be wiped off the map.

Widely considered to be the Middle East's sole if undeclared nuclear power, Israel along with the US suspects that Tehran's nuclear programme is a cover for developing atomic weapons, a charge Iran has

denied.

"If I were an Israeli, I would take the words of the Iranian president seriously, and as president of the United States I take them seriously," Bush said.

International support for further sanctions against Iran has been waning since a US National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) in early December said that the Islamic

republic had halted a nuclear weapons programme in 2003.

On Sunday Iran slammed Bush's planned trip as an interference in relations between regional states.

"We see such a trip as interference in the relations of the countries in the region and propaganda," foreign ministry spokesman Mohammad Ali Hosseini told reporters in Tehran.

Sudan ready for any attack by Chad

AFP, Khartoum

Sudan will repel any attack by neighbouring Chad, its armed forces said yesterday, the day after Ndjamena threatened to pursue Chadian rebels into Sudan where they have allegedly sought shelter.

"All military bases in western Sudan are ready to deal with any attack launched from Chadian territory," armed forces spokesman Mohammed Othman al-Aghbash was quoted as saying by the official SUNA news agency.

"The Chadian government continues to threaten to attack Sudan saying it is hosting the Chadian opposition... which is not

true because our government has no interest in doing that," Aghbash said.

Chadian President Idriss Deby Itno on Saturday threatened to pursue and strike Chadian rebels inside Sudan, repeating charges that Khartoum is trying to destabilise his country.

Deby claimed his forces had already driven out the rebels from Chad and said: "We're going to destroy them in their nest inside Sudan... We're going to make them eat dust inside Sudan."

Rebels and government forces clashed violently in eastern Chad between November 26 and December 4, scuttling October peace accords signed in Libya.

Sarkozy to marry girlfriend Bruni

AFP, Paris

French President Nicolas Sarkozy is to marry his new girlfriend, the former model turned singer Carla Bruni, a French newspaper reported yesterday, claiming a wedding was "imminent".

Citing several anonymous sources, the Journal du Dimanche said the couple, currently on a private visit to Jordan at the invitation of King Abdullah II, are believed to have set a wedding date for either February 8 or 9.

Presidential spokesman David Martinon declined to comment on the front-page story.

Sarkozy, 52, and Bruni, 39, were photographed on Saturday touring the rose-red city of Petra in southern Jordan, the president carrying Bruni's young son Aurelien on his shoulders.

During a Christmas trip to Egypt, the recently-divorced president reportedly gave Bruni an engagement ring -- a pink diamond heart -- while Bruni gave him a luxury Swiss watch in grey steel.

Sarkozy and Bruni -- heiress to a tyre fortune whose former boyfriends include rock stars Mick Jagger and Eric Clapton -- have been trailed by a swarm of paparazzi since their romance was first publicised in mid-December.

Bruni may accompany Sarkozy on an official trip to India late this month, according to local media, which said the government of the morally conservative country was struggling to find the right protocol to greet her.



Admission seekers coming out of the examination halls at Chittagong University on the first day of the admission test yesterday under Gha unit. Eighteen students are vying for each seat in the unit.

Health centre opens at Keraniganj

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Keraniganj Health Care Centre under Health Care Development Project of Diabetic Association of Bangladesh (DAB) was formally inaugurated yesterday to bring the health care services to doorsteps of the people.

Charge de Affairs of the Netherlands Embassy to Bangladesh Fritz Meijndert inaugurated the centre while Director of the centre Dr SM Akmal Ali, Executive Director of BISH Dr Md Lutfur Rahman, Director of the Project AKM Shahjahan and President of Managing Council of the project Prof AK Azad Khan were present.

On the occasion, a medical camp was arranged to give treatment to the people.

The project taken by the DAB in association with Netherlands-Bangladesh has been working to provide health facilities to all diabetic and non-diabetic patients.

Construction works of hundred-bed hospital in Dinajpur, Thakurgaon, Bogra and Pabna each and a two hundred-bed hospital in Shiraiganj under the project are on the verge of completion.

Four centres in Talora, Shatabganj, Ramshankail and Kashinathpur upazila in northern region of the country have been working in full swing that were inaugurated a year ago, says a handout of DAB.

Ten centres at Dhanmondi, Banani, Mirpur, Motijheel, Uttara, Rampura, Bashabo, Savar, Keraniganj and Jurine in the city under the project already are in operation, the handout added.

US, Turkish presidents set for fence-mending talks

AFP, Washington

With the United States bowing to Turkey's insistence on punitive action against Kurdish rebels in Iraq, the two nations can look forward to a more harmonious encounter at summit talks here this week.

President George W Bush is set to welcome his Turkish counterpart Abdullah Gul to the White House on Tuesday morning, shortly before Bush leaves for the Middle East on his first visit to Israel and the Palestinian territories.

The leaders are expected to discuss Turkey's long-running bid to join the European Union, an aspiration warmly backed by the United States in the face of resistance from some EU powerbrokers such as France.

And with Bush seeking to revitalize Middle East peace talks, Turkey's influence with Israel and Arab states will also figure in Gul's Washington talks, as will Iran's nuclear ambitions, according to the State Department.

It will be Gul's debut trip to Washington since the mildly Islamist politician took over as Turkey's president in August.

Since then, Turkish opinion has been inflamed by deadly cross-border attacks from northern Iraq by the separatist Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), and by a push in the US Congress to accuse the old Ottoman Empire of "genocide".

But on both fronts, Turkey's government has grounds for satisfaction as the two presidents bid to

reinvent the oft-strained partnership between the United States and its Muslim-majority NATO ally.

Mark Parris, a former US ambassador to Turkey, said the breakthrough came in November when Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan enjoyed a

Canadian FM to visit ME, India

AFP, Ottawa

Canadian Foreign Minister Maxime Bernier will go to the Middle East and India next week in an effort to promote Arab-Israeli peace and improve bilateral ties, the government announced Saturday.

"Our message in the region is clear: we support efforts that will lead to a peaceful and comprehensive resolution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, including the creation of a Palestinian state living side by side in peace and security with Israel," Bernier said in a statement.

He added that in India, he will have a chance "to discuss a wide range of bilateral and regional issues, such as the situation in Pakistan and Afghanistan."

On January 9, Bernier is scheduled to meet with Saudi King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz. He will then head to New Delhi for talks with his Indian counterpart.

Bernier will conclude his visit in Ramallah, West Bank, and Tel Aviv, Israel, on January 13 and 14.

Seven killed in Delhi slum fire

AFP, New Delhi

At least seven people were killed when a fire tore through a slum yesterday in the Indian capital New Delhi, the fire department said.

Ten others were injured as the inferno engulfed hundreds of make-shift huts in the overcrowded old city commercial district, city fire department chief RC Sharma told reporters.

"Seven people were charred to death and almost all the 300 huts completely gutted in the fire," Sharma said.

The cause of the blaze was not immediately known, but Sharma said sparks from an open stove lit to ward off the bitter winter cold may have been to blame.



Combank Sports and Recreation Club of Commercial Bank of Ceylon (CBC) donates 500 blankets and winter clothes to Prothom Alo Relief Fund for the Sidr-affected people recently.

ADVANCED DEVELOPMENT TECHNOLOGIES

For A Beautiful Tomorrow

ADVANCED NOORANI TOWER

An Elegant OFFICE SPACE at Mohakhali

ADVANCED CENTRE : 176 Gulshan Avenue, Gulshan North, Dhaka-1212
Phone: 8815323, 8811923, 9884746, 9896455, 8813042, 8813046, 8813047, 8821692, 8821749, 8821988, 9861434, 9884745 Mobile: 01819-222314, 01819-226568, 01819-226567, 01819-222303, 01819-226569, 01819-558022, 01819-558010, 01819-558014, 01819-558015, 01819-558016, 01819-558021, 01819-558023, 01819-558024
Fax: 88-02-8810788 E-mail: adtl@citelco.net, advanced@agni.com Web: www.advanced-bd.com

UK, US, Australian, French, or Canadian?

Get your world-recognised degree, here at Taylor's Malaysia.

Seminar & Spot admission conducted by representative from Taylor's. Scholarships & Study Grants for deserving candidates available

Date: 8th January, 2008
Time: 10:30 AM - 4:30 PM
Venue: Kanak arcade, House-14(5th Floor), Sonargaon Janapath Road, Sector-9, Uttara, Dhaka-1230

Please Register
PRUDENCE EDUCATION CONSULTANT
Phone: +88-02-8951966
Fax: +88-02-8957576
Email: adroitaf@gmail.com

ARCHITECTURE, BUILDING & DESIGN	BIOMEDICAL SCIENCE
COMPUTING	ENGINEERING
HOSPITALITY & TOURISM	LAW
PRE-UNIVERSITY STUDIES	South American Education
International Canadian Pre University	American Degree Transfer Program

Email: admissions@taylors.edu.my www.taylors.edu.my



Fritz Meijndert, charge d'affaires and head of Development Cooperation and Economic Affairs, Embassy of Kingdom of the Netherlands in Dhaka, speaks at the inaugural ceremony of Keraniganj Health Care Centre in Keraniganj yesterday.

Three drug peddlers held

BSS, Rangamati

Police arrested a drug peddler and seized five grams of heroin from his possession at hatchery area in Rangamati town yesterday.

He was identified as Mohammed Alamgir, 22, son of Shafiqul Alam.

Besides, members of the Department of Narcotics Control with the help of Kawkhali police arrested two ganja sellers named Bidubushan Chakma, 30, and Ujjal Chakma, 29, of Chhoto Daluchhari village under Kawkhali upazila on Friday.

The authorities also seized five kilograms of ganja from their possessions.



NAVANA Residential Projects

Rangalia 2025-2045 sft. (approx.)

Shamim Beaumont 1700 sft. (approx.)

(1 sft = 0.0929 sqm)



Navana Real Estate Ltd.

House No. 35, Road No. 9/A (New), Dhanmondi R/A, Dhaka.

Tel: 912 1602 (Hunting)

Cell: 01819 411 228, 01713 424 255, 01713 424 246, 01713 424 247, 01713 424 248, 01817 036 501, 01817 036 502, 01817 036 503, 01817 036 504, 01817 036 505, 01817 036 506, 01817 036 507, 01817 036 508, 01817 036 509, 01817 036 510, 01817 036 511, 01817 036 512, 01819 411 225, 01819 411 226, 01819 411 227

Fax: 880-2-911 8292 E-mail: info@navana-realestate.com

www.navana-realestate.com

Member REHAB

Celebrating 4th Anniversary of

FASHION SHOW & LIVE MUSIC

on Thursday 10 January, 2008

SINGER: AKHI ALAMGIR &
Fashion Show by Shumon

BUFFET DINNER at TK 1500 per person at STEAK HOUSE
For Reservation: 01196055365, 01720106780