

### Lankan jets bomb suspected base of Prabhakaran

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lankan war planes bombed a suspected base of the top Tamil Tiger leader in the island's north yesterday as ground attacks killed at least 20 rebels, the defence ministry said Wednesday.

Aircraft hit a base of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) at Irinamadu where the separatists have a clandestine airfield, the ministry said. It gave no details of casualties or damage.

Military sources said six aircraft were deployed for the bombing raid based on intelligence reports that Tiger leader Velupillai Prabhakaran was receiving medical treatment at a jungle hideout in the region.

There was no immediate reaction from the guerrillas to the military statement.

Sri Lanka's military has already claimed either killing or wounding Tiger chieftain Prabhakaran, 53, in previous air attacks inside rebel-held territory.

The guerrillas have made no comment, but released pictures of the Tiger leader at meetings with his fighters.



French President Nicolas Sarkozy (R) welcomes his Pakistani counterpart Pervez Musharraf prior to a meeting on Tuesday at the Elysee Palace in Paris.

## Musharraf wins backing from Sarkozy

### French president calls for a free and transparent election in the crisis-ridden country

AFP, Paris

Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf on Tuesday won pledges of support from French President Nicolas Sarkozy who called for free, transparent and safe elections next month in the unstable nation.

Musharraf met with Sarkozy on the second leg of a European tour aimed at shoring up his battered image after months of turmoil and the assassination of opposition leader and former prime minister Benazir Bhutto last month.

"France will continue to provide its full support in the fight against terrorism, because France and the world have an interest in stability, unity and democracy-building in

Pakistan," said Elysee spokesman David Martinon.

"The only response to terrorism and terrorists is holding elections in the best possible conditions, with freedom, plurality, transparency and security," added Sarkozy's spokesman.

Musharraf earlier dismissed fears Tuesday that his nuclear-armed country could slip into al-Qaeda's hands, saying there was a "zero percent chance" of a takeover by Islamic extremists.

Addressing a foreign policy institute, he insisted it was impossible for militants to gain access to Pakistan's nuclear arsenal.

The only way for that to happen, he said, would be if al-Qaeda or the

Taliban "defeated the Pakistani army entirely" or if extremist religious groups won next month's elections.

"There is a zero percent chance of either one of them," Musharraf said. "They (the weapons) cannot fall into any wrong hands."

Months of unrest and Benazir's assassination have crystallized fears in the West that Pakistan risks spinning out of control.

Musharraf pledged that elections postponed after Benazir was killed and now scheduled for February 18 would be "free and fair" and added: "We will make sure they are peaceful."

Regularly accused of failing to keep a lid on extremists, Musharraf

rejected suggestions al-Qaeda could take advantage of the situation to seize control of the country.

"We don't think it is possible that this al-Qaeda or Taliban can take over in Pakistan," Musharraf told the French Institute of International Relations (IFRI). "We cannot be defeated like this."

Islamic militants launched new attacks on forts on the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan Tuesday, leaving seven troops and 37 rebels dead.

Musharraf has been keen to bolster his credibility as a pivotal ally in the fight against terrorism following Bhutto's assassination, blamed on al-Qaeda and allies of tribal leader Baitullah Mehsud.

### Pak troops pound militant hideouts

AFP, Wana, Pakistan

Pakistani troops hammered militant hideouts and reinforced outposts yesterday in a tribal area where days of clashes have left more than 20 troops and 100 rebels dead, the army said.

There were no immediate details about casualties in the latest fighting in South Waziristan tribal district bordering Afghanistan, the hideout of a rebel commander accused of masterminding the killing of opposition leader Benazir Bhutto.

In the neighbouring tribal zone of North Waziristan one soldier was killed and two wounded when Islamist fighters fired rockets at a paramilitary fort.

"Troops are engaging miscreants and attacking their hideouts," chief military spokesman Major General Athar Abbas told AFP.

"We are reinforcing the (military) posts in South Waziristan because of the continued attacks from miscreants."

### Thaksin's wife pleads not guilty in graft case

AFP, Bangkok

Ousted premier Thaksin Shinawatra will return to Thailand in May to defend himself against corruption charges, his wife said yesterday as she pleaded not guilty in a graft case.

Pojaman Shinawatra did not speak during the 15-minute hearing at the Supreme Court, and smiled at reporters as she left the building.

But she pleaded not guilty in a written filing, which was read out by the judges in court. Her statement said Thaksin, who has also been charged over the same controversial land deal, would return in May to defend himself.

## Anti-Musharraf lawyers win human rights award

AFP, Hong Kong

Two of Pakistan's top lawyers, who led protests against President Pervez Musharraf's attempts to sack the country's chief justice, have won an Asian human rights award, organisers said yesterday.

Munir Malik, former president of the Pakistan Supreme Court Bar Association, together with his

successor, Aitzaz Ahsan, have been awarded the Asian Human Rights Defender Award by the Hong Kong-based Asian Human Rights Commission (AHRIC).

The pair were instrumental in leading the vociferous protests against Musharraf's attempt to sack Chief Justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry last March.

"The two lawyers' leadership, courage and unwavering commit-

ment to their profession, their integrity and their country are strongly symbolic of their cause," the award organisers said in a statement.

"In them we acknowledge and award all of the lawyers, judges and others who have refused to bow down to the immoral pressure of military force, including all of those dismissed from their posts and kept in their houses."

### Hillary defends her husband's role in campaign

AFP, Washington

White House hopeful Hillary Clinton on Tuesday strongly defended her husband's tough campaign attacks against her rival Barack Obama despite charges the ex-president's tactics were too harsh and unbecoming for a former head of state.

The New York senator made no apologies for her husband's scathing attacks on Obama a day after an acrimonious debate among the three main contenders for the Democratic presidential nomination, saying her husband's role was similar to that of other spouses in the race.

"You go back and look at this campaign each of us who were on that stage last night have incredibly dedicated, passionate support from our spouses," Clinton told reporters before setting off to California.

She said asking pointed questions about Obama's record was necessary and dismissed criticism that her husband's tactics could sow divisions within the Democratic ranks.

"That has absolutely nothing to do with a unified Democratic party around a nominee and full support for whoever our Democratic president will be," Clinton said.

Obama's campaign said it was unbecoming for a former commander-in-chief to be engaging in harsh attacks against a fellow Democrat and some party figures have advised Bill Clinton to tone down his words or risk tarnishing his presidential legacy.

## Egypt arrests 500 during pro-Gaza demo in Cairo

AFP, Cairo

Egyptian authorities detained at least 500 people in Cairo yesterday who were demonstrating in support of Palestinians in the Gaza strip, a security source told AFP.

"The protesters, most of whom belong to the opposition Muslim Brotherhood, were detained as they staged the protest in front of the Arab League headquarters" in the centre of the Egyptian capital, the source said.

The Islamist group, the largest opposition movement in the country, said on its website that 1,000 of its members had been arrested.

Witnesses said security forces used batons and tear gas against the demonstrators and chased them through the streets before arresting them.

"Those left standing made their way to the nearby lawyers' union, where about 3,000 people gathered, chanting slogans against the Israeli blockade on Gaza."

"Gaza residents, we are with you night and day!" shouted the protesters holding up copies of the Koran.

"Keep strong Haniya, don't let go of your gun," they chanted in a call to sacked Palestinian prime minister and senior Hamas official Ismail Haniya.

The prolonged blockade was tightened six days ago to a full-scale lockdown, with Israel halting all fuel shipments and even the entry of humanitarian aid, with the aim of

stopping rocket fire from the territory.

On Tuesday, the blockade was partially lifted, with some fuel being allowed in.

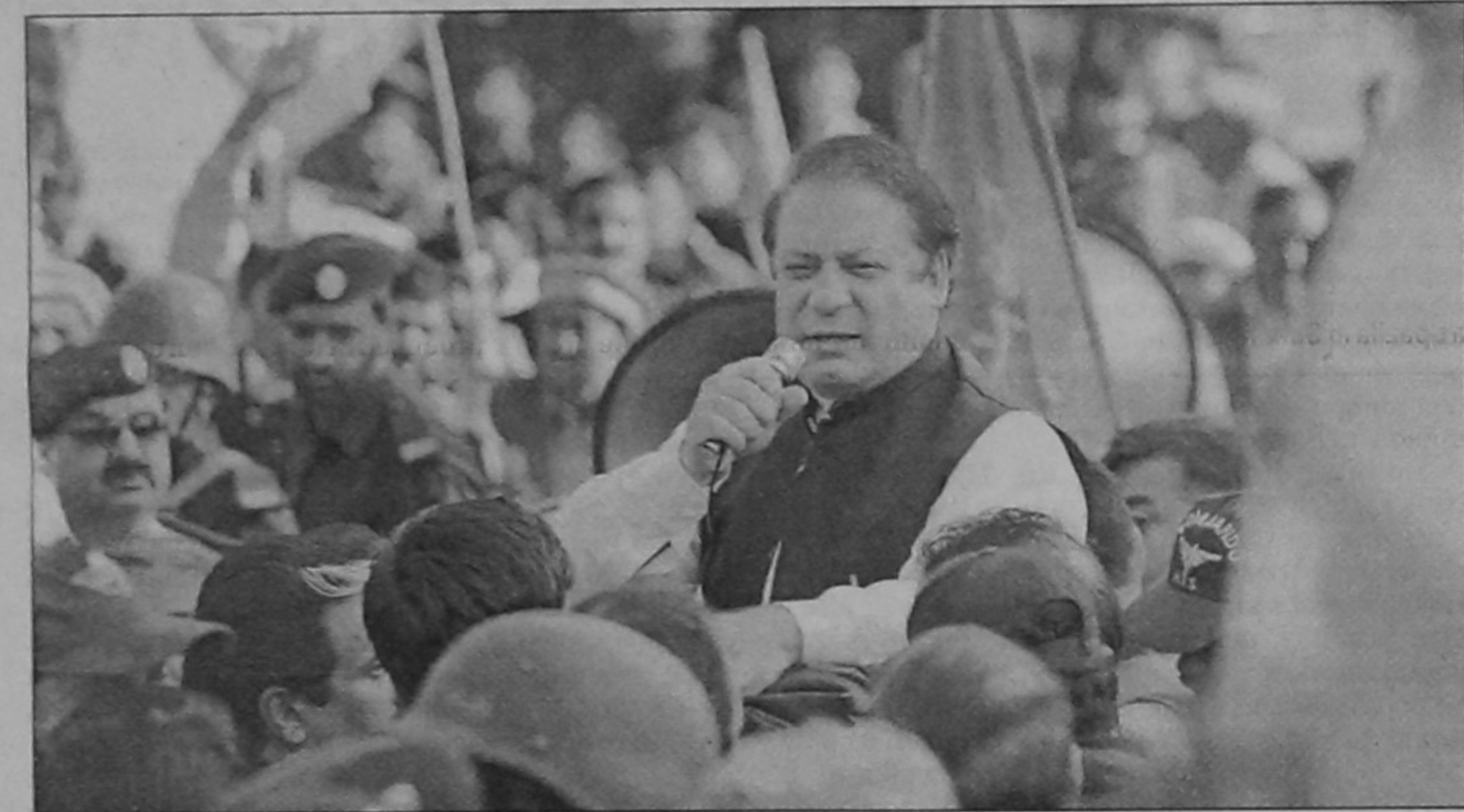
The protesters also took part in a mass prayer calling on God "to help lift the blockade, and to put our leaders on the right path, and to turn the ground under (Israelis') feet into fire."

Cairo's arrests were part of a nationwide crackdown on Muslim

Brotherhood members who called for demonstrations across the country.

A security source told AFP that at least 200 members of the group had been detained in the last three days in six different provinces.

The movement's supreme guide Mohammed Mehdi Akel said in a statement he expected the crackdown to widen as protests against the Israeli blockade increased.



Pakistani opposition leader and former premier Nawaz Sharif (C) addresses party supporters after he was stopped by riot police near the residence of deposed chief justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry in Islamabad yesterday. Police stopped Sharif from meeting Iftikhar, who is under house arrest for refusing to endorse emergency rule.



Indian villagers stand in a queue to give their chickens for culling to the health workers at Haribati village in Murshidabad district, some 330-km north of Kolkata, yesterday as bird flu spreading fast in the Indian state of West Bengal.

INTERNATIONAL TENDER NOTICE			
1	Ministry/Division	Ministry of Health & Family Welfare (MoHFW)	
2	Agency	ICDDR,B	
3	Procuring Entity Name	Executive Director, ICDDR,B	
4	Procuring Entity District	Dhaka	
5	Invitation for	Imported Materials/Equipment for Hospital Patient Care Activities (C&F Dhaka, airfreight basis)	
6	Invitation Ref No & Date	Ref. Shapoom/Has-3/13-06/2007/460, dated: 20-11-2007	
7	Procurement Method	Open Tendering Method (PPR-2003)	
8	Budget and Source of Funds	GoB	
9	Project (if applicable)	Post Flood Medical Supplies	
10	Tender Package Number & Name	Package No. 08/01, Post Flood Medical Supplies	
11	Mode of Payment	Through Letter of Credit (L/C)/credit/advance	
12	Tender Publication Date	23 January, 2008	
13	Tender Last Selling Date	04 March, 2008	
14	Pre-tender Meeting date and place	05 March, 2008, 10:00 A. M. at Procurement & Materials Office, ICDDR,B, Mohakhali, Dhaka.	
15	Tender Closing Date and Time	10 March, 2008 Time: 11:00 Hours	
16	Tender Opening Date and Time	10 March, 2008 Time: 11:30 Hours	
17	Name & Address of the office(s)	<b>Address</b> Treasury Unit, 2 <sup>nd</sup> floor, Hospital Building, ICDDR,B, Mohakhali, Dhaka. Procurement & Materials Office, ICDDR,B, Mohakhali, Dhaka. Procurement & Materials Office, ICDDR,B, Mohakhali, Dhaka.	
18	Eligibility of Tenderer	(i) The tenderers shall be Manufacturers / Sole Agents / Sole Distributors from eligible source countries. (ii) All prices shall be on C&F Dhaka by air freight basis (Cost of items and freight to be specified) (iii) Tenderers / Suppliers abroad shall have a minimum 05 (five) years of specific experience in the supply of similar importable goods / materials to Bangladesh or in any country in Asia. (iv) Tenderer, if local agent / distributor may submit price quotation on behalf of their respective vendor abroad, supported by Proforma Invoice. Successful bidder, in case of local agent / distributor must submit "indent" having valid registration for opening L/C in favour of their principal abroad by the purchaser. (v) Tenderers may submit price quotation either for individual lot or for any combination of lots and prices quoted shall correspond to 100% of the items and quantities specified for each lot.	
19	Identification of Lots, Tender Security, Completion Time and Price of Tender Document		
	Lot No.	Identification Location Tender Security Amount in BDT or equivalent foreign currency (by Pay Order / Bank Guarantee) Completion Time Price of Tender Document (in cash)	
	Lot-1 Lot-2 Lot-3	Bio-Medical Equipment Diagnostic Equipment Analytical Equipment ICDDR,B 68, Shaheed Tajuddin Ahamed Sharani Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212 Bangladesh	3% of quoted value 30 (thirty) days BDT. 1,000 or equivalent
20	Name of Official Inviting Tender	Syed Saiful Hasan	
21	Designation of Official Inviting Tender	Sr. Manager, Procurement & Materials, ICDDR,B, Mohakhali, Dhaka, Bangladesh.	
22	Address of Official Inviting Tender	ICDDR,B, Mohakhali, Dhaka, Bangladesh	
23	Contact details of Official Inviting Tender	Tel: (8802)8860523-32 Fax: (8802)8811686 E-mail: shasan@icddr.org	
24	The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject all tenders.		



Syed Saiful Hasan  
Senior Manager  
Procurement & Materials

### Three Myanmar nationals beheaded in KSA

AFP, Riyadh

Three Myanmar nationals were executed by the sword in Saudi Arabia yesterday for threatening a housewife with a knife and tying her up as they robbed her home, the interior ministry said.

Abderrahman Ibrahim and Hussein Hassan, who lived in kingdom, broke into the house and confronted the woman before stealing cash and jewellery they shared with accomplice Abu al-Taieb al-Tahar, the SPA official news agency quoted the ministry as saying.

All three were beheaded in Makkah.

In a separate case, Saudi Mohsen Muteiri was beheaded in Qassim, north of Riyadh, after murdering his wife during an argument, the ministry said.

### 100,000-year-old human skull found in China

AFP, Beijing

An almost complete human skull dating back 80,000 to 100,000 years has been unearthed in central China, state media reported yesterday.

skull, consisting of 16 pieces, was dug up last month after two years of excavation at a site in Xuchang in Henan province, the China Daily said.

The pieces were fossilised because they were buried near the mouth of a spring whose water had a high calcium content, the report said.

The People's Daily newspaper said the skull was expected to provide "direct evidence" concerning the origins of human beings in east Asia, as very few human fossils dating back to about 100,000 years ago had ever been found outside Africa.

The China Daily said that the skull, with protruding bones over the eye sockets and a small forehead, was "the greatest discovery in China after the Peking Man and Upper Cave Man skulls were found in Beijing early last century".

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