



An aerial view shows Baghdad's al-Tayaran square this week. Five years after US-led troops swept across Iraq, Baghdad -- for centuries a beacon of culture in the Arab world, today a city under occupation divided by concrete walls -- refuses to see its spirit crushed.

Fahim, Zardari undecided over Pak PM post

THE DAWN, Islamabad

The crisis in the Pakistan People's Party deepened on Thursday when co-chairman Asif Ali Zardari and senior vice-chairman Makhdoom Amin Fahim failed to resolve their differences on the choice of the party's candidate for the prime minister's post.

Sources told Dawn that the body language of the two leaders in their second meeting in two days indicated that "all is not well" between them.

Fahim's insistence that he is the president of the People's Party Parliamentarians, which is only a technical issue, means that top party leaders differ on some policy matters, particularly on the process of nominating a candidate for the post of prime minister.

"I am the president of the (PPP) Parliamentarians and this post is more important for me than that of the country's president," Fahim said when a reporter asked him whether he had been offered the post of the country's president or that of National Assembly speaker in return for his withdrawal from the race for premiership. "I will not become speaker. I am the PPP-

Parliamentarians president," he said, adding that he was still a "very strong candidate" for the office of prime minister.

Talking to reporters after his one-to-one meeting with Zardari, he said they would continue to meet.

When asked how he would react if Zardari nominated any other person for the prime minister's post, Fahim said he would express his opinion when the time came.

When asked to comment on reports that the PPP co-chairman himself was aspiring for the post, Fahim said he had already declared that if Zardari expressed his desire to become the prime minister he would be the first person to support him.

He said there were no differences between him and Zardari and they met like brothers. "We dined together yesterday and we ate together again."

PPP spokesman Farhatullah Babar told Dawn there was nothing "extraordinary" about the meeting because talks among senior party leaders were a routine matter. He said the meeting was held in a cordial atmosphere.

He said Fahim might meet Zardari again on today or on Saturday.

Pakistani held on terror charges by Dutch police

AFP, The Hague

Dutch police have arrested a Pakistani man suspected of belonging to a terrorist group and planning an attack in western Europe, prosecutors said yesterday.

The 26-year-old suspect was picked up late Thursday in the southwestern Dutch town of Breda, the public prosecutor's office said in a statement.

The detainee was "suspected of belonging to a global jihadist network which prepares attacks in western Europe," the statement said.

23 Tigers die in Lanka

AFP, Colombo

Heavy fighting between security forces and Tamil Tiger rebels in northern Sri Lanka has left at least 23 guerrillas dead and five government soldiers wounded, the defence ministry said yesterday.

Clashes erupted in the Wanni region as well as the Jaffna peninsula, along the de facto border of the mini-state of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) on Thursday, the ministry said.

Voters urged to say 'no' to Myanmar constitution

AFP, Yangon

One of Myanmar's main pro-democracy groups yesterday urged voters to reject the ruling junta's proposed constitution when it goes to a referendum in May.

The regime says approval of the charter will clear the way to multi-party elections in 2010, but the 88 Generation Students' Group said it would only enshrine military rule.

"This constitution is designed to protect and promote the interests, wealth and security of generals and their cronies," the group said in a statement.

"This constitution will allow the military dictatorship to perpetuate in Burma," it added, using the country's previous name.

The 88 Generation Students' Group launched anti-government protests last August, harnessing public anger over a surprise hike in fuel prices.

Top leaders of the group have been arrested, but Buddhist monks continued the demonstrations and they snowballed into the

Mahathir's son calls on Badawi to resign

AFP, Kuala Lumpur

The son of former premier Mahathir Mohamad yesterday revived calls for Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi to resign after the ruling coalition's unprecedented election setback.

"I feel that Abdullah has to take responsibility for our losses and that the honourable thing to do is to withdraw," said Mukhriz Mahathir, who has written to the premier calling for him to quit.

The call adds to the pressure on Abdullah, who heads the United Malays National Organisation (UMNO), which leads the Barisan Nasional coalition that was humbled in the March 8 polls.

"By his resignation, then at least the confidence in UMNO and Barisan Nasional will be somewhat restored in the eyes not only of the people but also our members," Mukhriz told AFP.

Mukhriz, a member of UMNO's youth wing, is the highest-ranking figure to openly push for Abdullah to stand down.

The premier won his party's backing in a meeting on Monday.

Calls for Abdullah's resignation are also coming from UMNO's rank-and-file who are posting their comments on a pro-Mahathir website.

Tremors in Malaysia as political quakes persist

Ruling party squabbles over state chief

AFP, Perak

Malaysia's states yesterday worked to resolve various problems that emerged after historic weekend elections, including power struggles and ethnic tensions.

The three-party opposition seized four states and a third of parliamentary seats in March 8 polls, and the unexpected gains presented them with the difficult task of forming workable coalitions to rule.

The opposition yesterday reached a deal over control of northern Perak state, ending days of squabbling by choosing a chief minister from the Islamic PAS party with a state cabinet dominated by the Chinese-based Democratic Action Party (DAP). Malaysia's opposition has reached a deal over control of northern Perak state, officials said yesterday, ending days of squabbling and averting a split between the fragile alliance.

Malaysia's three-party opposition seized four more states and a third of parliamentary seats in March 8 polls, and the unexpected gains presented them with the difficult task of forming workable coalitions to rule.

In Perak, they squabbled over the selection of chief minister as well as the make-up of the state cabinet, but after threats of boycotts and walkouts all 31 assembly members signed a power-sharing agreement.

"All the three parties signed their allegiance to the decision. Everything is OK, there are no more problems," said Ahmad Awang, state commissioner of the Islamic party PAS.

The Chinese-based Democratic Action Party (DAP) won most seats in Perak, but state law says the chief minister should be a Muslim Malay, so they have settled on a PAS candidate to take up the role.

Meanwhile, new row erupted within Malaysia's ruling party yesterday over control of northern Perak state, with the dumped incumbent chief minister saying he is the rightful leader.

The dispute emerged after last Saturday's elections produced the worst results in the history of the United Malays National Organisation (UMNO), which has dominated Malaysian politics for half a century.

Perlis Sultan Syed Sirajuddin appointed UMNO assemblyman Mohammad Isa Sabu as the new

head of the state government, leading the party's incumbent Shahidan Kassim to insist he had been selected by Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

"I have a letter from Prime Minister Abdullah to the Perlis Sultan nominating me as the Perlis chief minister but yet the Sultan has appointed someone else as chief minister," Shahidan told AFP.

"I am now waiting to speak with the PM to see what we can do next."

A palace statement said the Sultan wanted to appoint someone who he believed enjoyed the confidence of the majority of state assemblymen.

Shahidan admitted there were groups within UMNO who were not happy with him continuing as chief minister.

In December, home minister and UMNO secretary general Radzi Sheikh Ahmad and Environment and Natural Resources Minister Azmi Khalid, both lawmakers from Perlis, called for a change of leadership in the state.

Shahidan has been at odds with the two for several years, with Radzi claiming Perlis was in a state of disarray under his leadership.

Sonia marks 10 years atop India's Congress

AFP, New Delhi

Sonia Gandhi -- considered India's most powerful politician -- yesterday marked her 10th year as chief of the ruling Congress party surrounded by supporters crying "Long live Sonia."

Italian-born Sonia, who arrived in India as a shy bride in her early 20s to emerge as political kingmaker, marked the anniversary at her sprawling bungalow residence in the heart of the Indian capital.

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, a quiet economist vaulted to power when Gandhi refused the premier's job after leading Congress to an upset win in the 2004 elections, led the congratulations.

But with just over a year before the next general elections, many are unsure whether Gandhi will be able to take Congress to victory again following a string of setbacks for the party in state polls.

"She has positioned it better through making alliances... but whether she can carry it forward is still unclear," said political analyst Mahesh Rangarajan.

Singh -- a staunch Gandhi family loyalist -- gifted her with a fine cream paisley shawl as cabinet ministers thronged around.



PHOTO: AFP

Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh (R) presents a shawl to Congress Party President Sonia Gandhi at her residence in New Delhi yesterday. Italian-born Sonia Gandhi known as India's most powerful politician, has created history by completing ten years as president of India's Congress Party -- an unparalleled feat in the history of the party.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Office of the Project Director

250 Bedded National Institute of Ophthalmology & Hospital
Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207

Memo No. NIOH/250 Bedded/Project/SFD/2008/1439

Date: 10/03/2008

Invitation of Tender for Procurement of Close Circuit TV

1	Ministry/Dept.	Ministry of Health & Family Welfare.
2	Agency	Director General of Health Services.
3	Procuring entity	Project Director, 250 Bedded National Institute of Ophthalmology & Hospital, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207.
4	Procuring entity district	Dhaka.
5	Project code No.	N/A
6	Invitation for	"Close Circuit TV".
7	Tender invitation Ref No.	NIOH/250 Bedded/Project/SFD/2008/1439.
8	Date	10/03/2008
9	Tender package No.	NIOH-SFD-04.
10	Procuring method	Open tender method.
11	Budget & source of fund	Saudi Fund for Development (SFD).
12	Date of publication	11/03/2008.
13	Tender last selling date	30/03/2008 (office hour).
14	Dropping date & time	08/04/2008 (at 12.00 noon).
15	Opening date & time	08/04/2008 (12.30 in presence of tenderer).
16	Tender sale, closing, opening address	250 Bedded National Institute of Ophthalmology & Hospital, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207.
17	Tender document sale	Do
18	Tender box closing	Do
19	Tender box opening	Do
20	Tenderer's qualification	Tenderer should be purchase tender documents who are eligible to supply Close Circuit TV as 05 (five) years experience to show original trade licence and VAT registration certificate along with application with their own letterhead pad.
21	Tender document price	To submit Tk. 1,000.00 (one thousand) Bank Draft/Pay-Order non-refundable from any schedule bank in favour of Project Director, 250 Bedded National Institute of Ophthalmology & Hospital Project, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207 at the schedule time (except govt. holiday) at project office and collect the tender schedule to show the original copy of all documents which shown at serial no. 20.
22	Description of work	Site Tender security money Remarks
23	Procurement of Close Circuit TV	250 Bedded National Institute of Ophthalmology & Hospital, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207 To submit security deposit Tk. 60,000.00 (sixty thousand) Bank Draft/Pay-Order/Bank Guarantee in favour of Project Director, 250 Bedded National Institute of Ophthalmology & Hospital Project (refundable)
24	Special condition	Project Director reserves the right to accept or reject any or all tenders without assigning any reason.

Dr Md Shahab Uddin
Project Director

250 Bedded National Institute of Ophthalmology & Hospital
Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207
Phone: 9119194

No breakthrough in N Korea nuke talks

AFP, Geneva

The chief US nuclear negotiator said yesterday he was leaving Geneva after a "very good" meeting with the North Koreans, but without a breakthrough on how to disable Pyongyang's nuclear programme.

"It was a very good meeting yesterday," Hill told reporters before leaving for Warsaw, adding that the two sides will continue to be in touch over the weekend.

"I'm not in a position to say whether we're prepared to go on," he said, referring to the next phase of talks involving all six countries who have played a role in trying to solve the issue -- the US, the two Koreas, China, Russia and Japan.

Hill held talks on Thursday with his North Korean counterpart Kim Kyung-Wan, seeking to gain clarification on Pyongyang's suspected uranium enrichment programme (UEP) and alleged secret nuclear

"We need to pick up the pace," he stressed. "We have some ambitions for trying to get done with this, get through this in 2008. And so therefore there's no question we need to move faster."

Campaigns gear up in Taiwan polls

AFP, Taipei

Taiwan's presidential rivals geared up for the final stretch of their election battle yesterday, each aiming to galvanise a million supporters onto the street in mass weekend rallies.

The ruling Democratic Progressive Party's (DPP) Frank Hsieh is desperately trying to eat into the commanding lead enjoyed by the opposition Kuomintang's Ma Ying-jeou for the March 22 vote.

Hsieh will rally supporters Sunday in meetings in the capital, Taipei, and across the island, culminating in a night rally in central Taichung.

Opinion polls are banned between now and election day, but

the last one to be published gave Ma, who has called for closer ties with Beijing, a 20-point lead over Hsieh.

Meanwhile a lawmaker in Taiwan's opposition Kuomintang (KMT) yesterday announced that he is quitting the party to take the blame for a violent clash outside the headquarters of the rival presidential candidate.

Fai Hrong-Tai told reporters that he would even consider committing suicide if his actions led to KMT presidential candidate losing upcoming elections.

He said: "I am very sorry to say that I am leaving the KMT now... I am not ruling out the possibility to end my life should this incident cause Ma Ying-jeou to lose the election."

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