

Zimbabwe neighbours to push for end to deadlock

Political rallies banned in Harare

AFP, Lusaka/Harare

The leaders of southern Africa, traditionally loath to criticise Robert Mugabe, will try and cajole Zimbabwe's president to defuse an escalating post-election crisis at a summit in Zambia Saturday.

The 14 Southern African Development Community heads of state have been summoned to Lusaka by the bloc's chairman Levy Mwanawasa two weeks on from a presidential election, the results of which have still to be declared.

As well as Mugabe, Zimbabwe opposition leader Morgan Tsvangirai has also been invited after meeting many of SADC's leaders bilaterally this week.

SADC has been slammed by Tsvangirai's Movement for Democratic Change for giving the

polls a largely clean bill of health before the results and US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice has described Zimbabwe as a disgrace to the region.

But few analysts believe SADC will humiliate Mugabe or tell him to stand down, limiting any post-statement call for the speedy release of results, even if they are tougher behind closed doors.

The meeting comes a year after SADC met in Tanzania for another emergency Zimbabwe summit following assaults on Tsvangirai and other opposition leaders.

Rather than upbraid Mugabe, SADC then expressed solidarity with his regime and blamed Zimbabwe's economic woes on limited Western sanctions.

Neo Simuntanyi, a lecturer at

the university of Zambia said the fact SADC was meeting would put pressure on Mugabe but warned, "Don't expect too much. They will be shy in the past in terms of condemning what he is doing and this time round I don't think it will be any different."

Tsvangirai has already proclaimed himself the poll's winner, saying the hold-up of results is tantamount to a coup.

The MDC, having collated its own results, says it will not take part in a run-off as Tsvangirai passed the 50 percent threshold on March 29 when it also wrested control of parliament from Mugabe's party.

The lack of results has not prevented the Zimbabwe African National Union - Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) from pronouncing there will be a run off and endorsing

ing Mugabe, 84, to stand again.

MDC spokesman Nelson Chamisa said SADC should tell Mugabe his time is up after 28 years at the helm of the former British colony, beginning at independence.

Meanwhile Zimbabwe's authorities banned yesterday all political rallies in the capital Harare as tensions ran high in the country following the disputed March 29 presidential election, police said.

"It's true that we have banned political rallies," police spokesman Wayne Bvudzijena told AFP. "We see no reason for rallies since we have had elections."

The spokesman would not explain the decision further, saying only that all issues would be clarified during a media briefing at 1600 GMT.



Pakistani Information Minister Sherry Rehman briefs media representatives at parliament in Islamabad yesterday after the introduction of a parliamentary bill proposing an end to curbs on live broadcasts and punishments for journalists ranging from heavy fines to imprisonment and confiscation of equipment.

Ex-party boss in China gets 18 yrs for graft

AP, Shanghai

The former Communist Party chief of China's financial capital was sentenced yesterday to 18 years in prison for his role in a massive corruption scandal involving a third of the city's pension funds.

Chen Liangyu, who also was a member of China's powerful 24-seat Politburo, was the highest-level Chinese official to be dismissed in a decade. The official Xinhua News Agency said Chen was locked up "for taking bribes and abusing power."

Chen's lawyer, Gao Zicheng, indicated Chen would appeal. "If Chen appeals, it's not over," he said, declining further comment. Chen was sentenced in Tianjin No. 2 Intermediate People's Court.

The party chief in Shanghai, China's largest and richest city, is one of the country's most powerful local government jobs. The man who replaced Chen, Xi Jinping, has already been promoted again and is widely seen as being moved into position to be China's next president.

Poor farmers commit suicide in India

AP, Lucknow

Authorities in northern India have banned the sale of a cheap variety of hair dye after debt-ridden farmers were found to be drinking it to end their lives, an official said Friday.

At least 11 farmers have died from swallowing the hair dye in a drought-hit region of Uttar Pradesh state in the past three months, said Rajiv Agarwal, a senior state official.

Two-thirds of India's 1.1 billion people depend on agriculture, and most have been left out of India's economic boom. In parts of western and southern India, the dire economic state of farmers has been blamed for thousands of suicides in recent years.

The hair dye leads to kidney failure, said Ganesh Kumar, principal of the Maharani Lakshmi Bai Medical College.

Japan extends North Korea sanctions

AP, Tokyo

Japan extended for six months Friday the economic sanctions imposed on North Korea for conducting its first test of a nuclear weapon in 2006.

The Cabinet approved the extension because the North has failed to make good progress on dismantling its nuclear weapons programmes, Chief Cabinet Secretary Nobutaka Machimura said.

"North Korea hasn't made a complete and correct declaration on its nuclear programmes yet," Machimura said.



PHOTO: AP

Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf, (2nd L) and Chinese President Hu Jintao, (R) toast after attending a signing ceremony at a meeting held ahead of the Boao Forum for Asia in Sanya yesterday. Leaders from countries such as Pakistan, Australia, Qatar, Chile and Sri Lanka are expected to attend the Boao Forum for Asia, a conference that brings together influential figures from business, government and academia.

New US airstrikes kill 12 in Iraq

AFP, Baghdad

Fresh US airstrikes killed at least 12 people in Baghdad and Basra on yesterday as Shia militiamen and security forces fought sporadic street battles in the two Iraqi cities.

Six insurgents were killed by US aircraft in the southern port of Basra early Friday, hours after a Hellfire missile fired from a drone killed six militants in the capital, US and British military officials said.

The strike in Basra happened when US aircraft homed in on the

northern Al-Hayaniyah district after identifying a group of militants, British spokesman Major Tom Holloway told AFP by telephone.

"The air strike was launched after positively identifying a mortar team that was engaging the Iraqi troops on the ground," Holloway said.

Basra witnessed fierce clashes last month after Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki ordered a crackdown on Shia militiamen, mostly from hardline cleric Moqtada al-Sadr's Mahdi Army.

Two Palestinian teenagers were wounded in clashes, Gazamedics said.

An Israeli army spokeswoman

India risks sanctions for not taking back illegal migrants

PTI, Washington

A legislation targeting India and seven other countries which allegedly refuse to take back illegal immigrants convicted of crimes in the United States has been introduced in the House of Representatives.

The Bill requires reports being sent to Congress every 90 days on the countries which inhibit repatriation that will automatically trigger denial of foreign aid as well as suspension of visa issuances to them.

The Bill, a companion to the Accountability in Immigrant Repatriation (AIR) Act of 2008 introduced last month in the US Senate, was introduced by Congressmen Charlie Dent and Michael Castle.

"Shockingly, criminal aliens (illegal migrants) who have served time in the US prisons are routinely released onto our streets after their home countries refuse to take them back," Castle said at a press conference.

The AIR Act would suspend all pending visa petitions from those countries until they agree to repatriate. The legislation would also direct the State Department to withhold funds under the Foreign Assistance Act to countries that persist in this refusal.

Hours earlier two Hamas militants were killed in another air strike in southern Gaza.

Israel has vowed to "settle the score" with the Islamist group for a border attack that killed two Israeli civilians on Wednesday, which followed a month of relative calm in and around Gaza.

Israel sends tanks, bulldozers into Gaza

AFP, Gaza City

confirmed forces were operating in the Hamas-run territory and had come under gun and mortar fire.

She said Israeli forces carried out an air strike in the same area. Witnesses did not immediately report any casualties from the air raid.

Ten tanks and two armoured bulldozers entered one kilometre (0.6 mile) into Gaza, west of the Bureij refugee camp, drawing heavy fire from militants, Palestinian security sources said.

Two Palestinian teenagers were wounded in clashes, Gazamedics said.

An Israeli army spokeswoman

BJP, Congress in race for power in Karnataka

PTI, Bangalore

A resurgent Congress and a determined BJP are locked in a fierce battle for the next month's Karnataka Assembly elections while the Janata Dal (S), eroded by desertions in its ranks, hopes to remain in the reckoning.

Both Congress and the BJP began wooing the 4.07 crore electorate on the stability plank, playing up on the voters' mind on the "bitter experience" the state had undergone in the last 40 months after the 2004 polls, which had given a fractured verdict.

During this period, the JD(S) made a deft use of the fractured verdict to get the best out of the coalition governments it forged with both the parties.

The JD(S) which too played the tune of stability before the Election Commission announced the poll schedule, however, has gone on the backfoot with its leader HD Deve Gowda declaring "no party can form the government without our support", evoking sharp reactions from the BJP and Congress.

26 rebels killed in Lankan fighting

AP, AP, Colombo

At least 26 Tamil Tiger rebels, two soldiers and a civilian have been killed in fighting across Sri Lanka's northern districts, the defence ministry said yesterday.

Security forces smashed rebel bunkers and exchanged artillery with Tamil Tiger guerrillas in two days of fighting, while air force jets bombed a suspected Tiger sea base on Thursday, the ministry said.

A Tamil laundry owner was shot dead on the Jaffna peninsula on Friday, the ministry said, blaming the attack on the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE).

There was no immediate comment from the LTTE, who have been fighting for autonomy in the island's north and east for Tamils from the majority Sinhalese community.

Reports of fighting have increased in recent months amid government promises to capture

the rebels' de facto state in the north and crush the group by the end of the year. But diplomats and other observers say the army is facing more resistance than it had expected.

The latest infantry clashes were reported along the front lines separating the government-controlled territory with the rebels-held areas in the north on Thursday, a defence ministry official said.

A Tamil laundry owner was shot dead on the Jaffna peninsula on Friday, the ministry said, blaming the attack on the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE).

It was not possible to independently verify the reports because of limited access to the northern jungles where the fighting took place. Often, each side will minimize its own casualty figures while inflating those of its opponent.



PHOTO: AP

'Climate of fear in Myanmar ahead of referendum'

AFP, Washington

Military-ruled Myanmar is gripped by a climate of fear ahead of a May 10 constitutional referendum, according to three Buddhist monks who led a failed revolt against the junta and other activists.

"People are threatened, (some) brutally beaten by unknown assailants," said U Kovida, who was in the forefront of last September's "safron revolution" that was brutally suppressed by the military.

Kovida, a leader of the "Monks Representative Group" which organised some of the first demonstrations, suggested that the junta might not accept any unfavourable referendum result.

and security," said Kovida, who fled to neighbouring Thailand and was recently accepted as refugee in the United States together with his two compatriots.

He testified at a Congressional hearing Thursday that he was informed by his colleagues in Myanmar that security had been tightened with police and security forces deployed in the main streets of the former capital Yangon.

Kovida, a leader of the "Monks Representative Group" which organised some of the first demonstrations, suggested that the junta might not accept any unfavourable referendum result.

01.	Name of work	O&M of Boarding Bridge Central Airconditioning System at Zia International Airport, Kurmitola, Dhaka during the year 2007-2008 (SH: Replacement of flexible pipe connection for Chilled Water pipe line for 2x70 RT Chiller of Boarding Bridge Holding Lounge No. 1 & 6).
02.	Source of funds	CAAB own fund.
03.	Procurement method	Restricted tendering method.
04.	Tender package No.	No. 85/CAAB/EM-I(O&M)/2007-2008.
05.	Invitation for tenders Ref. & date	No. CAAB/EM-I/Accts-2/2928 Dated: 07-04-2008.
06.	Eligibility of tenders	CAAB enlisted 'B' Class & above E/M contractors having 'BC' class electrical contractor & supervisory licence, 3 years experience as contractor, experience of E/M works within last 3 (three) years issued by not below the rank of Executive Engineer supported by completion certificate from any govt/semi-govt/autonomous department.
07.	Name & address of the office(s) selling tender document	Tender papers will be available from the office of the Superintendent Engineer, EM Circle, Director, CEMSU, Executive Engineer, EM Division-I, CAAB, PA to Member (Ops & Plans), PA to Chief Engineer & PA to Director, ZIA, CAAB during the office hours.
08.	Name & address of the office receiving tender	Office of the Executive Engineer, EM Division-I, CAAB, Kurmitola, Dhaka.
09.	Name & address of the office opening tenders	Office of the Executive Engineer, EM Division-I, CAAB, Kurmitola, Dhaka
10.	Last date & time for selling tender document	In all working days up to 1200 hours on 07-05-2008.
11.	Last date & time for submission of tender	Up to 1200 hours on 08-05-2008.
12.	Date & time for opening of tender	At 1230 hours on 08-05-2008.
13.	Brief description of goods & services (works & services)	
14.	Lot No.	Identification of works
15.	Special condition	The procuring entity reserves the right to accept any tender or part thereof or reject all the tenders without assigning any reason whatsoever.
16.	Special instruction	In case of any unavoidable circumstances if the transport & communication systems are totally disrupted on the last date of receiving & opening of the tender, the tender will be received & opened on the next office day. Other terms & conditions of the tender will remain unchanged.

Muhammad Hossain
Executive Engineer
EM Division-I, CAAB, Dhaka

CAAB/PR-07/2008/253
Date: 7-4-2008
GD:1722

Invitation for Bid	
Tender No. SGFL/07-08/FP-52 (Re-tender-1) Dated: 03-04-2008	
1.	Ministry/Division : Ministry of Power, Energy & Mineral Resource/Energy & Mineral Resource Division.
2.	Agency : Syhet Gas Fields Limited (A Company of Petrobangla).
3.	Procuring entity name : Syhet Gas Fields Limited (SGFL).
4.	Procuring entity district : Syhet.
5.	Invitation Ref. No. : SGFL/07-08/FP-52 (Re-tender-1) dated 03-04-2008.
6.	Invitation for : Supply of Heat Transfer Oil.
7.	Procurement method : Open tender method (international competitive bidding), single stage one envelope system.
FUNDING INFORMATION	
8.	