

Rice prods Israel on West Bank barriers

Olmert will meet Abbas today

AFP, AP, Jerusalem

US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice called on Israel to take more concrete steps to ease the lives of Palestinians in the West Bank on her latest trip to the region to boost sluggish peace efforts.

"We hope to improve the opportunities around the West Bank for people to have economic opportunity in a secure environment," Rice told reporters after meeting Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas in the West Bank political capital of Ramallah.

She went on to say that the changes should have "a real effect on the lives of people," adding that US mediators were "trying to look not just at quantity but also at the quality of improvements."

Rice said at the press conference that improving conditions in the West Bank depended on "responsible actions" by Abbas's Palestinian Authority which she said "are really now taking place."

On her last visit to the region,

Rice secured an Israeli pledge to remove some 50 of the 500 plus roadblocks across the occupied West Bank, but the Palestinians and the UN said the move was largely insignificant.

Rice specifically praised the decision to deploy some 600 Palestinian police reinforcements to the town of Jenin as part of a security crackdown in the north of the territory aimed at building confidence with Israel.

"Because of that I think you are going to see improvements in the West Bank and the Israelis will also really have to do their part," she added.

On her 15th visit to Israel and the Palestinian territories in less than two years, Rice said she remained hopeful that the two sides could strike a peace deal by the time US President George W. Bush leaves office in 2009.

Abbas meanwhile told the same press conference that "the negotiations are being carried on every day and every hour."

"Everyone seems serious, and expresses hope that we will arrive at an agreement to establish a Palestinian state with its capital in Jerusalem this year," he added.

Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert said he will meet Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas on Monday.

Olmert made the announcement Sunday at the regular weekly meeting of his Cabinet. Palestinian officials had previously said the meeting would take place Monday in Jerusalem.

Rice travelled to Ramallah to meet with after holding a three-way meeting with Israeli Defence Minister Ehud Barak and Palestinian prime minister Salam Fayyad on efforts to improve conditions in the West Bank.

"There was an agreement that we will go back and take a look at ways to have a clear sense of what the qualitative effect is, that is, the significance of any improvement of access on the lives of the Palestinian people," Rice said.

Taliban to resume talks with Pak govt soon

Kidnapped Pak ambassador to be released

A deadlock in talks between Taliban and government of Pakistan will be over soon. Taliban of Pakistani tribal areas will release kidnapped Ambassador Tariq Azizuddin as a goodwill gesture and they will restart their negotiations with the government officials within a few days.

Talks between Taliban and government officials were suspended few days ago due to the continued presence of Pakistan Army in the tribal areas. Informed sources are not hopeful for any breakthrough in the coming round of talks due to the absence of political leaders from the new coalition government. It is learnt that Baitullah Mehsud wanted Nawaz Sharif to become part of the negotiations due to his recent role for the implementation of Bhurban declaration.

PPP co-chairperson Asif Ali Zardari and PML-N leader Nawaz Sharif have given the mandate of

negotiations to ANP president Asfandyar Wali but he is not in contact with Taliban directly. Asfandyar tried to do something for the release of Pakistan Ambassador in Afghanistan but he was unable to establish direct contacts with Taliban for many weeks.

Initially Pakistani Taliban denied their involvement in the kidnapping of Ambassador Tariq Azizuddin. He was kidnapped from Khyber Agency just few days before the elections in February. According to informed sources Pakistani Ambassador in Kabul was captured by a local group sympathetic to Taliban.

This group kept the Ambassador in their custody for few days and then handed him over to Taliban leader Baitullah Mehsud in South Waziristan. They wanted Baitullah Mehsud to negotiate with Pakistan government for the release of their men, who were arrested before the elections.



PHOTO: AFP
Palestinians gather to inspect the damage to their home following an Israeli operation in the southern Gaza Strip town of Khan Yunis yesterday. A Palestinian was killed and five others wounded after Israeli forces launched an operation overnight in the southern Gaza Strip, Palestinian medical officials said Sunday.

Invitation To Bid (ITB)

Color Printer, Toner, Maintenance Kit, Stapler Pin for Preparation of Electoral Roll with Photographs assisted by the United Nations Development Programme

Sealed Bids are invited for "Color Printer-20 units, Toner - 1250 units, Maintenance Kit- 32 units and stapler- 56 units" from authorized/ certified vendors with the detailed specification and price.

Submission of Bid: The envelope should state "Color Printer, Toner, Maintenance Kit & Stapler Pin for Preparation of Electoral Roll assisted by the United Nations Development Programme" and should be marked as "Confidential" and addressed to the UNDP Business Center, IDB Bhaban (14th Floor), Begum Rokeya Sharani, Agargaon, Dhaka-1207. The selection of Bids will be done based on the UNDP procurement rules and regulations and only the successful bidder(s) will be contacted. However, UNDP, Dhaka reserves the right to accept or reject any bid(s) without assigning any reasons whatsoever.

The detailed bid documents are available on the website: <http://www.undp.org.bd/bc.php?d=34>. Hardcopy of specifications are also available at the Procurement Cluster of UNDP, Dhaka. Attn: Parvin Akther (parvin.akther@undp.org). Bids must be submitted before 16:00 hrs on 21 May 2008.

150 Kurdish rebels killed in Iraq raids

Says Turkish army

AFP, Ankara

More than 150 Kurdish rebels from the separatist Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) have been killed in Turkish bombing raids carried out in northern Iraq this week, the Turkish army said Saturday.

But a PKK spokesman dismissed the figures as false, describing them as psychological warfare.

"According to initial estimates, this operation allowed us to neutralise more than 150 terrorists," said a statement on the Turkish army website.

Several senior PKK commanders may have been among the dead, the statement said, adding that the raids caused "panic among (PKK) members."

The raids in the mountainous Qandil region, which began late Thursday and continued into the night, hit 43 targets including shelters and a PKK communications centre, which were all destroyed, the army said.

PKK spokesman Ahmed Danis dismissed the death toll issued by the Turkish army and previous figures

published in the Turkish media.

He told AFP that six of their fighters had been killed during the attack overnight Friday in the Qandil mountains.

"The Turkish government is indulging in psychological warfare against the people of Kurdistan and PKK," he said.

"The Turkish media is exaggerating the number of attacks and the number of people killed and wounded," he added.

The Qandil mountains straddle Iran, Iraq and Turkey and have long been a separatist haven.

Turkish warplanes have been bombing PKK positions in northern Iraq on and off since mid-December. In February, the army conducted a week-long ground offensive against rebel hideouts in the region, where Ankara estimates more than 2,000 militants take refuge.

Turkey's parliament authorized cross-border military action against the rebels for a period of one year in October, paving the way for the ground offensive, which was preceded by five bombing raids on PKK targets in northern Iraq.

News Analysis: Polls rout raises questions over British PM's future

AFP, London

Britain's Gordon Brown is battling to steady his Labour Party's nerves after its worst election defeat for 40 years, but the rout raises serious questions about his future, commentators say.

The British prime minister was left reeling by local polls that saw the main opposition Conservative Party surge back into town halls in England and Wales and even oust eight-year London mayor Ken Livingstone from office.

But while nobody expects Brown to go anytime soon, some see the May 1 polls -- 11 years to the day after Tony Blair led Labour into power -- as presaging the beginning of the end for the party's hold on national power.

Just as the local elections of 1995 marked the draining of (then premier) John Major's authority, so those of 2008 announce the sands are running out for Brown," said Martin Kettle of the normally sympathetic Guardian daily.

Brown has described the results as "bad" and "disappointing" -- an understatement to many -- while Cabinet colleagues have accepted the government has been given a bloody nose.

One rank-and-file Labour member of parliament even said Brown had been put on six months' notice to reverse the slump. Others admit there has been talk of a leadership challenge, although party insiders dismiss this as unlikely.

The most talked-about possible successor, Foreign Secretary David Miliband, has made clear he remains utterly loyal to Brown, and in any case at 42 is widely considered not experienced enough.

The question now, though, is whether Brown's government -- still barely 12 months old -- is so irreparably damaged that Labour will fail to secure a fourth, straight term of office at the next general election.

Notwithstanding the results -- which saw Labour limp in third with just 24 percent of the national equivalent vote, a full 20 points

behind the Tories -- and the negative headlines, Brown still has time on his side, say some.

A general election does not have to be called until mid-2010 at the latest.

And while newspaper editorials Saturday all recognised that he failed his first major electoral test since taking over from Tony Blair and sensed a Tory resurgence, Brown still has the benefit of the doubt.

Significantly, the mass-selling newspapers The Daily Mail and The Sun, perceived by politicians to have the greatest influence in shaping British public opinion, remain "on-side."

The next few weeks could determine how long Brown is given such leeway.

New legislative proposals due in the coming weeks are being billed as the start of a relaunch, although truth told, the man once called "the big clunking fist" has already had more fightbacks in 10 months than an ageing boxer.

SUBJECT: TENDER FOR SUPPLY AND DELIVERY OF DRY FOOD RATIONS

Medecins sans Frontieres-OCA is an international medical humanitarian organization working in Bangladesh as from 1992. Items listed below. At this moment MSF-OCA is looking for suppliers able to deliver food to Khagrachari District in the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

The interested supplier must meet the next Terms and conditions

1. Be able to supply the next list of food items, on a monthly basis, according to the quantities and packing stated in the table below.

Item	Total Quantity	Packing Unit
Sedol/Nappy (fish Paste)	7,000 Kg	Packed 11n bags of 1/2 Kg

2. The supplier makes the first delivery of food 10 days after the signing the contract with MSF.
3. Ensure that the quality of the food meets the requirements stated by MSF.
4. The supplier is responsible for the safe, reliable, timely and efficient transport of the food to the MSF premises in Khagrachari or other locations as required by MSF.
5. The supplier observes the delivery schedule established by MSF-OCA.
6. The supplier replaces in a period of 5 days the food that doesn't meet the requirements established by MSFH.
7. If the supplier fails to replace bad quality food MSF will reserve the right to cancel the contract.

Quotations must be submitted by written before the 13th of May 2008, including contact person, address, contact telephone, prices, etc.

Please send the quotation to the address below

বিস্ত: সংশোধনী - গত ০৫/০৮ ইংরেজী তারিখে দৈনিক প্রথম আলো ও The Daily Star - এ প্রকাশিত বিজ্ঞপ্তিতে Dry salted fish এর পরিবর্তে উপরে উল্লেখিত Sedol/Nappy (fish Paste) অংশটি হইবে। বিজ্ঞপ্তির অন্যান্য অংশ অপরিবর্তিত থাকিবে।

Logistic Co-ordinator
Medecins Sans Frontieres - Holland,
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PHOTO: AFP
In this file picture taken in Ahmedabad on March 1, 2007 rescued vultures sit on a perch at the Animal Help Foundation.

Asian vultures face extinction in India

AFP, New Delhi

Asian vultures may face extinction in India unless a farm drug responsible for their large-scale decimation is banned outright, according to a report Sunday citing researchers.

The population of the oriental white-backed vulture has declined by 99.9 percent and the numbers of two other highly-endangered species by 97 percent since 1992 in India, a story in the Hindu newspaper said citing a study in the Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society.


The study had not yet been released on the society's website and the authors were not immediately available for comment.

Conservationists say the vultures are fast vanishing because of livestock painkiller diclofenac, which India banned in 2006 after it was found that the birds absorbed toxic amounts of the drug as they scavenged animal carcasses.

But despite the ban on the drug's manufacture, it is widely available, according to BirdLife International, a global partnership of conservation organisations, which also quoted the study in a post on its website.

"Time has almost run out to prevent the extinction of vultures in the wild in India. The ban on diclofenac manufacture was a good start but a ban on the sale of diclofenac and other drugs known to harm vultures is vital," said co-author of the study Rhys Green.

"Efforts must be redoubled to remove diclofenac from the vultures' food supply and to protect and breed a viable population in captivity," lead author Vibhu Prakash was quoted as saying by the organisation.



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Swisscontact is realizing a Supplier Qualification project in Bangladesh for a German Retail company. In a training cycle, supplying companies will be trained on identifying and improving labour and productivity issues through dialogue between workers and management.

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- 1 Translator
- 1 Administrative Staff

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- Flexibility
- Ability to travel in the region
- Discretion & Integrity
- Time management skills
- Good understanding of inter-company communications

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- Good command of English and native Chinese
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About Swisscontact:

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Lecturer / Sr. Lecturer - Merchandising - Production - Fashion Design	Min. Graduate associated with training/ certificate course / diploma program. Or Graduate in Fashion Design or Textile Design or Apparel Manufacturing Sector that case experience will be relaxed.	Minimum Experience 12 years
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Assistant Professor - Merchandising - Production - Fashion Design	Min. Masters associated with training/ certificate course / diploma program. Or graduate in Fashion Design or Textile Design or Apparel Manufacturing Sector that case experience will be relaxed.	Minimum Practical experience 15 Years. Teaching experience 3 years.
Accounts Officer	Graduate from Commerce background with CA Course Complete.	Not Applicable
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