

# Iran would strike Israel if US navy attacks

US strike would be a 'political suicide' for Bush, says Ahmadinejad

AFP, Tehran/Kuala Lumpur

Iran would "set on fire" Israel and the US navy in the Gulf as its first response to any American attack over its nuclear programme, an aide to supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei warned yesterday.

"The first US shot on Iran would set the United States' vital interests in the world on fire," said Ali Shirazi, a mid-ranking cleric who is Khamenei's representative to the naval forces of the elite Revolutionary Guards.

"Tel Aviv and the US fleet in the Persian Gulf would be the targets that would be set on fire in Iran's crushing response," he said,

according to the Fars news agency. Meanwhile, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad on Tuesday downplayed the threat of an attack on his country by the United States, saying it would be "political suicide" for US President George W. Bush.

He also said that the Iranian people stood ready to defend their country in the event of any attempt to close down the nation's nuclear programme.

"Any finger that will trigger the bullet, the Iranian people will cut it," he told a press conference at the D8 summit of developing nations. Ahmadinejad said the US was

no longer in a position to make an assault on Iran.

The United States and its top regional ally Israel have never ruled out attacking Iran over its nuclear drive, which the West fears could be aimed at making nuclear weapons.

There has been concern an attack against Iran could be imminent after it emerged Israel had carried out manoeuvres in Greece that were effectively practice runs for a potential strike against Iranian nuclear facilities.

Shirazi said "the Zionist regime is pressuring the White House leaders to plan a military assault on Iran" and Iran would react "if they

commit such a stupidity."

It was not clear if he was referring to Tel Aviv as a city or as shorthand for the Jewish state as a whole, which the Islamic republic does not recognise.

His comments came as the Revolutionary Guards embarked on a new round of war games to sharpen their combat readiness amid continued tensions in the Iranian nuclear crisis.

The Great Prophet III manoeuvres by the missile and naval sections of the Revolutionary Guards are aimed at "improving the combat capability" of the forces, Far reported.

## Thaksin on the dock for graft

AFP, Bangkok

Thailand put billionaire former premier Thaksin Shinawatra on trial for corruption yesterday, almost two years after he was toppled from power in a military coup.

Thaksin and his wife Pojaman, loved by the poor and loathed by the Bangkok elite, were not on hand at the Supreme Court for the opening of a legal saga that could put them behind bars for 13 years.

The case is only one of many being launched against Thaksin and his allies, and threatens to bog down a new government - led by Thaksin loyalists - which is already facing mass protests in the streets.

The Supreme Court is considering whether Thaksin, a self-made tycoon who now owns English football side Manchester City, illegally arranged for his wife to buy a prime chunk of Bangkok real estate for just one-third its appraised value.



Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh (R) and Chinese President Hu Jintao (L) are helped by their aides as they arrive to give a joint press briefing with Mexican President Felipe Calderon, Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva and South African President Thabo Mbeki (not in picture) after the G5 meeting on the sidelines of the G8 summit in Sapporo yesterday on Hokkaido island. The Group of Eight major powers agreed to halve global carbon emissions by 2050, in what leaders hailed as a breakthrough but environmentalists called toothless.



Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad (L) shakes hands with Malaysian Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi (R) after a joint press conference at the D8 Summit in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

## Afghan parliament slams US airstrikes

AFP, Kabul

The Afghan parliament condemned Monday civilian casualties in US-led air strikes after Afghan officials said more than 40 people were killed in two recent raids, including one that struck a wedding.

The UN representative to Afghanistan, Kai Eide, expressed "grave concern" about the allegations - rejected by the coalition - and called for investigations to clarify what happened.

Various parliamentary committees held a special meeting on the strikes, which happened on Friday and Sunday in remote and mountainous areas on the eastern border with Pakistan.

"The Afghan people cannot

tolerate American forces' bombing of civilians any more," deputy speaker of the Lower House, Mirwais Yasini, told reporters after Monday's meeting.

"We are stuck between a rock and a hard place, between Taliban attacks and foreign forces air strikes," he said.

Civilians are regularly caught up in violence linked to an extremist insurgency launched after the hardline Islamic Taliban regime was removed from power in late 2001 in a US-led invasion.

The United Nations said last month that nearly 700 Afghan civilians had lost their lives in such violence this year, nearly two-thirds in militant attacks and about 255 in military operations.

## US Senator Webb rules out Obama VP nod

AFP, Washington

Virginia Senator Jim Webb, a gruff marine veteran and military expert with blue collar appeal, on Monday definitively ruled out serving as Barack Obama's Democratic vice presidential running mate.

Webb, who could have brought national security left to Obama's ticket, and may have been able to help deliver his home swing-state to the Illinois Democrat's column, said he owed it to his constituents to stay put.

"Last week I communicated to Senator Obama and his presidential campaign my firm intention to remain in the United States Senate, where I believe I am best equipped to serve the people of Virginia and this country," Webb said in a statement.

## Taliban, tribal elders agree to expel Uzbeks

THE DAWN, Wana

Local Taliban and tribal elders decided at a meeting on Monday to expel Uzbek militants and their local collaborators from the areas of Ahmadzai Wazir tribe in South Waziristan.

The meeting in Wana was attended by about 500 elders and Maliks and representatives of Taliban Shooras from North Waziristan.

Witnesses said that supporters of pro-government militant commander Maulvi Mohammad Nazir detained tribal elder Malik Baa

Khan after he opposed the participation of some Taliban in the jirga.

They said that some people shouted at Malik Baa Khan when he said that the people of South Waziristan did not need the help of Taliban from North Waziristan in confronting foreign militants.

Malik Baa was taken to a private Taliban jail and was released after he paid Rs500,000.

Sources said that the group of Maulvi Nazir and elders had agreed to continue their action against Uzbek militants. Maulvi Nazir and his supporters, it may be mentioned, had launched a campaign

last year, killing over 60 foreigners.

The jirga severely criticised recent attacks on Maulvi Nazir and assassination of pro-government elders.

It alleged that foreign elements, particularly the Uzbeks, were involved in the attacks.

It endorsed the merger of the Taliban groups based in North and South Waziristan and backed the new outfit headed by Hafiz Gul Bahadur.

It warned that anyone opposing the merger would be fined one million rupees and his house would be demolished.

## Assad wants French role in Syria-Israel talks

AFP, Paris

Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, expected in Paris this weekend, has welcomed a "break" in France's policy toward Damascus and invited Paris to play a role in possible direct negotiations with Israel.

In an interview published in French newspaper Le Figaro Tuesday, Assad said: "We are witnessing a break between the current policy of France and the policy

of the past.

"This new policy is more realistic and better suited to the interests of both our countries. It is a solid basis to renew healthy relations."

French President Nicolas Sarkozy invited Assad along with some 40 foreign leaders for the launch Sunday of a new Union for the Mediterranean, aimed at boosting cooperation between European Union and southern Mediterranean states.

Sarkozy, who decided to renew

high-level contacts with Damascus following the breakthrough in Lebanon's drawn-out political crisis, is to meet Assad in Paris on July 12. The Syrian leader will stay on for France's Bastille Day ceremonies on July 14.

Former president Jacques Chirac cut off official contacts with Syria following the assassination of former Lebanese premier Rafiq Hariri, who was a personal friend, in a February 2005 bombing in which Syria has been implicated.

## Sodomy victim dares Anwar to swear innocence

THE STAR/ ANN, Petaling Jaya

Mohd Saiful Bukhari Azlan who alleged he was sodomised by PKR de facto leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim recently is daring the latter to swear on the Quran to prove his innocence.

The challenge posted as a link in his fiancée's blog said: "Dear Anwar the hypocrite! I challenge you to swear on the Quran. Set the place and time! I will come. The truth will prevail. Falsehood will surely be exposed. I am not afraid to die. God is mighty!"

His fiancée Janna Mohd Zaki included the link from Friendster in her newest posting on her blog in conjunction with Mohd Saiful's 23rd birthday on Sunday.

## NEWS ANALYSIS

# Pakistan govt in disarray

AP, Islamabad

What a difference 100 days make. Pakistan's new coalition government came to power after February's elections on a wave of public sympathy and hope. The two main parties pledged to work together on a range of issues, including the quick restoration of democracy by common rival President Pervez Musharraf.

But some 100 days after formally taking charge, the coalition is in disarray. The second-largest party left the Cabinet amid disputes over the judges and the fate of Musharraf, the former army chief who had dominated Pakistani politics since seizing the reins in a 1999 military coup.

Multiple power centres have

emerged since the new civilian administration took over, making it unclear who is in charge. Critics worry the wrangling is distracting political leaders from tackling the sinking economy and relentless militancy in the South Asian nation of 160 million.

"The kind of coherence and focus and directness that we were expecting would emerge with a common sentiment for the restoration of democracy has not really come about," political analyst Rasul Bakhsh Rais said.

Upon becoming prime minister in March, Yousuf Raza Gilani laid out a series of broad goals for the first 100 days. Tackling terrorism was the top priority.

But although violence is down

since last year, militants appear to have gained sway in large parts of the northwest border along Afghanistan amid the political confusion. On Sunday, an attack blamed on a suicide bomber killed 18 people, mostly police, in the capital, Islamabad.

The new administration has sought to strike peace deals with militants, an approach that has faced criticism from the US which warns it could give time for militants to regroup.

In late June, as militants increasingly threatened the key city of Peshawar, the government shifted to battle mode, deploying paramilitary forces to Khyber tribal region. The offensive, however, led Pakistan's top Taliban leader to suspend peace talks with the gov-

ernment. The US appears concerned that Pakistan's political infighting is distracting it from battling terrorism. Assistant Secretary of State Richard Boucher pointedly said in a recent visit that the government needs to "focus" on critical issues, including militancy.

Farzana Raja, a leading member of the largest coalition party, the Pakistan People's Party of slain ex-Premier Benazir Bhutto, insisted the government is progressing. She noted the overall drop in violence and plans for housing and development projects. She also pointed to a much-criticised PPP proposal aimed at curbing Musharraf's authority and restoring the judges through constitutional reforms.

## Vacancy Announcement

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) - Bangladesh invites applications from highly qualified, energetic and experienced development professionals who want to join UNDP's dynamic working environment, for recruitment in the position of **Communication and Advocacy Associate** (1 position) for the "Support to Monitoring Poverty Reduction Strategy and MDG" project.

For details of the Terms of Reference and instructions to apply, please visit our website: <http://www.undp.org.bd/jobs>. Applications should be received no later than 22 July 2008.



## Biman Bangladesh Airlines Limited

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## Invitation of Request for Proposal

Biman Bangladesh Airlines Ltd. invites Request for Proposal (RFP) for taking lease of two 777-200/ 777-200ER/ 777-300/ 777-300ER aircraft powered by any engines, preferably GE Engines, from Airlines, Operators, Owners of Aircraft and/or Leasing Companies. Basic requirements are mentioned below:

Nature of lease	ACMI (Aircraft, Crew, Maintenance and Insurance) lease with option for conversion to AMI (Aircraft, Maintenance and Insurance) after six months and then to Dry Lease after one year, or Dry lease with or without proposal for crew and maintenance support.
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Commencement of lease	As soon as possible (Tentatively from August 2008).

- Detailed information is given in the RFP schedule. RFP notice and schedule may be viewed at Biman's website: [www.bimanaair.com](http://www.bimanaair.com)
- Proposals/Offer are to be submitted to General Manager (Planning), Biman Bangladesh Airlines Ltd., Head Office, Balaka, Kurmitola, Dhaka, Bangladesh latest by 1400 hours BST (0800 hours UTC) on 30 July 2008 through Courier Service or E-mail at [RFP777@bdbiman.com](mailto:RFP777@bdbiman.com). The Proposal(s)/ Offer(s) will be opened on the same day immediately after the closing time. No Proposal/Offer will be accepted after the scheduled time and date.
- Biman Bangladesh Airlines Ltd. reserves the right to accept or reject any proposal/offer without assigning any reason.

Md. Belayet Hossain  
General Manager (Planning)



Seven year-old Palestinian girl Mariya Aman, who is paralysed from her neck down after an Israeli missile struck her family's car in the Gaza Strip in 2006, arrives along with her father for a hearing at the Supreme Court in Jerusalem yesterday.

## Paralysed Palestinian girl gets stay from Israeli court

AFP, Jerusalem

Israel's Supreme Court delayed on Tuesday a decision to transfer to the West Bank a Palestinian girl paralysed in an Israeli air raid who must spend the rest of her life on a respirator.

Maria Aman, seven, was severely wounded in May 2006 when an air raid on the Gaza Strip targeting a militant in a car outside her home killed her mother, older brother, grandmother and aunt.

She has since been on a respirator at a hospital in Jerusalem, but the Israeli defence ministry has proposed that she be sent to a hospital in Ramallah, in the occupied West Bank.

The child's lawyers argued that moving her to Ramallah would endanger her life, because the necessary equipment and support staff are not available.

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Executive MBA (EMBA)	12/08/2008 Tuesday	16/08/2008 Saturday (Interview)	MBA Program Extn.-140, 158, 274
MA in English	13/08/2008 Wednesday	14/08/2008 Thursday	Department of English Extn.- 149, 127
MS in Computer Science and Engineering	21/08/2008 Thursday	22/08//2008 Friday	CSE Department Extn.- 283, 170, 119
MS in Electronics and Telecom. Engineering	21/08/2008 Thursday	22/08//2008 Friday	CSE Department Extn.- 283, 170, 119
MS in Economics	25/08/2008 Monday	27/08/2008 Wednesday	Dept. of Economics Extn.-132, 196
Master in Development Studies (MDS)	25/08/2008 Monday	27/08/2008 Wednesday	Dept of Economics Extn.- 132, 196
Master in Public Health (MPH)	28/08/2008 Thursday	29/08/2008 Friday	Dept. of Life Sciences Extn. -249, 318
Master in Biotechnology	28/08/2008 Thursday	29/08/2008 Friday	Dept. of Life Sciences Extn. -249, 318

\*Please contact concerned department for detailed information.



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