

Olmert doubts full ME peace deal this year

AFP, Jerusalem

Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert said yesterday that Israel and the Palestinians will not be able to agree this year on a peace deal that includes the crucial issue of Jerusalem.

"I don't believe that we can reach an understanding that will include Jerusalem by the end of the year," Olmert told parliament's powerful foreign affairs and defence committee, according to a senior official.

He expressed optimism that the two sides could bridge their differences on other core issues in the decades-old conflict.

But he seemed to rule out a comprehensive deal by year-end, despite a commitment made by the two sides at a conference hosted by US President George W. Bush in Annapolis, Maryland last November that revived peace talks.

"There is no practical possibility to reach an overall understanding on the issue of Jerusalem at this time," Olmert said.

"But there is an intention to create a mechanism that will continue to deal with the issue for a much longer period until we reach understandings that we can live with."

Israel captured mostly Arab east Jerusalem - including the Old City with its holy sites sacred to Christians, Muslims, and Jews -- in the 1967 war and annexed it shortly afterwards.

It declared the whole city its eternal and undivided capital, a claim never recognised by the international community or the Palestinians, who have demanded east Jerusalem as the capital of a future state.

The Palestinians slammed Olmert's remarks, insisting they would never agree to a deal that did

not include Jerusalem.

"Jerusalem is a red line with respect to the Palestinian Authority and the Palestinian people and we cannot retreat one inch from it," Nabil Abu Rudeina, a spokesman for president Mahmud Abbas, told AFP by phone from Cairo.

"East Jerusalem is the capital of the Palestinian state and Olmert's statements are an attempt to run away from the commitments of the Annapolis conference and the vision of President Bush," he said.

The American administration must work to push Israel to enter into serious negotiations and stop wasting time."

Already on the agenda is a meeting in Washington later this week between Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni and former Palestinian prime minister Ahmed Qorei, who are heading their respective negotiating teams.

The two sides launched their latest round of peace talks after a seven-year hiatus, vowing to try to reach a comprehensive agreement by the time Bush leaves office in January.

The talks have made little tangible progress since then, but Olmert said the gaps on other core issues, including the fate of 4.5 million UN-registered Palestinian refugees and final borders, could be bridged by the end of 2008.

"The American administration is not dramatic. On the issue of refugees we can reach an understanding that will not make us assume responsibility or have to withdraw troops, they should be pulled back in equal numbers."

The first meeting on July 21 between the two sides foundered over what maps should be used to demarcate the border. It prompted Cambodia to request an emergency meeting of the United Nations Security Council before agreeing to the second meeting with Thailand.

Thai-Cambodian border talks resume

AP, Siem Reap

Cambodia and Thailand attempted to settle Monday an armed stand-off over disputed border territory near a historic Hindu temple that prompted both countries to deploy thousands of troops to the area.

Foreign ministers from both Southeast Asian nations expressed optimism that a second round of talks would produce a breakthrough over the dispute, after several thousand soldiers were sent two weeks ago to the 11th century Preah Vihear temple.

"I hope that the result of the talks will be positive," said Thai Foreign Minister Tej Bunnag before flying off to the Cambodian city of Siem Reap. "On the issue of withdrawing troops, they should be pulled back in equal numbers."

The first meeting on July 21 between the two sides foundered over what maps should be used to demarcate the border. It prompted Cambodia to request an emergency meeting of the United Nations Security Council before agreeing to the second meeting with Thailand.

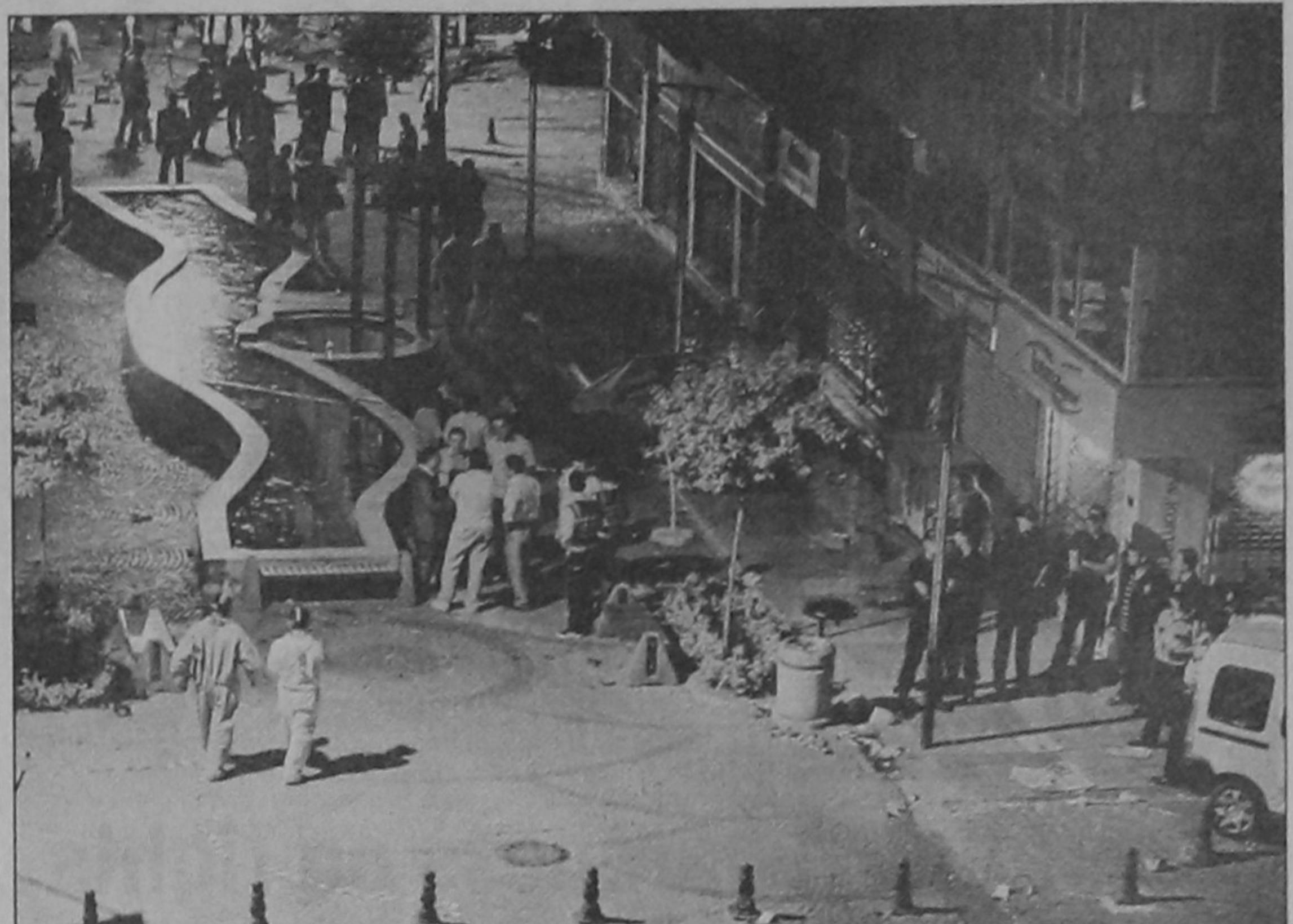


PHOTO: AFP
Forensic officers investigate the scene of two bomb explosions in a busy shopping district in Istanbul Sunday. Two bombs exploded in Istanbul Sunday night, leaving at least 17 people dead, and 140 others wounded.

Iran would respond if US adopts new approach

Says Ahmadinejad

AFP, Washington

from Tehran, speaking through an interpreter.

If US behaviour represented a genuine change, "we will be facing a new situation and the response by the Iranian people will be a positive one."

The interview came after the United States took the unprecedented step of sending a top diplomat to meet Iran's chief negotiator at talks in Geneva over Tehran's disputed nuclear program.

It also follows Ahmadinejad's announcement on Saturday that Iran had boosted the number of uranium-enriching centrifuges to up to 6,000, in an expansion of its nuclear drive that defies international calls for a freeze.

Iran is already under three sets

of UN Security Council sanctions over its refusal to halt uranium enrichment, which makes nuclear fuel as well as the fissile core of an atomic bomb.

World powers, seeking to resolve the standoff and concerned Tehran is pursuing a clandestine nuclear weapons project, have offered to start pre-negotiations during which Tehran would add no more uranium-enriching centrifuges and in return face no further sanctions.

Iran was given a two-week deadline to give a final answer to world powers seeking a breakthrough in the crisis after talks a week ago in Geneva with EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana ended in stalemate.

Floods, mudslides in Japan kill 4

AP, Tokyo

Four people died Monday in central Japan after being swept away in torrential rains that caused floods and mudslides and prompted an evacuation order for 50,000 people, officials said.

A woman, two girls and a boy were found dead after being washed away by a swollen river in the port city of Kobe, about 270 miles west of Tokyo, said an official in the city's fire department who asked that his name be withheld according to department policy. He said three others were rescued in serious condition.

In the city of Kanazawa, about 180 miles northwest of Tokyo, heavy rain flooded houses and led authorities to issue a mass evacuation order, said Hiroyuki Tatsuda, a city spokesman.

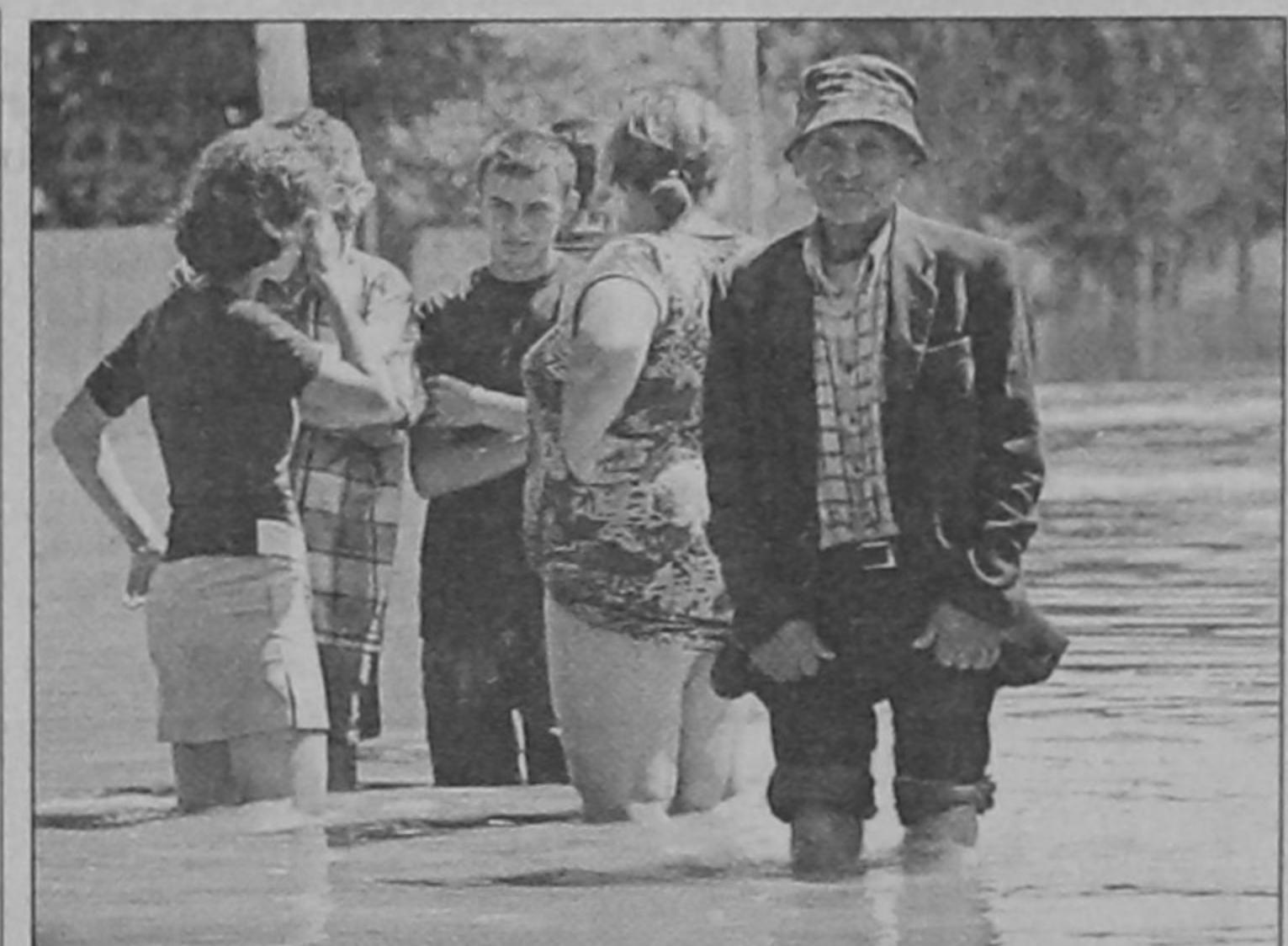


PHOTO: AFP
People wade through flooded Poberezhya village in the Ivano-Frankivsk region in Ukraine on Sunday. At least 16 people have died in severe storms and flooding in western Ukraine and northern Romania, which forced thousands of people to abandon their homes.

North South University
Executive MBA @ NSU
 The first private university in Bangladesh
FALL 2008 ADMISSION
Majors: Marketing, Finance, Management & HRM

This is a unique EMBA program exclusively designed for mid-level and senior executives. Our EMBA program will enable you

- to acquire latest knowledge and skills of business
- to enhance your career progression and
- to prepare yourself to compete in a global market

Admission Requirements

- A four-year Bachelor or a three-year Honors degree or a Master's degree in any discipline
- At least Second Class (45% or above) in all exams or a minimum CGPA of 2.5 on a 4-point scale
- At least five years of continuous work experience as executive (eight years for those with a two-year Bachelor degree)

Special Features of EMBA Program

- Faculty members with Ph.D. from North American or equivalent universities or with long industry experience from prestigious institutions
- Weekend classes
- Customized course offering
- Exclusive computer lab for EMBA students
- Up-to-date curriculum
- Extracurricular activities through EMBA Forum
- NSU financial aid/tuition waiver for meritorious performance
- Academic collaboration with leading North American universities
- No written test but must pass an oral test for admission
- Special course waiver based on academic background
- Weekend classes (on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays)

Application Forms are available for Tk. 600 at NSU Accounts Dept. A complete application includes:
 (i) application form (fully filled in); (ii) three passport size photographs; (iii) clean copies of certificates and mark-sheets (attested); (iv) appointment letter and experience certificate (attested) and (v) visiting cards of the candidate and her/his supervisor.

For Further Information, Please Contact
 EMBA Program Office
 12 Kemal Ataturk Avenue, Banani, Dhaka-1213
 Tel: 880-2-988-5611-20, ext. 158/274/140
 E-mail: mbainfo@northsouth.edu, Fax: 880-2-882-3030

Serbia braces for Karadzic transfer

AFP, Belgrade

the tribunal based in The Hague for as long as possible.

Ultra-nationalists have staged daily protests in support of Karadzic since his capture, some of them marred by attacks on journalists and threatening chants against Serbia's pro-Western leaders.

Speaking at a Belgrade rally closely watched by riot police on Sunday evening, Vujacic said he believed local authorities hoped to transfer Karadzic to the UN court before a large rally organised for September 2006 military coup.

The first hearing for the 47 people named in the lawsuit is set for Sept. 26, said Judge Pairoj Reungrengwong.

The suit names three members of the current Cabinet: Finance Minister Surapong Suebwonglee, Labor Minister Uraiwan Thienthong and Deputy Transport Minister Anurak Jureeas.

The targets of the lawsuit are accused of malfeasance in a 2003 lottery scheme initiated by Thaksin's government. The administration claimed the plan would attract people away from a popular illegal lottery and generate revenue for education.

The complaint, brought by the Attorney General's office, alleges that irregularities in the scheme, including misspending and tax exemptions, cost the state \$1.1 billion. It asked the Supreme Court to order the 47 people to pay the damages.

Graft case against Thaksin cabinet approved

AP, Bangkok

The Thai Supreme Court on Monday accepted a lawsuit alleging abuse of power by ousted Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, his former Cabinet and other officials in the holding of a government lottery.

It is the third case to go to court involving allegations of corruption and abuse of power against Thaksin, who was deposed in a September 2006 military coup.

The first hearing for the 47 people named in the lawsuit is set for Sept. 26, said Judge Pairoj Reungrengwong.

The suit names three members of the current Cabinet: Finance Minister Surapong Suebwonglee, Labor Minister Uraiwan Thienthong and Deputy Transport Minister Anurak Jureeas.

The targets of the lawsuit are accused of malfeasance in a 2003 lottery scheme initiated by Thaksin's government. The administration claimed the plan would attract people away from a popular illegal lottery and generate revenue for education.

The complaint, brought by the Attorney General's office, alleges that irregularities in the scheme, including misspending and tax exemptions, cost the state \$1.1 billion. It asked the Supreme Court to order the 47 people to pay the damages.

Hamas arrests in WB spark tit-for-tat action in Gaza

AP, Nablus

Palestinian security forces arrested more than 50 Hamas members in the West Bank Monday in an apparent tit-for-tat action after the Islamist movement rounded up hundreds of its rivals in the Gaza Strip.

Security forces loyal to Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas carried out the arrests in and around the northern West Bank town of Nablus against "those suspected of inciting civil strife," a Palestinian security official told AFP.

All but one of the detainees are Hamas members, and those arrested include several prominent local leaders and university professors.

The wave of arrests came amid a widening Hamas crackdown in the Gaza Strip in which more than 300 members of Abbas's Fatah party, which was largely driven from the territory when Hamas took over, have been detained in the past three days.

A senior security official in the West Bank political capital of Ramallah said 150 people, most of them Hamas members, had been arrested in the past week but denied that the arrests had any connection to events in Gaza.

"The arrests are not political but are against outlaws," the official said. "They were given the opportunity to live their lives and conduct their political activities according to the law but they did not do that."

In Gaza, meanwhile, Hamas continued to raid homes, offices, sporting clubs and charities, most of them linked to Fatah, and arrested dozens more people, a senior Fatah official told AFP on condition of anonymity.

Hamas also halted distribution in Gaza of the three main Palestinian newspapers -- Al-Ayyam, Al-Quds and Al-Hayat Al-Jedidah, according to Sami al-Qishawi, a senior manager at Al-Ayyam.

"They did not give any reason," Qishawi told AFP, adding that Hamas-run security forces had blocked shipments of the papers at the Erez crossing between Israel and Gaza.

Studies and Analyses. "It is reasonable to say this group has benefited from external involvement," he adds.

Other observers say the "Indian Mujahideen" was coined to cover the involvement of Pakistani groups, although few here doubt that Indian Muslims are involved at some level.

Saturday's bombings occurred in two waves. The first series of explosions detonated in crowded markets; the second wave, less than half an hour later, targeted two hospitals where the injured had been taken. Television footage showed blood-covered victims writhing in agony on hospital floors. In all, there were 17 explosions, caused by crudely made devices that peppered victims with red-hot ball bearings and shrapnel.

But analysts say that stoking communal tensions is not the sole objective of recent attacks. "These people want to hurt the country in any way possible," says Ajay Sahni, a terrorism expert at the Institute for Conflict Management in Delhi. "Causing communal tensions is a secondary objective to that. If I wanted to whip up communal riots I would ensure that only Hindus were killed whereas these attacks are occurring in areas with mixed populations." Indeed, Saturday's attacks occurred in Ahmedabad's old city, which houses many Muslims.

Both attacks like the one in Jaipur occurred in states run by the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata

Party (BJP), India's main opposition party.

Ahmedabad, the main city in Gujarat, is especially vulnerable to communal tensions. In 2002, a train fire that killed members of a Hindu nationalist group sparked Hindu-Muslim riots in which over 2,000 people, most of them Muslim, died.

Await five minutes for the revenge of Gujarat," read an e-mail sent to television stations, purportedly from the Indian Mujahideen, moments before Saturday's explosions.

But analysts say that stoking communal tensions is not the sole objective of recent attacks. "These people want to hurt the country in any way possible," says Ajay Sahni, a terrorism expert at the Institute for Conflict Management in Delhi. "Causing communal tensions is a secondary objective to that. If I wanted to whip up communal riots I would ensure that only Hindus were killed whereas these attacks are occurring in areas with mixed populations." Indeed, Saturday's attacks occurred in Ahmedabad's old city, which houses many Muslims.

Both attacks like the one in Jaipur occurred in states run by the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata

Party (BJP), India's main opposition party.

Ahmedabad, the main city in Gujarat, is especially vulnerable to communal tensions. In 2002, a train fire that killed members of a Hindu nationalist group sparked Hindu-Muslim riots in which over 2,000 people, most of them Muslim, died.

Await five minutes for the revenge of Gujarat," read an e-mail sent to television stations, purportedly from the Indian Mujahideen, moments before Saturday's explosions.

But analysts say that stoking communal tensions is not the sole objective of recent attacks. "These people want to hurt the country in any way possible," says Ajay Sahni, a terrorism expert at the Institute for Conflict Management in Delhi. "Causing communal tensions is a secondary objective to that. If I wanted to whip up communal riots I would ensure that only Hindus were killed whereas these attacks are occurring in areas with mixed populations." Indeed, Saturday's attacks occurred in Ahmedabad's old city, which houses many Muslims.