Renewed rocket fire as Gaza truce nears end

Palestinian polls scheduled 'very soon': Abbas

AFP, *Gaza City/ Ramallah*

Militants in Gaza fired rockets at Israel yesterday, just two days before the end of a troubled six-month truce, which the Palestinian territory's Hamas rulers say they are unlikely to renew.

Three rockets landed in open areas in southern Israel where they caused no casualties or damage, an Israeli army spokeswoman said.

The Islamic Jihad movement said its armed wing had fired four rockets in response to the overnight killing of one of its members by Israeli security forces in the occupied West Bank.

The movement, which is far smaller than Hamas but regularly carries out attacks against Israel, urged all Palestinian factions to reject any extension of the truce.

"The truce with the enemy has not enabled the realisation of our goals and represents a threat against the interests of our people," it said in a statement.

The truce in and around the Gaza Strip was initially negotiated through Egyptian mediation for an initial period of six months, which ends on Thursday.

Hamas's Syria-based political chief Khaled Meshaal has said his Islamist movement will not renew the agreement, although leaders of the movement in Gaza were less categorical.

Israel for its part has said it wants the truce to continue as long as militants in Gaza halt their attacks, but also stressed it will not hesitate to use military force if needed.

"We do not fear an operation in Gaza but we are in no rush," Defence Minister Ehud Barak said on Tuesday.

An opinion poll published by Jerusalem's Hebrew University on Tuesday found that 51 percent of Israelis support a continuation of the truce while 44 percent oppose it.

Several Israeli ministers have called for a tougher line against Gaza militants, and Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni, who hopes to become prime minister after February 10 elections, has said Israel "cannot allow Gaza to remain in the hands of Hamas."

Since the truce went into effect on June 19, Palestinian militants have fired more than 311 mortar rounds and rockets at southern Israel, according to the military.

Israel responded to the violence by tightening the crippling blockade it has enforced since Hamas seized power in the Gaza Strip in June 2007.

Meanwhile, Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas said yesterday he will "very soon" schedule Palestinian elections in the absence of reconciliation with the Hamas rulers of the Gaza Strip.

"We will very soon call presidential and legislative elections within the Palestinian Authority here in the West Bank and in Gaza," Abbas told journalists.

PHOTO: AFP

Members of Palestinian armed group Popular Resistant Committees hold a demonstration in Gaza City yesterday in support of an Iraqi journalist who threw shoes at US President George W Bush. Iraq faced mounting calls to release the journalist who hurled his shoes at Bush, an action branded shameful by the government but hailed in the Arab world as an ideal parting gift to the unpopular US president.

PHOTO: AFP

Thai Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva (C) smiles as he receives flowers from his supporters at the Democrat party in Bangkok yesterday. Thailand's new government will prioritise boosting the flagging economy, with Premier Vejjajiva set to head up the financial team, Democrat Party members said.

'Non-US foreign troops to go out of Iraq by July'

Seven dead in Iraq unrest

AFP, *Baghdad*

All foreign troops except for those of the United States will be out of Iraq by the end of July, the Iraqi parliament's foreign affairs committee head said yesterday.

"The cabinet has approved draft legislation on the withdrawal of the non-US forces in the coalition. It sets a timetable for a withdrawal of between five and seven months from January 1," Hummam Hammudi told reporters.

The bill, which still has to be passed by parliament, will mainly affect the roughly 4,100 British troops deployed at Basra air base in the south.

London newspapers have reported that Britain intends to begin its withdrawal in March with most troops out by June, although defence officials insist that the precise timetable will depend on conditions on the ground at the time.

"We plan -- subject to the conditions on the ground and the advice of military commanders -- to reduce our force levels in Iraq as we complete our key tasks in Basra in the early months of next year," a British defence ministry spokesman said last week.

But he added: "Final decisions on the timing of the drawdown will depend on the circumstances at the time."

From a peak of 46,000 British soldiers in 2003 when Britain joined the invasion, just 4,100 now remain in Iraq.

Up to 400 troops are likely to remain to help train the Iraqi forces, while equipment such as helicopters and drones will be transferred to Afghanistan.

Since the US-led invasion of March 2003, 177 British troops have died in Iraq.

Meanwhile, seven Iraqis, including four soldiers and a policeman, were killed in two separate attacks on Tuesday, security and medical sources said.

The soldiers were killed in a car bombing in the town of As-Sadiyeh in Diyala province, north of the capital, the army's operations room said.

Bush's Iraq assailant has broken arm, ribs

Says brother

AFP, *Baghdad*

The Iraqi journalist who hurled his shoes at US President George W. Bush has a broken arm and ribs after being struck by Iraqi security agents, his brother told AFP yesterday.

Durgham Zaidi was unable to say whether his brother Muntazer had sustained the injuries while being overpowered during Sunday's protest against Bush's visit to Baghdad or while in custody later.

He said he had been told that his brother was being held by Iraqi forces in the heavily fortified Green Zone compound in central Baghdad where the US embassy and most government offices are housed.

"He has got a broken arm and ribs, and cuts to his eye and arm," said Durgham.

"He is being held by forces under the command of Muwaffaq al-Rubaie," Iraq's national security adviser, he added.

Zaidi, 29, a journalist for private Iraqi television channel Al-Baghdadia, was swiftly overpowered by Iraqi security forces after he threw the shoes at Bush in a gesture seen as the supreme mark of disrespect in the Muslim world.

An AFP journalist said that blood was visible on the ground as he was led away into custody although it was unclear if it was his.

Bush, who was on a swansong visit to the battleground that came to dominate his eight-year presidency, ducked when the shoes were thrown and later made light of the incident.

New Thai PM faces deep divisions

AP, *Bangkok*

Thailand's new prime minister faces the difficult task of unifying a country torn apart by months of violent anti-government protests demonstrations that battered the key tourism industry just as the global economy was slipping into its worst crisis in decades.

The selection on Monday of Abhisit Vejjajiva the 44-year-old, Oxford-educated opposition leader marks the first time in eight years that a civilian government will be led by an opponent of exiled Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, who has loomed over Thai politics since he was ousted by a military coup in 2006.

Abhisit began Tuesday to put together his Cabinet, which will struggle to heal the rift between the middle class that is his base and the rural poor who backed Thaksin and manage an economy buffeted by Thailand's political turmoil and a global slowdown. "It will be more difficult for the Democrats to achieve fast results in tackling the economic problems now than in 1997," when most of Asia sunk economic recession, said Ekamol Khiriwat, former head of Thailand's stock exchange. "Now everything is kind of slowing down."

Emergency out, rights in

FROM PAGE 1

deployment designed to aid the civil administration in maintaining law and order in the run-up to the election will be complete by December 20.

Meanwhile, the Election Commission tomorrow meets officials of the law enforcement agencies to discuss security arrangements for the polls, said EC Secretariat sources.

The withdrawal of emergency comes on immense pressure from the political parties and rights organisations, leaving less than two weeks before the national election.

It marks a drastic shift in the caretaker administration and EC's stance over the way the polls should be organised.

Buoyed by the peaceful conduct of the mayoral polls on August 4, Chief Election Commissioner ATM Shamsul Huda said he does not see any problems with holding the parliamentary election too under the state of emergency.

His arguments were echoed by the advisers.

In the days following the proclamation of emergency, former prime ministers Sheikh Hasina and Khaleda Zia were detained on graft charges. Along with the two, many political heavyweights were put behind bars.

Awami League and BNP, the parties that rule the country's political landscape, were pressed heavily to reform themselves.

In September last year, the caretaker government slackened the curbs on indoor politics only in the capital. Elsewhere, the ban was lifted in May this year to facilitate preparations for the elections.

Political analysts observe that the political parties must conduct themselves responsibly now as they are the ones blamed for the situation leading to emergency after over 16 years.

The last time the nation saw itself under emergency rule was in 1990. Declared by HM Ershad on November 27 that year, the state of emergency then was in force till December 6, the day the military strongman was forced to quit presidency following a popular uprising.

PHOTO: AFP

Immigration attorneys give free consultations to immigrants in a dimly-lit room, darkened by a storm-related electrical power outage, as immigrants are taught their legal rights during Know Your Rights Week on Dec 15 in Los Angeles, California. The educational effort is aimed at the immigrant community in light of recent immigration raids, which have split families apart when parents are suddenly arrested and sent out of the country.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Executive Engineer
PWD Electrical/Mechanical Division-VII
Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka
Phone & Fax: 8121492

Memo No. E/M-7-126/2327 Dated: 03-12-08 Eng / 19-08-1415 Bng

Invitation for Tender

1	Invitation for	বাংলাদেশ কারিগরী শিক্ষা বোর্ড এর অভ্যন্তরীণ বৈদ্যুতিকরণ এবং বেগম খালেদা জিয়া মেডিকেল কলেজের সিকিউরিটি লাইট ফিটিংস ওয়ারিং কন্ট্রোল সুইচ সরবরাহ ও স্থাপনকরণ কাজ (গ্রুপ-১ ও ২)।
2	Invitation Ref No	Memo No. E/M-7-126/2327, Dt. 03-12-08.
3	Procurement method	Open tendering method.
4	Budget and source of funds	GOB.
5	Tender package No.	Tender No. 51 (E/M-VII)/2008-09.
6	Tender last selling date	During office hours up to 07-01-09.
		Date / Time
7	Tender closing date and time	08-01-09 / 12.30pm.
8	Tender opening date and time	08-01-09 / 03.00pm.
9	Name & address of the office(s)	
	- Selling tender document (principal)	PWD E/M Division-7, S B Nagar, Dhaka.
	- Selling tender document (others)	PWD E/M Division-1/2/3/4/5/6/8/Wood Workshop Division/E/M Workshop Division, Dhaka.
	- Receiving tender document	PWD E/M Division-7, S B Nagar, Dhaka.
	- Opening tender document	PWD E/M Division-7, S B Nagar, Dhaka.
10	Eligibility of tenderer	গণপূর্ত অধিদপ্তরের তালিকাভুক্ত বিশেষ শ্রেণী, প্রথম শ্রেণী (সম্মিলিত), এবং বৈদ্যুতিক/যান্ত্রিক কাজের তালিকাভুক্ত প্রথম শ্রেণী ঠিকাদারী প্রতিষ্ঠান অথবা যে কোন বোনাফাইড ফার্ম যাদের সরকারি বৈদ্যুতিক লাইসেন্সিং বোর্ড কর্তৃক প্রদত্ত বৈধ এবিসি লাইসেন্স, হালনাগাদ ট্রেড লাইসেন্স, মূল্য সংযোজন কর নিবন্ধিকরণ, টিআইএন সহ আয়কর পরিশোধের প্রত্যয়নপত্র এবং ব্যাংক সলভ্যান্সি রয়েছে।
11	Price of tender document (Tk)	Group-01=1,000.00 (one thousand) only & Group-02= Tk. 500.00 (five hundred) only.

দরপত্র জমার মূল রশিদসহ চাহিত তথ্যাদির সনদপত্রের সত্যায়িত ফটোকপি দরপত্রের সাথে সংযুক্ত করতে হবে।

	Sl. No	Identification of work		Location	Tender security amount (Tk)	Completion of installation time
12	01	গ্রুপ-১	ঢাকার শেরেবাংলা নগরস্থ কারিগরী শিক্ষা বোর্ডের মূল ভবনের বিদ্যমান ৭ম তলার উপর ৮ম তলা হইতে ১০ তলা পর্যন্ত উর্ধ্বমুখী সম্প্রসারণ প্রকল্পের অভ্যন্তরীণ বৈদ্যুতিকরণ কাজ।	আগারগাঁও, শেরেবাংলা নগর, ঢাকা।	৩২,০০০/- (বত্রিশ হাজার)	৬ (ছয়) মাস।
	02	গ্রুপ-২	HNPSP ২০০৩-২০১০ এর আওতায় ঢাকার শেরেবাংলা নগরে ১০০ আসন বিশিষ্ট বেগম খালেদা জিয়া মেডিকেল কলেজ নির্মাণ প্রকল্প (১ম পর্ব)। সিকিউরিটি লাইট ফিটিংস ওয়ারিং কন্ট্রোল সুইচ সরবরাহ ও স্থাপন করণ কাজ।	শেরেবাংলা নগর, ঢাকা।	৪,০০০/- (চার হাজার)	৬ (ছয়) মাস।

13. The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject all tenders.

মোঃ লুৎফুল আজিজ
নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলী
গণপূর্ত ই/এম বিভাগ-৭
শেরেবাংলা নগর, ঢাকা

জিডি-৫৮২৪

PHOTO: AP

In this July 19, 2007 file photo, an iceberg melts off Ammassalik Island in Eastern Greenland. More than 2 trillion tons of land ice in Greenland, Antarctica and Alaska have melted since 2003, according to new Nasa satellite data that show the latest signs of what scientists say is global warming.

Over 2 trillion tons of arctic ice has melted since 2003

AP, *Washington*

More than 2 trillion tons of land ice in Greenland, Antarctica and Alaska have melted since 2003, according to new Nasa satellite data that show the latest signs of what scientists say is global warming.

More than half of the loss of landlocked ice in the past five years has occurred in Greenland, based on measurements of ice weight by Nasa's GRACE satellite, said Nasa geophysicist Scott Luthcke. The water melting from Greenland in the past five years would fill up about 11 Chesapeake Bays, he said, and the Greenland melt seems to be accelerating.

Nasa scientists planned to present their findings Thursday at the American Geophysical Union conference in San Francisco. Luthcke said Greenland figures for the summer of 2008 aren't complete yet, but this year's ice loss, while still significant, won't be as severe as 2007.

The news was better for Alaska. After a precipitous drop in 2005, land ice increased slightly in 2008 because of large winter snowfalls, Luthcke said. Since 2003, when the Nasa satellite started taking measurements, Alaska has lost 400 billion tons of land ice.

In assessing climate change, scientists generally look at several years to determine the overall trend.

Melting of land ice, unlike sea ice, increases sea levels very slightly. In the 1990s, Greenland didn't add to world sea level rise; now that island is adding about half a millimetre of sea level rise a year, Nasa ice scientist Jay Zwally said in a telephone interview from the conference.

GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH
Local Government Engineering Department
Community Based Resource Management Project
LGED Bhaban ,Agargaon Shere E Bangla Nagar
Dhaka 1207
Memo No .LGED/ (PD/ GBRMP/T-04/2008/560 Date 15-12-08

Invitation For Tender (Retender)

1	Ministry/Division	Local Government Division	
2	Agency	Local Government Engineering Department	
3	Procuring Entity Name	Community Based Resource Management	
4	Procuring Entity District	Dhaka	
5	Invitation for	Tender for procurement of goods	
6	Invitation Ref. No.	LGED/PD/CBRMP/G-01/2008/04	
7	Date	15-12-2008	
KEY INFORMATION			
8	Procurement Method	NCT Open tendering method (OTM)	
FUNDING INFORMATION			
9	Budget and Source of Funds	Annual Development Programe (GoB 10%)	
10	Development Partner	IFAD 90%	
Particular Information			
11	Project Code	7018	
12	Project Name	Sunamganj Community Based Resource	
13	Tender Package No.	As per Sl. No. 22	
14	Tender Package Name	As per Sl. No. 22	
15	Tender Last Selling Date	05/01/2009	
16	Tender Closing Date and Time	Date	Time
		06/012009	12:00 AM
17	Tender Opening Date and Time	06/01/2009	12:30 AM
18	Name & Address of the Office(s)	Address(s)	
	Selling Tender Document(Principal)	CBRMP, LGED Bhaban (level-11) Agargaon,	
	Selling Tender Document(Others)	Not Applicable	
	Receiving Tender Document	SCBRMP, LGED Bhaban (level-11) Agargaon,	
	Opening Tender Document	SCBRMP, LGED Bhaban (level-11) Agargaon,	
19	Place/Date/Time of Pre-Tender Meeting (Optional)	Not Applicable	
INFORMATION FOR TENDERER			
20	Eligibility of Tenderer	Mentioned in tender document	
21	Brief Description of Goods	(a)Computer (b)photocopier(c)Stationery(d)	
PACKAGE INFORMATION			
22	Package No.	Identification of Package	Tender / Tender / Completion Time
	G-01/2008	Computer&acessories	150.00 / 6000.00 / 30 Days
	G-02/2008	Photocopier &Accessories	300.00 / 10000.00 / 30 Days
	G-03/2008	Stationery	750.00 / 34000.00 / 30 Days
	G-04/2008	Printing of register	750.00 / 34000.00 / 30 Days
	G-06/2008	Speed boat	750.00 / 34000.00 / 45 Days
	Location of Supply	PMU, SCBRMP-LGED, Sunamganj	
PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS			
23	Name of Official Inviting Tender	Sk. Md. Mohsin	
24	Designation of Official Inviting Tender	Project Director	
25	Address of Official Inviting Tender	SCBRMP,LGED Bhaban (Level-11) Agargaon,	
26	Contact details of Official Inviting Tender	Tel : 880-2-8151387,8155581	
27	The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject all tenders		

15.12.08
(Sk. Md. Mohsin)
Project Director

C-3012