# Rockets, gunfire on Gaza border as truce ends

AP, AFP, Jerusalem/ Gaza City

Sporadic violence is flaring along the

fired two rockets into Israel on Friday morning, following heavy rocket fire in recent days. The military also says troops guarding Israeli farmers in fields along the border came under sniper fire from inside Gaza.

There were no injuries reported, A six-month truce between Israel and

Gaza's Hamas rulers is set to expire Friday. The ceasefire has been marred by ditions." ongoing violence since early November.

Hamas officials said Thursday that they would not renew the arrangement. Israel says the truce has no expiration date and that it will not take military action if Gaza's armed groups hold their

besieged Palestinian enclave declared an of the Ezzedine al-Qassam Brigades. end to the troubled truce with Israel and

warned they would respond to any attack. Shortly after the armed wing of

Hamas formally announced the shaky Gaza-Israel border as a shaky truce 'six-month truce was over, the smaller of an escalation of violence. Islamic Jihad group said it fired three The Israeli military says Gaza militants rockets at Israel, which reported no damage or casualties.

Security sources also reported that an Israeli driving a tractor in a field just outside Gaza was targeted by Palestinian tions." gunmen but was not hit.

At dawn, Hamas's Ezzedine al-Qassam Brigades said: "The ceasefire is over and there won't be a renewal because the Zionist enemy has not respected its con-

Both Hamas and Israel have said they would respond if attacked, but neither has said it would go on the offensive at this stage.

enemy: all attacks against the Gaza Strip or any new crime will trigger a large-scale Tension surged in and around Gaza on confrontation and we will retaliate very Friday as the Islamist rulers of the fiercely," said a statement on the website

Israeli media highlighted the tionin Gaza.

increased state of alert among security forces and communities around the Gaza Strip, but also uncertainty about the risk

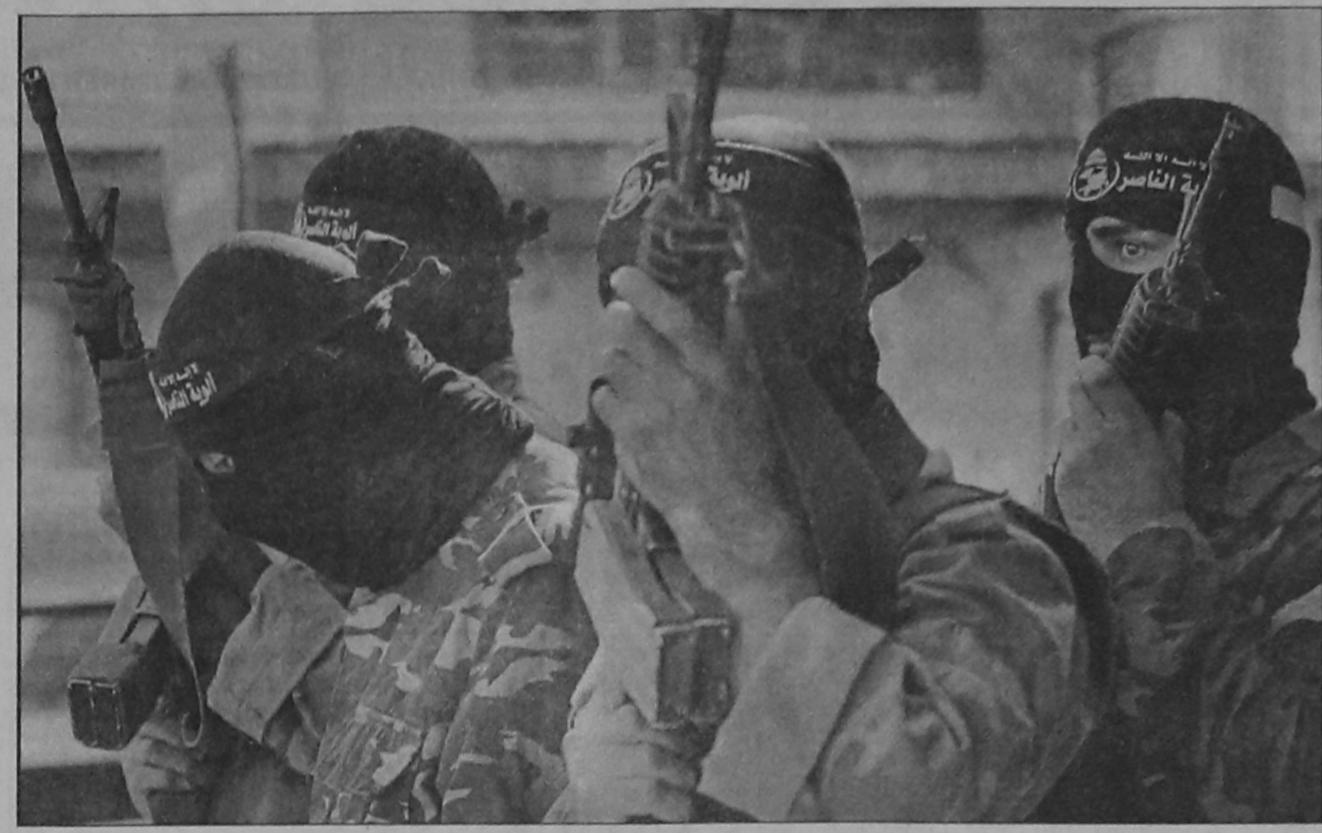
"Hamas continues to maintain ambiguity," the mass-selling Yediot Aharonot daily said. "If causing the situation to deteriorate will serve its immediate interests it will open fire even without declara-

Several newspapers said the Israeli defence establishment was not eager for battle at this stage.

"There are myriad arguments against a war in Gaza, but the strongest is the one defence officials can't utter aloud... It would be hard to go into Gaza at the height of an election campaign," the liberal Haaretz daily said.

Israel scheduled legislative elections "We issue a warning to the Zionist on February 10 after scandal-plagued Prime Minister Ehud Olmert presented his resignation in September.

Israeli Defence Minister Ehud Barak has stressed that he sees no urgency in launching a large-scale military interven-



Palestinian militants of the Nasser Salah al-Din Brigades, the military wing of the Popular Resistance Committees, stand guard with their weapons during a press conference about the end of truce with Israel in Gaza City yesterday. Tension surged in and around Gaza Friday as the Islamist Hamas rulers of the besieged Palestinian enclave declared an end to the troubled truce with Israel and warned they would respond to any attack.



A riot police officer throws a tear gas canister to protesters during a demonstration in Athens on Thursday. The Greek capital was suffocating under a barrage of tear gas as 5,000 protesters swamped riot police outside parliament, 12 days after the police killing of a teenager sparked riots.

# on Greek govt

AFP, Athens

Athens police braced for more rate rallies outside parliament protests Friday after nearly two weeks of clashes, as the government faced growing vote on Sunday. pressure over its handling of the crisis sparked by the police in Athens, which left city killing of a teenager.

cultural institute in the city were targeted by masked youths even before the day's scheduled demonstrations involving trade unions as well tion. as student groups.

leader, was wounded in a University.

The main trade unions meanwhile organised sepaagainst what they called an "anti-workers" budget up for

After Thursday's violence centre residents choking in The offices of a French tear gas, the main opposition Pasok socialist party again called for early elections, arguing that the government had lost control of the situa-

About 100 leading fig-Students planned a protest ures including academics, in a city suburb where another magistrates and econoteenager, the son of a union mists launched a petition calling on the government mysterious shooting incident and the political world as a on Wednesday night, and were whole to get a grip on the to stage a concert at Athens situation to re-establish confidence.

## Protests pile pressure Nato resumes diplomatic contacts with Russia

AP, Brussels

Nato and Russia will resume diplomatic contacts for the first time since the war in Georgia, , the alliance's spokesman said Thursday.

Spokesman James Appathurai said Nato's secretary-general and Russia's ambassador to the Western alliance will meet informally Friday - the first such meeting since Nato froze diplomatic contacts in the wake of Moscow's invasion of Georgia in August.

Russian Ambassador Dmitry Rogozin has said previously he would welcome the resumption of ties, but his mission played down expectations for the meeting with Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer.

"We don't expect anything specific ... but it is a step in unfreezing our relations," said Igor Semenenko, a senior Russian diplomat in Brussels.

Despite the diplomatic freeze, Nato and Russia have continued to cooperate on issues of common interest, such as combating piracy off the Somali coast.

Moscow also has agreed to allow the alliance to use its territory to resupply Western forces in Afghanistan. Attacks on transport convoys in Pakistan by pro-Taliban forces have raised concerns about the security of Nato's main overland logistics route.

Nato foreign ministers agreed two weeks ago to gradually resume contacts with Moscow, starting with informal meetings at a relatively low level, such as Friday's meeting in which Russia is represented only by its ambassador.

They held off on resuming higher level talks, such as the meetings of Russian foreign and defence ministers with Nato counterparts that were held regularly every few months before the split over Georgia.

The decision was a compromise between nations led by Germany who had sought a rapid return to normal relations and the United States, backed by some eastern European Nato members, who were concerned a softer line might encourage Russia to bully its neighbours.

# Obama takes a break after cabinet plaudits

AFP, Washington

President-elect Barack Obama was set to round out his cabinet picks vesterday after moving with his promised "deliberate haste" to get the faces in place to confront a dizzying sofar. array of menaces.

ence Obama is expected to name Democratic lawmaker and former Dallas mayor Ron Zelizer said. Kirk as US trade representative, the Washington Post reported.

But after leaving Saturday period for an incoming president since his November 4 supporters," he said.

percent of respondents in a

At a Chicago press confer- well-organized and well-Hilda Solis as labor secretary University historian Julian

for a Christmas break in and experience, but on key Hawaii, the Democrat will areas -- including economics have a chance to reflect on and defence -- he has been what has been unusually busy able to move to the centre

stellar poll readings -- 83 Marist survey Wednesday approved of his performance

prepared transitions that we have seen," Princeton

"Not only has he appointed as haste," he said. some very high quality picks in terms of intellectual capacity without alienating his core

election triumph.

And while these are still act. The most distinct aspect early days, Obama can bask in of this transition is how fast it is taking place." At his first post-election

news conference on November 7, Obama vowed to confront the US economic "This was one of the more crisis head-on but stressed he would not rush into making cabinet appointments.

"I want to move with all deliberate haste, but I want to emphasise deliberate as well

By common consent, Obama has filled his cabinet quickly but also with much thought to ability as he emulates the "team of rivals" assembled by his political hero, Civil War president Abraham Lincoln.

AP, Bangkok Thailand's new prime minister picked up a broom and is his base and the rural poor "It is a difficult balancing

New Thai leader surveys

damage at PM's office

House, vowing to clean up the by Thailand's political turmoil mess from a three-month sitin and show the country is "back to normal."

About 100 painters and maintenance workers accompanied Abhisit Vejjajiva on his first trip to the prime miniswas left in shambles after a three-month siege by protesters demanding the departure with holy water. of allies of deposed ex-premier Thaksin Shinawatra.

on Monday as the country's third prime minister in four months. He and his Democrat Party are the first opponents of

Abhisit, 44, faces an enor- at \$3.6 million.

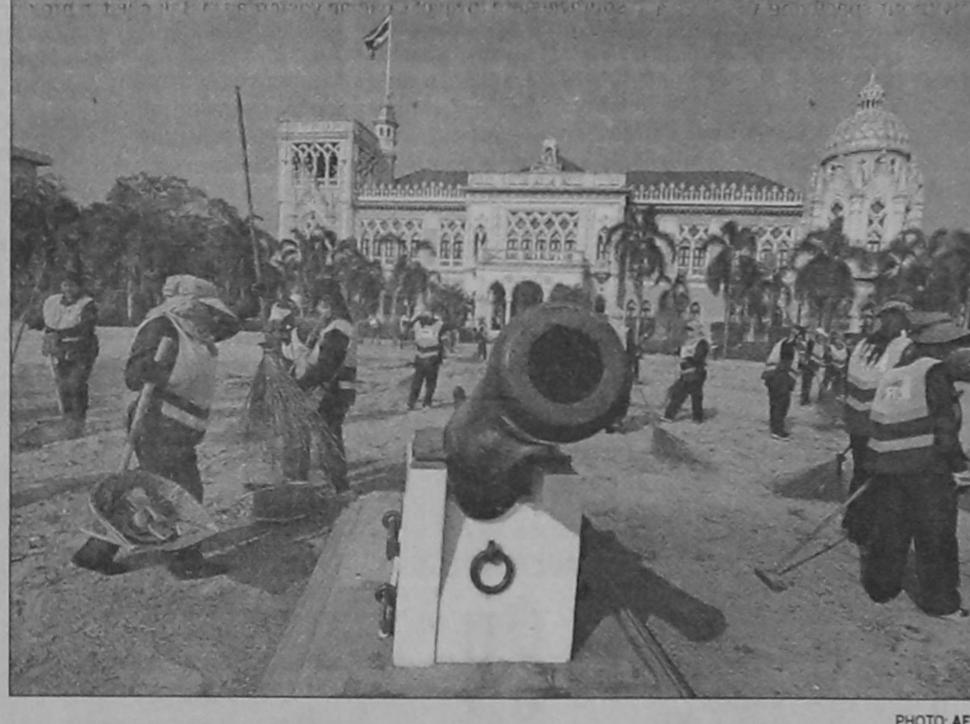
mous challenge trying to unite the country largely split between the middle class that posed for cameras yesterday who backed Thaksin and on the steps of Government manage an economy buffeted

"I intend to have the renovation finished as soon as possible because this is the country's face," Abhisit told ter's office compound, which reporters outside after orange-robed Buddhist monks blessed the building

and a global slowdown. But

first, he needs to get into his

The once lush lawns and manicured gardens at Parliament voted Abhisit in Government House were ripped up by the protesters who set up a tent community with free food and outdoor showers. The crowd swelled to Thaksin to lead a civilian gov- tens of thousands of people ernment in the past seven years. and caused damage estimated



Bangkok Metropolitan Administration workers clean the ground at the Government House (background) in Bangkok yesterday. Thai Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva planning to work at Government House next week as a massive 'Cleaning' campaign launched in the compound which was illegally occupied by anti-government protesters for more than three months.

## Malicious campaign in Ctg

FROM PAGE 1 candidate.

The booklets were being sold for Tk5 and Tk10.

The booklets criticised Awami League's politics. One of them apparently had a doctored photo of AL chief Sheikh Hasina wearing Sindur (vermilion).

As The Daily Star correspondent bought two booklets from a Shibir activist he was told that the Shibir men stored the booklets in a nearby library of their organisation for selling during the rally.

Four-party candidate in the constituency Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury said he was not aware of such activities.

"I do not believe in such dirty politics of tarnishing someone's character," he said, adding, "Everybody knows that I am a clean politician. It would be a matter of Jamaat if any such incident takes place," he added.

Prof Aslam Chowdhury, personal secretary to Khasru, told The Daily Star that they would be careful in future so that none could repeat such incident. Our staff correspondent in

Khulna reports: Police seized 101 VCDs and audiocassettes at an office of a courier service in Khulna yesterday.

The VCDs had pictures and footage of a Shibir man being

killed with oars and sticks in front of Baitul Mukarram Mosque in Dhaka on October 28, 2006. The audiocassettes contained apparently Awami League leaders' speeches against Jamaat-e-Islami.

Igbal Hossain of Moghbazar, Dhaka, sent those to City Jamaat Ameer Mian Golam Parwar and Maulana Golam Kader, proprietor of Mamun Pharmacy at Paikgachha Bazar in Khulna.

A general diary (GD) was filed with Khulna Police Station in the evening.

Mian Golam Parwar is contesting the upcoming parliamentary elections from Khulna-5 constituency.

for leniency CNN, Baghdad

Shoe-thrower asks

"ugly" and asked the Iraqi government for leniency. confirmed Thursday that Muntadhar al-Zaidi penned a contrite handwritten letter to Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki

The journalist who hurled his

shoes at US President George W.

Bush has described his attack as

Yaseen al-Majeed, the prime authorities. minister's media adviser and spokesman, read CNN part of many Iraqis protesting his the letter, saying al-Zaidi describes what he did as "the great ugly act I perpetrated" and says an excuse would not be enough for that.

requesting compassionate

interviewing al-Maliki in 2005, and al-Maliki had said to him "comein, this is your home, too."

Al-Majeed told CNN al-Zaidi asked al-Maliki for that same "fatherly compassion." The letter was received on Thursday A government spokesman but it was written at another time, al-Majeed said.

Asked if al-Maliki would consider exonerating him, al-Majeed said it is too early to talk about that because the case remains with the judicial

Al-Zaidi is hailed as a hero by detention after he threw both of his shoes at Bush while the US president and al-Maliki were holding a news conference Sunday during Bush's unan-Al-Zaidi said he recalled nounced visit to Baghdad.

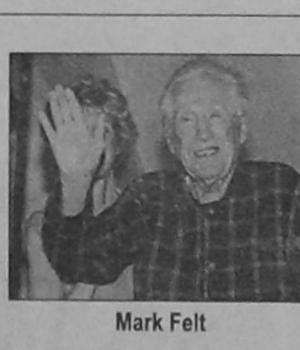
### Zimbabwe opposition threatens to quit talks

AFP, Gaborone

Zimbabwe opposition leader Morgan Tsvangirai threatment talks Friday over his Movement for ahead of President Robert members did not stop. Mugabe's address to his party's annual conference.

become prime minister under the unity government, told reporters in Botswana that he would quit the talks ened to quit unity govern- in January if abductions of kidnappings of supporters Democratic Change (MDC) "More than 42 members

have been abducted," said



Watergate's Deep

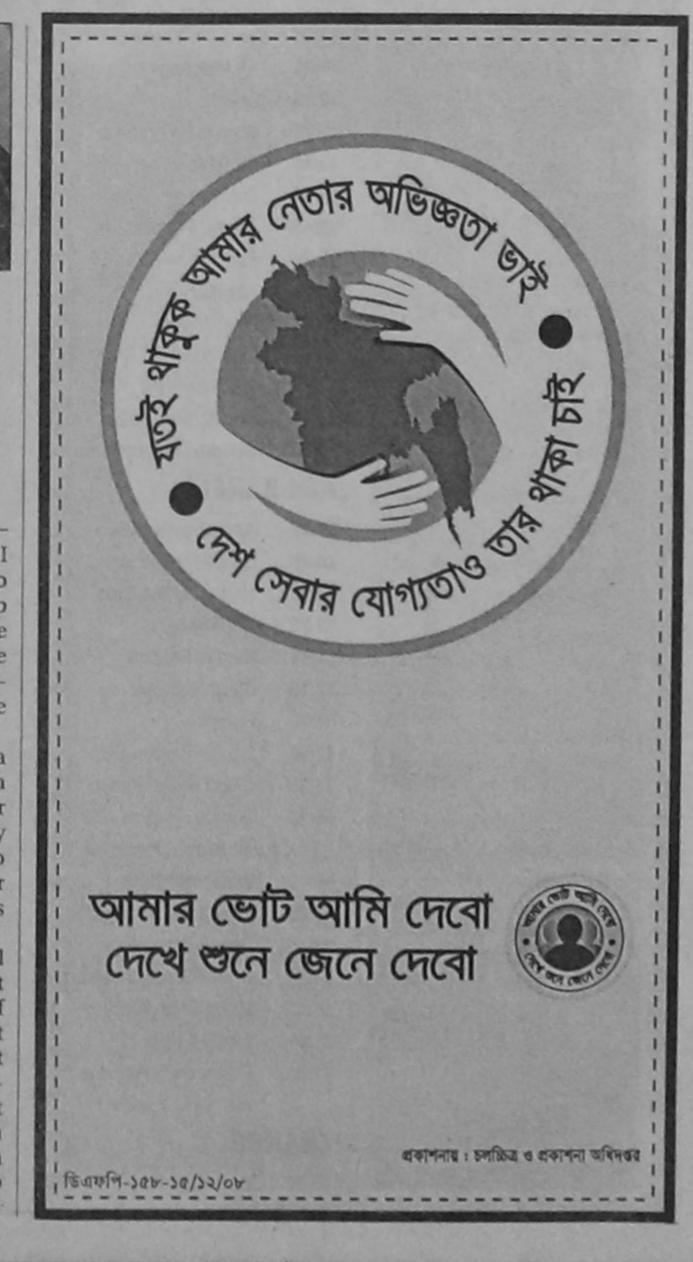
Throat,' dies

AP, San Francisco

W Mark Felt, the former FBI second-in-command who revealed himself as "Deep Throat" 30 years after he tipped off reporters to the Watergate scandal that toppled a president, has died. He was 95.

Felt died Thursday in Santa Rosa after suffering from congestive heart failure for several months, said family friend John D. O'Connor, who wrote the 2005 Vanity Fair article uncovering Felt's secret.

The shadowy central figure in the one of the most gripping political dramas of the 20th century, Felt insisted his alter ego be kept secret when he leaked damaging information about President Richard Nixon and his aides to Washington Post reporter Bob Woodward.



#### Nizami shares assets Mojahid, who is running in cash against her husband's Tk FROM PAGE 1 lakh. He also owns electronics

goods and furniture worth about Tk 3 lakh. as salary from the party, the Jamaat secretary general says that his two other sources of income are share dividends of Tk 3,512 and Tk 1.60 lakh he

rent from his tenants. Mojahid, who identifies himself as a businessman, did not describe anything about his business. He claimed he spends Tk 3.75 lakh annually.

received as advance house

He says he may get donation of Tk 50,000 from Monowara Begum and Tk 4 lakh from Anwarul Haq Raju, neither of whom are his relatives. He will also get Tk 1.50 lakh from other sources.

for the December 29 parliamentary elections in deposited in banks than her Faridpur-3 constituency, will husband. Nizami has Tk 28,837 Apart from getting Tk 3 lakh spend Tk 50,000 from his own deposited in banks against his pocket while his sons, brothers and wife will provide him Tk 6.50 lakh for election spend 1.5 lakh from his own

> that he has movable properties worth over Tk 47 lakh and his wife has more than Tk 7 lakh. They would have sahred movable properties worth almost equally had Nizami kept the three vehicles in his wife's name. The Jamaat chief's three vehicles are said

cases each. Proceedings of the to be worth Tk 40 lakh. cases against Nizami were The couple have immov- suspended while Mojahid is able properties in either of on bail in two cases and the their names. proceeding of the other one

Nizami's wife owns Tk 65,828 was suspended.

28,716. She also has more money wife'sTk2.51 lakh. Nizami says he would

pocket while the rest of his In contrast, Nizami says total election expenditure of Tk 14 lakh would come from the party, his family members and well-wishers. Nizami, who identifies himself as a writer, is contesting the polls from Pabna-1 constituency. Both the Jamaat leaders are now facing three criminal

Tsvangirai, who is to Tsvangirai.