



PHOTO: AFP
Palestinian demonstrators hold placards bearing portraits of US President George W. Bush, topped with shoes during a protest against Israel's separation barrier in the West Bank village of Bilin near Ramallah Friday. They also expressed solidarity with Iraqi journalist Muntazir al-Zaidi, who was arrested in Iraq after throwing his shoes at Bush.

UN calls for immediate halt to Gaza violence

AFP, AP, United Nations/ Gaza City

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon is "extremely concerned" about the escalation of violence in the Gaza Strip and urged an extension of a recently ended truce, his office said Friday.

"The Secretary-General is extremely concerned at statements calling into question the continuation of the Egyptian-brokered calm in and around Gaza," his press office said in a statement.

"A major escalation of violence would have grave consequences for the protection of civilians in Israel and Gaza, the welfare of the Gaza civilian population and the sustainability of political efforts."

Ban reiterated his appeal that "the calm should be respected and extended, rocket attacks against Israel must be immediately halted and all acts of violence must cease," his office said.

Shortly after the armed wing of Hamas formally announced that the six-

month truce with Israel was over, the smaller Islamic Jihad group said it fired three rockets at southern Israel, which caused no reported damage or casualties.

Violence has escalated for the past several weeks in the run-up to the end of the ceasefire. Militants fired nine rockets Thursday toward southern Israel that caused no damage or victims after Israeli forces carried out five air strikes and killed one Palestinian Wednesday.

Iraqi MPs reject law on UK troops

Baghdad frees detained officers

BBC ONLINE, AFP, Baghdad

Iraq's parliament has rejected a draft law that would allow troops from the UK, Australia and a number of other countries to remain after 2008.

The bill would have given these foreign forces a legal basis for staying in Iraq once the current United Nations mandate ends on 31 December.

The draft, rejected by 80-68 votes, now goes back to the cabinet for amendment.

US forces are allowed to remain until the end of 2011 under a separate status of forces agreement.

Fariad Rawndouzi, a Kurdish MP, told the BBC that many of his colleagues were not happy with the formulation of the draft law, and wanted it to more closely resemble the deal between the US and Iraq.

Earlier in the week, UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown announced that the UK planned to withdraw its remaining troops from Iraq by

the end of July.

Meanwhile, Iraq on Saturday freed 24 security personnel arrested this week on suspicion of aiding terrorism, amid claims their detention was orchestrated by supporters of Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki.

The interior and defence ministry officers "have all been released and the allegations were dropped," Brigadier General Abdel Karim Khalaf told AFP without saying when. "They are patriotic officers. We will take action against the people who made the allegations against them," he said.

Without giving a source, pan-Arab daily newspaper Asharq Al-Awsat said on Saturday that "the arrests were carried out by a special counter-terrorism group supervised personally by Maliki."

The operation "could have been launched by Maliki to weaken his rivals before the provincial elections" scheduled for the end of January, it said, decrying an "atmosphere of political secrecy and rivalry in Iraq."

Pakistan acting against Jamaat-ud-Dawa: UN

Pak fight against terrorism not enough, says US

CNN-IBN, IANS, New Delhi/Washington

Pakistan has satisfactorily complied with the UN's sanctions on the Jamaat-ud-Dawa, the Islamic charity group declared a terrorist group by the Security Council, a top UN official has said.

Richard Barrett is the Coordinator of the Security Council established al-Qaeda and Taliban Sanctions Monitoring Committee, which has the task of monitoring sanctions imposed by the Security Council on individuals and organisations declared as terrorists.

Barrett told CNN-IBN in New York that it was difficult to implement the sanctions on the Jamaat completely, but the UN has found all Pakistani agencies were cooperative.

"I don't mind dealing with the officials in Pakistan, whether it is the Government, its elected officials, whether it is the ministries or the intelligence services and army. I found very good atmosphere of cooperation between them as well as with us," Barrett told CNN-IBN.

"It is very difficult for a state to implement that (sanctions) completely, but yes in a way Pakistani government is working to ensure fruitful compliance," he said.

Barrett indicated that the cooperation was across the board, covering civil and military

agencies and ministries. Barrett is expected to visit Islamabad soon to make an assessment of Pakistan's actions so far and what more needed to be done.

Barrett had earlier said the Security Council has the power to take action against nations if they are found to be not taking action against individuals and organisations branded as terrorists.

The Associated Press reports the Pakistan Government after the United Nations declared the Jamaat a terrorist group and a front for Lashkar-e-Toiba has shuttered all of its offices, arrested scores of activists and put its entire leadership under house arrest.

India blames the Lashkar for the terrorist attacks on Mumbai last month.

But US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said on Friday Pakistan has taken some "positive steps" after the Mumbai terror attacks for which India has blamed a Pakistan-based terrorist group but "they are not nearly enough."

During her recent visit to the region to show solidarity with India and ask Pakistan to deal with the terror groups operating from its territory, she found that civilians "were very much in charge and making decisions", Rice said at an event here.

New Thai premier unveils cabinet

AFP, Bangkok

Thailand's new prime minister Abhisit Vejjajiva unveiled his cabinet yesterday aimed at building reconciliation and reviving the economy, but the ministerial line-up has already stoked tensions.

The cabinet list was announced after King Bhumibol Adulyadej signed a royal command approving the ministers, five days after Abhisit won a parliamentary vote to bring a coalition led by the Democrat Party into power.

Heading the economic team is finance minister Korn Chatkavanij, an Oxford contemporary of 44-year-old Abhisit who worked for investment bank JPMorgan Chase.

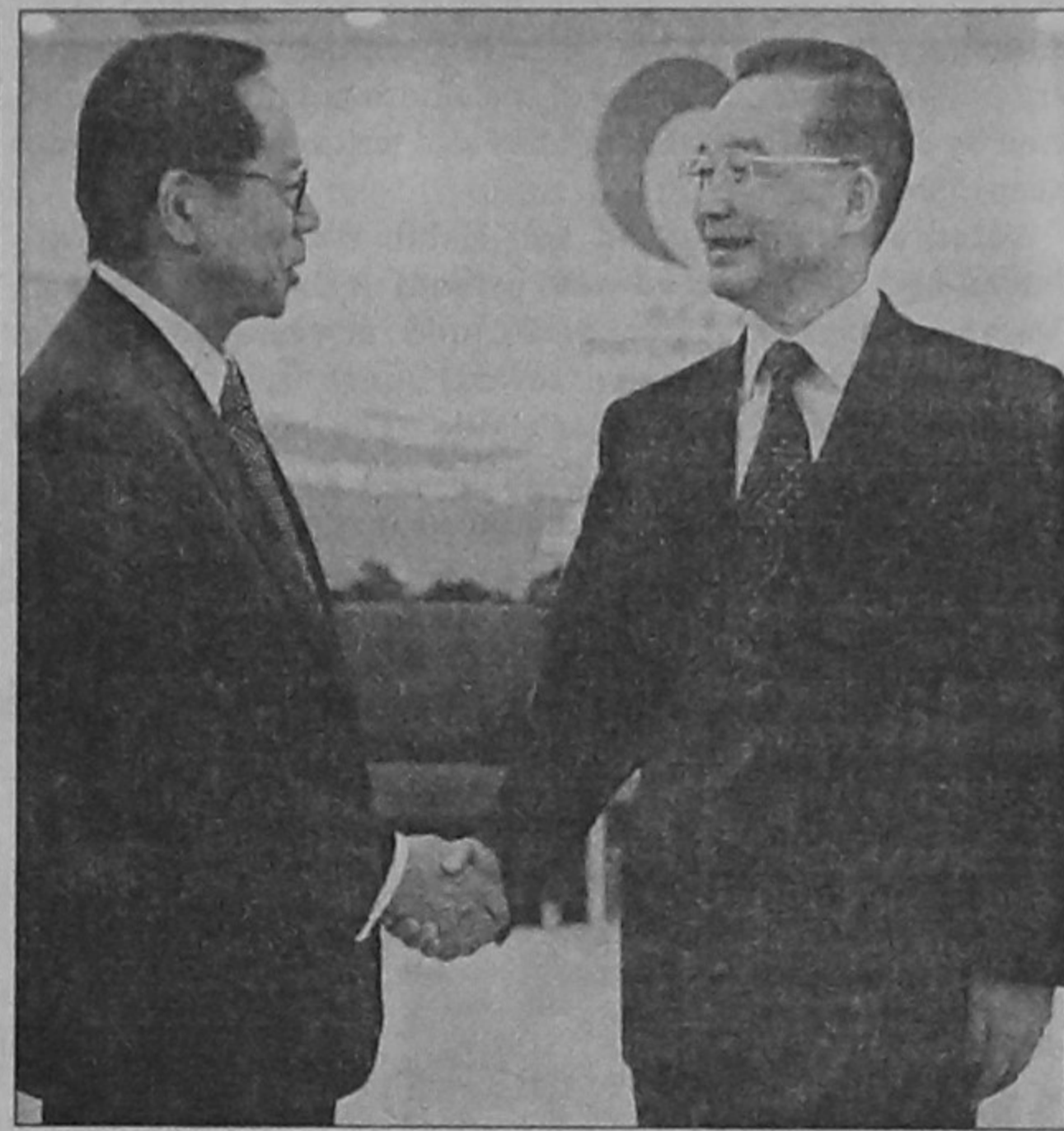


PHOTO: AFP
Former Japanese prime minister Yasuo Fukuda (L) meets with Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao (R) in Beijing yesterday ahead of a ceremony marking the close of the Sino-Japan Youth Friendship Exchange Year.

Nine militants killed in Afghanistan

AFP, Kabul/Copenhagen

Eight Taliban-linked militants were killed in a joint operation by Afghan and US-led forces in volatile southern Afghanistan, the interior ministry said yesterday.

The rebels were killed on Friday in Helmand province, which sees some of the worst violence of the insurgency waged by Taliban fighters since the hardline movement was ousted from power in a US-led invasion in late 2001.

Most of the districts in Helmand are said to be under the control of the rebels. The province is also Afghanistan's primary opium-growing region.

"In a joint operation by Afghan national police, national army and coalition forces in Helmand... eight of the enemies of peace and stability were killed," the interior ministry said in a statement.

Five other militants were wounded in the battle in Nad Ali district, it added.

Elsewhere in the province, one rebel was killed when a bomb he was planting alongside a road exploded prematurely, the ministry said.

Illinois governor vows to stay in office, fight

AP, Chicago

Facing federal corruption charges that threaten to end his political career, Gov. Rod Blagojevich has made clear to the world what those close to him know well: He's not one to be easily fazed.

"I have done nothing wrong. And I'm not going to quit a job that people hired me to do because of false accusations and a political lynch mob," a composed yet combative Blagojevich said Friday, addressing the public for the first time since his arrest 10 days earlier.

"I will fight. I will fight. I will fight until I take my last breath," Blagojevich said. He took no questions from reporters and immediately left the room after wishing his listeners, "Merry Christmas, happy holidays."

Recruitment of IT Consultants

The Canadian International development Agency (CIDA) is funding the SCOPE (Strengthening Comptrollership and Oversight of Public Expenditures) project for institutional strengthening and capacity building. A major objective of the project is to enhance capacity in conducting audits in IT environments and use IT based audit tools.

The following consultant positions, all of which are based in Dhaka, are open for local recruitment under the SCOPE project

1. National IT Audit Consultant (Code SCOPE IT 01)
2. National IT network/database consultant (Code SCOPE IT 02)
3. National network specialist and trainer (Code SCOPE IT 03)

National IT Audit Consultant (Code SCOPE IT 01)

Responsibilities :-Working with the SCOPE international consultants, the national IT audit consultant will play an important role in capacity building in "Auditing in IT environments". Specific responsibilities will include (a) develop IT based audit tools and techniques, (b) assist in accessing data from auditee computer system and perform data analysis, (c) develop training courses on evaluating IT system controls and (d) assist in implementing IT based audit tools and techniques. **Qualifications and experience** :-The ideal candidate will possess (i) A Masters degree in Computer Science or Audit or Business Administration from a recognized University. Certification as CISA (Certified Information Systems Auditor) or CISM (Certified Information Security Manager) or CISSP (Certified Information Security Professional) is a plus. (ii) Extensive knowledge of international auditing and accounting standards, automated public financial management systems, internal controls and governance issues, (iii) Demonstrable skills in using Windows (XP/Vista), MS Office suite, CAATs and EWP software, (iv) At least 5 years of experience in working in the public sector or public financial management development projects and (v) Previous experience in designing and delivering IT training courses

National IT network/database consultant (Code SCOPE IT 02)

Responsibilities :-The national IT network/database consultant will assist in implementing IT infrastructure and database applications. Specific responsibilities will include (a) assist with procurement, installation and maintenance of IT equipment and software, management of the IT training facility, resolve IT related problems, including user access and component configuration, (b) supervise of the IT network installation project, (c) maintain up to date inventory of SCOPE IT equipment and software and safeguard IT assets and (d) assist in development of audit management database application and other supporting applications. **Qualifications and experience** :-The ideal candidate will possess (i) Masters Degree or equivalent in Computer Science or Business Administration, (ii) Current MCSE (Microsoft Certified Systems Engineer) or MCITP (Microsoft Certified IT Professional). Microsoft Certified Database Administrator (MCDBA) or Oracle's OCP (Oracle Certified Professional) DBA (Database Administrator) is a plus. (iii) Working knowledge of LAN/WAN network administration and security management, (iv) Experience in system analysis and database application development, ERP and similar application packages, (v) experience with internet application architecture and monitoring, network and internet security, and availability and (vi) Minimum 5 years experience in IT application management or application development projects

National network specialist and trainer (Code SCOPE IT 03)

Responsibilities :-The national network specialist will assist in implementing a local area network and providing training to staff on network usage and security. Specific responsibilities will include (a) supervise and monitor LAN installation project (b) configure the network, email, internet access and other applications, (c) administer the network and (d) impart training to staff. **Qualifications and experience** :-The ideal candidate will possess (i) bachelor's Degree or equivalent in Computer Science or related subject, (ii) Current Cisco Certification (CCNA) certification, (iii) Extensive knowledge and experience of LAN/WAN network administration and security management including knowledge of Windows 2003 server, Windows 2003 domain administration and active directory, manage Exchange 2003 server, backup/restore in Windows/Solaris environment, (iv) Substantial work experience with internet application architecture and monitoring, network and internet security, and availability and (v) Minimum 3 years experience in network administration

Interested persons may respond by sending CV and application along with three references and copies of the educational and professional certificates in envelope superscribed "SCOPE- Recruitment of National IT Consultants and the job code" to the following address :

Mr. Peter Armstrong, Field Project Manager, SCOPE Project
CIDA Program Support Unit
House D-2, Road 95
Gulshan-2, Dhaka
Or via email: parmstrong@cowater.com

Applications will be accepted until 15 January 2009

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Admission Test: 10th January 2009 at 10-30 am

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