

EU calls for immediate ceasefire in Gaza

Abbas in 'urgent contact' with other states

AFP, Brussels/Ramallah

The French presidency of the European Union called yesterday for an immediate halt to Israeli attacks on the Gaza Strip and rocket fire against Israel from Gaza, where Israeli air strikes were reported to have killed at least 155 Palestinians.

The EU presidency "expresses greatest concern at the escalation of violence in the Gaza Strip and deplores the very large number of civilian victims," a statement said.

"It condemns the Israeli bombardments as well as the firing of rockets from Gaza. It demands their immediate halt. It condemns the disproportionate use of force."

A spokesman for EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana earlier Saturday said, "We are very concerned by the events in Gaza."

"We are calling for an immediate ceasefire and the maximum restraint.

Everything must be done to reinstate the truce" declared by the Palestinian Hamas movement controlling Gaza, which expired on December 19.

Stressing that there was no military solution possible in Gaza, the French statement called for a lasting truce to be concluded and encouraged "the efforts of neighbouring countries, in particular Egypt, which can enable this objective to be attained."

It also urged for all crossing points out of Gaza to be reopened and deliveries of aid and fuel to be resumed, as well as free access for international humanitarian organisations, journalists and diplomats, which Israel has blocked.

Earlier Palestinian President Mahmud Abbas said yesterday that he was in "urgent contact" with numerous countries over the deadly Israeli air strikes on the Gaza Strip.

"We have carried out urgent contacts with numerous Arab countries and other

nations to stop the cowardly aggressions and massacres in the Gaza Strip," Abbas told AFP from Saudi Arabia which he is currently visiting.

The Islamist Hamas movement that controls Gaza said Saturday's Israeli attacks killed at least 155 people.

The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), presided over by Abbas, called for a strike and protests in solidarity with the people of Gaza.

Hundreds of Palestinians demonstrated in the centre of Ramallah. One placard read "We will not forget you, Gaza."

Abbas told AFP he had called Jordan's King Abdullah II and would also be contacting King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia.

Meanwhile, Egypt yesterday condemned a wave of Israeli air raids on the Gaza Strip that killed at least 155 Palestinians, and said it would open its Rafah border crossing with the besieged territory.



Palestinians inspect the site of an Israeli airstrike in the southern town of Rafah yesterday. At least 155 people were killed across the Gaza Strip as a result of massive Israeli air strikes Saturday, 70 inside Gaza City and the rest elsewhere across the enclave.

Fresh face relief for Barisal voters

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land while constructing a multipurpose city market here, constructed the market there. Subsequently he earned a lot of money by giving out fake allocation of the shops.

The businessmen are yet to get any shops.

There are five other abandoned multipurpose city markets in the main city here, all entangled in similar problems.

Barisal residents lived with these realities as they suffered from corruption, irregularities and criminal activities both during the past AL and BNP regimes.

As a result, new faces contesting for the first time from AL and BNP here are getting preferences among voters who are aware about these issues due to widespread media coverage and the massive anti-corruption drive in the country.

On the other hand, old candidates are trying to hold

on to their past positions by making pledges to tackle corruption with a tough hand.

Both the AL-led 14-party alliance candidate Col (Retd) Zahid Faruque, who is contesting for the first time, and BNP's Mozibur Rahman Sarwar yesterday pledged to work against corruption and criminal activities as the election campaign ended yesterday.

Islami Shashontantra Andolon, meanwhile, is also a force to reckon with as it enjoys a considerable amount of popularity in Barisal-5.

Barisal incumbent City Corporation Mayor Shawkat Hossain Hiron from the four-party alliance also enjoys some popularity of his own here.

The voters from different constituencies in Barisal where old faces are contesting yet again, however, have no other option but to choose from amongst them.

Meanwhile, Barisal city was

a city of processions and crowds as the last minute campaigning ended yesterday.

The new faces contesting from six constituencies in Barisal include Abdus Sobhan, from BNP-led four party alliance from Barisal-1 constituency, Selima Rahman, both contesting for the first time from BNP and AL-led 14-party alliance from Barisal-3 constituency, Mejbauddin Farhad and Maidul Islam, both for the first time from Barisal-4.

"We want to give a chance to new faces. The old faces have had enough chances," Mohiuddin, a resident of Barisal-5 constituency, said.

A three tier security measures including stationed, mobile and striking forces has been announced for the parliamentary polls tomorrow.

In the 2001 polls in Barisal, the four-party alliance won 18 out of 23 seats in 2001. This year number of seats in Barisal division has been reduced to 21.

Pakistanis mark first anniversary of Benazir killing

AP, Garhi Khuda Bakhsh

More than 150,000 Pakistanis flocked to the mausoleum of former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto yesterday after some walked hundreds of miles (kilometres) to offer flowers and kiss her grave on the first anniversary of her assassination.

Some mourners beat their heads and chests and wailing. Several burst into tears.

"I am taking these flowers to take home and will show my daughters this gift," said 41-year-old Saifullah Khan.

Benazir Bhutto was killed in a gun and suicide bomb attack on Dec. 27, 2007, as she was leaving a rally in the garrison town of Rawalpindi, just outside the capital of

Islamabad.

She was campaigning to return her Pakistan People's Party to power in parliamentary elections, a scenario supported by the United States, which admired her secular credentials.

Her assassination shocked the world, fanning revulsion at rising militant violence in Pakistan as well as conspiracy theories that the country's powerful spy agencies were involved.

Her widower, Asif Ali Zardari, took over Benazir Bhutto's party after her death and was elected president in September, facing a crushing economic crisis and soaring violence by militants also blamed for attacks on US and Nato forces in Afghanistan.

Pakistan says no to war with India

US leads diplomatic efforts to defuse tension

AFP, Islamabad

Pakistan again said yesterday it did not want war with India, as the international community tried to defuse tensions between the nuclear-armed neighbours after Islamabad moved troops to the border.

Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari said Saturday that dialogue was the only way to solve the problems confronting the region, amid heightened tensions with India in the wake of the Mumbai attacks.

"Dialogue is our biggest arsenal," Zardari told ministers and lawmakers at the family home in Naudero of his dead wife, former premier Benazir Bhutto, who was assassinated one year ago in a gun and suicide attack.

The White House called for calm amid a flurry of diplomatic activity in both Islamabad and New Delhi aimed at easing already badly strained ties, one month after the Mumbai attacks, which India has blamed on Pakistan-based militants.

based militants.

In Washington, the White House sought to restore calm between the South Asian neighbours, which have fought three wars since independence from Britain in 1947, two of them over Kashmir.

"US officials are in touch with both the Indians and Pakistanis. We continue to urge both sides to cooperate on the Mumbai investigation as well as counterterrorism in general," White House spokesman Gordon Johndroe told AFP.

"We don't want to have aggression with our neighbours. We want to have friendly relations with our neighbours," Pakistani Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani said at his official residence in remarks broadcast on state television.

"I assure you once again that we will not act. We will only react," he added, as he led a special prayer ceremony in honour of two-time former premier Benazir Bhutto, who was assassinated one year ago in a gun and suicide attack.

Shokrana guilty of hiding past

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and his membership to parliament, if he wins victory, will be cancelled.

The probe body has found Shokrana concealed records of four criminal cases filed against him and in three of the cases he was sentenced to imprisonment for various terms.

He did not mention the fact in the affidavit, sources say quoting the findings of the probe report sent to EC.

During scrutiny of nomination papers, the RO okayed Shokrana's candidacy illegally ignoring clear proofs against him of concealing information. On the other hand, the SP did not perform his duty properly in this connection.

Both of them did not want cancellation of the BNP candidate's candidacy since he is an influential candidate, says a source quoting the probe report.

On receiving the report, EC yesterday held a meeting and briefly discussed the issue but did not take a decision regarding Shokrana, meeting sources say.

The sources add that the EC rather seemed confused whether it will take actions on grounds of concealing information

since the information relates to cases tried long ago.

Contacted by The Daily Star, Election Commissioner Brig Gen (retd) M Sakawat Hossain however said the accused candidate was convicted in cases during 1973-74.

"We have to examine the documents more. The police will collect necessary documents in this regard," he said.

The election commissioner said there is still scope to take legal action against the candidate if he is found guilty, regardless of his victory in the polls.

As per the election official laws, EC is empowered to withdraw any of the election officials or law-enforcement agency members from election duty if they fail to execute their tasks properly. Moreover, EC can ask their appointing authorities to take departmental action against them.

PROBE FINDINGS
The probe report finds that Shokrana concealed information of four criminal cases filed against him.

Of those, he was handed down three years' imprisonment in 1975 in a criminal case, and in another case he was

sentenced to imprisonment for three and a half years in 1975.

Earlier in 1973, he was jailed for life in another criminal case. He was also acquitted of a criminal case in 1974.

But Shokrana did not mention these pieces of information in his affidavit submitted with his nomination papers.

Besides, the probe body, which investigated the cases on the orders of the EC directives, said it did not find information about some other cases since those were filed long ago.

"There has been no proof of his involvement in some other cases since those were filed long ago and it's not possible to find the case records; and sufficient information is not available to the police," says the probe body which is also working as the electoral enquiry committee to prevent pre-polls irregularities.

During investigation, the probe body found that when the matter was published in different dailies, the RO and the SP put the blame on each other.

Their statements are contradictory and lack cooperation between them, the report observes.

US offers Viagra to win over Afghan warlords

AFP, Washington

CIA agents are offering the potency drug Viagra and other gifts to win over Afghan warlords in the US-led war against Taliban insurgents, the Washington Post reported on Friday.

Paying for information is nothing new for the Central Intelligence Agency, but officers have started employing unusual incentives to persuade Afghan local leaders to share intelligence about the Taliban's movements, the Post wrote, citing unnamed sources in the spy service.

"Whatever it takes to make friends and influence people -- whether it's building a school or handing out Viagra," one CIA operative who has worked

in Afghanistan was quoted as saying.

CIA agents have offered pocket knives and tools, toys and school equipment, travel visas, medical services including surgeries and sometimes the erectile dysfunction drug Viagra for Afghan chieftains, the papers said.

The aging chieftains often have up to four wives and are open to the Viagra pill as a way to "put them back in an authoritative position," said another official.

More customary bribes such as cash and weapons can create problems, because guns fan fall into the wrong hands and a sudden influx of cash can draw too much attention, agents told the paper.

2 lakh

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Foreign observer teams include Asian Network for Free Elections (ANFREL), European Union (EU), International Republican Institute (IRI), ANFREL-BD, E.O.J., International Democratic Institute (NDI), EU Election Observation Mission, Commonwealth, Asia Foundation (SAARC), British High Commission, US Embassy, Indian High Commission, Swedish Embassy, Nepal, German Embassy, USAID.

Sources in the EC secretariat said around 70 people will work as interpreters and around 100 will be staffers of the local embassies and high commissions of different countries.

The EC secretariat in a press release yesterday said none would be allowed to observe the election without observer identification cards of the election commission.

Tigers in Murali maze again

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stroke of the lunch interval. Shakib Al Hasan was again the hero with the ball, picking up his five wickets for the fourth time in Test matches.

But it was the inept display with the bat that would hurt the Tigers. Five out of the top seven batsmen got starts but failed to capitalise on it.

Openers Tamim Iqbal (17) and Imrul Kayes gave the hosts a good start but their 44-run stand ended when Muralidaran took the first wicket, that of Tamim Iqbal, off only his second ball. Kayes, who scored 33 off 53 balls, followed soon after and one-down Zuneed Siddiqui (29) was next man out, bowled a Muralidaran doosra.

Tillakaratne Dilshan took a fantastic reflex catch at short cover to get rid of skipper Mohammad Ashraful,

who looked fidgety from the onset. Mehrab Hossain (29) and Shakib (26) added 41 for the sixth wicket before Muralidaran took three more wickets to complete a routine bowling performance against Bangladesh. Chaminda Vaas took two wickets while Dhammika Prasad and Rangana Herath had one each.

Both Mehrab and Shakib swept well in their innings but were undone by their hunger for strokes.

Earlier, Thilan Samaraweera batted with purpose with the tail and smacked thirteen boundaries in his 90 off 141 balls. He added 99 for the seventh wicket with Vaas (37) and became Shakib's fifth victim in the 90th over. Mashrafe Bin Mortaza and Shahadat Hossain took two wickets.

Honour the will of people

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Ban Ki-moon also asked all parties to ensure a stable post-election climate in the country.

"The secretary general wishes to stress that a stable post-election climate will be vital for the effectiveness and sustainability of the nation's democracy," said Vendrell.

The three-member UN panel headed by Vendrell arrived in the city yesterday to assess the election- and post-election period.

The secretary general urged all political parties, irrespective of their performance in the elections, to

work together in a spirit of dialogue and compromise and address the challenges facing the nation.

Bangladesh goes to polls tomorrow. The country had its last (eighth) parliamentary polls in 2001 after which minority people and losing parties were reportedly harassed.

The UN panel will monitor the post-election situation with the help of international observers. The panel will also report to the UN secretary general.

"The country has been run by an un-elected government for the past two years. This election is very significant for the nation, simply because it is

going to be held after long seven years," Frances Vendrell said.

Replying to a question he said the voters have faith and full respect for the caretaker government on its preparation of the entire electoral process.

He said they realised in their visit in late November that there is no reason to fear for any violence during and after the elections.

Panel members Bhojraj Pokharel, chief election commissioner of Nepal, and Aracelly Santana, former deputy director of the UN Electoral Assistance Division, were present at the briefing.

4-party candidate

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who is running for the Rangpur-4 seat on a four-party ticket.

M o h a m m a d Khairuzzaman, union land deputy-assistant officer of Mahiganj, filed a general diary (GD) with the district headquarters police station in this regard on Friday.

In the GD, the land official said the government with the assistance of the joint forces had recovered 11.27 acres of public land from the grip of Vhorosha in March last year, but as soon as the forces were withdrawn this month, Rahim Uddin Vhorosha, son of Mondiruddin Paikar, of Sarai

Haragachh, Kaunia in Rangpur, and his aides re-encroached upon the land.

"They already dug 20 to 25 ditches in the land in a bid to build permanent structures," the GD alleges.

"We went to the land and ordered them to stop digging, but instead of paying heed to us, they rather threatened us. We had earlier informed the matter to the Kotwali police station," the land official said in the GD.

According to the GD, Khairuzzaman and Deputy-assistant Officer Mohammad Gausul Azam found about 15 to 20 men working on the land, who continued to work even

after being told to stop.

The higher authorities were informed of the matter, the GD adds saying there is a potential threat of violence erupting, if the administration again goes to the land to refrain Vhorosha's men from consolidating their grab on the public land.

"Under the circumstances, we earnestly request you to take necessary steps to protect the public property," Khairuzzaman pleaded with the law enforcers in the diary.

When contacted, Vhorosha, however, denied his involvement in the land grab. "I don't know who grabbed the land," he said.

Don't elect

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will be suicidal, they said.

Terming vote a precious deposit, they warned that if people fail to use it judiciously they have to suffer its consequences.

The statement said if one casts vote taking money or other benefits, it means one is selling himself for herself.

It stressed the role of political parties and their candidates in the holding of a free, fair and peaceful election.

The renowned citizens noted that in violation of electoral laws, most political parties nominated candidates without taking the opinion of grassroots leaders and activists of the parties. And they also nominated many controversial people who, if elected, will cross previous records of their misdeeds, they said.

They urged the authorities to ensure security of minorities after the election.

Signatories to the statement include Prof Mosharraf Hossain, Prof Muzaffer Ahmad, M Hafizuddin Khan, Rokia Afzal Rahman, ASM Shahjahan, Sultana Kamal, Zafarullah Chowdhury, Quazi Kholiquzzaman Ahmad, Syed Anwar Hossain, Khondakar Ibrahim Khaled, Selina Hossain, Dilara Chowdhury, Mohammad Zafar Iqbal, Laila Rahman Kabir, Shahdin Malik, Syed Abul Maksud, Mahfuza Khanam, Shawkat Ara Hossain and Badiul Alam Majumdar.



বাংলাদেশ তাঁত বোর্ড

বিটিএমসি ভবন (৫ম তলা)

৭-৯, কাওরান বাজার

ঢাকা-১২১৫

নং-বার্তাবো/পবা/১৫৩(৩)/২০০৮/

পুনঃ নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

তারিখ : ২৪-১২-২০০৮

বঙ্গ ও পাট মন্ত্রণালয়ধীন বাংলাদেশ তাঁত বোর্ডের "সিলেটের মনিপুরী তাঁত শিল্পের উন্নয়নে প্রশিক্ষণ, নমুনা উন্নয়ন, তাঁতবস্ত্র প্রদর্শনী ও বিক্রয় কেন্দ্র স্থাপন" শীর্ষক প্রকল্প বাস্তবায়নের নিমিত্ত প্রকল্প মেয়াদকালীন সময়ের জন্য (জুন, ২০০৯ পর্যন্ত, তবে প্রকল্পের মেয়াদ বৃদ্ধির সম্ভাবনা রয়েছে) নিম্নবর্ণিত পদগুলো পূরণের লক্ষ্যে প্রকৃত বাংলাদেশী নাগরিকদের নিকট হতে দরখাস্ত আহবান করা যাচ্ছে :

ক্রমিক নং	পদের নাম	বেতন-স্কেল/ সর্বসাকুলো বেতন	পদ সংখ্যা	বয়স	প্রয়োজনীয় যোগ্যতা ও অভিজ্ঞতা
১।	ইনস্ট্রাক্টর	১০৩৬০.০০ (গ্রেড-৯)	০১	অনুর্ধ্ব ৩০ বছর	টেস্টাইল ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং এ স্নাতক অথবা ৩ বছরের অভিজ্ঞতাসহ টেক্সটাইল ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং এ ডিপ্লোমা।
২।	কম্পিউটার অপারেটর	৮৮৫০.০০ (গ্রেড-১৩)	০১	অনুর্ধ্ব ৩০ বছর	ক) স্নাতক ডিগ্রী (বিজ্ঞানে স্নাতক ডিগ্রীধারীদের অগ্রাধিকার দেয়া হবে)। খ) ডাটা এন্ট্রি / কম্পিউটার অপারেটর হিসেবে দুই বছরের অভিজ্ঞতা সম্পন্ন প্রার্থীদের ক্ষেত্রে শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা শিথিলযোগ্য। প্রার্থীকে কম্পিউটার পরিচালনা সম্পর্কিত এপ্লিকেশন টেস্ট এ উত্তীর্ণ হতে হবে।

আবেদনকারীর নাম, পিতা / স্বামীর নাম, মাতার নাম, স্থায়ী ও বর্তমান ঠিকানা, জন্ম তারিখ, শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা, অভিজ্ঞতা, জাতীয়তা, ধর্ম ইত্যাদি উল্লেখপূর্বক আবেদনপত্র সরাসরি অথবা ডাকযোগে ১৪/০১/২০০৯ তারিখের মধ্যে নিম্নস্বাক্ষরকারীর দপ্তরে পৌঁছাতে হবে। খামের উপরে প্রার্থীর পদের নাম উল্লেখ করতে হবে।

আবেদন পত্রের সাথে ৩ কপি সাম্প্রতিক কালে তোলা পাসপোর্ট সাইজের ছবি, সকল শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা ও অভিজ্ঞতার সনদপত্রের ছায়াছবি এবং ইউনিয়ন পরিষদ/পৌরসভার চেয়ারম্যান/সিটি কর্পোরেশনের ক্ষেত্রে ওয়ার্ড কমিশনার প্রদত্ত নাগরিকত্ব সনদপত্রের সত্যায়িত কপি এবং প্রথম শ্রেণীর গেজেটেড কর্মকর্তা প্রদত্ত চারিত্রিক সনদপত্র দাখিল করতে হবে।

মুক্তিযোদ্ধা/শহীদ মুক্তিযোদ্ধার সন্তানদের ক্ষেত্রে বয়সসীমা ৩২ বছর পর্যন্ত শিথিলযোগ্য।

অসম্পূর্ণ দরখাস্ত কোন কারণ প্রদর্শন ব্যতিরেকে বাতিল বলে গণ্য হবে।

২৪/১২/০৮
(এস. মোস্তফা কামাল)
প্রধান (পরিঃ ও বাস্তঃ)
ও
প্রকল্প পরিচালক