



Indian Foreign Minister SM Krishna (L) gestures as he talks with US Special Envoy for Pakistan and Afghanistan Richard Holbrooke during a meeting in New Delhi yesterday.

Israel 'collectively punishing' Gaza people, says Amnesty

AFP, Jerusalem

Amnesty International yesterday accused Israel of "collectively punishing" the population of Gaza with border closures tightened after the Islamist Hamas movement's bloody 2007 takeover.

The British-based rights group said the firing of rockets by Palestinian militants -- which the Israeli military says has dropped by about 90 percent since its offensive in Gaza last year -- did not justify the sanctions.

"The blockade does not target armed groups but rather punishes Gaza's entire population by restricting the entry of food, medical supplies, educational equipment and building materials," said

Malcolm Smart, the group's Middle East and North Africa director, in a statement.

"The blockade constitutes collective punishment under international law and must be lifted immediately."

Amnesty said Egypt was partly to blame because it only occasionally opens its Rafah crossing with the Gaza Strip -- the only terminal bypassing Israel.

It also faulted Cairo for starting work on an underground border wall in a bid to halt the smuggling tunnels that have become an economic lifeline to the territory but are also used by Hamas to smuggle in weapons and money.

"However, as the occupying power, it is Israel that bears the foremost responsibility for ensuring the welfare of the inhabit-

ants of Gaza," Amnesty said.

Responding to the report, Israeli government spokesman Mark Regev blamed Hamas.

"The Palestinians in Gaza are under the thumb of the brutal Hamas regime that places violent jihad against Israel above the well-being and the welfare of the people of Gaza," he said.

"Like its patron, the Iranian regime, Hamas has no qualms whatsoever in abusing Gaza's civilian population on the altar of its extremist agenda."

Monday was the one-year anniversary of the mutual ceasefires that ended the 22-day Gaza war, which killed about 1,400 Palestinians and flattened entire neighbourhoods. Thirteen Israelis were killed during the fighting.

Myanmar court hears Suu Kyi appeal

AP, Yangon

Lawyers for opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi said yesterday they were optimistic Myanmar's highest court would overturn an extension of her house arrest imposed after an American intruder swam uninvited to her home.

The court began hearing from both sides in the case Monday and was expected to issue a ruling within a month. Suu Kyi, who was barred from attending the session, has been detained for 14 of the past 20 years.

The 64-year-old Nobel Peace Laureate's sentence would ensure she cannot participate in Myanmar's first elections in two decades that will be held sometime this year. Her party swept the last elections in 1990, but the results were never honoured by the military, which has ruled the country since 1962.

US may keep up drone attacks

ANI, Lahore/Washington

Pakistan Defence Minister Chaudhury Ahmed Mukhtar has said that despite Islamabad's continuous reservations against drone attacks, the US has not given any clear signal that it would put an end to it.

"We have clarified to the US that drone strikes are not a permanent solution to the problem," The News quoted Mukhtar, assaying.

He added that the only solution to insurgency in tribal areas is through holding

talks and winning hearts.

Interacting with reporters at Aibak Polo Ground, Mukhtar said Pakistan's nuclear programme is safe and secure.

No outsider in the past could get access to it, nor will anyone be successful in it in future, he assured.

Answering a question, Mukhtar said if former President Pervez Musharraf could do politics then why not Asif Ali Zardari, who has been elected as president by the political parties.

Meanwhile, US Defence

Secretary Robert Gates, who will arrive in Pakistan with a 125-member delegation this week, is likely to urge Islamabad to stop publicly criticising US drone attacks, as it would further increase the anti-American sentiments in the country.

The two-day talks between Gates' delegation and the Pakistani officials is also expected to discuss military supply routes to Afghanistan through Pakistan, and the expansion of its military presence at the US embassy in Pakistan.

Breakthrough in leukaemia treatment

ANI, London

Scientists have overcome a technical obstacle and made first successful use of expanded umbilical-cord blood units to treat leukaemia and other blood cancers.

Experts at Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Centre spent their efforts in making umbilical-cord-blood transplants a more widely-used method.

Colleen Delaney and colleagues based their work on an approach by developed by Irwin Bernstein, a member of the Hutchinson Centre's Clinical Research Division.

The pioneering technique to vastly expand the number of stem/progenitor cells from a single unit of cord blood in the laboratory that were then infused into patients resulting in successful and rapid engraftment could decrease the risk of early death, the authors said.

Delaney, an assistant member in the Hutchinson Centre's Clinical Research Division and an assistant professor in the Department of Paediatrics at the University of Washington School of Medicine, explained: "The real ground-breaking aspect of this research is that we have shown that you can manipulate stem/progenitor cells in the lab with the goal of increasing their numbers. When given to a person, these cells can rapidly give rise to white blood cells and other components of the blood system."

Zardari seeks world support for Pak war on terror

ANI, Indo-Asian News Service, Lahore

Pakistan President Asif Ali Zardari has urged the international community to provide Pakistan with more resources so that the country can fight the war on terror more successfully.

"We have to persuade the world to give us the resources to take on the monster of terrorism," the Daily Times quoted Zardari, as saying.

"Time and again, I have asked the world for a Marshall plan for Pakistan, like the one

they had for Europe. Yes, they have not agreed as yet. I can promise you that one day, they will realise that the route of all wars in Afghanistan goes through Pakistan," he added.

Addressing a reception at Lahore at Governor's House, he said:

"There is natural instinct in the nation of Pakistan to turn the odds in their favour... it has been demonstrated by the people and political forces, including the Pakistan People's Party and Pakistan Muslim League, that they turn their

weaknesses into strengths."

He said this century would "belong to Asia" and the world was looking towards Pakistan.

Zardari added that the war on terror has the total support of the people of Pakistan.

"We stand together against terrorists who want to change our way of life. We have come this far through political maturity. I congratulate the prime minister, parliament, the leader of the opposition and all political forces over the political ownership of the war," he said.



Story of Newton's encounter with apple goes online

AP, London

An 18th-century account of how a falling piece of fruit helped Isaac Newton develop the theory of gravity is being posted to the Web, making scans of the fragile paper manuscript widely available to the public for the first time.

Newton's encounter with an apple ranks among science's most celebrated anecdotes, and Britain's Royal Society said it was making the documents available online Monday.

Royal Society librarian Keith Moore said the apple story has managed to keep its polish in part because it packs in so much an illustration of how modern science works, an implicit reference to the solar system and even an allusion to the Bible.

When Newton describes the process of observing a falling apple and guessing at the principle behind it "he's talking about the scientific method," Moore said.

"Also the shape of the apple recalls the planet it's round and of course the apple falling from the tree does indeed hark back to the story of Adam and Eve, and Newton as a religious man would have found that quite apt."

The incident occurred in the mid-1660s, when Newton retreated to his family home in northern England after an outbreak of the plague closed the University of Cambridge, where he had been studying.

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Ref. : Purchasing/Civil/01/2010/01 Date : 19 January 2010

Sealed Tenders are hereby invited for the following work at KAFCO, Rangadia, Chittagong from the 1st class Construction contractors of any Government, semi Government, Autonomous bodies or multinational companies having enlistment certificate renewed up to current year and experience in similar works with Govt., Semi Govt., Autonomous or Multinational Companies in the last 5-years which has been carried out under single work order with a value in excess of Taka 40 lacs.

Name of the Work : Repairing of CUFL Chaturi Road at Anowara, Chittagong.

The interested Contractors/Construction firms shall furnish their tender after physically inspecting the work site.

Tender shall be of two envelope system i.e. (A) Technical Proposal & (B) Commercial Proposal. Technical Proposal shall be opened first. Commercial offers of non-qualified tenderers in technical proposal shall be returned unopened and those of qualified tenderers shall be opened for further review.

Both the Technical Proposal & the Commercial Proposal along with related documents shall be initially sealed in two separate inner envelopes mentioning clearly the name of the respective proposal (The Technical Proposal / The Commercial Proposal) on the top of envelopes and finally sealed in an outer envelope mentioning clearly the name of the work on the top of the envelope and submitted accordingly.

Tender documents will be available from the Office of the Finance Department of KAFCO, Rangadia, Anowara, Chittagong and KAFCO Corporate Office, IDB Bhaban 13th floor, E/8-A, Rokeya Sharani, Dhaka during Office hours from 20 January to 27 January 2010 at a cost of Tk. 2,000.00 (non refundable).

Tender documents shall be sold only to those interested contractors / construction firms, who apply in their letter head along with successful completion certificate of at least a similar nature of work in excess of Tk. 40 lacs in a single contract during the last five years from the concerned Engineer / Officer not below the rank of Executive Engineer.

Tenders will be received in the Tender box at KAFCO Rangadia, Anowara, Chittagong and KAFCO Corporate Office, IDB Bhaban 5th floor, E/8-A, Rokeya Sharani, Dhaka up to 15.00 hours on 07 February 2010.

Tenders, as would be received, will be opened in the office of the General Manager Procurement, KAFCO, Rangadia, Anowara, Chittagong on 09 February 2010 at 14:30 hours in presence of tenderers, if any.

Each Tenderer shall furnish along with commercial proposal as part of its Tender, an earnest money @ 2.5% of quoted amount in the form of Pay Order / Bank Draft from any scheduled Bank of Bangladesh in favour of Kamaphuli Fertilizer Company Limited, Rangadia, Anowara, Chittagong.

Other required eligibility and conditions of the Tenderers are stipulated in the Tender Documents.

KAFCO reserves the right to accept or reject any or all Tender without assigning any reasons whatsoever.

Md. Mahub-Ul-Alam
General Manager, Procurement

Neptune and Uranus may have oceans of diamonds!

ANI, Sydney

Scientists have said that the outer planets of our solar system may have oceans of diamonds.

According to ABC News, a new report has suggested that oceans of liquid diamond, filled with solid diamond icebergs, could be floating on Neptune and Uranus.

The research is based on the first detailed measurements of the melting point of diamond.

It found, diamond behaves like water during freezing and melting, with solid forms floating atop liquid forms.

The surprising revelation gives scientists a new understanding about diamonds and some of the most distant planets in our solar system.

"Diamond is a relatively common material on Earth, but its melting point has never been measured," said Dr Jon Eggert of the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory in California.



Indian Actor Sanjay Dutt (R) answers a question during a press conference while senior Samajwadi Party (SP) leader Amar Singh looks on in New Delhi yesterday. The acceptance of Amar's resignation had brought to an end of speculation about his future in the SP.

Deadly unrest flares in Lanka ahead of polls

AFP, Colombo

A Sri Lankan opposition supporter was killed yesterday as fresh unrest erupted ahead of next week's presidential election despite a security crackdown, police said.

The man was killed in a clash with ruling party activists in northwestern Sri Lanka, the third politically-related death in the run-up to the vote on January 26.

Supporters of the main opposition candidate, former army chief Sarath Fonseka, were attacked in the town of Wariyapola while they were putting up election posters, police said.

"One man was killed and several others sustained injuries," police Deputy Inspector General Anura Senanayake said. "There had been 694 poll-related incidents of violence since nominations were handed in a month ago."

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REQUEST FOR QUOTATIONS (RFQ)
PROMOTION OF DEVELOPMENT AND CONFIDENCE BUILDING
IN THE CHITTAGONG HILL TRACTS (CHT)
(Re-advertisement)

The Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Facility, United Nations Development Programme Bangladesh, seeks Quotations for supplying following items and services;

- (1) Arc View (Single License) and Arc Editor (Floating License) - software (Latest Version) suitable to use with Microsoft Genuine XP professional SP2 (English) - Downgrade Vista Ultimate 64-bit with CD Media Kit.
- (2) Electrification Works at Building No. - 5, CHTDF, Rangamati.

Two separate RFQ documents along with the submission instructions are available on the UNDP Bangladesh Procurement website at: http://www.undp.org.bd/proc_more.php

Hardcopy of the Solicitation documents are also available in CHTDF, UNDP Offices located in Dhaka (IDB Bhaban, 7th Floor, Agargaon), Rangamati (Rajbari Road), Bandarban (Jadipara, Don Bosco High School Road) and Khagrachari (Milonpur).

The deadline for submission of Quotations is **Jan. 25 (Electrification Works) and Jan. 26 (Software), 2010 at 05:00 pm**

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