



A Palestinian man (R) and a woman (3rd R) are taken away by Israeli border policemen in the Shuafat refugee camp after arrest in Jerusalem yesterday during an Israeli police operation.

# Australia tightens migration rules

20,000 visa applications scrapped

AP, Canberra

Australia tightened its migration rules yesterday in favour of English speakers and professionals, saying the country has been attracting too many hairdressers and cooks and too few doctors and engineers.

Immigration Minister Chris Evans blamed the overrepresentation of lower skilled immigrants on a system put in place by Prime Minister John Howard, whose government lost power in 2007 elections.

"Under the Howard government, we had a lot of cooks, a lot of hairdressers coming through," Evans told reporters. "We were taking hairdressers from overseas in front of doctors and nurses it didn't make any sense."

The new rules will favour applicants who already have job offers over those who merely have qualifications or who are studying. The measures are expected to dampen enrolment in Australian colleges by foreign students hoping to settle in the country.

Numbers of foreign students enrolled in

Australian colleges exploded in 2001, when the government changed migration rules to allow them to apply for permanent residency while studying. Until then, skilled workers had to apply offshore for visas to fill jobs from a list of more than 100 trades and professions that were suffering shortages in Australia.

Australia continues to have a shortage of accountants, partly because many of the 40,000 accountants who immigrated in the past five years did not have the professional or language skills to find work, Evans said.

The new policy will favour applicants who score highly in an English language test. Moreover, immigrant numbers in certain jobs could be capped for the first time. The government has not identified which jobs.

Because of the higher standards and a revised list of which skilled workers are in short supply, 20,000 visa applications will be scrapped and their application fees totalling 14 million Australian dollars (\$12 million) refunded, he said.



Costa Rica's ruling National Liberation Party candidate, Laura Chinchilla, waves to supporters as she celebrates after winning the general elections in San Jose on Sunday.

## Costa Rica elects 1st woman president

AP, San Jose

Costa Ricans have elected their first woman president as the ruling party candidate won in a landslide after campaigning to continue free market policies in Central America's most stable nation.

With most of the votes from Sunday's election counted, Laura Chinchilla held a 22-point lead over her closest rival. Her 47 percent share of the vote was well beyond the 40 percent needed to avoid a runoff.

The 50-year-old protégé of the current president, Nobel Peace Prize laureate Oscar Arias, promised to pursue the same economic policies that recently brought the country into a trade pact with the US and opened commerce with China.

## Qaeda leader calls for attacks on US interests

AFP, Dubai

al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula number two Said al-Shihri called for attacks against US interests "everywhere," in an audio message released on the Internet yesterday.

"American and Crusader interests are everywhere and their agents are moving everywhere," Shihri said. "Attack them and eliminate as many enemies as you can."

The US-based SITE monitoring service said Shihri said Yemeni Muslims "must be united in this battle front and support the Mujahideen," and urged "Muslims elsewhere in the Arabian peninsula to do the same" and "embrace Jihad."

# Key powers push for tougher sanctions

Iran notifies IAEA of its uranium enrichment plan

AFP, Paris

The United States and France said Monday they would push for new UN sanctions against Iran over its nuclear programme after Tehran announced it was going to enrich uranium to a higher level.

Western powers condemned the move, which Germany said was a sign that Iran is not cooperating with the international community, which wants the fuel to be upgraded abroad.

A top Russian lawmaker called Tehran's move "a sure step backward" and said new sanctions should be discussed -- a step Moscow has previously opposed.

Iran on Monday officially informed the UN International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) that it planned to start enriching uranium to 20 percent on its own from Tuesday.

Western countries fear its nuclear programme masks plans to build an atomic

bomb, a charge rejected by Tehran which insists its activities are strictly for energy purposes.

French Defence Minister Herve Morin, speaking after Paris talks with US Defence Secretary Robert Gates: "We have no choice but to work on other measures."

Morin, whose country holds the rotating chair on the UN Security Council, added: "It will unfortunately be necessary to launch a dialogue with the international community that will lead to new sanctions if Iran does not stop its programmes."

Gates, whose aides had earlier said the United States would ask France to submit a sanctions motion, said: "We are very much agreed that action by the international community is the next step."

Iran's move raises the stakes in a long-running dispute with the West less than a week after it had signalled it favoured a UN-drafted agreement on the supply of fuel for a research nuclear reactor in Tehran.

# Abbas mulls talks with Israel

AFP, Ramallah

Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas has agreed in principle to indirect talks with Israel under US mediation but has requested a number of guarantees, a Palestinian official said yesterday.

The latest US proposal for renewing peace talks suspended more than a year ago would have the two sides hold three months of indirect negotiations and have Israel make several goodwill gestures to the Palestinians.

The Palestinians would

continue to require a complete freeze of Israeli settlements before any direct negotiations but not as a precondition to indirect talks.

"These contacts will be aimed at creating a better climate and reaching an understanding on the borders of the Palestinian state, and they will begin on February 20," the official told AFP on condition of anonymity.

"They will last three months, with the Americans negotiating directly with the two sides after determining a timetable and agreed-upon mechanisms for implementation."

The official said US Middle East envoy George Mitchell would shuttle between the two sides, either travelling between Jerusalem and the West Bank political capital of Ramallah or between separate rooms at a hotel or other location.

Under the proposal, Israel would implement a five-point initiative proposed by Mitchell that would include the freeing of Palestinian prisoners and a halt to Israeli incursions in Palestinian cities, the official said.

## Palin could run for president in 2012

ANI, Nashville

Former Alaska governor and 2008 Republican Party vice-presidential nominee Sarah Palin has revealed that she may run for US President in 2012.

She said she would if she believed that that is the right thing to do for the country and for the Palin family.

"It would be absurd to not consider what it is that I can potentially do to help our country," Palin told Fox News Sunday in an interview recorded a few hours before she gave the keynote address at the National Tea Party Convention in Nashville.

"I won't close the door that perhaps could be open for me in the future," she added.

# Iran launches production lines of drones

Also manufacturing air defence missile system

AP, AFP, Tehran

Iran has launched two production lines to build unmanned aircraft with surveillance and attack capabilities, the defence minister announced yesterday.

It also announced that Iran would soon deploy a missile air defence system more powerful than the advanced Russian S-300 system Tehran has ordered from Moscow in 2007 but has yet to receive.

The state television quoted Defence Minister Gen Ahmad Vahidi as saying the unmanned aircraft would be able to carry out surveillance as well as offensive tasks with high precision and a long range.

The two types of aircraft, or drones, are named Ra'd (thunder) and Nazir (herald), with

the former possessing offensive capabilities.

Iran announced two years ago it had built an unmanned aircraft, but details were only revealed last year when Vahidi said it has a range of more than 1,000km, long enough to reach Israel. It was not clear whether Ra'd or Nazir has such a range.

Iran frequently makes announcements about the strides being made by its military industries, however, it is virtually impossible to independently determine the actual capabilities or combat worthiness of the weapons Iran is producing.

Iran began a military self-sufficiency programme in 1992, under which it produces a large range of weapons, including tanks, medium range missiles, jet fighters and torpedoes.



The space shuttle Endeavour STS-130 lifts off from Kennedy Space Centre in Cape Canaveral, Florida yesterday.

## Space shuttle blasts off on last night flight

AP, Cape Canaveral

Endeavour and six astronauts rocketed into orbit Monday on what's expected to be the last nighttime launch for the shuttle programme, hauling a new room and observation deck for the International Space Station.

The space shuttle took flight before dawn, igniting the sky with a brilliant flash seen for miles around. The weather cooperated at the last minute; Sunday morning's try was thwarted by thick, low clouds that returned and almost caused another delay.

"Looks like the weather came together tonight," launch director Mike Leinbach told the astronauts right before liftoff. "It's time to go fly."

## British dead in Afghanistan equals Falklands toll

AFP, London

Two more British soldiers were killed in Afghanistan at the weekend, bringing the country's death toll there to the same as the 1982 Falklands war, the Ministry of Defence said Monday.

The soldiers from the Royal Scots Borderers, 1st Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland were killed by an explosion in Sangin in Helmand Province on Sunday, taking the British death toll in Afghanistan to 255 since 2001.

"They were on a foot patrol bringing security to local people... when the explosion caught them... Two of our comrades have been cruelly taken from us, but their bravery and fortitude will not be forgotten," said a spokesman.

The politically symbolic toll comes as Prime Minister Gordon Brown battles to persuade a sceptical British public that the Afghan conflict is worthwhile, and as he struggles to avoid defeat in elections due by June.

Britain ousted Argentinean forces from the Falkland Islands, known in Spanish as the Malvinas, in a 74-day war that left 649 Argentines and 255 Britons dead. Then premier Margaret Thatcher's popularity surged as a result.

The latest British deaths in Afghanistan came as Britain braced for a surge in casualties in a major assault against Taliban-led militants in southern Afghanistan.

**INVITATION FOR TENDERS**  
**Cowater International Inc.**  
**Strengthening Comptrollership and Oversight of Public Expenditure (SCOPE) Project**  
 CONTRACT NO: CIDA Project No. 7049333  
**Supply, Installation and Configuration of a wide area network and related information systems for the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General of Bangladesh**  
**(SCOPE IT Training Facility and Project Office)**

Under an agreement between the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh and the Government of Canada, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) has provided funds for the **Strengthening of Comptrollership and Oversight of Public Expenditure [SCOPE] Project**. The SCOPE project intends to apply part of the allocation of this credit to payments under the contract for: **Supply, Installation and Configuration of a wide area network and related information systems for the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General.**

Cowater International Inc., the Canadian implementing agency of the SCOPE project now invites sealed tenders from eligible bidders for the supply of related goods/services. The Tender package describes three sub-systems. Bidders are required to submit bids for all sub-systems together as one proposal.

A complete set of bidding documents in the English language will be available upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Taka Three Thousand, for which a receipt will be issued. Bidding documents are available at the address below, during working hours

SCOPE Project  
 C/o CIDA Program Support Unit  
 House 19, Road No. 3  
 Baridhara (Off Park Road)  
 Baridhara, Dhaka-1212  
 Bangladesh  
 Tel: 8824740-44

**BIDS WILL BE ACCEPTED UNTIL 2:00 p.m. THURSDAY 11 MARCH 2010**  
 Site visits may be arranged by contacting the following:

Mr. Peter J. Armstrong  
 Field Project Manager  
 SCOPE Project  
 2nd 12-Storeyed Government Building (9th floor)  
 Segunbagicha, Dhaka-1000  
 Tel: 9335363 or 9335357

**KATALYST**  
 Partners in Business Innovation

**Request for Proposal (RFP)**

Ref. No. - IRSG/FI/2010/RFP/01

Katalyst is a pro-poor market development project implemented under the Ministry of Commerce by Swisscontact and GTZ International Services and funded by a donor consortium. Katalyst requests proposal from interested consulting firms/development organizations/other relevant entities for designing and co-implementing interventions in line with market development approach to develop the *culture fisheries* sector (excluding shrimp and prawn) of Bangladesh. Specific tasks are the following:

**Task 1:** Stimulating growth in culture of fish species that have high export potential and promoting export of those species

**Task 2:** Promoting fish cultivation in unexploited areas (e.g. suitable floodplains, small ponds) and accelerating growth in common pond fish farming

An organization can choose to bid for either one or both the tasks. Terms of References (ToR) for the tasks can be collected directly from the Administration department of Katalyst or by e-mailing to [tender@swisscontact-bd.org](mailto:tender@swisscontact-bd.org) mentioning 'RFP - Fish: Task 1 and/or Task 2' in the subject line. The proposal should consist of a separate technical and financial bid in two separate envelopes in one package. Separate packages should be used in case an organization chooses to submit proposals for both the tasks. The proposal(s) should be dropped in the *tender box* placed at the reception area (ground floor) of Katalyst office. Please mention the Ref. No. and the specific task on top of the envelope.

An *additional soft-copy* of the Technical Proposal (NOT the Financial Proposal) may be submitted to the Administration Department Tender e-mail address [[tender@swisscontact-bd.org](mailto:tender@swisscontact-bd.org)] during or after the tender period.

Interested parties are requested to drop/send the proposal(s) to *Katalyst, House 20, Road 6, Baridhara, Dhaka - 1212*. Deadline for the proposal is **February 25, 2010, 5:00 pm**.

Katalyst has the right to cancel a bidding process, accept or reject bids without notifying any reasons to the bidders. Queries through any medium will not be entertained and will lead to an automatic disqualification.

**RAHIMAFROOZ**

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Amtali, Sadar Road, Joypurhat
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10/3/5, Toyabbee Circular Road, Dhaka-1000

have been cancelled recently.

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