

US wants Israel to cancel settlement plan

But Netanyahu vows to keep up housing

AP, AFP, Jerusalem

Israeli officials said yesterday that the US is pressing Israel to scrap a contentious east Jerusalem building project whose approval has touched off the most serious diplomatic feud with Washington in years.

But Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu made it clear on Monday that settlement construction would continue in east Jerusalem, amid diplomatic row.

Tensions in the city at the centre of the spat were high, with police out in large numbers in Jerusalem's volatile Old City in expectation of renewed clashes.

Top US officials have lined up in recent days to condemn the Israeli plan to build 1,600 apartments in east Jerusalem, the sector of the city that the Palestinians claim for their future capital.

The project was announced during Vice President Joe Biden's visit to the region last week, badly embarrassing the US and complicating its efforts to restart Israeli-Palestinian peacemaking.

US officials have not disclosed what steps they want Israel to take to defuse the crisis, and Israeli government spokesman Mark Regev refused to comment Monday. But Israeli officials, speaking on condition of anonymity because no official decision has been made public, said Washington wants the construction project cancelled.

Although Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has apologized for the timing of the project's approval, he has not said he will cancel it.

Israel does not stand to benefit from antagonising its most important ally, but Netanyahu has historically taken a hard line against territorial concessions to the Palestinians, and a curb on east Jerusalem construction would threaten to fracture his hawkish coalition.

The Israeli officials said the US also wants Israel to make a significant confidence-building gesture toward the Palestinians, including possibly releasing hundreds of Palestinian prisoners or turning over additional areas of the West Bank to Palestinian control.



Picture taken on Monday shows explosions in the southern Gaza Strip town of Khan Yunis as members of Hamas' security forces work with United Nations explosives experts on detecting and neutralising unexploded ordnance left behind after Israel's 2008-2009 military offensive in Gaza. The United States announced last week it was providing an additional 55 million dollars to a UN programme aiding Palestinian refugees.

Putin's party suffers setbacks in polls

AFP, Moscow

Russia's ruling party United Russia again emerged yesterday as the dominant force in regional elections but suffered a string of surprising setbacks against the background of the economic crisis.

United Russia -- whose overall leader is Prime Minister Vladimir Putin -- won less than half the vote in some polls for regional parliaments and in a stunning reversal lost the election for mayor in the Siberian city of Irkutsk.

The polls Sunday only involved some of Russia's regions but were being closely watched by the authorities after unusual displays of discontent in recent weeks rattled the Kremlin.

Yemen air raid kills 2 al-Qaeda leaders

AFP, Sanaa

A Yemeni air raid against a "terrorist cell" in the southeast of the country has killed two senior al-Qaeda members, the defence ministry said early yesterday.

"Our air force carried out a raid on terrorist elements who were planning attacks on vital installations (and) two al-Qaeda leaders were killed," said a statement on the defence ministry's website.

It did not specify what installations were being targeted, but said that the air strike happened in Moudia region -- around 480km southeast of Sanaa -- which is close to the oil-rich province of Shabwa.

Suicide bomber kills 9 in Iraq

AFP, Fallujah

A double-blast suicide bomber targeting a military checkpoint and labourers killed eight people on Monday in the former Sunni rebel bastion of Fallujah, Iraqi police and medics said.

Twenty-eight other civilians were wounded in the blasts, which occurred within minutes of each other at around 9:00 am (0600 GMT) in the centre of Fallujah, 50km west of Baghdad, officials said.

Captain Bashar Mohammed, a police station chief in Fallujah, said the bomber parked his explosive-packed vehicle near a military checkpoint in the centre of the city.

The assailant then walked into a group of labourers and detonated his explosives vest. The car bomb exploded shortly afterwards, again without causing any military casualties.

Iraq PM bolsters chances of retaining post

AFP, Baghdad

Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki's bloc looked poised yesterday to be the biggest single group in parliament, as poll results from key provinces gave him a strong lead eight days after the vote.

Preliminary results have put Maliki's State of Law Alliance in pole position in two of Iraq's three biggest provinces, with the bloc ahead in seven of 18 provinces overall, two more than its nearest rival, although the figures remain far from complete.

The results from the March 7 election -- the second since Saddam Hussein was ousted in 2003 -- come less than six months before the United States is set to withdraw all of its combat troops from the country.

Top UNSC members on same page on Iran

British FM tells China

AFP, Beijing

British Foreign Secretary David Miliband said on his way to China yesterday that the veto-wielding members of the UN Security Council were on the same page on how to tackle Iran.

Miliband's comments came ahead of talks in Beijing with Chinese leaders, which he said would focus on efforts to resolve the international standoff over Tehran's disputed nuclear drive.

China, a close ally of Iran, is the only permanent Security Council member that has so far refused to agree to tougher sanctions against the Islamic republic despite mounting pressure from the West.

But Miliband said the permanent Council members -- Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States -- "are all agreed on a dual-track strategy, which is on the one hand engagement with Iran and at the same time pressure."

The offence is punishable by up to 20 years' imprisonment, according to the statement, which gave Tomas's address as OceanSide in California.

"Tomas recently fled his post in Korea and his whereabouts are presently unknown," the news release said.

Laden's son seeks release of relatives detained in Iran

AFP, Washington

One of Osama bin Laden's sons has called on Tehran to release a number of his relatives said to be detained under house arrest in Iran, according to a letter released Sunday.

The message, distributed by the Global Islamic Media Front and translated by the SITE Intelligence Group monitoring service, is purportedly from bin Laden's son Khalid.

It directly addresses Iran's Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, calling on him to intervene to secure the release of the bin Laden relatives.

"After the Crusader attack on Afghanistan... they were forced to enter Iran through unofficial means, and most of those who did were women and children," the letter said.

It accuses Iran of having rounded up the unspecified number of Bin Laden family members.

'Da Vinci foresaw end of the world in 4006'

ANI, London

Leonardo da Vinci predicted that the world would meet its end in a "universal flood", beginning on March 21, 4006 and concluding on November 1 the same year, claims a Vatican researcher.

Sabrina Sforza Galitzia, who works in the Vatican archives, alleges the Italian genius hid clues in his Last Supper mural, which she said, held a "mathematical and astrological" puzzle.

According to Sforza Galitzia, who formerly studied da Vinci manuscripts as a researcher at the University of California, the central half-moon window, or lunette, above his painting of Christ with his disciples before the Crucifixion pointed towards the hidden "code".

"There is a da Vinci code - it is just not the one made popular by Dan Brown," Times Online quoted her as telling Italian newspaper La Repubblica.

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US Homeland Security staffer flees S Korea amid fraud probe

AFP, Seoul

A US Department of Homeland Security official who fled his post in South Korea is wanted in California in connection with a 240,000-dollar wire fraud, according to a statement seen yesterday.

Dario Tomas, 51, was charged on Friday by a federal grand jury with defrauding investors by falsely promising to open a computer training school in the Philippines, said the statement from the US attorney's office in San Diego.

The offence is punishable by up to 20 years' imprisonment, according to the statement, which gave Tomas's address as OceanSide in California.

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Mexico presses EU to unblock promised climate funds

AFP, Brussels

Mexico yesterday urged European leaders to hand over funding promised to help poor nations cope with global warming, as an important gesture before a key climate conference in Cancun later this year.

"The developing countries want to see this money unblocked, and the smallest, notably the island nations are waiting for this funding," Mexico's Environment Secretary Juan Rafael Elvira Quesada told a press conference on the margins of talks with his EU counterparts.

The Europeans have committed to providing 7.2 billion euros (10.6 billion dollars) from 2010-2012, including 2.4 billion euros this year, to help the poorest nations deal with the consequences of global warming.

At a climate conference in Copenhagen last December, the international community as a whole pledged 30 billion dollars, in public and private funding, over the three years to help the poor countries cope.

However the funds have not yet been unblocked and non-governmental organisations fear this will become merely an exercise in "recycling" development aid.

"We need the transfer of the funding," Quesada insisted.

However the Mexican minister also stressed the need for long-term financing.

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A reputed life insurance company invites application for the following positions:

1. Advisor: Requirement: Post graduate degree in any discipline. Retired Secretary/Additional Secretary, preferably with background in life insurance. Age 55-60 years. The position requires providing leadership and strategic direction to the management in line with Company's strategy and policies.

2. Director Audit and Finance: Requirement: FCA with experience in life insurance company in similar position. Age 45-60 years.

3. Director HR, Administration, Estate and Security: Requirement: Post graduate degree in any discipline. Long experience in HR and Administration Management in reputed multinational company as Director/ Head of HR and Administration. Age 50-60 years.

4. Director Customer Services and Monitoring: Requirement: Post graduate degree in any discipline. Retired Secretary/Additional Secretary, preferably with background in customer oriented services. Age 45-60 years. The position requires liaison with various stakeholders & policy holders and monitor business development and growth of the company.

5. Office Secretary to the Chairman Secretariat: Requirement: Minimum Graduate with 5 to 10 years experience as Office Secretary in a reputed national / multinational company. Female candidates are preferred.

6. Support Service Executive: No. of position 2 Requirement: Minimum graduate with completion of secretarial course and fluent in English and Bengali and to work in Front desk having 2 to 5 years working Experience in similar position. Female candidates are preferred.

7. Executives in Customer Service Department: No of Position 2 Requirement: Minimum BBA/MBA from recognized University with 3 to 5 years experience in Customer Service Department in a reputed national / multinational company. Preference will be given to candidates with Life Insurance background.

8. Executives in Audit and Finance Department: No of Position 2 Requirement: Minimum BBA/MBA major in Finance from recognized University with 3 to 5 years experience in Audit & Finance Department in a reputed national / multinational company. Preference will be given to candidates with Life Insurance background. Candidate who have completed CA part 1 will also be considered.

9. Asst. Manager HRD: Requirement: Minimum BBA/MBA major in HRM from recognized University with 3 to 5 years experience in HR & Admin Department in a reputed national / multinational company. Preference will be given to candidates who has Diploma in Personal management.

10. Executive Administration: Requirement: Minimum Graduate from recognized University with 2 to 3 years experience in Administration Department in a reputed national / multinational company. Preference will be given to candidates who has Insurance Background.

11. Executive Estate: Requirement: Minimum Graduate from recognized University with 2 to 3 years experience in working Estate Department in a reputed national / multinational company.

12. Executive Security: Requirement: Minimum Graduate from recognized University with 2 to 3 years experience in Security Services in respect of property, records, shares, deed/document, policy papers, MR/PR/OR, bonds, FDR etc. of the company.

13. Public Relation Officer: Requirement: Minimum Graduate from recognized University with 3 to 5 years experience in similar position. Must be able to handle all PR related affairs efficiently. Also have to meet the requirement of all portfolio related job of the company.

14. Drivers: No. of Position 4 Requirement: Candidates should have valid driving licence with 5 to 7 years experience as driver. He should be good health and mentally sound person.

15. Peons: No. of position 2 Requirement: Minimum SSC and should be acquainted with the office works.

All position except Sl. No. 14 & 15 requires excellent computer skill. For sl. No. 1 to 4 requires extensive travelling all over Bangladesh frequently. For exceptionally deserving candidate age, educational qualification and experience may be relaxed.

We offer competitive compensation for all the above positions. Candidate who are willing to work under challenging conditions and meet the above criteria are requested to send application by 23rd March, 2010 along with resume and recent photograph to **Box No. A-18, C/O. The Daily Star**. For the sake of confidentiality the interested candidates (only for Sl. No. 01) may also contact Chairman of Administration and Finance Committee of the Company over Mobile number 01713093178.

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