

SECURITY SUMMIT
Ministers call for improved relief coordination

AFP, Singapore

Asia-Pacific nations should adopt a more coordinated response to relief operations in the disaster-prone area, top regional officials said at a security conference yesterday. Malaysian Defence Minister Ahmad Zahid Hamidi called for the establishment of centres focusing on humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) in the region. "I think (a) few HADR centres have to be set up," he said at the Shangri-La Dialogue, an annual security conference in Singapore. This would supplement the existing Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) facility governing cooperation among the group's 10 member nations, Ahmad added.

Blasts kill 6 in Iraq

AP, Baghdad

A car bomb exploded outside a Baghdad police station yesterday in the deadliest of a pair of attacks that killed six people in the Iraqi capital, security and hospital officials said. A suicide attacker drove the bomb-rigged car up to a gate protecting the police post in western Baghdad's al-Amil neighbourhood during an early morning shift change when officers were gathered outside its blast walls. The blast killed four police officers and one civilian, and wounded 15 people, according to emergency security and hospital officials who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to talk to the media.

BP cap captures 10,000 barrels a day in US Gulf

BBC ONLINE

A containment cap on a ruptured well in the Gulf of Mexico is now funnelling off 10,000 barrels of oil a day, BP's chief executive Tony Hayward says. The amount has risen since Saturday, and implies more than half the estimated 12,000 to 19,000 barrels leaking each day is now being captured. The spill has been described as the biggest environmental disaster in US history. Hayward told the BBC that BP would restore the Gulf to its original state. Speaking on the Andrew Marr Show, Hayward said: "As we speak, the containment cap is producing around 10,000 barrels of oil a day to the surface."



An Israeli soldier restrains a man carrying the US flag during a protest by Palestinian, Israeli and foreign peace activists against Israel's controversial separation barrier in the West Bank village of Beit Jala, near the biblical town of Bethlehem yesterday.

UN chief proposes joint Gaza aid flotilla probe

Britain to give 19m pounds to Gaza, Israel expels activists

REUTERS, AFP, Jerusalem/ London

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has proposed a multinational investigation of Israel's raid on a Gaza-bound aid ship in which nine pro-Palestinian activists were killed, an Israeli official said yesterday. Ban has suggested establishing a panel that would be headed by former New Zealand prime minister Geoffrey Palmer and include representatives from Turkey - under whose flag the ship sailed - Israel and the United States, said the official from Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office. UK AID FOR GAZA Meanwhile, Britain announced yesterday it was giving 19 million pounds (27 million dollars, 23 million euros) for refugees in Gaza and repeated calls for Israel to lift its blockade of the territory. "The humanitarian situation in Gaza is both unacceptable and unsustainable," International Development Secretary Andrew Mitchell said announcing the funds, which will help support schools and health clinics for Gazan refugees. The money is part of a five-year, 100-million-pound agreement signed with the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian refugees (UNRWA) in 2006. Confirmation of this year's contribution comes amid renewed concern about Israel's blockade of Gaza following a deadly raid by Israeli commandos on an aid ship bound for the Palestinian territory earlier this week.

ACTIVISTS EXPELLED

Seven of 19 activists from the Rachel Corrie aid ship which tried to run the Gaza siege were expelled from Israel as calls grew for an end to the crippling blockade of the Hamas-ruled enclave. The remaining 12 would be deported later yesterday, an Israeli official said, as Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, defending an earlier botched raid which left nine dead, insisted Israel would never allow a situation in which arms could be sent to Gaza's Islamist rulers. "Everyone on board the boat will be expelled on Sunday after they signed a waiver renouncing their right to appeal to an Israeli judge," Israeli immigration official Sabine Haddad told AFP. Six Malaysians and a Cuban national from the boat were deported to Jordan early afternoon, leaving Israel via the Allenby Bridge, an AFP correspondent at the crossing said. An Indonesian journalist, who was injured in last Monday's deadly commando raid, also crossed with the group. The remaining 11 activists from the Rachel Corrie - five Irish nationals, including Nobel Peace laureate Mairead Maguire and six Filipinos - as well as the ship's Scottish captain, were to fly out of Ben Gurion international airport later in the afternoon and overnight, Haddad said. The Israeli leader discussed the proposal with Ban on Saturday and planned to convene senior cabinet ministers on Sunday to decide whether Israel would

take part, said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity. Israeli leaders have spoken publicly about setting up an Israeli investigation with foreign observers into the interception of the Turkish-flagged Mavi Marmara last Monday. Ban also discussed with Turkish Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan "options for moving forward with the investigation called for by the Security Council," the UN said on its website, referring to the Council's call for an impartial inquiry. Israel's navy boarded another ship carrying aid to Gaza on Saturday. Its interception of the MV Rachel Corrie ended without violence following diplomatic efforts to avoid bloodshed. Turkey's relations with Israel, once a close ally, have soured badly since the deadly raid on Monday. The Israeli official said there was hope that ties could be mended if Israel and Turkey cooperated in a committee investigating the incident. The official said Israel also wanted to establish whether the Turkish government sponsored the Mavi Marmara, where activists used clubs and a knife to attack the marines - resistance that appeared to catch Israeli military planners off guard. Israel has said seven of its troops were wounded. Netanyahu said at the start of his weekly cabinet meeting that a smaller group of "violent extremists" had boarded the ship separately with the intention of clashing with Israeli troops.

Turkey hosts Eurasian meet amid tension

REUTERS, Istanbul

Turkey, seething with anger after an Israeli raid on an aid ship bound for Gaza, hosts leaders from Russia, Iran, the Arab world and beyond this week for a Eurasian security summit that may further isolate Israel. The guest list for the meeting in Istanbul of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA), reads like a "who's who" of leaders from world hot spots, with participants from the Middle East, South Asia and the Korean Peninsula. Israel is one of 20 members of the forum, but has decided to send a diplomat from its consulate, an Israeli embassy official said yesterday, rather than expose a more senior figure to the fury generated by the killing of nine Turkish pro-Palestinian activists in the Israeli commando operation last Monday. Turkey is expected to try to raise pressure on Israel to end the four-year old blockade of 1.5 million Palestinians in Gaza during a conference on Monday, which precedes Tuesday's full summit. The diplomatic momentum will continue on Wednesday, as Arab League foreign ministers gather in Istanbul for the Turkish-Arab Cooperation Forum.

SHIP SINKING ROW
N Korea threatens South for taking it to UNSC

AP, Seoul

North Korea threatened yesterday to retaliate against South Korea for taking it to the UN Security Council over the deadly sinking of a warship, calling the action an "intolerable provocation." South Korea officially asked the UN Security Council on Friday to punish North Korea, accusing its nuclear-armed communist neighbour of blowing apart one of its warships with a torpedo, killing 46 sailors. It was the first time Seoul has taken Pyongyang to the Security Council for an inter-Korean provocation, despite a history of being attacked by the North. On Sunday, North Korea which denies involvement in the sinking issued a statement saying the South's action will intensify military tension and could trigger a war on the divided peninsula. "That is yet another intolerable provocation to us," the North's Committee for the Peaceful Reunification said. The statement carried by the official Korean Central News Agency was Pyongyang's first response to Seoul's request for UN action over the March 26 sinking. The North Korean committee said its military will launch a "stern punishment" against South Korea if it doesn't stop anti-North Korea steps. It didn't elaborate on what action it might take. The Security Council has several choices: a resolution with or without new sanctions against North Korea, a weaker presidential statement calling for specific actions, or a press statement. The Security Council earlier imposed sanctions against North Korea after its two nuclear tests in 2006 and 2009. These include UN embargoes on nuclear and ballistic missile-related items and technology, on arms exports and imports except light weapons, and on luxury goods. UN diplomats familiar with consultations on possible action against North Korea said that China, the North's closest ally, is opposed to new sanctions and indicated that the more likely result will be a presidential statement. The diplomats spoke on condition of anonymity because the contacts have been private.

Thai PM says polls possible early next year

Wants 'Red' representative on team probing violence

REUTERS, AFP, Ho Chi Minh City

Thai Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva said yesterday that an emergency decree would remain in place for now, but the situation was calm and an election was possible early next year. Abhisit, in an interview, also said economic growth in the second quarter could exceed 6 percent and full-year growth could be close to 6 percent. He expected no rush by the central bank to raise rates as that would depend on recovery and inflation. The prime minister said he wanted a quick end to emergency measures, imposed on about a third of the country amid the most violent protests in the country's modern history between security forces and "red shirt" anti-government protesters. But they would remain in place for now. "I think people understand that this is needed to make sure that we can curb some of the remaining activities as far as those who want to use violent means are concerned." Thai Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva said yesterday he wants to ensure "Red Shirt" representation on a panel to examine the deadly unrest that erupted during weeks of anti-government protests. Shortly after Thai troops moved on May 19 to disperse the anti-government "Red Shirts" from their fortified encampment in Bangkok after two months of crippling demonstrations and outbreaks of violence, Abhisit vowed that an independent probe would be set up. But it has not yet been formed. Abhisit told Reuters on the sidelines of a World Economic Forum meeting. "Things were calm, he said, but "feelings could run high." "We want to do it as soon as possible," he said.

Japan's new PM to curb power of kingmaker Ozawa

AFP, BBC ONLINE, Tokyo

New Japanese Prime Minister Naoto Kan is likely to keep his predecessor's cabinet with only minor changes but is moving to curb the influence of powerful backroom fixer Ichiro Ozawa, reports said yesterday. The former finance minister has announced the appointment of two critics of Ozawa - dubbed the "Shadow Shogun" - to top posts before formally unveiling his new cabinet, probably on Tuesday. Meanwhile, US President Barack Obama has telephoned Japan's new leader Naoto Kan to congratulate him and to pledge co-operation, amid tensions over a US military base on the island of Okinawa. Tokyo officials said Kan had promised to make "strenuous efforts" to resolve the issue. Japan's previous government resigned after failing to implement an election pledge to move the US base off Okinawa. Many residents on the island resent the military presence. Kan is likely to name his former deputy, 52-year-old fiscal hawk Yoshihiko Noda, to head the finance ministry as pressure mounts to revive the world's number two economy and slash mounting public debt, media reported. Otherwise he plans to retain the main cabinet members including Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada, Defence Minister Toshimi Kitazawa and Transport Minister Seiji Maehara. Kan, who became prime minister Friday, told reporters he would appoint Yukio Edano, a 46-year-old critic of Ozawa, as secretary general of his ruling Democratic Party of Japan (DPP), the top post after party leader. Yoshi Sengoku, 64, will become chief cabinet secretary, the prime minister's right-hand man and top government spokesman. Ozawa was seen as the real power behind outgoing prime minister Yukio Hatoyama, who announced his resignation last week after less than nine months in office amid a row over a US airbase and political funding scandals. "I would like to maintain transparency and fairness to lead the party," Edano told reporters. Ozawa, 68, was the architect of the August electoral earthquake that swept out the conservative Liberal Democratic Party after more than half a century of almost unbroken rule.

Advertisement for Coral Reef resort. Features a large image of the resort building and a table of room rates. Text includes: 'কক্সবাজারে সফকবলায়', '৪৭৫ লাখ টাকায় 5 STAR হোটেলের মানিকানা', 'সাগরপাড়ে স্বপ্নের ঠিকানা', 'সাথে আজীবন মুনাফার সুযোগ', 'বিশেষ আকর্ষণ', 'মূল্য তালিকা (১৫ জুন ২০১০ থেকে কার্যকর)', 'কোরাল রীফ প্রপার্টিজ লিমিটেড', 'চুক্তি স্বাক্ষর পূর্বেই বুকিং দিল', 'কক্সবাজার: প্লট # ৯৪০ (২য় তলা), সেইন রোড, কক্সবাজার। ফোন: (০০৪১) ৫১১৮৮, (০০৪১) ৫১৪১৪'.