

Sharon dissolves parliament, calls snap elections

By the Associated Press INTERNATIONAL

JERUSALEM — In a surprise move, Prime Minister Ariel Sharon today dissolved parliament and called snap elections, to be held at the beginning of February, after he failed to rebuild his crumbling government.

The dramatic developments throw Israel into a likely unruly election campaign at a time when the nation is facing severe problems — the 2-year-old conflict with the Palestinians, a deepening economic crisis and the possibility of an Iraqi attack on Israel in the event of a U.S. strike against Saddam Hussein. Sharon said he made the decision reluctantly, but that he had no choice because the alternative — succumbing to political blackmail by potential coalition partners — would have been worse.

"Elections are the last thing this country needs right now," Sharon told a hastily called news conference at his office. He chided his former Labor party allies and a far-right party, blaming them for the fall of his 20-month-old government. Israel has had five prime ministers in the past seven years.

The February date for elections would leave an unusually short time for campaigning, and both Sharon and the main opposition party, Labor, face likely leadership challenges.

KABUL, Afghanistan — International peacekeepers confined to Kabul should be deployed across Afghanistan

around the world

to restrain warlords including a U.S.-backed governor whose forces are guilty of human rights abuses, a human rights group said today.

In a new report, Human Rights Watch alleges that the governor of Herat, Ismail Khan, ordered politically motivated arrests and beatings throughout 2002. In the most serious cases, prisoners were hung upside down, whipped or tortured with electric shocks, the report said.

"The international community says it wants to reduce the power of the warlords and bring law and order back to Afghanistan," said John Sifton, who co-authored the report. "But in Herat, it has done exactly the opposite. The friend of the international community in western Afghanistan is an enemy of human rights."

President Hamid Karzai's government has limited authority outside the capital, Kabul, which is patrolled by a 4,800-strong International Security Assistance Force, or ISAF. The rest of the country is a patchwork of territories divided up among regional warlords.

NATIONAL

GREENBELT, Md. — The teenage sniper suspect was ordered detained as investigators look into whether two September shootings were related to the October spree that left 10 dead in the Washington area.

The wounding of two people in separate holdups, one outside a liquor store and the other outside a restaurant in Clinton, the Washington suburb where John Allen Muhammad's ex-wife lives, could be connected with the string of sniper attacks, Prince George's County police said.

Muhammad, 41, was scheduled to appear in federal court today, where prosecutors are expected to make their case for holding him until trial. Under federal law, prosecutors have until Thursday to secure an indictment against him.

On Monday, 17-year-old John Lee Malvo was ordered detained at a closed hearing, and the orders and records were sealed, court clerk Felicia Cannon said. In addition to the shootings in Maryland, Virginia and Washington, D.C., the two face murder charges in Louisiana and Alabama, and are suspects in two shootings, one fatal, in Washington state.

American Roman Catholic bishops' new draft of their sex-abuse policy was quickly branded by victims' advocates as a cumbersome, secretive rollback from the sweeping changes approved at a historic summit this year.

The draft, released Monday, is a revised version of the abuse policy that bishops endorsed in Dallas in June. The Vatican had misgivings about the Dal-

las proposal, saying elements conflicted with universal church law.

Bishops will vote on the changes at their Nov. 11-14 meeting in Washington. Priests said the changes would ensure due process for the accused, but advocates were skeptical.

Under the revised policy, allegations would trigger a "preliminary investigation," during which an accused priest would remain in place. The policy said his reputation would be protected during the investigation.

David Clohessy, director of Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests, said the revision would prevent congregations from learning about allegations against priests and "enable abusive priests to remain in ministry, and unidentified, longer."

JACKSON, Miss. — WorldCom Inc. took "extraordinary and illegal steps" to paint a rosy picture of its crumbling finances and committed accounting fraud that likely exceeded the more than \$7 billion already disclosed to investors, according to a bankruptcy report.

Richard Thornburgh, a former U.S. attorney general appointed by the bankruptcy court to examine WorldCom's finances, also sternly criticized the telecommunications giant in the report Monday for making more than \$1 billion in loans to the firm's former chief executive.

He said WorldCom's board never should have allowed former CEO Ber-

nard Ebbers to leverage his company stock with the loans.

Thornburgh concluded that those responsible for the fraudulent practices include "the board of directors, the audit committee, the company's system of internal controls and the independent auditors."

WorldCom, which filed for bankruptcy protection in July after revealing accounting irregularities, said it is doubling its internal audit department staff, creating two new operational chief financial officer positions and hiring a new corporate controller.

WASHINGTON

WASHINGTON — The Bush administration expects to submit a new resolution on Iraq to the U.N. Security Council this week and hopes for prompt approval. Even so, it's not ready to claim victory.

The text has been changed to reflect the result of negotiations with France, Russia and other critics over their objections to threatening war against Iraq if it should refuse to disarm.

After the talks, a senior U.S. official said the votes of Russia and France — either of which could veto the resolution — remained uncertain Monday. He said he did not know anyone who was doing a victory dance yet.

At a one-hour White House meeting, Secretary of State Colin Powell discussed the planned revisions with Vice

President Dick Cheney, Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld and Condoleezza Rice, President Bush's national security adviser.

The revisions go a long way toward taking into account the views of other countries, State Department spokesman Richard Boucher said.

WASHINGTON — Opening up a visible new front in the war on terror, U.S. forces launched a pinpoint missile strike in Yemen, killing a top al-Qaida operative in his car, a U.S. official said.

The strike, believed to have been conducted by a CIA aircraft, killed Qaeda Salim Sinan al-Harethi, the official said, speaking on condition of anonymity. U.S. counterterrorism officials say al-Harethi was al-Qaida's chief operative in Yemen and a suspect in the October 2000 bombing of the destroyer USS Cole.

Al-Harethi's car was struck by a Hellfire air-to-ground missile. The CIA launches Hellfires from pilotless Predator aircraft. Five other people, believed al-Qaida operatives, also were killed. The attack occurred in the northern province of Marib, about 100 miles east of Yemen's capital, where al-Qaida is considered active.

Speaking Monday about al-Harethi, Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld told reporters, "It would be a very good thing if he were out of business."

'Thousand-legged worms' are invading homes

We are again seeing millipedes invading homes. Millipedes, or "thousand-legged worms," are an arthropod relative of insects.

They can be distinguished from centipedes by the number of legs per body segment. Millipedes have four legs per segment, while centipedes have only two. Also, the millipedes legs are quite short and may not be seen if viewing the millipede from above.

Though usually found in damp locations outside, they can become a problem inside the house and cause homeowners a great deal of concern. Invasions of households are often sud-



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den and sporadic.

Millipedes feed primarily on decaying organic material; rarely on living tissue. They do not bite people nor damage household furnishings directly. However, they will leave a mess and give off an odor if crushed.

Millipedes are worm-like and most often brownish-black in color. The legs ripple as they move but will often curl up into a "C" shape like a watch spring if

touched. Remember you may not see the legs unless viewing the millipede from the side. They defend themselves by releasing a disagreeable odor when disturbed.

Millipedes require high moisture

conditions in order to survive and often die in a day or two after entering a house. Dead millipede bodies can then be vacuumed up and disposed of.

Drying out any moist areas inside will also help with control. Sealing and caulking around any openings in the foundation will help keep populations low.

If this is not enough, spraying cyfluthrin (Home Pest Control Indoor/Outdoor Insect Killer), profoxpur (Baygon) or resmethrin in a three-foot band around the outside of the house will take care of them before they get inside.

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