

Hamas announces choice for next Palestinian leader



AP PHOTO
Ismail Haniyeh, expected to be named the next Palestinian prime minister, arrives for talks with Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas in Gaza City on Monday.

Officials: Militant group member expected to be appointed as prime minister

The Associated Press

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip

Hamas presented a pragmatic former university administrator as its choice for Palestinian prime minister Monday and the Islamic militant group reached out to Fatah and other factions to join a broad-based Cabinet that might stand a chance of gaining international approval.

Officials said Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas would give Ismail Haniyeh his formal letter of appoint-

ment today, a step toward installing the first government to be headed by Hamas, which swept parliamentary elections last month.

Haniyeh, 43, told reporters after meeting with Abbas that he would try to form a joint government with Fatah, the traditional Palestinian ruling party that Hamas trounced in the election, "that can shoulder its responsibilities in the political arena and internal issues." So far, Fatah has refused to join.

Hamas, which calls for the destruction of Israel and is responsible for

dozens of suicide bombings, is trying to persuade other Palestinian factions to join a coalition, hoping to persuade the world that the new Cabinet represents all the Palestinians and should not be the target of a boycott.

Another Hamas leader, Mahmoud Zahar, met with other militant factions Monday — Islamic Jihad and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine — to try to gain their support.

Islamic Jihad leader Sheik Nafez Azzam said the group, which boycotted the election, would not join the govern-

ment. The PFLP, which won just three seats, did not give an answer.

The process of picking Haniyeh as prime minister-designate is a mere formality after the Jan. 25 election in which Hamas won 74 seats in the 132-member legislature. Abbas' Fatah Party, which had dominated Palestinian life for four decades, won only 45.

Abbas aide Nabil Abu Rdeneh said further talks were set for today, when Abbas will formally ask Haniyeh to form a government. Haniyeh will then have five weeks to do so.

BRIEF NATION

LINCOLN, Neb.

Winner of record lottery jackpot remains mystery

No one had come forward Sunday to claim the record \$365 million Powerball jackpot sold at a convenience store on West O Street, said Nebraska Lottery spokesman Brian Rockey. With the office closed for Presidents Day, the winner may not be known until today, if then.

Jim Haynes, acting director of the Nebraska Lottery, said large jackpot winners "tend to wait until they have sought legal counsel or financial counsel."

The winning numbers drawn Saturday were 15, 17, 43, 44 and 48, with a Powerball number of 29, according to the Multi-State Lottery Association of Des Moines, Iowa, which runs the game for the participating states.

The U-Stop, which would earn a \$50,000 bonus if it sold the winning ticket, was swarmed with reporters and customers Sunday, said owner Mick Mandl.

BRIEFS WORLD

SAN JUAN DE SABINAS, Mexico

Rescuers work to free 65 trapped in mine

Emergency crews using picks, shovels and their hands tunneled feverishly through dirt, wood, metal and rock on Monday in an attempt to reach 65 coal miners trapped by a gas explosion 600 feet underground.

Officials said that while it was unlikely the miners were still alive, there was still a chance of finding survivors.

Above ground, priests and pastors led hundreds of the miners' friends and relatives in prayer for the men trapped by Sunday morning's explosion at the Pasta de Conchos mine near the town of San Juan de Sabinas, 85 miles southwest of Eagle Pass, Texas.

The trapped men had carried only six hours of oxygen, but officials said they believed a ventilation system that uses huge fans to pump in fresh air and suck out dangerous gases was still working.

GUINSAUGON, Philippines

Sounds heard at school buried by landslide

Rescuers refused to give up hope of finding survivors in an elementary school buried by up to 100 feet of mud, digging into the night Monday after detecting what the provincial governor called signs of life.

Sounds of scratching and a rhythmic tapping were picked up by seismic sensors and sound-detection gear brought in by U.S. and Malaysian forces.

"To me, that's more than enough reason to smile and be happy," said South Leyte Gov. Rosette Lerias.

Still, it was hard to imagine survivors under the wet muck nearly four days after a mountainside collapsed on the farming village of Guinsaugon, killing up to 1,000 people. No one has been pulled out alive since just a few hours after the disaster Friday morning.

THE WAR AGAINST TERRORISM

U.S. ambassador: Unity key to Iraqi government

Khalilzad warns leaders to keep security forces secular

By ROBERT H. REID
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BAGHDAD, Iraq

The U.S. ambassador delivered a blunt warning to Iraqi leaders Monday that they risk losing American support unless they establish a national unity government with the police and the army out of the hands of religious parties.

Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad delivered the warning as another 24 people, including an American soldier, died in a string of bombings, underscoring the need for the country to establish a government capable of winning the trust of all communities and ending the violence.

Such a government is also essential to the U.S. strategy for handing over security to Iraqi soldiers and police so the 138,000 U.S. troops can go home. But talks among Iraqi parties that won parliament seats in the Dec. 15 election have stalled over deep divisions among Shiites, Sunni Arabs and Kurds.

During a rare news conference, Khalilzad said division among the country's sectarian and ethnic communities was "the fundamental problem in Iraq," fueling the Sunni Arab-dominated insurgency and the wave of reprisal killings.

"To overcome this there is a need for a government of national unity," which "is the difference between what exists now and the next government," he said. The outgoing government is dominated by Shiites and Kurds.

Khalilzad said Iraq's next Cabinet ministers, particularly those heading the Interior



AP PHOTO
Iraqi President Jalal Talabani, right, greets U.S. Ambassador to Iraq Zalmay Khalilzad in Baghdad, Iraq, on Saturday. When meeting with Talabani to discuss

the formation of Iraq's new government, Khalilzad told Iraqi leaders to keep parliament out of the hands of religious leaders or risk losing American support.

and Defense ministries, "have to be people who are nonsectarian, broadly acceptable and who are not tied to militias" run by political parties.

Otherwise, he warned that "Iraq faces the risk of warlordism that Afghanistan went through for a period." Khalilzad was born in Afghanistan and served as U.S. envoy there.

To underscore his remarks, Khalilzad reminded the Iraqis that the United States has spent

billions to build up Iraq's police and army and said "we are not going to invest the resources of the American people and build forces that are run by people who are sectarian" and tied to the militias — some of which the ambassador said received "arms and training" from Iran.

There was no response from Prime Minister Ibrahim al-Jaafari's government to Khalilzad's warning, but a prominent Shiite politician, Jalaladin al-

Saghir, said the comments were unacceptable and constituted interference in the affairs of a sovereign state.

"We all want a national unity government and the U.S. ambassador is no more eager than we are to reach such a government," al-Saghir said. "It is the Americans who push toward sectarianism by their ever-changing points of view. We feel uneasy about some of the U.S. agenda."

Bipartisan session takes timeout to honor former governor

By MIKE SMITH
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

ANALYSIS

INDIANAPOLIS

Even in death, Frank O'Bannon showed once again that he could bring people together in the Indiana Statehouse.

For an hour last week, people packed the south atrium of the Capitol for a ceremony in which a bronze bust of the late governor and down-home Democrat was unveiled. Preparations for such a tribute began just a few months after

O'Bannon died in September 2003 with more than a year left in his second term.

It seemed fitting that the ceremony occurred in the midst of a fast-paced legislative session, since O'Bannon had been a part of so many of them during his 18 years in the state Senate, eight more as lieutenant governor, and seven as governor.

"This building is about government, but it's also about people, and there were few leaders who spent more time thinking about people than Frank O'Bannon," said House Speaker Brian Bosma.

"Whether you agreed with his politics or not, you appreciated and respected the man. So I think it was very appropriate that we took a short break and remembered that legacy and the leadership that he brought to this building."

Republican state Sen. James

Merritt of Indianapolis, who helped lead the effort that resulted in the bronze bust, said O'Bannon "really lived by the Golden Rule."

"He was genuine," Merritt said. "He was the real deal, and if he tried to be fake, he would fail."

Former first lady Judy O'Bannon wanted the bust to be the real deal, too. She said as the artist was working on it, she kept telling him, "I think his nose was bigger than that." When a velvet cover was lift-

ed and the bust was revealed, the large, bent nose was there. "He wasn't perfect always in his decisions or his actions," Judy O'Bannon told the crowd. "He was a man, a human being, like all of us."

Shortly after the ceremony was over, action shifted to the third floor, where lawmakers resumed their work and lobbyists crowded together. The buzz could be heard throughout the building.

The show was on again, and O'Bannon would have loved it.



Lawmakers took a break to honor Frank O'Bannon last week at the statehouse, where a bronze bust of the former governor was unveiled.

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