

OIC calls emergency meeting on W Asia

KUALA LUMPUR, April 15. — The world's Islamic nations will hold an emergency meeting on developments in West Asia at the request of Palestinian leader Mr Yasser Arafat, Malaysia said today. Malaysia is current chairman of the 57-member Organisation of the Islamic Conference, the world's largest grouping of Muslim states.

"We want to organise the meeting earlier because we now feel the urgency of the new development," Mr Hamid said. Mr Bush, breaking with a decades-old US policy, stated after talks yesterday with Israeli leader Mr Ariel Sharon that Israel could keep some Arab land captured in the 1967 war. Mr Hamid said: "The Palestinians expect the OIC to play a role to put the road map (for West Asia peace) on its track." Mr Hamid said that the US endorsement of Mr Sharon's proposals would not contribute to peace and prosperity in West Asia.

Meanwhile reports from Ramallah add, US secretary of state Gen. Colin Powell telephoned Palestinian premier Mr Ahmed Qorei in a bid to explain President Bush's declarations in support of Mr Sharon's disengagement plan. Mr Powell, who also contacted Palestinian foreign minister Mr Na-

1679 Annan warning

UNHQ, April 15. — UN Secretary General Mr Kofi Annan has cautioned against making unilateral statements on the final outcome of Palestinian-Israeli talks, implicitly criticising US President George W Bush for saying Palestinian refugees should not be allowed to return to lands lost to Israel in 1948. — AFP

bil Shaath, "attempted to reduce the impact of the American position," labour minister Mr Ghassan al-Khatib said.

Another report from Jerusalem said Israel's attorney general today ordered government ministries to freeze the transfer of all funds to settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, fearing the money will be transferred to illegal outposts. Israel is required to dismantle dozens of outposts under the internationally backed "road map" peace plan. USA and Palestinians have criticized the outposts as seeds of future settlements.

Meanwhile, an Israeli helicopter opened fire during an army incursion into a Palestinian refugee camp in southern Gaza early today, leaving 20 Palestinians wounded, medical sources said. — AFP