

Saudi suicide attacks kill 91 including 12 Americans

Expatriate residential areas targetted, al-Qaeda blamed

AFP, RIYADH
 More than 90 people died, including up to 12 Americans, in overnight suicide car bombings blamed on the al-Qaeda terror network that devastated three expatriate compounds in Riyadh, US officials said.
 "We have counted more than 90 dead," one State Department official in Washington said.
 "These are very preliminary numbers," he added, as a second official said the death toll stood at 91 and was expected to rise. At least 30 and possibly as many as 44 US citizens were wounded.
 The officials, speaking to AFP on condition of anonymity, gave figures significantly higher than those released shortly before by the

Saudi interior ministry, which said at least 29 people were killed -- 0 including nine bombers and seven Americans -- and 194 slightly injured.
 "It certainly has all the fingerprints of an al-Qaeda operation," US Secretary of State Colin Powell said during a tour of a devastated compound housing personnel of US firm Vinnell, which trains the Saudi National Guard headed by Crown Prince Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz.
 The blast scoured out a five-metre (17-foot) deep crater, devastating dozens of the 280-odd luxury villas in the sprawling estate and damaging virtually all the rest.
 The force of the blast had blown the huge concrete blocks erected to protect the compound dozens of

metres (yards) out of place.
 According to unconfirmed reports, the attackers shot and killed at least one guard to get through the main gate of the well-guarded compound, hard by the junction of the airport highway and the main motorway to the oilfields in the east of the kingdom where many expatriates work.
 They drove at least one car -- three according to some reports -- into the compound and opened fire before detonating their massive cargo of explosives.
 Residents said in addition to the car bomb, the charred bodies of four armed men were found in another vehicle which also rammed through the gate.
 They said further shooting had

been heard after the blast.
 "It was a well planned terrorist attack ... it was very well executed and it shows the nature of the enemy we are working against," said Powell, in Riyadh on a tour to push for Middle East peace.
 "These are people who were determined to penetrate places like this just for the purpose of killing people in their sleep, killing innocent people, killing people who had tried to help others."
 "This is criminality, terrorism at its worst, there is no justification in any way shape or form," Powell said of the first major anti-Western attack since the US-led war on Iraq was launched in March.
 Shortly after he spoke, the Saudi
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The video grab from the official Saudi television shows the scene of one of the overnight blasts in the Saudi capital Riyadh. Suicide bomb attacks on expatriate compounds near the Saudi Arabian capital killed 91 people, including 12 Americans.



A car lies devastated on an expatriate compound in Riyadh in overnight blasts. Suicide bomb attacks on expatriate compounds in the Saudi Arabian capital overnight killed 91 people, including 12 Americans.

A heinous act: Khaleda

UNB, Dhaka
 Prime Minister Khaleda Zia has expressed her profound shock and grief at the loss of innocent lives in bomb attacks in Saudi Arabia.
 "We condemn such a heinous act," she said in a message to King Fahd Bin Abdul Aziz Al-Saud.
 The prime minister conveyed her deepest sympathy and most sincere condolences to the bereaved family members of the victims and prayed for the families of the victims to have the courage and fortitude to withstand the irreparable loss.
 In another message to US President George W Bush, she expressed deep shock at the loss of precious lives, including those of US citizens, in bomb attacks in Saudi Arabia.

Arab states condemn Riyadh carnage

AFP, Dubai
 Arab states on Tuesday poured condemnation on three suicide bombings on expatriate housing compounds in the Saudi capital overnight that killed more than 90 people.
 Kuwait and Bahrain, both neighbours of Saudi Arabia, branded the attacks, blamed on the al-Qaeda terror network of Osama bin Laden, as "criminal acts".
 Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah al-Ahmed al-Sabah sent
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Saudi, Chechen suicide attacks linked: Putin

AFP, Moscow
 Russian President Vladimir Putin said yesterday a series of suicide attacks in Saudi Arabia and Chechnya bore "the same imprint," Interfax news agency reported.
 "The imprint in this and that case is absolutely identical. The consequences are absolutely comparable," Putin said at a meeting with NATO Secretary General George Robertson.
 "The blasts in Saudi Arabia, in Chechnya and other places -- these are links in the same chain," Russian foreign ministry spokesman
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Inclusion of ministers in JS standing bodies violation of rules: AL

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
 The Awami League (AL) has questioned inclusion of ministers in two of the 11 parliamentary standing committees formed by the Jatiya Sangsad Monday night.
 "It is a clear violation of the Rules of Procedure," Opposition Chief Whip Abdus Shahid said while briefing newsmen yesterday.
 Inclusion of State Minister for Finance Shah Mohammad Abul Hossain in the Public Undertaking Committee and State Minister for Agriculture Mirza Fakrul Islam Alamgir in the Public Accounts Committee is a clear violation of the Rules of Procedure, Shahid noted.
 "Thus the BNP-led alliance is demeaning the constitution and the Rules of Procedure, and violating the democratic norms," he said.
 Referring to rules 234 and 239 that deal with the formation of such committees, Shahid said the Speaker wrongly did not mention the relevant rules to constitute the committees as he was not well informed

Moudud says anti-graft bill will be tabled in budget session

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
 Law Minister Moudud Ahmed yesterday said a bill on an independent anti-corruption commission would be tabled in the parliament in its upcoming budget session.
 "We have finalised a bill to set up the anti-corruption commission. The cabinet has also decided in that line. There should not be any doubt about our implementing the decision," Moudud said at a press briefing at his office yesterday.
 The briefing was convened to clarify the government position on the formation of the commission following press reports published yesterday stating that the cabinet on Monday did not approve the draft bill.
 "The bill first has to be placed before the Secretariat Committee on Administrative Development (SCAD) for scrutiny to ensure
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Cops club AL pickets at Russell Square

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
 Police yesterday swooped on an Awami League (AL) procession at the Russell Square, wounding at least 15 women activists during an opposition-called countryside eight-hour hartal.
 The windshields of at least two buses were smashed and two policewomen were hurt in brickbats by pro-hartal activists during the shutdown.
 Police picked up 12 AL picketers from different areas.
 A few vehicles plied the Dhaka roads and most businesses kept their shutters down.
 The AL and its front organisations enforced the general strike from 6:00am to 2:00pm to protest the reinstatement of a convict in the Bangabandhu Murder Case and an accused in the Jail Killing
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Battered in backyard

INAM AHMED
 Jatra took a long swig on chu. And then looked up from the semi-darkness of the mud-walled kitchen. His eyes already shiny from the influence of the drink.
 "They have taken our land. They have taken it even against a single piece of umbrella," he said. And then smiled. No contempt in his voice. "We are slow in mind. The Bangalis are not. They are clever and cruel; they robbed us of our land."
 "We are never a match for them," said Mukti in the corner of the kitchen. She too was drinking, but not as much as her uncle Jatra.
 At Askipara, close to the hills of the Meghalaya, the night passes by in strange stillness. A wind picks up. The leaves rustle. The light from the small lamp sways. A strange smell hangs in the air; the smell of the true Garo spirit. We sit in silence for some more time. And shiver in cold even on the April night.
 "They lend us a small sum. Then charges compound interest on it. We even don't know how much they charge. Or how they calculate it. By the turn of the year, our credit becomes too bloated to pay back. Then, we have to write off our land," Jatra begins again.
 In his candid way, he smiles. It's hard to imagine that he just lost his two-year-old child two days ago. Such is his simplicity. He drowned in a village pond.
 Only in the afternoon, before we took a swim in the huge pond, we saw the grave forlorn, yet amazed
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Professionals to come under tax net

Economists suggest Saifur to spur investment
STAFF CORRESPONDENT
 All professionals will be brought under the tax net in the next fiscal.
 "All professionals and directors of chambers, associations, banks and insurance companies will also be notified for compulsory submission of tax returns from July 1," Finance and Planning Minister M Saifur Rahman said yesterday.
 He was exchanging views with business leaders at a pre-budget meeting at the conference room of the ministry.
 "Necessary amendments will be brought to the tax law before serving notice on the professionals for compulsory submission of tax
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