

## Kidnapped Indian found beheaded in Afghanistan

REUTERS, Kandahar

A kidnapped Indian telecommunications engineer was found beheaded in southern Afghanistan on Sunday and the Taliban said they had killed him.

The man and his Afghan driver were kidnapped on Friday. Taliban insurgents said on Saturday they had taken both men and vowed to kill the Indian unless New Delhi withdrew all its workers from Afghanistan within 24 hours.

"We found the body, beheaded, in a ditch by a road, about 10 km from where he was kidnapped," said Mohammad Mir, a district police chief in Zabul province.

Taliban spokesman Qari Mohammad Yousuf said by telephone Sunday that the body of the Indian telecommunications engineer was found on Saturday evening while trying to escape.

Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh condemned the killing.



PHOTO: AFP  
Indian woman Manjula Narayan (C) is consoled by Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh Y.S. Rajashekar Reddy at her home in Hyderabad yesterday as she grieves with family members the killing of her husband in Afghanistan. The body of her husband Surya Narayan who was kidnapped by Taliban, was found in Afghanistan.

## Pak nuclear official freed

AFP, Islamabad

A top Pakistani nuclear official detained nearly two years ago in a probe into a proliferation network run by disgraced scientist Abdul Qadeer Khan had been freed, a military spokesman said yesterday.

Mohammed Farooq, who worked as director general of the country's main nuclear enrichment facility, Khan Research Laboratories, was freed last week, chief military spokesman Major General Shaukat Sultan told AFP.

"He has been freed and allowed to go home," Sultan said, refusing to say if Farooq had been cleared of all charges.

"He has been advised to restrict his activities and stay home," the spokesman said.

Farooq was detained with 10 other scientists and administrators of Khan Research Laboratories in late 2003.

Khan, the so-called father of Pakistan's atomic bomb programme, has admitted involvement in transferring nuclear secrets to Iran, Libya and North Korea. He has been under house arrest since 2004.

# Tigers raid camps of renegade rebels

## 20 killed in fighting

REUTERS, Colombo

Sri Lanka's Tamil Tiger rebels said they raided camps belonging to renegade ex-rebels the Karuna group in army territory yesterday, killing 20 as war fears remain high after a suicide bombing and military air strikes.

The rebels say the government uses fighters led by former Tiger eastern commander Karuna Amman as "army-backed paramilitaries" to attack the mainstream Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) -- a charge the government denies.

"It is a very severe blow for the paramilitary groups and for the Sri Lankan army," head of the Tiger peace secretariat S. Puleedevan told Reuters

by satellite phone from rebel territory.

"We have burned the camps and a lot of arms and ammunition provided by the Sri Lankan army," he added.

He said the rebels had come under artillery fire from nearby army camps during the attack, but were withdrawing back behind their own lines with only one Tiger fighter wounded. Twenty Karuna fighters were killed and 15 wounded, he said.

None of the information could be independently confirmed.

The army denied there had been any shelling, and said all they knew was there had been fighting between Tiger and Karuna forces in jungle areas not really controlled by either

side. They have always denied knowing where the Karuna camps were, but Nordic truce monitors said the army, at best, turns a blind eye.

The past three weeks have been the bloodiest since a 2002 ceasefire with more than 120 people -- possibly many more -- killed in suspected Tiger attacks on the military, ethnic riots, government air strikes and unsolved murders of civilians on both sides. Peace talks due to take place in Switzerland have been indefinitely postponed because of wrangling over the transport of eastern rebel leaders to their headquarters for a pre-talks meeting.

Analysts said that ultimately the

key issue for the Tigers, whose two-decade fight for an ethnic Tamil homeland has killed more than 64,000 on both sides, was stopping Karuna.

The attacks took place near the eastern town of Welikanda, where the Tigers say Karuna fighters kidnapped several aid workers from the Tamils Rehabilitation Organization (TRO), effectively the aid arm of the de facto Tiger state.

Puleedevan said the rebels had found two seized TRO vehicles inside the three Karuna camps raided, but no sign of the seven aid staff still missing.

## Afghan, coalition troops kill 11 militants

AP, Kandahar

Afghan troops backed by coalition forces battled Taliban forces across volatile southern Afghanistan, killing 11 insurgents after militants killed three policemen and wounded another in an ambush.

Nine Taliban militants were killed during fighting that raged late Friday into Saturday in Panjwayi, a western district in Kandahar province, and 12 insurgents, including commanders, were captured, said Gov. Asadullah Khalid.

"Taliban and foreign al-Qaeda fighters are working together against our forces across southern Afghanistan, including in Panjwayi," Khalid told The Associated Press.

Khalid said seven Taliban members were wounded and carried away by fleeing militants.

Later Saturday, about 50 Afghan soldiers and police attacked a Taliban camp hidden in mountains about 60 miles north of the Helmand capital of Lashkar Gah, local Afghan army commander Gen. Rahmattullah Roufi said.

## Israel changes route of West Bank barrier

AP, Jerusalem

Israel's Cabinet yesterday voted to modify the route of its West Bank separation barrier to put thousands of Palestinians on the "Palestinian" side of the enclosure, officials said.

The original proposal would have put the Palestinians, who live in the area of the Jewish settlement of Ariel, on the "Israeli" side of the barrier, officials said.

Interim Prime Minister Ehud Olmert says he wants the barrier concluded by the end of the year. He

decided last week to erect a temporary security barrier around Jerusalem to protect Israelis in areas where the permanent barrier has not yet been completed. Israeli left-wing organisations accused Olmert of trying to bypass the Supreme Court, where dozens of Palestinian petitions against the barrier are pending.

Israel says the separation barrier, which dips into the West Bank at several points, is meant to provide security by preventing suicide bombers from entering the country. Palestinians call it a land grab.

## Cyclone Mala kills one in Myanmar

AFP, Yangon

A woman was killed and 21 people were injured when a cyclone struck a town outside Myanmar's capital Yangon, state media reported yesterday.

At least 200 houses and five factories were also damaged as strong winds and heavy rain from Cyclone Mala hit Yangon and surrounding industrial areas late Friday, the New Light of Myanmar newspapers said.

"Sudden strong winds along with heavy rainfall destroyed roofs on five factories and more than 200 houses in Hlainethaya township," it said.

The injured had been sent to two hospitals and Yangon's military commander had set up relief camps for families whose houses were heavily damaged, it said. It was unclear how the woman died.

Witnesses, however, said the damage was more widespread with about 28 factories destroyed.

Military and police were blocking roads to the affected areas and had started cleaning up, the witnesses said.

Cyclone Mala has been moving up the coast of western Myanmar bringing strong winds and causing some flash floods and power blackouts.

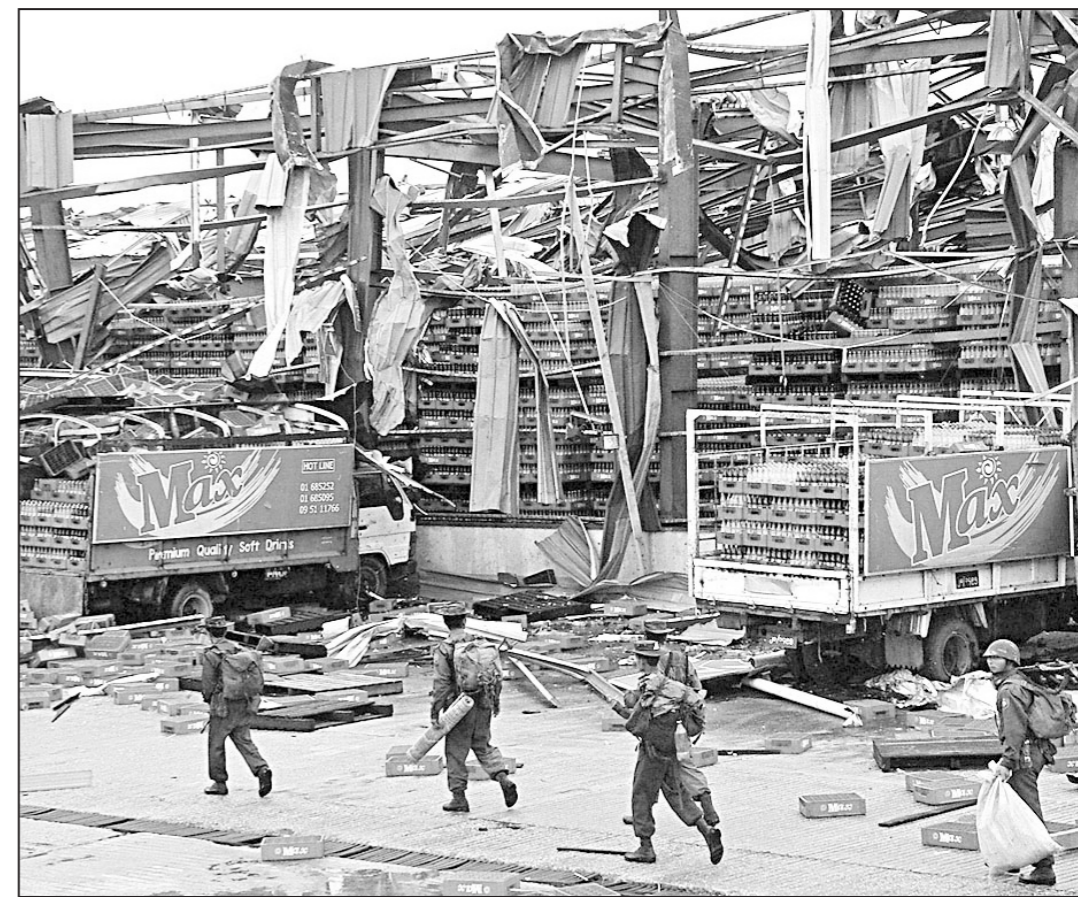


PHOTO: AFP  
Soldiers walk past a destroyed factory after the powerful Cyclone Mala hit the outskirts of the Myanmar capital city Yangon on Saturday. The powerful cyclone battered the coast of western Myanmar on Saturday destroying buildings and killing one person.