# INTERNÄTIONAL

## **RUSSIAN SCHOOL CARNAGE World traumatised**

DHAKA SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 5, 2004

#### REUTERS, London

Tragic, despicable, inhumane, cowardly, barbaric, evil, and astonishing -- the deaths of a hundred or more people including children in a siege in Russia sparked strong words for the hostage-takers from world leaders.

"This is yet another grim reminder of the lengths to which terrorists will go to threaten the civilized world," President Bush told a campaign rally in Wisconsin.

British Prime Minister Tony Blair wrote to Russian President Vladimir Putin saying: "It is hard to express my revulsion at the inhumanity of terrorists prepared to put children and their parents through such suffering.

Some analysts questioned Russian security forces' tactics in storming the school, though Moscow has said the move was forced on them when hostagetakers opened fire on fleeing children.

"I suspect that Putin's immediate concern will have been to be seen to be strong rather than be seen to be

negotiating," said Alex Standish, editor of Jane's Intelligence Digest. In a statement in the name of the presidency of the 25-nation EU, Dutch Foreign Minister Bernard Bot said all countries should work

together to prevent such tragedies. "But we also would like to know from the Russian authorities how this tragedy could have happened, he added.

World leaders focused on support and solidarity for Russia.

"Killing of these innocent people is an evil, despicable act of barbarism. The fact that many of them appear to have been young children murdered in cold blood is simply horrible." said the President of the

European Commission Romano Prodi. German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder said everyone in his country was "moved with sympathy" for the victims and their families.

"Here terrorists without conscience tried to reach political goals by murdering people," he said.

Egypt expressed its sympathy for the "friendly Russian people in this ordeal," while Israel's foreign minister called the events an "an intolerable criminal terror act." Italian Prime Minister Silvio

Berlusconi said the world was holding its breath as the siege unfolded "These are astonishing times, the level of insecurity is very high," he said. The fact that so many of the

victims were children provoked universal condemnation.

"Terrorism has shown one of its ugliest faces -- attacking children." said Polish Defence Minister Jerzy Szmaidzinski. "Canadians are outraged by

reports of the barbaric acts of terrorism today in North Ossetia, and by the unbelievable cruelty of hostagetakers firing on fleeing children, said Prime Minister Paul Martin.

UN Secretary General Kofi Annan said he was "horrified" to

learn that a large number of children and others had lost their lives or were injured.

Greece condemned what it called a "cowardly terrorist action." Spain said there was a "wave of concern" for the victims. Irish Foreign Minister Brian Cowen said his reaction was "horror and sad-

"It is regrettable that it did not prove possible to bring this crisis to a peaceful end," Cowen added.

Danish Foreign Minister Per Stig Moeller said it was "totally inhumane" to take children as hostages.

"It is unacceptable, incomprehensible, senseless," said UN Children's Fund Executive Director Carol Bellamy. "It is time to take stock, to take a long hard look at our world and how it is treating children If we don't respect the sanctity of childhood, then we have nothing.



Women light candles at a church in Vladikavkz, North Ossetia, yesterday. Rescuers pulled more bodies from the ruins of a school gym as Russia was plunged into mourning after a three-day hostage-taking ended in carnage in Beslan, with at least 322 dead, half of them children

### Pictures tell all in Russian papers AFP, Moscow

The Daily Star

The front page of one of Russia's most authoritative newspapers had no headline or story on its front page vesterday. Instead Izvestia showed a man with a pained look on his face rushing a girl to safety in his arms.

She was semi-naked and clutching on to his neck with a look of horror on her face. A militiamar stood solemnly in the background.

The photo spoke volumes --graphically underlining how many Russians were left speechless and terrified at events in school number one in Beslan that some in the Western media have already identified as Russia's September 11.

Izvestia is not known for being emotional. It is now a high-brow daily that was respected for its slightly liberal views in the Soviet era and lengthy political tracts in more recent times

But on Saturday, it also had a half-page photo of a seemingly unconscious girl on a stretcher over the caption: "I raised my head and saw that children were lying in a pool of blood and not moving.

27 more Pak

ministers take

oath of office

AFP, Islamabad

### Hurricane prompts mass evacuation **BBC ONLINE**

#### About 2.5 million Americans have been ordered to leave their homes along Florida's east coast in advance of the expected arrival of Hurricane Frances

The hurricane has already hit the Turks and Caicos Islands and continues to pound the islands of the Bahamas

It is expected to strike somewhere on the Florida coast on Saturday. Forecasters say the storm has weakened and slowed its progress, but it could yet strengthen again and a slower storm raises the poten-

tial for damage. At least 19 people died in Florida and 2,000 were forced into temporary shelter when Hurricane Charley hit the state last month.

On Friday, Hurricane Frances tore through the Bahamas' capital city, Nassau, killing one person on the island

on campaign trail



Indian Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran (R) and his Pakistani counterpart Riaz Khokhar (L) arrive for secretary level talks in New Delhi yesterday. Senior Indian and Pakistani officials began talks to finetune the agenda for today and tomorrow's first ministerial meeting in three years

## 'not insignificant'

## Delhi ready to talk to militants

#### AFP, New Delhi

Progress in ongoing peace talks with Pakistan has been "not insignificant" and the process can be sustained, Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said yesterday.

"We are a government that is only 100 days old and in this short period of time we have ... (com-pleted) the Composite Dialogue, Singh told his first media conference since taking office on May 22.

During ongoing meetings between Indian and Pakistani officials since March -- known as the composite Dialogue -- a raft of proposals have been drawn up on issues ranging from improving trade and cultural ties and combatting terrorism and drug trafficking to

over Kashmir The proposals were accepted on between Indian Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran and his Pakistan

counterpart, Riaz Khokhar, according to a joint statement issued after the talks.

Meanwhile, India's prime minister said yesterday his government was ready to talk to any militant group, including those in Kashmir, abandoning previous preconditions that the rebels must first disarm.

However Manmohan Singh added that he expected the militants to "eschew the path of violence."

"We are ... willing to talk to all elements in Kashmir who are not represented in the state assembly. Manmohan Singh told his first press conference since taking office on May 22.

## **Progress with Pakistan** Rebels planned attack, hid weapons in school basement earlier

Interfax

story.

#### AFP, Moscow

Guerrillas who took 1,000 hostages in a Russian school close to Chechnya for three days staged a well planned attack after first scouring the area and then disguising themselves as workers rebuilding a gym, officials said vesterday.

Russian newspapers and some politicians have questioned how a dozen guerrillas could take so many hostages and then stand up to hundreds of Russian troops during a grisly raid that lasted for more than six hours and killed more than 322 people.

The volatile Caucasus region is notorious for its tight road security caused by a decade of warfare in separatist Chechnya and flaring conflicts in other nearby multi-ethnic republics.

But the media is filled with reports of the road police letting just about anyone pass through for a bribe.

Pakistani President Pervez Mush The head of the North Ossetian arraf yesterday swore in another 27 security service said that he was ministers, three days after inducting certain now that the guerrillas had a 32-member cabinet headed by located their point of attack well in newly elected Prime Minister advance and did not simply rush in Shaukat Aziz. officials said. on the school on the first day of class on the spur of the moment.

PHOTO: AFP

One federal minister and 26 ministers of state took their oaths of "We found a large amount of office, they said. Portfolios of the ministers would

explosives and mines, and their number says that this attack was be announced later, the officials planned in advance," Valery said Andreyev was quoted as saying by Aziz, a key ally of Musharraf, was sworn in as prime minister last week

"The armaments were hidden on and won a parliamentary vote of the school grounds," he said. confidence that was boycotted by He gave no other details but the opposition.

other news reports fleshed out the He was chosen for the job after Zafarullah Jamali resigned in June They quoted an unnamed source in a transfer of power planned by

as saying that the militia first scouted Musharraf. out two other schools before settling Aziz, a former Citibank execuon School Number One -- the main one in Beslan -- because it was undergoing major reconstruction work over the summer

tive, entered politics as finance minister after Musharraf's 1999 coup and still retains the finance ministry

## World press mourns school siege victims Britain's Daily Telegraph noted.

#### AFP, Paris

Harrowing photographs of traumatised children fleeing their school at the brutal climax to a Russian hos-

"One war and many terrorist atrocities later, he seems further from his goal than ever," it charged in an editorial, while The

for Islamic terrorism"

dozens of civilian deaths.

France's Le Figaro newspaper

criticised what it called Russia's

"tradition of force," saying that in

Russia's recent history "not a single

hostage-taking had ended without

## 'Clinton has

#### strike against Hamas Kerry said at a rally in Newark, Ohio, a key battleground state. "It's time for us to have a president of the

Palestinians aiming for polls next year

Bush & Kerry trade jabs Israel launches missile

AFP, Gaza City

sive devices.

alties.

the Palestinian militant group.

the building, which was targeted in a

similar raid two months ago, was

severely damaged, although there

were no immediate reports of casu-

#### "What we have achieved in that time is not insignificant. It is our intention to carry forward the dialoque process." he said.

## steps towards resolving the dispute Saturday during talks in New Delhi

began a final two-month election sprint, with Bush touting his economic record and Kerry launching a fierce counter-attack on Republicans who "can't tell the truth."

President Bush and Democratic

rival John Kerry traded blows over

jobs and security Friday as they

**REUTERS,** New York

Bush, who opened up a significant 11-point lead on Kerry in a new Time poll, hailed a government report showing 144,000 US jobs were created in August and said "because we acted, our economy is arowing again.

"We've overcome a recession, corporate scandals, a terrorist attack," Bush told a roaring crowd of 20,000 supporters in West Allis, Wisconsin, the day after accepting the Republican nomination for a second White House term.

"Our economy is growing and it's getting stronger," Bush said.

But Kerry said the economy still had shed nearly 1 million jobs under Bush and he was "now certain to be the first president since the Great Depression to face re-election without creating a single job."

The Massachusetts senator came out swinging after a week of attacks on his character and record at the Republican convention, dismissing the criticism as "bitter and insulting.

"Every time they open their mouths they can't tell the truth,"

The Time magazine poll, taken over the last three days of the Republican convention, showed Bush leading Kerry 52 percent to 41 percent among likely voters and ranking ahead of him on issues like handling the economy, the Iraq war,

United States who can look you in

the eye and when he does, you

know you're being told the truth.

taxes and terrorism. Most polls heading into the convention had shown Bush and Kerry neck and neck, but Bush gaining ground and developing a significant advantage over Kerry on

issues like national security. Kerry said on Friday he would not allow Bush or Vice President Dick Cheney, who led a stinging assault on Kerry at the convention, to ques-

tion his fitness to serve. "I will not have my commitment to defending this country questioned by those who refused to serve when they had had a chance, and I will not have it questioned by those who misled this nation into war in Iraq,

the Vietnam veteran said. Neither Bush nor Cheney served in Vietnam. Bush was in the Texas Air National Guard and Cheney obtained five draft deferments. Both Bush and Kerry hit the road tants.

Commanders made the order in Israel pressed its threatened the villages of Jaba, Sandakumieh onslaught against Hamas yesterand Asafa Saturday morning. The day, launching an early morning air curfew was imposed in Hilat Adaher strike in the Gaza Strip and a major the previous day following clashes search operation in the northern between troops and stonethrowing West Bank following this week's protestors. deadly double suicide bombing by

All four villages are close to the town of Jenin, regarded by Israel as a militant bastion. Israeli helicopters swooped

down on the Maghazi refugee camp Troops were going house to in the central Gaza Strip overnight house looking for suspects. In Jaba, and launched a rocket at a home they surrounded a school. An incursion into the nearby village of suspected of being used by Hamas to manufacture weapons and explo-Yamun sparked a gunbattle between troops and armed mili-Palestinian security sources said tants.

In the Fara refugee camp, a Palestinian was seriously wounded by Israeli fire. In the town of Tubas, troops were greeted by stonethrowing protestors.

The Israeli military would only Israeli troops also slapped a curfew on four northern West Bank confirm it detained five Hamas activists in the West Bank overnight. villages and carried out a massive search operation for wanted mili-The whole territory has seen

intense military activity since Tuesday's deadly suicide bombings in the southern Israeli city of Beersheva by Hamas which killed

16 people, aside from the bombers from the Islamic militant movement. On the political front, the Palestinians said they were aiming to hold elections across the occupied territories in spring of next year.

"We hope to be able to hold general elections (presidential, parliamentary and municipal) next spring," the head of the central electoral commission, Ali Jarbawi, told reporters at Yasser Arafat's West Bank headquarters flanked by the Palestinian leader.

The two men then launched a voter registration driver, that Jarbawi said should last a month. A further three months would

then be necessary for the rest of the preparations, he added.

tage crisis dominated the world's front pages yesterday, with many slamming Moscow for failing to prevent a bloodbath

Some 250 people were killed, many of them children, and 700 injured, when Russian troops stormed a school in Beslan. North Ossetia where 1,000 hostages had been held leaders. by heavily-armed militants demanding independence for Chechnya.

The bulk of world coverage focused on the horror of the killings, with strong words for Russian President Vladimir Putin, criticising his botched handling of the siege and hardline stance on rebel Chechnya.

"Mother Russia's agony," read the headline in Britain's The Times. "Slaughter of the children", said The Daily Telegraph, while The Independent said simply "The blackest day", below a shot of a body being draped in a sheet.

Putin came to power as a strongman who would sort out Chechnya

multiple artery Independent warned that "the very worst response would be a punitive blockages' crackdown on Chechnva.'

"Dazed, shaken and bloodied," AFP, New York headlined the International Herald Tribune which warned in an editorial that Putin had no choice but to Former president Bill Clinton has

negotiate with Chechen separatist "multi-vessel coronary artery disease" but should recover well after "Unless he now opens a serious surgery next week, according to the negotiating channel with legitimate surgeon who advised the ex-Chechen leaders, the situation can president about his options after only get worse," the paper said. examining his heart.

"Carnage," headlined France's Clinton checked into a New York Liberation daily, which argued that hospital Friday and was awaiting heart bypass surgery after seeking "the master of the Kremlin has fallen medical help for chest pains and into a trap" and that Putin's hard line on Chechnya had "opened the way shortness of breath

Physician Anthony Pucillo administered an angiogram early Friday at Westchester Medical Center and the test, in which dye is injected into a patient's arteries showed that the fast-food loving former president has "multi-vessel coronary artery disease," Pucillo

told the New York Daily News.

PHOTO: AFF Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat registers for the forthcoming elections during the launching of a voter registration drive at his West Bank headquarters in Ramallah yesterday. The Palestinians are aiming to hold general elections in spring of next year.



to visit key swing states ahead of the long Labor Day holiday weekend, traditionally the kick off for political races.