



A car burns on a bridge near the road leading to Baghdad International Airport yesterday. US troops set this vehicle on fire after suspecting that it was carrying explosives. The incident occurred after a suicide car bomb smashed into a joint US and Iraqi National Guard convoy.

## No roll back of nuke plan: Musharraf

Islamabad will never give up Kashmir

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE, Islamabad

President Pervez Musharraf has asserted that Pakistan will not roll back its nuclear programme.

Speaking to officers and soldiers at the Garrison Darbar in Quetta on Saturday, Musharraf revealed that the Government had spent more money in the last three or four years improving its nuclear capability than during the last 30 years. Dawn newspaper reported yesterday.

Pakistan carried out nuclear tests in May 1998 days, after India stunned the world with a series of similar tests.

The international community had condemned both countries for barging into the exclusive nuclear club uninvited and has been pressing both to roll back their nuclear programmes. Both have refused to yield to global sanctions.

Musharraf said that all requirements were being met for making the country secure and stable, adding that a strategy for the next 15

years had been chalked out to augment the country's defence.

Pakistan's main problem on defence and security fronts was not external threats, but internal challenges like terrorism, he said.

Speaking about the steps being taken to eliminate terrorism, he said the Government had been successful in arresting "90 per cent" of terrorists operating in the country.

AP adds: Pakistan's president confirmed Saturday that he'll meet with India's new premier in New York later this month, but vowed that Pakistan would not give up Kashmir -- a cause of lingering tension in the region, a local news agency reported.

The planned talks between President Gen. Pervez Musharraf and India's Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on the sidelines of the annual UN General Assembly session Sept. 21-22 will be the first between the leaders of the neighboring rivals since Singh took office in May.

## N Korean blast area near missile base

No indication of nuke test

REUTERS, Seoul

North Korea's huge blast on Sept. 9 hit a mountainous area close to an underground missile base that was listed as a possible uranium enrichment site, a disarmament think-tank said.

South Korean and US officials have said the explosion at Kimhyongjik county near North Korea's border with China was unlikely to have been a nuclear weapons test, although no definitive explanation has been put forth.

Kimhyongjik county is home to the Yongjori missile base, an underground facility thought to hold missiles and launchers, according to the Nuclear Threat Initiative (NTI) database.

The county lies in Ryanggang province, a remote and sparsely populated region which Western defense experts believe houses key

military sites. It is off-limits to outsiders, including aid agencies. South Korea's Chosun Ilbo newspaper said the blast site was 6 miles southwest of the Yongjori missile base and 18 miles from the China frontier. The explosion took place 4,900 feet above sea level, it said.

Kimhyongjik county is named after leader Kim Jong-il's grandfather and sits right on the border with China.

Yongjori base, which lies about 12 miles from the Chinese border, consists of a dozen tunnels for storing, deploying and launching medium-range missiles that are capable of hitting Japan, NTI said.

The NTI Web site (<http://nti.org>), which lists known or suspected weapons sites in North Korea and other countries, cites testimony by a North Korean defector as saying 12 tunnels at the base could hold 36 missiles. The base was completed in recent years, it said.

The base, run by the missile division of North Korea's National Defense Commission, is one of three suspected locations of North Korean plants for enriching uranium, the NTI said.

"It is unclear whether US officials have identified a separate facility in Yongjori dedicated to uranium enrichment, or if the site previously identified as a missile base is a uranium enrichment facility instead," says the NTI Web site.

North Korea's suspected secret program to enrich uranium for weapons was the catalyst for a two-year diplomatic standoff with the United States and regional powers. North Korea denies it has a program to enrich uranium.

A Western diplomat in Seoul said it was too early to draw a conclusion on the blast, but suggested several possibilities.

## 'Iran may join nuke club by 2007'

AFP, Vienna

Iran could join the small club of nuclear-armed nations by 2007, or sooner if it is secretly developing weapons despite denials, analysts say.

The five major powers with nuclear arsenals -- the United States, Russia, China, Great Britain and France -- are all signatories of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, which binds them to guarantees monitored by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

India and Pakistan, which have both openly tested nuclear bombs, and Israel, which is thought by experts to have nuclear weapons as well, are not subject to IAEA inspections because they have not signed the treaty.

Analysts remain divided as to whether North Korea's efforts to develop nuclear weapons have yielded concrete results.

Iran claims that its nuclear programme is entirely oriented towards generating energy and says it is willing to accept inspections, but the United States in particular has asserted that Iran is trying

to buy time to build a bomb and has demanded that it give up all its uranium enrichment activities.

The United States would like the IAEA to refer the case of Iran's suspected nuclear weapons programme to the UN Security Council for possible sanctions.

Benn Tennerbaum, an expert at the Federation of American Scientists, thinks that "it will take several years" for Iran to develop a bomb if they only have the gas centrifuge programme that is known to be in place. Even if it is fairly well monitored, he said, "they still have the ability to divert some material," in which case it would take "a few years" to gather enough high-grade uranium to make a bomb.

"If they have a separate program, they would probably do it very quickly," he added, noting that such a program would not be subject to inspection.

"The IAEA is not a judge of the Non-Proliferation Treaty," explained Mark Gwozdecky, an IAEA spokesman. "We monitor countries' activities -- if there are compliance issues, they are referred to the UN Security Council," he added.

## 7 killed in clashes after Afghan Governor ousted

REUTERS, Herat

At least seven supporters of the ousted governor of Herat in western Afghanistan were killed Sunday and 20 wounded in clashes with US troops and police after mobs burned UN offices, doctors said.

Protests erupted after President Hamid Karzai replaced powerful regional commander Ismail Khan as Herat governor on Saturday.

"I have so far received seven bodies of protesters," said the doctor at Herat's central hospital, who did not want to be identified. A Reuters cameraman at the hospital saw at least 20 people being treated for gunshot injuries.

"I was protesting in front of the UN office when the Americans shot me in the leg," one of the wounded, Abdul Hamed, told Reuters.

The replacement of the governor in Herat and the restive neighboring province of Ghor came after Karzai launched his manifesto for Oct. 9 presidential elections with a pledge to rein in regional warlords.

The clashes will be a concern for President Bush, who is hoping a peaceful Afghan election will offset violence from Iraq and provide a filip for his own re-election chances in November.

## Cops foil VHP plan to raze Muslim tomb

500 activists detained

PTI, Mumbai

Nearly 500 VHP activists were on Sunday detained and 13 vehicles seized in view of the outfit's threat to raze the tomb of a 17th century Mughal General, Afzal Khan, near Pratapgah fort, which is 24km from Mahabaleshwar.

The VHP workers proceeding to Pratapgah from various parts of the state have been detained and nearly 13 vehicles seized so far, police sources said adding that the situation was under control.

Heavy security was being maintained in and around Pratapgah and unlawful assembly has been banned under section 144 of the IPC in the area in view of the VHP's rally at Pachwad near the fort.

VHP Maharashtra unit Secretary Vyankatesh Abdeo, who is present at Pachwad, said over telephone that despite police "suppressing" their agitation, nearly 10,000 VHP workers have managed to reach the site and has resorted to a "peaceful road blockade."

Abdeo also claimed that police has detained nearly 10,000 VHP activists. However, it could not be

confirmed from the authorities.

VHP and like-minded organisations have threatened to demolish the structure accusing that beautification of the tomb was nothing, but "glorification" of Afzal Khan.

Afzal Khan had attempted to assassinate Chhatrapati Shivaji on the foothills of Pratapgah fort where he had come to hold peace talks with him. However, Shivaji had then killed the general.

Meanwhile, 13 persons, from Bhiwandi in neighbouring Thane district, who were proceeding towards Pratapgah, were detained at Mahad bus stand, they said.

VHP's district office bearer Prashant Ramkrishna Polkam and 33 others were detained at Pali when they were going towards Pratapgah while 50 persons were detained by Panvel police, they said.

The prohibitory orders were lifted from 12 noon to 1 pm.

The police said that the agitators were allowed to gather at Loharmal village on NH17 to conduct a public meeting.



Family members of victims of the 9/11 terrorist attacks pay respect at Ground Zero on Saturday in New York City. Americans recalled the horror of the September 11, 2001 attacks three years ago in ceremonies shadowed by fresh terrorist taunts, the mounting US death toll in Iraq and a divisive presidential election.

## 'US manipulated 9/11 as pretext for invasions on Islamic nations'

ANI, Karachi

The 9/11 air attacks were a pre-planned drama staged by the US itself in order to manipulate an excuse for invading Muslim countries, MMA leader and senator Ghafoor Ahmed has claimed.

Ghafoor said this while addressing a protest demonstration held Saturday. The protest call was given by the MMA to mark the third anniversary of the twin towers incident as a "protest day" against the US.

The demonstration was reportedly held in connection with the continued intervention, aggression and invasion by the US in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Palestine. The News reported Sunday.

Criticising the US' "unnecessary interference in Pakistan's internal affairs", the demonstrators carried placards and banners with slogans "War against terrorism, or blood for oil?" and "Twin Towers blast a drama".

They said that it was the US who was a global terrorist, and not Islam.

The protesters also condemned the recent attacks on Wana. Ghafoor said that the Pakistan government had crossed the limits of genocide at the behest of US for which the nation will never ever forgive the rulers.

## HK residents votes in close polls

REUTERS, Hong Kong

Hong Kong residents voted yesterday in a legislative election seen as a referendum on greater democracy and a test of popularity for China's communist rulers in the former British colony.

In the most extensive exercise in democracy in China, polls opened at 7.30 a.m. with a record 3.2 million voters registered to take part in elections for the 60 seats in its Legislative Council. Polls close at 10.30 p.m. and initial results are expected early on Monday.

An early high turnout could boost the democratic camp in its goal of strong gains over pro-Beijing politicians although the complicated proportional representation system for the 30 directly elected seats in the chamber makes it difficult for any group to win a majority.

"I hope they will fight for what I want, which is universal suffrage," said postgraduate student Kim Yip-lo, 30, who voted for a democratic candidate.



Hong Kong's Financial Secretary Henry Tang (R) and his wife casts their votes in the Legislative Council Election in Hong Kong yesterday. Voter turnout was at record levels in Hong Kong elections yesterday, pollsters said of polls considered a test of feeling towards the city's rulers in Beijing after a year of political strife in this former British colony.

## Militants raid security camp in Kashmir

3 cops, 2 rebels killed

AP, Srinagar

Suspected Kashmiri militants attacked a paramilitary camp in the Indian-controlled part of Kashmir, setting off a night-long gunfight that left three security officers and two attackers dead, officials said yesterday.

At least seven men of the Central Reserve Police Force were also wounded in the attack on their camp in Srinagar, the summer capital of Jammu-Kashmir state, said Ranjit Sinha, an inspector general of the force.

More than 30 soldiers were in the camp set up in a hotel, Sinha said.

Three militants barged into the building Saturday night after detonating a hand grenade at its entrance, he said. The gunfight ended Sunday after commandoes cordoned off the building and shot dead two of the attackers. The third escaped, Sinha said.

Three security officers were also killed, he said.

He said commandoes waited

until dawn to storm the building because it was in a crowded neighborhood and there could have been civilian casualties if the fighting intensified during the night. Adjacent building were also damaged as the militants set off several grenades during the battle, he said.

An unidentified person called Zee News television's office in Srinagar and claimed that the Al-Mansurian rebel group carried out the assault.

Hours before the assault, a civilian was killed and 15 others, including three paramilitary soldiers, were wounded when suspected militants hurled a grenade at a Border Security Force patrol in the town of Kupwara, about 100km northwest of Srinagar.

Violence has surged in recent weeks in the Indian-controlled portion of Kashmir, where more than a dozen rebel groups have been fighting security forces for the Muslim-majority territory's independence from predominantly Hindu India, or its merger with mostly Muslim Pakistan.

## Lanka marks peace talks anniversary

AFP, Colombo

Norway is set to make a fresh bid to salvage Sri Lanka's peace process two years after kicking off internationally-backed negotiations with hopes of ending three decades of ethnic bloodshed.

In contrast to the highly publicised launch of talks between Colombo and Tiger rebels at the Sattahip naval base in Thailand on September 16, 2002, peace broker Norway this time round is launching a quiet bid to save the country from returning to war.

Norway's peace envoy Erik Solheim is due here Monday on a five-day visit aimed at jump-starting the stalled face-to-face discussions, diplomats said.

On the eve of his visit, local residents in the island's east reported finding two dead bodies of suspected militants killed in a confrontation with the main Tamil Tiger group last week, officials said.

## Pak forces attack militant hideouts

REUTERS, Wana

Up to ten people were killed in fierce fighting between Pakistani security forces and al-Qaeda-linked fighters Sunday, taking the death toll to over 70 in one of the deadliest actions against the militants.

Military spokesman Major-General Shaukat Sultan said "six to eight" people were killed in clashes with the security forces in the rugged South Waziristan tribal region near Afghan border where more than 60 militants died last week.

He said the security forces also suffered a "few" casualties but declined to provide details.

An unnamed government official said two soldiers were killed and two others were wounded in the latest fighting.

Witnesses said the security forces backed by helicopter gunships and artillery attacked suspected hideouts of the militants in the mountains surrounding Laddha and nearby areas in South Waziristan. told Reuters by telephone.

## Ivan intensifies off Jamaica: 59 killed

AP, Bull Bay

Hurricane Ivan strengthened to a rare Category 5 storm capable of catastrophic damage, leaving Jamaica and aiming for the Cayman Islands with winds reaching 165 mph, the US National Hurricane Center said Saturday. Ivan has killed 59 people across the Caribbean so far this week, including 34 in Grenada and 14 in Jamaica.

Millions more people are in its path, with Ivan projected to go between the Cayman Islands, make a direct hit on Cuba and then either move into the Gulf of Mexico or hit South Florida.

"If God doesn't help us, I think this is going to be extremely tragic," said Maria del Carmen Boza, a 65-year-old resident of Cojimar, a seaside community in Cuba once frequented by Ernest Hemingway. "All of Cuba is worried. This looks

like it's going to be really dangerous."

President Fidel Castro sought to assuage such concerns.

"This country is prepared to face this hurricane," Castro said Saturday night on state television, saying his government had mobilised to save lives and property.

A Category 5 storm is the most powerful, with winds of at least 155 mph and a storm surge of at least 18 feet.

At 2 a.m. EDT Sunday, Ivan was centered about 90 miles southeast of Grand Cayman and was moving west-northwest at near 8 mph. It was still packing 165 mph winds. Meteorologists expected it would be near or over the Cayman Islands on Sunday.

The storm could dump up to 1 foot of rain, possibly causing flash floods and mud slides, the Hurricane Center said.