

## 'Norway is misleading Europe about Tigers'

Colombo may seek foreign help to probe Kadirgamar killing

AFP, New Delhi

Sri Lanka's new foreign minister has accused the island's peacebroker Norway of misleading European nations about the "terrorist" nature of the Tamil Tiger rebels, a report said yesterday.

Anura Bandaranaike, named after his predecessor's slaying which Colombo has blamed on the Tigers, urged India to be "very emphatic to the free world that this (the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam-LTTE) is a terrorist organisation."

Colombo would like India "to try to influence the Europeans in particular who have been misled by Norwegians... away from the LTTE,"

he told The Hindu newspaper.

"The Europeans have been misinformed deliberately (about the Tigers)... the role of Norway is under severe criticism in Sri Lanka," Bandaranaike said.

Norway was asked by Sri Lanka in 2000 to act as a peacebroker to end the island's three-decade-old ethnic conflict that has claimed 60,000 lives. But Sri Lankan critics have regularly accused it of bias toward the rebels.

The Tigers "must feel the heat for what they have done," said Bandaranaike, who spoke during a two-day visit to India late last week.

The Sri Lankan government has accused the Tigers of the August 12 killing of Lakshman Kadirgamar, an

ethnic Tamil who was a fierce critic of the rebels. The group has denied responsibility.

Bandaranaike, brother of Sri Lankan President President Chandrika Kumaratunga, said he would like European nations to take action against such Tiger activities as fund-raising.

Colombo has repeatedly asked India to take a more hands-on role in the peace process but Bandaranaike's comments marked the first time that Sri Lanka has spelt out a role it would like New Delhi to play.

Meanwhile, Sri Lankan police may seek foreign expertise to track down the assassins of foreign minister Lakshman Kadirgamar following

the arrest of two suspects, police chief Chandra Fernando said yesterday.

Forensic experts may require the help of foreign experts, Fernando said adding that evidence so far suggested that the August 12 killing was the work of Tamil Tiger rebels.

"As the investigation progresses and our teams feel they need help, we will be calling for assistance from foreign experts," Fernando told AFP. "That is an option available to our investigators."

Official sources said several countries had offered help but there was no formal word from the investigators about seeking immediate external assistance.



PHOTO: AFP

Pakistani High Commissioner to India Aziz Ahmed Khan (2R), looks on as Indian Home Secretary V.K. Duggal (L) shakes hands with Pakistani Home Secretary Syed Kamal Shah prior to a meeting in New Delhi yesterday. Top Indian and Pakistani officials discussed drug trafficking and terrorism and reviewed the status of nationals jailed in each other's countries during talks.

## Unsecured 'dirty bomb' material found in Asia

AFP, Sydney

Australian nuclear experts working to prevent a "dirty bomb" attack by terrorists have found large unsecured sources of dangerous radioactive material in southeast Asia, a report said yesterday.

A team from the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation (ANSTO) discovered enough loose material to contaminate the heart of a major city, the Australian newspaper reported.

At one site a "substantial" piece of cobalt used for cancer therapy had been found abandoned after a radiation centre was closed.

A conventional bomb wrapped around a small stick of cobalt could contaminate a large area of a city, dramatically boost cancer rates and force residents out for decades, scientists say.

"There are two countries where we have located quite large sources," ANSTO's chief of operations, Ron Cameron, told the paper. He declined to identify the countries until the material had been properly secured.

## Iraq charter ready for referendum

AFP, Baghdad

US President George W. Bush downplayed Sunni Arab objections to Iraq's draft constitution, which President Jalal Talabani said was ready for an October 15 referendum.

"The draft constitution is ready and will be presented to the Iraqi people, who are known for their intelligence, to give their verdict on October 15," Talabani told reporters at a ceremony to mark the end of the drafting process.

"There are objections from our Sunni Arab brothers ... but nobody can claim that they represent the whole spectrum of Sunni Arabs," said the president, who is a Kurd. "If the nation rejects it, we will write another one."

Bush hailed the draft constitution, calling it "an inspiration" for supporters of democracy.

"This is a document of which the Iraqis, and the rest of the world, can be proud," Bush told reporters from his Texas ranch.

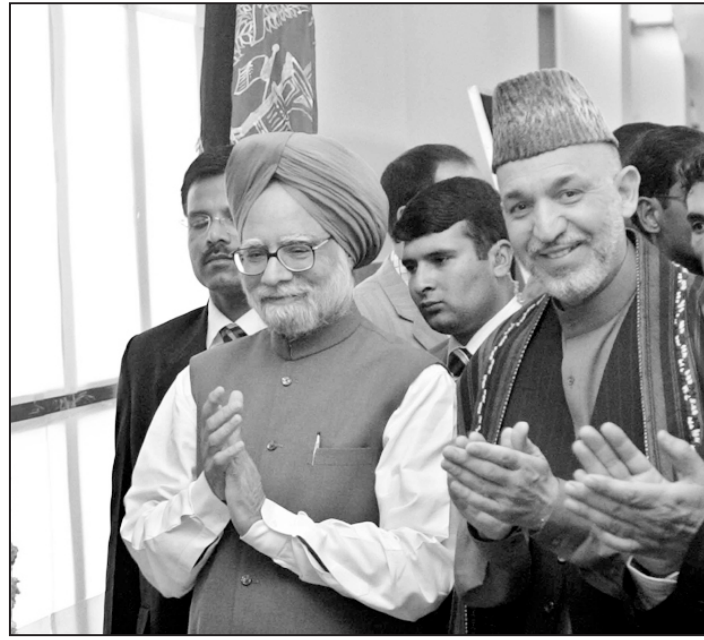


PHOTO: AFP

Afghan President Hamid Karzai (R) and Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh (R) attend the inauguration of Habibia High School in Kabul Sunday. Singh became the first Indian premier to visit Afghanistan in nearly three decades, pledging to battle terrorism in talks with Karzai amid rising violence in the war-battered country.

## Manmohan offers Kabul security help

REUTERS, Kabul

Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, in Afghanistan to rekindle traditionally warm ties, said yesterday that India was ready to help ensure Afghanistan never again becomes a haven for terrorism.

Singh, speaking at a ceremony to unveil the foundation stone for a new Afghan parliament building with Indian help, said democracies had to work together to deal with global terrorism.

"We are ready to work with the government and people of Afghanistan to ensure that Afghanistan will never again be a haven for, or become a haven for, terrorists," Singh said.

Afghanistan's former Taliban rulers let Osama bin Laden run al-Qaeda training camps in Afghanistan. US forces invaded in late 2001 after the Taliban refused to

give up bin Laden, wanted for the Sept. 11 attacks.

"Open societies, whether old or young, are equally threatened today by the rise of global terrorism," Singh said.

"Afghanistan has a unique position in this alliance of democracies that are fighting this menace," he said.

India is among Afghanistan's top aid donor nations and has committed aid of about \$500 million. Singh pledged another \$50 million on Sunday.

India has not been giving the government of President Hamid Karzai military assistance -- the United States is training the new Afghan army -- but it is involved in training police and diplomats.

Afghanistan is holding parliamentary and provincial elections next month, almost a year after Karzai won a five-year term.

## Bhutan to block entry of fleeing Indian rebels

AFP, Guwahati

Bhutan has assured India that it will not allow separatist rebels fleeing a weekend crackdown in India's restive northeast to find refuge in the remote Himalayan kingdom, an official said yesterday.

"We shall render all possible help in preventing militants from India's northeast entering our territory and also uprooting any rebel bases, although there are no camps right now inside our kingdom," said Sonam Dawa, the district magistrate of Bhutan's Serpong district bordering India's Assam state.

Dawa was leading a high-level team of Bhutanese civil and army officials to Assam's western district of Kokrajhar to discuss reports of Assamese rebels trying to set up

bases in Bhutan once again.

"We are keeping a close watch on the border area," Dawa told reporters.

Indian intelligence officials said militants from the outlawed United Liberation Front of Assam (Ulfa) were fleeing their bases in the northeastern state of Arunachal Pradesh after Indian soldiers launched an operation at the weekend to evict them. The Ulfa, a powerful militant group, has been fighting for an independent Assamese homeland since 1979.

An Indian army commander said at least six Ulfa rebels were killed in the offensive and five more were arrested while trying to flee.

The Ulfa shifted its base to Arunachal Pradesh after Bhutan in December 2003 evicted hundreds of Assamese rebels including Ulfa in a

military offensive in dense jungles that lasted for nearly a month.

More than 30 well-entrenched rebel camps were smashed and dozens of militants killed in the operation.

Some 100 Ulfa rebels are believed to be located in Arunachal Pradesh, police said.

"We are going to break the militant camps and shelters and the operation will continue till we are satisfied," Arunachal Pradesh police chief Amod Kant told AFP by telephone from the state capital Itanagar.

Bhutan shares a 380-kilometre (236-mile) unfenced border with two Indian states, Assam and West Bengal.



Atamnia Yachine

LONDON BOMBINGS

## Thai police say no proof yet of Algerian's link

AFP, Bangkok

Thai police said yesterday there is no proof yet that an Algerian wanted by British authorities is linked with the deadly July bombings in London. Immigration Police Major General Suwat Thamrongrisukul confirmed Britain had applied for the extradition of Atamnia Yachine, 33, who was arrested in Bangkok last week in possession of 180 fake passports.

"They may have suspicions about him but at the moment they cannot link him (with the bomb plot)," he said at a press conference where Yachine was paraded in front of the media.

"They will do further investigation," he said, adding that he had met earlier Monday with representatives from Britain's Scotland Yard.

## Jakarta ups terror vigilance

Asia-Europe Editors Forum meet begins

THE JAKARTA POST/ ANN, Jakarta

Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono has ordered his top security officers to heighten alert against possible terrorist attacks in Indonesia, saying that domestic terrorist cells might be planning another strike soon.

The President summoned the chief security minister Adm (ret) A.S. Widodo and the chief of the National Intelligence Chief (BIN) Syamsir Siregar on Sunday night, ordering them to take every precaution against a possible terrorist attack.

Although the last terrorist attack in Indonesia happened in September last year, Indonesia would not let its guards down, he told the gathering of the Asia-Europe Editors Forum at the Dharmawangsa Hotel in Jakarta Sunday.

"We know that the terrorist cells are still active. They are still hiding, recruiting, networking, trying to find new funding source, and even planning," he said, adding that the authorities are focusing their work on locating two Malaysians bombmakers believed to be tied to the series of bombings in Indonesia

in the past three years.

The two-day forum of about 40 top editors from the two regions is being jointly organised by the Konrad Adenauer Foundation's Singapore office and The Jakarta Post.

Indonesia has been at the receiving end of several deadly terrorist attacks, including among them the October 2002 bombing of two Bali night clubs that killed many tourists, the August 2003 attack at the J.W. Marriott Hotel in Jakarta and the car bomb attack outside the Australian embassy in Jakarta in September last year.

## Mumbai bldg collapse kills 6

AFP, Mumbai

Hundreds of families will be urgently moved from around 30 dilapidated buildings in flood-damaged Mumbai, a top official said yesterday, hours after a three-storey apartment block collapsed and killed six people.

"There are at least 28 to 29 extremely dangerous buildings where 900 families reside which will have to be vacated definitely in the next seven days," said Vilasrao Deshmukh, chief minister of Maharashtra state of which Mumbai is the capital.

## Talabani to oppose Saddam's execution

REUTERS, Dubai

Iraqi President Jalal Talabani said on Sunday he would not sign a death sentence for Saddam Hussein if the former leader was convicted and said he would resign if the sentence was passed.

Talabani, who opposes the death penalty on principle, said he expected the former leader to be convicted but it was not clear if he might let a deputy sign a death sentence on his behalf.

"When the death sentence is given to me, I will not sign it on principle ... and if it does pass, I will relieve myself of my post," he told Al Arabiya television.

## Solana leads ME peace drive after Gaza pullout

AFP, Jerusalem

EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana was meeting Israeli and Palestinian leaders yesterday as the international community tried to breathe life back into the peace process after the historic pullout from Gaza.

The first evacuation of Jewish settlers from the occupied Palestinian territory, which was wrapped up last week, has raised hopes of a new chapter for the Middle East after five years of bloodshed.

But a suicide bombing in Israel on Sunday, apparently to avenge the killing of five Palestinian militants by

Israeli troops last week, served as a sharp reminder of the scale of the task ahead.

Solana's tour coincides with the arrival of the head of the Egyptian intelligence services, Omar Suleiman, who is expected to urge militant groups to continue adhering to a truce agreement brokered in Cairo.

The top European diplomat on Monday continued a round of meetings with Israeli officials, including Defence Minister Shaul Mofaz and Deputy Prime Minister Shimon Peres.

He was later to meet Palestinian

leader Mahmud Abbas in Gaza City and prime minister Ahmed Qorei on Tuesday.

The European Union, along with the United States, United Nations and Russia, is one of the sponsors of the roadmap which targets the creation of an independent Palestinian state alongside a secure Israel.

The blueprint has made next to no progress since it was endorsed by the Israelis and Palestinians in 2003 amid continuing violence, prompting Israel to come up with its unilateral plan to withdraw from the Gaza Strip.

## Hurricane hits US islands

AFP, New Orleans

Hurricane Katrina claimed its first victims in Louisiana early yesterday as it slammed into barrier islands while dumping torrential rain on a wide swath of the US Gulf of Mexico coast and threatened more death and massive destruction.

The hurricane made its first landfall as its northern eye crossed the coast near Grand Isle, one of Louisiana's barrier islands, at about 1000 GMT, said Martin Nelson, an official with the National Hurricane Centre.

"We may have a second landfall later on," Nelson said in a brief telephone interview.

Although slightly weaker than on Sunday, the monster storm has already forced hundreds of thousands of residents from New Orleans to Biloxi, Mississippi, to flee and seek refuge on higher ground.

An estimated 80 percent of New Orleans residents have left the low-lying city, according to local officials. But for three elderly people, evacuation from New Orleans to Baton Rouge proved fatal, officials said.

State police spokesman Markus Smith said the people were "indirect" victims of the storm, which has been downgraded to category four from the highest level of five but is still packing a powerful punch.

"It may have been dehydration-related," Smith said in a telephone interview.

He explained that Louisiana State Police views natural disaster casualties as direct when they are killed by falling trees and downed power lines or die as a result of flooding or storm surges.

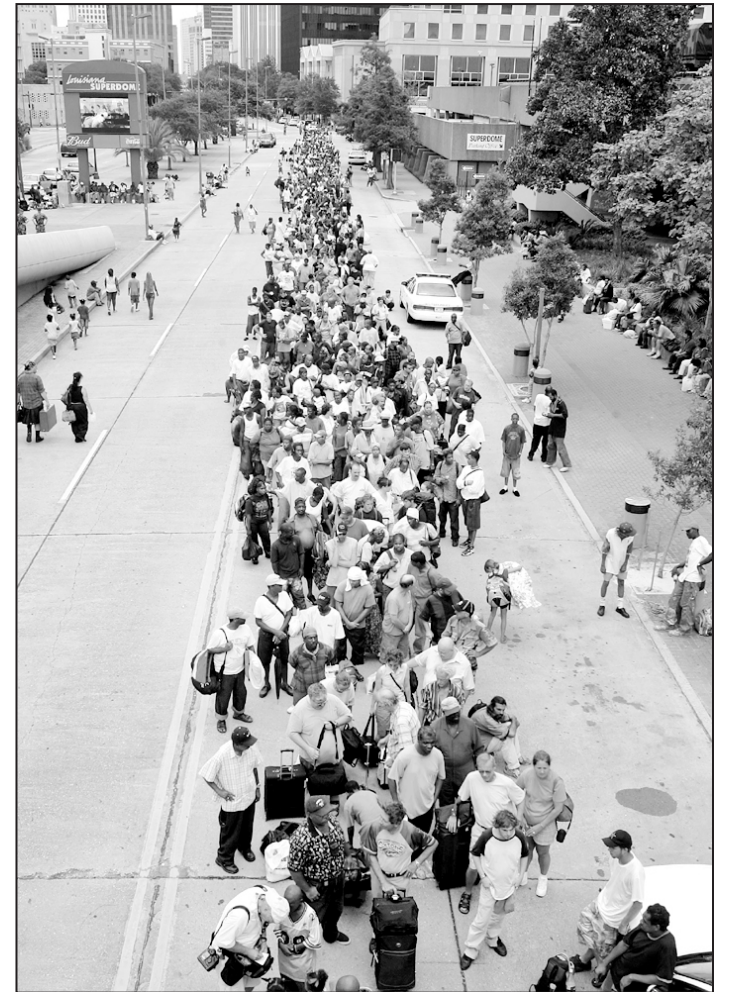


PHOTO: AFP

Residents wait in line to enter the Superdome which is being used as an emergency shelter before the arrival of Hurricane Katrina Sunday in New Orleans, Louisiana. Hurricane Katrina has sustained winds of 175 mph and made landfall in the Gulf Coast yesterday.