

# Iraq war, tsunami biggest events of 2005

AFP, London

The ongoing bloodshed Iraq and the devastating Indian Ocean tsunami were seen as the main global events of 2005, according to a poll published yesterday.

The survey of nearly 32,500 people in 27 countries also ranked the deadly US hurricanes and the death of Pope John Paul II as the incidents most likely to be remembered by history.

"Global citizens see 2005 mainly as a year of natural and man-made disasters," said Doug Miller, of the Canadian pollsters GlobeScan, which conducted the research for the BBC World Service.

The poll asked people what historians of the future would consider to be the most important event of global significance over the past 12 months.

The ongoing violence in Iraq, triggered by the US-led war in March 2003, was named by 15 percent of those questioned.

Some 43 percent of Iraqis cited the war, in contrast to just nine percent of people in Britain -- one of the countries that has deployed troops to Iraq.

While the tsunami struck on December 26, last year, it was still considered the one of the most significant events of 2005, drawing 15 percent of answers.

More than 220,000 people were killed and the lives of millions more were altered forever by the giant waves, unleashed by one of the world's largest-ever earthquakes which struck off the Indonesian island of Sumatra.

Respondents in the Asia-Pacific in particular regarded the tsunami as the most important event. It was named by

57 percent of people polled in Sri Lanka and 31 percent of Indonesians.

Katrina and Rita, the US hurricanes that devastated the US Gulf Coast in August and September, came in third, cited by nine percent of respondents overall.

But the percentage of people in the United States to name the hurricanes -- 15 percent -- was less than some other countries. Eighteen percent of respondents in both Afghanistan and Argentina cited the storms.

In fourth place, came the death of Pope John Paul II on April 2 and the inauguration of Pope Benedict XVI, attracting six percent of all answers.

The London bombings on July 7 that left 56 people dead, including four presumed suicide bombers, was regarded by four percent of people as the most significant event of the year.

# Pak 'Taliban' gain sway in tribal region

REUTERS, Islamabad

Pakistani followers of Afghanistan's Taliban have gained sway in a sensitive border area where they have been killing their opponents with impunity despite the heavy presence of government forces.

The word of the militants, who call themselves Taliban, has virtually become law in parts of the semi-autonomous North Waziristan tribal

area while the military appears loathe to intervene.

"The situation is no longer under their control," Rahimullah Yusufzai, a prominent journalist and expert on the region, said of the Pakistani army.

The government had "totally abdicated" its authority in North Waziristan, he said.

"It seems it's Taliban raj (rule) there."

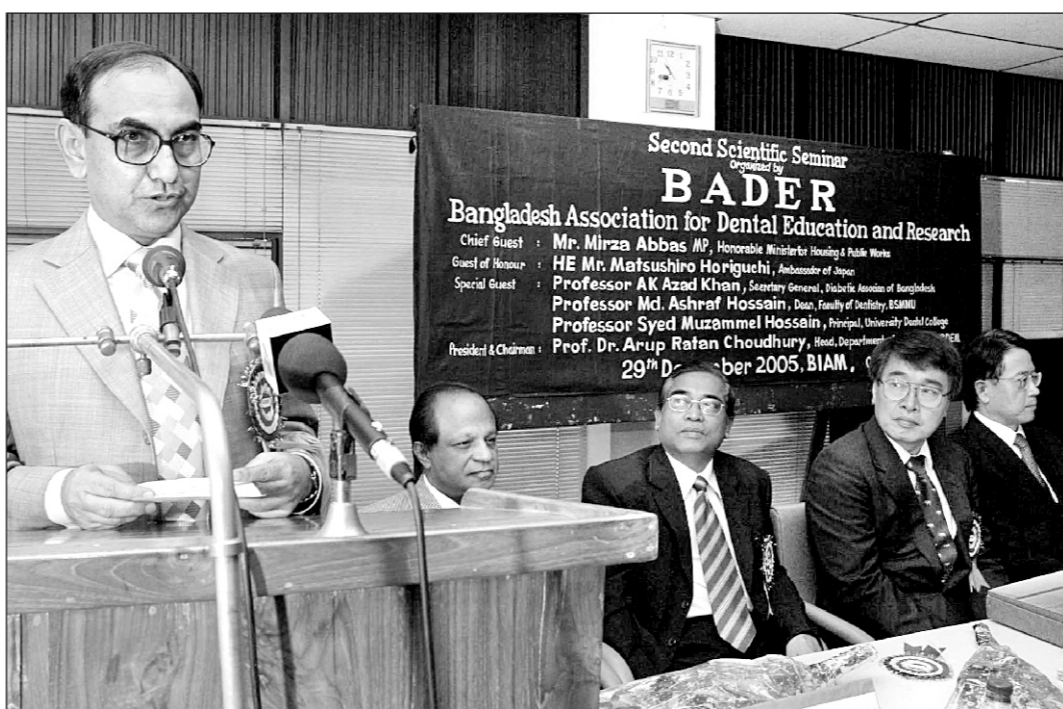
Waziristan is part of Pakistan's tribal belt that stretches through rugged mountains and deserts along the Afghan border.

Many al-Qaeda and Afghan Taliban members fled to the remote region from Afghanistan after US-led forces ousted the Taliban in late 2001 and were given shelter by militants from the ethnic Pashtun tribes that inhabit both sides of the border.

The army launched an offensive to clear foreign militants from the region two years ago and hundreds of people -- militants and government troops -- have been killed.

The latest violence follows a Dec. 1 blast in a house near the region's main town, Miranshah, where officials said an al-Qaeda commander, Abu Hamza Rabia, and four others were killed.

Although Rabia's body was not found, authorities say he died when explosives at his hideout detonated accidentally. Villagers said the blast was caused by a missile from an aircraft, possibly a US drone.



Housing and Public Works Minister Mirza Abbas speaks at the inaugural ceremony of the 2nd scientific seminar of Bangladesh Association of Dental Education and Research in the city on Thursday. Sitting from left are Prof Md Ashraf Hossain, Prof Syed Muzammel Hossain, Prof Shuichi Takinami and Japanese Ambassador Matsushiro Horiguchi.

## Security threat forces US embassy closure in KL

AFP, Kuala Lumpur

The United States embassy in the Malaysian capital was shut down yesterday due to an unspecified security threat, and the police presence around the building was beefed up, officials said.

"The embassy will close effective today ... until further notice due to a security threat to the embassy," the embassy said in a statement.

US embassy spokeswoman Kathryn Taylor said the mission, which is on a main thoroughfare in the heart of Kuala Lumpur, was closed at 11:40 am (0340 GMT) but would not specify the nature of the threat.

"Unfortunately I can't say at this time because it's something we're actively looking to," she said.

"The information applies specifically to the US embassy and does not apply to US citizens or private US interests in Malaysia as far as we're aware."

## Seminar on dental health

Bangladesh Association of Dental Education and Research (BADER) organised its 2nd Scientific Seminar on Dental Health at BIAM auditorium in the city on Thursday, says a press release.

Speaking as chief guest, Minister for Housing and Public Works Mirza Abbas laid emphasis on improving the quality of dental treatment in Bangladesh.

Ambassador of Japan Matsushiro Horiguchi said Japan government is ready to provide technical support for the skill development of dental professionals in the country.

Secretary General of BADER Dr Mahfuzul Haq Khan said they are going to launch short course on Dental Management of Diabetic patients for the rural dentists from next year.

Prof AK Azad Khan said Birdem is going to start a private dental college very soon.

A 17-member Japanese delegation attended the programme while Prof Md Ashraf Hossain, Prof Syed Muzammel Hossain, Prof Arup Ratan Chowdhury and Prof Shuichi Takinami spoke on the occasion.

