

# Pakistanis protest missile attack

AP, Peshawar, Pakistan

Chanting "Death to America," Islamic groups held nationwide protests Sunday as anger mounted over a purported CIA airstrike that Pakistan says killed innocent civilians instead of the apparent target - al-Qaeda's No. 2 leader.

Meanwhile, a newspaper reported that the mission was launched on intelligence that Ayman al-Zawahri had been invited to dinner that night in one of three houses leveled by the attack on Damadola, a village near the Afghan border.

Islamabad -- which insists it does not allow the 20,000 US soldiers in Afghanistan to cross the border in the hunt for Taliban or al-Qaida fighters -- has condemned the strike. The Pakistanis have shown increasing frustration over a recent series of suspected U.S. attacks along the frontier aimed at Islamic militants.

Pakistani officials say innocent people were among the 17 men, women and children killed in Friday's attack and al-Zawahri, Osama bin Laden's top lieutenant, was not even there.

Survivors in Damadola, an ethnic Pashtun hamlet about four miles from the border with Afghanistan, also denied militants were there, but some news reports quoted unidentified Pakistani officials as saying up to 11 extremists were believed among the dead.

A senior intelligence official said Sunday that 12 bodies had been taken away, including seven foreigners.

He said the bodies were reclaimed by other militants, but another Pakistani official told The Associated Press on Saturday that some were taken away for DNA tests. A law enforcement official in Washington said the FBI expected to conduct the tests to determine victims' identities, although Pakistan had not yet formally requested them.

The claims by the officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the matter, could not be independently verified.

Counterterrorism officials in Washington declined to comment on US media reports that a CIA-operated drone aircraft fired missiles Friday at a residential compound in Damadola trying to hit al-Zawahri, whose videos have made him the face and voice of al-Qaida.

A large number of al-Qaida and Taliban combatants, including al-Zawahri and bin Laden, are believed to have sought refuge along the rugged, porous and ill-defined border.

Some 10,000 people rallied in Karachi, Pakistan's biggest city, chanting "Death to America" and "Stop bombing against innocent people." Hundreds of police carrying batons and shields were deployed, but the rally ended after an hour with no violence reported.

Hundreds more rallied in the capital, Islamabad, and in Lahore, Multan, Peshawar and elsewhere, burning American flags and demanding the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Afghanistan.

In Pakistan's strongest reaction, Information Minister Sheikh Ishaq Ahmed on Saturday called the attack "highly condemnable" and said the government wanted "to assure the people we will not allow such incidents to reoccur."

The Foreign Ministry issued a statement saying it protested to US Ambassador Ryan Crocker over the "loss of innocent civilian lives."

Neither addressed the target of the airstrike. But two senior Pakistani security officials confirmed to AP that al-Zawahri was the intended victim and said Pakistan's assessment was that the CIA acted on incorrect information.

On Sunday, Pakistan's Dawn newspaper, citing unidentified senior officials, reported that two clerics, Maulvi Faqir Mohammad and Maulvi Liaqat, both wanted for harboring militants, also were invited to the dinner with al-Zawahri.

A senior army official said Sunday that "foreigners" were reported in the area, but there was no information al-Zawahri was among them.

Al-Zawahri may have come to area to meet with his wife who is from the Mahmood tribe, which is predominant in the area around Damadola, for last week's Islamic holiday of Eid al-Adha, according to one Pakistan intelligence official.

In a speech broadcast Sunday on state-run Pakistan Television, President Gen. Pervez Musharraf did not address the strike directly but warned his countrymen not to harbor militants, saying it would only increase violence within Pakistan's borders.

"If we keep sheltering foreign terrorists here ... our future will not be good. Remember what I say," Musharraf said in the speech, made Saturday in the northwest-ern town of Sababi.

Many in this nation of 150 million people object to Musharraf's alliance with Washington in the war on international terror groups, seeing it as a veiled campaign against Muslims.

Ghafoor Ahmed, a leader in the coalition of anti-US Islamic groups that organized nationwide rallies Sunday, called for Musharraf's resignation. "The army cannot defend the country under in his leadership," he said.

## Criminals kill 1 in Uttara

UNB, Dhaka

An unidentified man was hacked to death by criminals in city's Uttara area yesterday afternoon, police said.

Uttara police on information recovered the body of the man, aged about 40, from Koshabari area of Uttara at about 4:15pm.

Locals and witnesses said an armed gang chased the victim to the area, hit him indiscriminately with sharp weapons before leaving him behind in a pool of blood at about 4:00pm.

The body was sent to Dhaka Medical College Hospital morgue for autopsy.

## Manik Saha

FROM PAGE 16

accusing 13 suspected extremists.

Inspector Mosharaf Hossain, the erstwhile OC of the police station, submitted another charge sheet on June 20, 2004 under section 302 of the Bangladesh Penal Code accusing 12 suspected extremists.

Among the accused, Sumon alias Nuruzzaman, Akbar Ali Shikder alias Shaon, Akram alias Bomaru Akram and Bulbul alias Bulu are in Khulna District Jail.

Three out of the accused 13 died in 'crossfire' incidents in the years 2004 and 2005 while six of the accused are in hiding.

Both the charge sheets were submitted without proper investigation.

Journalists of Khulna rejected the charge sheets alleging that the masterminds and sponsors of the murder were not accused in the charge sheets.

Trial of the murder case began on January 4, 2005 in the Khulna Speedy Trial Tribunal. But Judge Abdus Samad issued an order on April 13 for further investigation of the case.

The tribunal had recorded statements of 24 out of 54 prosecution witnesses before the case dockets were sent back to the Kotwali police station for further investigation.

OC Abdul Hamid could not say when the investigation will be completed. "We have no new evidence for further investigation. Of course, we are trying to 'discover' one," he said.

## BNP man

FROM PAGE 1

Alam at around 5:30pm as the latter refused to pay him the toll of Tk 10,000, which Hannan had earlier demanded.

The locals chased Hannan and caught him with the pistol.

Eyewitnesses said Alam narrowly escaped any injuries.

The police lodged a case with the Kotwali station under Speedy Trial Tribunal Act.

## Neighbours

FROM PAGE 1

it lost the chance to exploit financial benefits from the road network, he said. The deadline for joining the network was December 31, 2005.

Even if Bangladesh joins the network in future, it will lose the voting power in the decision making body, he said.

According to the convention of the network, a country joining the road network later will have to comply with the decisions taken earlier.

The other states concerned may not accept Bangladesh's amendment proposal later, as they would have spent a lot of money by the time, he said.

The experts also feared that Bangladesh economy would be affected, as the foreign investors will hesitate to invest in the country due to lack of suitable connections with its neighbours.

Escap took the initiative for developing the Asian Highway that aims at developing road communication for easy transportation of goods and people.

Twenty-seven of the 32 countries already signed the agreement but Bangladesh declined to join the network fearing that it would ultimately turn into a transit to its neighbour India.

## Saddam

FROM PAGE 16

intelligent man, who wants the world to see that he dispenses a very different kind of justice from Saddam's own courts, our correspondent says.

And it is a tactic that works, he adds - at the start of the trial, Saddam Hussein refused even to give his name. Yet by force of sheer politeness, Judge Rizgar has worn him down.

His resignation must be approved by both the prime minister's counsel and the president and vice-presidents. The trial is due to resume on 24 January.

## Saifur

FROM PAGE 16

should be more development," Dessaliensaid.

She, however, identified some sectors like sanitation, education, family planning, health and nutrition, where Bangladesh need to achieve development faster.

# A hospital in sickbed

FROM PAGE 1

Suhrawardy Hospital is housed in a beautifully designed three-storey building, which, according to a number of senior doctors, is the country's best and has the latest medical gadgets and facilities of a general hospital.

In fact, when it was first planned back in 1963, it was meant to be the only full-fledged general hospital in the erstwhile East Pakistan. The present authorities, too, believe that the hospital has a great potential for providing tertiary level health care, particularly to the residents of the northern part of the city.

Instead, the hospital has become a place of rampant cheating of credulous patients, pilferage and tender manipulation, and its immense premises a safe haven for crooks and criminals including commission agents of dishonest private clinics, drug-dealers, muggers, thieves, extortionists and even killers.

The situation really beggars belief.

A gang, which once controlled the criminal activities including drug peddling, arms trading, extortion, blackmailing and mugging at the now-evicted BNP Slum in nearby Agaragon, now uses the hospital as its base. Thieves carry out rampant pilferage of hospital's fixtures, furniture and equipment as well as valuables of patients at night. So, every one from patients to staff feels unsafe after dusk, said a security guard.

A professor of surgery at the hospital on condition of anonymity said a nexus of some young doctors and staffs at the emergency and outdoor departments and brokers of various dishonest private clinics regularly cheats the admission seekers to the hospital.

The professor also confirmed that on average 60 percent of the paying and 40 percent of the non-paying beds at the hospital remain empty, when in other government hospitals in Dhaka two to three patients are always lined up for every bed.

During a visit, The Daily Star found four out of seven beds in a non-paying room and one out of three in a paying room under the female surgery ward empty. A

nurse on duty said 15 patients were there that day in the 30-bed ward comprising 21 paying and nine non-paying beds. But, in every other general hospital in the city, this is a ward where seats are always most scarce.

The Daily Star team also saw a lone sexagenarian patient lying despondently in a 10-bed room under the male ophthalmology ward. Lokiotullah, a peasant from Sonaimudi in Noakhali, said he went to consult Dr Lutfur Rahman, head of the ophthalmology department, at his private chamber and the doctor got him admitted to the hospital. The rustic man felt dejected living in the near deserted ward and was looking forward to the minor eye surgery he was scheduled to undergo to have done with the desolation.

**AHAUNT OF CROOKS, GANGSTERS**

Insider sources named a number of problems dogging the hospital for long. One is an appalling lack of manpower in some critical departments, which cannot be addressed, they said, as the hospital is still run by a project.

The hospital has only seven security guards. So, only two guards are tasked with maintaining security of the immense compound for an 8-hour shift, which is virtually impossible.

One of the guards said, at night, sometimes he has to abandon his usual post in fear of the prowling criminals and to remain hidden behind the building. At the evening, the guards on duty shut almost all the gates and windows of the hospital, turning it into a virtual fort under siege.

The area then comes under control of the gang of 20 to 25 criminals named after its leader Kajol, a notorious local kingpin who allegedly killed Chapati Babu, the leader of his rival group, in 2004 and established supremacy in the entire area housing some seven hospitals, sources said.

According to them, Kajol Group maintains close ties with and receives protection from local political quarters and law enforcers. They said it also grabs all the contracted work of the hospital allegedly in collaboration with some influential members of the

Doctors Association of Bangladesh (Dab) and Bangladesh Medical Association (BMA) posted at the hospital.

The gangsters even committed a number of murders, including that of Chapati Babu, on the hospital premises at night. A few months ago, they even beat a Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) member and a Rab informer black and blue, cracking their skulls, when they went there in search of a criminal.

**MEDICAL COLLEGE: AWAY OUT**

A move has been on for long to turn Suhrawardy Hospital into a medical college, especially considering that the seven specialised hospitals or medical institutes in the area would provide it with a rich spectrum of faculty.

According to Prof Zamil Nizamuddin Ahmed of the NIOH, "Suhrawardy Hospital should be turned into a medical university. It has the infrastructure required for that. A proposal was made during the Awami League regime to turn it into Begum Fazilatunnesa Medical College. But, nothing has come of that still."

Dr Ahmed said, overcoming political aversion, "The government should take a decision immediately. The campus is most suitable for such an institute."

However, the health ministry does have a plan to launch a 100-seat government medical college on the campus. On September 5, 2005 it formed a 6-member committee headed by the ministry's joint secretary (Coordination). According to a circular signed by Senior Assistant Secretary Aleya Aktar of the health ministry, the committee was supposed to prepare and submit by October 5 a complete proposal and implementation plan for establishing the medical college.

There were speculations in November and December that the college may open in this month, January 2006. But, that is yet to happen.

Still, an administration official of the hospital said with hope, "When it becomes a college, a lot of people like students, new staffs, teachers will be here. The insecurity will then surely dissipate and order restored."

## Two mothers

FROM PAGE 1

The boy died on the spot while his mother succumbed to her wounds at the Osmani Medical College Hospital (OMCH) after an hour.

Three others were critically injured in the accident and were admitted to hospital.

The driver of the killer truck managed to escape. The Osmaninagar police seized the truck.

In another incident, Shaheda Begum, 30, and her husband Abdul Aziz along with their eight-year-old son Hamza were travelling by an autorickshaw towards Ranapang when a Sylhet-bound minibus hit the three wheeler at Choughari of Golapganj upazila on the Sylhet-Jakiganj Highway at around 12:30pm.

The mother and son were declared dead by OMCH doctors.

Shaheda's husband sustained critical wounds and was admitted to hospital.

## PM

FROM PAGE 1

now in Dhaka on leave, is also accompanying the prime minister.

A large number of heads of state and government from all over the world will also be going to offer their deep condolences at the demise of Emir of Kuwait.

## Commissioners

FROM PAGE 1

& General Hospital said the CEC came to the hospital at 10:00am and left at 10:30am after taking physiotherapy.

Physiotherapist Iqbal Akand, who administered the therapy on CEC, said he (CEC) has been suffering from pain in his lower back for the last 15 days. "His condition is improving and he now can walk," he said.

MA Aziz has been absent from his office since January 9, the day the certified copy of the High Court's judgement reached the commission.

On January 4, the High Court asked the EC to revise the existing electoral roll. But ignoring the court's directives, the EC secretariat continued the task of preparing a fresh voter list, which began on January 1.

Referring to the illness of Aziz, the two election commissioners recently said they are willing to visit the CEC and if necessary the meeting can be held at his residence.

"We are ready to sit anywhere and at anytime as the court has asked to hold an immediate meeting," Munsef Ali said, adding, "But for that to happen, the chief election commissioner must call the meeting first."

Mohammad Ali, who made a phone call to the CEC's residence last Monday, said he tried to know the condition of the CEC during the Eid holidays as well but to no avail.

Replying to a query, he said they do not want to appeal against the court's directives, they rather want to carry out those.

# Space capsule returns to Earth with comet dust

AP, Dugway Proving Ground, Utah

A space capsule ferrying the first comet dust samples to Earth parachuted to a pre-dawn landing in the remote desert Sunday, drawing cheers from elated scientists.

The touchdown capped a seven-year journey by NASA's Stardust spacecraft, which zipped past a comet in 2004 to capture minute dust particles and store them in the capsule for the homecoming.

"It's an absolutely fantastic end to the mission," said Carlton Allen of NASA's Johnson Space Center.

A helicopter recovery team was searching the landing site for the capsule and was expected to transfer it to a clean room on the base. It will be flown later this week to the Johnson Space Center in Houston where scientists will unlock the canister containing the cosmic particles.

Once opened, they will find the microscopic bits trapped in the porous, pale-blue smokelike material made up of 99.8 percent air that was used to snag the dust in space.

The dust will be viewed under a microscope and analyzed. Because comets are frozen bodies of ice and dust from 4.6 billion years ago when the solar system was formed, researchers hope the comet dust will provide direct clues about the origin of our planetary system.

The cosmic samples were gathered from comet Wild 2 in 2004 during Stardust's seven years in space. The spacecraft used a tennis racket-sized collector mitt to snatch the dust and store them in an aluminum canister.

The capsule nose-dived through the Earth's atmosphere early Sunday at a record 29,000 mph, making it the fastest man-made probe to return. As it descended toward the desert, it unfurled its first parachute at 100,000 feet followed by a larger chute, which guided it to a 10-mph landing in the salt flats.

The mission, managed by NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, cost \$212 million.

Stardust's return to Earth was the reverse of the ill-fated Genesis mission that carried solar wind particles. In 2004, Genesis slammed into the desert and broke open like a clamshell, exposing the solar atoms to contamination.

Researchers believe about a million samples of comet and interstellar dust more than twice the width of a human hair are locked inside the Stardust capsule.

The cosmic dust should keep researchers busy for years. They hope to slice the samples into smaller bits and probe them under

a microscope to directly learn about their chemical makeup and the processes that shaped the early universe.

The dust grains, believed to be pristine leftovers from the birth of the solar system, contain many of the organic molecules necessary for life. Some of the particles are thought to be older than the sun.

Stardust's comet samples represent the second robotic retrieval of extraterrestrial material since 1976, when the unmanned Soviet Luna 24 mission brought back lunar rocks and soil.

The first was NASA's Genesis probe, which crashed at Dugway Proving Ground in 2004 during a failed mid-air attempt by Hollywood stunt pilots in helicopters to snag it. Scientists spent several days picking through the wreckage to salvage the fragile wafers containing solar wind atoms.

The accident was caused by the faulty installation of gravity switches designed to trigger the parachute release. Engineers reviewed Stardust's blueprints and rechecked its systems to make sure it wouldn't happen again.

Launched in 1999, the Stardust spacecraft traveled nearly 3 billion miles, looping around the sun three times.

In 2004, it flew through the comet's coma, a fuzzy halo of gas and dust. Outfitted with armored bumpers, the spacecraft survived a hail of debris to trap comet dust with a collector mitt packed with aerogel, a porous material made up of mostly air. The cosmic particles have since been tucked inside the capsule for the trip home.

Along the way, the spacecraft also captured interstellar dust tiny particles that stream through the solar system thought to be from ancient stars that exploded and died.

The spacecraft also beamed back 72 black-and-white pictures showing broad mesas, craters, pinnacles and canyons with flat floors on the surface of Wild 2, a craggy comet about 500 million miles from Earth at launch.

Stardust's sample return is the latest mission designed to study comets up close.

Six months earlier, NASA sent a probe into the path of an onrushing comet. The high-speed collision with comet Tempel 1 set off a celestial fireworks display in space and exposed the comet's primordial interior.

Scientists have been analyzing the voluminous debris hurled from the comet's belly and are trying to figure out the size of the crater caused by the impact.

# Kuwait emir dies

FROM PAGE 1

this major Gulf oil producer.

Analysts said they expect the new emir to maintain Kuwait's oil policies and pro-Western outlook.

Sheikh Jaber suffered a brain haemorrhage in 2001, which limited his duties in the country which controls about 10 percent of known global oil reserves.

Crown Prince Sheikh Saad al-Abdulla al-Sabah, 76, is likely to be a figurehead while Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Sabah runs the country -- a role he has played over the past four years.

Sheikh Jaber fled to Saudi Arabia in 1990 when Saddam's troops invaded but returned after the occupation ended to lead the rebuilding of a land scarred by the killing, torture and brutal Iraqi rule. He also oversaw the rehabilitation of oilfields set on fire by retreating Iraqi forces.

US-led forces used Kuwait as its main staging ground for the 2003 invasion of Iraq that toppled Saddam. Kuwait hosts up to 36,000 US troops and is home to some 13,000 US citizens.

State television said the emir had "passed away at dawn on Sunday." Hundreds of Kuwaitis and expatriates, some sobbing and reading the Koran, gathered outside the emir's Dasman palace in Kuwait City.

"Our kindhearted father is gone, he never held back on giving us everything we needed," said Raggayah al-Qallaf, 40, as she cried, clutching a copy of the Koran.

"This is the only emir I have known since my birth, he has been helpful to orphans like me; he was the one who looked after us and today he is dead; that's why I am crying," law student Fahd al-Ajmi, 23, told Reuters.

The ill health of Sheikh Jaber and Sheikh Saad caused concern at home and abroad over the future leadership of one of OPEC's biggest producers.

Calls by parliamentarians and members of the opposition for the Kuwaiti government to replace the crown prince and to share power have also clouded the succession process.

There has been no official word on who will take over but the ruling family is likely to adhere to the constitution and appoint Sheikh Saad, even though he is largely incapacitated.

"I don't think there will be any change. I expect the crown prince to take power officially but Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah will have the real power," one Western diplomat told Reuters.

"Most likely the prime minister will be named the crown prince. I don't think he will make any changes in policy."

Kuwaiti oil officials also said on Sunday the country would stick to its policy of keeping global markets well supplied.

"Kuwait's (oil) policy will not