

## Raid kills 4 Afghan militants, 2 women

AP, Kabul

Hundreds of angry protesters chanting "Death to Bush" and "Death to Karzai" demonstrated in eastern Afghanistan after US-led coalition and Afghan forces raided a suspected car bomb cell early yesterday, leaving four militants and two female civilians dead, officials said.

The latest civilian deaths occurred in the same area of eastern Nangarhar province where a US Marines convoy, fleeing after being hit by a suicide car bomb on March 4, opened fire on vehicles and pedestrians, killing 12 people.

Abdul Mohamad, a Nangarhar police investigator, said the operation early Sunday left five civilians dead, including two women.

He said villagers had taken the bodies to the main highway and blocked the road in an angry hourslong protest. They lashed out at President Bush and his Afghan counterpart, Hamid Karzai, as well as the governor of Nangarhar.

Coalition and Afghan forces jointly raided a compound in the

Bati Kot area of Nangarhar province, the coalition statement said, acting on a tip indicating that the cell was planning three suicide car bomb attacks against coalition forces in the coming weeks.

The coalition said that after being fired upon, the coalition forces returned fire, killing four militants, an adult woman and a teenage girl. Another child and teenage girl were wounded during the gunfight and were being treated at a coalition facility.

Coalition forces found multiple several guns and bomb-making materials, and detained one man from the compound for questioning.

"It is extremely unfortunate that militants put others' lives in danger by hiding among their families," said Maj Chris Belcher, a coalition spokesman.

The coalition said it arrested four other suspects and discovered more bomb-making materials at another compound raided early Sunday, also in Bati Kot.

Mohammad, the Nangarhar director of police criminal investigations, said the operation targeted three houses and that six people were arrested.

## Australian parties say no to uranium supply for India

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA, Melbourne

The opposition to uranium exports to India continues, even though the Australian Labour Party (ALP) has officially dumped its 25-year-old no-new-uranium-mines policy in annual conference.

The Australian Green Party chief Bob Brown on Sunday added to the raging debate on export of the crucial nuclear fuel to India by saying that India can attack Australia with bombs made from the Australian uranium.

"We're in an age where China's got rockets that can reach Sydney. India just fired a rocket that went 3000km. Double that and they will very shortly ... be able to reach Australia too and we're exporting uranium to them. It is daft, it is immoral, it is unnecessary," Bob Brown said.

While not much importance is attributed to maverick politician's remarks, observers are taking policy speeches at Labour Party's Sydney conference with much more seriousness. The Australian opposition party is expected to win the government in elections held later this year.

Senator Chris Evans, Labour's energy spokesman has made it abundantly clear that Labour government would not sell uranium to India as the South-Asian country has not signed the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

He has also criticized the ruling Liberals for considering India in its list of uranium export destination countries.

In his speech, titled "Labour and Uranium - an Evolution", Evans has also opposed the idea of a domestic nuclear power industry.

While the head of the opposi-

tion Kevin Rudd was making announcement about the much-anticipated u-turn uranium mining policy in the Sydney conference, the Liberal Prime Minister John Howard was busy announcing establishment of 25 nuclear power plants in Australia.

While observers are battling to fathom the logic behind Labour u-turn on mining of the yellowcake and continuing opposition to indigenous nuclear industry, they are expressing empathy for the Indian case to buy Australian uranium.

The usage of polluting Australian coal by the booming Indian economy is also causing concern down under. The sale of uranium to 'world's largest democracy and a potential strategic counterbalance to China' is also being advocated by some quarters for these reasons.

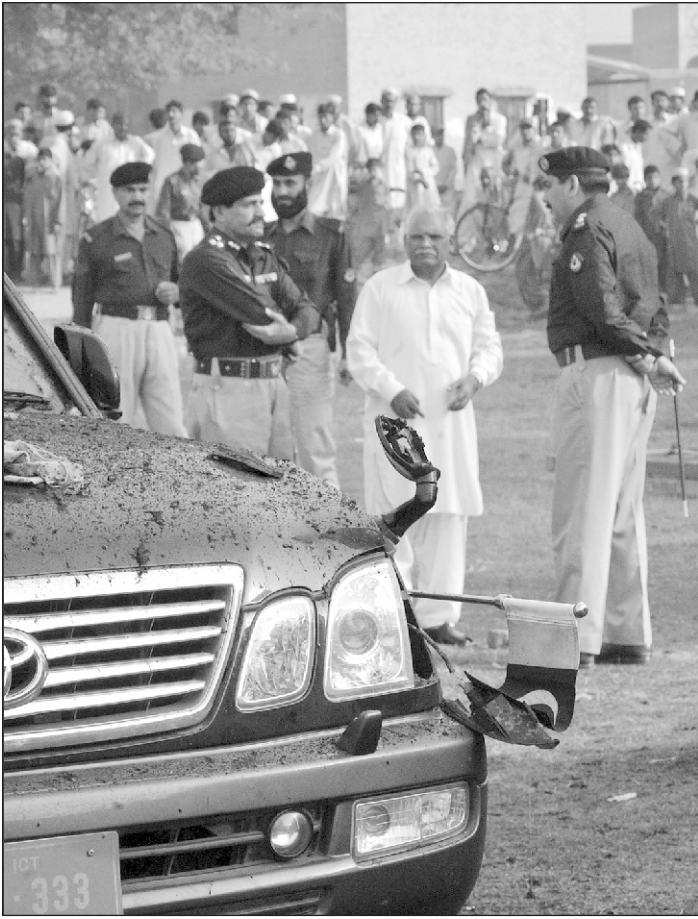


PHOTO: AFP

Pakistani policemen inspect the suicide attack site in Charsada yesterday. Pakistan's government has formed an investigation team to probe a suicide blast targeting the interior minister which injured him and killed 28 others.

ATTACK ON PAK MINISTER

## Govt forms probe body, toll rises to 28

AFP, Peshawar

Pakistan's government has formed a team to investigate a suicide blast that targeted and injured the country's interior minister and killed 28 others, officials said yesterday.

The minister, Aftab Sherpao, had just addressed a public gathering Saturday in the town of Charsada in North West Frontier Province, which borders Afghanistan, when the bomber rushed towards the stage and detonated his explosives.

"We have formed a joint investigation team comprising provincial and federal police and investigation agencies to probe the incident," the province's chief minister, Akram Durrani, told reporters after meeting Sherpao.

Sherpao, a staunch supporter of President Pervez Musharraf, has talked prominently of the government's achievements in fighting terrorism. Pakistan is a key ally of the United States in its so-called "war on terror."

"I was the target of this blast," Sherpao told national television.

The interior ministry said Sherpao was given first aid at a hospital in Charsada before being taken to his residence in Peshawar.



PHOTO: AFP

Residents in Sri Lanka's capital look at the sky after Tamil tiger aircraft entered the city's airspace and carried out bombing raids yesterday. Anti-aircraft gun fire and tracer bullets lit up the night sky and sparked off panic in the Lankan capital city.