

8 killed in Gaza ambush as Palestinian fighting spirals

AFP, Gaza City

Eight Palestinians were killed yesterday in an ambush on a presidential guard camp that was blamed on Hamas, as deadly factional fighting threatened to spiral out of control in the Gaza Strip.

The attack near the main Karni grounds terminal between the densely packed and violent Palestinian territory and Israel brought to 17 the number of Palestinians killed in the deadliest bout of violence in months.

The fighting, on top of Monday's resignation of interior minister Hanan al-Qawasmeh, is the first major crisis facing a new unity government set up by Abbas's Fatah party and the Islamic move-

ment Hamas to quell factional feuding.

Eight security officers in the Abbas-controlled and Fatah-dominated security services were killed in the fighting near Karni, a medical source said, in the deadliest single such attack in Gaza since the latest troubles flared.

The national security force, which lost officers in the ambush, formally accused a controversial Hamas paramilitary force and the Islamist faction's military wing, Ezzedine al-Qassam Brigades, of trying to stage a coup.

"Ezzedine al-Qassam Brigades and members of Hamas have not stopped firing against the security force headquarters, which proves its clear intention for a coup d'état

against the legal organs of the Palestinian Authority," it said.

The Ezzedine al-Qassam Brigades and members of Hamas are using heavy arms to bombard the security service headquarters," it added in a statement.

Colonel Ali Qayssi said dozens of supporters of Hamas, Fatah's bitter rival and the senior partner in the two-month-old unity government, fired grenades and anti-tank fire on the camp of 200 guardsmen near Karni.

But a spokesman for the Hamas paramilitary, the Executive Force which is controlled by the interior ministry, denied its members were involved.

Earlier yesterday, a fighter from Ezzedine al-Qassam Brigades was

shot dead and another Hamas supporter wounded in Gaza City, medics and witnesses said.

Ibrahim Mounia, 40, who belonged to the Brigades, was killed in eastern Gaza City overnight when unknown gunmen ambushed a minibus carrying fighters from the unit, the sources said.

Another Hamas loyalist was wounded when gunmen opened fire near a checkpoint controlled by national security, a service dominated by members of Fatah.

Seventeen Palestinians have been now killed in factional fighting since Sunday and more than 60 wounded, dealing a major blow to the struggling unity government just two months after it took office.

Police say 60 Taliban killed in strikes, army says 11

APP, Kandahar

Air strikes on Taliban rebels in southern Afghanistan killed about 60 fighters, a provincial police chief said yesterday, while the defence ministry issued a much lower death toll of 11.

The Nato-led force meanwhile rejected claims by the Afghan police and defence ministry that it was involved.

The separate US-led coalition that also carries out anti-Taliban operations was not available to comment.

Confusion about operations and death tolls is not uncommon, with the various military groups tasked with hunting down the militants blamed for destabilising Afghanistan often issuing different accounts of events.

Sixty Taliban militants were killed in a Nato-led aerial operation last night on a Taliban gathering point in Zahri district of Kandahar province, provincial police chief Esmatullah Alizai said.

The strikes targeted a meeting of Taliban fighters late Monday and were followed by ground troops

who entered villages in the province on Tuesday, Alizai said.

The dead included three well-known Taliban commanders, he said.

Zahri, about 30 kilometres east of Kandahar city, has been a

flashpoint for Taliban violence and is close to where the militant movement was born in the early 1990s.

However, the Afghan defence ministry said only 11 militants were killed, according to its reports.

"In the joint Afghan National Army and Nato forces military operation 11 terrorists were killed in Nato airstrikes," it said in a statement.

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Dilkusha Branch, Dhaka.
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Main Intake	
Qty	Name
1	Hopper
1	Chain Conveyor
1	Bucket Elevator
1	Pipe Magnet
1	Two -Way Valve
1	Cleaning Machine

External Storage	
Qty	Name
1	Bucket Elevator
1	Chain Conveyor
1	Storage Silo
1	Aeration System
1	Temperature Control
1	Discharge Auger

Grinding	
Qty	Name
1	Bucket Elevator
1	Extraction Auger
1	Bucket Elevator
1	Pre Bin
1	Trough Auger

Multimill Unit	
Qty	Name
1	Air Intake
1	Hammermill
1	Jet Filter
1	Ventilator
1	Mal Collection Bin
1	Discharge Auger

Premix Addition	
Qty	Name
1	Intake Hopper for Premix

Mixing	
Qty	Name
1	Bucket Elevator
1	Trough Auger
1	Pre-Bin for Mixer
1	Horizontal Mixer
1	Discharge Bin
1	Discharge Auger

ON behalf of : National Bank Limited
Dilkusha Branch.

Masqur Ahmed
Sr. Executive Vice President.



PHOTO: AFP
President Muammar Gaddafi (R) talks to reporters as he receives President of Ghana John Agyekum Kufuor (L) Monday in Tripoli. Libya yesterday scoffed at rumours about Gaddafi's state of health after a report said he was in a coma.

Sarkozy fine tunes govt as Chirac bids adieu

AFP, Paris

French president-elect Nicolas Sarkozy was putting the finishing touches to his broad-based government yesterday as Jacques Chirac prepared to bid farewell in a nationwide address.

On the eve of his inauguration, Sarkozy had surprised members of his own rightwing party and his leftist opponents by reaching out to prominent Socialists with offers of ministerial posts.

The Supreme Court also suspended a lower court order forbidding Shetty from travelling abroad.

An Indian judge in the northern state of Rajasthan had issued an arrest warrant for Gere and a summons for Shetty following a complaint accusing the pair of obscenity.

Gere embraced the 31-year-old Shetty -- winner of Britain's Celebrity Big Brother reality show -- and kissed her in front of thousands of onlookers at the AIDS function.

The government Sarkozy puts together will be in office until parliamentary elections in June that will decide whether he will have the strong majority in the legislature needed to push through his reform programme.

Most of the ministers are likely to stay on in their posts after the vote, if, as opinion polls predict, the ruling UMP party remains dominant in the national assembly.

The latest economic data released yesterday, showing growth had fallen short of government expectations in the first quarter, put added pressure on Sarkozy to make good on his pledge to shock the country out of its economic doldrums.

Sarkozy, 52, takes over today from Chirac who will welcome him to the Elysee presidential palace during a formal ceremony and hand over the launch codes of the French nuclear arsenal.

Chirac, who steps down after 12 years in office, was due to make a televised address later yesterday to

bid farewell to the nation before beginning life as a private citizen.

The 74-year-old leader is planning to set up a foundation devoted to saving the environment and promoting a dialogue of cultures and will take up residence with his wife Bernadette in a chic apartment overlooking the Louvre museum.

The apartment is being lent by the family of former Lebanese prime minister Rafiq Hariri, a close personal friend of the outgoing president who was murdered in 2005.

After Sarkozy's handover ceremony, the new president will this afternoon head straight to Berlin to meet German Chancellor Angela Merkel, in keeping with tradition followed by newly-elected French presidents.

Tomorrow he is expected to name former social affairs minister Francois Fillon, 53, as prime minister. Fillon is seen as a calm and competent operator who successfully negotiated reforms to the pensions system in 2003.

Mahathir recovering well: son

AFP, Kuala Lumpur

Malaysia's ailing former prime minister Mahathir Mohamad is recovering well after being admitted to hospital suffering breathing difficulties, his son and an aide said yesterday.

Mahathir, 81, was flown from a hospital on the resort island of Langkawi, where he was admitted Monday, to a specialist heart hospital in the capital Kuala Lumpur.

"The decision to transfer Mahathir... was made after doctors were satisfied at his positive rate of progress to treatment," his aide Sufi Yusoff said in a statement.

"He is okay and he is very fine and is recovering well," Mahathir's son, Mokhzani Mahathir, told reporters.

"He spoke to the family members and told us that he was hungry."

Mokhzani said a team of doctors had done a thorough check-up on Mahathir, including an x-ray and heart tests, and would release a statement later.

"He will be here for a few more days and he thanked everybody for their concerns and their prayers," Mokhzani said.

Vietnam jails dissident

APP, Hanoi

A Vietnamese court yesterday sentenced a dissident to five years' prison for spreading propaganda against the communist state and for disrupting security, the sixth activist to be jailed in a week.

Lawyer Tran Quoc Hien, 42, received three years' prison for anti-state propaganda and two years for disrupting security, to be followed by two years' probation, said Ho Chi Minh City People's court official Phan Ba.

The half-day trial of Hien, which was open to the media, was the most recent in a series of arrests and trials of political activists in Vietnam that have drawn protests from Western governments and human rights groups.

Vietnam's foreign ministry on Monday reiterated its position that it does not jail people for their political views, only for breaking the law.

"As we have said time and time again, the Vietnamese government has always respected the rights to freedom and democracy including the freedom of speech," the government said in a statement.

Legal action over Shetty, Gere kiss shelved

APP, New Delhi

India's Supreme Court suspended legal action against Bollywood actress Shilpa Shetty yesterday over enthusiastic kisses bestowed on her by French heart-throb Richard Gere.

Shetty had blamed India's "lunatic fringe" for the uproar caused by the kisses planted on her cheek by Gere last month at an AIDS charity event in the Indian capital New Delhi.

She said the kisses had been "wrongly projected" in the media, resulting in obscenity complaints being filed against the two celebrities by lawyers in three cities, the Press Trust of India reported.

The Supreme Court also suspended a lower court order forbidding Shetty from travelling abroad.

An Indian judge in the northern state of Rajasthan had issued an arrest warrant for Gere and a summons for Shetty following a complaint accusing the pair of obscenity.

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