

Pakistan releases suicide bomber's sketches

AFP, Islamabad

Pakistani police have released sketches of two men thought to be the suicide bombers who devastated former premier Benazir Bhutto's homecoming parade and killed 139 people, officials said Friday.

The drawings of the two severed heads found at the blast site were made public as President Pervez Musharraf ruled out enlisting international experts to help with the probe into the October 18 carnage.

Benazir Bhutto, who was targeted in the attacks, has repeatedly demanded the government seek expertise from the United States and Britain in tracking down the masterminds, saying she lacked confidence in local investigators.

"Our record in tracing previous suicide attacks is almost 100 percent," Musharraf was quoted as telling a meeting of pro-government lawmakers in the capital late Thursday.

"The president said our agencies have better expertise in tracing such attacks than anyone else in the world," deputy information minister Tariq Azeem also told AFP. Musharraf's comments are his first on the probe and back those of government ministers in recent days as Benazir Bhutto, the first female leader of an Islamic nation, steps up pressure for improvements in the investigation.

Benazir Bhutto has claimed extremists have infiltrated the government and security forces and could have been involved in the attacks, the worst in the nation's history.

Musharraf, who seized power in a coup in 1999, also defended the chief of the civilian-run Intelligence Bureau amid allegations from Benazir Bhutto's party and her husband of his possible involvement in the blasts.



Sher-e-Bangla National Youth Front places wreaths at the grave of Sher-e-Bangla AK Fazlul Huq in the city yesterday to mark the 134th birth anniversary of the great leader.

Most immigrants see future in US: Study

AP, Washington

Most Hispanic immigrants believe their future is in the United States, despite maintaining ties to their native countries, according to a new study by the Pew Hispanic Centre.

The nationwide survey of Latinos found that a majority took part in one or two "transitional activities" sending money, calling or travelling to their homelands. But only 9 percent do all three, which researchers say indicates being "highly attached" to their birth countries.

The report shows that the lives

of Latinos in the United States straddle two countries, a phenomenon known as transnationalism, said its author, UCLA sociology professor Roger Waldinger.

"What's striking is that although the long-term trend is toward disengagement ... most immigrants are involved in some form of contact with the place which they're from," Waldinger said. "What we have is a population that, as we tried to describe, is between here and there."

Researchers disagree on whether transnationalism is a new trend. Some say recent Latino immigrants are the first to establish

such dual connections by using modern communications and transportation.

However, Waldinger and others say today's immigrants behave much like their predecessors from Europe in the 19th and 20th centuries. They often sent letters and money home and later returned to live in their homelands. But Waldinger said direct comparisons are impossible because no data was collected then.

The study also found that transnational activities do not hinder Latino immigrants' bonds to the United States. More than 60 percent plan to stay and are more

concerned about politics and government in the US than in their native countries.

The report found that recent arrivals are more likely to send money home, but less likely to travel home than established Hispanic immigrants.

The survey was conducted by telephone among a random sample of 2,000 Hispanic adults from June 5 to July 3. Respondents include 1,429 foreign-born Latinos. The survey has a margin of error of plus or minus 3.8 percentage points for the full sample and plus or minus 4.4 percentage points for the foreign-born sample.

'Suu Kyi' talks with Myanmar junta no breakthrough

AFP, Bangkok

The Myanmar junta's talks with detained democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi were no more than a bid to deflect criticism of its bloody crackdown on protesters before top UN envoys visit, analysts say.

The Nobel peace prize winner on Thursday was briefly allowed out of her home, where she has spent 12 of the past 18 years under house arrest, to meet with Labour Minister Aung Mye Thazan, who was named to build ties with the opposition.

Although no details of the hour-long talk have been released, images of the meeting were broadcast on state television, a rarity in a country where Aung San Suu Kyi has spent years out of the public eye.

"It was significant in a sense that at least the military and Aung San Suu Kyi held talks," Chaichoke Chulsiwong, an expert on Myanmar at Bangkok's Chulalongkorn University, told AFP on Friday.

"But we have to remain cautious," he added.

The junta rarely has direct dealings with Aung San Suu Kyi, whose National League for Democracy party won 1990 elections but was never allowed to govern.

In appointing Aung Mye Thazan, viewed as a moderate in the junta, the ruling generals seemed to indicate the military was prepared for at least a minimal level of contact.

Indian court slams politicians' gun-toting entourages

AFP, New Delhi

An Indian court has criticised politicians who surround themselves with scores of gun-toting bodyguards, advising them to stay home if they fear frequenting public places, a report said Friday.

"I do not know why it has become a matter of prestige for them to move with 10-15 uniformed security personnel carrying lethal weapons," said Justice T.S. Thakur of the Delhi High Court, according to a Times of India report.

"Their presence in public places itself threatens the common man. If these people (the politicians) feel so threatened they should not come out in public places," Thakur also said Indian politicians should not be protected as if they were a "national asset," the report added.

He also complained that a Supreme Court judge was even told by bodyguards to face the wall while he crossed paths with a politician on a New Delhi street.

Thakur made his remarks to a government lawyer in a public interest lawsuit pressing for police reforms aimed at making the force more independent from political influence.

One-third of primates in peril

AFP, Geneva

Nearly a third of all non-human primates could be wiped out, threatened by illegal wildlife trade, climate change and destruction of their habitat, a new report warned yesterday.

Twenty-nine percent of all monkeys, apes and gorilla species are now in danger of going extinct, according to the report by the Swiss-based World Conservation Union (IUCN).

It highlighted 25 species it said were most endangered, including the Greater bamboo and white-collared lemurs in Madagascar, and the exotically named Miss Waldron's red colobus monkey in West Africa.

"You could fit all the surviving members of these 25 species in a single football stadium; that's how few of them remain on Earth today," warned Russell Mittermeier, chairman of the IUCN's Primate Specialist Group.

The report, compiled by 60 experts from 21 countries, warned that failure to respond to these threats could lead to the first primate extinctions in over a century.

"Hunters kill primates for food and to sell the meat; traders capture them for live sale; and loggers, farmers, and land developers destroy their habitat," it said.

The Miss Waldron's species in Ivory Coast and Ghana is already feared extinct, while the golden-headed langur of Vietnam and China's Hainan gibbon are thought to number just a few dozen, it added.

The IUCN said deforestation was the main factor behind the declining number of primates.

It also produces 20 percent of total greenhouse gas emissions that cause climate change -- more than all the world's cars, trucks, trains and aeroplanes combined.

"By protecting the world's tropical forests, we save primates and other endangered species while preventing more carbon dioxide from entering the atmosphere to warm the climate," Mittermeier said.

The research, presented at the International Primatological Society (IPS) on the Chinese tropical island of Hainan, was compiled by a team of 60 IUCN experts.

Meanwhile, a meeting on primate habitats, chaired by the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) in Paris, concluded on Friday with an initiative to help the Virunga National Park in the Democratic Republic of Congo, one of the last redoubts of the gorilla.

UNEP said it would provide 300,000 dollars (210,000 euros) to the

three-million-dollar programme, aimed at helping sustainable livelihoods among people living around the park, the agency said in a press release.

The gorillas face loss of habitat from deforestation, as trees are chopped down from fuel, as well as from poaching.

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Traidcraft Exchange, UK's only development charity specialising in making trade work for the poor (for more information, visit our website www.traidcraft.co.uk) is looking for a dynamic and proactive person to join our small but resourceful team working in our Bangladesh Country Office in Dhaka. This is a permanent position. This role offers the opportunity to contribute effectively to a team developing new projects and implementing our current projects in line with our broader objective to fight poverty through trade. The position also offers an excellent opportunity for career and personal development, travel in the region and to the UK

Summary of Job Description :

- Independently Develop new Projects
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- Undertake research and study

Essential Qualifications/ experience:

- Bachelor's degree in Business (i.e. IBA, NSU or comparable university) or Post Graduate Degree with honors in Economics having at least one 1st class either in graduate or under graduate level.
- 1-2 years relevant experience in development/business management related work

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All fully completed applications will be considered. Female candidates are especially encouraged to apply. Please do not apply unless you meet the educational requirement.

Short-listed candidates will be invited for a written test followed by interview.

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