

# Bomber kills 27 as US hands over Karbala to Iraqis

AFP, Baghdad

The US military yesterday transferred the Shia holy province of Karbala back to Iraq as a suicide bomber killed 27 policemen in an attack on their headquarters in the restive city of Baquba.

Karbala became only the eighth of Iraq's 18 provinces to be handed over to local forces by the US-led coalition.

Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki, who addressed the handover ceremony, blamed his own military leaders for slow progress in taking back control of the country's war-ravaged provinces.

"Allow me to say that we are late, very late, to reconstruct, to rebuild our forces for reasons that I do not want to mention here," said Maliki who is under pressure from Washington to rebuild his forces faster.

The delay in rebuilding Iraqi forces has hampered US plans to

withdraw its forces from the country.

"We demand that the military and police leadership make more efforts to reconstruct and rebuild the security forces in order to take over control of the rest of the provinces," Maliki said.

"These provinces are waiting to be secured by their own sons once again."

Washington and Baghdad had hoped that Iraqi forces would take control of most of the provinces this year, and had even declared 2007 the "Year of Security" in Iraq.

But a US congressional report in September said Iraq was 12-18 months away from assuming complete security control, largely because of a corrupt police force.

The report by Marine General James Jones, the former top US commander in Europe, said Iraqi forces were improving "but not at a rate sufficient to meet their

essential security responsibilities."

America's top officials in Iraq, Ambassador Ryan Crocker and General David Petraeus, said the handover of Karbala was a "positive step towards Iraq's self-reliance."

In a joint statement they said the transfer was an indication of the country's ability to "develop and assume greater responsibility for governing and providing security for the citizens."

Karbala, some 80km south of Baghdad, is relatively peaceful compared to some other central and western regions of Iraq, but is emerging as a flashpoint of Shia rivalry.

Home to the shrines of two of Shia Islam's most revered imams -- Imam Hussein and Imam Abbas -- Karbala was the site of a bloody firefight in August during a major religious festival in which at least 52 people were killed.

## Nepali parliament resumes talks on Maoist demands

AFP, Kathmandu

Nepal's parliament yesterday resumed talks on Maoist demands for voter reform and the abolition of the monarchy, issues that have held up the Himalayan country's peace process.

The former rebels, who ended a decade of bloody civil war late last year, want the sweeping reforms to be implemented before national elections to appoint a body to rewrite the constitution are held.

The dispute between the Maoists and the mainstream parties has already caused the polls to be postponed twice.

"The parliament session has started, and if we fail to reach any consensus, voting will be conducted to decide on the fate of our proposals in a day or two," Dev Gurung, a senior Maoist leader, told AFP.

The special parliament session was called earlier this month, but postponed for festival celebrations after the two sides failed to resolve the deadlock.

The Maoists are calling for a vote on whether the monarchy should be scrapped immediately and to change the proposed voting system.



Iranian Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki laughs as he is greeted by Syrian President Bashar al-Assad (back) and other Syrian officials at al-Shaab palace in Damascus yesterday.

## Iraq warns Turkey against incursion

Turkish troops surround 100 Kurdish fighters

AFP, Baghdad

Turkey celebrated Republic Day yesterday with stern warnings from Baghdad that any large-scale Turkish incursion against Kurdish rebel bases in northern Iraq would have "disastrous" results. In stark contrast to the festive mood across most of the country, Turkish troops faced off with some 100 rebels in the Ikiyaka mountains in the southeast.

The military had surrounded the fighters from the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) in a bid to prevent them escaping across the Iraqi border, the Anatolia news agency reported.

Turkey has threatened a major cross-border assault on PKK bases in northern Iraq if Baghdad and Washington fail to make good on promises to crack down on the rebels there.

Iraqi Foreign Minister Hoshyar Zebari warned Monday that such a move could have "disastrous consequences" and would be met with stiff Iraqi resistance.

"They are talking about a large-scale military incursion which is getting people extremely, extremely nervous and worried," Zebari told the BBC in an interview.

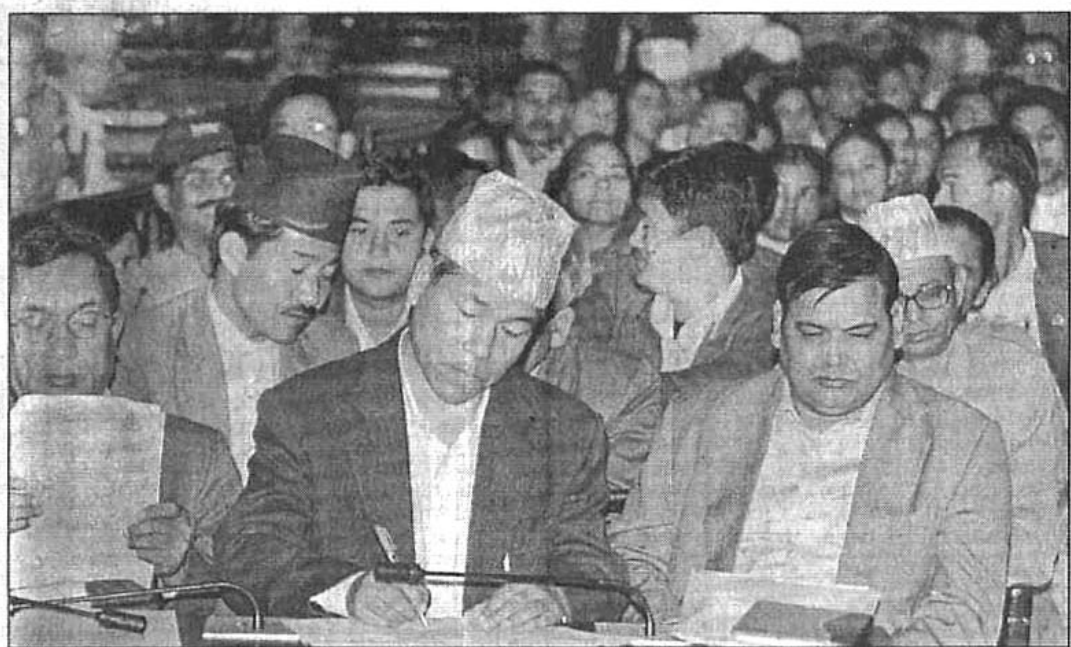
Describing the increasingly tense situation on the Turkish-Iraqi border as "dead serious," Zebari complained that Turkey "was not responsive" when Iraqi officials flew to Ankara last week for talks on how to resolve the situation.

According to Turkish media reports, some 100,000 Turkish troops have been deployed along the Iraqi border over the past week.

Zebari also insisted that Turkish demands for PKK leaders in northern Iraq to be rounded up and handed over were unrealistic.

"They are not under our control in fact. They are up in the mountains, they are armed," he said.

National red-and-white, crescent and star flags flew across Turkey on Monday, marking the 84th anniversary of the secular republic's creation by Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, "father of the Turks", on the ashes of the Ottoman Empire.



Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) lawmakers attend a special session of parliament as they prepare to submit their proposal calling for an immediate end to the country's embattled monarchy and a fully proportional system in parliament elections in Kathmandu yesterday.

## 50 suspected Taliban killed or wounded

AP, Kandahar

A six-hour battle in southern Afghanistan left over 50 Taliban fighters killed or wounded, while a suicide bomber targeting a police patrol ended in three civilian deaths, officials said Monday.

US-led coalition forces raided a compound in the northeast suspected of housing al-Qaeda facilitators, killing several militants on Sunday, a coalition statement said.

In the south, Nato-led troops and Afghan army soldiers launched an attack in Baluch village in Uruzgan province during a gathering of local Taliban on Sunday, said Juma Gul Himat, the provincial police chief.

"More than 50 enemies were killed or wounded" and 13 others, detained during the joint operation,

a statement from Afghanistan's Defence Ministry said.

Maj. Charles Anthony, a spokesman for Nato's International Security Assistance Force, said that "several dozen militants were killed" in the clash.

"This was a well-led and well-coordinated engagement, with the Afghan National Army and Isaf working in conjunction with each other," Anthony said.

Two policemen and an Afghan soldier were also wounded, Juma said.

It was impossible to immediately verify the death counts.

The clash follows a large-scale engagement in neighbouring Helmand province, where some 80 militants were killed during a weekend operation conducted by US Special Forces.

## Musharraf lawyer urges Pakistan court to uphold vote

AFP, Islamabad

A Pakistani government lawyer told the Supreme Court Monday that overturning military ruler Pervez Musharraf's victory in a presidential election would not be in the country's interests.

The court is hearing challenges against Musharraf's huge win in the October 6 vote by the national and provincial parliaments, which was boycotted by most of the opposition. It is expected to rule later this week.

The appeals argue that Musharraf was ineligible to stand for another five-year term while keeping his role as army chief, and that the vote should not have been carried out by the current, outgoing parliaments.

Attorney General Malik Muhammad Qayyum told the 11-judge bench that Musharraf had already promised to quit the military by the time his current presidential term ends, on November 15.

"Since the president is to give up his uniform before taking oath for the second term in just a matter of days, any interference will not be

merited and in public interest at this juncture," Qayyum told the court.

The court ruled the day before the election that the vote could go ahead, but stipulated that no official notification of the result could be announced until after it had decided on the appeals.

Musharraf seized power in a bloodless coup in 1999.

His popularity slumped earlier this year after he tried to sack Pakistan's chief justice, and he has since faced growing militancy and political complications ahead of general elections due in January 2008.

The situation has been further destabilised by the return from exile of former premier Benazir Bhutto, with a proposed power-sharing deal between her and Musharraf being slow to materialise.

Two suicide bombers targeted her homecoming procession in Karachi on October 18, killing 139 people and prompting her into accusations that rogue elements of the government and security services were involved.

## Court orders Israel to justify Gaza sanctions

Israeli soldier, 3 Palestinians killed in clashes

AP, AFP, Jerusalem

Israel's Supreme Court yesterday ordered the government to justify its decision to impose economic sanctions on the Gaza Strip within five days, following a petition from 10 human rights groups.

Nevertheless the court -- the highest legal authority in Israel -- rejected a demand by the Israeli and Palestinian petitioners to freeze implementation of the sanctions, which the government began to introduce on Sunday.

The organisations petitioned the court to reverse the sanctions, branding them an "illegal" act of collective punishment against the 1.5 million Palestinians who live in the increasingly isolated narrow coastal territory.

Attorney General Menachem Mazuz will also review a decision taken by Defence Minister Ehud Barak to enforce periodic electricity cuts on the Gaza Strip when he meets defence officials on Monday,

his office said.

On Sunday Israel began restricting fuel shipments to Gaza as part of a series of sanctions in the face of Palestinian rocket attacks on the Jewish state that military operations alone have been unable to stop.

The move comes after Israel declared the Hamas-run territory a "hostile entity" on September 19, paving the way for further sanctions and restrictions on Gaza, where the radical Islamist movement seized control in mid-June.

Meanwhile, Three Palestinians and an Israeli soldier were killed in the Gaza Strip yesterday as ground troops backed by air support pressed campaigns against militants who fire rockets into the Jewish state.

An army spokeswoman confirmed that one Israeli soldier had been killed in clashes inside the walled-off coastal strip, and said that two more had been lightly wounded.

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**CAREER OPPORTUNITY**

Transcom Beverages Limited, the franchisee of Pepsi, 7up, Mirinda, Slice, Teem and Mountain Dew beverages for Bangladesh is looking for dynamic and competent professionals to fill the following positions. The Company provides competitive remuneration, excellent job environment for career growth of individuals and practices a performance culture, where talent and creativity are recognized and rewarded.

**Position: Territory Development Manager:**  
**The role:**  
This is a mid level position based at any major cities of the country reporting to the Unit/Regional Sales Manager, the incumbent will be responsible for achieving company objective in relation with retail coverage, volume of the respective territory through company sales force and distributor. Company will provide a full time functional car.

**Accountability:**

- Plan, organize & establish retail network/coverage;
- Deliver annual targets of volume, KPI's;
- Guide and direct Customer Executives in setting up their target and ensure due compliance through continuous supervision, monitoring and management input;
- Involve actively in the field supervision of company/distributor field forces and primary and secondary sales monitoring;
- Assist Unit Sales manager in designing different trade related activities and other issues relating to the unit;
- Handle admin related job/issues of the designated area;
- Adequate knowledge/tactics of market intelligence;

**Qualifications:**

- University graduate with working experience in the area of sales & distribution of a reputed FMCG company for minimum 7 years out of which 2 years in Mid management position. Preference will be given to the candidates with BBA/MBA background;
- Adequate knowledge of major/strategic markets of the country;
- Experience of appointing Distributors and developing skills to manage/handle them;
- Designing/Conducting of different types of Trade & Consumer promotions and market survey;
- Being habituated to intensive travel and spent out-stations;
- Basic/working knowledge to use computer (word, excel & power point);
- Age around 35 years.

**Position: Customer /Sales Executive:**  
**Minimum Qualification:** - Graduate with minimum 2 years experience & proven record of success in selling FMCG in a well-reputed company preferably in the beverage industry.  
**Candidate Profile:-**

- Aggressive, field oriented, professional to lead 10-20 distributor's Sales Representatives.
- Must have the ability to achieve agreed targeted volume of sales, in the designated territory, as per the monthly/annual sales plan.
- Should possess outgoing personality and willing to work with retailers in both urban and rural markets.
- Must be willing to relocate anywhere in Bangladesh and travel extensively.
- Must have the ability to communicate (both spoken and written) in English and Bangla.
- Should be well groomed.
- Age:- Should not exceed 30 years.

**Position: Technician (Electrical):**

- S.S.C with 2 years Vocational Training from a recognized Technical School / Institute.
- Preference will be given to candidates with working experience in a large beverage plant.
- Must be willing to work in shifts.

**Position: Technician (Mechanical):**

- S.S.C with 2 years Vocational Training from a recognized Technical School / Institute.
- Preference will be given to candidates with working experience in a large beverage plant.
- Must be willing to work in shifts.

If you think you are the right person for any of the above positions, please send your Curriculum Vitae along with a recent passport size colour photograph to the Human Resources Manager, Transcom Beverages Limited, Gulshan Tower (10<sup>th</sup> Floor), Plot # 31, Road # 53, Gulshan North C/A, Dhaka-1212 by marking the name of the position on the envelope. The application should reach the office of Human Resources Manager on or before 7<sup>th</sup> November, 2007. You can also apply online to [jobs@tbl.transcombd.com](mailto:jobs@tbl.transcombd.com).