



Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh (2R), Chairperson of the ruling UPA government Sonia Gandhi (R) and Chief Minister of Assam Tarun Gogoi visit the site of the blast outside the District Court in Guwahati, the capital city of Assam yesterday. Singh and Gandhi touched down in Assam state's main city, Guwahati as police said they had arrested three people in connection with the October 30 serial attacks.

Manmohan visits bomb victims in Assam

AFP, Guwahati

Premier Manmohan Singh arrived yesterday in India's insurgency-wracked northeast to console those wounded in serial blasts claimed by a little known Islamist group in which 77 people were killed.

Singh, accompanied by ruling Congress party chief Sonia Gandhi, touched down in Assam state's main city, Guwahati as police said they had arrested three people in connection with Thursday's attacks.

Those held included a Muslim man, identified as Nazir Ahmed, whose mobile phone was used to send a text message in which the Islamic Security Force-Indian Mujahideen claimed responsibility for the bombings, police said.

The group is believed to have come into existence in 2000 in western Assam, where tribal Bodo militants are campaigning against Muslim settlers from nearby Bangladesh.

In the past two decades, more than 10,000 people have lost their lives to insurgency-linked violence in tea- and oil-rich Assam.

Aftershock rattles Pak quake zone

Disease spreads among survivors

AFP, Wam

A strong aftershock rattled southwestern Pakistan yesterday, as aid agencies warned that disease had begun to spread among tens of thousands of earthquake survivors waiting for relief supplies.

The 5.0-magnitude quake struck just before 6am in the mountainous province of Baluchistan, where a powerful pre-dawn tremor on Wednesday killed up to 300 people and left 70,000 people homeless.

There were no immediate reports of further casualties or damage as a result of the latest aftershock, the second strongest of more than 250 tremors to have shaken the region since Wednesday's quake.

Aid has begun reaching devastated villages, but angry villagers in remote areas said they desperately needed shelter, with thousands of people whose mud-brick homes were flattened sleeping in the open in freezing temperatures.

The UN Children's Fund said Friday they and Pakistani govern-

ment officials assessed the situation in the worst-hit districts and were "concerned about the urgent needs of children and women".

"With winter closing in, the most urgent needs of the survivors are shelter, safe drinking water, food, warm clothing and emergency medical assistance," a UNICEF statement said.

Clean water was a "priority," it said, adding that children were especially vulnerable to diseases such as diarrhoea and cholera.

The district health officer of the stricken hill town of Ziarat, Ayub Kakar, told AFP that children were already suffering from exposure to the harsh conditions.

"Due to the cold hundreds of children are being treated for pneumonia, abdominal diseases, diarrhoea and chest problems," he said.

"We fear the death toll will rise. Such diseases, if not treated in time, are life-threatening," Kakar said.

Children could be seen running after cars on the road adjoining the affected areas begging for food and drink, witnesses said.

US forces kill 19 militants in Afghanistan

AP, Kabul

A series of operations by US forces in eastern Afghanistan targeted an al-Qaeda leader and a bombing cell, killing 19 militants, the coalition said Saturday.

An Afghan police chief said officials were checking unconfirmed reports that civilians may have been killed.

The operations took place Friday in Nangarhar and Khost provinces, volatile regions along the Pakistan border.

In the deadliest operation, the coalition said it killed 10 militants during a strike against a bombing cell under the command of Jalaluddin Haqqani, a fierce militant leader believed to operate out of Pakistan.

Lt Col Walter Matthews, a US military spokesman, said his office had not received any reports of injuries or deaths to civilians.

"We go well out of our way to plan those operations and we do whatever we can to make sure we don't harm any civilians," he said.

Civilian deaths have long been a

problem in Afghanistan for US and Nato forces, and President Hamid Karzai has repeatedly pleaded with international troops to avoid such killings, which undermine support for the government and turn Afghans against the US and Nato.

In a separate operation in Nangarhar, the coalition said it targeted a known al-Qaeda leader believed to help move foreign fighters and weapons into Kunar province. The coalition said armed militants engaged the force with gunfire. Coalition troops returned fire and killed five militants, including an armed female.

Afghanistan is suffering through one of the most violent years since the 2001 US-led invasion that ousted the Taliban's hard-line Islamist regime for sheltering al-Qaeda's terrorist organisation.



PHOTO: AFP

Pakistani tribal youths look at a destroyed vehicle in Mir Ali, a town in the troubled North Waziristan region bordering Afghanistan yesterday, a day after US air strike. Abu Jihad al-Masri, a wanted Egyptian al-Qaeda operative who has appeared in some of the terror network's videos was killed in a suspected US missile strike in Pakistan.

Obama offers Afghans hope amid despair

AFP, Kabul

Afghans are backing Barack Obama for US president in the hope he will rescue them from an ever-deadly extremist Islamic insurgency wracking their nation and dashing hopes for a better future.

The Democrat's pledges to strike militant bases in Pakistan, boost US troop levels and return the focus of the US "war on terror" to this region have

outshone any impression Republican John McCain might have made.

"We like Obama because in his first speech he said he would defeat our enemies in Pakistan, the Taliban in Pakistan, that he will attack terrorists," said a Kabul money changer who would only give his name as Emal.

The 30-year-old said he knew little of McCain or his plans.

Afghans acknowledge that any

new US president is not going to mean a radical departure from Washington's plans for Afghanistan.

But some believe McCain would be just too much like the outgoing President George W Bush.

"He is just as old as Bush," said Masihullah Amin, 32, the owner of a successful construction company in Kabul. "The current Bush policy in Afghanistan seems to me a failed policy."

Melamine in global food chain

FROM PAGE 16
chances are Pranee Suankaew, a home-maker in Bangkok, Thailand.

"Let's go, let's go," the 37-year-old mother said as she tugged her 4-year-old away from the candy aisle where he eagerly eyed a bag of M&Ms. "We're going to get you fruit and a lollipop. There's no milk in that."

LDP to talk

FROM PAGE 16
Ahmed yesterday said, "We are still in the Awami League-led grand alliance formed earlier. There will be a meeting with that party on November 7. But nothing will be finalised until Sheikh Hasina returns home."

Addressing a meeting of the national executive committee of LDP at its Maghazala central office in the capital, Oli claimed that it would not be possible for any party to assume power without the help of his party.

He urged AL leaders to give up the 'mentality of using LDP' to serve their own interests.

Without naming BNP, Oli, who was a standing committee member of that party, said door is open for them to join another coalition since a 'big party' is urging them to go to their camp for contesting the December 18 poll.

On the remarks against his party made by AL grassroots leaders in different areas including his constituency in Chittagong, the LDP chief said these threaten formation of a grand alliance.

He called upon the AL central leadership to act in a 'responsible way' and ensure that local level AL leaders refrain from speaking this way.

Oli instructed is party leaders to make all our preparations for the national election.

The LDP president alleged that the government has 'surrendered' to corrupt people due to unknown reasons, and made an accord to bring them to power. He asked his party men to resist all 'unhealthy deals' in a democratic way.

He demanded immediate lifting of the state of emergency to pave the way for a free and fair election. If the government commits any mistake in holding the election on time, the nation would have to pay heavily for this, he added.

The LDP president urged aspirants for party tickets to collect nomination forms from the party office from November 7 to 10.

Oli said it would not be tough for his party to come out victorious in 50 constituencies.

LDP Executive President Sheikh Razzak Ali said they want long awaited changes in the country through meaningful reforms in every field including the administration and judiciary. He suggested formation of village courts to deal with litigations in rural areas since several lakh cases have been pending with differential trials.

LDP Secretary General Jahana Begum presented organisational report at the meeting claiming that committees of the party have been formed in 40 districts.

Party president members Alamgir Kabir, Redwan Ahmed, Abdul Karim and Syed Dildar Bakht, among others, were present at the meeting.

She said she usually gives in to avoid tantrums. "But this time, I told him, no, no, no."

Experts say melamine sometimes accidentally leaches into the food supply in low levels, from things like plastic dinnerware. It can also seep in from some pesticides and fertilisers.

But in China it's become clear that the chemicals deliberately added.

The baby formula set off a global recall of foods made with Chinese dairy products and sparked raids in supermarkets across Asia. Twelve truckloads of candy, yogurt and other dairy-based goods were burned in Indonesia's capital, Jakarta, just this week.

In light of Thursday reports by state media on the widespread use of the chemical in animal feed, health experts say the government clearly knew melamine was being added for more than a year, since contaminated dog food made it to markets in North America, but didn't crack down on producers as promised.

With the scandal escalating Chinese leaders are now desperate to clean up the country's image, making dozens of arrests in recent weeks and firing local and even high-level officials for negligence.

John Chapple, a Singapore-based adviser to Sinoanalytica, a food analysis laboratory in the Chinese city of Qingdao, said the decision to allow state media to report on the years of melamine use seems to show the government is ready to be more active in dealing with food safety.

However, one is not going to change a hierarchical government system overnight, he added. "It is usually going to be slow to start to react to a crisis, but quick to finally act."

Though China has vowed to boost inspections for melamine contamination, it will be difficult to monitor the countless small, illegally operating manufacturers found across the country, other experts said.

"It could take five or even 10 years" before some companies stop adding the chemical to food products, said Yan, of the US Grains Council.

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trained militants have joined the fray.

The groups are battling for power, for ethnic pride and for control of drug routes in India's northeast, an isolated collection of seven states and hundreds of ethnic groups and subgroups. They fight the government and they fight each other in a region crippled by poverty and political chaos.

But despite years of violence, no one had seen anything like the 13 coordinated bombs that killed 77 people and wounded hundreds in four towns Thursday raising the possibility that better-armed, better-

Bombing onslaught ups ante in India's northeast

AP, Guwahati

It's hard to keep the insurgent groups straight in India's far eastern region:

the United Liberation Front of Asom, the National Democratic Front of Bodoland, the Gorkha Tiger Force and many more.

But despite years of violence, no one had seen anything like the 13 coordinated bombs that killed 77 people and wounded hundreds in four towns Thursday raising the possibility that better-armed, better-

well-armed assaults and bloody bombings. Over the past decade, the violence has killed more than 10,000 people.

The United Liberation Front of Asom, which wants an independent state for the region's ethnic Assamese, is the largest of the northeast's myriad militant groups and the main suspect in Thursday's attack.

Few here, though, believe the group is capable of carrying out such a sophisticated attack, at least not on its own.

Bangladesh Film Development Corporation

Tejgaon, Dhaka-1208

Date: 28/10/2008

International Re-Tender for Import of 35mm Color Picture Negative Film

01 Ministry/Division Ministry of Information, Government of Bangladesh.

02 Agency Bangladesh Film Development Corporation, Dhaka.

03 Procuring entity name Managing Director, BFDC.

04 Procuring entity district Dhaka, Bangladesh.

05 Invitation for Import of 35mm Color Picture Negative Film.

06 Invitation for Ref. No FDC/PD-Import/2007-2008/7/Re/33.

07 Dated 28/10/2008.

08 Procurement method Open Tendering Method (OTM).

09 Budget and source of fund Revenue.

10 Tender package No. 1 No.

11 Tender publication date Import of 35mm Color Picture Negative Film.

12 Tender last selling date & time dt. 30/10/2008 up to 5.00pm.

13 Tender closing date & time dt. 01/11/2008 up to 2.00pm.

14 Tender opening date & time dt. 01/12/2008 at 2.30pm.

15 Name & address of office(s) i) Cash Counter of Accounts Section, BFDC, Tejgaon, Dhaka-1208.

16 i) Selling of tender documents ii) Receiving of tender document iii) Opening of tender document

17 Eligibility of tenderer The tenderer/local agent should have:

a) Professional capability, technical qualification & personnel, reputation, experience, equipment, financial resources.

b) Agency certificate from the manufacturer to participate in the bid (original).

c) Registration from CCI & E and Bangladesh Bank.

d) Up-to-date trade licence issued by Municipal Corporation/authentic authority of Bangladesh.

e) Up-to-date income tax GIFT/TIN certificate & VAT registration (attested).

18 Brief description of goods Import of 35mm Color Picture Negative Film.

19 Price of tender document (Tk) Tk. 3000/- (three thousand) only.

20 Lot No. Identification of lot Location Tender security amount (Tk) Completion time in weeks/months