Suspected US missile CMs asked to up security for kills 12 Pak militants

AP, Islamabad

A suspected US drone fired two missiles yesterday at an alleged hide-out connected to a Taliban leader who has threatened to attack Washington, killing 12 people and wounding several others, officials said.

The attack came a day after Pakistani Taliban leader Baitullah Mehsud claimed responsibility for a deadly attack on a police academy in the eastern city of Lahore, saying it was retaliation for U.S. missile strikes on militant strongholds along the Afghan border . Mehsud also vowed to launch an attack on Washington or even the White House in phone interviews with The Associated Press and local media.

The FBI, however, said he had made similar threats previously and that there was no indication of anything imminent.

A local intelligence official told The Associated Press that the compound attacked Wednesday in a remote area of the Orakzai tribal region near the Afghan border belonged to one of Mehsud's commanders.

Up to 30 suspected militants were at the compound when it was hit, and the Taliban have moved the dead and injured to an undisclosed location, he said.

The strike is believed to be the first in Orakzai, another sign the US is expanding its attack zone, possibly because of pressure on militants to keep moving.

Since the US escalated its missile campaign starting in August, most of the estimated three dozen strikes have landed in North and South Waziristan tribal regions, where Mehsud is

Two other senior intelligence officials said they believe 12 people were killed in the strike, including close associates of Mehsud. But it was difficult to confirm the exact identities of those involved because the Taliban surrounded the area shortly after the attack, they said.

The officials all spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorised to talk to the media.

Liaquat Ali, a local government official in Orakzai, confirmed the attack but could not provide casualty figures or the identities of the people targeted.

Pakistan has publicly protested the attacks, calling them a violation of its sovereignty that also deepens anti-American sentiment. But President Barack Obama's administration has signaled it has no intention of backing off. Officials say the strikes have killed top al-Qaida

122 outfits FROM PAGE 1

VVIPs in India

The Centre has written to the

chief ministers of all the states to

ensure tight security for nearly

two-dozen VVIPs, including

Congress President Sonia

Gandhi and her children Rahul

and Priyanka, during the elec-

Home Minister P

Chidambaram, has listed out

'dos and don'ts' to be ensured

by the state police and paramili-

tary forces during their elec-

tioneering, official sources said

Gandhi, her children Rahul and

Priyanka and Prime Minister

Manmohan Singh have got the

cover of elite Special Protection

UPA chairperson Sonia

The letter, written by Union

PTI, New Delhi

tion campaign.

onWednesday.

Group (SPG).

government's control," he said.

The workshop was organ ised by Bangladesh Enterprise Institute (BEI) at its conference centre at Gulshan in the city. Shafique said Qawmi

madrasas will get government facilities if they come under the government's control.

The law minister said the religion-based terrorism began in the country after 1975 when changes were brought to the constitution through martial law proclamation that opened the door of religious politics. "It would not have been so

easy for fundamentalists to take to terrorism if the 1972 Constitution had remained intact," he added. The minister said, "If the

article 38 of the 72 constitution is restored religious political parties automatically would cease to exist." Without clarifying the ques-

tion whether the government would restore the constitution of 1972, he said, "Wait and see; the government is only two and ahalfmonthsold." Regarding the madrasa

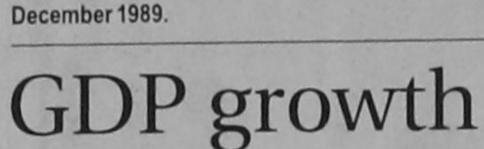
education he said modern education should be introduced in madrasas so that madrasa students could also compete in the job market, business and other fields. He said merging the money-

laundering act with that of the anti terrorism act would help the government fight Islamist militancy as money laundering is linked with terrorism. Differing with some points

of the law minister former adviser to the caretaker government Maj Gen (retd) Moinul Hossain Chowdhury said, "It is not the amendment to the constitution rather it is the economic problem that gave rise to militancy. "Moinul said the reasons

behind Islamist militancy lie with the gulf of difference between rich and poor, our education system, unemployment and overall law and order situation. BEI President Farooq

Sobhan, former IGP Nurul Huda, former adviser to the caretaker government Shafi Shamialso spoke.



FROM PAGE 1

could range between 4.5 and 5.5 percent, depending on the extent of the impact of global economic crisis on exports and remittance in the last quarter of the current fiscal year. Our GEP colleagues choose to present 4.5 percent growth for Bangladesh in order to highlight the downsiderisk," he said.

"I should emphasise that even this, what you may consider conservative growth forecast, is the second highest in the developing world--only China has a higher growth forecast--and the highest in South Asia. The forecast for

markets--is projected to contract 3 percent instead of 0.3 percent contraction projected for 2009 earlier in

The GEP said South Asia has been marked down to 3.7 percent growth for 2009 from 5.4 percent anticipated earlier--and down from 5.6 percent registered in 2008. GEP said, "Though terms

of trade has moved in favour of the region, with the fall in oil price weakening demand in export markets is being felt sharply as is a tempering of services exports from India's high tech centres, as capital spending wanes globally. Remittance is anticipated to ease as conditions in host countries falter, albeit with some lag. Capital inflows have diminished contributing to falloff in investment growth, notably in India. Fiscal support for slowing economies may face constraints in already quite high budget deficits.

"World Bank analysis shows that poor people are feeling the impact of the crisis across the world, many of whom were already hit hard by the food and fuel crises. The pace of poverty reduction has slowed with about 65 million people estimated to remain under the \$2 a day poverty line in 2009 as a result of the crisis." Justin Yifu Lin, WB chief

economist and senior vicepresident of Development Economics, said, "Conditions of recession are affecting the world's poorest people, makthan ever to sudden shocks-but also reducing the opporand frustrating their hopes. This could reverse years of

1,000MW plants

This image released by the US Geological Survey (USGS) and the Alaska Volcano Observatory (AVO), shows Mount Redoubt in Alalska

as it erupts on March 31, 2009, hurling ash and smoke high into the atmosphere. The last significant blast from Mount Redoubt began in

off the talks on an agreement for constructing nuclear power plants and peaceful use of nuclear energy. The Russian team, which arrived earlier this week, presented an overview of the Russian nuclear technology on Tuesday.

Bangladesh's current energy situation. "We discussed the existing infrastructure, transmission capacity, manpower and possible sites for setting up

Cairn FROM PAGE 16

refuses to do so, Cairn can go to a third buyer. The discoverer of Sangugas

field in Block-16 proposed to undertake a \$40 million work programme including a threedimensional seismic survey in the proposed Companyganj "ring-fenced" structure. But Petrobangla's decision

goes in favour of Bapex, although the financially weak but gradually developing national petroleum exploration company does not plan to work in that area in the next

Chittagong will continue to suffer from gas crisis for many more years. If Petrobangla could fine-tune the Block-10 PSC and get Cairn to work there, there were chances of finding and developing gas from there, and taking it to the national grid 25 km away. It might have been a better solution," noted an official.

After three years of negotia- nuclear power plant.

Neazuddin. The science and ICT minis-

try will prepare a report on the talks and submit it to the prime minister.

between the two sides if the negotiation succeeds, paving the way for reaching a final deal. The Russian team also includes Nikolay Poznyakov, head of external affairs of

Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission in Savar yesterday Bangladesh has long been nursing a nuclear power plant site at Rooppur, feasibility studies for which certified the

nomically viable. International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) representatives, who visited the site in November 2008, also gave Bangladesh the go-ahead with the project.

In line the 19-point sugges-

officials. Earlier in 1980, Bangladesh's National Economic Council

Dhaka has sought assistance from South Korea in setting up nuclear plants in Bangladesh. A total of 431 nuclear power

plants operating worldwide at present provide about 16 percent of the global electricity.

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Manpower market

The recruitment might begin after three to four months when Malaysia is expected to return to its political and economic stability. Both Bangladesh and

Malaysia were embarrassed as jobless workers are living here and there, even under the bridge, said Mosharraf. The minister went to

himself the situation Bangladeshi workers are in and meet the ministers concerned and employers there. He met Malaysian Human Resources Minister Dr Subramaniam and Home

Malaysia on March 28 to see for

Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar. "When I was talking to workers tears welled up in my eyes," he said referring to his visit to a house where the Bangladesh High Commission in Kuala

Lumpur sheltered 150 jobless

workers. The minister said workers lost their jobs because unscrupulous businessmen hired excessive workers, for example a company needs 20 workers but it hires 100 instead," he said.

"Problems are on both sides. Malaysian ministers said their people cannot be saints when thousands of crores of taka fly in the air." Mosharraf Hossain said, hinting corruption at the manpower recruitment business.

He said it happened before the present government came to power and now the government would have to take stern actions against agencies involved in such malpractices.

Asked if Bangladesh High Commission in Kuala Lumpur failed to verify the genuineness of job approvals that led to hiring excess workers, the minister said it surely had

manpower in labour wing of the addressed, he noted. Cancellation of visas of

55,000 jobseekers was basically a political decision, the minister

KLW-32W400A

In an emergency cabinet meeting, Malaysia decided to cancel visas following Bangladesh's Labour Counselor Talat Mahmud's remark that 70,000 Bangladeshi workers would enter Malaysia. The comment came at a time when 28,000 Malaysians lost their jobs in Singapore.

"Talat Mahmud has already been called back," he said adding that departmental actions would be taken against him.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh

Association of International Recruiting Agency (Baira) President Ghulam Mustafa who led an eight-member delegation to Malaysia besides the government team said they are hopeful Malaysia will soon start hiring Bangladeshi workers in plantation and construction At a press conference at Baira

office in the capital, Mustafa said their visit to Malaysia was very fruitful. "We requested Malaysian

ministers to include Bangladesh as a source country so that the migration cost could be minimized. They said they would consider the issue, "he said. Asked what happens it

Malaysia does not finally recruit the 55,000 jobseekers, Mustafa said their money would surely be returned to them.

38 rebels killed

FROM PAGE 16 the LTTE as a full-time activist, the Ministry said.

"This is what to be expected in the coming days as more senior Tigers will be exposed to direct military attacks," it quoted a defence observer as saying, adding that the loss of Madivalahan was a major setback for the There has been shortage of rebeloutfit. The government today also

commission but now it is being said that LTTE supremo V Prabhakaran's son Charles Anthony has been injured in clashes with the security forces. PTI

G20 protesters

Especially in Britain, bankers have been lambasted as being greedy and blamed for the recession that is making jobless ranks soar.

Protesters waved banners reading "Banks are evil," "Eat the bankers," and "0% interest in others."

One protester dressed as the Easter bunny managed to hop through the police cordon but was stopped before he could reach the Bank of England. Another black-clad demonstrator waved a fake light saber at officers.

Musician and political activist Billy Bragg said the time was now to make a differ-"It's better than sitting

down shouting at the television at these bankers," he said. "We cannot go back to the way things were before to the million-dollar bonus culture.'

BSF to check

FROM PAGE 16

The work related to maintenance of boundary pillars along the India-Bangladesh border also came up for discussions during the three-day meet at BSF headquarters in New Delhi from March 30 to April 1. BDR DG Brig Gen Mainul led a sixmember delegation at the border conference.

On extradition of Ulfa leaders, Mainul said, "I'm not in a position to comment. But I can assure you as Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has stated that the country will not harbour any one who harms our country or neighbouring country."

"We have shared our common concerns. We hope that we can resolve many issues in near future under democratically elected governments," said the BDR DG.

The chiefs of BDR and BSF earlier signed a Joint Record of Discussions.



November." Zahid Hossain said,

"World trade volume growth has also been revised downwards substantially. It is now ing. them more vulnerable projected to decline by 6.1 percent in 2009, a significantly sharper contraction in tunities available to them, trade volumes of manufactured products (Bangladesh's main exports). In November, progress and is nothing less drop in world trade volume in than an emergency for devel-2009 was projected at 2.1 opment."

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nuclear power units," said FROM PAGE 1 Bangladesh and Russia kicked

Yesterday's talks focused on

"This could mean

tion, the PSC for Block-10 was signed in July 2001 between Petrobangla and Shell and Cairn with the obligation to conduct seismic surveys covering 1,000 km and drill two exploratory wells. Shell later pulled out of Bangladesh, selling its stakes to Cairn that discovered Sangufield in 1996.

A memorandum of understanding might be signed

Russian International Relations Department, who visited the

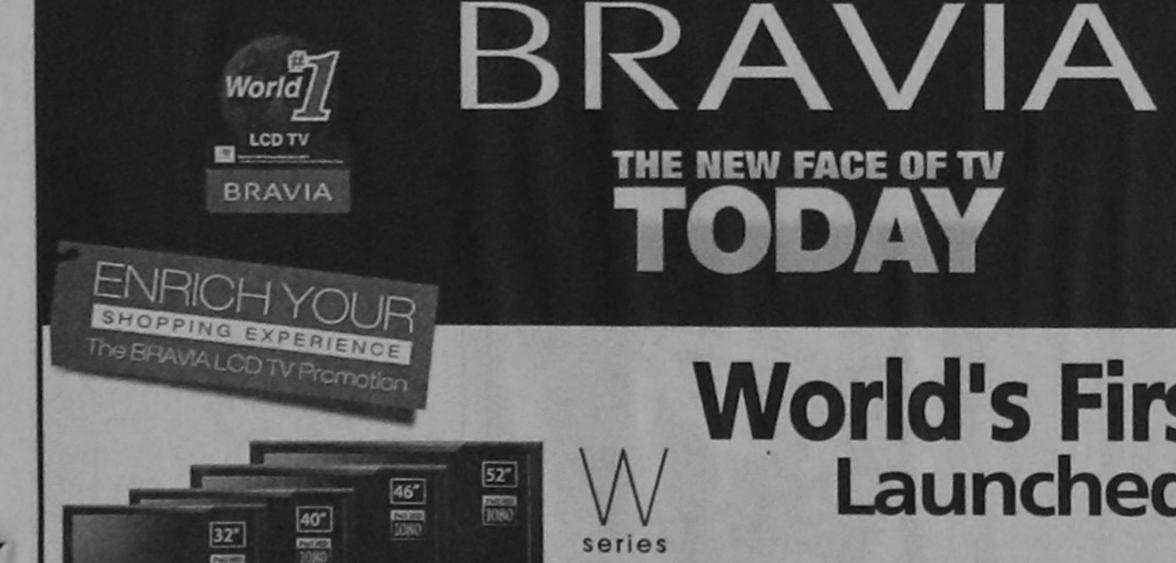
afternoon. project as technically and eco-

The IAEA, which gave Bangladesh technical support, also suggested completing certain regulatory and safety tasks besides infrastructure development at Rooppur.

tion of the IAEA, the government prepared a draft improving the existing nuclear law. Once the draft is finalised, it will be sent to Geneva for comments before being approved, said

approved the proposal for installation of the Rooppur

The project had been originally taken up in 1961. In recent negotiations,



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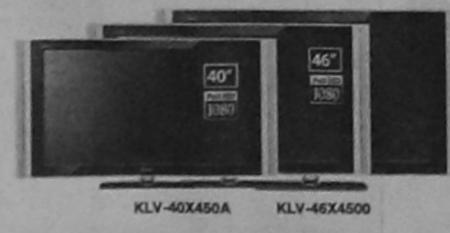
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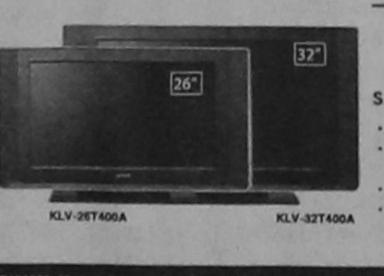
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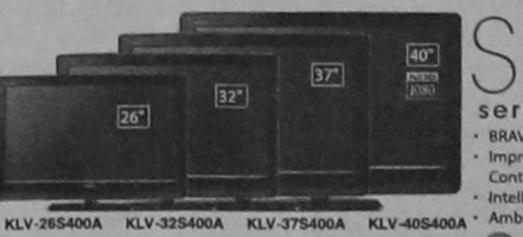
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