

# Troops kill 60 rebels, make largest Afghan drugs bust

AFP, Kabul

Troops killed 60 militants and seized their largest-ever drugs haul in a just-ended operation that smashed an insurgent hub in southern Afghanistan, the military said Saturday.

The four-day operation was in Helmand province where a British soldier was killed in a separate incident on Friday, officials said.

The operation ended overnight when air strikes destroyed 92 tonnes of drugs and masses more heroin-processing chemicals and bomb-making materials collected in the sweep of Marja, southwest of the provincial capital Lashkar Gah.

"A total of 60 militants were eliminated as they mounted an ineffective and uncoordinated defence against friendly forces," a joint US and Afghan military statement said, issuing a final tally.

The statement said the troops had also "seized the single-largest drug cache by Afghan-led forces in Afghanistan to date".

They moved all "friendly elements" from a bazaar in the area at midnight Friday, it said.

"With the area cordoned off, precision air strikes destroyed the narcotics, bomb-making materials, weapons and munitions discovered during the operation," it said.

"The air strikes targeted specific militant buildings used as command

nodes and drug-making facilities in which attacks against Afghan and coalition forces were coordinated."

Helmand, where thousands of British troops are based for a Nato-led military force helping Afghanistan, is the main producer of Afghan opium, which accounts for more than 90 per cent of the world's supply.

Most of it is turned into heroin and smuggled to markets in Europe, Asia and the Middle East.

The vast province is also a stronghold for the Taliban, who were in government between 1996 and 2001 and are now waging an al-Qaeda-linked insurgency.

The operation had confirmed that Marja was a "hub of multiple types of militant and criminal activity", the statement said.

## Prabhakaran cremated

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lankan security forces have cremated the body of Tamil Tiger supremo Velupillai Prabhakaran, army chief Sarath Fonseka said in an interview to be published on Sunday.

General Fonseka told the Sunday Rivira newspaper that positive identification of Prabhakaran's body came on Tuesday morning following heavy fighting in the north-eastern Mullaitivu district the previous day.

"We cremated the body in the same area and threw the ashes into the (Indian) ocean," Fonseka said. "Even before Prabhakaran was killed, I knew we had won the war, but I was overjoyed when I had confirmation of his death."



PHOTO: AFP

Aerial picture shows a general view of the abandoned conflict zone yesterday where Tamil Tiger separatists made their last stand before their defeat by the Sri Lankan army in the northeast of Sri Lanka. United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon flew over the zone and also visited the Menik Farm camp, which houses tens of thousands of internally displaced Sri Lankans.

## India to push for friendly ties with neighbours

Says news FM SM Krishna

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

India yesterday said it was ready to extend its "hand of friendship and partnership" to Pakistan and said terror infrastructure in that country was a "stumbling block" in improving bilateral ties.

SM Krishna, who was named as external affairs minister on Saturday, said he would work for pushing ties with India's neighbours and consolidate relations with rest of the world, including the US, Russia, China, Japan and European Union.

In his first interaction to media after his appointment, he said India wanted to have friendly and peaceful relations with its neighbours as it was essential for its main goal of achieving the economic growth rate of 9 to 10 per cent.

To a question on Pakistan, Krishna, who will take over on Monday, said "we stand ready to extend our hand of

friendship and partnership to Pakistan. It may take determined and credible action to dismantle the infrastructure of terrorism operating there." That has been a stumbling block (in improvement of relations). It is for Pakistan to take these necessary steps (to dismantle terror infrastructure) so that all of us can live in peace."

## My first job to strengthen party: Rahul

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE, New Delhi

As the buzz about whether he would become a minister intensified Friday, Rahul Gandhi categorically said his first job was to strengthen the Congress party.

"Elections come and go. My job is to strengthen the party," the Congress general secretary told IANS soon after the first lot of cabinet ministers in the new government took oath at Rashtrapati Bhavan.

## India wants to move forward on N-deal

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE, Washington

India has assured US industry that the India-US civil nuclear deal was very high on the priority of the new government and it would very much like to move forward on it.

Noting that the US did the "heavy lifting" in getting the nuclear deal through, Indian Ambassador Meera Shankar told the US-India Business Council (USIBC) on Thursday that India was keen at com-

mercial deals with US manufacturers for building nuclear reactors.

To facilitate the process, New Delhi was looking at speeding up negotiations on arrangements to give effect to India's right to reprocess US origin spent fuel and wanted to pursue this vigorously.

New Delhi was also looking at expediting joining the international nuclear liability convention, another issue of concern for US nuclear suppliers, she said.



PHOTO: AFP

This combination of images shows politicians with their new cabinet designations after Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh allocated key cabinet posts following formation of his new cabinet on Friday elections: Top row (L/R) Sharad Pawar (Agriculture), AK Antony (Defence), P Chidambaram (Home). Bottom row (L/R) Pranab Mukherjee (Finance), SM Krishna (External Affairs), Mamata Banerjee (Railways).

## Books, letter to be used in case against Suu Kyi

UN urges Myanmar to release all political prisoners

AP, Nya U, Myanmar

Several items left by an uninvited American visitor, including a book on the Mormon faith and a letter, could be used to convict and imprison Myanmar pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi on charges of violating her house arrest, a state-run newspaper said yesterday.

Meanwhile, the UN Security Council called for the release of all political prisoners in military-ruled Myanmar including Suu Kyi and expressed concern over the political impact her trial, which started Monday.

"The members of the Security Council express their concern about the political impact of recent developments related to Daw Aung San

Suu Kyi," the council said in a statement. The council members "reiterate the importance of the release of all political prisoners," the statement added.

Prosecutors accused Suu Kyi on Friday of accepting the items left by John W. Yettaw, the Myanmar Ahlin newspaper said. Yettaw swam across a lake to her Yangon home under the cover of darkness earlier this month and entered her compound uninvited.

Yettaw left at least six books including the "Book of Mormon," the newspaper said. He also left a letter written by his daughter, which Suu Kyi later ripped up, it said. They were among 23 items that Suu Kyi handed over to police including two black robes, a flashlight and three sets of goggles.

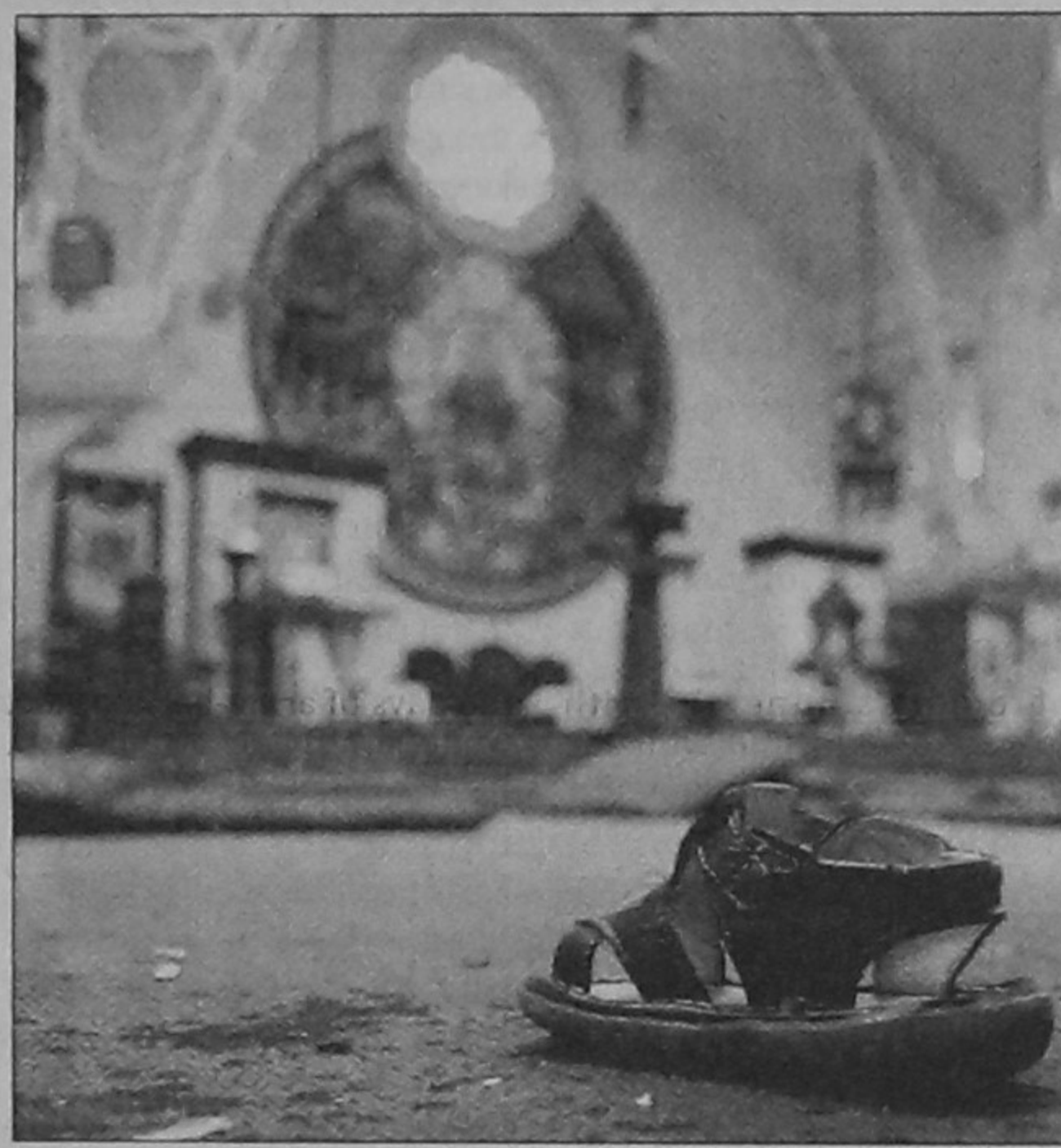


PHOTO: AFP

The shoe of a child lies beside a bloodied carpet at the bomb blast site inside a church in Kathmandu yesterday. Two people were killed, including a teenage girl, and 14 wounded when a bomb exploded in the church packed with worshippers on the outskirts of the Nepalese capital Kathmandu.

## Bombing in Nepali church kills 2

AP, AFP, KATHMANDU/ Washington

A bomb exploded in a church in the Nepalese capital during Saturday morning Mass, killing two people and wounding 15, police said.

The blast at the Church of the Assumption in Kathmandu killed a 14-year-old Indian girl and a 30-year-old woman, said police official Prabhakar Pudasini. The girl was identified as a high school student from the Indian town of Betiah.

It was the first such attack on a Christian church in Nepal where most of the population is Hindu or Buddhist. Religious violence is rare.

Officials said an underground Hindu extremist group claimed responsibility for the attack.

## British expenses scandal fuels election calls: Poll

AFP, London

Britain's shocking expenses row is fuelling calls for early elections, a poll indicated Saturday as a "whistleblower" behind the embarrassing revelations said he was proud of his role.

The opinion poll, showing two thirds of Britons want elections this year rather than next, adds to pressure on embattled Prime Minister Gordon Brown as he grapples with renewed economic bad news.

In the latest revelations of what lawmakers have charged to the taxpayer - ranging from tennis court repairs to a "duck island" over the last two weeks, one was found to have spent thousands of pounds for security gates.

Opposition Conservative business spokesman Jonathan Djanogly will have to pay back

25,000 pounds (28,000 euros, 40,000 dollars) out of over 77,000 pounds reportedly spent at his property, according to the Daily Telegraph newspaper.

Djanogly had automatic security gates installed at his house in Huntingdon, eastern England, at a cost of nearly 5,000 pounds, said the paper, whose revelations over the last 16 days have rocked British politics to the core.

In a statement, the member of parliament said this was on police advice because of threats from animal rights activists.

In the last two weeks, the Telegraph has published the expense claims, paid for from the public purse, of over 200 of Britain's 646 lawmakers, prompting a furious reaction from commentators and the public.

**SONY** like.no.other™

**BRAVIA**

THE NEW FACE OF TV TODAY

১টি এলসিডি টিভি কিনলে ১টি থ্রি এলসিডি টিভি ফ্রি

ক্যাশ ডিস্কাউন্ট **১০,০০০** পর্যন্ত

50" E-50A10 FREE with V-52 LCD

42" E-42A10 FREE with V-46 LCD

**ক্যাশ ডিস্কাউন্ট ১০,০০০**

পণ্য ভেদে সর্বোচ্চ টাকা পর্যন্ত

**RANGS**

সনি সাইবারশট ও হ্যান্ডিক্যাম **১৫০০** টাকা ডিস্কাউন্ট

সনি প্রজেক্টর **১৭,৬০০** টাকা ডিস্কাউন্ট

সনি হোমথিয়েটার **১৫০০** টাকা ডিস্কাউন্ট

সনি রঙ্গিন টেলিভিশন **১৫০০ থেকে ২০০০** টাকা ডিস্কাউন্ট

সাইড বাই সাইড ডোর রেফ্রিজারেটর **১৫ টি আকর্ষণীয় মডেল**

র্যাংগস রেফ্রিজারেটর **১২০০** ডিস্কাউন্ট

র্যাংগস ফ্যান রিমোট সিস্টেম **২০০০** ডিস্কাউন্ট

র্যাংগস আইপিএস **২০০০** ডিস্কাউন্ট

র্যাংগস মাইক্রোওয়েভ ও ইলেকট্রিক ওভেন **৫০০** পর্যন্ত ডিস্কাউন্ট

র্যাংগস রঙ্গিন টেলিভিশন **১২০০** টাকা পর্যন্ত ডিস্কাউন্ট

৪০ টি আকর্ষণীয় মডেল

**MAGIC SING**

২০০০ টাকা ছাড়! +২৫০ বাংলা গান ফ্রি

অতিরিক্ত আড়াইশ বাংলা গানের মেমোরিটিপ মাত্র ১৫,২০০

দাইশিন জেনারেটর **২০০০** ডিস্কাউন্ট

র্যাংগস ওয়াশিং মেশিন **৫০০** ডিস্কাউন্ট

এ সুযোগ **SONY RANGS** বিক্রয় কেন্দ্রে

Made in Japan