

## FBI recovers inflammatory al-Qaeda videos

PTI, Washington

Giving a new dimension to the LeT plot to attack Indian facilities, FBI sleuths have recovered two inflammatory al-Qaeda videos containing speeches by Osama bin Laden and other terrorists from the house of Pakistan-born Canadian Tahawwur Hussain Rana, who was arrested last month.

Produced by 'As Sahab Media', commonly acknowledged to be the media wing of al-Qaeda, one of the videos is titled 'Bombing of Denmark Embassy' and was recovered from the living room of 48-year-old Rana, who has been staying in Chicago for nearly a decade.

Rana was arrested by FBI last month along with David Coleman Headley, 49, for planning attacks on National Defence College in Delhi, Doon school in Dehradun and Woodstock in Mussoorie, besides some other facilities at the LeT's behest.

## Nepal peace process deadlocked, says UN

PTI, United Nations

A top UN official told the Security Council that the peace process in Nepal faced dead-end, "with an added risk of confrontation and violence".

"Despite continuing efforts, the level of trust among the major parties has continued to dwindle," said Karin Landgren, head of the UN Mission in Nepal (UNMIN), while presenting the latest report of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to the Council.

Landgren noted that the past few days have seen low-level clashes between the Maoist-affiliated Yong Communist League and the Unified Maoist-Leninist Youth Force in some eastern districts.

## S African man hits jackpot twice in 7yrs!

ANI, London

A South African man has scooped lottery jackpot twice in seven years.

The 34-year-old, who has asked to remain anonymous, came forward recently to claim 2.4 million pounds on South Africa's PowerBall draw - less than a decade after he collected 880,000 pounds in a previous competition, reports The Telegraph.

Thembi Tulwana, spokesman for South Africa's Lottery operator Gidani, said: "It's simply incredible. The odds on him winning twice were galactic. I have no idea what his secret is. He's just a lucky bloke."

The double winner is believed to be a successful businessman from South Africa's Limpopo province.



Young Palestinians wave their national flag during a demonstration in support of President Mahmoud Abbas and urging him to seek re-election, in the West Bank city of Jenin yesterday.

## 11 dead in Russian military plane crash

AFP, Moscow

A Russian military plane crashed into the sea during a training exercise in Russia's Far East region, leaving all eleven crew members missing and presumed dead, officials said yesterday.

The Tupolev Tu-142 plane disappeared from radar as it was coming to the end of a training mission Friday over the Tatarski Strait that divides Russia's Far East island of Sakhalin from the mainland, the defence ministry said.

"Given the conditions under which the catastrophe took place, we can presume that all the crew aboard the Tu-142 were killed," a source in the emergencies ministry told the RIA Novosti news agency.

"But search operations will continue as long as there is the slightest hope of finding someone alive," the official added.

Military sources told Russian news agencies that there were 11 crew aboard the plane. Previously, officials had said there were 10 crew members.

An emergencies ministry source in the Khabarovsk region in the Far East told RIA Novosti that in the early morning an object was found at a depth of 44 metres (144 feet) underwater "which appears to be the fuselage of the plane".

"Objects are being investigated at water level which could be fragments of the plane," the source added.

Search teams lead by Russia's Pacific Fleet were currently searching for the plane's black boxes and could use special submersibles to locate them, RIA Novosti said.

A defence ministry source told the agency that the most likely cause of the crash was a technical fault. Investigators have opened a criminal enquiry into the possible infringement of flight rules and preparation, it said.

## Japan steps up aid to Mekong nations

AFP, Tokyo

The leaders of Japan and Southeast Asia's five Mekong River nations wrapped up a summit Saturday at which Tokyo pledged more than 5.5 billion dollars in loans and grants and vowed deeper ties.

Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama told a press conference the Mekong region was a "priority area" for Japan's official development assistance (ODA) as it seeks to boost development in the resource-rich area.

A joint declaration said "Japan commits more than 500 billion yen of ODA in the next three years" for the further development of the Mekong region, which includes Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, Myanmar and Thailand.

"We strongly recognised the need for further strengthening of the Mekong-Japan relationship and cooperation to maximise the potential of the Mekong region," the statement said.

Asian giants Japan and China have for years poured aid and investment into the region, home to more than 220 million people, and are seen increasingly as competitors for influence.

Hatoyama said it was "not fair to say China's increasing involvement in the Mekong region is a disadvantage for Japan," noting Tokyo and Beijing had begun to coordinate policies towards the region.

"It is very important to create mutual benefits by cooperating each other" for "win-win-win relations" among Japan, China and the Mekong nations, he said.

Much of the region along the lower reaches of the 4,800-kilometre (2,980-mile) Mekong River has historically been isolated by war and political turmoil and remains poorer than other parts of Southeast Asia.

# Abbas' move reflects deep Palestinian despair

AP, Jerusalem

By saying he wants to step down as president, Mahmoud Abbas has highlighted a deep Palestinian despair rooted in decades of failed peace initiatives and fruitless violence.

Neither strategy has yielded a Palestinian state, and Israeli settlements still encroach on lands that would make up their would-be nation.

Facing a hawkish Israeli government and an Obama administration reluctant to put muscle behind its demands on Israel, many Palestinians say they see no hope at all.

"I am frustrated with so-called peace and the so-called 'two-state solution,'" said Rami Hassouna, a 34-year-old construction contractor in the West Bank city of Ramallah. "If all of this was one percent possible before, now I think it's impossi-

ble."

Moderate Palestinians are worried that Abbas, in saying he doesn't want another term in office, will only deepen frustrations and boost the militants who claim violence is the only option.

Some top Israelis also urged him to reconsider, but the widespread feeling on their side is that they offered Abbas sweeping concessions and got no response.

While Israel in recent months has eased restrictions on movement in Palestinian areas and the West Bank has enjoyed a limited economic recovery, the political stalemate is raising the spectre of new violence.

"I think that this position of President Abbas is ringing the alarm that things have been deteriorating in Palestine and in Palestinian-Israeli relations," said Palestinian government spokesman

Ghassan Khatib.

On the day after Abbas' Thursday speech, Palestinians debated whether their president was serious about not running in Jan. 24 elections, or was just trying to shake things up. It's also far from clear whether the vote can be held at all, given that 1.5 million Palestinians live in the Gaza Strip, a territory now ruled by Hamas militants who do not recognise Abbas' authority.

But the mere threat to step down has heightened Palestinians' fear that their dream of independence is slipping away.

Palestinian exasperation with President Barack Obama is running high. He began his term by reaching out to Muslims and promising zero tolerance for new Israeli settlement construction. The Obama team has since shifted stance, and many Palestinians believe their leader was simply hung out to dry.



Thai Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva (R) walks with his Japanese counterpart Yukio Hatoyama prior to their meeting in Tokyo yesterday. The leaders of Japan and Southeast Asia's five Mekong River nations wrapped up a summit at which Tokyo pledged more than 5.5 billion USD in loans and grants and vowed deeper ties.

## Why people love horror movies

ANI, Washington

The success of horror films like "Paranormal Activity" and the classic "Exorcist" has left many scientists wondering why people love the spooky genre so much.

Experts have said that it's not merely an attraction to blood and gore that people money to get scared. Researchers have said that this could be because the thrill calls up primal behaviour, mainly in males, to assess threat levels.

"People go to horror films because they want to be frightened or they wouldn't do it twice," Live Science quoted Jeffrey Goldstein, a professor of social and organisational psychology at the University of Utrecht in the Netherlands.

"You choose your entertainment because you want it to affect you. That's certainly true of people who go to entertainment products like horror films that have big effects. They want those effects," he added.

## Japan on al-Qaeda's prime target list

### Says French anti-terror judge

AFP, Paris

Former French investigating judge Jean-Louis Bruguiere said that Japan is among al-Qaeda's prime targets for attack, while promoting a book about his 25 years fighting terrorism.

Bruguiere, now retired at 65, also describes Pakistan as the "cauldron" of terrorism and blames ex-president Pervez Musharraf for failing to address the threat of extremists during his seven years in power.

"Japan has become a prime target for al-Qaeda," Bruguiere told journalists late Thursday at an event for the release of his book "Ce que je n'ai pas pu dire" (What I Couldn't Reveal).

Japan's geographical position and, in particular, its large Pakistani community make the country vulnerable to an attack, he said.

The retired judge said he had alerted Japan of the threat as he had done for the United States before the September 11, 2001 attacks.

"The danger nowadays is Pakistan," he said, describing the country as a "cauldron" of extremism that was allowed to fester under Musharraf's rule.

A 2003 investigation found Pakistani army officers were acting as instructors in training camps run by the Islamist group Lashkar-e-Taiba, he said.

Bruguiere led the 2002 probe of the Karachi bombing that killed 11 French engineers who were helping Pakistan build its first submarine.

During his long career, he also conducted high-profile probes of the Rwandan genocide, the 2004 Madrid attacks and the 1995 Paris subway bombings carried out by Algerian militants.



Iran's parliament speaker Ali Larijani (R) waves to the press after meeting with Iraq's top Shia cleric Grand Ayatollah Ali Hussein al-Sistani in the holy city of Najaf, 150km from Baghdad yesterday. Larijani is ending a four-day official visit to Iraq.

## Admin in disarray

FROM PAGE 1

"The establishment ministry's vision and mission will be redefined in keeping with the spirit of the liberation war in order to improve its efficiency, and to make the bureaucracy pro-people and service oriented," Imam, a former cabinet secretary, said.

The bureaucrat turned politician said the administration could be rid of partisanship, if the civil servants are competent and honest. "Inefficient officers get involved in party politics for personal gains," he claimed.

Twenty two commissions and committees have so far been formed in different times to streamline the bureaucracy, with almost every government venturing to form at least one such bodies since the independence of the country. They produced volumes of reports, but a very few have been implemented.

"Due to various constraints, the recommendations of those commissions and committees were either partially implemented or ignored totally. Consequently, the administrative structure has remained almost the same as it was during the colonial period," according to a report of the Public Administration Reform Commission (PARC), which was constituted in January 1997 with former secretary ATM Shamsul Haque as its chairman.

PARC submitted its report in five volumes to the then prime minister in 2000-01 with 598 recommendations for short, medium and long

terms, but most of those remained in paper, except a few like pay hikes for public servants, and formation of the Anti-corruption Commission.

It also suggested that merit should be the basis for appointments, postings, and promotions at all levels of the public administration. But no initiative was taken by the past governments to implement such recommendations.

The report also suggested formation of three clusters of closely related ministries in Bangladesh Secretariat -- general, economic, and socio-physical infrastructure -- with officials of the levels of deputy secretary and higher. The socio-physical infrastructure cluster would be comprised of ministries that deal with social and physical infrastructure development, the economic cluster would comprise ministries related to the country's economy, and the general cluster would be comprised of other ministries.

The foreign affairs ministry and the law ministry may remain outside the clusters, the report added.

The immediate past caretaker regime also embarked on an ambitious plan to infuse dynamism into the administration, and ensure its accountability and transparency. A five-member committee was then formed for reforms, and for guidelines for postings and transfers at the central and field-level administrations. The committee was also supposed to give directives for career planning and improving performances of public servants. But that too went into hibernation.

An adviser to the last caretaker government, AMM Shawkat Ali, who was a member of the committee, said nothing can be achieved if the recommendations for administrative reforms are not implemented. "Those who are supposed to work for that, seem uninterested," he told The Daily Star, adding that no major work has so far been done to that end.

About the performance of the current civil administration, the former food and disaster management adviser said, "The prime minister has instructed the secretaries twice to expedite their activities, which means things are not going well."

Neither the process of promotions nor the performance evaluation system has been modified to bring in qualitative changes, as promised by the present government.

Establishment Secretary Iqbal Mahmood however told The Daily Star, "We have prepared a draft of the Civil Service Act while initiatives are also under way to amend the promotion rules to award promotions in a more transparent manner based on merit."

Most ministries and divisions tend to avoid administrative and financial responsibilities delegated to them, causing clogs in the bureaucracy, and affecting public services, an inquiry report of the cabinet division observed last year.

"About 75 percent of the stockpiled files could be cleared readily, if the officials concerned had exercised the

authority given to them by rules," the report mentioned.

"There has been a lack of transparency, accountability, and responsibility among the officers, and no practice of punishment for not discharging official duties on time. The result is -- files continuing to pile up on secretariat desks as senior bureaucrats often tend not to use their discretion, and keep sitting on documents instead," said a senior bureaucrat.

The inquiry report, prepared by the then additional secretary to the cabinet division, Md Zahid Hossain, made an eight-point recommendation for infusing dynamism and accountability into the administration, after conducting a random survey in 11 ministries during the immediate past emergency rule.

Many officers in Bangladesh Secretariat, the administrative hub of the country, said the officers who are not carrying out respective duties, should be brought under a system of punishments. "The practice of not working should be considered as an offence," observed one of them.

Like the past governments, the government of Sheikh Hasina also initiated a fresh move in October in collaboration with UNDP to bring reforms to both the central and field-level administrations. A report on clustering the ministries, transfers, postings, and promotions is expected in three months.

"If the government accepts the report, then the implementation phase will come," said Shawkat Ali.

## Dinosaur foot prints found in NZ

AFP, Nelson

Scientists have discovered the first evidence that dinosaurs roamed the South Island of New Zealand with 70-million-year-old footprints found in six locations.

They are the first dinosaur footprints found in the country although bones, mostly vertebrae, have been discovered in two North Island locations.

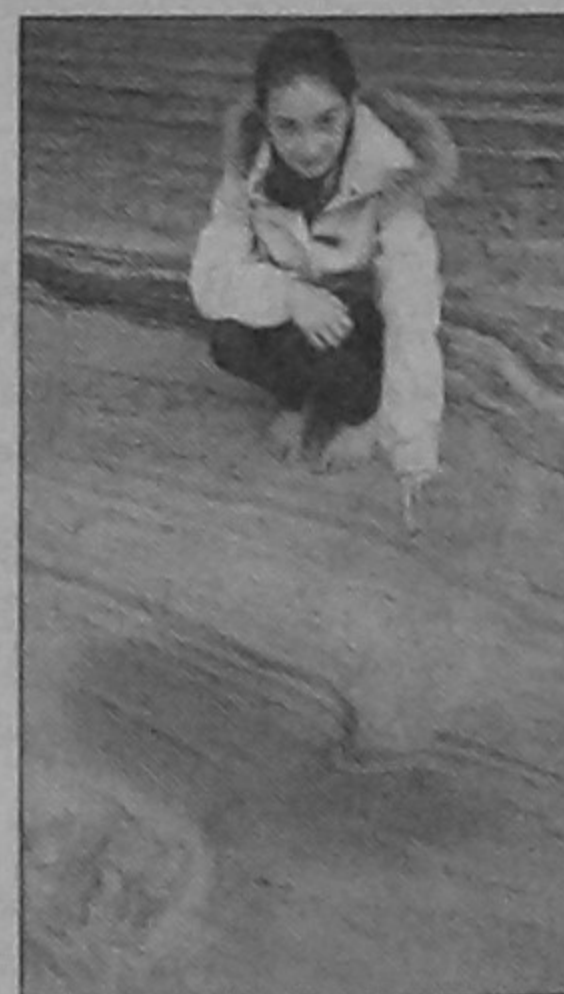
The footprints were found by scientist Greg Browne in the remote Whanganui Inlet in the northwest of Nelson at the top of the South Island.

They are spread over 10 kilometres and in one area there are up to 20 footprints, Browne said.

Browne, a sedimentologist, believes the footprints belonged to sauropods -- plant-eating dinosaurs which were among the largest animals to have lived, growing up to six metres (yards) in length and weighing several tonnes.

He said he carefully considered all possible geological and biological explanations for the features in the rock and was able to rule them out one by one.

His investigation included comparisons with dinosaur footprints in similar-aged rocks in other parts of the world.



Handout photo shows Sophie Thomson next to one of six 70 million-year-old footprints found in various locations in the Nelson region of New Zealand. They are the first dinosaur footprints found in New Zealand although bones, mostly vertebrae, have been found in two North Island locations.

Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh						
Office of the Chief Engineer						
Headquarter, Kurmitola, Dhaka-1229						
Tender Notice						
01.	Agency/Department	Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh.				
02.	Source of funds	CAAB own fund.				
03.	Procurement method	Open tendering method.				
04.	Invitation for tenders Ref. & date	No. CAAB/CE/JW-569(E/M)(Cap.Exp)(Part-12)/ dated 02-11-2009.				
05.	Eligibility of tenderers	CAAB enlisted "A" class & above class E/M contractors or equivalent class contractors enlisted in any govt./semi-govt./autonomous body's having valid "ABC" class electrical contractory & supervisory licence and having experience of amounting to Tk. 10.00 lac only in a single work order within 5(five) years supported by completion certificate issued by an officer not below the rank of Executive Engineer from any govt./semi-govt./autonomous department.				
06.	Name & address of the office(s) selling tender document	Tender papers will be available from CAAB office of the Superintending Engineer (E/M Circle), Director (CEMSU), Executive Engineer (E/M Division-II), P.A. to Member (Ops & Plans), P.A. to Member (Finance) P.A. to Chief Engineer & P.A. to Director, ZIA, during the office hours.				
07.	Name & address of the office receiving tender & opening tender	Office of the Chief Engineer, CAAB, Headquarters, CAAB, Kurmitola, Dhaka.				
08.	Last date & time for selling tender document	Up to 1700 hours on 07-12-2009.				
09.	Last date & time for submission of tender	Up to 1200 hours on 10-12-2009.				
10.	Date & time for opening of tender	At 1530 hours on 10-12-2009.				
11.	Brief description of goods & services (Works & Services)					
	Lot No.	Identification of lot	Name of work	Location	Price of tender document in Taka	Tender security amount in Taka
	1.	Packaged No. GD-42/100/CAAB/E-M-II (DEV)/2009-2010	Supply of tray for different capacity CCR unit at Zia International Airport, Kurmitola, Dhaka	Zia International Airport	Tk. 1000/- (one thousand) only (non-refundable)	Tk. 75,000/- (seventy five thousand) only.
12.	Special condition	The procuring entity reserves the right to accept any tender or part thereof or reject all the tenders without assigning any reason whatsoever.				
13.	Special instruction	In case of any unavoidable circumstances if the transport & communication systems are totally disrupted on the last date of receiving & opening of the tender, the tender will be received & opened on the next office day. Other terms & conditions of the tender will remain unchanged.				
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Muhammad Hossain</b> Superintending Engineer(C/C) E/M Circle For: Chief Engineer CAAB, Kurmitola, Dhaka</p>						
<p>CAAB/PR-88/2009/1070 Date: 03-11-2009 GD-5032</p>						