

Bomb hidden in trash kills 2 in Baghdad

Govt blames foreign groups for blasts

AP, AFP, Baghdad

An Iraqi police official says a bomb hidden in a garbage heap has killed two people in northern Baghdad.

The official says the blast occurred yesterday at about 8 am as street sweepers were cleaning in the Sunni neighbourhood of Azamiyah. He says two street sweepers were killed and three passers-by were wounded.

The official spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to release the information.

The explosion comes a day after a series of bombings targeted government buildings in Baghdad, killing at least 127 people and wounding more than 500. Funerals were starting in Baghdad for the bombing victims.

Meanwhile, the attackers who carried out a series of co-ordinated bombings in Baghdad on Tuesday that killed 127 people were backed by groups based in Syria or Saudi Arabia, a senior Iraqi policeman said on Wednesday.

"This material could not have been manufactured in Baghdad, it came from abroad," Major General Jihad al-Jaabiri, the head of Iraq's explosives unit, told reporters.

"Neighbouring countries helped them. The operation required lots of funding, which came from Syria or Saudi Arabia."

An interior ministry official said 127 people had been killed and 448 wounded in Tuesday's bombings.

Iraq's prime minister is calling on Iraqis to

stand by their security forces following the string of attacks in Baghdad that have angered lawmakers demanding answers and calling for resignations of security leaders.

Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki asked Iraqis to be patient and remain steadfast during a televised address Wednesday on state-run television.

Al-Maliki and his top security officials have come under fire for security lapses following Tuesday's attacks, the third against government buildings in Baghdad since summer.

Parliamentary lawmakers have called on Iraq's top security officials to appear Thursday before a special session to answer for how bombers found holes in Iraqi security.

The spokesman for the parliament speaker says lawmakers want Iraq's ministers of defence and interior to appear at Thursday's session, called over the attacks the previous day that killed at least 127 people.

It was the third large-scale attack against prominent government buildings in the Iraqi capital since August.

Interior Minister Jawad al-Bolani agreed Wednesday to attend the session under one condition. A statement from his office said al-Bolani would appear only if the session isn't held behind closed doors.

Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki is also expected to attend the session.



Iraqi men clear rubbles from the site of Tuesday's blast near the Finance Ministry in Baghdad yesterday. Iraqi leaders came under fire from enraged MPs for failing to prevent a spate of bombings in the city that killed 127 people, the third major set of attacks to hit the capital since August.

PHOTO: AFP

Climate change affects over a dozen of species

PTI, New York

Over a dozen of animal species like flamingos, musk ox and hawksbill turtle are facing "strange" threats because of climate change, the Wildlife Conservation Society has said.

Releasing the list of animals affected by climate change, the society stated more than a dozen animal species and groups are facing threats due to changing land and sea temperatures, shifting rain patterns and exposure to new diseases, some in strange and unexpected ways.

"The image of a forlorn looking polar bear on a tiny ice floe has become the public image of climate change in nature, but the impact reaches species in nearly every habitat in the world's wild places," said Dr Steven E. Sanderson, president of the Wildlife Conservation Society.

Sanderson said, "In fact, our own researchers are observing direct impacts on a wide range of species across the world."

Afghans shout 'death to US' after civilian deaths

AFP, Jalalabad, Kabul

Hundreds of Afghan students took to the streets yesterday shouting "death to America" to protest at the alleged deaths of civilians during a Nato-led raid, witnesses said.

Most of the some 400 demonstrators were university students in the eastern town of Jalalabad, where they blocked a key highway to the capital Kabul.

"We are protesting against the killing of civilians by Nato and US forces," one demonstrator said.

President Hamid Karzai's office said six civilians, including a woman, died when troops from the Nato-led International Security Assistance Force (Isaf) conducted an operation in the eastern province of Laghman.

Several other people were detained, officials have said. The protesters demanded the release of those arrested and a classmate detained last month in his home province of Paktia, also in the east.

Isaf said it had no reports to substantiate claims of civilian casualties during the joint Afghan-international operation in Laghman. The government says it is investigating the incident in conjunction with Isaf.

Two people were reportedly wounded when security forces opened fire during a similar demonstration in Laghman on Tuesday.

Civilian casualties are highly sensitive in Afghanistan where officials say it creates animosity against the Western-backed government, and 113,000 Nato and US forces fighting against an escalating Taliban insurgency.

Karzai has long called on foreign troops to avoid civilian casualties during operations against insurgents.

Philippine police to net 161 suspects

Clan chief charged with rebellion

AP, Manila

Philippine police yesterday named 161 suspects in the massacre of 57 people last month, including government militiamen led by members of a powerful clan facing murder and rebellion charges.

The patriarch of the clan, Andal Ampatuan Sr, and one of his sons were among 24 people charged with rebellion in a court in the southern city of Cotabato, justice undersecretary Ricardo Blancafor told reporters.

Witnesses have identified Andal Ampatuan Jr, a scion of the clan, leading the group of militiamen who

stopped his rival's convoy that included 30 journalists and their staff on Nov 23 in the southern province of Maguindanao, national police chief Jesus Verzosa told reporters.

He said witnesses told investigators Ampatuan himself shot some of the victims in Ampatuan township named after his family that has ruled the impoverished province unopposed for years.

Police said the militiamen, all but two at large, were identified by witnesses Tuesday. Their names will be submitted to prosecutors to be included in the charge sheet and court warrants of

arrest.

The mug shots of about 100 newly identified suspects were displayed at the national police headquarters in Manila. Of 161 suspects identified by authorities, 100 are militiamen and the remainder are members of the Ampatuan clan or are police, army and local officials working for the Ampatuans. About 30 of them have been arrested.

Ampatuan turned himself in three days after the Nov 23 killings and denied involvement. His father, the family patriarch, and other relatives have been arrested on separate charges of rebellion.

Killing bin Laden key to al-Qaeda defeat

Says McChrystal

AFP, Washington

Killing or capturing Osama bin Laden is the key to defeating the al-Qaeda terror network, the Nato commander in Afghanistan told US legislators in testimony on Capitol Hill.

General Stanley McChrystal added that the additional 30,000 troops ordered by President Barack Obama would turn back insurgent momentum in Afghanistan "by this time next year" and cut off the Taliban

from the population. Testifying Tuesday about the US military surge of forces in Afghanistan, he said of Bin Laden: "I believe he is an iconic figure at this point whose survival emboldens al-Qaeda as a franchising organization across the world."

"It would not defeat al-Qaeda to have him captured or killed, but I don't think that we can finally defeat al-Qaeda until he's captured or killed," McChrystal told the Senate Armed Services Committee. Related article: US general

confident on surge. US officials believe that bin Laden -- considered the chief mastermind of the attacks of September 11, 2001 on New York and Washington that killed nearly 3,000 people -- is hiding along the mountainous Afghan-Pakistani border.

US ambassador to Afghanistan Karl Eikenberry, also speaking at the hearing, said that capturing or killing bin Laden "does remain important to the American people -- indeed, the people of the world."

WB's \$1.5b stuck in procurement row

FROM PAGE 1 projects would be hampered or delayed.

However, the entire amount of the \$1.5 billion would not be spent during this fiscal year and some amount would be carried over to the next fiscal year, the sources add.

Like the WB, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) also in a letter to the finance minister last month expressed their objection to the amended PPA but has not suspended any project.

Insiders at ERD say the ADB in most cases followed their own guidelines instead of the procurement guidelines of Bangladesh. In cases where they followed Bangladesh guidelines, the agreement mentions that the agency would follow their own rules in case of any mismatch.

The ERD officials say the ADB has informed that if the agency gets a procurement proposal from the finance ministry which violates their guidelines, they would not approve it.

However, after the Public Procurement Regulation (PPR) and the PPA were passed in 2003 the WB started following those. But as the government amended the PPA in 2009 the agreements with them were signed following the amended version.

A substantial chunk of the

amount for the 26 projects approved by the WB has not yet been spent.

The original amount in the Clean Air and Sustainable Environment Project was \$62 million, Higher Education Quality Enhancement Project \$81 million,

Dhaka Water Supply and Sanitation Project \$149 million, and Siddhirganj Peaking Power Project \$350 million.

The full amounts in these projects have yet to be disbursed.

The Emergency 2007 Cyclone Recovery and Restoration Project had approval for \$109 million and 97 percent of the amount remains unspent.

The original amount and undisbursed percentage of the Secondary Education Quality and Access Enhancement Project are \$130 million and 81 percent, Additional Financing for Social Investment Programme Project \$25 million and 67 percent, Disability and Children-at-Risk Project \$35 million and 95 percent, Additional Financing for Rural Transport Improvement Project \$210 million and 31 percent, Additional Financing for Municipal Services Project \$25 million and 26 percent, Additional Financing for Social Investment Programme Project \$8 million and 67 percent, and the National Agricultural

Technology Project \$62 million and 87 percent.

The original amount and unspent percentage of the Water Management Improvement Project are \$102 million and 93 percent, Public Procurement Reform Project-II \$23.6 million and 80 percent, Avian Influenza Preparedness and Response Project \$16 million and 96 percent, Local Governance Support Project \$111.5 million and 57 percent, Investment Promotion and Financing Facility Project \$50 million and 27 percent, Health, Nutrition and Population Sector Programme \$300 million and 25 percent, Economic Management Technical Assistance Project \$20 million and 70 percent, Reaching Out-of-School Children Project \$51 million and 29 percent, Water Supply Programme Project \$40 million and 28 percent, Enterprise Growth and Bank Modernization Project \$250 million and 28 percent, Power Sector Development Technical Assistance Project \$15 million and 50 percent, and Second Primary Education Development Programme \$150 million and 25 percent.

The Project Preparation Facilities in two proposed projects -- the Padma Multipurpose Bridge Project and Railway Modernisation Project -- have been allocated \$3 million, but 90 percent of the money is yet to be spent.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Man dresses up as mom to withdraw cash

AP, Franklin, NJ

Police said a Franklin man dressed up as his mother in an attempt to withdraw money from her bank account. Tita Nyambi, 25, was still at the Chase Bank in Franklin, in Somerset County, when police arrived Monday afternoon. Tellers called to report that a man wearing women's clothes and speaking in a high-pitched voice was trying to withdraw money through the bank's drive-through window.

Police said Nyambi handed tellers his mother's license and a bank form forged with her signature. Nyambi was arrested and charged with forgery and attempted theft by deception.

Taiwan PM sorry for calling advocates 'idiots'

AFP, Taipei

Taiwan's premier apologised yesterday after angering the anti-China opposition by saying only "idiots" want independence from the mainland.

"Only irresponsible people or idiots want Taiwan independence," Wu Den-yih, of the pro-Beijing Kuomintang party, told a local radio station Tuesday.

"It's simply impossible for Taiwan to become independent. Even if it did, it would lead to an internal split and cause pressure from abroad."

Japanese doctor guilty of 'mercy killing'

AFP, Tokyo

Japan's Supreme Court yesterday found a doctor guilty of murder for allowing a patient to die at the request of his family, but suspended her 18-month prison sentence.

The top court, in its first ruling on a so-called mercy killing, upheld a lower court's suspended jail term for Setsuko Suda, 55, who still practices in a hospital in Yokohama near Tokyo, a court official said.

US Air Force confirms 'Beast of Kandahar' drone

AFP, Washington

The US Air Force on Tuesday confirmed for the first time that it is flying a stealth unmanned aircraft known as the "Beast of Kandahar," a drone spotted in photos and shrouded in secrecy.

The RQ-170 Sentinel is being developed by Lockheed Martin and is designed "to provide reconnaissance and surveillance support to forward deployed combat forces," the air force said in a brief statement.



Steam rises from underground pipes near a Christmas decoration alongside of a shopping street in Beijing yesterday. China, world's one of the largest carbon gas polluter, has promised to make gains in energy efficiency, but as a developing nation it insists that developed nations should bear most of the cost of tackling climate change.

PHOTO: AFP

Iran criticises new UN nuke observatory

AP, Tehran

An Iranian nuclear official says the purpose of a UN warning station set up in Turkmenistan near the border with Iran is "espionage."

The UN announced last week the new nuclear warning station one of dozens such observatories worldwide that monitor for seismic activity and radioactivity.

The station, just miles from the Iranian border, can detect extremely weak blasts and even shock waves from nuclear experiments.

The Iranian official, Abolfazl Zohrehvand, says the station will only give world powers an opportunity to spy on Iran. Zohrehvand, an adviser to Iran's nuclear negotiator Saeed Jalili, spoke on Wednesday to state IRNA news agency.

The West worries Tehran seeks to build a nuclear weapon, a charge Iran denies.

Brazil police killed more than 11,000 in 6 years

AP, Rio De Janeiro

Police in Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo have killed more than 11,000 people in the past six years, many execution-style, according to a report released Tuesday by Human Rights Watch.

Few of the officers have been charged in the extra judicial killings, which are often labelled in police reports as the deaths of suspects who resisted arrest, the report said.

The 122-page declaration echoes a 2008 United Nations finding that police throughout Brazil were responsible for a "significant portion" of 48,000 killings the year before.

"Extra judicial killing of criminal suspects is not the answer to violent crime," said Jose Miguel Vivanco, America's director at Human Rights Watch. "The residents of Rio and Sao Paulo need more effective policing, not more violence from the police."

South Asian Union

FROM PAGE 1

The Nobel laureate delivered the speech in honour of academic and parliamentarian Prof Hirendranath Mukherjee, better known as Hiren Mukherjee, whose commitment to social justice spanned over 60 years until his death in 2004.

Mukherjee joined the Communist Party of India in 1936 and was elected to the Lok Sabha from Kolkata North East constituency for five consecutive terms beginning in 1952.

Yunus' lecture revolved around the role of social business and also social stock markets in making the "dreams" come true.

A social business, he said, is a business where an investor aims to help others without taking any financial gain himself. At the same time, the social business generates enough income to cover its own costs. Any surplus is invested in expansion of the business or for increased benefits to society.

The social business is a non-loss and non-dividend company dedicated entirely to achieving a social goal, he said.

He made clear the sources of funds for such businesses.

One source can easily be the philanthropy money going for creating social businesses but one problem of charity programmes is that they remain perpetually dependent on donations. Charity money goes out to do good things, but that money never comes back, he said.

But if a charity programme can be converted into a social business that supports itself, it becomes a powerful undertaking.

"Now the money invested is recycled endlessly. A charity takes a one-life, but a social business takes an endless life. That's the power of social business," Yunus said.

Besides philanthropists, he said, many other people will invest in social businesses just to share the joy of making a difference in other people's lives. People will give not only money but also their creativity, networking skills, technological prowess, life experience, and other resources to create social businesses.

He came up with examples of social businesses set up.

Some of them are created in partnership with large multinational companies. The first such joint venture with a multinational company was created in 2005, in partnership with the French dairy company, Danone.

The Grameen-Danone social business is aimed at reducing malnutrition among the children of Bangladesh, he said.

As a social business, Grameen-Danone follows the basic principle that it must be self-sustaining, and the owners must remain committed

ted never to take any dividend beyond the return of the original amount they invested.

The success of the company will be judged each year not by the amount of profit generated, but by the number of children getting out of malnutrition in that particular year.

"Many other big companies are now approaching us to create social businesses jointly with us," Yunus said.

Once they become experienced in social business, they will take the concept wherever the need exists, he added.

"We have a joint venture social business with Veolia, a French water company. The Grameen-Veolia Water Company was created to bring safe drinking water in the villages of Bangladesh where arsenic contamination of water is a huge problem. Villagers are buying water from the company at an affordable price."

There are more others--BASE-Grameen, Grameen-Intel, Grameen-Adidas and Grameen-Otto.

About social stock markets, he said: "I am happy to say there are already initiatives in Europe and Japan to create social business funds to provide equity and loan support to social businesses."

"We'll soon need to create a separate stock market for social businesses to make it easy for small investors to invest in social businesses."

Only social businesses will be listed on this social stock market, Muhammad Yunus said, adding that investors will know right from the beginning that they will never receive any dividends when they invest in social stock market.

The dome of the historic Central Hall of Indian Parliament reverberated with repeated clapping during Yunus' over-an-hour-long speech, reports our correspondent in New Delhi.

Among the distinguished listeners of Prof Yunus were Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, Congress party President Sonia Gandhi and Vice-President Hamid Ansari who is also the chairman of Rajya Sabha, and Lok Sabha Speaker Meira Kumar.

As soon as Yunus ended his scripted speech, there was the loudest round of applause from the lawmakers and leaders.

Later, Prof Yunus was seen talking to the Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh.

The Indian premier described Prof Yunus as a great visionary and said India has much to learn from him as he had applied his brilliance in reducing the poverty of millions.

Opposition leader LK Advani was also present at the lecture by the noble laureate.