

# Suicide blast kills 8 in Afghanistan

2 soldiers killed in a separate attack

AP, AFP, BBC ONLINE, Kabul

A suicide car bomber struck a heavily guarded neighbourhood yesterday near the home of a former Afghan vice president and a hotel favoured by Westerners, killing at least eight people and wounding dozens, officials said.

In a separate attack, a suicide bomber on a motorbike killed two Afghan soldiers Tuesday in the south of the country, the deadliest battlefield in the eight-year war against the Taliban, the government said.

The bomber detonated a motorcycle rigged with explosives in the Sangin district of Helmand province, killing two Afghan soldiers and wounding two others, the defence ministry said.

The soldiers were on patrol with Nato troops when the bomber struck and the ministry said there were some casualties among the foreign troops, but provided no further details.

The Afghan Interior Ministry said the target of the bombing was unclear, but security officials at the scene said the bomber was going

after the home of former first vice president, Ahmad Zia Massoud. He is the brother of legendary anti-Taliban hero, Ahmad Shah Massoud, who was killed by al-Qaeda two days before the attacks on Sept 11, 2001.

"Of course we were the target," said Shah Asmat, an aide to the former vice president. "Before, the Taliban killed Massoud. Now, they tried to kill his brother."

Afghan President Hamid Karzai, during a speech he was delivering at a conference on corruption, said two of Massoud's guards were among those killed in the explosion.

In a statement released later, Karzai strongly condemned the terrorist attack. He instructed government officials to thoroughly investigate the incident and identify those responsible.

"This terrorist attack, which killed and wounded innocent civilians, was an attack on humanity and Islam," Karzai's statement said.

Ministry of Interior spokesman Zemer Bashary said four men and four women died in the mid-morning blast. He said about 40 others were wounded.

## Israel slams British arrest warrant against Livni

AFP, Jerusalem

Israel yesterday slammed an arrest warrant issued by a British court against former foreign minister Tzipi Livni over her role during the war on the Hamas-run Gaza Strip at the turn of the year.

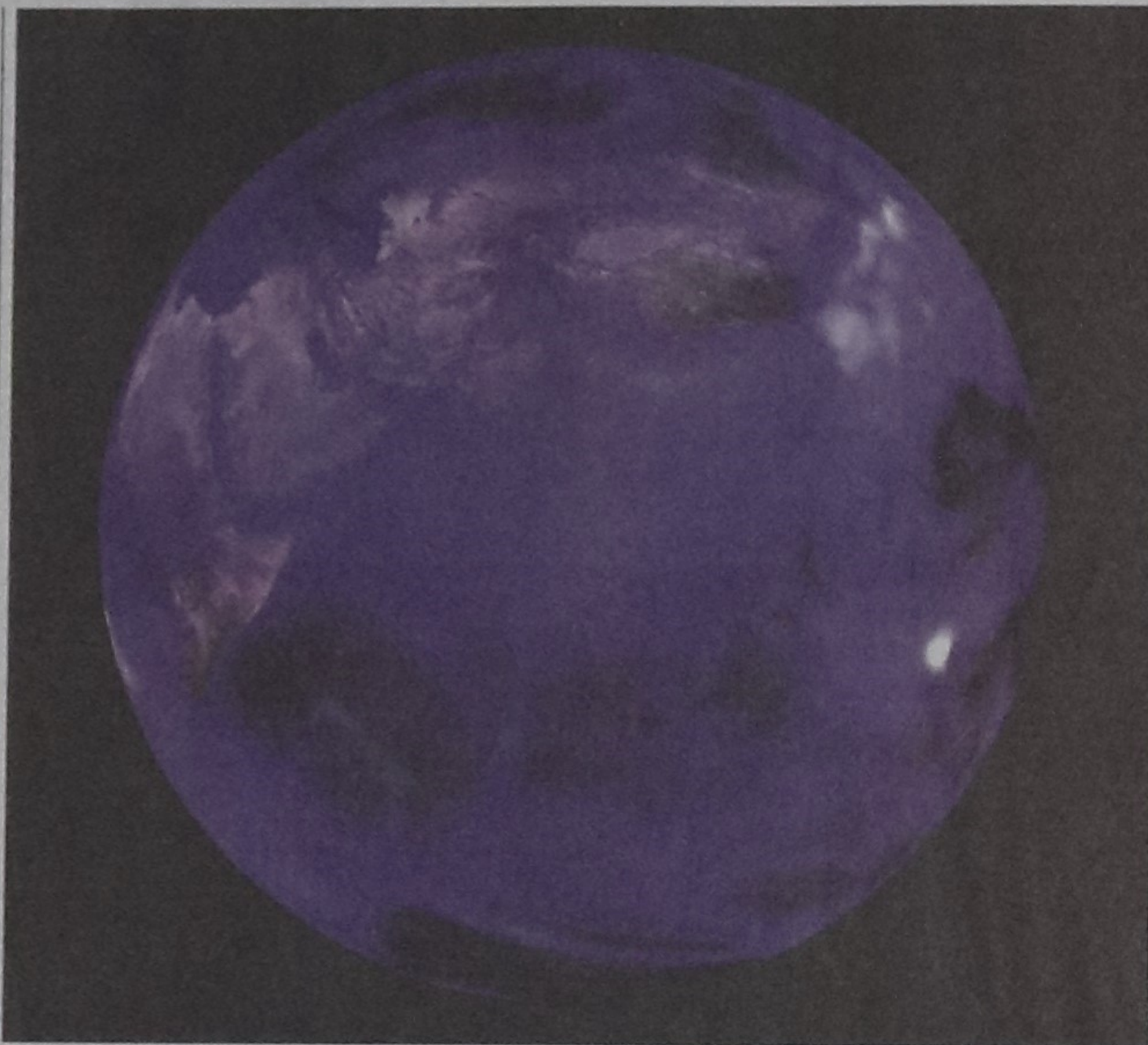
"The current situation has become intolerable, it is time that it change," Israeli ambassador to Britain Ron Prosor told army radio.

"I am convinced that the British government will understand that it is time to react and not content itself with declarations."

The arrest warrant against Livni, current opposition leader, was understood to have been issued by a London court at the weekend and media reports said it caused her to cancel a trip to Britain.

Her office said the trip was cancelled because of scheduling problems.

A spokeswoman for the Foreign Office told AFP that it was urgently assessing the implications of the warrant.



A picture released by the Nasa Earth Observatory on Tuesday shows a computer simulation of the spread of black soot over the Tibetan Plateau from August through November 2009. Places where the air was thick with soot are white, while lower concentrations are transparent purple. On the Plateau, temperatures are rising and glaciers are melting faster than climate scientists would expect based on global warming alone.

PHOTO: AFP

## Philippine army raid kills 10 rebels

AFP, Cagayan De Oro

Nine communist rebels and one soldier were killed after the military raided a guerrilla camp in the southern Philippines yesterday, the army said, adding fighting was ongoing.

Soldiers, backed by two helicopter gun ships, clashed with gunmen from the communist New People's Army (NPA) around Valencia town on the southern island of Mindanao, spokesman Major Michelle Anayron told reporters.

Army found about 60 guerrillas hiding in the NPA camp, the major said.

## China rejects US, EU calls for dissident's release

AFP, Beijing

China yesterday rejected as "unacceptable" US and EU calls to release prominent dissident Liu Xiaobo, who appears headed for trial on subversion charges after co-authoring a bold petition for democracy.

Both the United States and European Union on Monday had urged China to free Liu and end the harassment and detention of political dissidents.

"The accusations are unacceptable to China," foreign

ministry spokeswoman Jiang Yu told reporters, adding that "China brooks no interference" in such cases.

"We oppose any foreign forces using this as an excuse to interfere in China's internal affairs and judicial sovereignty."

The 53-year-old Liu, who was jailed after playing a role in the 1989 Tiananmen democracy protests, was arrested last December after he co-authored Charter 08, a widely circulated petition calling for greater democracy.

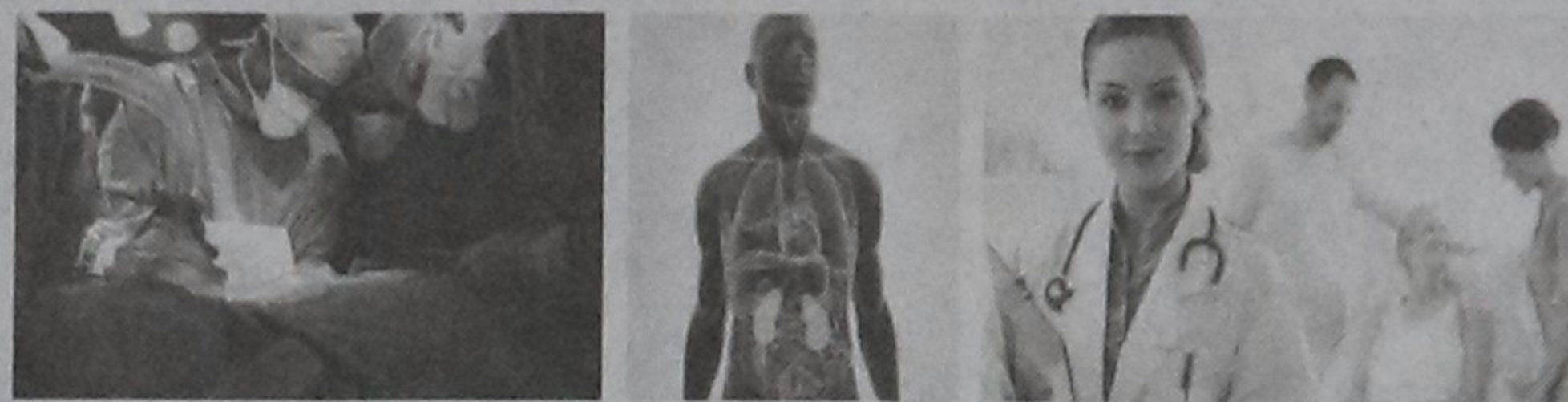
## Iran to try 3 border crossed Americans

AP, Tehran

Iran said Monday a court will try three Americans who wandered across the border from Iraq last July and became ensnared in an increasingly bitter standoff with the West over Tehran's nuclear program.

Iranian Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki did not say when the trial would begin or even what the Americans were charged with, other than that they had "suspicious aims." Last month, Iran's chief prosecutor said they were accused of spying.

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Photograph: Aniya Tarafdar 1971 Courtesy: Liberation War Museum



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