

## Suicide attack kills 7 Russian police

AP, Makhachkala

A suicide bomber set off a powerful car bomb outside a police headquarters in the restive Russian republic of Dagestan, killing seven policemen and wounding 15, officials said.

The 8:00 am explosion occurred in front of the traffic police headquarters in Makhachkala, the Dagestan capital, investigators said in a statement, calling the perpetrator a "suicide bomber."

The bomber's car was stopped by guards at the entrance into the police headquarters and a police car drove out to meet it, they said, praising the policemen for their "vigilance and selflessness."

"Realizing that he wouldn't be able to get into the headquarters, the suicide bomber triggered an explosive device," the Investigative Committee said.

Investigators put the initial death toll at six, but one victim later died in hospital, NTV television reported, quoting

the chief doctor at the Republican Orthopaedic and Trauma Centre, Magomed Omarov.

A further 15 were hospitalized and some underwent surgery, Omarov said.

Television footage showed a deep crater outside the police headquarters, roofs blown off neighbouring buildings and piles of bricks lying on the ground. Cars parked on the street were crumpled by the blast.

The unidentified suicide bomber, who drove the car alone, was a young man in dark clothing, according to witnesses, the deputy head of public security police in Dagestan's interior ministry, Magomed Isayev, told NTV television.

Concerns have mounted over increased militant attacks throughout Russia's Caucasus region, where Islamist militants have been battling pro-Kremlin local authorities and Russian security forces in a sporadic insurgency.

## Obama rebukes spy chiefs over intelligence 'screw-up'

### Yemen arrests a key al-Qaeda chief

AFP, Washington / Sanaa

An angry President Barack Obama has lectured US spy chiefs on an intelligence "screw-up" that left a US airliner carrying 290 people open to a barely-averted al-Qaeda attack on Christmas Day.

In a highly unusual public rebuke of the US clandestine community, Obama on Tuesday made a terse televised statement about the thwarted bombing, after gathering agency chiefs and national security aides at a high-stakes White House meeting.

Hours after his statement, Yemen police yesterday arrested a key al-Qaeda chief believed to be behind threats that saw several foreign missions in the capital Sanaa, including the US embassy, close their doors.

Mohammed al-Hanq had evaded arrest on Monday during a security force raid in Arhab, 40 kilometres (25 miles) north of Sanaa, in which two of his relatives were killed and three other people wounded.

During the televised remarks, Obama suggested that missed "red flags" before the airliner attack were more serious than originally thought.

"It is increasingly clear that intelligence was not fully analysed or fully leveraged," Obama said. "That's not acceptable, and I will not tolerate it."

He was more explicit during the meeting in the secure White House Situation Room, an official said, calling for immediate repairs to the flawed US security system.

"This was a screw-up that could have been disastrous,"

the official, speaking on condition of anonymity, quoted Obama as saying in the meeting.

"We dodged a bullet but just barely. It was averted by brave individuals, not because the system worked," the president said, according to the official.

US President Barack Obama said Tuesday he has suspended transfers of freed Guantanamo Bay inmates to Yemen following the Christmas Day airliner attack, but renewed his vow to close the notorious prison.

The administration is under intense pressure from domestic critics not to send more detainees back to Yemen, because of fears they will slip back into extremism in the Arab nation where Obama says the thwarted bombing was planned.

His decision whipped up further uncertainty over his drive to close the detention centre in Cuba. Obama had demanded the closure of the facility within a year of taking office, but the deadline will slip later this month.

"Given the unsettled situation, I've spoken to the attorney general and we've agreed that we will not be transferring additional detainees back to Yemen at this time," Obama said in a televised statement.

But the president sent an immediate message to critics who oppose his decision to close Guantanamo and many people abroad who support it, saying he was determined to follow through on his promise.

Obama's sharply worded comments contrasted with some of his earlier statements on the botched attack, which had led to criticism that his response lacked a sense of urgency.

## Extra security checks on US airport draw criticism from 14 nations

ANI, Washington

The Obama administration's decision to carry out extra security checks, including full-body pat downs, on people flying into the United States from 14 mostly Muslim countries has provoked criticism from foreign officials.

Under the new rules, all citizens of Afghanistan, Algeria, Lebanon, Libya, Iraq, Nigeria, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Somalia and Yemen must receive a pat down and an extra check of their carry-on bags before boarding a plane bound for the United States, while citizens of Cuba, Iran, Sudan and Syria - nations considered "state sponsors of terrorism" - face the same requirement.

Nigeria's Information Minister Dora Akunyili said that United States's decision

was unreasonable and they cannot declare the entire population suspects for the reason that a 23-year-old Nigerian man was accused of hiding explosives in his undergarments on a flight to Detroit.

"It is unfair to discriminate against over 150 million people because of the behaviour of one person," The New York Times quoted Akunyili, as saying.

Meanwhile, the Algerian ambassador to the United States, Abdallah Baali, said that he would file a protest once he was given formal notice of the change.

"The United States has the right to protect the security of its citizens. But this is discrimination against the citizens of Algeria, who do not pose any particular risk to the people of the United States," Baali said.



## World War II Atomic bomb survivor dies in Japan

AP, Tokyo

Tsutomu Yamaguchi, the only person officially recognized as a survivor of both the Hiroshima and Nagasaki atomic bombings at the end of World War II, has died at age 93.

Yamaguchi was in Hiroshima on a business trip for his shipbuilding company on Aug. 6, 1945, when a US B-29 dropped an atomic bomb on the city. He suffered serious burns to his upper body and spent the night in the city.

He then returned to his hometown of Nagasaki, about 300 kilometres (190 miles) to the southwest, which suffered a second US atomic bomb attack three days later.

On Aug. 15, 1945, Japan surrendered, ending the war.

## China's Xinjiang issues new anti-terror rules

AFP, Beijing

Authorities in China's troubled Xinjiang region will step up identity checks and monitor religious activities in a renewed bid to quash terrorism, separatism and extremism, state media said yesterday.

The announcement of the new government regulations aimed at helping the police and judiciary stamp out the so-called "three forces" in the region comes six months after ethnic

violence left nearly 200 people dead.

More than 1,600 people were also injured in the violence that erupted between mainly Muslim Uighurs and Han Chinese in the regional capital of Urumqi on July 5, according to government figures.

So far 22 people, mostly ethnic Uighurs, have been sentenced to death for the violence, drawing sharp criticism from the West and rights groups concerned that the accused were not guaranteed

due process.

Nine of those convicted have already been executed.

"The new rules provide forceful legal guarantees to step up the struggle against separatism," Jappa Abibulla, chairman of the Xinjiang People's Congress, told the China News Service.

"They clearly state that striking at the 'three evil forces' of terrorism, separatism and religious extremism in accordance with the law are the priority task for maintaining social order."

## Blair was "disconnected" from reality in Iraq war expectations: Patey

ANI, London

Sir William Patey, Britain's Ambassador to Iraq from 2005 to 2006, has said that there was a "disconnect" between then Prime Minister Tony Blair's demands and the situation faced by their forces fighting in Basra and the south of the country.

"The politics here

demanding instant results. It was the first time I have ever had instructions as an ambassador directly from the Prime Minister... help get a constitution that the Iraqis would vote positively for, the formation of a new government, create the conditions for the withdrawal of British troops. It was quite simple," The Times quoted Patey, as saying.

"They were quite reasonable instructions, provided you realized that they weren't in my gift or solely in the gift of the British Government. There was a tension between the desire for instant results and the realities on the ground. What you could achieve in the sort of timescales that London needed for political reasons - there was a disconnect," he added.

## S Korea urges N Korea to return to nuke talks

AFP, Seoul

South Korea yesterday urged North Korea to return to nuclear disarmament talks and called on China to step up efforts to bring Pyongyang back to the table.

"I think the North has now secured all face-saving measures (it needed) to return to the six-party talks," Foreign Minister Yu Myung-Hwan told Yonhap news agency.

"Now is the time for the North and China to respond more actively (to calls for resuming the talks)," he said.

North Korea abandoned the talks, which group the two Koreas, Japan, China, Russia and the US, in protest at international censure over its launch of a long-range rocket. In May, it staged its second nuclear test since 2006.

"My personal expectation is that North Korea will return to the talks at an early date but I am cautious in predicting in more precise terms -- whether it will do so in February or in March," Yu said.

Yu also said the North was believed to have begun developing a second way to build nuclear weapons by 1996.



## Snow brings chaos to Britain as Europe shivers

### Seoul buried in heaviest snowfall in 70 years

AFP, AP, London / Seoul

Britain's most brutal winter in decades caused chaos for travellers yesterday as snow and ice hit airports and roads, while bitterly cold temperatures cloaked much of Europe.

Meanwhile, Seoul residents slogged through the heaviest snowfall in modern Korean history after a winter storm dumped more than 11 inches (28 centimetres)

Monday, forcing airports to cancel flights and paralyzing traffic in South Korea's bustling capital.

The snow and icy roads snarled traffic in and out of Seoul, and at least three people died in traffic accidents. Many commuters squeezed into packed subways to get to work, and a Cabinet meeting was delayed because ministers were stuck in traffic.

Millions of people in

London and the south-east of England woke up to heavy snow after storms spread overnight from Scotland and the north of England, where they have caused problems for days.

"The current cold weather started in mid-December and it has been the most prolonged spell of freezing conditions across the UK since December 1981," forecasters at the Met Office said.