

Afghan Taliban attack air field 10 militants killed

Insurgents launched a brazen pre-dawn assault yesterday against the giant US-run Bagram Air Field, the second Taliban strike at Nato forces in and around the capital in five days. At least 10 insurgents were killed and seven US service members wounded in the attack on Bagram, which started at about 3 am with rockets, small arms and grenades fired into the base, said Maj Virginia McCabe, a spokeswoman for US forces at Bagram. The gunfire finally subsided around midday, said another spokesman, Master Sgt Tom Clementson. "It's been a little while since we've heard any gunfire but we're still maintaining a heightened security posture," he said. The attack came a one-day after a suicide bomber struck a US convoy in the capital of Kabul, killing 18 people. The dead included five American troops and a Canadian, making it the deadliest attack on Nato in the Afghan capital in eight months. The back-to-back attacks appeared part of a Taliban offensive that the insurgents announced earlier this month even as the US and its partners prepare for a major operation to restore order in the turbulent south. The insurgent attacks against both the capital and a major American military installation show the militants are prepared to strike at the heart of the US-led mission. The Taliban claimed responsibility for both the Kabul bombing and the attack at Bagram, 30 miles (50 kilometres) north of Kabul. Taliban spokesman Zabiullah Mujahid said 20 suicide attackers were involved.



Patil to visit China next week

President Pratibha Patil will embark on a five-day official visit to China next week when she will open the first Indian-style Buddhist temple in the ancient Chinese capital Luoyang. The trip coincides with the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between India and China. With a view to further strengthen bilateral ties, Patil, who has been invited by her Chinese counterpart Hu Jintao, will be in China May 26-31.

Indian Maoists reject govt talks offer

Maoists rejected talks offer of Indian government and blew up a vehicle killing four security personnel in West Bengal state's West Midnapore district yesterday on the second day of their 48-hour strike called in five states. Maoist leader Ramanna rejected Indian Home Minister P Chidambaram's offer for talks if Maoists stop violence for 72 hours and said "the government did not believe us when we had responded to the Home Minister's offer earlier." He also alleged "there is a heavy presence of security forces and their atrocities are continuing". The Maoists detonated a landmine in

Cyclone bears down on India's southeast coast

A cyclone packing winds of up to 125 kilometres (80 miles) an hour closed in on India's southeast coast yesterday as people began to evacuate their homes fearing major storm damage and floods. Cyclone Laila was set to slam into the state of Andhra Pradesh on Thursday morning, with forecasters warning of a sea surge, disrupted power and communication lines, and wind gusts reaching 155 kilometres an hour. As heavy rains and strong gales battered the coast on Wednesday, state authorities started evacuating residents from low-lying areas, and emergency teams were put on stand-by. The Indian Meteorological Department said the cyclone was centred in the Bay of Bengal, 190 kilometres (120 miles) east of Chennai, and would strengthen before hitting the coast near the city of Machilipatnam.

Suspected NY bomber appears in court

Two weeks after his arrest, Pakistani American Faisal Shahzad, who planned to detonate a car bomb at the landmark Times Square, was arraigned before a federal magistrate in Manhattan on five felony counts. Appearing before Magistrate Judge James C Francis IV Tuesday evening, Shahzad, 30, did not enter a plea, simply answering 'yes' when the judge asked whether an affidavit attesting to his finances was accurate. He was then charged with one count each of attempting terrorism by attempting to kill people; attempted use of a weapon of mass destruction and others.

Pak-US security vow after NY bomb plot

Pakistan and the United States vowed to step up efforts to prevent terror plots yesterday as US officials briefed Islamabad on inquiries into a New York bomb plot blamed on the Pakistani Taliban. US national security adviser General James Jones and CIA Director Leon Panetta flew into Islamabad on what the White House called a mission to probe the failed May 1 plot that led to the arrest of a Pakistani-American. Jones and Panetta met President Asif Ali Zardari and "provided an update on the ongoing investigation into the Times Square terrorist incident", according to a joint statement released after the talks. The discovery of a crude bomb inside a parked car in crowded Times Square prompted an evacuation of the popular tourist spot and a massive manhunt that culminated in the arrest of Pakistani-born US citizen Faisal Shahzad. Authorities have been interrogating Shahzad since his dramatic arrest at JFK Airport in New York, as his Dubai-based plane was about to take off. He allegedly told interrogators that he visited Waziristan, in Pakistan's lawless tribal belt along the Afghan border, for bomb-making training.

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International Tender Notice for Procurement of Vinyl Composite Tiles. Issued by ICDDR,B. Includes details on tender documents, pre-tender meeting, and eligibility criteria. Lists 27 items for procurement, including vinyl composite tiles, and provides contact information for the procuring entity.