

Iran blames West, Israel for suicide bombings

AFP, Tehran

Iran blamed the West and Israel yesterday for twin suicide bombings that killed at least 27 people, despite condemnation of the attack by the European Union, United Nations and United States.

Iranian police, meanwhile, arrested 40 people for "creating disturbances" in the southeastern city of Zahedan where the bombers struck on Thursday, the Mehr news agency reported.

"This blind terrorist act was carried out by the mercenaries of the world arrogance (the Western powers)," state television's website quoted Deputy Interior Minister Ali Abdollahi as saying.

"The agents of this crime were trained and equipped beyond our borders and then came into Iran," Abdollahi said.

Sunni militant group Jundallah has said it carried out the bombings that targeted members of the elite Revolutionary Guards at a Shiite mosque in Zahedan, capital of the restive province of Sistan-Baluchestan.

It said the attacks were to avenge the execution of their leader Abdolmalek Rigi on June 20. Parliament speaker Ali Larijani directly

accused the United States for the bombings.

"Today, the country is mourning the tragic explosion in Zahedan which was done with the backing of Americans. Americans can't come up with any excuse since they are connected with the Rigi group," he said, quoted on the website.

Crowds of mourners gathered in Zahedan yesterday for a mass funeral for the bombings' victims. They assembled outside the city's Jamia mosque where the bombers struck for a procession to the main cemetery.

"Those who committed these terrorist acts are neither Shiite nor Sunni," read one banner carried by the mourners, while crowds chanted: "Death to terrorists," the official IRNA news agency reported.

Tehran has long charged that Washington has provided support to the Rigi group as part of efforts to destabilise the Islamic regime by fomenting unrest among ethnic minorities in sensitive border areas.

But US President Barack Obama has condemned the "outrageous terrorist attacks," while UN chief Ban Ki-moon blasted a "senseless act of terrorism" and EU foreign affairs chief Catherine Ashton condemned "these cowardly terrorist attacks."



Women in traditional costumes shout during the procession of the El Carmen Virgin into the sea in Malaga, southern Spain, on Friday. Many seaside towns celebrated the feast of El Carmen Virgin, the patron saint of sailors. PHOTO: REUTERS

Taj voted most popular Asian destination

THE INDIAN EXPRESS

Taj Mahal, one of the Seven Wonders of the World, is grand winner of the voter's choice for most popular Asian destinations.

The announcement in this regard was made by the International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA) at the Asian Attractions Awards ceremony held during Asia Attractions Expo (AAE) 2010 in Kuala Lumpur.

While the Taj Mahal was declared the Grand Winner, it was followed by Large Attraction (Resorts World Sentosa, Singapore), Medium Attraction (Sunway Lagoon, Malaysia), Small Attraction (Sentosa 4D Magix, Singapore), Waterpark (Sunway Lagoon, Malaysia), Wildlife Park (Night Safari, Singapore), and Theme Park (Universal Studios Japan, Japan).

'Militants' kill 16 in Pak ambush

BBC ONLINE

A suspected sectarian attack on a civilian convoy in a troubled tribal area of Pakistan has left 16 dead.

Several other people were wounded in the ambush in the northwest, where the army has carried out operations against Islamist militants.

The convoy, which was being escorted by security forces, was attacked in Char Khel village in the Kurram region.

All those killed were Shia Muslims, according to local officials, who said the death toll may rise.

The convoy was heading from Parachinar, in Kurram, to the main regional city of Peshawar when it was ambushed yesterday in the predominantly Sunni region.

Typhoon Conson heads for Vietnam, China toll 67

AFP, Beijing

Typhoon Conson weakened to a tropical storm and headed for Vietnam yesterday after brushing the southeastern Chinese island of Hainan and pounding the Philippines, leaving at least 67 dead.

Philippine authorities warned the toll could rise further with dozens missing days after Conson struck the main Luzon island, including the capital Manila, on Tuesday with a ferocity that caught weather forecasters by surprise.

The typhoon destroyed thousands of homes, sank or damaged dozens of boats, uprooted trees that crushed people to death and snapped power lines.

In China the storm killed at least two people, tore down trees and ripped up electricity pylons when it hit Hainan Friday evening, local officials said.

Authorities on the popular tourist island evacuated around 40,000 people from the most vulnerable areas before the storm barreled inland.

Two men, a security guard and a motorcyclist, died after being struck by advertising hoardings unhinged by strong winds, an official from the local typhoon warning centre said.

Television images showed driving rain and powerful winds rocking the island, while residents also reported power outages.

Several Vietnamese ships in the South China Sea had been wrecked, the state Xinhua news agency said.

The typhoon was later downgraded to a tropical storm as it headed towards northern Vietnam, according to China's national weather centre.

The China Meteorological Administration said the winds had slowed to around 20 kilometres (12 miles) per hour, but that coastal areas of eastern China could still expect heavy rain over the next 24 hours.

Earlier Conson became the first major storm to hit the Philippines this year and the archipelago nation bore the brunt of its fury, with the death toll there rising sharply to 65 Saturday.

Philippine air force helicopters and navy aircraft were still combing the seas southeast of Manila for around 43 missing fishermen and other sailors.

Three fishermen were plucked by passing colleagues from waters off the Bicol region, after Conson destroyed their boat on Tuesday, an army statement quoted survivor Victor Bordeos as saying.

Venezuela opens Simon Bolivar's tomb to examine remains

AP, Caracas

Hugo Chavez has opened the coffin of his idol Simon Bolivar as Venezuela investigates the president's suspicions of foul play in the South American independence hero's death nearly two centuries ago.

Chavez announced the exhumation of Bolivar's remains Friday and displayed the intact skeleton briefly on national television, saying he wept when he saw the bones of the inspiration for his Bolivarian Revolution.

While historians have generally concluded that Bolivar died of tuberculosis in 1830, Chavez has another theory -- that Bolivar was murdered -- even though he acknowledges it may not be possible to prove.

State television showed footage of white-clad officials opening the coffin. Specialists will carry out DNA testing on the remains, which were well preserved and include teeth in "perfect" shape, hair, remnants of a shirt and boots, Chavez said.

Those who opened the coffin wore surgical gloves, hairnets and gas masks. Chavez interrupted a speech late Friday to show footage of them rolling back a black cloth to reveal the skeleton while the national anthem played.

"Viva Bolivar," Chavez said. "It's not a skeleton. It's the Great Bolivar, who has returned."

Chavez opened Bolivar's tomb unannounced, spreading the news on Twitter shortly after midnight Thursday: "What impressive moments we have lived tonight! We have seen the remains of the Great Bolivar!"

"Our father who is in the earth, the water and the air... You awake every hundred years when the people awaken," Chavez continued. "I confess that we have cried, we have sworn allegiance."

The president often speaks under a portrait of "The Liberator" and quotes his words. Chavez has also renamed Venezuela the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, and say he's creating a

socialist system based on Bolivar's ideals.

Chavez has sometimes raised a sword that belonged to Bolivar at public events, and he views his presidency as a modern extension of Bolivar's struggle to liberate and unite Latin America.

"That glorious skeleton has to be Bolivar, because his flame can be felt. My God," Chavez said in another tweet.

"Bolivar lives... We are his flame!" Bolivar's remains have been kept since 1876 at the National Pantheon in Caracas, where foreign leaders visiting Chavez often pay homage at the tomb with flower-laying ceremonies.

Chavez said one key aim is "glorifying Bolivar" by removing his remains from a lead sarcophagus and moving them to a grander final resting place. He said the skeleton was temporarily moved to a vacuum-sealed plastic case, promising to place it in a gold casket.

The government also will build a new pantheon to house Bolivar's remains, Chavez said.

Australian PM announces Aug 21 polls

AP, Canberra, Australia

Australia's first female Prime Minister Julia Gillard will attempt to win a second term for her centre-left government at August 21 elections, with battle lines drawn on climate change, asylum seekers, and record-high public debt.

Buoyed by opinion polls endorsing her new leadership, Gillard called the election yesterday only three weeks after grabbing power in a surprise ruling Labor Party coup. She said the government had "lost its way" under her predecessor, Kevin Rudd, and has attempted to steer new courses in key policy areas.

"We would go into our second term with some lessons learnt," Gillard told reporters at Parliament House. "We would be able to implement and deliver programmes differently than we have in the past."

Opinion polls point to Labor winning a second three-year term, but analysts expect a tight contest against a resurgent conservative opposition Liberal Party led by Tony Abbott.

Gillard, a 48-year-old Welsh-born agnostic, was once considered too far left to successfully win over the political middle ground essential to an Australian election victory. Abbott, a 52-year-old former seminarian, was nominated as too far right.



A woman takes a photo of a group of Leopard Gekos, during the International Reptile Expo at the Hong Kong International Trade and Exhibition Centre yesterday. PHOTO: AFP

Kashmiri women united by loss

NEWS ANALYSIS

ALJAZEERA ONLINE

Parvina Hangar's son was just 16 years old when she says he was abducted by Indian forces. That was almost 20 years ago, and Hangar, a simple woman with an elementary school education, did not know what to do or who to turn to. The pain of losing her son left her unable to get out of bed for months.

Today Hangar strikes a very different figure. She proudly displays the plaque she was awarded as one of 1,000 women nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize in 2005.

But of much greater value to her is an aging photograph she carries of her missing son Javed Ahmed.

Speaking in Kashmiri, Hangar explains: "The pain of separation is what keeps me going. Until my son returns home, I will not sit idle. I will not give up. I will continue to fight."

She is far from a political figure but has twice seen the inside of a jail after being arrested during protests.

Through her efforts to search prisons across India for her son, Hangar has brought together 450 families of missing persons and forced the Indian government to admit that at least 4,000 people have been abducted in the Kashmir conflict. Human rights groups say the figure is closer to 9,000.

Hangar's organisation, the Association of Parents of Disappeared Persons, represents a grassroots effort by Kashmiri women to enter a highly politicised terrain from a humanitarian

perspective.

"Women have a key role in this conflict," Hangar says. "Many Kashmiri women have been forced to take on the role of sole breadwinner after their men were killed or arrested."

Asiya Andrawi is one such woman. She is one of the most prominent Islamist separatist leaders in Kashmir. Her husband is currently under arrest, facing life in prison, and she is in hiding.

Nahide Nasrean, Andrawi's second-in-command, explains: "What she teaches is from Quran or Hadith so we think that if we obey her that it will be better for our life in this world and in the life hereafter."

"We will continue our fight until we get our freedom. If we do not get it, we will transfer our movement to our next generation."

As in most conflict zones, Kashmiri women have been subjected to violence. According to a study by Medecins Sans Frontieres, Kashmiri women suffer some of the highest rates of sexual violence in the world.

"Sexual violence has been routinely perpetrated on Kashmiri women, with 11.6 per cent of respondents saying they were victims of sexual abuse," a 2005 study reported.

Nasrean says: "We feel if militants are not here, our chastity is not safe."

While not all women share the ideology of Andrawi and her followers, most agree that this conflict has made women stronger.

Castro appears again, warns of war

REUTERS, Havana

Cuban revolutionary leader Fidel Castro took his warning of impending nuclear war to Cuba's Foreign Ministry on Friday, where he explained the reasons for his dire prediction in his fifth public appearance in 10 days. Castro's sudden re-emergence after four years in seclusion for health reasons has raised questions about his intentions, but his message has been consistent -- a devastating war is at hand if the United States, in alliance with Israel, tries to enforce international sanctions against Iran for its nuclear activities.

He also has predicted the United States will attack North Korea.

"The United States finds itself now in an unsolvable dilemma (in the Middle East). It cannot get out, nor can it stay," Castro told 115 ambassadors, who listened with rapt attention.

"It won't get out of that situation through diplomacy, but through the power of its arms," he said, pointing his finger in the air and pontificating at length as in the old days.

Castro, 83, spoke for more than an hour as he sat in front of the ambassadors. He looked fit, relaxed and fully in charge as he took questions and read numerous news reports to back up his position.

He said he had partially recovered from the "sudden and grave situation of health" that forced him from power.

Castro disappeared from public view following emergency intestinal surgery in July 2006 and ceded power to his younger brother, now President Raul Castro.

He resurfaced on July 7 at a scientific research centre in Havana and has since made several appearances in person and in videotaped television interview.

Theories abound about why the man who ruled Cuba for 49 years after taking power in a 1959 revolution has returned to public view. He has said his only interest is in warning the world of the coming conflict.

His reappearance has coincided with Cuba's biggest release of political prisoners since 1998, in a deal cut with the Catholic Church, and intentional or not, has drawn away from it.

The church announced on July 7 that 52 political prisoners, or about a third of the island's jailed dissidents, would be freed over the next few months. The releases began on Monday.

Wide-ranging speculation includes theories that Castro is sending a message of stability at a time of uncertainty about Cuba's future, that he felt his warning of war was being ignored, or that he simply wanted to return to the limelight.

MRP

FROM PAGE 1
Passports after learning about the undue delay by DIP staff," said the project director.

He said police are supposed to turn in the verification report in two weeks, but its Special Branch sometimes takes more than a month to submit it.

In a visit to the DIP last week, it was found that many people opted for manual passports after the home ministry allowed issuance of hand-written passports with three-year validity.

The decision encouraged many passport handlers and middlemen to revive their business.

A syndicate involving a few DIP staff and outsiders had been active at the introduction of the MRP from April 1, 2010 was regarded as a severe blow to the syndicate.

"Some DIP staff are very unhappy with the introduction of Machine Readable Passports that closes their ways to make brisk money. The syndicate is on the rebound following the home ministry order," said a DIP official, preferring anonymity.

The project director and IRIS officials said they should have been given adequate space for work at the DIP as the facility is crucial for implementation of such a project.

Besides, the government should have readied two or more offices in the city to receive MRP applications, they said.

DIP Director General Abdul Mabud said he was unaware of non-cooperation of some DIP staff in issuing MRPs.

"All are supposed to perform their duties sincerely, those who fail to do so should be punished," he said.

The DIP director general said the home ministry has already asked police to submit verification report without any delay.



INDEPENDENT UNIVERSITY, BANGLADESH

Admission Autumn 2010

Estd: 1993

Master of Science

- Computer Science
- Software Engineering
- Telecommunication Engineering
- Computer Networks & Communication



Application Eligibility

- Completion of 4 years undergraduate degree in relevant (or closely relevant) discipline from any accredited university.
- Applicants from other disciplines may also join the programs after completing the prerequisites course

Financial Assistance

- Financial assistance is available in the form of Teaching and / or Research Assistantship.
- 15% discount on tuition for IUB graduates.
- 30% discount on tuition for meritorious students on the basis of their results of the first semester.
- Payment of fees in installments.

Length and Duration

- Students have to complete a total of 33 credits of graduate course work with or without a thesis.
- Students who have completed all their pre-requisite courses will be able to complete the required program in 3 regular semesters.

Our Graduates

- Our graduates are successfully employed in software industries, mobile & land phone companies, multi-national banks, university teaching and other multi-national companies.
- Some graduates have also gone ahead to do their doctoral studies overseas.

Application Deadline : Sunday, 8 August 2010

Admission Interview : Monday, 9 August 2010

Class Commence : Monday, 16 August 2010

Apply online at

<http://msc.secs.iub.edu.bd/>



For any other information, please contact
School of Engineering & Computer Science
14/2-A Baridhara North Road, Baridhara, Dhaka-1212
Tel-9884498, 9862386-90
Email: info@secs.iub.edu.bd

<http://www.secs.iub.edu.bd>