

Europe on alert after attacks warning

AFP, Paris

Japan yesterday became the latest country after Britain and the United States to issue a travel alert for its citizens amid growing fears of a major al-Qaeda attack on landmark sites in Europe.

Tokyo joined Washington and London in issuing an alert warning of "possible terrorist attack" by al-Qaeda and affiliated groups against their citizens travelling in Europe.

The US State Department said in its alert on Sunday that attackers may use "a variety of means and weapons and target both official and private interests" in Europe.

Britain immediately backed the US alert and warned its own citizens of a "high threat of terrorism" in France and Germany.

The Japanese alert urges its citizens living or travelling in Europe to exercise full caution at possible attack targets, such as government and police facilities, public transport systems and tourist spots.

US channel Fox News, citing unnamed intelligence officials, said militants had a list of targets in France and Germany, including Paris's Eiffel Tower and Notre Dame Cathedral, Berlin's Brandenburg Gate, the city's central railway station and the Alexanderplatz TV tower.

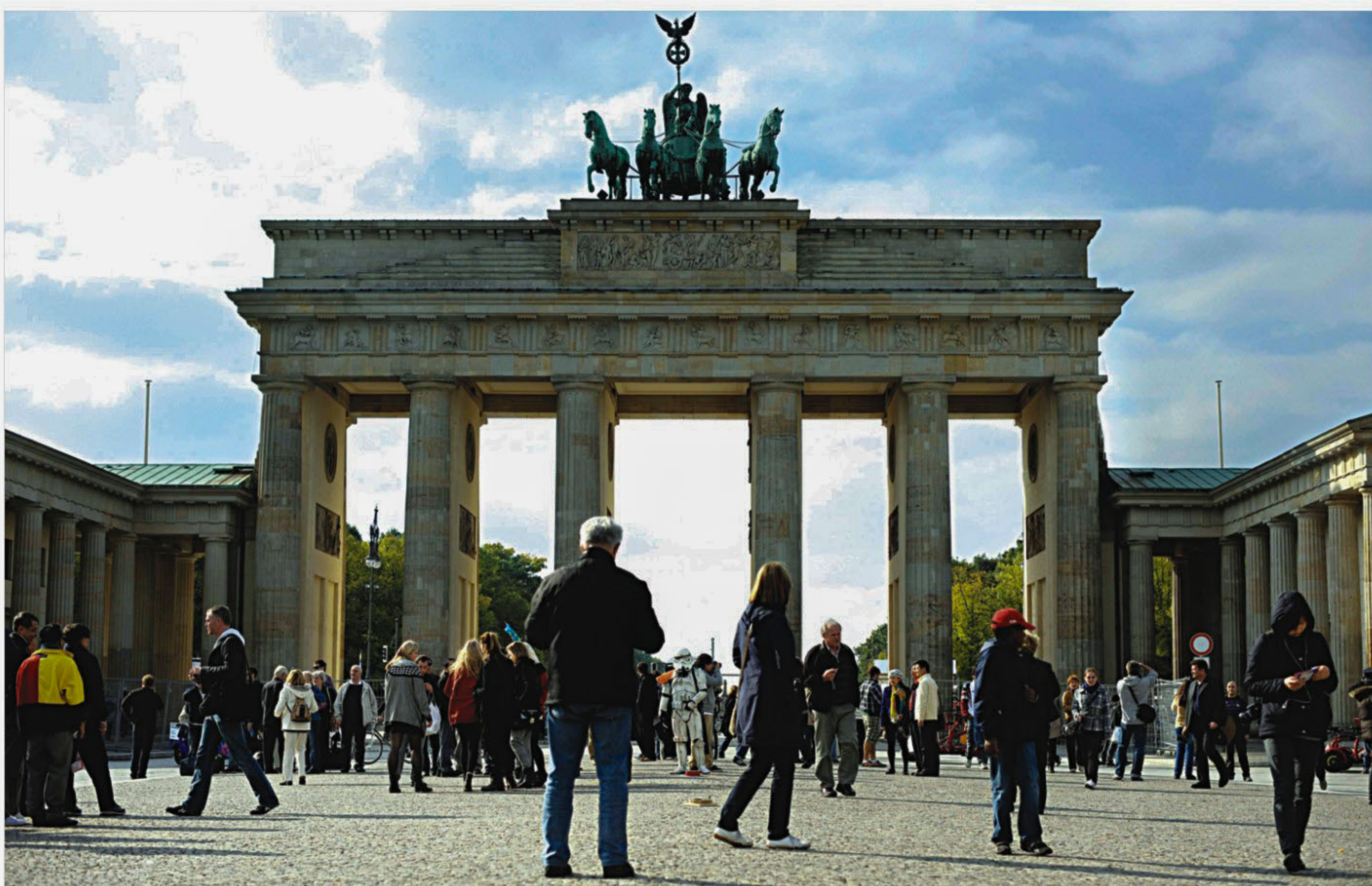
Fox cited a senior western intelligence official as saying that the information about the target list was provided by "a German-Pakistani national interrogated at Bagram Air Base in Afghanistan."

The Eiffel Tower, France's most-visited tourist attraction, was twice evacuated last month because of telephoned bomb warnings, but French officials said there was no reason to raise the current threat level from red alert to scarlet, which would mean it considered an attack imminent.

A small number of soldiers patrolled as usual at the foot of the Eiffel Tower early Monday as long lines of visitors waited to climb the tower, a magnet for many of the 74.2 million visitors to France last year.

Though there were no visible signs of heightened security, some tourists said they felt more vigilant than usual.

"We decided not to go up the Eiffel Tower because of the possibility of what could happen" after hearing of the travel advisory on CNN, said Eileen Carbrelo, 60, a tourist from Virginia.



A street artist dressed up as a storm trooper (C) and tourists stand in front of Berlin's landmark the Brandenburg Gate yesterday. Germany's interior minister warned against "alarmism" about the threat of terrorist attacks, after the United States, Britain and Japan issued a travel alert for Europe.

PHOTO: AFP

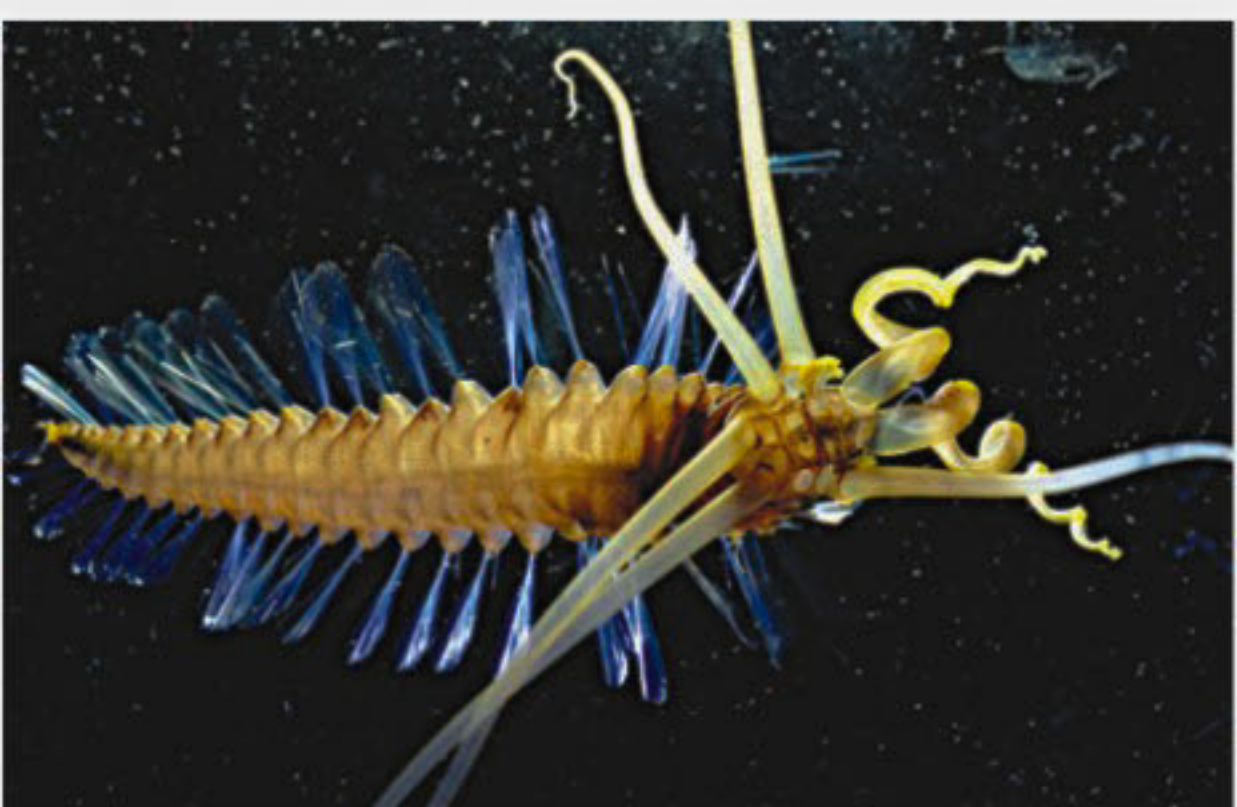


PHOTO: AFP

Undated handout photos showing recently discovered species called a squid worm (up) found in the Celebes sea in Southeast Asia and crab (below) found in the south of Easter Island. Results of the first-ever global marine life census were unveiled yesterday in London revealing an unprecedented view of life beneath the waves after a decade-long trawl through the murky depths. The Census of Marine Life estimated there are one million-plus species in the oceans, with at least three-quarters of them yet to be discovered.

It's time to fly

FROM PAGE 1

at the maximum regulated speed of 63mph will take you. With a full tank of gas, it would last roughly 30 minutes, although Martin Aircraft expects that to improve as the manufacturing process becomes more efficient. The other model, which will be an unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV), will be released before its much sexier human-friendly counterpart. Field trials for the UAV will begin in 2011. Depending on the results, the manned flight trials will begin in 2012.

Although it may sound more sci-fi than sci-fact, a commercially developed jetpack is actually being eyed for mass production, with plans to eventually release it to the public. Jetpacks are real, and you might be able to buy one someday soon. Or at least see them among the skies.

First, it is important to note that these are reusable and maintainable jetpacks, and that while pricey, they could be landing in garages someday soon.

The jetpack is being developed by the Martin Aircraft Company which was founded in 1998 and operates out of New Zealand.

Currently Martin Aircraft Company is fulfilling an order for 500 jetpacks to be used by emergency services, as well as four unnamed defense companies. As of right now, the company's focus is to produce jetpacks specifically for governmental purchase, but they are seeking funding to build at least one new factory with the purpose of producing jetpacks for the average (extremely rich) customer.

The Martin jetpack comes in two models. One is pretty much what you would expect a jetpack to be - it is a device that can carry a person to infinity and beyond, assuming that infinity is less than the 8000 feet ceiling or the 31.5 miles distance that travelling

speed of 63mph will take you. With a full tank of gas, it would last roughly 30 minutes, although Martin Aircraft expects that to improve as the manufacturing process becomes more efficient. The other model, which will be an unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV), will be released before its much sexier human-friendly counterpart. Field trials for the UAV will begin in 2011. Depending on the results, the manned flight trials will begin in 2012.

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Draft law

FROM PAGE 16

The law has been formulated to frame a legal structure for exporting meat and meat processed goods.

The cabinet at its weekly meeting at Bangladesh Secretariat with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the chair gave final approval to the draft law aiming to ensure safe meat for people.

Livestock ministry placed the draft law before the cabinet meeting after getting it vetted by the law ministry.

Provisions of punishment and compensation for violating the law have been included in it. The law will come into effect after getting parliament's nod.

The summary of the draft says some serious diseases like tuberculosis, rabies, anthrax and salmonella might spread to human body if the processed meat of slaughtered animals and birds are not healthy.

It added that a good number of meat processing factories and slaughterhouses have been established in the country amidst the export demand of halal meat from many countries including Malaysia.

So a law is mandatory to ensure safe meat production in those slaughterhouses to materialise the opportunity of exporting meat abroad, it continued.

PM's Press Secretary Abul Kalam Azad told reporters after the meeting that huge foreign currencies could be earned by exporting quality and halal meat.

Climate change talks open in China

AP, AFP, Tianjin

The UN climate chief urged countries yesterday to identify achievable goals for fighting climate change ahead of a year-end meeting in Mexico, after last year's Copenhagen summit failed to produce binding limits on greenhouse gas.

The UN climate change chief on Monday warned feuding countries they must immediately begin working towards a deal to combat global warming, as grid locked talks resumed in China.

The six-days of talks in the northern city of Tianjin are part of long-running efforts through the United Nations to secure a post-2012 treaty to limit global warming and avoid potential environmental catastrophes.

Christiana Figueres told 3,000 delegates at the opening of a six-day conference in China the world's biggest carbon emitter that they must "accelerate the search for common ground" ahead of December talks in Cancun to make progress toward securing a global climate change treaty.

"As governments, you can continue to stand still or move forward. Now is the time to make that choice," she told delegates in the northern port of Tianjin.

"If you want a tangible outcome in December, now is the time to clarify what could constitute an achievable and politically balanced package for Cancun, and what could be subject to further work after Cancun," she said.

Last year's UN climate summit in Copenhagen disappointed many environmentalists and political leaders when it failed to produce a global and legally binding treaty on curbing the greenhouse gases that cause global

warming. Instead, nations agreed to a nonbinding political declaration on fighting climate change.

The UN talks are meant to produce a replacement for the Kyoto Protocol, whose relatively modest emissions reductions expire in 2012.

This year, expectations have been down-sized as it has become obvious that countries remain deadlocked over the same issues. Distrust has only deepened between developed and developing countries over how to cut the greenhouse gas emissions that are causing the earth to overheat.

As the host, China will seek to reduce those differences, said State Counsellor Dai Bingguo, the country's top foreign policy official, who urged countries to renew efforts in order to "hammer out a binding agreement at an early date."

With a single climate package deal unlikely, the focus has turned to finding areas of agreement on essential components, including financing and transfer of clean technology and ways of reducing deforestation.

Much of what needs to happen in Tianjin is the less tangible task of restoring trust and some momentum in order to "set the stage for what's realistically possible in Cancun," said Jake Schmidt, International Climate Policy Director for the US-based Natural Resources Defence Council.

Two of the key pieces will be financing and transparency, he said. At Copenhagen, rich countries had pledged to give \$30 billion over three years in climate funding to poor nations, rising to a total of \$100 billion dollars annually by 2020, but little money has materialized so far.

First test tube baby 'delighted' at Nobel for IVF pioneer

AFP, London

The world's first test tube baby said yesterday she was "delighted" that Robert Edwards, the pioneering scientist who made her birth possible, has been awarded the Nobel Prize for Medicine.

Louise Brown, in a joint statement with her mother Lesley, said: "It's fantastic news, me and mum are so glad that one of the pioneers of IVF (in vitro fertilisation) has been given the recognition he deserves."

"We hold Bob in great affection and are delighted to send our personal congratulations to him and his family at this time." Louise's birth in 1978 was the first to stem from the groundbreaking work of Edwards and Patrick Steptoe, a gynaecologic surgeon.

She is now a mother herself, having given birth by natural means. Although Edwards, now 85, is too frail to give interviews, his wife Ruth said the family was "thrilled and delighted" at the honour.

"The success of this research has touched the lives of millions of people worldwide," she said.

"His dedication and single-minded determination despite opposition from many quarters has led to successful application of his pioneering research."

Edwards and Steptoe, who died in 1988, developed IVF technology in which egg cells are fertilised outside the body and implanted in the womb.

Congratulations poured in from across Britain's science community and from colleagues of Edwards -- although some wondered why it had taken so long for the Nobel committee to recognise his work.

Mike Macnamee, chief executive of Bourn Hall, near Cambridge, the IVF clinic which Edwards founded, said: "Bob Edwards is one of our greatest scientists."

"His inspirational work in the early sixties led to a breakthrough that has enhanced the lives of millions of people worldwide."



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