

World's longest tunnel completed

BBC ONLINE

Engineers have drilled through the last remaining rock to complete the world's longest tunnel, under the Swiss Alps.

The 10m-diameter drill-head tore through the rock to cheers and applause from watching workers. The 57km Gotthard rail tunnel has taken 14 years to build and is not likely to open before the end of 2016.

But it is expected to revolutionise transport across Europe, providing a high-speed link between the north and south of the continent. Eventually, trains will travel through it at speeds of up to 250km/h.

Journey times between Zurich and Milan are likely to be slashed by as much as one-and-a-half hours.

The length of the Gotthard tunnel exceeds the 53.8km Seikan rail tunnel linking the Japanese islands of Honshu and Hokkaido and the 50km Channel Tunnel linking England and France.



A giant drilling machine completes the world's longest tunnel beneath the Swiss Alps during a ceremony yesterday 30 kilometres from one end and 2,000 metres below the mountains. PHOTO: AFP

New settlements imperil talks

Palestinians criticise plan to build around 240 new homes in East Jerusalem

ALJAZEERA ONLINE

Israel has unveiled plans for around 240 new homes for Jewish settlers in predominantly Arab East Jerusalem, in a move that has drawn the ire of Palestinians.

Saeb Erekat, the Palestinian chief negotiator, said yesterday that the move proved Israel was intent on "killing" every opportunity to revive the stalled direct peace talks between the two sides.

"We call upon the US administration to hold the Israeli government responsible for the collapse of the negotiations and the peace process as a result of this government's insistence on killing every opportunity for resuming negotiations," he said.

The plans for new housing units in the settlement neighbourhoods of Pisgat Zeev and Ramot were approved late on Thursday by Binyamin Netanyahu, the Israeli prime minister, the Ynet news website said.

The United States have been pushing Israel to extend a 10-month moratorium on new settlement building in the occupied West Bank, but

Netanyahu has failed to find an agreement to within his coalition government over the freeze that expired on September 26.

Although the freeze did not cover construction in east Jerusalem, Netanyahu had avoided signing off on any such projects in order to avoid the political fallout, Ynet said.

Settlement watchdog Peace Now said that it was the first time such a plan had been approved since March, when Israel gave the green light to plans for the construction of 1,600 new homes in east Jerusalem during a visit by Joe Biden, the US vice-president, prompting a major dispute with Washington.

The group said the announcement showed that the Israeli government was trying to undermine the chances of salvaging the peace talks with the Palestinians.

"The fact is that someone - either the housing minister or the prime minister - is trying to make a point: they want to make it harder on peace efforts," Hagit Ofra of Peace Now told the AFP news agency.

Heartfelt homecoming for Chile miners

REUTERS, Copiapo

Chile's rescued miners head home yesterday to a hero's welcome after their miracle survival for two months deep underground, and now yearn to put the psychological trauma of their ordeal behind them.

The first three of the 33 miners were cleared to head home from a hospital late on Thursday, returning to neighbours' cheers and confetti a day after their rescue from the depths of a collapsed mine.

"This is really incredible. It hasn't sunk in," said 52-year-old Juan Illanes amid roaring cheers, still wearing the dark sunglasses he and his fellow miners were given to protect their eyesight as they acclimatize after 69 days underground in a dark tunnel.

He said being trapped after the cave-in had taken him "to the limit."

The remaining 30 miners were due to head home on Friday after medical tests.

Most of the men were surprisingly healthy considering they were stuck in a wet, hot and dark tunnel for so long.

The miners, who set a world record for survival underground, were finally hoisted to the surface in a metal capsule in a rescue operation that was watched by hundreds of millions of people worldwide and triggered celebrations across the South American nation.

They have returned as celebrities -- and to job offers, gifts and invitations from Real Madrid and Manchester United to travel to Europe to watch football matches.

Avid Elvis Presley fan Edison Pena has even been invited to Graceland, the late Presley's former home in Memphis, Tennessee.

Pena, 34, said he did not expect to see his home again.

"I didn't think I'd make it back, so this reception really blows my mind," he said, as waiting neighbours showered him with

confetti. "We really had a bad time."

When the mine caved in, all 33 men were believed to have died in yet another of Latin America's litany of mining accidents. But rescuers found them 17 days later with a bore hole the width of a grapefruit.

That tiny hole became an umbilical cord used to pass down hydration gels, water and food to keep them alive until a bigger shaft could be bored to bring them up.

In a complex but flawless operation under Chile's far northern Atacama desert, the miners were hauled out one by one through 2,050 feet (625 meters) of rock in a metal capsule little wider than a man's shoulders and dubbed "Phoenix" after the mythical bird that rose from the ashes.

It took 24 hours to extract the 33 miners and six rescuers who had gone down the escape shaft to help the men get out.

They are in remarkably good shape considering the ordeal.

N Korea threatens to attack South over leaflets

AP, Seoul

North Korea renewed its threat yesterday to attack South Korea over anti-Pyongyang leaflets being sent into the country, a sign of lingering tension after the sinking of a South Korean warship.

Civilian activists regularly use balloons to launch leaflets condemning North Korean leader Kim Jong Il across the heavily fortified border, a tactic Pyongyang views as part of official South Korean psychological campaigns aimed at toppling its regime.

The North warned during military talks with South Korea last month that it might fire artillery at sites the activists use to launch the balloons.

Nato facilitating Taliban talks in Afghanistan

US General Petraeus says

AFP, London

The commander of Nato forces in Afghanistan, US General David Petraeus, admitted Friday that western troops have facilitated the safe passage of Taliban leaders to Kabul for talks with the government.

US and International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) troops had helped insurgent commanders get to the Afghan capital as part of its support for Afghan President Hamid Karzai's negotiations with the rebels, he said.

"There are certain ongoing initiatives in that regard," Petraeus told an audience at the Royal United Services Institute in central London when asked about the state of negotiations with the hardline Islamist movement.

"And indeed in certain respects we do facilitate that, given that, needless to say, it would not be the easiest of tasks for a senior Taliban commander to enter Afghanistan and make his way to Kabul if



ISAF were not witting and therefore aware of it and allows it to take place," Petraeus said.

Karzai this month launched the High Council for Peace, the latest effort to persuade the Taliban and other insurgents to negotiate an end to the war which has entered its 10th year.

The Taliban on Wednesday denied a claim by Karzai that they were taking part in the talks, more than nine years after they were driven from power by a US-led invasion after the September 11, 2001 attacks in the United States.

But Petraeus, who also led the US "surge" in Iraq in 2007, said a number of key figures from the Taliban had also made contact with foreign forces in Afghanistan as well as with local authorities.

"There have been several very senior Taliban leaders who have reached out to the Afghan government at the highest level and also in some cases reached out to other countries engaged in Afghanistan," he said.

BTCL DATA LINK

Provides nationwide data connectivity between offices.

[No Tendering Hassle!]

BTCL Optical Fiber Network

www.btcl.gov.bd

Bangladesh Telecommunications Company Limited

BTCL provides the solution of nationwide high speed data connectivity between offices through DDN technology and optical fibre network. Establishing WAN, VPN or IP Network with internet access is easier with BLink. Our new rate is more lucrative than before (45% less). As BTCL (Former BTTB) is 100% state owned company you can easily avoid tendering hassle.

More than 100 distinguished customers are using our services. Present customers include Govt. and Semi-govt. organizations, NGOs, Banks, Embassies, Universities, National and International organizations etc.

Main Feature of BLink

- >> Reliable Point to Point high speed data connectivity between offices. Suitable for online office management, Banking etc.
- >> DDN (Digital Data Network) technology is considered as the superior quality service by the distinguished customers
- >> It's a Point to Point dedicated link. So communication is more secured.
- >> It's a wired solution. So no Interference.

Contact Address :
DE, Exchange Installation :
Phone : +880 2 8331133, 8332200, 8333436 (Mkt).
Fax : +880 2 8332299
Email : deexinst@btcl.net.bd, marketing@btcl.net.bd
Mob : 01550151283, 01550151261
Fax, Marketing Cell : +880 2 8333430

Top Obama ally clashes with rival in tight poll race

AFP, Las Vegas

President Barack Obama's top ally in Congress called his Tea Party-backed rival "extreme" Thursday, while she questioned his integrity in their sole face-to-face debate before crunch polls.

With the race neck-and-neck, Democratic Senator Harry Reid and Republican Sharron Angle duelled, often unpleasantly -- with Angle wondering how Reid had become so wealthy as a senator, prompting Reid to complain of "a low blow."

There were no major showstoppers, just a steady one-hour bounce from topic to topic as the two disagreed on how to improve the floundering US economy, what to do about undocumented immigrants and what to do about health care.

Angle, a former state assemblywoman plagued by criticism that she has changed her position on numerous issues, appeared cheerful and focused, while the four-term Senate Majority Leader seemed demure and tired.

"I'm laughing because this was like watching the 'Twilight Zone'," said Eric Herzik, a political science professor at the University of Nevada at Reno. "I think Senator Reid was as animated as Senator Reid gets."

"I think he was a little frustrated that Angle kept shifting her positions and her past positions, and said some things that were blatantly not true. But I'm sure many people thought she came across just fine."

Reid, seeking a fifth six-year term in November 2 mid-term elections, is fighting for his political life amid deep voter anger in the state with the country's top jobless and home foreclosure rates.

Republicans, who aim to defeat Reid and politically cripple Obama, helped Angle raise an eye-popping 14 million dollars this summer.

The incumbent's approval ratings continue to hover around an abysmal 40 percent in part because he has a quiet, dour personality that was on display at the debate.

Yet his campaign has made the contest close by blanketing the TV airwaves and Internet sites with a barrage of ads portraying Angle as a radical. On Thursday night he called her "extreme" three times.

Global Education + Global Networks = Global Opportunities

UNSW is a research leader in the field of HIV/AIDS

Photovoltaics laboratory at UNSW

UNSW is a world leader in silicon solar cell research

UNSW Cinema Centre - An Australian first

The University of New South Wales (UNSW) is one of Australia's leading research intensive universities focusing on important global challenges through advanced research in the following areas:

- Biomedical Science
- Business, Law and Economics
- Water, Environment and Sustainability
- Fundamental and Enabling Sciences
- Next-Generation Materials and Technologies
- Creative and Digital Arts
- Social Policy, Government and Health Policy
- Defence and Security
- ICT, Informatics and Robotics
- Medical Research (Cancer, HIV/AIDS, Stem Cell)

www.unsw.edu.au

UNSW International Office: Tel. +61 2 9385 6996 ■ internationaloffice@unsw.edu.au
IDP Dhaka: Tel. 02 988 3545 ■ info.bangladesh@idp.com

Group of Eight
AUSTRALIA'S LEADING UNIVERSITIES

UNIVERSITAS
The Network for International Higher Education