

## CHINA GAS LEAK All 37 miners confirmed dead

REUTERS, Beijing

All 37 missing and trapped miners in China's latest colliery disaster have been confirmed as dead, state media reported yesterday.

The gas leak occurred early Saturday morning in a pit owned by Pingyu Coal & Electric Co Ltd based in Yuzhou city in the central province of Henan, although 239 people escaped.

Rescuers had said they expected there to be little chance of any missing miners being found alive and have now found the last five bodies, state news agency Xinhua reported, bringing the final death toll to 37.

Another gas leak in 2008 at the same mine killed 23 people.

The accident occurred after Chile's dramatic rescue of 33 miners trapped for more than two months underground.



Policemen stand in front of agitating youths during clashes yesterday in Nanterre outside Paris, on the sidelines of the strikes against the pension reform. French workers and students took to the street once again yesterday to defend their right to retire at 60.

## French pension protests take violent turn

AP, Paris

Masked youths clashed with police and set fires in cities across France yesterday as protests against a proposed hike in the retirement age took an increasingly radical turn.

Hundreds of flights were cancelled, long lines formed at gas stations and train service in many regions was cut in half.

President Nicolas Sarkozy pledged to crack down on "troublemakers" and guarantee public order, raising the possibility of more confrontations with young rioters after a week of disruptive but largely non-violent demonstrations.

Sarkozy also vowed to find a solution to the fuel crisis that has seen more than 1,000 gas stations shuttered nationwide.

The protesters are trying to prevent the French parliament from approving a bill that would raise the retirement age from 60 to 62 to help prevent the pension system from going bankrupt. Many workers feel the change would be a first step in eroding France's social benefits -- which include long vacations, contracts that make it hard for employers to lay off workers and a state-subsidized health-care system -- in favour of "American-style capitalism."

Sarkozy's conservative government points out that 62 is among the lowest retirement ages in the world, the French are living much longer and the pension system is losing money. The workers say the government could find pension savings elsewhere, such as by raising contribu-

tions from employers.

At a high school in the Paris suburb of Nanterre, closed because of earlier violence, a few hundred youths started throwing stones from a bridge at nearly as many police, who responded with tear gas and barricaded the area. It was not immediately clear if there were injuries or arrests. Youths also knocked an Associated Press photographer off his motorbike and kicked and punched him as they rampaged down a street adjacent to the school.

Nanterre has often seen student protests in the past and the latest clashes were reminiscent of 2005 riots that spread through poor housing projects nationwide with large, disenfranchised immigrant populations.

At the Place de la Republique in eastern Paris, young people pelted riot police with projectiles and torched garbage cans. Skirmishes between youths and police broke out in other cities.

It was the sixth national day of demonstrations over the planned pension reform since early September. Union leaders have vowed to keep up the pressure until the government scraps the unpopular plan.

Sarkozy called the reform his "duty" as a head of state and said it must go through to save France's generous but money-losing pension system. The protests in France come as countries across Europe are cutting spending and raising taxes to bring down record deficits and debts from the worst recession in 70 years.

## ISI link to 26/11 attack claimed

Indian documents leaked to UK paper detail "dozens" of meetings between fighters and Pakistani intelligence agents.

ALJAZEERA ONLINE

David Headley, a US informant who scouted locations to help militants prepare for the November 2008 Mumbai attacks, told Indian interrogators this summer that members of Pakistan's military intelligence, the Inter-Services Intelligence agency (ISI), were closely involved in planning the assault, according to the Guardian newspaper and Associated Press news agency.

Headley said ISI agents met members of Lashkar-e-Taiba, the Pakistan-based armed group responsible for the attack, "dozens" of times beforehand. The ISI supported the Mumbai operation because it hoped that a spectacular attack would provide jihadi groups in the contested state of Kashmir with a "sense of achievement" and would shift the "theatre of violence" from Pakistan to India.

Such groups, including the Lashkar, are believed to maintain ties to the ISI and Pakistani government, unlike more

extremist groups, such as the Taliban and al-Qaeda, which pose a threat to Islamabad.

The ISI hoped that a successful Lashkar operation would halt ongoing attrition from the Lashkar to the Taliban and al-Qaeda, Headley claimed.

The new allegations of ISI involvement in the Mumbai assault come from a 109-page classified report by the Indian government that documents Headley's interrogation in the United States in June. The Guardian and AP both obtained a copy of the report.

The well-executed, three-day operation by 10 attackers included raids on two luxury hotels, a major train station and a Jewish outreach centre. More than 160 people died and hundreds more were wounded.

The US and India have blamed the Lashkar for the Mumbai attacks, and the lone surviving attacker has admitted the group carried out the operation.

Allegations of ISI ties to Lashkar are not

new; in July, Indian Home Secretary GK Pillai said members of the group are the "clients and creations" of the ISI and that the Pakistani spy agency was "literally controlling and co-ordinating" the Mumbai attack "from the beginning until the end".

Pakistan has admitted that parts of the attack were planned on its soil and has arrested Pakistani citizens as a result.

Though Headley claimed he met several ISI agents and was, in one meeting, given \$25,000 by an ISI handler to finance one of his reconnaissance missions in India, he also indicated that high-ranking ISI officers may not have known about the Mumbai operation.

After the attacks, Lieutenant-General Shuja Pasha, the ISI's director-general, visited a senior Lashkar member in prison to try to "understand" the operation. Headley reportedly took this as an indication that Pasha had not known about the attack, or at least its scope and aims.

## Saudi prince found guilty of murdering servant

REUTERS, London

A Saudi prince was found guilty yesterday of murdering his servant in their room at a luxury London hotel that prosecuting said had a sexual element.

The prince, Saud Abdulaziz bin Nasser al Saud, 34, was convicted at the Old Bailey of murdering Bandar Abdulaziz, 32.

The court had heard that the two were believed to be having some kind of sexual relationship.

Bandar Abdulaziz was found beaten and strangled in the Landmark Hotel in central London in February.

## Iran welcomes Chavez as partner against Western "bullies"

REUTERS, Tehran

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad received his close Latin American ally Hugo Chavez on Tuesday and welcomed the Venezuelan president's support against the Islamic Republic's western "bullies."

Both men are eyed with great suspicion by the United States which has led tougher international sanctions against Iran over the nuclear programme Washington fears would lead to a bomb.

The leaders of the two major oil exporters inspected a guard of honour before heading into talks which Iranian media said were aimed at boosting cooperation in the oil, gas, and petrochemical sectors.

"The progressive and fraternal stance of Venezuela in condemning sanctions against Iran imposed by the bullying powers is indicative of the deep and firm ties between the two countries," Ahmadinejad was quoted as saying by the student news agency ISNA.

Chavez is on a 10-day tour of Europe and the Middle East and he secured while in Moscow on Friday Russia's agreement to build Venezuela's first nuclear power plant.

A Russian-built reactor is due to start providing Iran's first nuclear power early next year as part of a move into nuclear technology that Tehran says will allow it to export more of its fossil fuels. Iran denies it is seeking a nuclear bomb.

## Iraqi PM courts Iran during visit

ALJAZEERA ONLINE

In a move unlikely to allay fears about Iran's rising political influence, Nouri al-Maliki, the Iraqi prime minister, has held talks with Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, the Iranian president, and other officials in Tehran.

The trip to the Iranian capital on Monday comes amid reports that Iran has been directly involved in convincing Muqtada al-Sadr, the leader of a pro-Iranian Shia Muslim bloc, to back an al-Maliki-led government.

The move, reported by LA Times and the UK daily Guardian, would increase Iran's influence in Iraq against that of Western powers.

## Violence continues in Karachi

Another 16  
reported dead

REUTERS, Karachi

Violence continued in Pakistan's troubled southern city of Karachi yesterday, with at least 16 people killed in different attacks, including eight in one incident, police and officials said.

At least 49 people have been killed in Karachi since Saturday when violence erupted ahead of a by-election to replace a provincial lawmaker murdered in August, raising fears of instability in the country's commercial capital.

Senior police official Naveed Khawaja said unknown gunmen riding on motorcycles opened fire in the Sher Shah area, known locally for used cars and machine parts.

Eight people were killed and 10 injured in the incident, said Hashim Raza, health secretary of Sindh province of which Karachi is the capital.

Another eight were killed in other incidents in the city on Tuesday, police said, though it was not clear if all the attacks were related to the ongoing violence.

## Cameron unveils armed forces cuts

BBC ONLINE

David Cameron has confirmed defence spending is to be cut by 8 percent in real terms over four years, as he unveils the strategic defence review.

He said RAF and Navy numbers would be reduced by 5,000 each, Army numbers by 7,000 and the Ministry of Defence would lose 25,000 civilian staff by 2015.

Nimrod reconnaissance would be axed and there will be fewer frigates and destroyers, he said.

Labour's Ed Miliband said the review had been "hastily prepared".

Mr Cameron opened his Commons "statement by denying the review was simply a cost saving exercise", saying it was a "step change in the way we protect this country's security interests".

He said the defence budget would fall by 8 percent over four years but will meet the Nato target of spending 2 percent of GDP on defence and would still leave Britain with the fourth largest military in the world.

There would be no cuts to support for troops in Afghanistan - which is funded separately from the Treasury's special reserve, he told MPs.

Mr Cameron vowed to push ahead with replacing Britain's Trident nuclear missile system but said their replacement would be scaled back, with the number of warheads per boat cut from 58 to 40, as part of a £750m package of savings.

The life of the current Trident submarines would also be extended, with the final spending decision on their replacement delayed until 2016 - after the next general election.

Mr Cameron said he wanted the Ministry of Defence to become more commercially "hard headed" and said it would face "significant challenges" as a result of cuts.

## Google in breach of privacy law

BBC ONLINE

Google's accidental collection of personal data as part of its Street View project has been branded a "serious violation" of privacy laws.

The Canadian privacy commissioner found that the incident was the result of "an engineer's careless error", which saw rogue code accidentally added to Street View software.

It has called on Google to tighten up its privacy rules by February or face further action.

Google has apologised for the error.

## Wife alleges

FROM PAGE 1  
beside her three daughters, could not hold back her tears while reading out a written statement on the killing incident.

The family members of the victim saw a glimpse of hope after a statement of ruling party General Secretary Syed Ashraf Islam. In his statement Ashraf said the government has the video footage of the killing incident and action will be taken against the offenders after watching the footage.

"But the prime minister later said who would prove that the killing was not a result of internal conflict of BNP," stated Kochi, adding that it encouraged the killers and now they are roaming freely.

She demanded justice for the killing and urged the prime minister to bring the killers to book.

Babu, chairman of Baraigram upazila in Natore, was allegedly killed by AL men on October 8.

Prime Minister on October 12 said how they (BNP) would prove that the incident was not an outcome of their internal conflict.

Addressing the press conference, BNP Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain said the prime minister's comments on the incident would not only protect the killers, but also threaten the rule of law, justice and democracy.

He expressed his doubt over the trial of alleged killers. "Babu's killers are activists of the ruling party. Now they [ruling party] are investigating it while they are also witness to the incident."

A video footage of the killing incident was screened during the press conference.



A man looks at the "Piano Robot" during the Taipei International Robot Show at the World Trade Center yesterday. Some 300 exhibitors from 66 companies are taking part in the four-day exhibition.

## Int'l court rejects ex- Congo VP's appeal

AP, The Hague

An appeals panel at the International Criminal Court yesterday rejected former Congolese Vice President Jean-Pierre Bemba's bid to have rape, murder and pillage charges against him dismissed.

Bemba is accused of committing a militia responsible for atrocities in the neighboring Central African Republic in 2002-2003. He argued the charges were inadmissible because authorities in the Central African Republic had investigated the allegations and decided not to prosecute him.

Appeals judge Anita Usacka rejected Bemba's arguments, saying the Central African Republic's highest court overturned a 2004 decision to dismiss charges against Bemba and correctly referred the case to the International Criminal Court.

"The appeals chamber confirms the impugned decision, and dismisses the appeal," said Usacka, who is from Latvia.

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