

US bombs tip-off 'came from former Qaeda men'

The crucial tip-off that led to the discovery of parcel bombs on two cargo planes came from a repentant al-Qaeda member, UK officials say.

Jabr al-Faifi handed himself in to authorities in Saudi Arabia two weeks ago, the officials told the BBC.

US officials have suggested that a Saudi bombmaker is the key suspect in last week's attempt to send the parcel bombs from Yemen to the US.

One bomb travelled on two passenger planes before being seized in Dubai.

The other almost slipped through Britain.

Jabr al-Faifi is described as a former detainee at the US detention centre at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

After leaving Guantanamo he went through a rehabilitation programme in Saudi Arabia and then rejoined al-Qaeda in Yemen before turning himself in to Saudi authorities, AFP news agency reports.

He contacted Saudi government officials saying he wanted to return home and a handover was arranged through Yemen's government, interior ministry spokesman General Mansour al-Turki said.

Jabr al-Faifi is reported to be one of several former detainees from Guantanamo who were returned to Saudi Arabia for rehabilitation in December 2006.

Both bombs - hidden inside printer toner cartridges - contained the powerful plastic explosive PETN, which is difficult to detect. UK authorities have come under criticism after the initial failure to find one of the two bombs on a plane at East Midlands airport.

14 Qaeda suspects surrender Says Yemen

AFP, Sanaa

Fourteen suspected al-Qaeda members, including senior figures, have surrendered in the restive southern province of Abyan, Yemen's defence ministry and a source close to the governor said yesterday.

"Fourteen al-Qaeda members have surrendered to Abyan's governor Ahmed al-Mayassari," said the ministry's website, 26sep.net, citing a security official.

Five of them are leaders of the network's local branch in Abyan, a source close to Mayassari told AFP.

Last month, another 15 suspected members of al-Qaeda surrendered to Abyan's governor.

Yemen is under renewed pressure to eliminate al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, a local franchise, after explosives were found in air parcels headed for the United States sent from its territory by suspected al-Qaeda militants.



Yemeni medical student Hanan al-Samawi, 22, arrives with her father at Sanaa University to attend a ceremony held in her honour yesterday, one day after her release by police who had arrested her over an alleged al-Qaeda plot that sparked a global air cargo alert last week after being tracked down through a mobile number written on the explosives-filled packages. A senior Yemeni security official told AFP that only one parcel had been sent by a woman who "impersonated" Samawi and put the student's phone number on the receipt.

Pakistan launches anti-graft campaign

REUTERS, Islamabad

Pakistan, ranked as one of the most corrupt countries in the world, says it will turn itself around with results of an anti-graft drive seen within a couple of months.

Pakistan's economy has always relied heavily on aid from foreign donors who express concern over the lack of transparency in the South Asian country, especially when providing relief from devastating summer floods that caused \$9.7 billion in damage.

Interior Minister Rehman Malik said agents would also be deployed in government offices to monitor corruption when the drive starts next week.

Taliban briefly overrun Afghan district

AP, Kabul

The Taliban briefly overran a district seat in eastern Afghanistan, torching government buildings and capturing police officers after an intense gunfight, officials said yesterday.

The government was back in control of Ghazni province's Khogyani district headquarters a few hours later, said Interior Ministry spokesman Zemer Bashary, who did not have any information on casualties.

Local police chief Mohammad Yasin, who wasn't there during the attacks, said government buildings were captured and set on fire. All the police guarding the district headquarters were either killed or taken prisoner, Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said, and their weapons and vehicles were confiscated.

US drone attack kills 5 in Pakistan Suicide attack kills two police

AP, Parachinar

A US drone attack killed five people in northwest Pakistan yesterday, local intelligence officials said, the latest in a barrage of such strikes against al-Qaeda and Taliban militants that have long sought sanctuary in the region.

Also in the northwest, four militants stormed a police complex, killing two officers, and gunmen attacked tankers carrying fuel for Nato and US troops just across the border in Afghanistan, wounding a driver and his assistant, police said.

Four American missiles were fired at a house in North Waziristan, the area that has seen the overwhelming majority of attacks over the last two months, said the officials, who did not give their name because the agency they work for does not allow its operatives to be identified.

Nepal fails to elect PM for 15th time

SC to give verdict on PM election writ on Nov 10

NEPALNEWS ONLINE

Nepali Congress parliamentary party leader Ram Chandra Poudel has failed to get elected as the prime minister in the 15th round of election conducted in the legislature parliament yesterday.

Poudel secured 96 votes while 2 votes were cast against him. 31 lawmakers went for 'no vote' option in the ballot paper. Altogether 129 lawmakers participated in the voting.

Meanwhile, the Business Advisory Council has set the next round of PM elections for November 4 at 3 pm.

The House committee announced the new schedule even before the voting took place as it was certain that Poudel would get voted out this time too.

The NC has turned down numerous calls from the UCPN (Maoist) and CPN (UML), which together form a majority in the House, to quit the 'futile' election and sit for dialogue for a government of national unity.

The Supreme Court yesterday set November 10 as the date for final verdict on a case that seeks to declare the sole candidate for the prime minister Ram Chandra Poudel elected to the executive post.

Meanwhile, a division bench of justices Kalyan Shrestha and Girish Chandra Lal decided to pass the final verdict on the writ filed by a group of lawyers.

The bench also ordered the petitioners and the government attorneys to present written arguments within a week.

Taliban hold secret talks with Afghan president

AP, Kabul

Three Taliban figures met secretly with Afghanistan's president two weeks ago in an effort by the Afghan government to weaken the US-led coalition's most vicious enemy, a powerful al-Qaeda linked network that straddles the border region with Pakistan.

A former Afghan official said the meeting in Kabul included an ex-Taliban governor, Maulvi Abdul Kabir. He comes from the same Zadran tribe as the leaders of the Haqqani network, an autonomous wing of the Taliban responsible for many attacks against US and Afghan forces, the former official said over the weekend.

US and Afghan officials hope that if Kabir agrees to quit the insurgency, it could split the Zadran tribe and undercut the pool of

recruits from which the Taliban currently draw fighters. But it was unclear whether any progress toward that end was made during the talks.

Weakening the Haqqanis' grip over the Zadran tribe could help shift the power balance in eastern provinces where the network poses a major threat. The Haqqani network, led by ailing Jalaluddin Haqqani and his son Sirajuddin, is believed to be sheltering top al-Qaeda leaders across the border in Pakistan.

Kabir served as governor of Nangarhar province and deputy prime minister during the Taliban rule, which ended with the US-led invasion of 2001. He is believed to run the Taliban council in the Pakistani city of Peshawar but is not considered a powerhouse in the Taliban.

The two other Taliban who took part in the talks were Mullah Sadre Azam and Anwar-ul-Haq Mujahed.

Mujahed is credited with helping Osama bin Laden escape the US assault on Tora Bora in 2001, the former official said. He has been in Pakistani custody since June last year when he was picked up in a raid in Peshawar, where one of several Afghan Taliban shuras, or councils, is located.

The men were brought by helicopter from Peshawar and spent two nights in a luxury Kabul hotel before returning to Pakistan.

The US earlier this month acknowledged facilitating some Taliban trips to Kabul but provided no specifics. The Pakistani military has not commented on such reports.

India reviews security in Kashmir

AFP, Srinagar

India's home minister reviewed the security situation in Kashmir Sunday in the face of months of deadly protests against Indian rule that have left over 100 people dead.

P Chidambaram held a series of meetings with Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah and top security and intelligence officials, a spokesman said.

It was Chidambaram's first visit to the state since June 11, when a 17-year-old student was killed by a police tear-gas shell, triggering months of clashes.

Since then, security forces have been accused of killing a total of 111 people, mostly teenagers and students during violent anti-India demonstrations.

The two day-tour that began Saturday took Chidambaram to the northeastern district of Ladakh that was hit by flash floods in August, leaving over 200 people dead.

On Sunday, he visited northern Baramulla district to take stock of the situation in the areas most affected by the protests.

Hours after he left Baramulla, Indian troops backed by police shot dead a suspected militant in the same district during a fierce gunbattle, a police spokesman said, adding the "fighting was still going on."

Chidambaram later met with Abdullah, Kashmir's army and police chiefs and other officials in Indian Kashmir's summer capital of Srinagar, the spokesman said.

Police said anti-India protesters and police clashed at three places in northern Baramulla district and Srinagar prompting police to use "mild force to ward off the protesters."

"There were no casualties despite protesters hurling stones at security forces," the police spokesman said.

The unrest has left the government grappling for solutions to the outpouring of anger in Kashmir, where a 20-year insurgency has declined in intensity but popular desire for an independent Kashmir remains strong.

About two-thirds of residents want independence for their region, according to a survey in September.

Kashmir, a scenic Himalayan territory with a Muslim majority but large Hindu minority, is divided between India and Pakistan and claimed by both. It has triggered two of the three fully-fledged wars between the nuclear powers.

Separatist militants have been battling Delhi's rule in the Indian part of the territory since 1989. At least 47,000 people, more than a third of them civilians, have died in the conflict, according to official figures.



An Iraqi man mourns the death of his wife yesterday who was killed along with 52 other Christians the night before at the Sayidat al-Nejat Catholic Cathedral, or Syrian Catholic Church, in central Baghdad when US and Iraqi forces stormed the cathedral to free dozens of hostages in an attack claimed by al-Qaeda gunmen.

Advertisement for Sony Bravia LCD TV featuring various models like KLV-32NX500, KDL-52LX900, KDL-46NX710, KDL-40NX710, KDL-46EX700, KDL-40EX400, KLV-32EX300, KLV-40BX400, KLV-32BX300, and KLV-26BX300. Includes promotional prices, MRP, and features like 3D World, Motionflow, and Live Colour.