



Ivory Coast police face supporters of Alassane Ouattara, who has claimed to have won last month's presidential election, during a protest in Abidjan yesterday. At least four demonstrators were shot dead as troops loyal to Ivorian leader Laurent Gbagbo mobilised to thwart an attempt to storm state television headquarters.

PHOTO: AFP

US strategy on Afghanistan 'is weakening al-Qaeda'

BBC ONLINE

Al-Qaeda's leadership in Pakistan is at its weakest since 2001, a US review of Afghan strategy has said.

President Barack Obama's review says the US has made enough progress in Afghanistan to start a "responsible reduction" of forces in July 2011.

But it says that the gains against the Taliban made by the US troop surge remain "fragile and reversible".

Nato's plan is to transfer full responsibility for the country's affairs to Afghans by the end of 2014.

The review comes at a time when civilian casualties are at their highest since the US-led invasion of 2001. This year has also been the bloodiest for foreign troops since 2001, with the US taking the brunt of the casualties.

The White House has released a five-page summary of the review of the war strategy in Pakistan and Afghanistan ahead of speech by President Obama on the document later on Wednesday.

The review says: "Al-Qaeda's senior leadership in Pakistan is weaker and under more sustained pressure than at any other point since it fled Afghanistan in 2001."

It continues: "In Afghanistan, the momentum achieved by the Taliban in recent years has been arrested in much of the country and reversed in some key areas, although these gains remain fragile and reversible."

"While the strategy is showing progress across all three assessed areas of al-Qaeda, Pakistan and Afghanistan, the challenge remains to make our gains durable and sustainable."

But BBC correspondents say the bigger picture is of an insurgency fighting the death in Helmand and Kandahar and expanding in places like Ghazni and Kunduz.

The Nato commander in Afghanistan Gen David Petraeus, says a number of insurgents have approached the Afghan government and foreign forces about laying down arms.

However, the Taliban leadership has publicly shunned the idea of direct talks with the government.

There are more than 150,000 Nato troops in Afghanistan trying to defeat the insurgency.

Assange granted bail at High Court

BBC ONLINE

WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange was granted bail yesterday by the High Court in London which rejected an appeal against him being released under stringent conditions.

The 39-year-old was granted bail earlier this week, but prosecutors objected to the decision and he remained in jail.

The Australian is fighting extradition to Sweden over sex charges involving two women. He denies the allegations.

His supporters have offered to put up a surety of £240,000 to guarantee he surrenders to bail.

The appeal was heard at the Royal Courts of Justice in London by Mr Justice Ouseley.

Earlier the judge made a ruling banning the use of Twitter to give a blow-by-blow account of yesterday's proceedings.

WIKILEAKS

Fidel Castro 'nearly died'

BBC ONLINE

Cuban leader Fidel Castro came close to death in 2006, according to the latest secret US diplomatic cables published by Wikileaks.

Mr Castro almost died after suffering a perforated intestine during an internal flight, unnamed sources told US diplomats in Havana.

The illness led Mr Castro to hand power to his brother Raul, although he has since returned to public life.

The 84-year-old's health is considered a state secret in Cuba.

The Wikileaks cables, published by the Spanish newspaper El Pais, reveal the intense efforts made by US diplomats in Havana to find out the nature of Fidel Castro's illness and his chances of recovery.

The names of the sources of information reported in the cables have been redacted by Wikileaks, but some apparently knew people who were close to the Cuban leader, or had access to his medical records.

The details of what they say cannot be independently verified.

One cable, sent in March 2007 by the then-head of the US interests section in Havana, Michael Parmly, quotes a report by an

unnamed doctor on the moment Mr Castro fell seriously ill in July 2006.

"The illness began on the plane from Holguin to Havana," reports the cable.

As it was a short flight there was no doctor on board and they had to land urgently once they knew of Mr Castro's bleeding. He was diagnosed with diverticulitis of the colon.

The source said Mr Castro had a perforation of the large intestine and needed surgery.

But it says he "capriciously" refused to have a colostomy, with the result that his condition deteriorated over time and he required further surgery.

"This illness is not curable and will not, in her opinion, allow him to return to leading Cuba," the report concludes.

"He won't die immediately, but he will progressively lose his faculties and become ever more debilitated until he dies."

Further leaked cables quote other sources as saying Mr Castro was terminally ill, and examine statements by his medical team and reports of specialist drugs being brought into Cuba.

Television still of Fidel Castro drinking orange juice, 30 Jan 2007 Pictures released in January 2007 showed Fidel Castro looking thin and weak.

But the reports of his imminent death have proved to be exaggerated.

Australia launches criminal probe into asylum shipwreck

BBC ONLINE

Australia is launching a criminal investigation into the Christmas Island shipwreck that killed at least 28 people, under people trafficking laws.

Prime Minister Julia Gillard said more bodies may be pulled from the sea after a boat carrying suspected asylum seekers crashed into jagged rocks.

She said the boat may have been carrying more than the 70 passengers originally thought.

Forty-two people were rescued from the heavy surf after the boat broke apart.

Australia's asylum seeker debate is often conducted as if the people heading for its shores were an abstraction, with the term "boat people" almost shorn of its human meaning.

With such harrowing images from Christmas Island broadcast on early evening news shows, millions of

Australians would have seen the anguished faces of those seeking to reach its shores, and witnessed the lengths to which they would go to get there. Put simply, it was shockingly real.

Tabloid sensationalism in Australia is normally turned against the asylum seekers. They are often regarded as "queue jumpers", unwilling to go through the normal channels to seek asylum. Asylum seekers arriving by plane do not attract the same attention, nor what refugee groups would call the same paranoid reaction.

The disaster has already escalated the boat people debate, although the country's politicians have temporarily called a truce in respect for the dead. Whatever its outcome, after the tragedy on Christmas Island the debate has a human face.

"We do not know with any certainty how many people there were on the boat so we've got to prepare ourselves for the

likelihood that more bodies will be found and that there has been further loss of life than we know now with the numbers available to us," said Ms Gillard.

Immigration Minister Chris Bowen said as many as 100 people may have been on board - some 30 more than originally believed.

The passengers of the flimsy wooden boat are believed to have been asylum seekers making their way to Australia via Indonesia.

The route of the vessel and the identity of who organised the journey are still unclear.

In recent years increasing numbers of people from countries such as Sri Lanka, Iran, Iraq and Afghanistan have been making their way to Australia in boats organised by people smugglers.

"It is an evil trade," said Ms Gillard. "But I believe Australians are responding to these events today as human beings."

UN lifts most Int'l sanctions against Iraq

BBC ONLINE

The UN Security Council has voted to lift most international sanctions imposed on Iraq during the Saddam Hussein era.

The vote is intended as a recognition of the political progress made in Iraq.

One resolution ends sanctions that were imposed to stop Iraq building nuclear, chemical or biological weapons.

The fear that Saddam Hussein was developing weapons of mass destruction was the main reason cited for the 2003 invasion of Iraq.

Sanctions were first imposed on Baghdad in 1991 after Iraq invaded Kuwait, though some relating to trade, investment and conventional weapons have been lifted since 2003.

In a statement, the Security Council said it "recognises that the situation now existing in Iraq is significantly different from that which existed at the time of the adoption of resolution 661" in 1990.

The council also voted to return control of Iraq's oil and natural gas revenue to the government on 30 June and to end all remaining activities of the oil-for-food programme, which helped ordinary Iraqis cope with sanctions.

US Vice President Joe Biden, chairing the high-level meeting, noted that the number of violent attacks in Iraq had fallen and he said the people there had "flatly rejected the grim future offered by extremists".

"Iraq is on the cusp of something remarkable - a stable, self-reliant nation," he said.

But UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon said Iraq must make efforts to agree a border with Kuwait and to agree on a dispute over war reparations if all sanctions were to be ended.

Baghdad still pays 5% of revenues from its oil sales into a fund which pays reparations to Kuwait.

Iraq's Foreign Minister Hoshyar Zebari said normalisation of relations with Kuwait would be a priority for the new Iraqi government.

Turkey tries army officers over coup plot

AFP, Siliuri

Some 200 soldiers, among them senior commanders, went on trial yesterday in a landmark case in connection with an alleged 2003 plot to topple Turkey's Islamist-rooted government.

The case marks the toughest challenge yet to the once-omnipotent Turkish army, which has unseated four governments since 1960 but has seen its clout wane under the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP).

The trial started in a huge courtroom inside a prison complex in Silivri, a town near Istanbul, with a judge opening proceedings by confirming the identities of the suspects.

Among the most high-profile defendants present were the alleged mastermind of the coup plan, retired general Cetin Dogan, as well as the former chiefs of the navy and the air force, Ozden Ornek and Ibrahim Firtina.

The 196 suspects -- both serving and retired officers -- risk 15 to 20 years in jail for "attempting to overthrow the government or prevent it from carrying out its duties through the use of force and violence."

The case has been marred by serious doubts over the authenticity of some incriminating documents, fuelling political tensions and deepening mistrust between the staunchly secularist military and the AKP, the offshoot of a banned Islamist movement.

For supporters, the probe is a long-due push to force the generals out of politics, while critics say it is a deliberate campaign to disable the army and remove a major stumbling block for the AKP's Islamist ambitions.

Underscoring the rift, the Taraf daily, the first to report the coup plan in January, hailed "the trial of the century," while the mass-selling Hurriyet cast doubt on the charges, listing defendants who were not even based in Turkey at the time when the plan was allegedly debated.

The prosecution argues the plan -- code-named "Operation Sledgehammer" -- was drawn up and discussed at the First Army base in Istanbul shortly after the AKP came to power in November 2002 amid fears it would undermine the secular system.

It says the suspects planned to "pave the way for a military takeover by plunging the country into chaos and unrest" and singles out Dogan, the First Army's then commander, as the mastermind.

The soldiers allegedly plotted to carry out bomb attacks on two Istanbul mosques and down a Turkish jet over the Aegean to provoke tensions with Greece, hoping to discredit the AKP and garner public support for a coup.

Dogan has denied the charges, arguing that papers from a seminar on a contingency plan based on a worst-case scenario of tensions with Greece and Islamist unrest at home have been doctored to look like a coup plan.

The seminar, held in March 2003 in Istanbul, was attended by officers serving in the city and neighbouring regions.

The probe began in February after Taraf, which routinely targets the army, published purported documents incriminating the defendants and then handed them over to prosecutors.



PHOTO: AFP

An anti-nuclear demonstrator is carried off the railway tracks by police officers in Kraepelin, near Lubmin, north Germany, yesterday, as the region is covered by snow and experiences temperatures around minus five degrees celsius. Some 200 protesters sat on the tracks to block a Castor transport train on its way from Cadarache in southern France to the storage facility in Lubmin.

No survivors in Nepal air crash

ALJAZEERA ONLINE

All 22 people on board a passenger plane have been found dead after the aircraft crashed in eastern Nepal, the Rescue Co-ordination Committee at Kathmandu Airport has said.

The announcement came after rescuers recovered the wreckage of a small plane yesterday near a village about 160km from the capital.

The plane crashed in the foothills of the Himalayas after losing contact with flight controllers shortly after taking off from a mountainous airstrip in Lamidanda on Wednesday, heading for Kathmandu.

The Twin Otter aircraft, operated by Tara Air, an airline based in Nepal, had 19 passengers and three crew members on board.

The cause of the crash was not yet known.

Bhesh Bahadur Thapa, a police official stationed near the crash site, said the wreckage was scattered over an area of 300 meters radius on the sides of a mountain.

He said rescuers were collecting the bodies and preparing them to be sent back to Kathmandu.

An army rescue team reached the crash site after it was located in an aerial search.

Malaysia Parliament suspends Anwar, 3 top allies

AP, Kuala Lumpur

Malaysia's ruling coalition won a vote yesterday to ban its archrival Anwar Ibrahim and three of his top allies from Parliament for six months, eroding the opposition's legislative influence to precarious levels.

The suspension reduces the opposition to less than one-third of Malaysia's 222-member Parliament for the first time since 2008 general elections. That could enable Prime Minister Najib Razak's coalition to change the constitution and election district boundaries before the next national polls, which some expect next year.

Anwar was suspended on accusations of making false statements in Parliament last March, when he claimed that the government's program to promote multiracial unity in this Muslim-majority country was inspired by a



Anwar Ibrahim

1999 Israeli election campaign.

The suspension was the government's "way of mocking the people's voice, preventing us from defending ourselves," the opposition leader said after yesterday's vote. Anwar's three senior colleagues were penalized for leaking details about a parliamentary investigation into his remarks.

Anwar and dozens of other opposition legislators stormed out of Parliament's lower house during the vote, which followed scenes of pandemonium and shouting. Some opposition lawmakers held posters denouncing the lower house as "a kangaroo court" because they claimed Anwar was unfairly targeted.

Anwar and the other three lawmakers will be barred from parliamentary debates and votes through June, but they can continue other political work, such as addressing rallies.

বিজ্ঞপ্তি

"সবাই মিলে দেব কর, দেশ হবে স্বনির্ভর"

ব্যাংক ও আর্থিক প্রতিষ্ঠানের গ্রাহক এবং ব্যাংকারগণ লক্ষ্য করুন

মূল্য সংযোজন কর আইন, ১৯৯১ মোতাবেক "ব্যাংকিং ও নন ব্যাংকিং সেবা প্রদানকারী" অর্থ কোন রাষ্ট্রায়ত্ত্ব, দেশীয় বা বিদেশী বাণিজ্যিক ব্যাংক অথবা আর্থিক প্রতিষ্ঠান, যারা কমিশন, ফি, বা চার্জের বিনিময়ে ব্যাংকিং বা নন ব্যাংকিং সেবা যথাঃ- ঋণপত্র, ব্যাংক গ্যারান্টি, ডিমাড ড্রাফট, পে-অর্ডার টিটি, এমটি, কমিটমেন্ট, হ্যাভলিং, যে কোন প্রকারের হিসাব (Account) খোলা ও নবায়ন এবং আবেদনপত্র প্রক্রিয়াকরণসহ অন্যান্য সকল সেবা (স্টক এক্সচেঞ্জ তালিকাভুক্ত কোম্পানীর শেয়ার ক্রয় বিক্রয় সংক্রান্ত সেবা ব্যতীত) প্রদান করে থাকে। এছাড়াও ওয়েজ আনার্স রেমিটেন্স থেকে প্রাপ্ত চার্জ/কমিশন/ফি, বৈদেশিক মুদ্রা বিনিময় বাবদ আদায়কৃত চার্জ/কমিশন/ফি, ক্রেডিট কার্ড সেবার মাধ্যমে প্রাপ্ত চার্জ/কমিশন/ফিসহ অন্যান্য যে কোন সেবার বিপরীতে প্রাপ্ত চার্জ, কমিশন/ফি-র উপর ১৫% হারে মুদ্রক আদায়যোগ্য হবে। উক্তরূপে আদায়কৃত মুদ্রক ট্রেজারী চালানের মাধ্যমে পরিশোধপূর্বক পরবর্তী মাসের ১৫ তারিখ এবং ১৫ তারিখ সরকারি ছুটির দিন হলে, তার পূর্ববর্তী কর্মদিবসে ট্রেজারী চালানের কপি সহ কর চালানপত্র স্থানীয় মূল্য সংযোজন কর কার্যালয়ে দাখিল করতে হবে।

২। এ ছাড়াও ২০১০-১১ অর্থ বছরে ব্যাংক ও আর্থিক প্রতিষ্ঠানসমূহ কর্তৃক সংরক্ষিত যে কোন ধরনের একাউন্টের উপর বছরের যে কোন সময় ডেবিট বা ক্রেডিট ব্যালান্সের পরিমাপের ভিত্তিতে নিম্নবর্ণিত হারে আবাগারী ওঙ্ক খার্ব করা হয়েছেঃ

সেবা কোড	সেবার বর্ণনা	আবাগারী স্কেডের হার
(ক)	বছরের যে কোন সময়ে কোন হিসাবের ডেবিট অথবা ক্রেডিট ব্যালান্স ২০,০০০/- (বিশ হাজার) টাকা অতিক্রম না করলে	শূন্য
(খ)	বছরের যে কোন সময়ে কোন হিসাবের ডেবিট অথবা ক্রেডিট ব্যালান্স ২০,০০০/- (বিশ হাজার) টাকার উর্ধ্বে থেকে ১,০০,০০০/- (এক লক্ষ) টাকা পর্যন্ত	প্রতিটি হিসাবের জন্য প্রতি বছরে ১২৫/- (একশত পঁচিশ) টাকা
(গ)	বছরের যে কোন সময়ে কোন হিসাবের ডেবিট অথবা ক্রেডিট ব্যালান্স ১,০০,০০০/- (এক লক্ষ) টাকার উর্ধ্বে থেকে ১০,০০,০০০/- (দশ লক্ষ) টাকা পর্যন্ত	প্রতিটি হিসাবের জন্য প্রতি বছরে ৩৫০ (তিনশত পঞ্চাশ) টাকা
(ঘ)	বছরের যে কোন সময়ে কোন হিসাবের ডেবিট অথবা ক্রেডিট ব্যালান্স ১০,০০,০০০/- (দশ লক্ষ) টাকার উর্ধ্বে থেকে ১,০০,০০,০০০/- (এক কোটি) টাকা পর্যন্ত	প্রতিটি হিসাবের জন্য প্রতি বছরে ১০০০/- (এক হাজার) টাকা
(ঙ)	বছরের যে কোন সময়ে কোন হিসাবের ডেবিট অথবা ক্রেডিট ব্যালান্স ১,০০,০০,০০০/- (এক কোটি) টাকার উর্ধ্বে থেকে ৫,০০,০০,০০০/- (পাঁচ কোটি) টাকা পর্যন্ত	প্রতিটি হিসাবের জন্য প্রতি বছরে ৫০০০/- (পাঁচ হাজার) টাকা
(চ)	বছরের যে কোন সময়ে কোন হিসাবের ডেবিট অথবা ক্রেডিট ব্যালান্স ৫,০০,০০,০০০/- (পাঁচ কোটি) টাকার অধিক	প্রতিটি হিসাবের জন্য প্রতি বছরে ১০,০০০/- (দশ হাজার) টাকা

৩। এক্ষেত্রে ব্যাংক ও আর্থিক প্রতিষ্ঠানের শাখাসমূহ প্রতি বছরে তাদের আদায়কৃত আবাগারী করের তথ্য/বিবরণী পরবর্তী বছরের ৩১শে জানুয়ারির মধ্যে তাদের প্রধান কার্যালয়ে প্রেরণ করবেন, এবং প্রধান কার্যালয় কেন্দ্রীয়ভাবে ট্রেজারী চালানের মাধ্যমে সর্ভশ্রীত মুদ্রক কমিশনারেটের আর্থিক হেডে আদায়কৃত কর জমা দিয়ে চালানের মূলকপি ফেরতায় মাসের মধ্যে স্থানীয় মুদ্রক কার্যালয়ে দাখিল করবেন।

ব্যাংকিং জাহাঙ্গীর হোসেন
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বৃহৎ করদাতা ইউনিট-মূল্য সংযোজন কর
২য় ১২-তলা সরকারি অফিস ভবন (৬ষ্ঠ তলা)
সেগুনবাগিচা, ঢাকা
ফোনঃ ৯৩৬২৯৬১

জিডি-৫১৭৮