

# No nuclear bomb for Iran

## US president vows at UN, delivers General Assembly speech

AFP, United Nations

President Barack Obama yesterday vowed the United States would not permit Iran to arm itself with nuclear weapons, as the UN General Assembly heard appeals for an end to Syria's civil war.

Crises across the Middle East dominated the first day of the annual UN summit, where Western leaders sought to increase pressure on Damascus and Iran to abandon confrontation and seek negotiated settlements.

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon condemned the violence, speaking a day after his peace envoy had accused Syrian leader Bashar al-Assad's regime of resorting to "medieval forms of torture" against his own citizens.

And Obama went further, declaring: "the regime of Bashar al-Assad must come to an end so the suffering of the Syrian people can stop, and a new dawn can begin."

US President Barack Obama also urged global leaders to rally against extremism.

Obama said it was the obligation of all leaders to speak out forcefully against violence and extremism, as he framed his speech with references to the US ambassador murdered in Libya.

Obama was unequivocal on Iran, which is locked in a stand-off with the West over a nuclear program that Washington alleges is designed to produce a weapon that could tip the balance of power in an already volatile region.

### OBAMA'S ADDRESS AT UN



Calls for end to Assad rule

Vows justice for slain Libya ambassador

Condemns extremism

Stresses Arab Spring 'progress'

"Make no mistake. A nuclear-armed Iran is not a challenge that can be contained. It would threaten the elimination of Israel, the security of Gulf nations, and the stability of the global economy," Obama said.

"That is why a coalition of countries is holding the Iranian

government accountable. And that is why the United States will do what we must to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon," he declared.

Six weeks before he is due to seek re-election, Obama is under pressure on the foreign policy front, with criticism of his handling of the killing of US diplomats and claims he is not standing closely enough behind Israel.

Obama said the Arab Spring would lead to improved democracy and living standards in a Middle East region more in line with US values but, while he condemned the film, he insisted no insults could justify violence.

He vowed that the militants who stormed the US consulate in Benghazi on September 11, killing the American ambassador to Libya and three colleagues, would face justice and said the United States would always defend free speech.

Debate in New York in the run-up to the assembly focused on the violence in Syria and the risk that the Iranian stand-off could lead to broader conflict if Israel or the United States launched a pre-emptive strike.

The UN chief also expressed concerns for the mounting tensions surrounding Iran, denouncing what he called: "The shrill war talk of recent weeks."

While Obama took no option off the table in dealing with Iran's nuclear ambitions, Ban called on the United Nations to reject threats of military action, warning: "Any such attacks would be devastating."

## NEWS IN brief

### India PM turns 80 today

AFP, New Delhi



Manmohan Singh

India's Prime Minister Manmohan Singh marks his 80th birthday today in fighting fashion with signs he has rediscovered his "mojo" as a reformer after being written off as a dithering under-achiever.

The soft-spoken Singh, India's first Sikh prime minister, is widely expected to stand down at the next elections due to be held in 2014.

While he earned a place in the history books as the man who lit the fuse for India's rapid growth in the 1990s when he was finance minister, his reputa-

### China coalmine accident kills 20

AFP, Beijing

A coal mining accident in northern China yesterday left 20 miners dead and 14 injured, state media said, in the latest incident to hit the industry.

The cable of a rail carriage taking workers into the mine in Gansu province snapped, sending the 34 miners plummeting into the pit, Xinhua news agency reported.

According to the latest official figures, 1,973 people died in coal mining accidents in China in 2011, a

### Hillary, Zardari discuss Indo-Pak ties

PTI, New York

The improving trade ties between Pakistan and India, terrorism and violent anti-US protests were among a host of issues that Pakistan President Asif Ali Zardari discussed with Secretary of State Hillary Clinton when they met here on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly session.

Zardari brought up the issue of the anti-Islam movie with Hillary. Hillary reiterated that those who provoke violence cannot be tolerated.

Zardari was accompanied by Pakistan Foreign Minister Hina Rabbani Khar.

The two leaders also talked about continued counter terrorism cooperation, including efforts by the US to squeeze the Haqqani Network, which was recently designated as a foreign terrorist organisation.



A Japan Coast Guard vessel, lower, sprays water against Taiwanese fishing boats, in the East China Sea near the Senkaku islands as known in Japanese or Diaoyu Islands in Chinese yesterday. Coastguard vessels from Japan and Taiwan duelled with water cannon after dozens of Taiwanese boats escorted by patrol ships sailed into the disputed waters. Inset, China's first aircraft carrier which began its service yesterday.



PHOTO: AFP

### Syrian kids 'badly traumatised'

AFP, Amman

A global children's aid agency yesterday warned that Syrian children are being "badly traumatised" after witnessing killings, torture and other atrocities in their country's brutal conflict.

Save the Children said it has collected "shocking testimony" revealing that "children have been the targets of brutal attacks, seen the deaths of parents, siblings and other children, and have witnessed and experienced torture."

"Horrible acts of violence are being committed against children in Syria. These children need specialist care now to help them recover from their shocking experiences," said Jasmine Whitbread, chief executive of Save the Children.

Released yesterday, "Untold Atrocities", a collection of first-hand accounts of the conflict from Syrian children and parents after fleeing their country, contains graphic details of how children have been caught up in Syria's war, "witnessing massacres and in some cases, experiencing torture."

The global organisation urged the United Nations to step up its documentation of all violations of children's rights in Syria.

### Congress endorses reforms, backs PM

PTI, New Delhi

India's ruling Congress party yesterday fully endorsed the government's new economic reform measures, including FDI in multi-brand retail, as party president Sonia Gandhi ruled out any threat to the government.

The endorsement came at the first meeting of the Congress Working Committee (CWC) after the Trinamool Congress walked out of the UPA with the party president saying the government was "stable".

In her opening remarks, Gandhi said that reforms in the economy are "very necessary" and the government has begun the moves in that direction.

The Congress president also slammed the BJP for playing "negative" politics, saying the main opposition party should play the role of a responsible opposition as was done by the Congress when it was not in power.

Congress sources said that there a likelihood of the party organising a rally in Delhi in support of the reforms.

While no resolution was adopted after the meeting, the tone and tenor of Gandhi's speech made it clear that the party was fully behind the government on the issue.

The Congress president also expressed sorrow over incidents of communal violence in few states and the violent ethnic clashes in Assam.



Sonia Gandhi

### S Lanka shuts war-time refugee camps

AFP, Colombo

Camps which housed 300,000 displaced people by the end of Sri Lanka's ethnic conflict have now all closed, three years after the war ended, the military yesterday said.

The United Nations welcomed the move, but said hundreds of people could not return home because their properties are occupied by the military in the former war zones. Instead they are in makeshift shelters or with friends and family.

Once one of the world's biggest camps, the final batch of 361 families left Menik Farm in the northern district of Vavuniya on Monday.

The Tamil Tigers fought for an independent homeland for the island's Tamil minority concentrated in the northern and eastern regions. The 37-year conflict claimed up to 100,000 lives, according to UN estimates.

### Israel has no root, will be 'eliminated'

REUTERS, New York

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said on Monday Israel has no roots in the Middle East and would be "eliminated," ignoring a UN warning to avoid incendiary rhetoric ahead of the annual General Assembly session.

Ahmadinejad also said he did not take seriously the threat that Israel could launch a military strike on Iran's nuclear facilities, denied sending arms to Syria, and alluded to Iran's threats to the life of British author Salman Rushdie.

"We don't even count them as any part of any equation for Iran. During a historical phase, they (the Israelis) represent minimal disturbances that come into the picture and are then eliminated," he said.

The United States quickly dismissed the Iranian president's comments as "disgusting, offensive and outrageous." Meanwhile, defying the world pressure, Iran has test-fired four missiles during a military drill in the strategic Strait of Hormuz. It is the first time the Iranian army conducted the drill simultaneously with US-led joint naval exercise in the Gulf.

Ahmadinejad is due to speak at the UN General Assembly today. UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon met Ahmadinejad on Sunday and warned him of the dangers of incendiary rhetoric in the Middle East.



Mahmoud Ahmadinejad

### Shakib show in vain

FROM PAGE 1 much improved batting performance from Bangladesh after Mushfiqur Rahim decided to bat, Pakistan still posted an eminently comfortable 8wicket victory with eight balls to spare.

Pakistan openers Mohammad Hafeez and Imran Nazir put pacemen Mashrafe Bin Mortaza and Shafiqul Islam to the sword to take control of the match as they collected 58 runs from the first five overs. And then they didn't show any mercy towards the spinners as well, on way to the massive victory.

Things however could have been different if young pacer Abul Hasan, who came into the match in place of left-arm spinner Elias Sunny, had managed to take a simple catch off

Nazir at mid-on on the first ball of this over.

Hasan finally got the wicket of Nazir, but by then it was too late because the right-hander had already smashed a 36-ball 72 that contained nine fours and three sixes. Hasan also made up by dismissing Hafeez, who made 46 off 47 balls, in the same over but the damage had already been done as the opening pair partnered to score 124 runs in 13.3 overs.

In-form Nasir Jamshed and Kamran Akmal then finished the job in style.

Earlier, the left-handed Shakib was in exemplary form after a dismal show in the first match against New Zealand. It was amazing to watch after the way the world's number one all-rounder executed the shots

all around the park against a very formidable bowling attack in front of an electrifying crowd.

Shakib smote eleven boundaries and two sixes during his 54-ball 84 to become Bangladesh's highest individual innings in T20I surpassing Nazimuddin's 81 against the same opponents in Kenya in September 2007.

Bangladesh got a perfect start but after the dismissal of Mohammad Ashraful, Shakib joined Tamim Iqbal to create an opportunity for setting up a daunting target for the opposition. Tamim, who set the tone with a firing 12-ball 24, looked in great touch but returned to the pavilion after an unfortunate run-out.

In a mix-up for a quick

single, Tamim lost his balance while U-turning and Hafeez didn't risk throwing the ball but instead ran towards the non-striker's end and dislodged the bails to find Tamim miles short.

Shakib, who made his second fifty after making 57 runs against Ireland this year, however took charge to make up for the loss. He was however not helped by the efforts of Mushfiqur Rahim who failed to rotate the strike properly and was dismissed at a wrong time or vice-captain Mahmudullah who followed his skipper quickly to dash the hope of reaching their highest total in T20.

But credit must also go to champion Pakistan off-spinner Saeed Aijmal, who bounced back strongly after

conceding 12 runs in his first over. Shahid Afridi also showed his character to slow down the Tigers' run-rate while gentle medium-pacer Yasir Arafat claimed three wickets, all of which came at crucial times as Bangladesh managed 42 runs from the last five overs. Bangladesh amassed 90 runs for the loss of two wickets in the first 10 overs.

Shakib, who hit a six against Yasir Arafat to reach his half-century in style, slashed Umar Gul over point for a boundary after hitting a six as Bangladesh reached 100 in 10.4 overs.

It could have been a story about Shakib's, but the Bangladesh bowlers failed again to show their skills on a true batting wicket and will now return home empty-handed.



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