

These tragedies must end

Says Obama; poised to tackle gun violence

AFP, Newtown, Connecticut

President Barack Obama vowed Sunday to battle gun violence, casting the fight as a nation's duty to protect its young, as a Connecticut town prepared to bury the first two victims of last week's rampage at an elementary school.

Speaking at a vigil for the dead, which included 20 six- and seven-year-olds, Obama pledged to use all his power to stop such gun massacres, saying "these tragedies must end."

Newtown, home to the Sandy Hook Elementary School where Adam Lanza, 20, unleashed terror with a military-style assault rifle Friday, will hold the first two funerals on Monday, with more scheduled throughout the week, according to local website Newtown Patch.

Six-year-old Noah Pozner will be buried at the B'Nai Israel Cemetery, while Jack Pinto, also six, is to be buried in the Newtown Village Cemetery.

The other victims of the shooting included six teachers and support staff at the school, as well as the shooter's mother and the shooter himself.

Obama, called for the fourth time in his pres-

idency to eulogize the dead of a mass gun crime, appeared to commit himself to a genuine effort to reform firearms laws, perhaps by leading a push to restore a ban on assault weapons like the one used by Lanza, which expired in 2004.

He did not cast the fight against the entrenched gun lobby, which wields substantial power in Congress, as an effort to confiscate weapons -- a desire his most vehement conservative opponents often say he harbors.

But he suggested that the argument should be built more on the need to protect, innocent, defenseless children.

"Can we say that we're truly doing enough to give all the children of this country the chance they deserve to live out their lives in happiness and with purpose?" he implored, as candles burned by his podium to remember the victims.

"I've been reflecting on this the last few days, and if we're honest with ourselves, the answer is no. We are not doing enough, and we will have to change."

Obama's impassioned remarks did not propose specific solutions, in keeping with the somber tone of the apolitical vigil service.



President Obama is able to temporarily lift the spirits of young victim Emilie Parker's siblings and some other guests while meeting with the families before speaking at the interfaith service. Inset, Emilie Parker.

PHOTO: DAILY MAIL

Gun control debate begins to simmer

AP, Washington

Democrats say meaningful action in the wake of last week's elementary school shooting must include a ban on military-style assault weapons and a look at how the nation deals with individuals suffering from serious mental illness.

Several Democratic lawmakers and Independent Sen. Joe Lieberman said Sunday that it was time to take a deeper look into the recent spate of mass shootings and what can be done to prevent them in the future. Gun control was a hot topic in the early 1990s, when Congress enacted a 10-year ban on assault weapons. But since that ban expired in 2004, few Americans have wanted stricter laws and politicians say they don't want to become targets of a powerful gun-rights lobby. Gun-rights advocates said that might all change after the latest shooting that killed 20 children aged 6 or 7.

Speaking Sunday night at a vigil in Newtown, Conn., the site of Friday's massacre, President Barack Obama did not specifically address gun control. But he vowed, "In the coming weeks I'll use whatever power this office holds to engage my fellow citizens, from law enforcement to mental health professionals to parents and educators in an effort aimed at preventing more tragedies like this."

NEWS IN brief

Iraq attacks kill 25

AFP, Baghdad

A series of attacks targeting both Iraqi security forces and civilians killed 25 people yesterday, in a second day of deadly violence ahead of the first anniversary of the withdrawal of US forces.

The violence comes after a string of attacks killed 19 people and wounded 77 on Sunday. Monday was the deadliest day in Iraq since November 29, when 50 people were killed.

US military forces completed their withdrawal from Iraq on December 18 last year, ending a nearly nine-year war that cost the lives of tens of thousands of Iraqis, thousands of Americans and hundreds of billions of dollars.

People flee as Cyclone batters Fiji

AFP, Suva

Thousands of people fled to evacuation centres in Fiji yesterday as a powerful cyclone lashed the Pacific nation, causing power outages and flash flooding, officials said.

Tropical Cyclone Evan pummelled the main island Viti Levu with winds exceeding 200 kilometres per hour (125 mph) bringing down trees, blocking roads and forcing all flights to be grounded at the popular tourist destination.

Man in Romney mask robbed bank

ANI, Washington

An armed man in a Mitt Romney mask has robbed a Wells Fargo bank in Virginia, USA, according to a report.

The armed robber, wearing the Romney mask, methodically robbed all five tellers at the Virginia bank in suburban Washington, DC, New York Daily News reports.

According to the report, the Romney robber, who also wore a Florida state sweatshirt, methodically collected cash from each of the five bank tellers before escaping the scene.

Chavez's party dominates state polls

AFP, Caracas

President Hugo Chavez, despite an intensifying battle with cancer, has tightened his grip on Venezuela with his party crushing the opposition and winning most governorships in state races Sunday.

Chavez's top rival, Henrique Capriles, survived his own tough test, winning re-election as Miranda state governor. But Chavez's party gained in four other states, said electoral officials in this OPEC nation with the world's top proven oil reserves.

Ban alarmed by violence

Syria VP says at odds with Assad over conflict

AGENCIES

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon expressed alarm on Sunday at the worsening violence in Syria, including the reported mass killing of Alawites and alleged firing of long-range missiles on Syrian territory, Ban's spokesman said, reports Reuters.

"The Secretary-General is alarmed by the continued dramatic escalation of violence in Syria over the past several days, and the grave danger facing civilians in areas under fire," Ban's spokesman, Martin Nesirky, said in a statement.

"There have been extremely worrisome reports earlier this week of a mass killing of civilians in the village of Aqrah near Hama, as well as alleged firing of long-



Ban Ki-moon

range missiles in some areas of the country," he said.

Syrian Vice President Faruq al-Sharaa said in comments published yesterday that he favours a negotiated solution to the Syrian conflict rather than the president's strategy of crushing the rebellion militarily, reports AFP.

Sharaa, in an interview conducted last week at his Damascus office but published on Monday by the pro-Syrian Lebanese newspaper Al-Akhbar, said that such policy disagreements have now reached the highest levels of power.

"Those who have the chance to meet the president will hear from his mouth that this promises to be a prolonged conflict, essentially a grand conspiracy hatched by several parties," Sharaa said.

ROYAL HOAX NURSE FUNERAL

Family attends in India



Children of Jacinth Saldanha, daughter Lisha, left, and son Junal, right, are consoled by their father Ben Barbosa, center, during their mother's funeral at the Shirve Church cemetery. Inset, the grave of Saldanha in Shirva north of Mangalore, India.

PHOTO: AFP

AFP, Shirva

Family and friends of the nurse who was found hanged after taking a hoax call to the hospital treating Prince William's wife gathered for her funeral yesterday in a small town in southwest India.

Indian-born Jacinth Saldanha, 46, apparently committed suicide after answering the telephone call

from Australian radio DJs to the hospital where the pregnant Duchess of Cambridge was admitted with acute morningsickness.

Saldanha's body was flown back from Britain on Sunday and was due to be buried at a cemetery in Shirva, 30 miles from Mangalore city, after a funeral in the Catholic parish church at 4:00pm.

ISLANDS ROW China moves UN for claim

TNN, Beijing

The Diaoyu islands dispute with Japan took another turn with China moving the United Nations to press its claim on a wider area in East China Sea.

Making a partial submission to the UN secretariat about the outer limits of the continental shelf beyond 200 nautical miles in the East China Sea, China said the area is the natural prolongation of its land territory. This is evident in the physiognomy and geological characteristics of the shelf, it said.

World powers must end nuke stalemate: Iran

REUTERS, Dubai

Iran's foreign minister yesterday said a way must be found to end the protracted deadlock between Iran and six world powers over Tehran's nuclear program.

"The two sides have reached a conclusion that they must exit the current stalemate," Ali Akbar Salehi was quoted as saying by the Iranian Students' News Agency.

Big powers suspect Iran is trying to develop the means to build atomic bombs under the cover of a declared civilian nuclear energy program. The Islamic Republic denies this.

Iran and the six powers - the United States, Russia, France, China, Britain and Germany - have expressed readiness to revive efforts to find a negotiated solution to the decade-old dispute to head off the risk of a shattering new war in the Middle East.

Salehi said he did not know when the next round of talks would be held, according to ISNA.

The six powers said last week that they hoped soon to agree with Iran to hold a new round of nuclear negotiations.

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Contact: Office Manager, Department of Environmental Science, IUB, Dhaka Phone: 02-8401645-53, 02-8402065-76, Extn: 229, Mobile: 01727325552 Office Hours: Sunday-Thursday (9:00 am–5:00 pm)	Application Deadline Sunday, January 6, 2013 Admission Test Monday, January 7, 2013 at 5:30 pm Registration / Admission 8-10 January 2013 (3:00 – 5:00 pm) Classes Start Sunday, January 13, 2013, 6:30 pm Orientation Wednesday, January 16, 2013, 5:15 pm

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KATALYST
Partners in Business Innovation

ICT (Information and Communication Technology) firm wanted to develop online software for irrigation recommendations

Katalyst is looking for an ICT firm to develop an online software to make irrigation recommendations for farmers and other users. Interested ICT firms should attend an orientation meeting on the Terms of Reference (ToR) and requirements for the software, which will be held at **sharp 10:30 a.m on 23 December, 2012** at Katalyst office (House 20, Road 6, Baridhara, Dhaka-1212).

Organisations that are interested in attending the orientation meeting are requested to confirm their presence via an email to tender@swisscontact-bd.org (please note that only orientation participating firms will be eligible to bid for the proposal).

Organisations should send their proposals to the address mentioned in the ToR by **5:00 p.m on 2 January, 2013.**

The detailed ToR and supporting documents can be downloaded from the following web-link: http://www.katalyst.com.bd/abtus_procurement.php

File names: "ToR_IRS_2012" and "Supporting_IRS."

Abe sees difficult road ahead

Pledges no compromise on islands

AFP, Tokyo

Japan's premier-in-waiting Shinzo Abe came out fighting yesterday after his sweeping election victory, saying there can be no compromise on the sovereignty of islands at the centre of a dispute with China.

China reacted with alarm to Abe's victory, after his conservative Liberal Democratic Party crushed opponents in national polls and he immediately restated Tokyo's claims.

"The Senkaku islands are Japan's inherent territory," Abe told a press conference, referring to an archipelago Beijing calls the Diaoyus. "Japan owns and controls the islands... under international law. There is no room for negotiation on this point."

Beijing declared itself ready to work with Japan on "further development of stable relations" but expressed disquiet at where Abe would lead Japan.

