

Obama won't rush

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He played down the chances of Assad cooperating with a UN team that might, if given access soon, provide conclusive evidence of what happened. In any case, he would not react in haste to calls for US intervention that would "mire" Americans in an undertaking that was counter to their long-term interests.

Meanwhile, Britain yesterday said it believed forces loyal to Syrian President Bashar al-Assad were responsible for the chemical weapons attacks, saying it thought the Syrian government had "something to hide".

Stepping up calls for UN inspectors to be allowed access to the site of the reported attack, Hague said Britain would go back to the UN Security Council to seek a stronger mandate if inspectors were not granted access "within some days", reported AFP.

Earlier, a US official familiar with initial intelligence assessments said that the gassing appeared to be the work of the Assad government.

Noting budget constraints, problems of international law and a continuing US casualty toll in Afghanistan, Obama told CNN:

"Sometimes what we've seen is that folks will call for immediate action, jumping into stuff that does not turn out well, gets us mired in very difficult situations, can result in us being drawn into very

expensive, difficult, costly interventions that actually breed more resentment in the region.

"The United States continues to be the one country that people expect can do more than just simply protect their borders. But that does not mean that we have to get involved with everything immediately.

"We have to think through strategically what's going to be in our long-term national interests."

Asked about his comment - a year to the day before the poison fumes hit sleeping residents of rebel-held Damascus suburbs - that chemical weapons would be a red line for the United States, he replied: "If the US goes in and attacks another country without a UN mandate and without clear evidence that can be presented, then there are questions in terms of whether international law supports it."

Russia and China have vetoed United Nations Security Council moves against Assad in the past and oppose military action.

International powers, including Moscow, have urged Assad to cooperate with a UN inspection team which arrived on Sunday to pursue earlier allegations of chemical weapons attacks and to give them access to affected areas before evidence deteriorates.

Syrian officials say allegations against their forces are "illogical and fabricated".

They point to the timing of the attack, just days after UN inspectors arrived, and say it conflicts with previous assurances that, if they possessed chemical weapons, they would never use them against Syrians.

Opposition activists said they had been in contact with the specialist UN team in Damascus and had sent tissue samples with couriers seeking to slip across from the Ghouta region into the government-held centre to deliver them to the inspectors.

The rebels' efforts could prove futile; only material that has a clear provenance and a "chain of custody" would generally be treated as evidence by UN inspectors.

Former weapons investigators say every hour matters in determining if chemicals were used and who was behind them.

"The longer it takes, the easier it is for anybody who has used it to try to cover up," said Demetrius Perricos, who headed the UN team of weapons inspectors in Iraq in the 2000s.

Images, including some by freelance photographers supplied to Reuters, showed scores of bodies laid out on floors with no visible signs of injury. Some had foam at the nose and mouth.

France said on Thursday that world powers must respond with force if allegations of chemical attack on civilians prove true. Fabius stressed, however, there was no question of sending in

troops.

European officials speaking on condition of anonymity said that hypothetically, options for response range from air strikes, creating a no-fly zone, or providing heavy weapons to some rebels were all still on the table. But there was little prospect of concrete measures without US backing.

"The American reaction ... was cautious," said one official. "And without US firepower, there's little we can do."

Obama has directed US intelligence agencies to urgently help establish what caused the deaths, a State Department spokeswoman said, but she said it may be difficult, given that the United States does not have diplomatic relations with Syria.

No deadline was given to agencies investigating the attack.

The State Department also said senior US and Russian diplomats would meet in The Hague next Wednesday to discuss ending Syria's two-year civil war, which has already killed more than 100,000 people. It would be the first such meeting since allegations of the chemical attack.

Millions have been forced from their homes. On Friday, the United Nations said 1 million children alone have fled the country and 2 million have been displaced inside Syria.

World's most

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"The stability of the ytterbium lattice clocks opens the door to a number of exciting practical applications of high-performance timekeeping," National Institute of Standards and Technology physicist, and co-author of the study revealing the clock, Andrew Ludlow said in a statement.

While mechanical clocks use the movement of a pendulum to keep time, atomic clocks use an electromagnetic signal of light emitted at an exact frequency to move electrons in cesium atoms.

The physicists built their ytterbium clocks using about 10,000 rare-earth atoms cooled to 10 microkelvin (10 millionths of a degree above absolute zero) and trapped in an optical lattice made of laser light.

Another laser that "ticks" 518 trillion times per second triggers a transition between two energy levels in the atoms. The clock's high stability is owed to the large number of atoms.

The new clocks can achieve precise results very quickly.

Technicians must average the current US civilian time standard, the NIST-F1 cesium fountain clock, for about 400,000 seconds (about five days) to obtain its best performance.

But the new ytterbium clocks can achieve that same result in about one second of averaging time.

The study was published in the journal Science.

'Indian' smuggler released

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Kushita

An Indian man, caught by an anti-smuggling taskforce in Meherpur Thursday morning, was released yesterday as a Bangladesh citizen.

The man had claimed to be Serajul Islam, 27, of Petubhanga in Nadia district of Paschimbanga in India.

Moktar Hossain, upazila nirbahi officer of Mujibnagar who led the taskforce, told journalists that he had raided Sonapur border in Mujibnagar following a tip-off. The Indian cattle smuggler had infiltrated Bangladesh territory

around 7:30am.

The taskforce with a police team arrested Serajul and seized 46 cattle. It took a deposition from him where Serajul stated that he was indeed an Indian national.

The taskforce then handed him over to Mujibnagar police.

According to sources, a group of local ruling Awami League leaders then started lobbying for his release.

Sources said Serajul was a relative of Mujibnagar upazila unit Awami League Vice-President Ayub Hossain, who was also a union parishad chairman.

The Awami League leader

had met Meherpur Superintendent of Police Mofazzel Hossain and claimed that Serajul was an inhabitant of Sonapur in Mujibnagar, said the sources.

"I believed the UP chairman who asked to release the man in his custody," Mofazzel Hossain said.

All the cattle seized were also returned to Serajul.

Deputy Commissioner of Meherpur Mahmud Hossain said UNO Moktar Hossain had informed him of the matter verbally. "We can take the next step after getting a written statement from the UNO," he said.

US soldier apologizes for Afghan shooting

AFP, Washington

A US Army sergeant who pleaded guilty to killing 16 villagers in a shooting spree in Afghanistan apologized Thursday to his victims' families and said his behavior was cowardice.

Robert Bales, 40, choked back tears as he spoke at a sentencing hearing over the worst war crime by an American soldier in Afghanistan. Those gunned down included nine children.

"What I did was an act of cowardice, behind a mask of

fear, bullshit and bravado," Bales said at the military courtroom, according to the Seattle Times. It was his first apology for the massacre.

"I am sorry, truly, truly sorry, for what I did to those people," said Bales, a father of two. "I murdered their families. If I could bring their family members back, I would in a heartbeat."

Bales, who came face to face with survivors of his rampage this week, is facing life in prison. He pleaded guilty in June to avoid the death penalty.

The defense and prosecu-

tion are to give their closing arguments Friday. The six member military jury will then decide if Bales can ask for parole after serving 20 years behind bars.

Bales spoke during unsworn testimony, which meant he could not be cross examined. He did not describe exactly what he did during the massacres or why he carried them out, the Times said.

This week Bales had to listen to people who lived through his massacre, as seven survivors offered gut-wrenching testimony.

UN for dialogue to end crisis

FROM PAGE 1

regarding the next polls and the polls-time government, reported BSS.

"During the telephonic conversation, the premier apprised Ban Ki-moon of the mode of the next general elections and the current political situation," said PM's Media Adviser Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury.

"We would welcome any sort of proposal of the opposition if it places that in the upcoming session of the Jatiya Sangsad," she said, adding that she and her government always believed in solving any problems through discussion.

Hasina also informed the UN secretary general of her earlier proposal to the Leader of the Opposition Khaleda Zia for a dialogue to solve the problems.

"But without responding to the proposal, she [Khaleda Zia] issued the government a 48-hour ultimatum, and later the opposition destroyed peace and political environment by unleashing violence, terrorism and subversive activities to topple the government," she said.

The premier said her government wants peace and to see a peaceful hand-over of power through free, fair and impartial elections.

She expressed high hopes that the next general election would be held in due time as per the constitution and the people would be able to cast their votes without any barrier.

The opposition had brought an adjournment motion about the polls-time government in parliament and the treasury bench agreed to discuss the issue in the House, she said.

"But the opposition withdrew its adjournment motion within three hours as it was reluctant to solve the problems," she added.

Hasina said the treasury bench wanted to discuss the issue in the Jatiya Sangsad as it tried to solve any political

issue through discussion and in a peaceful environment.

The 15th amendment to the constitution was brought following the verdict of the country's apex court, she said.

The apex court declared the 13th amendment to the constitution illegal since any unelected government is in conflict with the constitution. "Only the elected representatives will run the country," she added.

The parliamentary special committee brought the amendment after a long discussion with all stakeholders including civil society and media representatives, Hasina said.

She told Ban Ki-moon that the parliamentary special body discussed the issue with all, not to mention the lawmakers, and such discussion over a long period of time had never been held in Bangladesh.

The UN secretary-general lauded Bangladesh's tremendous successes in the fields of democracy, economic growth and millennium development goals under the leadership of Hasina.

"Bangladesh has been acclaimed internationally for its firm stance against terrorism, militancy and fundamentalism," he said, adding that the world needed a leader like Hasina.

He expressed hope that Bangladesh's advancement in democracy, economy and anti-militant activities would continue under the leadership of Hasina.

The UN secretary general invited the premier to attend the next UN General Assembly session scheduled next month.

Accepting the invitation, Hasina said her participation in the UNGA would depend on the situation as the JS session is likely to continue at that time.

The premier also invited Ban Ki-moon to visit Bangladesh at his convenient time.

The UN chief expressed sympathy to Hasina for the assassination of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, and most of his family members on August 15, 1975.

He also condoled the deaths of 24 Awami League leaders and workers in August 21 grenade attack in 2004.

CALL TO KHALEDA

The UN chief also talked about the country's latest political situation and the next general elections during his half and hour telephone conversation with the BNP chairperson.

BNP spokesperson Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir last night briefed the media about the conversation at Khaleda's Gulshan office.

Quoting the UN chief, he said the UN wanted to see a free, fair and acceptable election participated by all political parties.

Ban Ki-moon called upon the ruling and the opposition parties to work out a solution through dialogue to ensure all parties' participation in the next elections, informed Fakhrul.

He said the UN chief, however, expressed concern as the UN's recent initiatives to get the country out of the political stalemate had not been successful.

In response, Khaleda told him that she and her party were ready for the dialogue and had repeatedly been proposing for talks.

"There are no alternative to dialogue to save democracy," said Fakhrul quoting Khaleda as saying.

The BNP chairperson said the opposition would not participate in any election under the Awami League government.

She said 90 percent people, including the civil society and political parties, believe that there was no alternative to a non-party government, and a strengthened and independent election commission during the next polls.

Pak blast death toll rises to two

AFP, Karachi

The death toll in a roadside bomb attack targeting troops in Pakistan's port city of Karachi has risen to two, officials said yesterday.

The blast was aimed at soldiers returning to their barracks by truck after carrying out security duties at polling stations for by-elections in the city on Thursday.

"An army soldier, who had sustained injuries in the attack died overnight of wounds, rising the toll in the attack to two," a senior security official told AFP.

The official who did not want to be named said the condition of 10 other soldiers wounded in the attack was stable.

A local intelligence official also confirmed the new toll.

The attack initially killed a civilian and left 16 more people including 11 soldiers

wounded in the violence-plagued port city.

A bloody wave of killings and kidnappings has hit Karachi, a sprawling metropolis of 18 million people on the Arabian Sea and Pakistan's economic heart.

Bombs hurled

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unit Jubo League Organising Secretary Rafiqul Islam Shipon made the attack to establish supremacy in the area.

One BCL activist was hurt in the incident, he said.

Emdadul Haque Sheikh, officer-in-charge of Sadar Police Station, said they had found evidence of the attack.

Locals said the BCL office was built illegally on the land of a company named Newtown Housing.

Man shot

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was rushed to Chittagong Medical College Hospital where doctors declared him dead.

Quazi Motiul Islam, officer-in-charge of Double Mooring Police Station, said Nasir himself was a criminal and was accused in several cases filed with Double Mooring and Bander police stations.

Jahedul Islam, officer-in-charge of Bander Police Station, said Nasir and Rubel were members of a covered van robbery gang.

A murder case has been filed with Double Mooring Police Station in connection with the murder.

10,680 Yaba

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Chittagong-bound truck near the check post on the Cox's Bazar-Teknaf highway, and seized the yaba tablets from the vehicle after conducting a search.

They also recovered 100 sacks of dried betel nuts from it.

Later, the BGB members held the four drug peddlers from the vehicle.

Lt Col Md Khalid Hasan, commanding officer of 17 BGB Battalion, said the drug peddlers had been taking the consignment of yaba tablets to Chittagong from Teknaf.

Subedar Maj Nurul Islam, in-charge of Morichya Check Post, said a case had been filed with Ramu Police Station in this connection.

The four were handed over to the police station, added Nurul.

<div><div></div><div><div>Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkha</div><div>Uttara Residential Model Town (3rd Phase) Project</div><div>RAJUK Bhaban, Dhaka</div><div>www.rajukdhaka.gov.bd</div></div></div>					
Invitation for Re-Tenders (Works)					
01	Ministry/Division		Ministry of Housing & Public Works.		
02	Agency		Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkha (RAJUK).		
03	Procuring entity name		RAJUK.		
04	Procuring entity district		Dhaka (Metropolitan Area).		
05	Invitation reference No.		Tender No. 02/2013-2014 (Uttara 3rd Phase).		
06	Date		20/08/2013.		
07	Procurement method		Open tendering method (OTM).		
08	Budget & source of funds		Own fund of RAJUK.		
09	Project name		Uttara Residential Model Town (3rd Phase) Project.		
10	Tender package name		N/A.		
11	Last date of tender publication		24/08/2013.		
12	Last date and time for selling tender documents		08/09/2013 during office hour.		
13	Last date and time for submission of tender documents		09/09/2013 up to 12.30pm.		
14	Date and time for opening of tenders		09/09/2013 at 2.30pm.		
15	Name and address of the office(s):				
	Selling tender documents	Manager, Sonali/Janata/Agrani Bank, Rajuk Bhaban Branch, Dilkusha C/A, Dhaka-1000.			
	Receiving tender documents	(i) Office of the Chief Engr. RAJUK, 4th Floor, RAJUK Bhaban, Dhaka. (ii) Office of the Project Director, Uttara RMT (3rd Phase) Project, Annex Building, 6th Floor, RAJUK Bhaban, Dhaka. (iii) Office of the Secretary, RAJUK, 2nd Floor, RAJUK Bhaban, Dhaka.			
	Opening tender documents	Tenders will be opened by TOC at Meeting Room of RAJUK, 3rd Floor, RAJUK Bhaban, Dhaka in presence of intending tenderers or their authorised representatives.			
16	Eligibility of tenderers	(a) General experience: Minimum 07 (seven) years experience in civil construction work. (b) Similar work experience: Earth filling/dredge filling of minimum amount Tk 3.00 (three) crore of single contract within last 7 (seven) years. (c) Annual turnover: Last five years (financial year 2007-2008, 2008-2009, 2009-2010, 2010-2011 & 2011-2012) average construction turnover should be required is minimum Tk 16.00 (sixteen) crore. (d) Liquid asset: Should be required minimum Tk 2.00 (two) crore. (e) Any individuals/firms who fulfill the qualification criteria stipulated in the tender data sheet and others condition of tender document. (f) Tenderer should be competent in terms of legal, financial and technical capacity having experience in similar nature of work. (g) Furnishing of any false, forged and misleading documents by tenderer shall result in rejection of his/her tender may lead to forfeit of tender security and action may be taken against tenderer as per PPR & PPA.			
17	Brief description of works	Land development by earth/sand filling in remaining part of Group No. 52 & 53 at URMT (3rd Phase) project by dredge filling method.			
18	Works details				
	Identification of lot	Name of works & location	Price of tender document (in Tk)	Tender security amount (in Tk)	Time for completion (in months)
		Land development by earth/sand filling in remaining part of Group No. 52 & 53 at URMT (3rd Phase) project by dredge filling method	2000.00 (two thousand)	16,00,000.00 (sixteen lac)	6 (six)
19	Name of official inviting tender		Bhidan Chandra Dhar.		
20	Designation of official inviting tender		Chief Engineer, RAJUK, Dhaka.		
21	Address of official inviting tender		4th Floor, Rajuk Bhaban, Dhaka.		
22	Contact details of official inviting tender		Telephone No. 9563604.		
23	Procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject any or all tenders without assigning any reason whatsoever.				
<div><div>Bhidan Chandra Dhar</div><div>Chief Engineer</div><div>Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkha</div><div>RAJUK Bhaban, Dhaka</div></div>					
GD-3090					