

PARIS TERROR ATTACK

Majority of Germans see Islam as threat

AFP, Berlin
A large and growing majority of Germans believe Islam does not belong in the Western world and more than half see it as a threat, a poll published yesterday showed. In a survey conducted in November, before Wednesday's massacre by Islamist gunmen at a French satirical paper or widespread media coverage of a new German anti-migrant movement, 61 percent of non-Muslim Germans said Islam had no place in the West.

Who are the killers?

AFP, Paris
Cherif Kouachi, the 32-year-old hunted along with his older brother Said for the attack on satirical weekly Charlie Hebdo is a jihadist who has been well-known to anti-terror police for many years. Cherif, who was born on November 28, 1982 in Paris not far from where the attack took place,



From top left, Standing in support of the freedom of the press, these protesters hold an illuminated sign at a gathering in the centre of Paris; People hold pencils during a minute of silence in front of the French Embassy in Copenhagen; An Indian artist is pictured with his sand sculpture, in tribute to those who lost their lives in the attack by gunmen on French satirical weekly Charlie Hebdo in Paris, at Golden Sea Beach in Puri, yesterday.

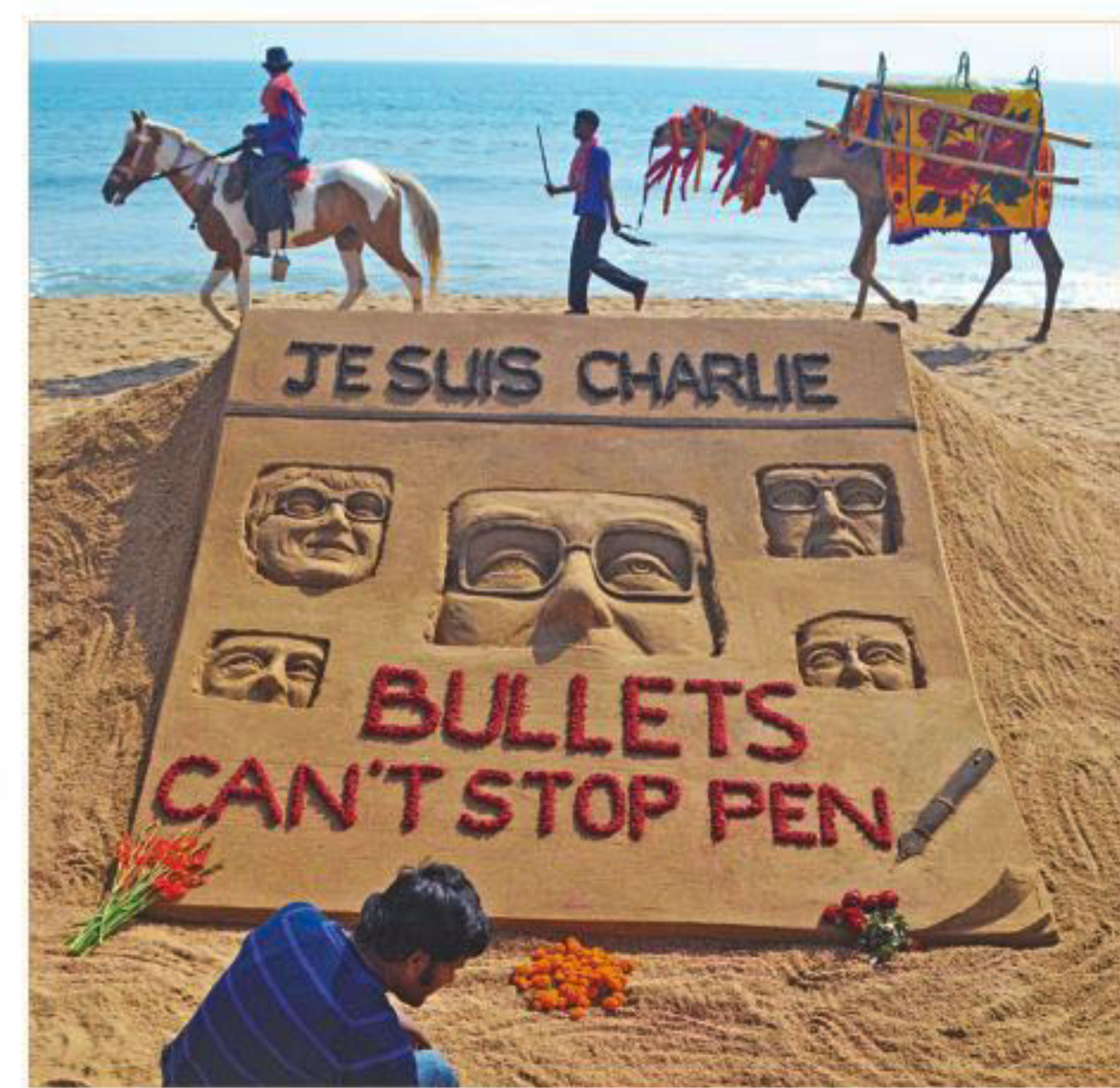


PHOTO: AFP, AP

Leave coal, oil in ground for climate's sake: Study

AFP, Paris

The Middle East must leave 40 percent of its oil reserves in the ground, and China, the US and Russia most of their coal if global warming is to be curbed, researchers said Wednesday.
Globally, a third of oil, half of gas and over 80 percent of coal reserves must be left untouched until 2050, according to a novel breakdown of "unburnable" fossil-fuel stocks published in the journal Nature.
This is the sole way to meet the UN target of limiting warming to 2.0 degrees Celsius over pre-Industrial Revolution levels, said co-author Christophe McGlade of University College London.
The UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change estimates that for a good chance of meeting the target, further emissions of Earth-warming greenhouse gases must be limited to about 1,000 billion tonnes (gigatonnes).

But global fossil fuel reserves, on current estimates, would emit three times this total if used, said the study.
UN members are negotiating a global carbon-cutting climate pact to be signed in Paris in December.
At current rates, emissions are steering the world towards potentially catastrophic warming of 4 C or more, scientists say.
Under this scenario, the Middle East has over half the world's "unburnable" oil. The other big producers also have to make serious contributions.
Countries with large stocks of coal, including developing nations that rely heavily on the resource to fuel their fast growth, also face challenges.
China and India would have to leave nearly 70 percent of their reserves under a scenario with CCS, and Africa almost 90 percent, according to the findings.
Among developed nations, Europe would have to leave 78 percent of its coal and the United States 92 percent.

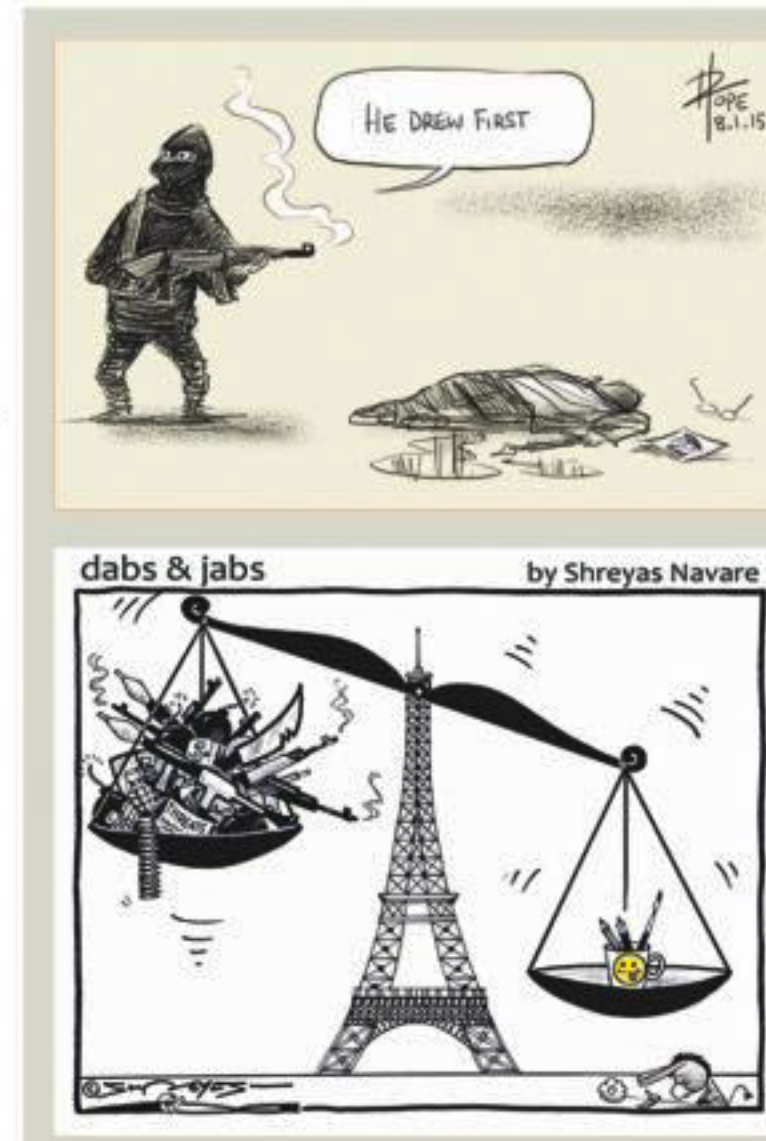


'Dangerous moment' for Europe

Experts say killings would strengthen Islamophobia, anti-immigrant sentiments

NEW YORK TIMES ONLINE

The sophisticated, military-style strike on Wednesday on a French newspaper known for satirizing Islam staggered a continent already seething with anti-immigrant sentiments in some quarters, feeding far-right nationalist parties like France's National Front.
"This is a dangerous moment for European societies," said Peter Neumann, director of the International Center for the Study of Radicalization at King's College London. "With increasing radicalisation among supporters of jihadist organizations and the white working class increasingly feeling disenfranchised and uncoupled from elites, things are coming to a head."
Olivier Roy, a French scholar of Islam and radicalism, called the Paris assault — the most deadly terrorist attack on French soil since the Algerian war ended in the early 1960s — "a quantitative and therefore qualitative turning point," noting the target and the number of victims. "This was a maximum-impact attack," he said. "They did this to shock the public, and in that sense they succeeded."



Anti-immigrant attitudes have been on the rise in recent years in Europe, propelled in part by a moribund economy and high unemployment, as well as increasing immigration and more porous borders. The growing resentments have lifted the fortunes of established parties like the UK Independence Party in Britain and the National Front, as well as lesser-known groups like Patriotic Europeans Against Islamization of the West, which assembled 18,000 marchers in Dresden, Germany, on Monday.
In Sweden, where there have been three recent attacks on mosques, the anti-immigrant, anti-Islamist Sweden Democrats Party has been getting about 15 percent support in recent public opinion polls.
Paris was traumatized by the attack, with widespread fears of another. "We feel less and less safe," said Didier Cantat, 34, standing outside the police barriers at the scene. "If it happened today, it will happen again, maybe even worse."
Cantat spoke for many when he said the attacks could fuel greater anti-immigrant sentiment. "We are told Islam is for God, for peace," he said. "But when you see this other Islam, with the jihadists, I don't see peace, I see hatred. So people can't tell which is the real Islam."
The newspaper, Charlie Hebdo, in its raucous, vulgar and sometimes commercially driven effort to offend every Islamic piety, including the figure of the Prophet Muhammad, became a symbol of an aggressive French secularism that saw its true enemy in the rise of conservative Islam in France, which is estimated to have the largest Muslim population in Europe.
The attack left some Muslims fearing a backlash. "Some people when they think terrorism, think Muslims," said Arnaud N'Goma, 26, as he took a cigarette break outside the bank where he works.
Samir Elatrassi, 27, concurred, saying that "Islamophobia is going to increase more and more."
"When some people see these kinds of terrorists, they conflate them with other Muslims," he said. "And it's the extreme right that's going to benefit from this."



Nature halts Syria war

The war-ravaged country observes its first death-less day in three years

AFP, Beirut
A group monitoring Syria's war said Thursday that it had recorded no deaths in the conflict for the first time in three years as a rare snowstorm forced a halt to fighting.
"We did not document any new killings on Wednesday," Rami Abdel Rahman, the head of the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, told AFP.
"While humanitarian needs soared, the snowstorm protected Syrians from battles, gunfire, shelling, rocket fire and airstrikes," he said.
Other activist networks also reported no deaths on Wednesday.
The storm hit Syria and other parts of the Middle East on Wednesday,

leaving much of the country including Damascus blanketed in snow and causing fuel and electricity shortages.
Fighting and shelling resumed on Thursday as the weather improved, said the Observatory, which relies on a wide network of sources inside Syria to monitor the conflict.
Syria's civil war has killed more than 200,000 people since breaking out in March 2011 as a peaceful uprising against President Bashar al-Assad that evolved into an armed conflict.
In December alone, at least 4,358 people were killed in the war, the Observatory said.
Meanwhile, the number of Syrian refugees grew by 704,000 in the first six months of last year and they are now the largest group under the UN refugee

agency's mandate, a United Nations report said Wednesday.
The UNHCR also forecast that the number of Syrian refugees could shoot up to 4.27 million by December from the current figure of more than three million.
The mid-year review came as the head of the UN refugee agency warned of the worst displacement problem in seven decades.
The report said Syrians had for the first time become the largest refugee population under its mandate, overtaking Afghans who had held that position for more than 30 years.
The UNHCR ranking however does not include Palestinians, who are covered by another UN agency. There are an estimated five million Palestinian refugees around the world.



Egypt's Sisi urges reform in Islam

AP, Cairo

Egypt's president opened the new year with a dramatic call for a "revolution" in Islam to reform interpretations of the faith entrenched for hundreds of years, which he said have made the Muslim world a source of "destruction" and pitted it against the rest of the world.
The speech was Abdel-Fattah el-Sisi's boldest effort yet to position himself as a moderniser of Islam. His professed goal is to purge the religion of extremist ideas of intolerance and violence that fuel groups like Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State - and that appear to have motivated Wednesday's attack in Paris on a French satirical newspaper that killed 12 people.
In his Jan 1 speech at al-Azhar addressing Muslim clerics el-Sisi called on them to promote a reading of Islamic texts in a "truly enlightened" manner to reconsider concepts "that have been made sacred over hundreds of years."

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