

Debris 'very likely' part of MH370

BBC ONLINE

Debris found on the Indian Ocean island of Reunion is "very likely" to be from the missing flight MH370, a top Australian official told the BBC yesterday.

Martin Dolan, who heads Australia's search efforts, also said the operation was continuing "in the right place" in the southern part of the ocean.

The wreckage, said to be a wing part, is to be flown to France for analysis.

The Malaysia Airlines flight - a Boeing 777 travelling from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing - vanished in March 2014. There were 239 passengers and crew on board the plane when it went missing.

The debris washed up on Reunion island on Wednesday, some 4,000km from the area where MH370 is thought to have gone down.

Dolan, who heads the Australian Transport Safety Bureau, told the BBC that he was "increasingly confident that the wreckage... is associated with a 777 aircraft".

However, Dolan also said the discovery of debris would not help pinpoint where the plane went down.



(From left, clockwise) Palestinians look at the damage as they stand in a house set on fire by Jewish settlers and where 18-month-old Palestinian toddler Ali Saad Dawabsha died, in the West Bank village of Duma; a man shows a picture of the 18-month-old toddler; and people protest as Israeli troops stand by in East Jerusalem yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP, REUTERS



NEWS IN brief

Ukraine court permits rebels' self-rule

AFP, Kiev

Ukraine's highest court yesterday allowed parliament to vote on Western-backed constitutional amendments aimed at stemming daily bloodshed by giving pro-Russian insurgents partial autonomy in the separatist east. The idea of granting limited self-rule to rebellious parts of Ukraine's industrial war zone for three years has struck a note of disquiet among many lawmakers and much of the Kiev media.

'PKK attack' kills two cops in tense Turkey

AFP, Istanbul

Two more Turkish police were killed Friday in an attack blamed on Kurdish militants as tensions in the country boiled over amid the military's cross-border bombing campaign against extremists in Syria and Iraq. Ankara has launched a two-pronged anti-terror offensive against Islamic State (ISIS) jihadists in Syria and Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) militants at their bases in northern Iraq after a wave of deadly attacks in the country.

4 Indian 'kidnapped in Libya'; 2 released

BBC ONLINE

Two Indian teachers who were detained in an area of Libya that the Islamic State group claims to control have been released but two of their colleagues are still being held, the New Delhi government said yesterday. The teachers, who had been working at Sirte university, were heading for Tripoli where they intended to catch a flight out of the country.

Market suicide blast kills six in Nigeria

AFP, Kano

Six people were killed in a suicide bomb blast in a market in Maiduguri, the capital of Nigeria's north-eastern Borno state, a vigilante and a witness said yesterday. The market attack came on the day the newly-appointed head of the regional multinational force, Major General Iliya Abba, formally took over.

UN adopts resolution to fight wildlife poaching

AFP, United Nations

The United Nations called on its member states Thursday to work harder in combatting poaching of endangered species such as elephants and rhinoceroses. The General Assembly resolution was the first of its kind but not legally binding. Still, it reflects worldwide opposition to illegal hunting.

DEATH OF MULLAH OMAR AND ELECTION OF NEW EMIR 'It is all calculated ISI game'

Says Afghan ex-intel chief as reports of Taliban infighting emerges

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

The Taliban named Mullah Akhtar Mansour as their new chief, a historic power transition that raises hopes a more moderate leadership will pave the way for an end to Afghanistan's bloody war.

The appointment of Mansour, seen as a pragmatist and a proponent of peace talks, comes a day after the Taliban confirmed the death of their near-mythical leader Mullah Omar, who led the fractious group for some 20 years.

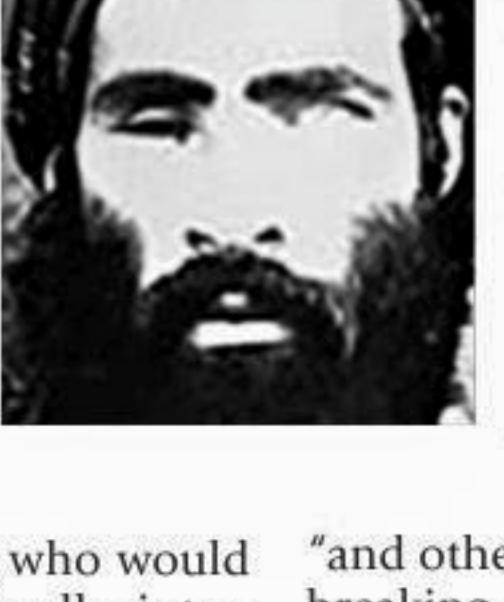
But the power transfer has been met with skepticism both by the Taliban militants and Afghan officials.

"They [Pakistan] want to bring in someone who can speak, negotiate and play a visible role [in the peace process], that is Mansour," said Amrullah Saleh, the former head of Afghanistan's National Directorate of Security.

Hesaid: "It is all calculated. It is all an ISI [Pakistani intelligence] game. The time for the mythical figure is gone. Someone

reachable and touchable has to be brought in. That is Mansour."

A border police officer, 32, who has lost six members of his family to Taliban attacks, told The Independent that district commanders of the



Afghan Taliban were unsure whose orders to follow. "The Taliban are worried and confused. They are not fighting they are just talking on the radio."

The Independent has seen evidence that, at least nine months ago, senior commanders within the Taliban knew of their leader's death

and were already plotting who would succeed him. Letters allegedly intercep-

ted by Afghan intelligence, and written nine months ago by two Taliban commanders - Mullah Mansour Dadullah and Mullah Abdul

Zakir - appeared to urge Taliban members to rebel against Mullah Omar's then deputy, Mullah Akhtar Mansour.

The letters said to have been seized by Afghan intelligence both address members of the "Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan" and accuse Mullah Mansour of plotting to kill Mullah Omar.

The first, apparently from Mullah Dadullah, says: "I am sure that the Emir of the Faithful [Omar] was martyred on the advice of... Mansour".

The second, apparently written by Mullah Zakir, accuses Mullah Mansour "and other corrupt agents like him" of breaking off from the leadership "in the hope of taking the inheritance of the movement". It adds: "The creator of all this problem is... Mansour and his Punjabi advisers".

'A barbaric terror attack' Palestinian toddler burned to death in 'settler' arson attack

AFP, Duma

A Palestinian toddler was burned to death and four family members wounded in an arson attack by suspected Jewish settlers on two homes in the Israeli-occupied West Bank yesterday.

Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu called the firebombing in Duma village near the northern city of Nablus "an act of terrorism in every respect" and ordered security forces to hunt down the assailants.

The attack further stoked tensions between Israelis and Palestinians, two days after Netanyahu controversially approved 300 new settler homes in the West Bank.

The Palestine Liberation Organisation said it held Netanyahu's government "fully responsible" for the death of 18-month-old Ali Saad Dawabsha, arguing it was "a direct consequence of decades of impunity given by the Israeli government to settler terrorism".

Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas called for an investigation by the International Criminal Court in The Hague, while hundreds of Palestinians protested after leaving mosques following the main weekly prayers, with reports of sporadic clashes.

Israeli troops shot and wounded one

protester in the "lower extremities" during clashes in the city of Hebron, the army said.

Several thousand people also took to the streets in Duma for the funeral of the toddler, whose body was wrapped in a Palestinian flag.

The family's small home of brick and concrete was blackened and gutted by fire, a Star of David along with "revenge" and "long live the Messiah" spray-painted in Hebrew.

According to Palestinian security officials, four assailants believed to be settlers set the house on fire before dawn at the entrance to the village and scrawled the graffiti before fleeing to a nearby Jewish settlement.

The Israeli military and army radio said two homes had been set ablaze by two masked men, with the child killed and four family members wounded.

Palestinian sources said those wounded included the toddler's parents - mother Rihab, 26, and father Saad - as well as four-year-old brother Ahmed.

The mother was in critical condition with third-degree burns covering 90 percent of her body, an Israeli doctor told public radio.

The father had burns on 80 percent of his body and the son 60 percent, with all of their lives in danger.

Haqqani chief has died: report

BBC ONLINE

Jalaluddin Haqqani, the Afghan founder of the militant Haqqani network, died at least a year ago, sources close to the group have told the BBC.

Haqqani died after a long illness and was buried in Afghanistan, the sources added.

Rumours about Haqqani's death have circulated for some years but the group has always denied the reports. The network has been behind many of the co-ordinated attacks on Afghan and Nato forces in recent years.

Haqqani's son, Sirajuddin Haqqani, has long been thought to be in de facto control of the organisation.

The network has links to al-Qaeda and to the Taliban.

'US spied on Japan govt, companies'

BBC ONLINE

The US has been spying on Japanese cabinet officials, banks and companies, including the Mitsubishi conglomerate, whistleblowing website WikiLeaks said yesterday.

Documents released by WikiLeaks list 35 telephone numbers targeted for interception by the US National Security Agency (NSA). The surveillance extends back at least eight years, WikiLeaks said.

Wikileaks has previously released files showing the US spied on Germany, France and Brazil - like Japan, all allies.

There has been no comment from Japan on the latest claims.

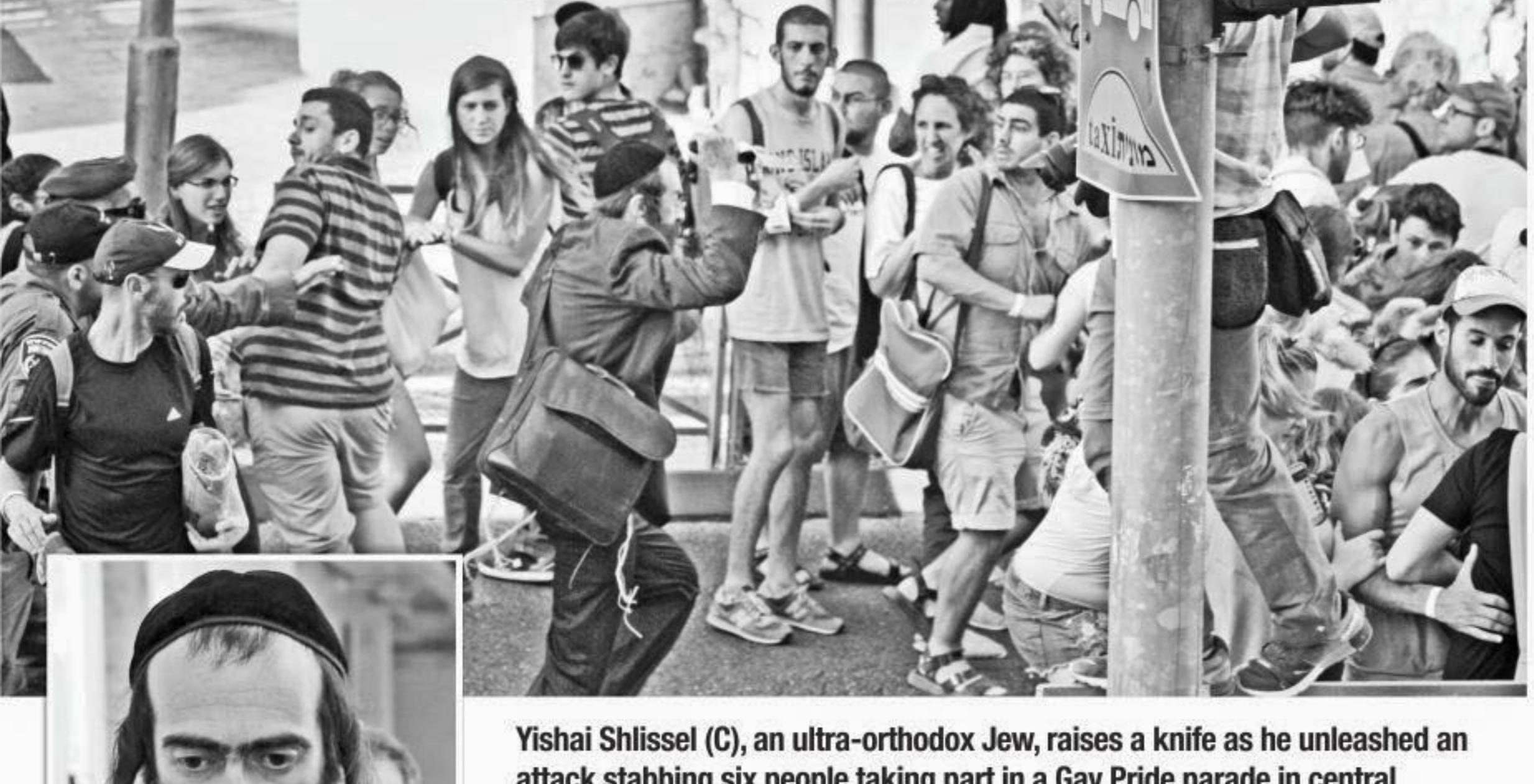
A WikiLeaks statement said the latest revelations "demonstrate the depth of US surveillance of the Japanese government".

The documents, marked "top secret", reportedly show that the US was listening in on conversations at Japanese government ministries and offices.

Wikileaks says the US was aware of Japan's internal discussions on issues such as trade talks, climate change policy and nuclear and energy policy - as well as the contents of a confidential briefing in Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's residence.

The US also reportedly spied on Bank of Japan officials and on the fossil fuel departments at Japanese firms Mitsubishi and Matsui.

Wikileaks says the NSA shared the information it had gathered with Australia, Canada, the UK and New Zealand - the so-called "Five Eyes" group.



Yishai Shlissel (C), an ultra-orthodox Jew, raises a knife as he unleashed an attack stabbing six people taking part in a Gay Pride parade in central Jerusalem on Thursday, seriously wounding two, Israeli police and health services said. Shlissel, inset, was released from jail three weeks ago after having served his sentence for a similar attack a decade ago when three marchers were wounded, a police spokesman said. Shlissel had posted a letter on the Internet speaking of the "abomination" of a Gay Pride parade being held in the Holy City and the need to stop it, even at the cost of one's life.

PHOTO: AFP, REUTERS

Coining of 'Hindu terror' not helping India

Indian home minister blasts UPA for weakening countries stance on terrorism

TNN, New Delhi

Indian Union home minister Rajnath Singh yesterday asked all political parties to present a united front to the world against terrorism.

"Terrorism is terrorism, it has no religion, no caste," Rajnath Singh said while making a statement in the Lok Sabha on the July 27 Gurdaspur terrorist attack.

Hitting out at Congress, Rajnath Singh said the term "Hindu terrorism" coined by its previous UPA government had "weakened" the fight against the scourge by diverting the direction of probe into the incidents of terrorism.

After making the statement, Rajnath raked up a host of issues, including Sharm-el Sheikh fiasco and statements at Havana NAM Summit besides the 1962 war with China, to underline Congress' alleged failures, adding fuel to the fire in the protests.



France, Russia settle row over warship

BBC ONLINE

France yesterday agreed to pay compensation to Russia for cancelling the sale of two warships, a Russian official said.

France stopped the sale after the outbreak of the conflict in eastern Ukraine, where Russia is accused of backing separatist rebels.

The Mistral contract was worth €1.2bn. Russia made an advance payment of about €840m.

The first of two helicopter carriers - the Vladivostok - was supposed to be delivered to Russia in November 2014.

Sources close to the talks, quoted by Russia's Kommersant daily, say France will compensate Russia to the tune of €1.1bn. That sum includes the amount that Russia has already spent on special training for sailors and port infrastructures.

The deal was clinched last week at talks between Russian Deputy PM Dmitry Rogozin and French Defence Secretary-General Louis Gautier, Kommersant reports.

As the protests intensified,

he hit back, "In this House in 2013, the then home minister (P Chidambaram) had coined the new terminology 'Hindu terrorism' in order to change the direction of probe. It weakened our fight. As a consequence, Hafiz Sayeed (LeT founder) of Pakistan had congratulated the then home minister. Our government will never allow such a shameful situation again."



(From top, clockwise) A protester assists another as they cross a barbed wire fence outside the Education Ministry during a demonstration in Taipei; students protest at the entrance to the ministry; and a protester sleeps on the ground as police cordoned off the government office yesterday. Hundreds of Taiwan students stormed the compound early yesterday, after one committed suicide earlier in the week, intensifying anti-China protests over textbooks they say are aimed at promoting Beijing's "one China" policy.

