

# \$5m bounty for tips on disrupting ISIS

CNN ONLINE

The war against ISIS is expanding to a new frontier: its finances. As the terror group plunders archaeological sites and oil fields in Iraq and Syria, the United States is offering a \$5 million reward for tips to stop the smuggling of gas and antiquities.

The terror group's oil and antiquities trafficking are crucial sources of revenue, the State Department said in a statement announcing the reward.

ISIS makes millions of dollars from the trafficking of oil and antiquities, which helps fund its brutal tactics, US officials said.

"The US Department of State hopes this reward generates information regarding individuals or entities engaged in the production, facilitation, processing, smuggling, distribution, sale and trade of oil and antiquities that benefit ISIL, as well as information regarding smuggling networks, methods and routes," it said.

The terror group uses various acronyms, including ISIL, which stands for the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant.

Experts have described it as the best-funded terrorist organization in history, which draws recruits from all over the world.

The funds are used for various things, including paying the terror group's fighters.

The reward announcement came the same day a bipartisan congressional task force concluded the United States is losing the battle to stop Americans from traveling abroad to enlist in ISIS.

More than 25,000 foreigners have flocked to Syria and Iraq since 2011 to fight with ISIS and other Islamist terrorist groups, according to U.S. estimates.

And despite declining finances, ISIS still boasts of hefty incomes.

Its oil income alone has plunged to \$500,000 a day from as much as \$1.6 million a day last year, according to risk consultancy group Verisk Maplecroft.

ISIS wants to wipe the west off the face of the earth with a nuclear holocaust according to a journalist who spent ten days with the group while researching a book.

The terror group allowed Jürgen Todenhöfer to embed with the group because he has been a high-profile critic of US policy in the Middle East, reports Mail Online.

The German journalist claimed the terror group wants to launch a 'nuclear tsunami' against the west and anyone else that opposes their plans for an Islamic caliphate.

The 75-year-old former German MP wrote up his findings in a new book 'Inside IS - Ten Days In The Islamic State'.

He said that upon his arrival in ISIS controlled territory, that he and his son were forced to hand over their mobile phones to their hosts.

He said he spent several months talking to the terror organisation over Skype before he was allowed to travel into



An Afghan National Army soldier carries a colleague who was wounded during an offensive with Taliban insurgents in Kunduz yesterday. Inset, A Taliban fighter poses for a photo at the main square, a day after the insurgents took control of the strategic northern city.

# Nukes 'didn't do US any good on 9/11'

Says Jeremy Corbyn  
INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Jeremy Corbyn has reaffirmed his opposition to Trident - by saying nuclear weapons "did not do the United States any good on 9/11".

The Labour leader had earlier prompted dissent from within his own shadow cabinet by insisting he would never push the nuclear button if he was elected Prime Minister, after saying in his keynote conference speech on Monday that he would push through plans to make Labour back unilateral nuclear disarmament and vote against renewing Trident.

But asked about the issue late yesterday, he told BBC Radio 5 Live: "We're going to have a discussion and debate about nuclear weapons; we're going to have a discussion and debate about how we're fulfilling our obligations under the nuclear non-proliferation Treaty and we'll go forward



# Taliban tighten grip on Afghan city

Troops from US-led mission fight insurgents

BBC ONLINE

Taliban fighters yesterday seized a military hilltop site in Kunduz, tightening their grip on the northern Afghan city. The capture of the Bala Hisar fortress came despite efforts by government reinforcements, backed by Nato airstrikes and special forces, to retake the city.

It leaves the airport as the army's last stronghold. The Taliban overran Kunduz on Monday, their biggest military gain since they lost power in 2001.

The Taliban had blockaded the Bala Hisar fortress for two days. Hundreds of Afghan security personnel were stationed there, and their fate was not clear. Late on Tuesday the Taliban tried to capture the airport as well, but two US air strikes halted their advance.

Clashes went on through the night around Kunduz, and the provincial hospital was reportedly struggling to cope with the number of casualties.

The fall of Kunduz is a win-win for the

Taliban, whatever happens now. Even if the insurgents are expelled in the army counter-offensive, they will leave with both booty and publicity.

Taliban fighters emptied the coffers of banks in Kunduz, seized weapons, including armed vehicles, and also gained a propaganda victory.

The seizure of one of Afghanistan's most strategic and richest cities has also increased the prestige of new Taliban leader, Mullah Mansour - those within the insurgent group will see him as someone who can deliver impressive victories on the battlefield.

Victory also reasserts Taliban control amid competition from the Islamic State group, which has been challenging the Taliban's supremacy in many parts of the country.

The fact that a few hundred Taliban fighters defeated thousands of Afghan security forces is also embarrassing for the National Unity Government in Kabul, especially when the assault coincided with the first anniversary of its formation.

# Europe migrant crisis in spotlight at UN

Woman, child drown as boat sinks off Greece

AFP, United Nations

Europe's migrant crisis was set to be in focus at the UN late yesterday with Secretary General Ban Ki-moon seeking to muster a global response to the exodus of vast numbers of people from Syria and elsewhere.

The UN chief opened the General Assembly in New York this week with a call to Europe "to do more" and appealing to the international community to tackle the source of the problem.

"We should not be building fences or walls, but above all we must look at root causes, in countries of origin," said Ban, due later yesterday to host a meeting of around 70 countries on the crisis in New York.

In the latest reminder of the dangers, Greek police said yesterday that a woman and a child drowned off the island of Lesbos after their boat sank, although 45 others were rescued.

An Eritrean man was also killed by a train near the entrance to the Channel Tunnel in France near Calais -- where some 3,000 migrants are camped -- early yesterday, an official said, the 13th such death there since June.

According to the latest figures from the UN refugee agency (UNHCR) yesterday, Syrians made up 55 percent of the 521,000 migrants to have crossed the Mediterranean bound for Europe this year to date.

from there.

"There is no decision required until probably next summer on this and I hold a view, which is well-known, on nuclear weapons..."

"Would anybody press the nuclear button? Nuclear weapons are weapons of mass destruction that take out millions of civilians. They didn't do the USA much good on 9/11 - the problems in this world are not huge wars in that way."

Those comments sparked a public row within his shadow cabinet, with his shadow Defence Secretary Maria Eagle calling into question his ability to be PM if he was unprepared to press the nuclear button.

# NEWS IN brief

Thousands march in S Africa against graft  
AFP, Pretoria

Thousands of demonstrators took to the streets of South Africa yesterday to protest against corruption, as public frustration grows over a government enmeshed in graft scandals and a stagnant economy. The ruling African National Congress (ANC) led the fight to end white-minority rule, but after 20 years in power there is widespread pessimism that the benefits of democracy have only reached a small elite.

Israeli air raids hit Gaza after rocket fire  
AFP, Gaza City

Israeli air raids have hit the Gaza Strip in response to a rocket fired from the Palestinian enclave that was intercepted by the Iron Dome missile defence system, officials said yesterday. There were no reports of injuries from both the rocket fire and the Israeli raids, which the military said targeted "four terror sites".

India man lynched over beef rumours  
BBC ONLINE

A 50-year-old man in northern India has been killed in a mob lynching allegedly over rumours that his family had been storing and consuming beef at home. Mohammad Akhlaq was kicked and beaten with stones by a group of men in Dadri in Uttar Pradesh state on Monday night. Six people have been arrested in connection with the incident. Police are probing who spread the rumour.

# Protest-hit Nepal 'may fly in fuel'

BBC ONLINE

The Nepal Oil Corporation (NOC) is considering flying in fuel to the landlocked nation as it continues to face a crippling shortage of petroleum products.

Protests in southern Nepal against a newly adopted constitution have seen hundreds of supply trucks from India stuck at the border.

Many Nepalese, however, have accused India of blocking supplies to show its disapproval of the document.

Fuel is now being rationed in Nepal. Deepak Baral, an NOC spokesperson, told BBC Nepali that the state-owned fuel supplier was "exploring the possibility" of flying in fuel from a "neighbouring country".

As well as India, Nepal is also bordered by the Tibet Autonomous Region of China to the north.

Public anger towards India has been growing in Nepal.

KP Oli, a senior lawmaker tipped to be the next prime minister, has accused India of breaking international law by imposing a blockade.

He denied protesters were blocking roads.

New Delhi has denied the accusations and urged Nepal to defuse tensions over the constitution in its southern plains.

Clashes between police and protesters have seen more than 40 people killed in recent weeks.



Migrants and asylum seekers wait to board a train at the registration camp after crossing the Macedonian-Greek border near Gevgelija yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

# MUMBAI TRAIN BLASTS Five convicts get death, life for 7 others

AFP, Mumbai

An Indian court sentenced five men to death yesterday for a series of bomb blasts that ripped through packed trains in Mumbai in 2006, killing nearly 200 people and injuring many more.

Another seven people found guilty of involvement in the attacks in India's financial capital were sentenced to life imprisonment by the special court, their defence lawyer told reporters.

The 12 men were convicted of murder, conspiracy and waging war against the country over the coordinated attacks that killed 189 people and wounded more than 800.

Defence lawyer Wahab Khan said all 12 would appeal the verdict. "We still believe they have been framed and the court has relied on confessions and not on mitigating evidence," he told reporters outside the court.

The bombs were packed into pressure cookers and then placed in bags and hidden under newspapers and umbrellas in the trains.

The seven blasts ripped through the suburban trains during the evening rush hour on 11 July 2006.

"Many families lost their breadwinners that day and this judgement brings some amount of relief," Mahendra Pitale, who lost his left hand during one of the explosions, told AFP.

In all, police charged 30 people over the bombings including 13 Pakistani nationals, who along with four Indian suspects have yet to be arrested.

Krishna Raghuvanshi, who led the investigation while head of Maharashtra state's anti-terrorism squad, said he wished all of the alleged conspirators had

# Weapons bound for Yemen seized on Iran boat: coalition

REUTERS, Dubai

Arab coalition forces waging a military campaign against Houthi fighters in Yemen seized an Iranian boat loaded with weapons in the Arabian Sea on its way to deliver supplies to the group, the Saudi-led alliance said yesterday.

The announcement was made a day after tribal fighters backed by the coalition won control of a strategic dam in central Yemen from Houthi forces following weeks of fighting in the area east of the capital Sanaa.

The coalition, which also includes Bahrain, Qatar, Egypt and the United Arab Emirates, has been battling the Iranian-backed Houthis for more than six months, trying to shore up President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi's government and contain what the Gulf Arab states see growing Tehran's influence in their backyard.

As part of the campaign, Saudi-led naval forces have imposed a near-blockade to prevent weapons supplies from reaching the Houthis, resulting in

long delays and mandatory searches for shippers in the region.

A coalition statement said 14 Iranian sailors were detained on the boat, which was carrying 18 anti-armoured Concourse shells, 54 anti-tank shells, shell-battery kits, firing guidance systems, launchers and binoculars' batteries.

"The Command of the Coalition ... foiled an attempt to smuggle weapons destined to the Houthi militias, on an Iranian fishing boat," the statement said, adding the vessel was seized on Saturday some 150 miles off Salalah in southern Oman.

There was no immediate comment from Iran. The coalition has long accused Iran of arming the Houthis, who seized control of the country starting in September last year, claiming they were out to fight corruption and to force Hadi to bring them into the government.

The seizure of the Marib dam is the biggest success of Yemeni militia men



# Series of bombs in China kills seven people

REUTERS, Beijing

A series of package bombs exploded yesterday in the southwest China city of Liuzhou, killing at least seven people and injuring 51, state media said.

The official Xinhua news agency said police had determined the blasts were a "criminal" act and identified the suspect as a 33-year-old local man surnamed Wei, but added the investigation was continuing.

Media images showed a collapsed building, smoke and streets strewn with rubble in Liuzhou in Guangxi region. Two people were missing, state radio said on its microblog.

Bombs were sent to 13 places ranging from hospitals and shopping malls to prisons and government offices, reports said.

# Snowden draws crowd with Twitter debut

AFP, Paris

Former US intelligence contractor and whistleblower Edward Snowden joined Twitter Tuesday, picking up more than a quarter of a million followers on the social network in just over two hours.

Snowden followed a single Twitter account: the US National Security Agency, from which he stole electronic documents revealing the agency's secret surveillance programmes.

"Can you hear me now?" he asked in his first tweet, which was quickly resented by Twitter users tens of thousands of times.

In his second, Snowden noted the recent news about the planet Mars and then quipped about the difficulty he had finding asylum after the US government fingered him as the source of the NSA leaks.

"And now we have water on Mars!" he wrote. "Do you think they check passports at the border? Asking for a friend." Snowden has been living in exile in Russia since June 2013.

His Twitter account, @Snowden, has been certified by the San Francisco-based company, which has more than 300 million active users worldwide.

"I used to work for the government. Now I work for the public," Snowden said in his Twitter profile, which identifies him as a board member of the Freedom of the Press Foundation.

