Philippine soldier kills five at prayer meeting

A Philippine soldier opened fire on a prayer meeting at a military base yesterday, killing five of his comrades before troops intervened and shot him dead, an army spokesman said.

Nine other people were also wounded in the rampage at an army camp on the southern island of Basilan, a hotbed for Muslim extremist groups, said Colonel Benjamin Hao. "There was a bible study (session)

He went there, to back (of the room) and then suddenly opened fire," Hao told reporters. Responding soldiers shot the gun-

man dead but the motive for the attack remained unknown.

"His battalion commander said that he had changed after going on vacation. He was surprisingly quiet. Before that, he was talkative, kind of jolly, but when he came back, he was different," Hao said.

The gunman, who he identified only as corporal in the mortar section, was not a member of the bible study group, Hao added.

"We believe it is an isolated incident but we will look closer into its medical and psychological aspect in order to determine the root cause," he said.

Soldiers in the island of Basilan face numerous threats, battling Muslim armed groups like the al-Qaeda-linked Abu Sayyaf, which has been blamed for the Philippines' deadliest terror attacks.

The group, which hides in the thickly-forested hills of Basilan, has been behind beheadings and kidnappings of foreign tourists and Christian missionaries as well as bomb attacks.

Clarification

FROM PAGE 20 there was an ongoing process to abandon the old bridge. OUR REPLY

The Daily Star published the photo of the old bridge because it is in full use by all sorts of vehicles and may become the reason for serious acci-

Our photographer observed the bridge for about two hours from 11:00am to 1:00pm on Wednesday. He saw all types of vehicles, including heavy buses and trucks, using the old bridge to enter Dhaka and Gazipur while vehicles going out of Dhaka for Sylhet were using the new bridge. The photo caption, however, did not mention the new bridge, which was

Our purpose was to point out the hazards of using the old bridge only.

UN Day

FROM PAGE 20

Star yesterday. The official declined to say why the programme was cancelled, but indicated that the security situation in Bangladesh was still not conducive for holding large gatherings of Westerners at hotels following the murders of two foreign nationals --

an Italian and a Japanese. The United Nations Day, celebrated annually on 24 October, is dedicated to the global efforts and

achievements of the UN. As part of its 70th anniversary celebration, a range of activities and events were taken up by the UN to mark this special year under the theme "Strong UN. Better World".

Meanwhile, several countries, including Spain and Japan, cancelled similar programmes to mark the occasion this month.

The US ambassador and high commissioners of the UK, Canada and Australia, during a meeting with the home minister on Wednesday, expressed their concerns about the

security of their citizens in Bangladesh despite heightened security measures. Diplomatic sources said the envoys at the meeting raised two issues --

security of their citizens and progress of investigation into the murders of two foreigners.

The four countries have continued to ask their citizens to "exercise a high degree of caution in

Bangladesh". In its updated security message for its citizens in Bangladesh, the US on Saturday said, "Security agencies in Bangladesh have taken extraordinary measures to increase security for foreigners in Bangladesh, but the

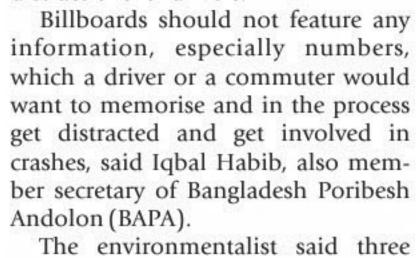
terrorist threat remains real and credi-

The UK government, in its latest update of travel advisory on Bangladesh, yesterday said, "There is a high threat from terrorists. Further attacks targeting Westerners may

occur and could be indiscriminate." The government of Canada in its travel advisory, also updated yesterday, said, "There is no nationwide advisory in effect for Bangladesh. However, you should exercise a high

Ban soon on billboards

FROM PAGE 20 distractions for drivers."



concepts were considered while formulating the draft. Firstly, the outdoor advertising should be considered as an art-based

industry; secondly, the advertisement on the billboards should highlight city and country as well as the product or brand; and finally, the size, number, content and placement of these billboards should not hurt the growth of a child in the city.

The draft guideline also makes it mandatory for all billboard advertisers to preserve 10 percent of the total space for social slogans.

In addition, no billboards should be placed near any educational institutions, hospitals, government organisations and traffic signals, added Iqbal Habib, also an architect. DNCC Mayor Annisul Huq on

August 28 said the guideline would be formulated by a month. Talking to The Daily Star recently,

Mohammad Rashed, general secretary

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of Outdoor Advertising Owners' Association, said the authorities should implement fresh measures after saving the billboard business.

Calling for an ideal guideline for this industry, the OAOA leader demanded phasing out of the unipoles instead of a wholesale crackdown.

In July, city corporation officials told this newspaper that Dhaka south has about 900 legal billboards against some 1,500 illegal ones. Of the illegal ones, 527 are privately owned.

Dhaka north has about 1,500 approved billboards against some 1,200 illegal ones. Of those illegal, 257 were permitted by the cantonment board, 173 by the air force, 147 by the railway, 10 by Wasa and 22 by police, while 443 are owned by private individuals.

WikiLeaks releases

FROM PAGE 20 spy chief and WikiLeaks said more files would be published "in the coming days."

The US government has been dogged in recent years by high-profile leaks, including a trove of diplomatic cables published by WikiLeaks. The six files did not include any top-

secret documents. WikiLeaks however said that Brennan had "used the account occasionally for several intelligence-related projects." Perhaps the most revealing document is a draft version of Brennan's

a security clearance application he apparently made in 2008. It lists several of his friends and associates, as well as a detailed work history and a slew of other personal

background check questionnaire from

and family details. One of the names listed -- along with a phone number -- is George Tenet, who directed the CIA from 1996 to 2004. A woman who answered the phone at the number given said Tenet

was not speaking to the press. The release also includes a 2008 letter from Christopher "Kit" Bond, then vice chairman of the US Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, calling for a ban of certain "harsh

interrogation techniques." Additionally, a fax from 2008 details a legal spat between the CIA and a firm called "The Analysis

Corporation." There is also a 2007 draft memo Brennan wrote about Iran, and another draft paper dated July that year in which he outlines challenges facing the US intelligence community.

The CIA angrily hit out at

WikiLeaks. "The hacking of the Brennan family account is a crime and the Brennan family is the victim," it said in a statement.

"The private electronic holdings of the Brennan family were plundered with malicious intent and are now

being distributed across the web. "This attack is something that could

happen to anyone and should be condemned, not promoted." It comes days after it was reported

that a teenaged hacker had broken into Brennan's AOL account and had taken mails and personal data. For many computer users, AOL is

synonymous with the days of the early

Internet, when the company offered

dial-up web access, and the apparently low-tech method the hacker employed to access the account is sure to spark ridicule in Washington. The hacker has claimed he accessed the account by using a process called "social engineering" in which he

tricked Verizon workers into divulging Brennan's personal information, then convinced AOL to reset his password. Earlier this week, The New York Post reported that a hacker, who described himself as an American high-school

student, had called reporters to describe his exploits. Using his purported Twitter account -- @phphax -- the hacker taunted authorities with redacted images of

what appeared to be government information. The Twitter account claims the

hacker is 13 years old, and expresses support for the Palestinian cause. Hackers recently breached US

government databases and stole the personal information from background checks of 21.5 million people. Senior officials have been criticised

for not properly protecting sensitive and classified documents.

Former CIA chief David Petraeus was forced to plead guilty to improperly handling documents after it emerged that he loaned his mistress his Afghan war diaries.

And presidential candidate Hillary Clinton is under fire after she admitted that she only used a private email server during her time as secretary of

Japan PM heads to Central Asia to cement trade ties

AFP, Tokyo

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe yesterday left for a week-long tour to Mongolia and five Central Asian nations, eyeing billions of dollars in business deals as China boosts its influence in the resource-rich region.

The conservative leader, who has been pushing to kick-start the world's number three economy, was accompanied by representatives of about 50 Japanese firms.

He is to arrive in Ulan Bator later in the day, his first visit to Mongolia since 2013.

He will later travel to Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, and make the firstever official visit by a Japanese premier to Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. "Mongolia and Central Asia are at

the centre of Asia and very important geopolitically," Abe told reporters at a Tokyo airport ahead of his departure. These countries "have relied on

exports of natural resources, but now are seeking high-quality infrastructure as they aim for an economy based on high value-added" indus-

tries. "I'd like to take a huge step in boosting ties with each country.

Abe has gone on a whirlwind global tour since sweeping to power in late 2012, visiting dozens of countries in a bid to boost Japan's econ-

During the tour, Japanese engineering firm JGC and four other companies are expected to sign a one trillion yen (\$8.3 billion) deal in Turkmenistan for the construction of a plant linked to natural gas fields, the leading Nikkei business daily said.

As rival China seeks to tap the region through its new Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), Abe has pledged to triple infrastructure orders from Japanese firms globally, including in Central Asia, to 30 trillion yen by 2020. The AIIB is seen as a rival to the

Washington-based World Bank and the Manila-based Asian Development Bank, which has been headed by biggest donor Japan since it was founded in 1966. The US and Japan have notably

declined to join the China-led AIIB. Observers say China's influence in

Central Asia has been growing as Russia's has declined, with Beijing becoming the region's leading trading partner.

PHILIPPINES GUN ATTACK

Two held over killings 'have diplomatic immunity'

AFP, Manila

Two Chinese diplomats being held over a gun attack in the Philippines that killed two colleagues have diplomatic immunity and will be sent back to China, the Philippine government said yesterday.

China's consul general in the central city of Cebu survived after being shot in the neck, but two of his staff members died during the lunchtime attack in a private room of a restaurant on Wednesday, police said Police detained a husband and

wife who were at the lunch and foreign ministry spokesman Charles Jose said yesterday they were both accredited Chinese diplomats. "Custody will be given to the

Chinese side and they will undergo legal process in China," Jose told reporters. Jose said China had already invoked diplomatic immunity, as its

right under the United Nations' Vienna Convention. However the positions held by the

two suspects at the consulate remained unclear. In a statement released before

briefing reporters, Jose said those involved in the shooting were "all members" of the Chinese consulate in Cebu.

Justice Manik

FROM PAGE 20 Nadia wrote.

The two stayed there for about five minutes when Manik delivered a speech, wishing everyone a happy Puja.

"After we came out, we crossed the road to get into the car from the Bangladesh High Commission to go home and just about then I realised a man walking very close to my father as if ready to pick him up, while gesturing and asking 'is this him'," the judge's daughter wrote in her post.

Seeing the man coming, Nadia covered her father. The man asked, "Are you Justice Shamsuddin Choudhury?"

As Manik tried to pull away without answering him, a few others came up and started kicking and hitting the former judge. "I shielded dad as best as I could

and hit the men, too, but they kept kicking away at dad as he lay on the floor. We were both screaming for help for well over 30 seconds. They took dad's phone," Nadia wrote. "This happened right in front of the

hall where such a big festival full of thousands of people was taking place. Dad was attacked in a similar manner near our home in London a few years ago as well," she added. Blaming the BNP for the attack, she

said: "These young thuggish, well-built men didn't even know dad by face and there's no doubt they had received instructions from terrorist BNP forces.

"Please keep us in your prayers. We got attacked right after landing in London, the city where Tarek [Tarique] Zia has comfortably settled in, and where his mother, leader of the opposition party BNP is also currently visiting."

Nadia said they informed the police about the attack.

Khaleda

FROM PAGE 20

Recently, some ruling AL leaders at different programmes expressed their speculation that Khaleda, who is facing several cases, might not return to Bangladesh from the UK in fear of legal steps against her.

When Fakhrul's attention was drawn to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and some ministers' allegation that the BNP was behind the recent murders of two foreigners in Bangladesh, he said such accusation was "baseless and a smear campaign against my party".

"Unfortunately, it has become a culture here to blame the opposition for any kind of incident. Probably, the government finds it very convenient to put the blame on the opposi tion," he observed.

Fakhrul went to Singapore on October 17 and was treated at National University Hospital there. Asked about his health condition,

he said he was better now. "But I will have to visit Singapore every month for the next six months for routine medical check-ups," he added. Meanwhile, BNP Standing

Committee Member Nazrul Islam Khan yesterday said his party does not believe in communalism and its stance on the issue would be stronger in future. "BNP right from the heart believes

that every Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist and Christian in Bangladesh is equal. We have been living in this country together for a long time and that reflects the communal harmony," he said while visiting a Puja Mandap at Dhakeshwari National Temple in the capital.

He also conveyed greetings from BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia to the Hindu community on the occasion of Durga Puja.

Fireworks erupt

FROM PAGE 20

collected and in command for the first phase of the hearing -- mounted a passionate defence of her response to the violence, telling the Republicans arrayed against her that she had lost more sleep over the deaths of four Americans in Libya than anyone else on the panel.

"I would imagine I have thought more about what happened than all of you put together," she said. "I have lost more sleep than all of you put together. I have been wracking my brain about what more could have been done or should have been done. But she came under repeated attack

from Republicans, who didn't accept her explanations and, in some cases, version of events. Republican Rep Jim Jordan of

Ohio submitted the former secretary of state to a dramatic period of questioning when he alleged that she and other Obama administration staff tried to blame the attack on the consulate on an anti-Muslim YouTube video to avoid undercutting President Barack Obama's claims that he had crushed al-Qaeda. "You could live with a protest

about a video, that won't hurt you, but a terror attack would," Jordan said, saying that Americans could accept, reluctantly, compatriots being killed abroad but "what they can't live with is when their government is not square with them."

Hillary Clinton rejected the claim, saying in the desperate hours after the attack on September 11, 2012, that information on the true nature of the assault on the compound by a mob was unclear. "I am sorry that it doesn't fit your

narrative congressman, I can only tell you what the facts are." Another Republican, Rep Mike

Pompeo of Kansas, tried to rile Hillary by asking why her old friend and political operative Sidney Blumenthal had been able to send her personal emails, requests for more security from US staff in Libya did not reach her desk.

Throughout, Republicans maintained that the panel was not created to serve partisan ends.

Gowdy rejected Democratic claims he was leading the investigation to a pre-ordained verdict with the intention of damaging Hillary Clinton.

"There is no theory of the prosecution," Gowdy said, raising his voice.

"This is not a prosecution," he

reiterated moments later. "I have reached no conclusions." But the heated exchanges highlighted that the hearing is not only limited to an examination of

Clinton's record on Benghazi but also the extent to which partisanship has shaped the investigation, with the Democratic candidates' allies repeatedly charging the GOP with politically motivated maneuvers.

In her opening statements, Hillary made a veiled reference to her campaign's contention that the Benghazi Select Committee is a sideshow meant to damage her politically, she added, "We need leadership at home to match our leadership abroad, leadership that puts national security ahead of politics and ideology."

She said she had taken "responsibility" for the deaths of the four Americans, and while still secretary of state had introduced a number of Americans to try to ensure such

attacks do not happen again.

Cummings claimed the probe had wasted 17 months and \$4.7 million on a partisan fishing expedition that had turned up no new evidence on the attack, which occurred when she was secretary of state.

Clinton noted that an independent Accountability Review Board that she set up as secretary had pulled no punches, unveiling 29 recommendations for improving security for U.S. diplomats overseas. She also noted that previous attacks on Americans abroad, including in 1983 on a US Marines barracks and the US Embassy in Beirut, had produced changes to US security procedures after nonpartisan investigations by Congress.

She said that while she and Stevens knew that Benghazi was dangerous for Americans -- like many other areas of the world -- there had been no actionable threat received by US intelligence agencies against the State Department facility, even on the morning of the attack. "No one ever came to me and said

we should shut down our compound in Benghazi," she said. At the White House meanwhile,

spokesman Eric Schultz said Obama was not watching the hearing. Schultz said Clinton's performance reminded him of why his boss had chosen her as secretary of state. "This is someone who clearly cares

deeply on the issues," he said. "Someone who has worked tirelessly to strengthen our relationships with our partners around the world. Someone who cares deeply about our men and women overseas at stations across the globe. And someone who when something goes wrong takes responsibility and owns up to that mistake and is happy to answer questions on however many occasions because she is being held accountable."

Holocaust

FROM PAGE 20

Holocaust has been made before, but has been widely discredited. There is no record of the conversation to which Netanyahu referred, and Nazi efforts to exterminate European

ported Hitler and met him in

November 1941, instigated the

time of Hitler's meeting with Al-Husseini. Netanyahu's comments sparked outrage, with Palestinian official Saeb

Jews were already under way by the

Erekat accusing him of attempting to absolve Hitler. Opposition leader Isaac Herzog called it a "dangerous historical distor-

Israeli government officials also appeared to distance themselves from the comments with Moshe Yaalon, the defence minister, acknowledging on Israel's Army Radio that Hitler "initiated" the Holocaust.

The Israeli prime minister later defended his comments saying: "I didn't mean to absolve Hitler of responsibility, but to show that the father of the Palestinian nation wanted to destroy Jews even without occupa-

tion." UK Jewish groups contacted by the Independent declined to comment on the issue, saying Netanyahu had

clarified his position. Shortly after making the comments Netanyahu flew to Germany where he was due to meet John Kerry, the US Secretary of State, to discuss the situa-

tion in Israel and the Middle East.

Snake 'not guilty

They also challenge the credibility of

three consecutive fatal bites. Cleopatra, who died at the age of 39 in 30BC, was a ruler of Egypt who became embroiled in power struggles within the Roman empire.

But her story and her death have become part of popular legend, portrayed in fictional form from Hollywood epics to Carry On films and television comedy.

From Roman sources onwards, her death has often been attributed to a poisonous snake or "asp", with the queen using the fatal bite as a way of ending her own life. But Egyptologist Joyce Tyldesley

and Andrew Gray, curator of herpetology at Manchester Museum, say the supposed culprit - a cobra - would have been too physically big to be concealed in the way that has been portrayed. They are typically 5-6ft long and can grow to 8ft (2.5m), and the

Manchester experts reject the idea such a snake could be hidden in the way suggested. Even if such a snake had been smuggled in to Cleopatra, they say it would have been very unlikely that it

could have killed Cleopatra and two of her servants in quick succession. "Not only are cobras too big, but there's just a 10% chance you would die from a snake bite: most bites are dry bites that don't inject venom," said

Gray.

Constables Mohsin, Mahbub and gunfight, he said, adding the trio took

snake to kill two or three people one after the other.

"Snakes use venom to protect themselves and for hunting - so they conserve their venom and use it in

Dr Tyldesley, author of Cleopatra: Egypt's Last Queen, is a contributor to a free online course - a Mooc - about ancient Egypt made by the university.

The course, A History of Ancient Egypt, is being launched next week and will study Egypt from before the pharaohs through the relationships with Greece and Rome and ending with Cleopatra.

'Robber'

FROM PAGE 20 union under the police station and

the scene.

times of need."

preparing to rob a nearby house. He did not mention the number of rob-As police reached the orchard around 3:00am, the robbers opened

fire on them, he claimed. Police retaliated with gunfire leaving Rahim dead on the spot, he further claimed, adding that the others fled

three rounds of bullet, two machetes and two knives from the spot, the OC Ibrahim were injured during the

They recovered a foreign pistol,

primary treatment at Laxmipur District "That's not to say they aren't danger-Health Complex. ous: the venom causes necrosis and Police has sent the body to the

will certainly kill you, but quite slowly. hospital morgue for autopsy. "So it would be impossible to use a