

2 Palestinian attackers shot dead

REUTERS, Jerusalem

Israeli troops killed two knife-wielding Palestinian assailants in the occupied West Bank yesterday, the army said, the latest in a months-long spate of street violence that Israel's defence minister described as declining.

Almost daily stabbings, car-rammings and shootings by Palestinians targeting Israelis have been fuelled in part by frustration at failed statehood talks and a dispute over a Jerusalem holy site, with Muslims angered by perceived Jewish encroachment.

The Israeli military said soldiers shot dead a Palestinian who tried to stab one of them near the West Bank city of Hebron and, in a separate incident near the town of Nablus, killed a man after he slashed and wounded an army officer.

That brought the number of Palestinians killed since Oct 1 to at least 145. Israel says 93 of these were assailants, while most of the others died in clashes with Israeli security forces.

3 winners hit \$1.6b US lottery jackpot

AFP, Los Angeles

Three winning tickets shared a \$1.6-billion bonanza in the US Powerball lottery on Wednesday, after millions of people tuned in to see the fate of the world-record jackpot live on TV.

The winning numbers were 4, 8, 19, 27 and 34, with a 10 as the so-called Powerball number.

Lottery fever gripped the United States, with people forming long lines outside stores to buy a ticket and then frantically checking their \$2 slips to see if they had hit the mammoth jackpot.

"It's official! There were 3 jackpot-winning tickets in tonight's Powerball draw: California, Florida & Tennessee," California Lottery tweeted.

Local television showed swarms of people, many cheering and chanting, descending on the Los Angeles convenience store where the California ticket was sold.

The jackpot, which had stood at \$1.5 billion for much of the day, eventually crept up to nearly \$1.59 billion.

The winner can choose to be paid the full jackpot in annual installments for 29 years or take a one-off payment of at least \$930 million.

The odds of winning were at least one in 292 million.

The previous US jackpot record of \$656 million, on March 30, 2012, was scooped up by three winners from North Carolina, Puerto Rico and Texas. The world's richest lottery is Spain's annual Christmas "El Gordo," which in 2015 handed out 2.2 billion euros (\$2.4 billion) but which capped individual wins at 400,000 euros and handed out thousands of smaller prizes.



Protesters rally in front of the US embassy against the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (EDCA) in Manila, yesterday. The Philippines is set to offer the US military use of eight bases, a military spokesman said on Wednesday, after the country's supreme court upheld a security agreement with Washington forged in the face of rising tensions with China.

Al-Jazeera pulls plug on US news channel

AFP, Washington

Cable channel Al-Jazeera America, launched with great fanfare in 2013 by the global Qatar-based media group, will be shut down April 30, the company said Wednesday.

The move comes after an investment of hundreds of millions of dollars in the channel failed to attract more than a minuscule audience.

An internal memo from director general Mostefa Souag said the decision was "driven by the fact that our business model is simply not sustainable in light of the economic challenges in the US media marketplace."

Souag said the shutdown would be accompanied by an expansion of Al-Jazeera's digital services "to broaden our multi-platform presence in the United

States."

Al-Jazeera paid some \$500 million to launch the cable news operation aimed at rivaling CNN, Fox News and MSNBC.

In mid-2013, the channel went live after hiring some 850 staff and opening 12 bureaus in the United States and a state-of-the-art studio in New York.

The wind-down of Al-Jazeera America will not affect the group's other global media operations, the memo said.

Al-Jazeera America chief executive Al Anstey told staff that he recognized the shutdown "will be a massive disappointment for everyone here who has worked tirelessly for our long-term future," adding that "the decision was no reflection on the work of that staff."

Excerpts of his comments appeared on Al-Jazeera's website.

AFTERMATH OF INDIAN AIR BASE ATTACK

Indo-Pak talks deferred

Islamabad refuses to confirm Jaish chief's arrest

AGENCIES

India and Pakistan have agreed to reschedule talks between their foreign secretaries, the Indian foreign ministry said yesterday, while an investigation into a deadly attack on an Indian military base is carried out.

India has demanded action against the Pakistan-based Jaish-e-Mohammad that it suspects of carrying out the attack on the Pathankot air base. Islamabad has held Jaish leader Maulana Masood Azhar and other members, sources say.

Indian foreign ministry spokesman Vikas Swarup said New Delhi welcomed the steps taken by Pakistan against the militant group, which was also blamed for a 2001 parliament attack that nearly led to a war between the nuclear-armed rivals.

He said the foreign secretaries of the neighbours spoke on the telephone and decided to defer the talks that had been tentatively scheduled for Friday in

Islamabad.

The two diplomats agreed to hold the talks aimed at achieving a thaw in ties in the very near future but no date was announced.

The Pakistani foreign office said a new date had not yet been decided.

A Pakistan foreign office yesterday said that it was not aware about detention of Jaish-e-Mohammed chief, the suspected mastermind.

Talking to reporters in Islamabad, Pakistan foreign office spokesperson Qazi Khalilullah said he is "not aware of such arrests".

On Wednesday, Pakistan announced that it has shifted JeM chief Azhar, his brother and other members of the terror outfit to an undisclosed location where the concerned authorities were interrogating them about the armed attack on Pathankot airbase.

Seven Indian military personnel were killed in the Jan. 2 attack on the base in the northern state of Punjab, which was followed by a raid on an Indian consulate in Afghanistan that has also been linked to JeM.



'Indian diaspora world's largest'

AGENCIES

According to the latest United Nations estimates, 244 million people, or 3.3% of the world's population, live in a country other than the one where they were born.

16 million Indians are scattered across the world, which partly reflects the country's demographic size (1.2 billion) and youth (median age is around 26). However, immigrants are concentrated in just 20 countries.

By far, the most popular destination in 2015 was the United States, followed by Germany, Russia and Saudi Arabia. But the ranking should not be viewed as a popularity contest. Saudi Arabia shows up because it hosts an enormous number of migrant workers, not immigrants who resettle, as in the United States.

Promote tolerance

US official urges Indian leaders

REUTERS, New Delhi

A top US human rights official yesterday expressed concern about recent incidents of violence in India against religious minorities, urging national leaders to be vigilant in protecting the right of Indians to freedom of worship.

"We have concerns about some of the recent incidents here in India," said Sarah Sewall, US under secretary for civilian security, democracy and human rights, citing the mob killing of a Muslim man rumoured to have eaten beef and a string of attacks on churches last year.

"Much of the challenge is for political leaders, as well as religious leaders, to be setting a strong and firm example about the need to uphold constitutional protections," Sewall told Reuters during an official tour of a mosque, church and Hindu temple in the Indian capital.

Sewall's visit this week to New Delhi and Dharamsala, where she is due to meet Tibet's exiled spiritual leader the Dalai Lama, is part of a warming in US-India ties since tension between the allies spiked over the arrest of an Indian diplomat in the United States in 2013.

Quake rebuilding to take years

Says Nepal's new reconstruction chief

AFP, Kathmandu

Tens of thousands of Nepalis left homeless after April's massive earthquake will have to spend years living in temporary shelters, the country's reconstruction chief has told AFP.

Sushil Gyawali said it would take another two to three years to rebuild houses damaged or destroyed in the April 25 earthquake, which killed nearly 9,000 people.

"Certain people might be in a situation to rebuild their houses before monsoon season but we cannot expect that all the houses will be reconstructed... it will take around two to three years (more)", said Gyawali, head of the National Reconstruction Authority (NRA).

He said in an interview late Wednesday that the first house will be inaugurated in March.

Tens of thousands of quake survivors are still living in flimsy tents in subzero temperatures nearly nine months after the 7.8-magnitude quake, which destroyed more than half a million homes in the Himalayan country.

A \$4.1 billion reconstruction fund was set up in June, but work on rebuilding was delayed by lawmakers' failure to pass a bill conferring legal status on the NRA.

Gyawali will oversee the fund and has vowed swift action to help quake victims, who have received little aid beyond an initial \$150-per-household government payout.

"Certainly (reconstruction)... has been delayed -- it is true and everyone knows it. But we have to start immediately and we have to make up the time," he said.

Over the next few weeks, some 1,500 engineers and 200 surveyors will fan out across quake-devastated villages and towns to assess damage and draw up lists of victims before the NRA can disburse aid worth \$2,000 per household.

The damage assessment, which will conclude by the first anniversary of the quake, will go hand in hand with rebuilding and grant distribution, Gyawali said.

The government vowed in June to set up the NRA to oversee rebuilding and ensure that all aid went to victims, as part of its bid to attract funding from sceptical foreign donors.



NEWSINbrief

Tourists killed in Alpine avalanche

AFP, Les Deux Alpes

Two French teenagers and a Ukrainian man were killed Wednesday when an avalanche swept away skiers in the French Alps, including a group on a school outing, local officials said. The avalanche hit a piste at the Deux Alpes resort in eastern France which has been closed to the public all season, engulfing a group of French pupils and their teacher from the city of Lyon, according to police sources.

Security scare at Sydney landmark

AFP, Sydney

Sydney's iconic Opera House was cordoned off yesterday in a security scare sparked by "information on social media" with people cleared from the harbour front precinct before police declared it safe. No further information was provided although Sydney's Daily Telegraph said the scare revolved around a threat received about an object inside the Opera House.

Peres hospitalised for heart problems

AFP, Jerusalem

Former Israeli president and Nobel Peace Prize winner Shimon Peres, 92, was hospitalised yesterday for cardiovascular problems and is in stable condition after a medical procedure, his spokesman said. The last of Israel's founding fathers, Peres has held nearly every major office in the country, including that of prime minister more than once and president from 2007-2014.



Zimbabwe denies reports of Mugabe's death

AFP, Harare

Zimbabwe government yesterday denied reports that veteran President Robert Mugabe, 91, had collapsed and died in Singapore after rumours spread rapidly about his alleged ill health. Under the headline "President well, fine", the state-run Herald newspaper said stories about Mugabe's health emerged each year when he took his annual leave outside the country. The president, who is the world's oldest national leader, has ruled Zimbabwe since independence in 1980.



Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation
(An enterprise under Ministry of Industries, Government of Bangladesh)
BCIC Bhaban, 30-31 Dilkusha C/A, Dhaka-1000, Bangladesh

Invitation of Expression of Interest (EOI)

ABRIDGED INVITATION FOR BIDS FOR EPC (TURNKEY) PACKAGE
FOR
1,600 MTPD Ammonia Plant and 2,800 MTPD Granular Urea Plant
of
GHORASAL POLASH UREA FERTILIZER PROJECT (GPUFP),
Polash, Narsingdi, Bangladesh

BCIC: 36.091.014.05.25.0123.2012

Date: 14/01/2016

Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation (BCIC) invites sealed bids from eligible bidders for EPC (Turnkey) Package for 1,600 MTPD ammonia plant, 2,800 MTPD granular urea plant with all offsites and ancillary facilities for the aforesaid project. Debt Financing shall be arranged by the Bidders through Export Credit Agency (ECA) and /or Bank. The qualified contractor will be encouraged to arrange Government to Government financing.

For Qualification Criteria, Scope of Work, availability of Bidding Document, Debt Financing Terms and other details, please refer to detailed EOI document which shall be available for purchase from Controller of Accounts, Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation, BCIC Bhaban (6th Floor), 30-31 Dilkusha C/A, Dhaka-1000, Bangladesh, during office hours on payment of BDT 8,000 equivalent to US \$100 (non-refundable) from 17/01/2016 and also available at www.bcic.gov.bd; www.cptu.gov.bd; www.moind.gov.bd.

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