

IS claims blast that killed 12 near Iraq’s Karbala

AFP, Baghdad

The Islamic State group on Saturday claimed a bomb blast that killed 12 people near the Iraqi Shia holy city of Karbala the previous day.

The blast aboard a bus at a checkpoint north of Karbala also wounded five people, according to the city’s health authorities.

Security forces said Saturday they had arrested a man suspected of placing the explosives on the bus before it disembarked.

Iraq declared victory against IS in late 2017 after three years of a brutal fightback against the extremist Sunni group, which had specifically targeted Shia gatherings.

Jihadist sleeper cells have continued to carry out hit-and-run attacks against government positions across the country, particularly at checkpoints, but attacks targeting Shia religious gatherings had been rare in recent years.

The deadliest incident this year was a stampede earlier this month in Karbala that left more than 30 pilgrims dead and dozens injured.

Hundreds of thousands of pilgrims from Iraq, Iran and as far as India had been gathering in the southern city this month to mark the Shia holy day of Ashura.

Protest

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PROBE BODY FORMED OVER ATTACKS

The university authorities yesterday formed a three-member committee led by Prof Md Abdur Rahman, dean of the university’s science faculty, to investigate the attacks on students on Saturday.

Last five years

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while glacier loss for 2015-19 is also the highest for any five-year period on record.

The report comes ahead of a major UN climate summit today that Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has called to ask countries to raise their greenhouse gas reduction targets.

On this metric, too, the world is failing. The report found that rather than falling, carbon dioxide grew two percent in 2018, reaching a record high of 37 billion tonnes.

More importantly, there is also no sign yet of reaching what is known as “peak emissions,” the point at which levels will start to fall, though these are not growing at the same rate as the global economy.

Former secy

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Former secretary Dr Kamal Uddin Ahmed has been appointed as the full-time member of the commission.

Five newly appointed honorary members are senior advocate of the Supreme Court Toufique Aftab, Rangamati Hill District Council former chairman Chingkiu Roaja, former senior district and session judge Jesmin Ara Begum, former district and session judge Mizanur Rahman Khan and former secretary Nomita Halder.

Two land in jail

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Sadar Police Station.
Over 40 days have passed since the body was dumped in the river. Chances of recovering the body is very low, the OC added.

A different butcher

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“Zahir used to torture me almost every day for money. He wasted Tk 2.82 lakh and when he failed to pay back the lenders, he left us. I still do not know where he is now,” she said. Jamila then had to face the wrath of the lenders. “I realised that I had to stand on my own feet by any means. So I took up the butcher’s job.”
Jamila’s business is now thriving. She has not only managed to clear the debts but also has built a home in her village. She opens her shop every day at 6 in the morning and passes busy time until around 3:30pm. She earns Tk 700-1000 daily. Her son Jahurul helps her at the shop while her daughter Salma reads at grade-VIII at Jharbari High School.
“I slaughter at least one cow daily. I buy the cattle, slaughter, skin the animal, make pieces of the meat, and sell them. On Fridays, I have to butcher two or three cows as people eat a lot of beef that day,” Jamila said.
“Initially I was frowned at for taking up the job being a female. But now the villagers and other male butchers have accepted me. They even come to help me sometimes,” she went on.
“Jamila is well-known for her profession in the village. She sells quality meat,” said Jakir, a youth of Debarupara.

Rafiqul Islam, an elderly butcher from Dinaipur, said, “I had long been in this profession but never heard of a female butcher. Jamila might be the only female butcher of the country,” he told this correspondent when asked about Jamila.



A policeman walks past a child holding a poster as she protests against the destruction of Aarey forest which they call “Mumbai’s Amazon”, after the government approved cutting down 2,700 trees for constructing a metro train car shed, in Mumbai, yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Stay out of the Gulf

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Trump indicated he did not plan to strike back.

On Friday, Defence Secretary Mark Esper said the US was sending reinforcements to Saudi Arabia at “the kingdom’s request”, while noting the forces would be “defensive in nature” and focused on air and missile defence.

‘STAY AWAY’
In his speech delivered before a massive military parade, Rouhani called on the foreign powers in the Gulf region to “stay away”.
“If they’re sincere, then they should not make our region the site of an arms race,” he said.
“Your presence has always brought pain and misery... The farther you keep yourselves from our region and our nations, the more security there will be.

“We are even ready to ignore their past mistakes... since today the situation is such that the enemies of Islam and the region, meaning America and Zionism, want to abuse the rift between us,” said Rouhani.
“Our logic is the logic of a Persian Gulf whose security comes from within.”

Following his speech, the armed forces paraded their latest equipment, including tanks, missiles and armoured vehicles as Rouhani and top military commanders saluted them.
The annual military parade marks the start of the week commemorating Iran’s 1980-1988 war with Iraq known as the “sacred defence”.
‘ACT OF WAR’
Rouhani is expected to travel to New York today, a day before general debate kicks off at the UN General Assembly.

Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, who is subject to US sanctions, has already arrived in New York.
Tensions have flared in the Gulf since May, when Iran began reducing its commitments to the nuclear deal and the US said it was sending forces to waters near the Islamic republic in response to “indications of a credible threat” from its forces.
The US deployed an aircraft carrier strike group and a bomber task force to the sensitive waterways, before sending B-52 bombers, an amphibious assault ship and Patriot missile battery.
Following the deployments, commercial ships were mysteriously attacked, drones downed and oil tankers seized in Gulf waters.
Trump in June authorised a military strike after Iran shot down a US drone, only to call off the retaliation at the last moment.

Swiss hold ‘funeral’ for lost glacier

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Upon arrival, a chaplain and several scientists gave sombre speeches in remembrance of the glacier, accompanied by the mournful tones of alphorns -- a 3.6-metre (12-foot), pipe-shaped wooden instrument.
A wreath was laid for the Pizol glacier, which has been one of the most studied glaciers in the Alps.
The move comes after Iceland made global headlines last month with a large ceremony and the laying of a bronze plaque to commemorate Okjokull, the island’s first glacier lost to climate change.

But unlike Iceland, the ceremony in Swiss mountainside does not mark the first disappearance of a glacier from the Swiss Alps.

“Since 1850, we estimate that more than 500 Swiss glaciers have completely disappeared, including 50 that were named,” Swiss glaciologist and march participant Matthias Huss told AFP.

Pizol may not be the first glacier to vanish in Switzerland, but “you could say it is the first to disappear that has been very thoroughly studied,” Huss of the ETH technical university in Zurich said.

‘We’ll mobilise to vote you out’

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do more to rein in rising temperatures and help those who are suffering from worsening extreme weather and rising seas, organisers said.

In the face of pressure, governments are beginning to respond - and “largely this change in momentum was due to you”, Guterres told about 1,000 young climate campaigners from more than 120 countries at the one-day summit.

But, he warned, “we are still losing the race. Climate change is running faster than we are.”

At Saturday’s summit, Swedish teenager Greta Thunberg, a figurehead of the youth movement, described it as “unstoppable”.

Other participants spoke about efforts they are leading to cut emissions or reduce climate impacts back home.

Those range from apps to help

African farmers adapt to changing weather, to campaigns to ban plastic, teach students about climate change, or capture carbon dioxide from the air.

Others said they were pushing for youth advisory panels that have direct access to government climate ministers - something now in place in Denmark - or launching smartphone apps to better coordinate and popularise climate action.

One activist challenged Microsoft’s chief environmental officer, who was on a panel judging youth presentations at the summit, over the technology giant’s contracts with fossil fuel companies.

“Do you care more about profit than you care about us?” she asked, to thunderous applause. The official replied that the “entire tech sector” was grappling with such ties.

Other activists said they were

prepared to take strong personal action, such as pledging not to have children until their governments acted on climate change.

Solomon Yeo, 24, a law student from the Solomon Islands, said he and others were working to fill gaps in international law, in part by drawing links between a warming climate and how it threatens human rights.

They hope to find ways to eventually get cases involving climate change liability before the International Court of Justice, which Yeo said “would help states understand their duties to protect future generations”.

Emmanuel Mobijo, 24, of South Sudan, who works on tech innovation and peacebuilding, as well as climate action in his conflict-torn country, said rainfall was fast becoming scarcer there even as many families still rely on farming.

“The youth here have answers - this

The regional crisis deepened with the September 14 attacks on Saudi energy giant Aramco’s Abqaiq processing plant and Khurais oilfield, which halved the kingdom’s oil output.

Yemen’s Iran-backed Houthi rebels claimed responsibility, but the US says it has concluded the attacks involved cruise missiles from Iran and amounted to “an act of war”.

Saudi Arabia, which has been bogged down in a five-year war in Yemen, has warned of “appropriate measures” once the source of the strikes is confirmed by a UN investigation.

A Houthi plan for a cessation of hostilities announced on Friday has been welcomed by the UN, but Saudi Arabia was sceptical, saying it would “judge other parties by their deeds”.

It has figured among some 4,000 glaciers -- vast, ancient reserves of ice -- dotted throughout the Alps, providing seasonal water to millions and forming some of Europe’s most stunning landscapes.

But Huss and other ETH scientists recently cautioned more than 90 percent of the Alpine glaciers could disappear by the end of this century if greenhouse gas emissions are not reined in.

Regardless of what actions humans take now, the Alps will lose at least half of their ice mass by 2100, according to their study, published in April.

meeting has shown it,” he told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

“But we will not have enough answers for the questions of the next generation if we don’t act now.”

Pita Taufatofua, an Olympic athlete from Tonga who lives in Australia, broke down in tears describing how his Pacific island homeland had seen half of its buildings destroyed by a powerful cyclone while he competed in skiing at the 2018 Winter Olympics in South Korea.

“If 50% of New York disappeared, people would act,” he said. “Fifty percent of my country was wiped out in one night and people haven’t acted yet.”

Gabriela Cuevas, a Mexican legislator, urged youth leaders to search for ways to “translate your activism into policy and legislation”.

“Do not expect the same people (in power) will change everything,” she said. “So, welcome to politics.”

Colombia seeks int’l sanctions on Venezuela to protect region

REUTERS, Bogota

Colombian President Ivan Duque called on Saturday for coordinated international sanctions targeting Venezuela to help stop President Nicolas Maduro’s support for Colombian rebels and drug traffickers from destabilizing Latin America.

Duque, who accuses Maduro of providing a safe haven for Colombian rebel fighters from the now-demobilized FARC guerrilla group and the still-active ELN rebel, compared the Venezuelan leader to former Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic, who was put on trial for alleged war crimes in conflicts that destabilized the Balkans.

“We should look at communal sanctions and actions so that the threat of (Venezuela) protecting terrorism in its territory ends,” Duque told Reuters before traveling to the United Nations General Assembly meeting in New York.

“The international community must understand that the dictatorship has to come to an end soon because the humanitarian tragedy, in addition to the consolidation of a dictatorial regime that is coexisting with drug cartels and with terrorism, is a threat for the whole Western hemisphere and for the stability of the world.”

NOVEMBER ELECTION

Spain’s Socialist party would maintain lead, polls show

REUTERS, Madrid

Spain’s Socialist party would win a November election and gain more seats, two polls showed yesterday, but it would fall short of a majority and would still need support from other parties to form a government.

The Socialists finished first in an inconclusive national election in April but acting Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez has failed to form a government with other parties, meaning the country is headed to its fourth election in as many years on November 10.

The two main traditional parties that have dominated the political landscape since Spain’s entry into democracy in the 1970s - the Socialist PSOE and the conservative People’s Party (PP) - would both gain seats in an election, the polls showed.

This is at the expense of the new parties that emerged following the financial crisis at the beginning of the decade such as far left Unidas Podemos, centre-right Ciudadanos and far right Vox.

The Socialists would gain 11 seats to win 134, a GAD3 poll carried out for Vanguardia newspaper showed, still not enough for a majority of 176. Podemos would lose 5 seats, the poll showed. The combined left-wing bloc of the Socialists and Podemos would again fall short of a majority.

The Socialists and Unidas Podemos were unable to form a coalition government after the April election despite months of talks.

A poll carried out by 40db and published in El Pais yesterday gave similar results, with the Socialists and the PP gaining ground and the newcomers Unidas Podemos, Ciudadanos and Vox losing seats.

Journalist

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the purpose.

“I was totally in the dark that they in guise of the online shop were running a gambling racket,” he said, adding that he had also filed a general diary in this regard and parted ways with Delwar.

To bolster his case, the ex-DMP commissioner said following information from an intelligence agency that Jubo League leader Ismail Chowdhury Samrat and his men were running a “casino” renting floors at a 24-storey tower in Motijheel, he conducted mobile court drive and sealed off the casino.

“Later, many influential quarters started lobbying to open the casino... They wanted to have me fired,” he said. “But I stood firm and said no I will not allow the casino.”

He also claimed that in 2017 he shut down gambling operations in Kalabagan Krira Chakra and another one in Gulshan.

He claimed that the only information they had was of people playing cards, which was something that had been going on since the 80s. “But, me, the IGP and the home minister did not have any knowledge that it turned into casinos and Nepalese were brought in to run them,” he added.

Asked about a possible police link to the “casinos”, he said, “Now, the accused are arrested. [Clean information from them...[about] who else are involved and who are the beneficiaries. Whoever they are, be it me, my superior or subordinates, unveil them and bring them to book.”