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Mahmoud Fadil, aged 50, was a witness to one of the bombings. "I saw others covered with blood lying on the ground and some crying because of wounds caused by shrapnel and the huge blast," he said, noting that the blast was strong enough to lift him up into the air.

The attacks come several days before Iraqi parliamentary elections are due on March 7. The explosions were the deadliest bombings in the country since February 1, when a suicide bomber in Baghdad killed 54 people.

At least 60 die in Indian temple stampede

At least 60 people died and several others were injured in a stampede at a temple in Uttar Pradesh, India's most populous state. The incident occurred when the gates of a Hindu temple collapsed, according to police officials.

At least 25 others were injured in the disaster. Some of them were said to be critical. The devotees had assembled at a religious feast or "bhandara" was organized by Jagadguru Kripalu Ji Maharaj in the Ram Janaki temple, located in the town of Kunda in Pratapgarh district. The lunch would have been followed by a free clothes distribution, according to sources. Over thousand had assembled in the temple for the luncheon without proper arrangement, according to Government sources.

Sources say the stampede occurred when a temporary tin shed caved in and a gate of the temple collapsed. Over 30 people are trapped in the debris; rescue work by police and administrative officials is underway.

"Sixty bodies had been recovered

and more could have been killed in the tragedy in Mangarh area of Pratapgarh district's Kunda town, about 180 km from here," said Brij Lal, Additional Director General of Police (Law and Order). According to Lal, the deaths and injuries occurred mainly due to the collapse of the gate.

"During the event the temple's concrete gate collapsed leaving 20 people dead and around 25 people injured. The accident did not have anything to do with stampede," said he. The death toll increased to 60 and is expected to surge even more.

Threat to ships in Malacca Strait, says Singapore Navy

The Singapore Navy on Thursday warned of a possible pirate threat to ships passing through the Strait of Malacca after receiving a correspondence from an unnamed terrorist organization.

According to the Navy, the intent of the terrorists was to "achieve widespread publicity and showcase that they remain a viable group." While the threat received covered only oil tankers, other large cargo ships were also at risk of attack, naval officials went on to say.

To reduce possible risks, the Navy urged ships to strengthen onboard security, including adding additional lights and lookouts. They also recommended that ships maintain a higher speed and report any unusual incidents to the proper authorities. The advisory said that past attacks in the Strait had been carried out by small vessels such as motorboats or fishing boats with armed crews. Commercial vessels were also warned to avoid known fishing areas accordingly.

At least 29 dead after bombings in Iraq

Three suicide bombers in the Iraqi city of Baquba, the capital of the Diyala, killed at least 29 people earlier today, according to reports, although the Associated Press puts the number at 32.

According to Captain, Ghalib al-Karkhi said that the explosions targeted the provincial headquarters, a hospital, and the Iraqi army.

One of the explosions occurred at the headquarters of police, the second near a police checkpoint; a third bomb blew up at the Baquba general hospital. A fourth bomb was later detonated by officials without incident about two hundred metres away from the hospital.

Fakhri al-Obaidi, thespokesman of the Diyala provincial council in Baquba, commented on the incidents. "These attacks aim to terrify people from going to polling stations. But I am sure that people will insist on voting," as quoted by the Associated Press.

The Singapore Navy said that it had contacted other countries in the area to warn them of the threat. Both Indonesia and Malaysia have also announced plans to increase patrols in order to provide additional security.

The Strait of Malacca is a major conduit for oil shipments. With around a third of global oil shipments passing through, it is the main route for travelling from the Middle East to Asia. Any attack on vessels within the Strait would likely have a major ripple effect on global trade.

6.4 magnitude earthquake hits Taiwan

A powerful 6.4 magnitude earthquake hit southern Taiwan on Thursday. According to USGS the epicenter was 23.1 km (14.4 miles) deep. The quake struck at 8:18 a.m. (0018 UTC) in a mountainous region on the southeast coast and 40 miles east of cities of Tainan and Kaohsiung on the southwest coast. The earthquake was felt in capital Taipei which is 155 miles north of the epicenter.

Several fires were started and Taipei's high-speed railway lines were stopped and are undergoing safety checks. CTI news agency reported one person was injured by falling debris in Kaohsiung, and one woman was hospitalized in the southern city of Chiayi. One person was hurt by a falling tree according to Central News Agency.

A spokesman for Taiwanese President Ma Ying-jeou assured that the concerned authorities had been instructed to follow the situation closely and take steps so as to alleviate the damage caused and survey the dislocation. The Ministry of Defense has dispatched troops to report on the damage. The Taiwan Ministry of Interior and the National Fire Agency said electricity was cut off near the epicenter but further information was not possible.

The quake was followed by many aftershocks, the largest of 4.8 on the

Richter scale. Kuo Kai-wen who is the director of the Central Weather Bureau's Seismology Center denied presence of any geological relations between the Chile earthquake and this earthquake in Taiwan.

Wikinews interviews Diego Grez, Chilean earthquake survivor

An 8.8 magnitude earthquake hit Chile on Saturday, causing significant damage throughout parts of the country. Diego Grez (a Wikinews correspondent by the pen name MisterWiki) was in Pichilemu at the time of the quake. Four days after the quake, Peter Coti a Wikinews contributor was able to chat with Mr. Grez via IRC about what happened Saturday morning.

«Peter Coti» What is the status of power, gas and water?

«Diego Grez» The electricity was restored last night, after more than 3 days without radio, cellphone or TV, in a few words, without communication. There was never any problem with the gas or water here in Pichilemu, but there are a near town called Bucalemu that has been 4 days without any of those.

«PC» How is the government responding in your area?

«DG» It has been slow. Mainly, I was surprised because the mayor of the city was not here during the quake. He was far away and he have got here in Sunday. We didn't received food until yesterday. The people was very scared and the government hasn't been seen after the quake. I went quickly to the nearest hill, to be safe of a possible tsunami without help of anyone.

«PC» What is going on right now?

«DG» We are on the hill right now, far away from my house. I'm very worried about my house.

«PC» Is the infrastructure stable?

«DG» Yes. Fortunately, the most

of the Pichilemu houses are secure including mine.

«PC» Are there a lot of people on the hill with you?

«DG» Yes. But every day that passes there are less.

«PC» Can you summarize what happened to you during the quake?

«DG» I was sleeping. My Dad came down from the second floor and said to my Mom that it was a shake. I have to say that my Dad was very scared. My mom went out with my dad. The shake didn't stop and then they called me and my sister. The house moved from side to side. I really thought it was going to fall. It was 3 or 4 minutes long. After it, when we wanted to go back for cellphone, a radio and clothes (we all were in pajamas), then some aftershocks took place. We then ran the the car and changed. Outside there were many other people running to the nearest hill, called Cerro (Hill) La Cruz. The La Cruz Hill was flooded with cars and people crying. It was really a sad situation. In addition of that, people was looting cars. And the people was urinating and excreting anywhere. The hill became very dirty. We stayed on the hill until the day before yesterday. We went to our house. And there didn't happen anything. Just a glass was broken. A strong aftershock happened and we ran away again. Now there's no problem to be there. I can happily say that we had no further problems.

«PC» Is the local hospital operational?

«DG» The ill people were taken to a high school, because of the risk of a new tsunami, but they were taken back soon.

«PC» Thank you for your time and I wish you and your country good luck in the recovery process.

«DG» Thank you.

FAA: Jets at New York airport directed by child

A US air traffic controller and his supervisor have been placed on administrative leave and are under investigation after a small boy was apparently allowed to direct passenger airplanes at New York's John F. Kennedy International Airport.

A probe was started after tape recordings indicated that a small child, which The Telegraph describes as sounding seven or eight years old, was heard directing air traffic from the airport on February 16.

"JetBlue 171 contact departure," was one of the child's directions. The pilot of the addressed aircraft responded by saying: "Over to departure JetBlue 171, awesome job." In another direction, the child says "MS 4-0-3, contact departure [...] Adios, amigo." The pilot replied with "Adios, amigo."

A man is later heard saying "[h]ere's what you get, guys, when the kids are out of school."

The age of the child and the name of their father wasn't immediately available.

An aviation official who asked to remain anonymous later told media that the same controller took his daughter into the control tower the next day, and that she was allowed to communicate with two pilots. According to another official, the two children are twins.

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), meanwhile, announced that all unofficial visits to towers, radar rooms, and other air traffic control areas, would be prohibited while the investigation is being conducted. "Pending the outcome of our investigation, the employees involved in this incident are not controlling air traffic," the aviation authority said in a statement.

Administrator Randy Babbitt commented about the incident. "This lapse in judgment not only violated FAA's own policies but common sense standards for professional conduct. These kinds of distractions

are totally unacceptable. We have an incredible team of professionals who safely control our nation's skies every single day. This kind of behavior does not reflect the true caliber of our work force."

The National Air Traffic Controllers Association, which is the union representing controllers, also stated that "[w]e do not condone this type of behaviour in any way. It is not indicative of the highest professional standards that controllers set for themselves and exceed each and every day in the advancement of aviation safety."

However, Dave Pascoe, the owner of LiveATC.net, a website which keeps records of air traffic communications, including those involving the aforementioned child, described the incident as being blown out of proportion, saying to CNN that "[...] when you listen to any of the recordings, the situation in the tower is very controlled. There is no hint [...] that anyone was too busy or anyone was interrupting the planes. [...] It was very controlled, and I don't think safety was compromised, nor should anyone be disciplined for this."

"[...] I have every belief that they'd make sure there were additional eyes there. JFK is highly supervised. It's not just one controller controlling the runway. Supervisors are there, and multiple people are there making sure by looking through binoculars and at radar." Pascoe is also a pilot.

US reveals Internet security efforts

The United States announced the declassification of a portion of the Comprehensive National Cybersecurity Initiative, a major part of the US's efforts to thwart cyber warfare, on Tuesday.

The announcement came at the RSA Security Conference in San Francisco, and was given by Howard Schmidt, who is the current US cyber-security coordinator, having

been assigned the position in December.

While only a portion of the document was revealed at the announcement, and much remains classified material, including all material related to plans by the government for offensive cyber-warfare, the program has twelve parts, and has three main strategies:

- To create a defense against immediate threats, as well as those possible in the near future;
- To create a defense against a wide variety of threats, both present and future;
- To initiate efforts to strengthen future cyber-security efforts.

The program includes funding for numerous security measures, including the government's controversial Einstein program, which scans all incoming communications to government-operated websites. The plan also mentions increasing security for classified networks within the government, as well as developing a government-wide plan for counter-intelligence work, although the declassified portions gave little indication as to what that would involve.

The program was begun by President George Bush in 2008 as a National Security Presidential Directive, and has been entirely classified until now. At its inception, it was intended to serve as a program to unify cyber-security efforts within the government and to develop other security programs for use nationwide. No budget has been released for the program, although estimates place the cost at \$40 billion until 2015.

Wave kills two on Mediterranean cruise

Two passengers on a Mediterranean cruise ship were killed by a rogue wave on Wednesday. The incident

occured off the north-east coast of Spain. The ship, named the Louis Majesty, had left from Barcelona, Spain and was headed for Genoa, Italy.

The giant wave broke the windows on deck five of the ship, resulting in two fatalities as well as another fourteen injuries. The two victims were German and Italian citizens. Following the incident, the ship returned to Barcelona. The ship, carrying over 1300 passengers, is expected to continue its journey after the injured are moved from the ship for treatment.

According to French officials, there had been no previous trouble with the ship. The waves were believed to have been 26 feet (8 meters) high. The ship is 660 feet (200 meters) long, and had 732 cabins onboard.

Commons Picture of the Day



Black Iguanas (Ctenosaura similis), one male with two females, in Barra Honda national park, Costa Rica. Image credit to Wikimedia Commons user Christian Mehlführe.

Quote of the Day

It's easier to ask forgiveness than it is to get permission.
~ [Grace Hopper](#) ~

Word of the Day

infallible *adj*

Without fault or weakness; incapable of error or fallacy.

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