



## In Focus

### US Plans New Afghan Jail

The United States intends to build a big new prison at its main military base in Afghanistan, a shift from earlier aims to transfer most detainees to Afghan custody, The New York Times reported.

A Pentagon spokesman confirmed the report in the Times Saturday edition of the planned 40-acre complex at the Bagram military base. "There are plans underway to do that," Lt. Col. Mark Wright said.

Wright said the new facility would offer more room and more opportunity for vocational, educational and religious training. The current, makeshift prison at Bagram holds about 630 prisoners, kept in wire-mesh pens surrounded by coils of razor wire, the Times said.

US officials concede a new Afghan-run prison cannot absorb all the Afghans detained by the United States and waves of new prisoners who are expected from an escalating fight against Al-Qaeda and the Taliban, the report said. It said the plans represent an acknowledgment that the US was likely to hold prisoners overseas for many years to come.

The new US prison would hold about 1,100 detainees and cost about \$60 million, the Times said.

"Our existing theatre internment facility is deteriorating," Sandra L. Hodgkinson, the senior Pentagon official for detention policy, told the Times. "It was renovated to do a temporary mission. There is a sense that this is the right time to build a new facility."

### > Suicide Bombers

An Afghan soldier was killed and two NATO troops injured when a suicide bomber blew himself up near a military patrol in southern Afghanistan, officials said.

The attack in Kandahar province's Zhari district, which followed a mine explosion, comes a day after another suicide bomber killed 16 people mostly civilians in southwestern Farah province, AFP reported.

Both attacks were claimed by Taliban insurgents.

Meanwhile, a bicycle bomb killed a child and wounded four people in the southern Afghan province of Kandahar on Saturday, police said.

The bomb was detonated by remote-control as a police convoy passed through the center of Kandahar city, police official Mohammad Yaqub told Reuters. Three of those wounded were police, Reuters said.

A NATO spokesman confirmed the attack, saying the child who was killed was nine years old.

### 10,000 Displaced In Yemen Clashes

Some 10,000 civilians in northern Yemen have been displaced from their villages over the past week by sporadic clashes between government troops and Muslim rebels, said the International Committee of the Red Cross on Friday.

The most recent round of fighting started last Saturday, and troops have been shelling rebel hideouts with artillery in the mountainous Saada province, said a military official speaking on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to talk to the media, AP reported.

"In the past six days only, I can say that some 10,000 Yemenis left their villages and sought shelter in the town of Saada," said Iman Monqar, the spokeswoman for the Red Cross in Yemen. The town of Saada is located in the province of the same name.

"We provided mattresses, bed sheets, food, water and other stuff to help facilitate the lives of people affected by the clashes," said Monqar.

The Red Cross official said that a total of 100,000 people in Saada province are struggling with tough living conditions as a result of the fighting. She said the clashes have also spread into other areas, such as the town of Harf Sufian in Arman province, located between Saada and the capital Sanaa.

## Police to Question Olmert Again

Israel's Channel Two TV says police will next week question Prime Minister Ehud Olmert in connection with a corruption case, AP said.

The TV has reported Friday that police will confront Olmert with evidence they have obtained in recent interrogations of those believed to be involved in the case.

Police this week questioned two US businessmen in connection to the suspicions. Olmert has been questioned over the allegations once this far.

The case focuses on American fundraiser Morris Talansky who allegedly transferred tens of thousands of dollars to Olmert. The delivery of the cash allegedly occurred during Olmert's tenure as Jerusalem mayor for a decade beginning in 1993 or as trade minister beginning in 2003.

Talansky is slated to give a court deposition on May 25.



## Europe Accused of Drowning Migrants

Libyan Leader Moamer Kadhafi accused Europe of deliberately provoking the drowning of illegal African migrants as they attempt to reach Europe by sea, the official JANA news agency reported on Friday.

"Dozens (of migrants) die and hundreds drown or are drowned deliberately," the official Libyan news agency quoted Kadhafi as saying during a meeting on Thursday with African Union leaders.

"Europe is trying to defend itself and is doing everything to prevent the migrants from reaching its shores," Kadhafi said without mentioning any one European nation.

He claimed that Europeans were "overturning" boats full of migrants in the Mediterranean Sea during what he alleged were fake rescue operations.

"This tragedy is real. A war is being waged in the Mediterranean against the Africans," Kadhafi said.

The Italian Interior Ministry recently said that 16,482 illegal immigrants landed in Italy last year, adding that they probably came from Libya.

# Pakistan Protests At American Strike



Pakistani people chant anti-US slogans at the site of a US missile strike in Damadola Village which borders Afghanistan's volatile Kunar province, May 15.

Pakistan's Army has taken issue with coalition forces in Afghanistan over a missile attack launched by a US drone aircraft that killed 14 people, an army spokesman told Reuters on Saturday.

Two missiles hit a house on Wednesday in the village of Damadola in Bajaur, a Pakistani tribal region where Al-Qaeda, the Taliban and other groups are active, a security official said.

"We have informed the coalition headquarters in Afghanistan ... we have raised this issue in tripartite commission," Pakistan Army Spokesman Major-General Athar Abbas said.

The commission comprises the military commanders from the US-led coalition forces in Afghanistan and the Afghan and Pakistani armies.

Abbas added that it was up to the government to decide whether to lodge a formal protest with the United States.

The strike had apparently targeted and killed a mid-level, Arab Al-Qaeda member, according to a senior government

official, speaking on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the subject.

The missile attack was the first since the new government was formed about six weeks ago but the fourth this year.

On Friday, the army found a body of a soldier in Bajaur who had been abducted earlier by Taliban fighters.

### > Kidnapped Envoy Released

Meanwhile, suspected Taliban militants released Pakistan's envoy to Afghanistan more than three months after he was kidnapped in Pakistan's Khyber tribal region, a senior government official told Reuters on Saturday.

Pakistani television channels said the envoy, Tariq Azizuddin, had been freed in Afghanistan.

Last month, Azizuddin appeared in a video on an Arabic television saying he was being held by the Taliban and urged the Pakistani government to meet their demands.

In his video, Azizuddin did not say

what demands the Taliban were making, but Pakistani media reports had reported they had called for the release of several jailed militants.

### > Resignations Rejected

The head of Pakistan's ruling coalition refused to accept the resignations of ministers from the party of former prime minister Nawaz Sharif and aims to persuade it to rejoin their six-week-old government.

Nine ministers from Sharif's Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz), or PML (N), quit the cabinet led by the party of assassinated former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto on Tuesday after their leaders failed to reach agreement on the restoration of judges sacked by President Pervez Musharraf in November, Reuters reported.

But Asif Ali Zardari, Bhutto's widow and leader of the coalition, has told Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gilani not to accept the resignations and he would persuade Sharif to withdraw them and rejoin the cabinet.