

Queen of Pop celebrates 60

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Madonna, the Queen of Pop, appears to have travelled to the former imperial city of Marrakech in western Morocco to celebrate her 60th birthday yesterday

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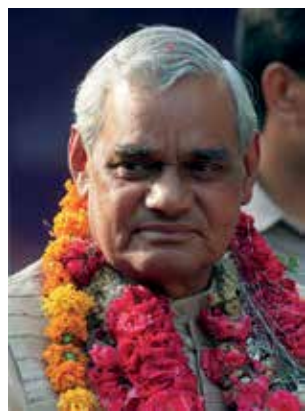
THE DAILY tribune



Halep under pressure as rain halts play 20 SPORTS

WORLD 13 Gunmen attack Kabul

Former Indian PM Vajpayee dead at 93



Atal Behari Vajpayee
 New Delhi, India

Three-time Indian prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee died yesterday, sparking tributes from across the political spectrum as current leader Narendra Modi mourned the "irreplaceable loss" of the respected statesman.

The 93-year-old had battled poor health for years but his condition deteriorated sharply in recent days, with doctors placing him on life support.

The sudden turn sparked a flurry of visits from top dignitaries, including Modi, who credited Vajpayee with laying the foundations for the meteoric rise of the right-wing Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) that rules India today. "Atal Ji's passing away is a personal and irreplaceable loss for me," Modi said in a tweet, using a Hindi-language honorific.

Vajpayee was being treated at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in Delhi, where he was admitted nine weeks ago.

As a mark of respect, state mourning will be observed by the Government of India from August 16 to 22, said Embassy of Bahrain India in a statement to Tribune.

A condolence book will be kept open by the Embassy on Sunday and Monday from 1000 hrs to 16000 hrs.

India warns of 'extremely grave' crisis as flood toll hits 106

AFP | Kochi, India

Hundreds of troops led a desperate operation to rescue families trapped by mounting floods in India's Kerala state Thursday as the death toll reached 86 with dozens more feared perished.

Helicopters airlifted stranded victims from rooftops and dam gates were thrown open as incessant torrential rain brought fresh havoc to the southern state that is a major international tourist draw.

Kerala chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan said the state now faces an "extremely grave" crisis with downpours predicted to last days more. The region's main airport has been ordered closed

until August 26. The state, famed for palm-lined beaches at resorts such as Bekal and tea plantations, is always battered by the annual monsoon but this year's damage has been the worst in almost a century.

State authorities said 21 more deaths had been confirmed Thursday taking the official toll to 86. Media reports said up to 30 more people were feared dead in landslides and rivers that burst their banks, flooding scores of villages.

At least eight people were killed when an irrigation dam burst and a landslide hit three houses in the town of Nemmara, Palakkad district, authorities said. Vijayan said 80 dams have reached danger levels and ap-



Fire and Rescue personnel evacuate local residents in an inflatable boat from a flooded area at Muppathadam near Eloor in Kochi's Ernakulam district

pealed to the population not to ignore evacuation orders.

Army and coastguard helicopters, lifeboats and navy div-

ing teams have been brought to the stricken state where an extra 540 troops were deployed Thursday. More are due in com-

ing days. The army said helicopters carried out scores of rescue operations. They also dropped food and water and appealed for victims to stand in open fields or on rooftops away from trees so helicopters were not damaged during rescue efforts.

More than 60,000 people have already sought refuge in relief camps.

"At least 6,500 people are stranded in different parts of Kerala and the situation in three districts is particularly grim," a state disaster management official said. Floods have also hit other states, including Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh, where eight people at a popular picnic spot were swept away by a sudden surge of water. (See Page 12)

Saudi foils terror plot

- The "extremist" was heavily armed
- Police arrested him after a gunfight
- No one was injured

AFP, National | Riyadh

Saudi forces have arrested a heavily armed "extremist" after wounding him in an exchange of gunfire in the kingdom's central heartland, the interior ministry said early yesterday.

The man had embraced the Islamic State group's "ideology" and was found to be in possession of a machine gun, a pistol and multiple rounds of ammunition, the ministry said in a statement.

The man in Al-Bukhariya city was also wearing what appeared to be an explosives-laden belt, state-run Al-Ekhabriya television reported.

In response, the police shot injured the suspect, the ministry added.

No passerby or security per-



Picture courtesy of ABNA

sonnel were wounded in the pre-dawn arrest in the north central city of Al Bukayriyah.

The incident comes as the kingdom prepares to host the annual hajj pilgrimage from August 19-24.

The kingdom has seen numerous attacks in recent years by extremist groups, including Al Qaeda and ISIS, against security forces.

Last year, Saudi Arabia launched the Islamic Military Counter Terrorism Coalition, which gathered defence min-

isters and leading security officials from 41 countries to focus on counter-terrorism co-operation. The Pan-Islamic coalition is tasked with co-ordinating individual efforts to fight terrorism. A Counter Terrorism Centre in Riyadh has been established as its operational arm.

In a visit to the UK in March, Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman highlighted the similarities between religious extremists and terrorists in an interview with British newspaper The Telegraph.

"The extremists and the terrorists are linked through spreading their agenda," the prince said in the interview in Riyadh. "We need to work together to promote moderate Islam".

"We want to fight terrorism and we want to fight extremism because we need to build stability in the Middle East," he told the newspaper. "The British and Saudi people, along with the rest of the world, will be much safer if [Britain has] a strong relationship with Saudi Arabia".

HM King appoints Finance Minister as chairman of GOSI

TDI | Manama

His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa issued Decree 42/2018 stipulating the structuring of the General Organization for Social Insurance (GOSI) board of directors.

HM the King appointed Shaikh Ahmed bin Mohammed Al Khalifa, Minister of Finance as Chairman of GOSI.

Shaikh Khalid bin Ali Al Khalifa, Minister of Justice and Islamic Affairs and Endowments, Ghanim bin Fadhul Al Buainain, Parliament Affairs Minister and Jameel bin Mohammed Ali Humaidan, Labour and Social Development Minister are also appointed to the board representing government.

Shaikh Nawaf bin Ibrahim Al Khalifa, CEO of Electricity and Water Authority, Ahmed Zayed Al Zayed, Chairman of Civil Service Bureau and Mohammed Ali Al Qaed, CEO of the Information and eGovernment Authority will represent government employees. (Continued on page 2)

Boost to tourism

Roman-era tombs discovered in Palestinian village

Idna, Palestinian Territories

A set of Roman-era tombs dating back some 2,000 years have been discovered near the Palestinian city of Hebron in the occupied West Bank during road works, an official said yesterday.

The cemetery dating to the first century AD, when the region was under Roman rule, was found in the village of Idna in the southern West Bank around two weeks ago.



Taleb Jubran, director of the department of tourism and antiquities in Hebron, points to a Roman-era burial site discovered near the West Bank city of Hebron

It was discovered during road work in mountainous terrain in the area, said Taleb Jubran, director of the department of tourism and antiquities in Hebron.

Bones, pottery and some 32 tombs set into stone were found. It was clear to archaeologists that artifacts had been stolen from the site before it was officially discovered, said Jubran.

"This discovery is very important for us to study it and to

preserve it," Jubran said.

The tombs were set out over a space of some 50 metres.

Officials also hoped to turn the site into a tourist attraction, while further study of it would continue to turn up details of what was found and its importance, he said.

A large number of remains from the Roman era can be found and visited in Israel and the Palestinian territories as well as the region as a whole.



02 Bahraini pilgrim dies in Mecca

03 Zallaq shown red card

05 Behind the Lens



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