

IN BRIEF

Indonesia steps up hunt for blast masterminds

BALI, Indonesia — Investigators on Monday hunted for the two suspected masterminds of suicide bombings on the resort island as Indonesia, Thailand, the Philippines, Australia and other nations went on high alert to protect their beaches from a repeat of the weekend attacks.

Newspapers published graphic photographs of the three alleged bombers' severed heads, evidence that investigators hope will lead them to the two Malaysians believed to have plotted Saturday's attacks at crowded restaurants that killed at least 22 people and wounded 104, including six Americans.

"It is our hope that people will recognize the faces and call us," police Brig. Gen. Sunarko Dami Artanto said.

The men suspected of masterminding the attacks — Azahari bin Husin and Noordin Mohamed Top — allegedly are key figures in Jemaah Islamiyah, a regional Islamic militant group with links to al-Qaida that is blamed for the 2002 Bali nightclub bombings that killed 202 people, mostly foreigners.

Palestinian police storm parliament for firepower

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip — Dozens of disgruntled Palestinian police officers stormed the parliament building Monday, complaining they do not have enough firepower to confront Hamas, and legislators upset over the growing chaos demanded that Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas reshuffle the Cabinet and fire his security chief.

The protest and parliament's rebuke of Abbas came a day after the worst fighting between Hamas and police in nearly a decade. Three people were killed, including the deputy police chief in the Shati refugee camp near Gaza City, who was shot in the head after he and his men ran out of bullets during a Hamas assault on their station.

The violence underscored the difficulties Abbas and his ill-equipped security forces face in trying to control unruly Gaza. Since Israel's pull-out from the coastal territory last month, the Islamic militant group Hamas has become increasingly brazen in challenging Abbas.

EU, Turkey agree on terms for membership talks

LUXEMBOURG — Turkey and the European Union agreed Monday to start talks on Ankara's eventual membership in the organization — a historic first step that would transform the bloc by taking in a predominantly Muslim nation and expanding its borders to Asia and the Middle East.

Turkish Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul flew to Luxembourg for a late-night ceremony to formally open entry talks following an agreement reached after two dramatic days of diplomacy that included strong U.S. lobbying for Turkey's candidacy.

"We have reached a historic point," Gul said in Ankara before departing. "Full membership negotiations will, God willing, begin tonight."

Bush chooses Harriet Miers for Supreme Court

WASHINGTON — President Bush named White House counsel Harriet Miers to a Supreme Court in transition Monday, turning to a longtime loyalist without experience as a judge or publicly known views on abortion to succeed Justice Sandra Day O'Connor.

Miers "will strictly interpret our Constitution and laws. She will not legislate from the bench," the president said as the 60-year-old former private attorney and keeper of

campaign secrets stood nearby in the Oval Office.

U.S. offensive continues forward in Iraq

QAIM, Iraq — With snipers on rooftops and helicopters hovering overhead, U.S. forces clashed with insurgent fighters Monday while searching homes in a town near the Syrian border.

In Baghdad, Iraq's oil minister narrowly escaped an assassination attempt when a bomb hit his motorcade.

While U.S. forces pushed ahead with their offensive further west, fighting erupted in the capital of Iraq's Anbar province, with masked militants attacking an Iraqi patrol and sparking a gun battle in the streets of Ramadi.

Oil Minister Ibrahim Bahr al-Uloum was headed out of the capital to attend the opening of a rebuilt refinery to the north when the roadside bomb hit his seven-car motorcade Monday morning, killing three of his bodyguards, the ministry said. Bahr al-Uloum was unhurt.

State may pay extra for soldiers on Katrina duty

SALEM — The Oregon Military Department may have to cough up an extra \$2.5 million to pay the 2,000 or so Oregon National Guard soldiers sent to Louisiana to help with the aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

The state promised soldiers headed to the Gulf Coast that they'd be paid the same state active-duty rate as if they were fighting fires within Oregon's borders, according to a report in The Oregonian.

But then the Department of Defense ordered that guardsmen on hurricane duty be paid at the lower federal-duty rate, about \$80 a day, rather than about \$250 a day.

If the department has to make up the difference — roughly 15 percent of its \$16.7 million two-year budget from the state general fund — the National Guard will have to ask for more money from the Legislative Emergency Board.

"We're hoping like heck we can go to FEMA," Col. Mike Caldwell, the Oregon National Guard's deputy director, told The Oregonian. "We're going to send them a bill."

The apparent pay cut prompted angry phone calls and e-mails among soldiers and family members. Caldwell said Oregon Adjutant General Fred Rees went to the governor's office to ask for permission to make up the difference. After getting approval, the Military Department sent final checks late last week.

Police seek witness to alleged rape

EUGENE — Police in Eugene want to speak with a driver who may have witnessed a man impersonating a police officer rape a woman in the Santa Clara area.

The alleged assault occurred in the early morning hours of last Monday, Sept. 26, when the impersonator persuaded the woman to pull over her vehicle.

The woman, who was then beaten and raped, told investigators that a vehicle drove by during the assault, Lane County Sheriff Lt. Randy Smith told The Register-Guard newspaper of Eugene.

The attacker's car appeared to be a four-door Chevrolet Caprice from the early 1990s with white doors and roof and black hood and trunk, resembling an old or retired police car.

Sheriff Russ Burger, who attended the news conference, said the bogus police car doesn't resemble any vehicles currently in use by local officers.

But Springfield police have said they are aware of at least three out-of-date vehicles they've sold that could possibly match the description of the

attacker's car, Burger said.

The woman's attacker is described as a white male in his late teens or early 20s, with shorter dark hair and standing 5 feet 9 inches tall with a thin build.

Search for Katrina bodies ends in Louisiana

NEW ORLEANS — The search for bodies of people killed by Hurricane Katrina has ended in Louisiana, and more searches will be conducted only if someone reports seeing a body, a state official said Monday.

All agencies conducting the searches have finished their sweeps for remains. But Kenyon International Emergency Services, the private company hired by the state to remove the bodies, is on call if any other body is found, said Bob Johannessen, a spokesman with the

state Department of Health and Hospitals.

Last week, the Federal Emergency Management Agency said it had completed its role in the search, because its specialties were no longer needed. Those services include getting to bodies in attics or other hard-to-reach places or in buildings that may be structurally unsound.

FEMA did nearly 23,000 secondary searches in New Orleans with about a dozen teams.

As of Monday, the Katrina death toll in Louisiana stood at 964.

Stocks mixed as inflation, rate worries persist

NEW YORK — Stocks turned in a mixed performance Monday after a report showed that the nation's manufacturing sector is expanding but facing even higher costs, triggering

worries about inflation and rising interest rates.

The market made a brief advance in early trading, lifted by lower oil and a pair of multibillion-dollar acquisitions, but retraced its steps as investors mulled the latest industrial data from the Institute of Supply Management. Meanwhile, news that global computer chip sales grew 1.7 percent in August bolstered gains in technology stocks.

While the ISM's index was better than expected and signaled that manufacturing has so far withstood the effects of hurricanes Katrina and Rita, companies reported another steep rise in raw materials prices last month amid record energy costs. Price inflation is among the top reasons for the Federal Reserve to keep to its policy of raising interest rates.

—The Associated Press

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