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3

Kidnapper arrested in flats drama...



Britain rolls out bird flu crisis plan

23

CLEARED!

Brown wins court case

24-25





His Majesty King Hamad arrived in Amman yesterday and was welcomed on arrival by the Jordanian monarch, King Abdullah, and other officials.

Six die in Israeli blitz

GAZA CITY: At least six Palestinians were killed last night in an Israeli air strike on a training base of the Popular Resistance Committees (PRC) in the southern Gaza Strip.

An Israeli aircraft targeted a training centre of the group in the town of Rafah, firing one missile at a vehicle and two missiles at a building with activists in it, Palestinian security sources said.

A local PRC leader, Iyad Abu Al Aynin and his five-year-old daughter were among those killed. Fifteen others were injured.

The PRC is an umbrella organisation bringing together secular and Islamist fighters.

Earlier, three Palestinians were injured by Israeli tank fire in Beit Lahiya in the northern Gaza Strip.

Meanwhile, Palestinian Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh said last night that his Hamas-led Cabinet will work with President Mahmoud Abbas to resolve a looming financial crisis.

The assurance came after a four-hour meeting between Haniyeh and Abbas.

Hamas slams EU aid freeze - Page 21

The world this morning

2AM LATEST BREAKING NEWS



Premier for UK

MANAMA: Prime Minister Sheikh Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa leaves today for the UK on a visit of several days during which he will also attend the graduation ceremony of his grandson, Shaikh Khalifa bin Rashid Al Khalifa, at Sandhurst Royal Military Academy.

Violations by tourist facilities

MANAMA: Twenty-six of 30 tourist facilities inspected yesterday by the Tourism Directorate were found to be in violation of Information Ministry's rules and regulations, MP Mohammed Khalid told our sister paper *Akhbar Al Khaleej*.

Jet threat man held

THE HAGUE: Dutch authorities arrested a passenger who had threatened to blow up an Iberia plane flying from Amsterdam to Madrid, a spokesman for the Dutch military police at Schiphol airport said yesterday. The pilot returned to Schiphol airport. It was not known if the man was carrying explosives. Nothing was known about his motives. An Iberia spokeswoman said 156 passengers were on Flight 3251.

Kuwaiti Amir in hospital

KUWAIT CITY: Kuwaiti Amir Shaikh Sabah Al Ahmed Al Sabah was admitted to a hospital yesterday for a regular medical check-up. Shaikh Sabah, 76, was sworn in on January 29 after the ailing crown prince Shaikh Saad Al Abdullah Al Sabah was ousted for health reasons following the death of the previous Amir Shaikh Jaber Al Ahmed Al Sabah. The former premier underwent surgery to remove his appendix in August 2002. He also had a heart pacemaker operation in February 2000.

Al Qaeda operatives freed

MADRID: Spain's High Court yesterday quashed jail terms handed down to three of 18 Al Qaeda operatives, including the Syrian head of a Spanish-based cell found to have helped to organise the September 11, 2001 attacks in the US. According to sources, Driss Chebli, Sadik Meriziak and Abdulaziz Benyaich were freed after receiving notification from the Supreme Court that their appeal would lead to their being absolved.



Iraqis evacuate a dead worshipper outside the Baratha mosque

SEA OF BLOOD

79 killed in Baghdad mosque bombing

BAGHDAD: Three suicide bombers dressed as women killed at least 79 people at a mosque yesterday.

Hundreds of worshippers had finished praying at the popular Baratha mosque when the triple attack, which left 165 people injured, turned the religious sanctuary into "a sea of blood", said witnesses.

"At least 30 people died in front of my eyes ... within minutes the place became a sea full of blood," said photographer Mustafa Ahmed.

"Preliminary investigation shows that a woman, or a man dressed as a woman,

managed to reach the security post of the female section, where the suicide bomber blew himself up causing panic and a rush by people to get out, allowing the two other terrorists to penetrate the mosque," said Sheikh Jalaluddin Al Saghir, the prayer leader at the mosque and a Shiite MP from the United Iraqi Alliance.

Of the other two bombers "one went towards my private office and one was in the mosque's main prayer hall and they blew themselves up amid the crowds".

Pointing the finger at Sunni-based groups, Saghir said: "This is a filthy war against the Shi'ites."

After the blasts, panic-stricken people were seen running across the street

seeking help and searching for their loved ones.

Security forces quickly cordoned off the entire area as dozens of pick-up trucks, ambulances and private vehicles started to ferry the victims to hospitals.


Victims were also carried away in carts and blankets, as men, beating their chests in grief, searched for relatives.

Pressure on Bush - Page 2

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