

THE WAR IN IRAQ

# Iraqi prime minister: No safe place for terrorists



An Iraqi soldier holds defused grenades found at Shurja, a predominantly Shiite market, in Baghdad, Iraq, on Thursday. A bomb attached to a motorcycle exploded in the market, killing at least 26 people, police said.

## Suicide car bombing kills at least 26 people in Baghdad

By BASSEM MROUE  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

**BAGHDAD, Iraq**

Iraq's prime minister insisted Thursday there will be no safe place in Iraq for terrorists, hours before a suicide car bombing killed at least 26 people in the Shiite neighborhood of Karradah and two rockets slammed into the heavily fortified Green Zone not far from the U.S. Embassy.

Angry Karradah residents took to the streets chanting "We want the Sunnis out!" after the blast, the second suicide bombing in three days in the neighborhood. The explosion destroyed three minivans, 11 cars and dozens of shops, as well as the local post office, according to a resident.

Seven charred bodies were visible in one

of the vans, including that of a woman who was half out a window in an apparent attempt to escape the inferno. Another woman dressed in black was seen screaming in front of her son's shop, where he was killed. Ambulances raced from the scene, at least one with the back door still open and bodies stacked in the back.

A second huge explosion later rattled the capital, but police said it was a controlled blast to destroy a second car explosive that had been disabled before its suicide bomber could detonate it.

As the rockets fell and bombs exploded across the Tigris River, the public address system inside the Green Zone compound could be heard warning in English that people should take cover because "this is not a drill."

Five people were wounded in the rocket attack, none seriously. Mortar and rocket attacks hit the zone frequently but reported casualties are rare.

The attacks came on a day that police reported 61 killed in sectarian violence nationwide, including the bodies of 22 torture victims dumped in Baghdad, and a parliamentary debate was suspended briefly after arguments broke out between Sunnis and Shiites over security.

Parliament conducted yet another raucous session, this time witnessing a heated exchange between Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki and Sunni legislator and cleric Abdul-Nasser al-Janabi, who accused the Shiite-dominated government of carrying out purges against Sunnis, the minority sect in Iraq.

# Minimum wage amendment fails

## Democrats called proposal poison pill

By JIM KUHNHENN  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

**WASHINGTON**

An effort to increase the minimum wage in all states, even those that already have wage floors higher than the federal base, failed Thursday after Democrats labeled it a "poison pill."

Democrats said the Republican proposal was designed to kill underlying minimum wage legislation.

An amendment offered by Sen. Jim DeMint, R-S.C., was an effort to show how raising the federal minimum wage from \$5.15 to \$7.25 over 26 months would have no effect in eight states because they already have wage floors of \$7.25 or higher. Another two states have scheduled minimum wage increases that also would place them above the proposed federal floor.

Eighteen other states have higher minimum wages than the

current federal floor, but not as high as the \$7.25 in the proposed legislation.

"This is a mandate on low-cost-of-living states, but not on high-cost-of-living states," DeMint said.

The amendment failed on a 78-16 vote after Sen. Edward Kennedy, D-Mass., raised a budget point of order challenging it. Massachusetts is among the states that already have a higher minimum wage and would not be affected by the federal law.

Kennedy called the amendment a ploy "intended to give senators in high minimum wage states an uncomfortable vote today not to raise wages for hard-working Americans."

States that already have higher minimum wages than the federal floor tend to be clustered in the Northeast and the Pacific Coast. States without their own wage floor are in the Midwest and the South.

# Bush seeks \$10.6 billion to rebuild Afghanistan

By ANNE GEARAN  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

**BRUSSELS, Belgium**

President Bush will ask Congress for \$10.6 billion to help

**Afghanistan**

strengthen its security forces and rebuild from years of war, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said Thursday.

The money would be on top of \$14.2 billion in aid the United States has already given to Afghanistan since the U.S.-led invasion in 2001 that toppled the repressive Taliban.

The request, which Bush will make formally next month, comes after a year in which Taliban forces launched surprisingly

fierce attacks across the country. U.S. and NATO forces are bracing for a renewed offensive by Taliban fighters in the spring.

"The challenges of the last several months have demonstrated that we want to and we should redouble our efforts," Rice told reporters flying with her to Brussels for NATO meetings on Afghanistan.

Rice said that of the total, \$8.6 billion would be for training and equipping Afghan police and security forces, and \$2 billion would be for reconstruction. The money would be spent over the next two years.

The aid proposal also comes as the United States appears to be stepping up its military commitment in the country.

The Defense Department has said that 3,200 soldiers from the New York-based 10th Mountain Division already in Afghanistan would have their tour extended by four months.



RICE

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