

## NATION/WORLD DIGEST

### 9 Trapped In Flooded Coal Mine Are Rescued

XIANGNING, China (AP) — Nine miners were pulled to safety early Monday after spending more than a week trapped in a flooded coal mine in northern China, and state television reported more survivors may be found.

The nine men — among 153 trapped since March 28 — were wrapped in blankets, placed in ambulances and rushed to a hospital where teams of doctors and nurses had been standing by for several days.

China Central Television said more people in the Wangjialing mine could still be alive, but did not give any details.

It showed images of the miners being taken into the hospital in Hejin city, about 30 miles (50 kilometers) from the mine. Their eyes were covered to shield them from the bright lights. Some were hooked up to intravenous drips.

The official Xinhua News Agency reported that their blood pressure and heart rates were normal after spending 179 hours trapped underground. It quoted one of the survivors, Li Guoyu, 38, from Henan province in central China, as saying they had gone without water because they were worried about drinking the dirty water flowing in the tunnel.

### Afghan Leader Seeks Support For Offensive

KABUL (AP) — Afghan President Hamid Karzai sought Sunday to rally public support for an upcoming military operation in the Taliban's birthplace, promising that U.S. and NATO troops will push into insurgent areas there only after consultations with community leaders.

His remarks to about 2,000 officials and tribal leaders in Kandahar reflect a NATO strategy that makes bolstering the stature and capabilities of the Afghan government in the city, the largest in southern Afghanistan, as important as clearing neighborhoods of insurgents.

"There will be no military operation without your cooperation and consultation," Karzai told the leaders as the commander of U.S. and NATO forces in Afghanistan, Gen. Stanley McChrystal, and NATO's top civilian representative, Mark Sedwill, looked on.

As Karzai was appealing for public support, NATO confirmed that international troops were responsible for the deaths of five people, including three women, killed Feb. 12 in Gardez south of Kabul. A NATO statement said a joint international-Afghan patrol fired on two men mistakenly believed to be insurgents. The three women were "accidentally killed as a result of the joint force firing at the men," it said.

U.S. and NATO forces are preparing a campaign in Kandahar expected to kick into high gear in June that will test President Barack Obama's gamble that tens of thousands more troops can turn the tide in the 8-year war. NATO hopes to wrap up the operation by Ramadan, the Islamic month of fasting and prayer that begins in early August.

### Kidnapped Linguist Returns Home To Calif.

SAN DIEGO (AP) — A U.S. Army linguist has returned home to his family in San Diego after more than two months in captivity in Baghdad.

California National Guard spokeswoman Maj. Kimberly Holman says 60-year-old Issa Salomi arrived in San Diego Saturday.

Salomi has not made a public appearance since the Pentagon announced his release March 27, but issued a statement saying he was "safe, healthy and unharmed." He said it was one of the most satisfying moments of his life when his plane touched down on U.S. soil in San Antonio on Tuesday.

The family asked for privacy and planned no immediate public appearances or statements.

A Shiite extremist group claimed responsibility for the Jan. 23 kidnapping and posted a video online that showed a man wearing military fatigues, reading a list of demands.

### Senator Says Domestic Terror Is Real Threat

WASHINGTON (AP) — The chairman of the Senate Homeland Security Committee says domestic terrorism is a real and growing danger.

Sen. Joe Lieberman, a Connecticut independent, says the political discourse in the U.S. turns extreme and incendiary at times, and that can lead some people to take radical actions.

Federal authorities report an uptick in the activities of domestic extremist groups in the last year.

Noting the recent bombings in Moscow, Lieberman says more must be done to protect trains, subways and buses in the U.S. Lieberman appeared Sunday on NBC's "Meet the Press."

### No. Calif. Temblor Unrelated To Baja Quake

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — A geophysicist with the U.S. Geological Survey says an earthquake recorded Sunday afternoon in Northern California was not related to a quake that hit south of the U.S.-Mexico border earlier in the day.

The USGS says the Northern California quake, with a magnitude of 4.0, hit about 25 miles north of Santa Rosa at 3:49 p.m.

Geophysicist Rafael Abreu described the Northern California quake as "typical seismic behavior" for the area.

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# Iraq Bombers Target Embassies

BY NED PARKER  
AND USAMA REDHA

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BAGHDAD — At least 41 people were killed and 237 wounded Sunday in three suicide car bombings targeting the Iranian and German embassies and the Egyptian Consulate in a span of 30 minutes.

The attacks, which Iraqi government officials blamed on the Sunni Arab extremist group al-Qaida in Iraq, came less than two days after unknown gunmen in uniforms massacred 25 people in a Sunni district south of Baghdad.

The ongoing carnage raises fears the security situation could unravel before Iraq's next government is formed, as armed groups and political parties look to exploit the uncertain period after last month's national elections. The conditions are reminiscent of early 2006 when al-Qaida in Iraq took advantage of the transition between elected governments to blow up a Shiite holy shrine and ignite a civil war between the country's Shiite majority and its Sunni minority population, which dominated the government of Saddam Hussein before he was toppled in the 2003 U.S.-led invasion.

It also comes as American forces prepare to draw down to 50,000 noncombat troops by the end of August and are less able



LAITH HAMMOUDI/MCT

A wave of suicide bombings struck foreign diplomatic missions in Baghdad, Iraq, on Sunday, killing at least 41 people and wounding 236 others, Iraqi authorities said.

to curb tensions between the sides, because of their diminishing numbers.

Many of those killed Sunday were motorists and pedestrians near the consular buildings in Baghdad's central governmental hub and an embassy row in west Baghdad.

No diplomats were reported wounded or killed.

None of the compounds were breached, but the force of the blast by the Egyptian Consulate tore down a wall. The deadliest attack was at the Iranian Embassy in central Baghdad,

surrounded by key government

institutions, where 23 were killed. Eighteen died in the twin bombings at the German and Egyptian buildings, located about five minutes apart on Emirat Street in Baghdad's Mansour district.

The road opposite the Iranian Embassy, a stately sand-colored building, was strewn with half a dozen incinerated vehicles, like a child's messy train set. Caved-in jeeps and sedans, smeared with blood and tiny bits of flesh, were parked by cement barriers, still plastered with faded posters of politicians from provincial elections a year ago when Iraq's

mood was more optimistic. The packed district, located next to Baghdad's fortified Green Zone, has been hit by suicide bombers at least four times since August.

A man climbed onto the husk of a minibus' upturned blackened chassis and peered inside the remains for a piece of clothing, papers, a trace of blood.

"I am sure of it. I know this is his car," the flushed man screamed, as he looked for survivors. Tired policemen and bystanders pleaded with him to come down, saying maybe it wasn't his brother's. Moments later, after coming down from the wreck, he spotted a blackened clump of muscle near the front windshield.

"A hand," he screamed. "A hand."

A policeman and two bystanders pulled him away. "No one was killed in the minibus. It was empty," the policeman insisted. The man looked the officer in the eyes, but continued to cry: "You are lying to me."

The attack on the Egyptian Consulate left three Egyptian officials lightly wounded. An Iraqi policeman charged with security for the embassies of Germany, Syria, Morocco and Tunisia was killed, along with two other policemen, according to Foreign Ministry officials.

At the German Embassy, a guard was killed, and nearby three doctors at a clinic were wounded.

## UN's Ban Calls Aral Sea 'Shocking Disaster'

NUKUS, Uzbekistan (AP) — The drying up of the Aral Sea is one of the planet's most shocking environmental disasters, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said Sunday as he urged Central Asian leaders to step up efforts to solve the problem.

Once the world's fourth-largest lake, the sea has shrunk by 90 percent since the rivers that feed it were largely diverted in a Soviet project to boost cotton production in the arid region.

The shrunken sea has ruined the once-robust fishing economy and left fishing trawlers stranded in sandy wastelands, leaning over as if they dropped from the air. The sea's evaporation has left layers of highly salted sand, which winds can carry as far away as Scandinavia and Japan, and which plague local people with health troubles.

Ban toured the sea by helicop-

ter as part of a visit to the five countries of former Soviet Central Asia. His trip included a touchdown in Muynak, Uzbekistan, a town once on the shore where a pier stretches eerily over gray desert and camels stand near the hulks of stranded ships.

"On the pier, I wasn't seeing anything, I could see only a graveyard of ships," Ban told reporters after arriving in Nukus, the nearest sizable city and capital of the autonomous Karakalpak region.

"It is clearly one of the worst disasters, environmental disasters of the world. I was so shocked," he said.

The Aral Sea catastrophe is one of Ban's top concerns on his six-day trip through the region and he is calling on the countries' leaders to set aside rivalries to cooperate on repairing some of the damage.

"I urge all the leaders ... to sit

down together and try to find the solutions," he said, promising United Nations support.

However, cooperation is hampered by disagreements over who has rights to scarce water and how it should be used.

In a presentation to Ban before his flyover, Uzbek officials complained that dam projects in Tajikistan will severely reduce the amount of water flowing into Uzbekistan. Impoverished Tajikistan sees the hydroelectric projects as potential key revenue earners.

Competition for water could become increasingly heated as global warming and rising populations further reduce the amount of water available per capita.

Water problems also could brew further dissatisfaction among civilians already troubled by poverty and repressive governments; some observers fear

that could feed growing Islamist sentiment in the region.

Ban also is taking on the region's frequently poor human rights conditions.

That is likely to be an especially tense issue when he meets Monday with Uzbek President Islam Karimov, who has led the country since the 1991 Soviet collapse and imposed severe pressure on opposition and civil rights activists.

The meeting comes less than two weeks after the U.N. Human Rights Committee issued a report criticizing Uzbekistan, including calling for fuller investigation of the brutal suppression of a 2005 uprising in the city of Andijan. Opposition and rights groups claim that hundreds were killed, but authorities insist the reports are exaggerated and angrily reject any criticism.

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