

## T UN...

(Contd. from p. 1)

Danish Prime Minister Lars Lokke Rasmussen said 110 world leaders, including U.S. President Barack Obama, were signed up to attend a summit at the end of the December 7-18 meeting.

"A deal is within our reach," Rasmussen said. But the talks will have to overcome deep distrust between rich and poor nations on sharing out the burden of curbing emissions, mainly from burning fossil fuels.

The presence of so many world leaders meant "an opportunity the world cannot afford to miss," he said of the talks, aimed at agreeing a pact to replace the existing UN Kyoto Protocol that runs to 2012.

"The clock has ticked down to zero. After two years of negotiations the time has come to deliver," said Yvo de Boer, the head of the UN Climate Change Secretariat.

Rajendra Pachauri, the head of the UN panel of climate scientists, said action was needed to avoid more intense cyclones, heatwaves, floods, and possible loss of the Greenland ice sheet, which could mean a sea level rise of 7 meters over centuries.

He said that even a widely accepted goal of limiting global warming to a maximum of 2 degrees Celsius over pre-industrial times could still bring an increase in sea levels that "could submerge several small island states and Bangladesh."

"The evidence is now overwhelming that the world would benefit greatly from early action, and that delay would only lead to costs in economic and human terms that would become progressively high," he said.

### Emails

He also defended the findings by his panel after leaked emails from a British university last month led skeptics to say that researchers had conspired to exaggerate the evidence.

He said there were rigorous checks on all research.

"The internal consistency from multiple lines of evidence strongly supports the work of the scientific community, including those individuals singled out in these email exchanges," he said.

Developing nations urged the rich to lead. Papua New Guinea delegate Kevin Conrad said that some small island states "may soon disappear for ever" without action. African nations said they faced worsening risks of desertification or floods.

Outside the conference center, delegates walked past a slowly melting ice sculpture of a mermaid, modeled on the Danish fairy tale of "The Little Mermaid", as a call for action.

Other activists asked delegates arriving at the conference center, with a large wind turbine nearby, to go through a green gateway marked "Vote Earth" or a red one marked "Global Warming". They told off anyone choosing red.

The attendance of the leaders and pledges to curb emissions by all the top emitters -- led by China, the United States, Russia and India -- have raised hopes for an accord after sluggish progress in negotiations over the past two years.

South Africa added new impetus, saying on Sunday it would cut its carbon emissions to 34 percent below expected levels by 2020, if rich countries gave financial and technological help.

World leaders did not attend when environment ministers agreed the Kyoto Protocol in 1997.

British Prime Minister Gordon Brown, writing in the Guardian newspaper on Monday, said: "The British government is absolutely clear about what we must achieve. Our aim is a comprehensive and global agreement that is then converted to an internationally legally binding treaty in no more than six months."

He added: "If by the end of next week we have not got an ambitious

agreement, it will be an indictment of our generation that our children will not forgive."

Some 56 newspapers from 45 countries including The Guardian, Le Monde, El Pais and Toronto Star on Monday published a joint editorial urging world leaders to take decisive action.

"Humanity faces a profound emergency. Unless we combine to take decisive action, climate change will ravage our planet," it said.

## T (Contd. from p. 3)

### Brazil ...

#### Far out and deep down

The entire pre-salt region is laced with "elephant fields," pools holding at least a billion barrels of oil each. Tupi, which in 2006 was the first field found, holds up to 8 billion barrels.

Despite the optimism that Petrobras officials display for visitors, they reel off the challenges: shifting salt, 6,500 feet of it, and working fields so far from the coast that they cannot be reached by helicopter.

Much of the new infrastructure needed to develop the pre-salt is being built here at Angra, and at other shipyards dotting the coast. On a recent day, decked out in a bright-orange jumpsuit and helmet, Roberto Moro, a mechanical engineer, strolled amid giant pontoons weighing 6,000 tons each. He explained how they would be latched together, then topped with a 14,000-ton deck the size of a football field.

The final product, a platform called P-56, will cost \$1 billion, he said. And Petrobras will need a fleet of them.

"Each platform we are building here, like P-56, represents 10 percent of national oil production," Moro, 46, explained. That is the equivalent of 180,000 barrels.

(Source: The Washington Post)

## Turkey says no more troops for Afghanistan

**ISTANBUL (Reuters)** — Turkish Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan, who met U.S. President Barack Obama on Monday in the White House, said Turkey would not contribute additional troops to Afghanistan.

The United States wants Turkey to increase its aid to Afghanistan, according to Secretary of State Hillary Clinton.

Erdogan's trip comes at a time when Turkey's deepening ties with fellow Muslim countries has fed perceptions that the NATO member is turning away from its traditional western allies.

Obama last week announced he was sending 30,000 more U.S. soldiers to Afghanistan, and Washington wants others to follow suit. "Turkey has already done what it can do by boosting its contingent of soldiers there to 1,750 from around 700 without being asked," said Erdogan before his departure in Istanbul.

Turkey's soldiers are not engaged in combat operations and Ankara has long resisted pressure from Washington to offer more combat troops.

Erdogan said Turkey would continue its training of Afghan security forces.

The prime minister also said he would discuss other regional issues such as Iraq and the Middle East with the U.S. president.

Last month, Erdogan visited Tehran to sign gas and trade deals and hosted Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad at a summit of Islamic countries in Istanbul. Turkey has also boosted ties with Syria with plans for joint military exercises.

## Pakistan court hears amnesty case, bombs kill 10

**ISLAMABAD (Reuters)** — Pakistan's Supreme Court began hearing petitions Monday against an expired amnesty that had protected President Asif Ali Zardari and key allies from graft charges, a case that could lead to legal challenges to the U.S.-backed leader's rule.

Meanwhile, an attack by a suicide bomber killed nine people outside a court in Peshawar and another blast was reported in Lahore.

Doubts are growing that President Asif Ali Zardari can survive politically in the long term, let alone lead the charge against Islamist fighters who have shown they can penetrate security near the headquarters of the all-powerful military.

Some of Zardari's closest aides may face revived corruption charges depending on the ruling of the Supreme Court, which took up legal challenges to an amnesty order granted to about 8,000 people, including the interior and defense ministers.

The politically charged issue could distract the government from a crackdown on the Pakistani Taliban.

Northwestern Peshawar has suffered the most from retaliatory bombings that have killed hundreds of people since October, when the army launched a major offensive in South Waziristan, part of a region seen as a global militant hub.

Another suicide bomber struck the key city on Monday.

"The bomber got down off an auto-rickshaw and rushed toward the gates of the court. He detonated the explosives strapped to his body when our men pointed their rifles to stop him from getting into the court," said Peshawar police chief Liaquat Ali.

Rescuers collected body parts after the blast, while six cars were engulfed in flames outside the courthouse.

Later, a blast in the eastern city of Lahore, near the border with India, killed at least one person, according to a Reuters photographer at the scene. Several people were wounded, rescue workers said, and a number of shops were set ablaze.

Pakistan's military, once a staunch supporter of Afghan militants in their fight against Soviet occupation in the 1980s, now faces brazen Taliban insurgents on its own soil.

Pakistan's priority is defeating the Taliban at home, but the task has been complicated by U.S. pressure to root out fighters who cross the border to Afghanistan to attack U.S. troops.

President Barack Obama sent a clear message to Pakistan last week in his speech outlining plans to send 30,000 more U.S. troops to Afghanistan. Pakistan, he said, must not allow its territory to be used as a sanctuary for militants.

But Pakistan's military, which sets national security policy and has great influence on decisions on Afghanistan, cannot afford to let its guard down in the fight against the Pakistani Taliban.

Last week suicide bombers and gunmen climbed over a wall and attacked a mosque near the military headquarters in the city of Rawalpindi. More than 40 people were killed.

Pakistan has little time to count its losses. Fresh questions are swirling over the whereabouts of Osama bin Laden and Western powers believe Islamabad is in the best position to answer them.

Interior Minister Rehman Malik said on Monday the al Qaeda leader was not in Pakistan. Experts have long believed he is hiding in the lawless frontier between Pakistan and Afghanistan.

## Students Day observed in Iran



(Contd. from p. 1)

This year, due to the post-election incidents, the Students Day ceremony was different from previous years. A number of student gatherings turned violent, and at certain points, police forces became involved.

Students gathered in groups of three to four near the University of

Tehran and Khajenasir and Amirakbar universities, where police forces had been deployed.

There were also clashes between supporters of defeated presidential candidate Mir-Hossein Mousavi and supporters of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

The Fars News Agency reported that the supporters

of Mousavi attacked a number of students at the University of Tehran. Mousavi's supporters then headed for the Pharmacy Faculty inside the university, chanting anti-administration slogans.

The student supporters of the president ended their demonstration with a visit to the graves of the three University of Tehran students martyred in 1953.

Mousavi's supporters ended their demonstrations with a gathering in front of the University of Tehran Science Faculty.

The Tabnak news website reported that there were disturbances in different areas in Tehran and the police used tear gas and fired warning shots into the air to disperse the crowds on Enqelab St. in downtown Tehran. Protesters confronted plain-clothes security forces at some points, Tabnak added.

Students from the Sharif Institute of Technology released green kites into the air to show their support for Mousavi, Khabar Online reported.

## India and Russia sign nuclear agreement

**MOSCOW (BBC)** — Russia and India have signed an agreement to increase their civilian nuclear energy co-operation.

The announcement came after talks between Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Russian President Dmitry Medvedev in Moscow.

Russia will build a number of nuclear reactors in energy-hungry India as well as increase atomic fuel exports to it.

Russian reports suggested progress had also been made on India's purchase of a refurbished former aircraft carrier.

The sale of the Soviet-era Admiral Gorshkov was agreed years ago but delivery has been long delayed.

Kremlin sources gave no timing for when the vessel might be handed over to India's military.

'Great potential'

Mr. Singh called the nuclear deal "a major step forward".

"Today we have signed an agreement which broadens the reach of our co-operation beyond the supply of nuclear reactors to areas of research and development and a whole range of areas of nuclear energy," Mr. Singh told a Kremlin news conference.

Mr. Medvedev spoke of "great potential" in the two countries' relations.

The head of Russia's state nuclear agency Rosatom, Sergei Kiriyenko, estimated the value of the deal at



Russia's President Dmitry Medvedev (R) and India's Prime Minister Manmohan Singh (2nd L) applaud while their subordinates exchange documents during their talks in Moscow's Kremlin, December 7, 2009. (Reuters photo)

"several dozens of billion of dollars".

He said the agreement could involve Russia building more than 12 nuclear reactors in India. Mr. Singh put the number at four.

Russia is among a number of countries seeking to expand their activities in India following its landmark nuclear deal with the U.S. in 2005.

That accord ended India's nuclear isolation after it tested an atom bomb in 1974.

Mr. Singh was due to meet Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin later on Monday.

## Boy who survived Halabja gas attack is reunited with mother

**HALABJA, Iraq (AP)** — Six families nervously awaited the DNA tests on the young man who returned from Iran. They wondered: Could this be their son who was just an infant in 1988 and somehow lived through a deadly chemical attack by Saddam Hussein's regime?

There was absolute silence as the judge announced the lab results. The man, who called himself Ali, was deemed to be the sole surviving child of 58-year-old Fatima Mohammed Salih, who had lost her husband and all her other six children in the poison gas clouds that covered the mostly Kurdish city of Halabja.

For the first time in more than two decades, they embraced.

"I'm in a dream," said 21-year-old Ali Pour as he comforted the weeping woman.

The reunion Friday in Iraq's northern Kurdish region was the rarest of artifacts from Halabja: a moment of joy from the day the city became an open cemetery for an estimated 5,600 people killed when lethal gas was dropped by Saddam's military.

It was part of Saddam's brutal 1987-88 campaign to crush a Kurdish rebellion. Nearly 200,000 people died in Baghdad's scorched-earth offensive.

The alleged mastermind of the Halabja attack, Saddam's cousin known as "Chemical Ali" Hassan al-Majid, is among regime officials who have been sentenced to death for the Kurdish crackdown and other crimes. The trial specifically on Halabja is still under way.

"I wonder if it is a dream or a gift from God," said his newfound mother.

She repeated her son's birth name: Zimnaku Mohammed Saleh.

She then recalled the day Halabja was attacked. The family was at home. There was utter panic. They first ran into the streets and then went back inside.

"We didn't know where to go," she said. "Zimnaku, the 4-month-old, was on my lap and suddenly my older son screamed saying, 'Mother, I feel like I'm burning.' I tried to help him and my other sons, too. But it was in vain. I saw them dying in front of me. I collapsed and the next thing I remember is lying in a hospital bed in Tehran."

As Ali Pour learned the fate of his Kurdish family, his own story was told through translators. Pour speaks only Farsi and knows only life in eastern Iran — far from the Kurdish region that straddles Iraq, Iran and Turkey.



In this photo taken Friday Dec. 4, 2009, Ali 21, right, embraces his mother Fatima Mohammed Salih 58, right, for the first time in more than two decades in Halabja, Iraq. (AP/Yahya Ahmed)

"The baby Ali survived for three days," said his adoptive uncle, Habib Hamid Pour.

He was found by the Iranian military, which had moved into Halabja after the gas attack. It was the closing months of a horrific war between the two countries that began in 1980 and many of the Halabja survivors were taken to Tehran.

The infant boy was brought to a hospital with plans to send him eventually to an orphanage, said the uncle. But his sister, Kubra Pour, offered to care for the boy along with her two children in the Iranian city of Mashhad.

"My adopted mother was nice," said Pour, who was dressed in traditional Kurdish clothing of baggy pants, tunic and scarf tucked into his belt. "When I entered primary school at age 6, she told me I am from the Kurdish people from Halabja. She said I should return someday to meet my relatives."

Four months ago, his adopted mother was killed in a car accident, Pour said.

"I felt lonely and I felt a strange feeling calling me to return to the arms of my relatives," he said. "I decided to go back."

He contacted Iranian officials who kept records on the Halabja survivors brought to Iran. They contacted Halabja officials, who answered that six families said they were missing a boy who would now be Pour's age. A judge asked for DNA tests from a medical lab in Jordan.