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DEFENDING CHAMPION SAINA NEHWAL BOOKS FINAL BERTH IN CHINA OPEN ›ht sport p24

DOPE-TAINTED RUSSIAN ATHLETES BANNED, MAY MISS OUT ON RIO 2016 ›ht sport p22

MODI WRAPS UP UK VISIT OFF TO TURKEY FOR G20 MEET ›ht nation p15

FRANCE SAVAGED, WORLD SHOCKED

PARIS ATTACKED 127 slaughtered in six coordinated attacks across French capital, Islamic State says more coming

Agencies
letters@hindustantimes.com

PARIS: French President Francois Hollande vowed on Saturday to launch a "pitiless" attack on the Islamic State after the jihadist group orchestrated a coordinated assault by gunmen and bombers that killed at least 127 people across locations in Paris.

Hollande called Friday night's shootings at Paris cafes, suicide bombings near France's national stadium and a hostage-taking slaughter inside a concert hall — all in under an hour — "an act of war that was prepared, organised, planned from abroad with internal help".

"Faced with war, the country must take appropriate action. All measures to protect our compatriots and our territory are being taken within the framework of the state of emergency," he said after the deadliest attacks to hit his nation since World War II.

France has been on edge since January, when Islamic extremists attacked the satirical newspaper Charlie Hebdo, which had run cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad, and a kosher grocery. Twenty people died in those attacks, including three shooters.

Experts said the brazen strikes — that also injured more than 200 people — were a copycat of the 26/11 Mumbai terror attacks with militants choosing crowded locations in Paris and food joints.

"The militants opened fired at a Paris restaurant like at Mumbai's Leopold café. Similarly, crowded areas like Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus (CST) were targeted as the attackers hit a packed stadium and a rock concert in Paris," said V Balachandran, former special secretary and a member of a commission that probed the 26/11 violence.

In a statement, the Islamic State admitted responsibility and said eight fighters "wrapped in explosive belts and armed with rifles" carried out synchronised attacks. All were killed.

It said the assaults were designed to show France would remain a top target as long as it continued playing a role in bombing IS targets in Syria and Iraq.

The cold-blooded massacre was part of what terror experts call a "high impact, low cost" attack that is difficult to apprehend due to the use of simple weapons and minimum logistical backup.

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■ Parisians mourn the victims of the deadly terrorist strikes with flowers, candles and prayers at street-side memorials a day later on Saturday. France has declared three days of national mourning. REUTERS PHOTO

› Once again we've seen an outrageous attempt to terrorise innocent civilians... Those who think that they can terrorise the people of France... are wrong.

BARACK OBAMA, US President

› Strongly condemn terrorist attacks in Paris, India stands firmly by France, my heart goes out its people.

PRANAB MUKHERJEE, President, on Twitter

■ A grab from a purported Islamic State video where its fighters can be seen exhorting Muslims to attack France.

'To teach France, and those following its path'

Reuters
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CAIRO: Islamic State group claimed responsibility on Saturday for attacks that killed at least 127 people in Paris, saying it sent militants strapped with suicide bombing belts and carrying machine guns to various locations in the heart of the French capital.

The attacks, described by French President Francois Hollande as an act of war, were designed to show the country would remain in danger as long as it continued its current policies, the militant group said in a statement. France is a founder member of the US-led coalition waging air strikes against the Islamic State in Syria and Iraq.

"To teach France, and all nations following its path, that they will remain at the top of Islamic State's list of targets, and that the smell of death won't leave their noses as long as they partake in their crusader campaign," said the group.

Earlier on Saturday, it redistributed a video that first appeared on the internet a year ago, threatening to attack France if bombings of its fighters continued. The group's foreign media arm, Al-Hayat Media Centre, made threats through several militants who called on French Muslims to carry out attacks.

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Carnage: 'There were bodies everywhere'

Agencies
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PARIS: The assailants' weapons were those of war: automatic rifles and suicide belts of explosives. The killing was indiscriminate, spread across a swathe of the city, in at least six different sites.

An ordinary Friday night in Paris transformed into a bloodbath. The word Parisians used over and over as they tried to make sense of the horror was "carnage."

At the packed Bataclan concert hall in eastern Paris, the attackers opened fire on a crowd waiting to hear American rock band Eagles of Death Metal perform. One witness told France Info radio he heard them yell "Allahu Akbar" — God is great in Arabic — as they started their killing spree and took hostages.

Julien Pearce, a journalist from Europe 1 radio, was inside the concert hall when the shooting began. In an eyewitness report posted on the station's website, Pearce said several very young individuals, who were not wearing masks, entered the hall during the concert, armed with Kalashnikov assault rifles and started "blindly shooting at the crowd".

"There were bodies everywhere," he said.

YOUNG, UNMASKED MEN BLINDLY SHOT CONCERT-GOERS AT THE BATACLAN UNTIL THERE WERE BODIES EVERYWHERE, RECALL WITNESSES

The gunmen shot their victims in the back, finishing some off at point-blank range before reloading their guns and firing again, Pearce said, after escaping into the street by a stage door, carrying a wounded girl on his shoulder.

Toon, a 22-year-old messenger who lives near the Bataclan, was going into the concert hall with two friends when he saw three young men dressed in black and armed with machine guns. He stayed outside.

One of the gunmen began firing into the crowd. Toon said he saw people shot in the leg, shoulder and back, with several lying on the floor, apparently dead.

About 1.5km from there, attackers sprayed gunfire at the Belle Equipe bar, busy as ever on a Friday night with patrons unwinding from their week.

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New Delhi seeks help to count Indians in IS

Shishir Gupta
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NEW DELHI: Security agencies have asked their US, European and West Asian counterparts with technical or human surveillance in Islamic State-held territory in Iraq and Syria to help estimate the number of Indians fighting for the so-called caliphate of Abu Bakr Al Baghdadi. As of now, a total of 23 Indians, mostly from the southern states, are fighting for IS, which has claimed responsibility for the Paris attacks.

While the home ministry's multi-agency centre (MAC) issued terror alerts to all states, missions and consulates as soon as the attacks began in Paris, New Delhi is worried about the similarity between the 14/11 and 26/11 Mumbai attacks with indiscriminate targeting of innocent civilians. Another reason for Indian concern is that terror organisation Ansar-ul-Tawhid, a splinter group of the Indian Mujahideen led by one Yusuf Al Hindi, Sultan and Shafi Armar from Bhatkal in Karnataka, are operating with the IS in Syria and Iraq.

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HTSPOTLIGHT P8, P9

Poland shuts its doors to refugees

Poland says it needs to retain complete control of its borders, will stop taking in refugees. Other countries may follow suit as the attacks in Paris threaten to seriously undermine hotly contested EU refugee policy

Attacks follow 26/11 pattern

Like Mumbai in 2008, Paris on Saturday faced a "high impact, low cost" terror attack where terrorists go for cold-blooded massacre of civilian targets, not a skyscraper or an airplane

Climate talks on for now

French authorities rule out cancellation of a crucial climate summit to be attended by world leaders in Paris on November 30, but suspend plans for a live 24-hour webcast

BCCI has called us to play, but only in India: Pak cricket chief

Agencies and HTC
letters@hindustantimes.com

KARACHI / NEW DELHI: The Pakistan Cricket Board on Saturday claimed the BCCI had invited its team to play its 'home' series in India next month, but the Indian side denied a formal proposal had been made.

"(BCCI chief) Shashank Manohar called me on Friday evening and told me they have got clearance from their government to play against us. But he said they wanted the series in India and not the UAE," PCB chairman Shahryar Khan told the media in Lahore.

Manohar, however, told HT he had spoken to Khan on various issues but that nothing was discussed officially. He also denied the BCCI had written to the government seeking clearance for the series. "We have not yet approached the government. Yes, I have talked to him (Khan) over phone and we may talk again in the next couple of days," the PTI quoted him as saying.

"Spoke to Shahryar Khan yesterday, asked him what he thinks about the option to play the series in India," CNN-IBN quoted the BCCI boss as saying.

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PROTEAS SPIN-DRIED ON DAY 1

■ R Ashwin (second from right) celebrates the dismissal of South Africa's Faf du Plessis with teammates. AJAY AGGARWAL / HT

214 Proteas all out on Day 1 of second Test in Bengaluru

8 wickets Shared equally by R Ashwin and Ravindra Jadeja

80/0 India at stumps with Dhawan & Vijay not out on 45 and 28

» DE VILLIERS THE LONE SPARK FOR SA, P20

'Delhi almost certain to lose 4th Test'

The fourth Test between India and South Africa is "99% going out of Delhi", a top BCCI official said on Saturday, in the wake of the Delhi government's probe into irregularities in the state association. »P20

'Development' used to mask communal agenda, says Sonia

HT Correspondent
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NEW DELHI: Congress president Sonia Gandhi on Saturday stepped up her attack on Prime Minister Narendra Modi, saying the government was using the "mask" of development to "whitewash communal agenda", and accused the ruling coalition of tyranny for allegedly muzzling dissent.

Addressing a function to mark the culmination of year-long celebrations of Jawarharlal Nehru's 125th birth anniversary, Sonia didn't name the RSS but questioned the role BJP's ideological mentor played in the freedom struggle.

"When leaders like Nehruji were fighting for our freedom, the ideological masters of today's ruling establishment were hiding safely in their homes while some were even singing praises of their British masters," she said to loud cheers at the jam-packed Indira Gandhi Indoor Stadium.

"Not one protest march did they take out, not one resolution did they pass, not once did they raise their voices in protest."

› Seeing the atmosphere of intolerance, we are reminded of Nehruji's days when any citizen could speak his mind, his 'mann ki baat' – a phrase that's today been reduced to the name of a radio broadcast.

SONIA GANDHI, Congress chief

The Congress attack came on a day Modi lauded Nehru for his contribution in the freedom struggle. "Pandit Nehru's life was spent in giving India freedom and leading India as the first PM. Tributes to him on his birth anniversary," he tweeted.

The Congress has received a shot in the arm with a snowballing protest against growing intolerance and the BJP's rout in Bihar at the hands of an alliance stitched together by party vice-president Rahul Gandhi.

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shortstories

HTNATION

Global oil prices fall but Indians may not benefit

NEW DELHI: Global crude prices have come down to $40 a barrel but oil marketing companies in India may hold on to their margins and not immediately pass the benefit to consumers, said analysts. Diesel prices may, in fact, go up slightly on Sunday, they added. Petrol prices, however, are likely to remain unchanged for the fortnight. »P18

HTNATION

Govt may put income cap on LPG subsidy

HYDERABAD: The government is planning to lift the subsidy on LPG cylinders for consumers earning more than ₹10 lakh per annum, Union minister Venkaiah Naidu said on Saturday. "Why do they need subsidy? Why do ministers need subsidy?" he asked. »P18

HTMETRO

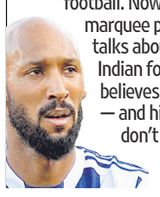
Revisiting Delhi's 'first and oldest' bookstore

NEW DELHI: JM Jaina and Brothers opened 87 years ago and went on to count Jawaharlal Nehru and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel among its patrons. The More Gate bookstore has so far held its own in the age of e-books but may soon be forced to shut shop as one has to navigate through a sea of traffic and crumbling buildings to reach it. »P4

HTSPORTSMAX

I'm not in the game for too long, says Anelka

NEW DELHI: Nicolas Anelka has played with some of the best talent in French football. Now as Mumbai City's marquee player-manager, he talks about the future of Indian football — which he believes "will get better" — and his own plans, which don't include being a full-time coach, he says. » P21



HTNATION

Nitish stakes claim, to take oath on Nov 20

PATNA: Chief minister-designate Nitish Kumar on Saturday staked claim to form the next government in Bihar as he met governor Ram Nath Kovind with a list of 178 MLAs of the grand alliance comprising the JD(U), RJD and Congress. He was earlier unanimously elected leader of the JD(U)'s legislature party. Kumar said his new cabinet would be sworn in on November 20. » P17