



Terrorist bombs kill more than 190 in Spain



JON SANTA CRUZ • KRT CAMPUS

By Mar Roman
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

MADRID, Spain — A series of bombs hidden in backpacks exploded in quick succession Thursday, blowing apart four commuter trains and killing at least 192 people and wounding more than 1,400. Spain at first blamed Basque separatists but a shadowy group claimed responsibility in the name of al-Qaida for the worst terrorist attack in Spanish history.

Panicked rush-hour commuters trampled on each other, abandoning their bags and shoes, after the first three bombs went off in one train in the Atocha station in the heart of Madrid. Train cars were turned into twisted wrecks and platforms were strewn with corpses. Cell phones rang unanswered on the bodies of the dead as frantic relatives tried to call them.

"March 11, 2004, now holds its place in the history of infamy," Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar said.

The bombing came three days ahead of Spain's general election on Sunday. A major campaign issue was how to deal with ETA, the Basque militant group that is seeking greater autonomy.

Campaigning for the election was called off and three days of

mourning were declared.

The bombings occurred exactly 2 1/2 years after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks in the United States, and was Europe's worst since the 1988 bombing of a Pan Am jetliner over Lockerbie, Scotland, that killed 270 people.

The attacks also reawakened terrorism fears among investors. Stocks fell in London and in New York, where the Dow Jones industrial average dropped nearly 170 points. On Friday, Tokyo stocks opened sharply lower.

The 10 backpack bombs exploded in a 15-minute span, starting about 7:39 a.m., on trains along nine miles of commuter line from Santa Eugenia to the Atocha terminal, a bustling hub for subway, commuter and long-distance trains just south of the famed Prado Museum. Police also found and detonated three other bombs.

The Interior Ministry said 192 people were killed and 1,421 injured.

"An act of barbaric terrorism has engulfed Spain with profound pain, repulsion and anger," King Juan Carlos said on national television.

Worst hit was a double-decker train at El Pozo station, where two bombs killed 70 people, fire department inspector Juan Redondo said. One corpse was

blown onto the roof.

At the Santa Eugenia station, "there was one carriage totally blown apart. People were scattered all over the platforms. I saw legs and arms. I won't forget this ever. I've seen horror," said Enrique Sanchez, an ambulance worker.

Forty coroners worked to identify remains, the national news agency Efe said, and a steady stream of taxis carried relatives to a sprawling convention center that was turned into a makeshift morgue.

Three days of national mourning were declared and thousands of people took part in spontaneous anti-terror rallies across the country Thursday. The government called for nationwide anti-ETA demonstrations on Friday evening, and millions were expected.

Who carried out the highly coordinated attack was a mystery. The government put the Basque separatist group ETA at the top of its list of suspects, although a shadowy group claimed responsibility in the name of al-Qaida.

The Arabic newspaper Al-Quds al-Arabi said it had received a claim of responsibility issued in the name of al-Qaida. The e-mail claim, signed

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CSPD urges students to remain safe over the break

By Michael Player
THE BATTALION

Authorities are urging students to use more caution when leaving town for spring break, as well as when leaving their residence halls and off-campus residences, despite the fact that the number of break-ins and burglaries tend to go down during the vacation.

"People should take with them all things that are extremely valuable from their dorm rooms," said Sgt. Alan Baron of University Police Department. "Thieves are going to pick on the easiest targets they can."

UPD said valuables commonly targeted for theft include laptop computers. "We have had several laptops stolen this year," Baron said. "Things like laptops are easily removed by thieves and they are very hard to recover."

Baron said he recommends that students living off-campus either secure or remove their valuables from their residences while closing blinds and leaving indoor and outdoor lights on to create the illusion of occupancy. Communicating with neighbors on issues such as lights and picking up newspapers is important, he said.

"We really do not have more burglaries during spring break, and vehicle burglaries actually go down," Baron said.

Students that live on campus have been instructed by the Office of the Vice President for Administration to help conserve energy by turning off all non-essential electrical equipment, as asked (requested) by the Energy Conservation Committee.

Ron Sasse, director of A&M's

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SPRING BREAK SAFETY

To avoid theft, precautions should be taken for both on- and off-campus residents.

- Secure and/or remove all valuables
- Close shades and blinds
- Use timers for lights
- Have your newspapers picked up by neighbors
- Make sure exterior lights are working and on

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SOURCE : SGT. ALAN BARON, UPD

'Passion' drives panel discussion

By Pammy Ramji
THE BATTALION

Students lined up outside Cinemark Thursday evening for a free screening of the movie "The Passion of the Christ" and to listen to a panel discussion featuring local religious leaders and educators. The MSC Film Society, MSC Current Issues Awareness and L.T. Jordan, an on-campus international awareness group held a panel discussion of the movie "The Passion of the Christ."

"I think this discussion is very important," said Rabbi Peter Tarlow, of Texas A&M Hillel Foundation. "We are thankful that we can be here to have this kind of discussion."

In addition to Tarlow, the panel included The Rev. Dean E. Wilhelm, pastor at St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church in College Station, and D.G. Myers, an associate professor of English and religious studies at Texas A&M that teaches a wide range of courses, including Bible as literature, and primarily writes on Jewish subjects.

Tarlow said he is worried that people uneducated in

Christianity who watch this film will interpret the film as "the death of Jesus Christ."

"Any film can lead to hatred or someone denying another of his or her humanity," Tarlow said.

Tarlow said he believes that the idea for "The Passion" was taken from graphic and bloody "passion plays" that were shown in the Middle Ages.

"This film will inspire you to become a better Christian," Myers said. "The Church in Rome has given up prayers for Jew conversion. Jews are being killed not by Christians, but by (people like) the people who were involved with the bombing in Spain."

Wilhelm said he believes that "The Passion" was an "act of faith" for Mel Gibson.

"I am looking at this through the eyes of a Catholic," Wilhelm said. "This film reflected on people's realization of what Christ did for our sins. This was an act of passion that Gibson brought to this world."

Wilhelm said he believes that ignorance is dangerous and that the greatest harm is judgements made through ignorance. "We live in a dangerous world," Tarlow said.

"Any film can lead to hatred or someone denying another of his or her humanity."

— Rabbi Peter Tarlow
Texas A&M Hillel Foundation

Child relief group to host fund-raiser

By Nishat Fatima
THE BATTALION

The Texas A&M Chapter of Child Relief and You (CRY TAMU) will be hosting a fund-raising dance Friday at 7 p.m. in the Memorial Student Center, room 224.

The event, titled "Spring Dance Blast," will feature Indian Bhangra and hip-hop music from Houston-based disc jockey Josan, also known as DJ Impact, and will aim to raise funds for CRY, a non-profit organization that focuses on aiding impoverished children around the world. Jayant Anand, a member of CRY TAMU, said the purpose of the event is

to raise money for children in different regions of the world such as India, Ireland and Kuwait.

Anand said the decision to have a dance as a fund-raiser came from the organization's desire to attract more students and therefore spread more awareness about the need for assistance programs for underprivileged children.

"Since this is a college community, we wanted to do an event that would get a lot of the students involved," Anand said. "We think it is important for the community to find out about the need for child relief and the resources available to them if they want to help."

Josan, who has been a DJ since he was

16, said the music from the province of Punjab, known as Bhangra music, has gained popularity among mainstream music listeners due to artists such as Madonna, Jay-Z and Britney Spears sampling it in their music.

"People from all crowds love Bhangra music," Josan said.

Josan said Bhangra music was ideal for the event because of its ability to attract crowds and expose them to aspects of another culture.

Josan said aside from raising money for CRY, he hopes the event will bring the

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A&M ranked among top 25 colleges for Latinos

By Joaquin Salcedo
THE BATTALION

Hispanic Magazine has ranked Texas A&M as one of the top 25 colleges for Latinos in 2004, highlighting academic excellence and Hispanic achievement as dominant characteristics among the schools included on the list.

A&M was recognized in this category last year as well; however, its position in the lineup has notably improved. A&M has progressed from an almost unranked 23rd in 2003 to a middle-ground 13.

Director of Hispanic studies Manuel M. Rodriguez said he is happy that A&M has been recognized in the top 25 list.

"Interested students and faculty will know that the University is working toward a more inclusive environment, and that its efforts are beginning to pay off," Rodriguez said. "A&M's reputation among Hispanic students and faculty nationwide will be bolstered."

Hispanic Magazine reviewed many sources in developing the basis for its selections. Information from the surveyed universities and Hispanic scholarship organizations were taken into account.

The magazine required schools on the list to have at least an 8 percent Hispanic enrollment, but this was not the sole condition for the ranking. Texas A&M's enrollment is 9 percent.

Other considerations taken into account in composing this list were the academic reputation the schools uphold and "whether or not they (Hispanic students) actually earn degrees from the universities they attend," according to Hispanic Magazine.

Managing editor Joe Vidueira said that this list is published in the March edition of Hispanic Magazine every year.

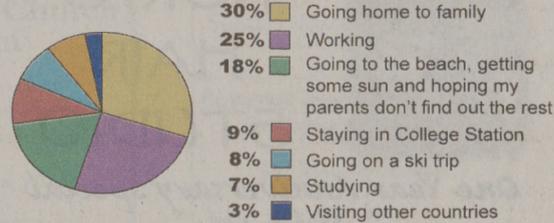
"(The list is arranged) from the best university for Latinos, No.1 to the 25th best," Vidueira said.

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THE BATTALION Online Weekly Poll

This Week's Results:

"What are you doing for spring break?"



Next Week's Poll:

"If the presidential elections were held today, whom would you vote for?"

Take this poll at: www.thebatt.com

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