FRIDAY, MARCH 12, 2004 50 cents A Media General Newspaper

# 192 killed by bombs in Spain

Over 1,400 hurt in rush-hour attacks on commuter trains

By MARK ROMAN Associated Press Writer

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

> "March 11, 2004, now

in the history

of infamy."

Spanish history.
Panicked rushhour commuters trampled on each holds its place other, abandoning their bags and shoes, after two of the bombs went off in one train in the Atocha station in the heart of

Jose Maria Aznar Prime Minister 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.

See ATTACK, Page 7A



Rescue workers cover up bodies alongside a bomb-damaged passenger train, following a number of explosions in Madrid, Spain just three days before Spain's general elections, killing more than 192 rush-hour commuters and wounding more than 1,400 in Spain's worst terrorist attack ever.

Death toll mounts 7:39 a.m. Three backpacks loaded More than 190 people were with explosives detonate on killed and 1,200 wounded when a commuter train in the Atocha station. 10 terrorist bombs tore through trains and stations at the height of the Thursday morning rush ■ Prado Museum hour in Madrid, Spain. Atocha All times local. 7:54 a.m. 7:44 a.m. Four backpack Two bombs explode bombs explode on double-decker on commuter commuter train in El train entering Atocha station. 7:49 a.m. Backpack explodes as commuter train Police carry out controlled explosions of three booby-trap backpack bombs; two in Atocha and one in El Pozo. They Eugenia train believe attackers planned to set off after the first wave.

SOURCES: Interior Ministry; ESRI

### Al-Qaida, Spanish terrorist group eyed as suspects in bombing

By Dafna Linzer AND PAMELA SAMPSON

Spanish leaders were quick to accuse Basque terrorists for setting off Thursday's devastating attacks in Madrid.

But hours later they were less sure. A shadowy Muslim militant group claimed responsibility in the name of al-Qaida and a van found near the attacks had detonators inside plus tapes of Quranic verses.

Getting at the truth could take time. Spanish officials used to blaming terrorism on the Basque separatist group ETA said they were opening up several lines of inquiry. As recent events have shown, it won't be easy. Other terrorist attacks carried out in the past two years in places such as Morocco and Turkey remain unsolved.

In Washington, a U.S. counterterrorism official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said it was too early to determine who was responsible for the attacks, which killed more than 190 people and wounded over 1,400.

We're not ruling out the possibility there was outside responsibility (beyond ETA) in this," the official said. "That's something being pursued, but at this point it's too early to tell."

If ETA was behind the 10 bombs that tore through trains and stations around Madrid, it would mark a stunning turning point for the group.

See **SUSPECTS**, Page 7A

Members of the Dothan Police

Department and the Dothan Hazmat unit confer with each other outside of the GE Motors Plant after the facility received a shipment containing a suspicous substance.

# Powder scare closes GE

CORRINA SISK-CASSON Eagle Staff Writer

A Dothan manufacturing plant was shut down Thursday after employees discovered a suspicious white powder substance in a shipment.

The Dothan police and fire departments were called out to GE Motors, 1371 Hodgesville Road, around 10:55 a.m. According to authorities the building had already been evacuated when they arrived.

Although they didn't show any symptoms of being infected, nine people had to change out of their clothes before being decontaminated and sent to Southeast Alabama Medical Center for further evaluation. According to hospital spokesman Steve Pearce, the patients were decontaminated again when they arrived. The patients were in stable condition and no one was hurt, however they were kept for a few hours as a precaution.

See **POWDER**, Page 8A

# Bush debuts ads targeting Kerry

By NICK ANDERSON Los Angeles Times

WASHINGTON — President Bush unleashed his first paid television attack Thursday against his presumed Democratic foe, John F. Kerry, with an advertisement that calls the Massachusetts senator "wrong on taxes, wrong on defense" and features footage suggestive of lurking terror-

The Bush ad, which includes pictures of the president and a legally required statement in his own voice

vouching for its content, asserts that Kerry would seek to raise taxes by at least \$900 billion.

It also accuses Kerry of advocating a policy that requires the United States to seek permission from the United Nations before taking action to defend itself — an allusion to debate over the war in Iraq. And it claims that Kerry, if elected, would take steps to weaken anti-terrorism laws.

Images in the ad include a person wearing a gas mask, a grainy picture

— filmed from overhead, like a fugitive — and another man turning his eyes slowly to face the camera as a narrator talks about Kerry's agenda on terrorism.

The ad was to be broadcast in 18 closely contested states, such as Florida, Wisconsin and Ohio, Bush-Cheney campaign officials said. A longer version of the script was used for a radio advertisement that the Bush-Cheney campaign released simultaneously.

#### See **BUSH**, Page 7A of an airplane landing, a man running Man who lost tongue to remain jailed on rape, assault charges

By The Associated Press

MOBILE — A man who lost his tongue during a confrontation with a 78-year-old woman will remain in jail on rape, assault and burglary charges.

A judge refused to reduce a \$103,000 bond on Wednesday for Robert Bell, 50, after a prosecutor said Bell raped and beat the woman in her Prichard home on Jan 31. He surrendered two days later and has been in Mobile County Metro Jail since then.

Defense attorney Habib Yazdi, who was seeking a bond reduction for Bell, told District Judge Charles McKnight that the woman lured his client into her home ostensibly for consensual sex. He said the woman was actually seeking revenge because Bell had been dating her niece, who is in her 40s.

Yazdi said that while Bell and the woman were having sex she implored him to stop seeing her niece. Bell told her he would continue to date both women, Yazdi said. The woman then asked Bell, Yazdi said, "to give her

some sugar." When Bell kissed her, she clamped onto his tongue with her teeth and tore about an inch of it off, Yazdi said. "She gets revenge and she literally bites his tongue off," Yazdi said.

See **TONGUE**, Page 7A

## Doing the wave



A group of fourth-graders from Montana Street Elementary School do the wave as they cheer on their adopted team, the Belmont Lady Bruins, at Atlantic Sun Womens Basketball Championship Monday afternoon.

FOR MORE COVERAGE OF THE A-SUN WOMENS' TOURNEY SEE SPORTS 1-D

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**TODAY** FRIDAY'S WEATHER



Plenty of sunshine; nice this afternoon. **TONIGHT** 

Low 42°

Clear to partly cloudy.

Part of this newspaper is printed on recycled newsprint





**High 72**°

