

Kashmir mosque siege ends: 6 killed

AFP, Srinagar

Indian troops shot dead five suspected Kashmiri militants, two of them near a mosque in Indian Kashmir where they had holed up after a raid by government troops, officials said yesterday.

The two rebels had fled to the mosque after soldiers raided their hideout in northern Bandipora town late Sunday, sparking a gunbattle in which a soldier was killed and two others were injured.

Skirmishes continued through the night, during which the militants had left the mosque and taken up positions in an adjoining house, said R.K. Bhargava, deputy inspector general of the paramilitary Border Security Force (BSF).

Several houses were damaged

during the fighting in which both sides also used grenades.

"The fighting has stopped and we have recovered two bodies from one of the damaged houses," Bhargava said, adding both were militants.

Bandipora is part of Baramulla district bordering the Pakistani zone of divided Kashmir.

In another incident, police Monday shot dead two militants near the Mughal-built Harwan gardens in Srinagar, a spokesman said, adding a policeman was also hurt in the clash.

Another rebel was killed by Indian troops in southern Doda district, while suspected militants shot dead a civilian in the same district late Sunday, police said.

Violence has surged in the

region over the past few months.

At the weekend, 12 suspected militants were shot dead after they infiltrated into Indian Kashmir from the Pakistani zone. India accuses Pakistan of arming and funding Kashmiri rebels, a charge it denies.

The arch-rivals both claim Kashmir in full and have fought two of their three wars over the scenic Himalayan region.

Since January 2004 they have been engaged in a peace process to resolve all their pending disputes, including over Kashmir.

The insurgency against Indian rule in Kashmir launched in 1989 has left more than 44,000 people dead, by official count. Rebels and separatists say the toll is at least double that number.



Dr Hoa Levitas, regional manager (international), Marketing and Student Recruitment Division, Monash University, Australia, and Dr Qamrul Alam of the Department of Management of the same university called on Prof AFM Yusuf Haider, acting vice-chancellor of Dhaka University, at his office yesterday.

Flood, landslides kill 45 in China

AFP, Beijing

Torrential rains in China since late last week have triggered flooding and landslides that have left at least 45 people dead and up to nine missing, state press reported yesterday.

The death toll from storms that began dumping heavy rains on Sichuan province on June 28 rose to 14, with at least two missing, China Daily said.

In Luzhou prefecture several towns and villages were inundated by up to 18.3 centimetres (7.3 inches) of rain, while rock and mudslides were reported in several

of Sichuan's mountainous regions, it said.

Damage to Luzhou was estimated at more than 84 million yuan (10.4 million dollars), it said, adding that meteorologists were expecting rain to continue to fall throughout Sichuan until at least July 10.

Meanwhile, in neighbouring Guizhou province nine people were confirmed dead, while more than 2,400 people were evacuated from areas where up to 14.8 centimetres of rain had fallen since last Thursday, Xinhua news agency said.

The same storms also struck Yunnan province where 11 were reported dead, nine injured and six

missing, it said.

Meanwhile in northeast China's Liaoning province eight people were reported dead and one missing after torrential rains beginning late Thursday last week triggered flooding in the region near Huludao city, Xinhua said.

Up to 24.3 centimetres fell on the region on Thursday and Friday, the biggest rainfall in the area since 1991, it said.

In Henan province, three people were reported dead and one missing after storms struck the region on July 2 resulting in the banks of two reservoirs bursting in Yuzhou prefecture, Xinhua said.

Biofuel from catfish fat to run diesel engines

REUTERS, Hanoi

Vietnamese catfish processor and exporter Agfish plans to turn catfish fat into fuel to run diesel engines, a company official said on Monday.

"We are planning to commercialise the fuel based on the result of pilot tests," Agfish Deputy Director Nguyen Dinh Huan told Reuters.

Huan said Agfish has been using the fuel, made from fat left over from processing, to run pumps at its fish ponds in the Mekong Delta province of An Giang in southern Vietnam.

"The fuel is as good as diesel oil," he said.

He said samples of the catfish fuel had been sent for tests at laboratories in Ho Chi Minh City for quality checks and government approval.

The state-run Tien Phong (Vanguard) newspaper on Monday quoted Ho Xuan Thien, the chief engineer of the project, as saying the firm planned to build a 10,000-tonne-per-year factory in 2007 to mass produce the fuel for domestic markets.

Thien said a kilogramme of catfish fat could produce 1.13 litres of biofuel.

Vietnam produces around 30,000 tonnes of catfish annually, mainly for exports to the United

States and Europe.

Agfish's products range from canned catfish through pre-cooked breaded fillets to sweet-and-sour fish prepared in clay containers.

Although Vietnam is Southeast Asia's third largest crude oil producer after Indonesia and Malaysia, it still relies on oil product imports for fuel because it lacks major refineries.

Agfish shares were quoted on Monday at 72,500 dong (\$4.54) per share on the country's main stock exchange, the Ho Chi Minh City Securities Trading Centre, unchanged from Friday. (\$1=15,962 dong)

Mexico stumbles towards crisis in chaotic election

REUTERS, Mexico City

The spectre of political chaos hung over Mexico's young democracy on Monday after two rival presidential candidates both claimed victory in a bitter election that divided the country between left and right.

Election officials said the race was too close to declare a winner and a recount was needed, but that didn't stop combative left-winger Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador and ruling party conservative Felipe Calderon from insisting they had won.

Fewal celebrations erupted just a few miles apart in the early hours of Monday morning, including thousands of people in Mexico City's vast central square.

It could be days before a final vote count is in, and some feared Mexico could be lurching towards a nightmare scenario of political deadlock, street protests and volatility in financial markets. Unrest would also worry the United States, which relies on Mexican help in securing its borders and tackling immigration and violent drug smug-

gling gangs.

Lopez Obrador supporters, remembering a 1988 presidential election widely believed to have been stolen from another left-wing candidate, claimed foul play.

"They are up to their tricks because everyone knows Andres Manuel won," said Gabriela Ramirez, a Mexico City student.

Critics of Lopez Obrador, a feisty and austere figure who pledged to put Mexico's poor first if elected, said the close race played into his hands and that he was looking for an excuse to mobilise supporters and cause trouble.

"Now if he loses, he can say the rich guys stole it from us. It could lead to chaos," real estate agent Victor Perera said at an upscale Mexico City neighbourhood restaurant.

Narrow Lead
Incomplete results from Sunday showed Calderon with a narrow lead. With about 86.8 percent of votes counted, the Harvard-educated politician had 36.90

percent support and Lopez Obrador trailed on 35.66 percent.

But the leftist, who won support for introducing welfare benefits to old people and single parents when he was Mexico City's mayor, earlier showed no signs of quitting.

"Smile. We've already won ... They have to respect our triumph," the former Indian rights activist told cheering supporters.

Critics compare him to Venezuela's firebrand President Hugo Chavez and say he would lead Mexico into a growing camp of anti-US leaders in Latin America.

Lopez Obrador counters he has no intention of fighting with business leaders or Washington. He says his infrastructure projects and government bureaucracy spending cuts would help the economy and so reduce the flow of poor Mexicans crossing the US border illegally for work.

Those policies worry business leaders and Wall Street investors, as does the prospect of a drawn-out battle over the election results.

List of newly promoted joint secretaries

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

- The government yesterday promoted 153 deputy secretaries to the post of joint secretary.
- All of them have been made officer on special duty (OSD) and posted to the Establishment Ministry until fresh postings.
- Following is the list of the new joint secretaries:
1. Abdus Sobhan Shikder, Director, National Savings Directorate.
 2. Kamrul Alam Rabbani, Deputy Director, Economic Relations Division.
 3. Ismail Hossain, Additional Divisional Commissioner, Dhaka.
 4. Abul Hossain, Director, Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation (BCIC).
 5. Mozammel Haque Khan, Director, Bangladesh Steel and Engineering Corporation (BSEC).
 6. Manzur Hossain, Member, Dhaka Electricity Supply Authority (DESA).
 7. Dr Zafar Ahmed Khan, Additional Divisional Commissioner, Dhaka.
 8. Prashanta Bhushan Barua, Member, Bangladesh Export Processing Zone Authority (BEPZA).
 9. Syed Mostafizur Rahman, Member, Rajdhani Unnayan Kartipakkha (RAJUK).
 10. Aiubur Rahman Khan, Deputy Secretary, Establishment Ministry.
 11. Pius Costa, Deputy Secretary, Planning Division.
 12. Khurshid Alam, Member, Bangladesh Handloom Board.
 13. Bhuiyan Shafiqul Islam, Deputy Secretary, Youth and Sports Ministry.
 14. Humayun Khalid, Director, Bangladesh Tourism Corporation.
 15. Amir Hossain, Additional Divisional Commissioner, Chittagong.
 16. Saiful Hasib, Director, Privatisation Commission.
 17. Mustaq Hossain Md Iftikher, Deputy Director, Planning Division.
 18. Mobaswera Begum, Deputy Secretary, Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs Ministry.
 19. Rafiqul Islam, Project Director, Registered Non-Government Primary School Project.
 20. Hossain Jamil, Deputy Commissioner (DC), Netrokona.
 21. Moshina Ferdousi, Deputy Secretary, Commerce Ministry.
 22. Sheikh Md. Mobarak Hossain, Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, Chittagong.
 23. Luthfor Rahman, Director, Department of Social Service.
 24. Rafiqul Islam, DC, Patuakhali.
 25. Mahbubur Rahman, Project Director, Basic Education Project for the Urban Working Children.
 26. Dr AHM Mostain Billah, Deputy Secretary, Economic Relations Division.
 27. Fakhruul Islam, Deputy Secretary, Fisheries and Livestock

28. Mujibur Rahman, Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, Dhaka.
29. Yunusur Rahman, DC, Moulivibazar.
30. Niaz Uddin Mian, Director, Bangladesh Shishu Academy.
31. Haris Uddin, Private Secretary (PS) to agricultural minister.
32. AKM Mortuza, Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, Chittagong.
33. Mohammad Nazrul Islam, Deputy Secretary, Cabinet Division.
34. Syed Abu Raihan, Deputy Secretary, Cabinet Division.
35. Abu Taleb, Secretary, Bangladesh Shipping Corporation.
36. Imdadul Haque, Chief Executive Officer, Zila Parishad, Manikganj.
37. Dr Abdus Sabur, Executive Director, Al-Nahian Trust.
38. Rezaul Kader, Deputy Secretary, Land Ministry.
39. Abdur Rashid, Deputy Secretary, Agriculture Ministry.
40. Masudur Rahman, Project Director, Selected Madrasa Development Project (Phase-1), Dhaka.
41. Enamul Haque, Economic Adviser, SPARSO, Dhaka.
42. Liakot Ali, Director, Non-formal Education Bureau.
43. Begum Dilruba, Deputy Secretary, Economic Division.
44. FM Abdul Monayem, Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Housing and Public Works.
45. Anis Uddin Manzur, DC, Munshiganj.
46. Abdur Rouf Chowdhury, PS to State Minister for Land.
47. Nazrul Islam, Chief Executive Officer, Zila Parishad, Noakhali.
48. Habibur Rahman, Secretary, BCSIR, Dhaka.
49. Abdul Quayum, Deputy Secretary, Establishment Ministry.
50. Abu Taleb Mian, Deputy Secretary, Home Ministry.
51. Mainul Haque, DC, Chuadanga.
52. Mohammad Fazle Rabbi, DC, Gazipur.
53. Mansur Raja Chowdhury, DC, Pirojpur.
54. Begum Nazma Begum, Deputy Secretary, Power Division.
55. Ataul Haque Mollah, Deputy Secretary, Agriculture Ministry.
56. Mostafizur Rahman, Deputy Secretary, Industries Ministry.
57. Ahmedur Rahim, PS to Disaster Management and Relief Minister.
58. Fasil Uddin, Deputy Secretary, Education Ministry.
59. Munshi Alauddin AlAzad, PS to Law, Justice and Parliament Affairs Minister.
60. Delwar Hossain, PS to the Parliamentary Affairs Adviser to the Prime Minister.
61. Md. Iqbal, Additional Director, Women Affairs Department.
62. Ahmed Hossain, Deputy

- Secretary, Primary and Mass Education Ministry.
63. Abu Yusuf Md Hemayet Uddin, Deputy Secretary, Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs Ministry.
64. Rokon Uddin Ahmed, Bangladesh National Parliament Secretariat.
65. ATM Mostafa Kamal, Project Director (VGD NNP Implementation Collage Programme) Women Affairs Department.
66. Prakash Chandra Das, Director, NILG.
67. Alamgir Hossain Khan, Secretary, Dhaka City Corporation.
68. Rabindra Nath Roy Chowdhury, DC, Nilphamari.
69. Nasir Uddin Khan, DC, Faridpur.
70. Md. Hanif, Director, Department of Social Service.
71. Mohammad Saidur Rahman, DC, Brahmanbaria.
72. Abdul Mannan, Deputy Secretary, Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs Ministry.
73. Mujibur Rahman, Directorate of Relief and Rehabilitation.
74. CM Yusuf Hossain, DC, Kishoreganj.
75. Sukriti Ranjan Chakma, Executive Officer, Chittagong Hill Tracts Regional Council.
76. Roushonuzzaman Suriya Begum, Special Officer-in-Charge (Deputy Secretary), Establishment Ministry.
77. Firoz Mian, DC, Pabna.
78. Fazlul Haque, DC, Lalmonirhat.
79. Biman Kumar Saha, Deputy Director, Compulsory Primary Education Implementation Unit.
80. Ahmed Ullah, Deputy Secretary, Home Ministry.
81. Asadul Islam, Special Officer-in-Charge (Deputy Secretary), Establishment Ministry.
82. Enamul Haque, Deputy Secretary, Establishment Ministry.
83. Mansur Ahmed, Chief Executive Officer, Zila Parishad, Bagerhat.
84. Mayez Uddin Ahmed, Deputy Secretary, Education Ministry.
85. Abdus Samad, Deputy Secretary, Commerce Ministry.
86. Faruq Ahmed, Special Officer-in-Charge (Deputy Secretary), Establishment Ministry.
87. Sardar Abul Kalam, Deputy Secretary, Establishment Ministry.
88. Ashraf Hossain, Deputy Secretary, Economic Relations Division.
89. Sheikh Abdul Gaffar, Deputy Secretary, Social Welfare Ministry.
90. AS Shamim Ahmed, Joint Programme Director, Primary Education Development Programme, Phase-2.
91. Zinnatul Haque, Director, Bangladesh Film Development Corporation (BFDC).
92. AKM Amir Hossain, Director General, Jiban Bima Corporation.

Pak flood kills 12

AP, Islamabad

A rain-swollen mountainside canal burst Monday, triggering a mudslide and flooding in a village in northwestern Pakistan that killed 12 people, police said.

About 20 people remained unaccounted near Swat, a hill resort district about 190 kilometers (120 miles) northwest of the Pakistani capital of Islamabad, said Ali Rehman, a police emergency official.

Police rescuers and locals in the flood-hit village of Gahel are searching for the missing people.

Twelve bodies have been retrieved from mud and the debris of three homes that were washed away, Rehman said.

Among the dead were two young girls, aged one and 10, and two women, he said. At least two people were injured.

The canal, feeding a small, water-driven electricity generator, flows above Gahel, which was flooded and struck by the mudslide and boulders when a canal embankment burst, another local police official said on condition of anonymity because he was unauthorized to speak to the media.

Pakistan is inundated by monsoon rains for about two months starting in July, a period when flash flooding is common in mountainous northern areas and the flat plains of the eastern Punjab province.

China restricts Internet cafe access

AP, Beijing

China has launched a campaign to enforce curfews at Internet cafes before schools let students out on summer vacation, a news report said on Monday.

The focus of the weeklong crackdown, launched Saturday, "is to prevent the entry of kids under the age of 18," said a Culture Ministry official quoted by the China Daily newspaper.

It said violators could face penalties ranging from being shut down for 15 days to losing their license to operate.

Internet cafes are required to limit the hours that underage customers can spend online and only allow in a few minors at a time.

China has the world's second-biggest population of Internet users after the United States, with 110 million people online, but tries to regulate what Web surfers can see online.

Rules on children in Internet cafes were imposed after Chinese officials warned that students were spending too much time playing online games and were getting

access to violent and obscene material.

Summer vacation for most Chinese schools begins in mid-July.

ESCALATING VIOLENCE
Koizumi stick to Israel visit

AP, Tokyo

Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi is still scheduled to visit Israel and the Middle East later this month, despite escalating violence there, the chief Cabinet spokesman said on Monday.

"There is no change to the schedule of the prime minister's trip, but we will continue to watch the developments closely," said Chief Cabinet Secretary Shinzo Abe.

The Japanese leader is expected to visit Israel and the Palestinian territories before attending the G8 summit of industrialised nations in mid-July in Russia.

But last week officials said they were reevaluating those plans, after Palestinian militants took an Israeli soldier captive prompting Israeli forces to enter southern Gaza in response.

