

Pak shelling kills Indian soldier in J&K

NDTV ONLINE

An Indian soldier was killed and three others were seriously injured during unprovoked ceasefire violation by the Pakistani Army along the line of control in Poonch district of Jammu and Kashmir, Indian military sources said yesterday.

According to sources, Pakistani forces resorted to heavy firing and shelling in Shahpur-Kerni sector on Saturday night, drawing strong retaliation by the Indian Army.

In the incident, Sepoy Lungambui Abonmei and three other Army personnel were injured and were immediately evacuated to hospital. Lungambui Abonmei died during treatment, the officials said.

This is the third casualty in the Pakistani firing and shelling on forward posts and villages in the twin districts of Poonch and Rajouri this month.

Yesterday morning, Pakistan again fired mortars and other weapons in Rampur Sector in Baramulla, Indian army sources.

As many as 2027 ceasefire violations by Pakistan have taken place along the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir till June 10 this year, news agency PTI reported quoting officials.

The increased violations are being viewed by senior security officials as an attempt by Pakistan to provide fire cover to terrorists sneaking from across the border.



(From top, anti-clockwise) Demonstrators march down Constitution Avenue to protest against racial inequality in the aftermath of the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis police custody, in Washington, US on Saturday; a woman holds a placard during a demonstration in Barcelona, yesterday; people take part in a Black Lives Matter protest march in central Tokyo, yesterday; and a US SWAT member aims his gun at protesters in Georgia, Atlanta after fresh protest there over the killing of an Afro-American man.

PHOTO: AFP, REUTERS

GEORGE FLOYD PROTESTS Is America at a turning point?

THE STRAITS TIMES/ANN

The United States has been through paroxysms before, often set off by killings of African Americans by the police, but there is every indication that the current crisis triggered by the widely seen death of George Floyd at the hands of the police is different, and in several aspects.

After more than two weeks of protests across the country, the outrage, unlike before, is seeing results as several states and city authorities have moved to, if not reform their police forces, at least update police rules of engagement.

Congress is working on legal changes that include a ban on using chokeholds; a limit on immunity for officers; and restrictions on the use of military weapons.

Also unlike previously, the death of Floyd has galvanised sections of society who otherwise have little in common to unite in protesting against racism and police brutality.

Results from a Pew Research survey, released on Friday, revealed that 67 per cent of Americans are supportive of the Black Lives Matter movement - including about four in 10 who offer strong support. While the sentiment is naturally particularly strong among African Americans, majorities of Caucasians (60 per cent), Hispanic (77 per cent) and Asian Americans (75 per cent) also express at least some support.

Dr Adam Garfinkle, distinguished visiting fellow at the S Rajaratnam School of International Studies, wrote last Tuesday: "Racially charged civil unrest in the United States will affect the November election, undermine military morale if the President orders military force to smother protests, and further estrange Americans from supporting an active and constructive US role in global affairs... The George Floyd moment may therefore be justifiably counted as a significant historical inflection point."

While the landmark Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Voting Rights Act of 1965 were important in terms of changing the politics and direction of the US, they did not affect the daily lives of African Americans, veteran commentator Bill Moyers told CNN's chief international anchor Christian Amanpour last Wednesday. "Even though we had a new political look about us... life didn't change for people who were living in the poverty of the ghetto, who couldn't find good jobs, and then we began not to see them," he said.

"We've finally come to that moment, when we're scraping the whitewash - and it is whitewash - off of our vision of the country, and what we are seeing is not pretty, and it's not right. Unless we see the truth of what is there, we are going to be just the same as we have been for the last decades, for the last 200 years," he added.

Many analysts are also saying that, taken together, the coronavirus crisis, as well as its induced economic crash, the toxic politicisation of issues and a looming election, Floyd's death and the running sores it has exposed may cumulatively sink the idea of "American exceptionalism".

In the RSIS brief, Dr Garfinkle wrote: "When, for justifiable reasons or not, the nation loses its moral self-respect, it cannot lift its chin to look confidently upon the world, or bring itself to ask the world to look upon America as a worthy model, let alone a leader... That is very much the mood in recent years, and particularly now... US allies and partners will need to adapt to what is an increasingly clear non-exceptionalist new American normal."



'I feel guilty about surviving'

Man gets \$1.1m bill after winning battle against Covid-19

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

A Seattle man who was dubbed "the miracle child" when he recovered from the coronavirus after being the longest-hospitalised patient has now received a \$1.1m bill for his lengthy stay.

Michael Flor, 70, almost died from the novel virus, but he joked his hospital bill also almost killed him after his 62-day stay rounded up to \$1.1m in fees.

"I opened it and said, 'Holy (expletive)!," the Washington resident told the Seattle Times.

The 181-page hospital bill listed all the treatments and fees Flor racked up while staying at Swedish Medical Centre in Issaquah, and the official amount owed stands at \$1,122,501.04.

Fortunately for Flor, he was on Medicare when entering the facility, which means a majority of the bill will be covered.

"I feel guilty about surviving," he said. "There's a sense of 'why me?' Why did I deserve all this?"

When breaking down the bill, \$408,912 was charged for the 42 days Flor was in an intensive care room equipped with a special isolation chamber. Then an additional \$82,215 was charged for the ventilator he used for 29 days.

Two of the days when Flor needed special care as his hearts, lungs, and kidneys were all failing, racked up \$100,000 in charges.

Part of Flor's guilt comes from the understanding that someone is paying for the \$1.1m bill. "It was a million bucks to save my life, and of course I'd say that's money well-spent," he said. "But I also know I might be the only one saying that."

End racism, police brutality

Violence in UK, France as protesters across the globe demand action

AGENCIES

Thousands have marched in cities around the world for a second week of rallies to support the US Black Lives Matter movement, but also to highlight racism and police brutality in their own countries.

There were rallies in cities across Europe on Saturday, with thousands demonstrating in several French cities, and clashes breaking out in Paris and Lyon. The protesters were back on the streets yesterday in major cities from Tokyo to Barcelona.

Police arrested several far-right demonstrators in London after violence when they challenged people supporting racial quality there, with Prime Minister Boris Johnson denouncing their "racist thuggery".

The weeks of historic demonstrations have been ignited by the May 25 killing of African American George Floyd by a police officer -- the latest in a long line of unarmed black men being killed by white law enforcement in the US.

His agonising death as the officer knelt on his neck was filmed by bystanders and swiftly went viral, triggering fury first in the US and then around the world.

The mass unrest has forced an unprecedented global conversation on the legacy of slavery, European colonialism and white violence against people of colour, as well as the militarisation of



A protester carries an injured counter-protester to safety in London.

police in America.

Police stopped protesters in Paris Saturday from marching through the capital, firing tear gas after some demonstrators pelted them with projectiles.

In the southeast city of Lyon, police used water cannons and tear gas at the end of a demonstration attended by about 2,000 people.

The Paris demonstration was called by a pressure group campaigning for justice for Adama Traore, a young black man who died in police custody in 2016.

Amnesty International called in a statement for "a systemic reform of police practices" in France. The rallies came at the end of a week when France's police watchdog revealed it had received almost 1,500 complaints against officers last year -- half of them for alleged violence.



'Ending era of endless wars'

Trump tells graduates at US Military Academy

REUTERS, West Point

President Donald Trump, facing criticism in recent days for plans to withdraw thousands of US troops from Germany, told West Point's graduating class on Saturday that their job will be to defend "America's vital interests" and not fight "endless wars" in faraway lands.

Trump's reported plans to withdraw 9,500 troops from Germany, one of America's strongest allies, and relocate them to Poland and elsewhere has drawn the ire of German officials and raised concerns in the US Congress about a retreat from the world stage.

In his commencement address to the US Military Academy at West Point, Trump told more than 1,000 graduating cadets, arrayed in a social-distancing pattern, that the job of the American soldier is not to rebuild foreign nations but "defend, and

defend strongly, our nation from foreign enemies."

"We are ending the era of endless wars," Trump said. It is not the job of American forces "to solve ancient conflicts in faraway lands that many people have not even heard of," he said.

As president, Trump has pulled troops from Syria and pushed US allies worldwide to pay more for the commitment of American forces to defend them.

In his remarks on Saturday, Trump only touched obliquely on the debate over racial injustice in the United States, saying the cadets were examples of America's diversity.

"You have come from the farms and the cities, from states big and small, and from every race, religion, color, and creed. But when you entered these grounds, you became part of one family, proudly serving one American nation," he said.

Poland invades Czech Republic by accident!

CNN ONLINE

The Polish military has admitted it accidentally invaded the Czech Republic last month, but it insists its brief occupation of a small part of the country was simply a "misunderstanding."

Polish soldiers mistakenly crossed the country's border with Czech Republic in late May before setting up there, the Czech foreign ministry told CNN.

The soldiers, who had been guarding parts of the closed Polish-Czech border during the coronavirus pandemic, then started turning away Czech citizens who were attempting to visit a church in their own country.

The snafu led the Czech embassy in Warsaw to take "immediate action" and notify its Polish counterpart, the Czech government told CNN, adding that Poland has still not formally explained why it mistakenly annexed its neighbour.

The incident occurred near Pielgrzymow, a small border village in southern Poland that sits opposite a sparsely populated stretch of Czech countryside.

CORONAVIRUS EPIDEMIC IN INDIA, PAKISTAN Record jump in cases

AGENCIES

India's federal government yesterday said it will provide New Delhi's city authorities with 500 railway coaches that will be equipped to care for coronavirus patients, after a surge in the number of cases led to a shortage of hospital beds.

The coaches will increase Delhi's capacity by 8,000 beds, home minister Amit Shah said on Twitter after a meeting with the capital's chief minister.

The government will also ramp up testing in the city, especially in containment zones, conduct a door-to-door health survey of residents and provide sufficient supplies of oxygen cylinders and ventilators, he said.

India is the fourth-worst affected country in the world, with cases steadily increasing. It reported a record single-day jump in cases on Sunday, adding nearly 12,000 confirmed infections and taking the total to more than 320,000, according to health ministry data.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi imposed a nationwide lockdown in late March that has since been loosened.

With more than 22,000 active cases, Delhi is the third-worst affected after the states of Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu. The chief minister of Delhi, which has a population of 20 million, has said that the number of infections in the city are expected to cross more than half a million by the end of July.

Shah said a committee was examining providing 60% of private hospital beds in Delhi at low cost for coronavirus patients, and fixing the cost of testing and treatment. He added that a report would be submitted



India records nearly 12,000 confirmed infections in a day
Delhi to use 500 railway coaches as hospital facilities
Pakistan records 6,825 infections, 81 deaths in 24 hours

on Monday.

That comes after a public outcry over the high cost of beds and coronavirus treatment at private hospitals.

Meanwhile, Pakistan has recorded its highest number of coronavirus cases in a single day with 6,825 new patients, taking the tally to 1,39,230, while more than 80 people lost their lives in the last 24 hours, the health ministry said on Sunday.

The Ministry of National Health Services said that the country's death count due to the COVID-19 has reached 2,632 with 81 more fatalities.

The number of people who have so far recovered has reached 51,735, it said.

So far 868,565 tests have been conducted across the country, including 29,546 in the last 24 hours.

Tanker blast kills 18 in China

AGENCIES

A tanker truck exploded on a highway in southeastern China on Saturday, killing 18 people and injuring at least 189 others, authorities said.

The explosion caused extensive damage to nearby buildings. One photo showed firefighters hosing down a row of buildings with blown-out facades well into the night.

The truck carrying liquefied gas exploded at 4:45pm on the Shenyang-Haikou Expressway south of Shanghai, Xinhua News Agency said, citing local authorities. A second explosion followed when the truck fell onto a factory workshop, Xinhua said.

The Wenling city government information office said on its social media account that houses and workshops collapsed and 189 people were treated at six hospitals.

The cause of the accident is under investigation, media said. The government commission responsible for safety production called for the probe to be completed within a certain time, state media reported, without specifying the period.