



Youths from the Hindu nationalist Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS, National Volunteer Organisation) sift through the debris of a high-speed train collision Monday near the Indian capital which killed at least 12 people and injured around 80 others. Officials said 50 of the injured were in serious condition.

## International

# 12 killed, 82 injured as trains collide in India

**FARIDABAD, July 28:** At least twelve people including two women were killed and 82 injured, 22 of them seriously, when the Delhi-bound Karnataka Express rammed into the stationary Himsagar Express near Faridabad Railway Station, 30 km south of Delhi late last night, police sources said, reports PTI.

The toll was expected to go up as rescuers struggled to extricate bodies and survivors in the pre-dawn hours today, cutting through the mangled metal coaches which were thrown off the railway track under the impact of the collision.

However, the Central Railway spokesman, Rakesh Saxena, put the toll at eight killed and 42 injured.

The mishap occurred when the Karnataka Express from Bangalore, running 12 hours behind schedule, overshot a signal and hit the Jammu-bound Himsagar Express coming from Kanyakumari, from the rear at full speed at around

2315 hrs.

Two of the bodies have been identified as those of Lt Colonel R D Hooda of Rohtak and R K Nanda of Meerut.

The injured have been admitted to the government Badshah Khan Hospital, Sun-Flag Hospital and Escorts Hospital, Faridabad while of the seriously wounded has been referred to Delhi.

Driver of the Karnataka Express is serious while the fate of the guard of Himsagar Express is not known, railway sources said adding that the AC coach, sleeper class and a general class compartment of the Karnataka Express were the worst hit.

AP adds: The dead were passengers on two trains — the New Delhi-bound Karnataka Express, just before midnight Sunday in Faridabad, an industrial suburb 30 kilometres (20 miles) east of New Delhi.

Obviously the driver of the Karnataka Express ignored a

stop signal. It's human failure," said SA Zaidi, a senior manager of the state-owned railway.

Full details would be known only after officials spoke to the driver of the Karnataka Express, who has hospitalised with a broken arm, Zaidi said.

Among the dead were two women, said B K Bagga, a railway doctor, who was supervising first-aid operations next to the track that was littered with smashed suitcases, shoes and bed sheets. Most passengers on both the trains were asleep when the collision occurred.

More than 1,500 passengers were on both trains. Three of the rear coaches of the Himsagar Express, travelling from India's southern tip, Kanyakumari, to the northern rail head of Jammu, were thrown off the track.

Two coaches of the second train, which was moving at 120 kilometres (70 mph), looked like crumpled shoe boxes. Another luggage coach was demolished.

# Gujral reasserts claim over whole of Kashmir

**NEW DELHI, July 28:** Prime Minister Inder Kumar Gujral on Monday reasserted India's claim over the whole of Kashmir, one third of which is held by Pakistan, reports AFP.

Gujral told parliament that there would be no compromise over New Delhi's traditional stand that the whole of Kashmir belonged to India.

The prime minister made the statement after an opposition member asked if he was diluting New Delhi's stand over Kashmir, following his statement on Saturday that he was ready for unconditional talks with Muslim separatist militants there.

Gujral, however, backtracked on Sunday by saying he would not talk to the militants until they put down their arms.

India and Pakistan dispute the ownership of Kashmir, a picturesque Himalayan state. India, controls the southern

two-thirds of the territory.

**India ready to thwart any 'mis-adventure' from Pakistan**

Earlier PTI says: India is fully prepared to meet any challenge posed by Pakistan which has acquired M-11 and Haft-3 missiles with Chinese assistance and can give befitting reply to thwart any 'mis-adventure' from its adversaries, the Defence Minister Mulayam Singh Yadav asserted in the Lok Sabha today.

Responding to a spate of supplementary questions during question hour, he said all necessary steps were being taken by the government to maintain appropriate defence preparedness.

"We are fully prepared to meet any challenge," he said adding "We have better capabilities."

## BRIEFLY

**Japan launches satellite:** A 100 million dollars Japanese communications satellite rocketed into orbit at 9:15 pm Sunday (0115 GMT Monday). AP reports from Cape Canaveral, Florida.

The Superbird satellite is expected to arrive at its 22,300-mile (36,000-kilometer) high position over the South Pacific in two weeks. After months of testing, it will provide broadcasting and business communications services throughout the Asia and Pacific region, including Hawaii. It is owned by Space Communications Corp of Tokyo, which already has two working satellites in orbit.

**Road mishap kills 5 in China:** At least five people were killed and 28 were injured when a passenger bus toppled over a cliff in the southern Chinese province of Guangdong, a news report said yesterday, AFP reports from Beijing.

The bus plunged down the ravine after colliding with a truck careering across the road after it had collided with another vehicle on Thursday near the city of Conghua, the China Daily said. The driver who caused the two accidents has been arrested, the newspaper said.

**10 trapped inside mine in China:** Ten miners trapped inside a flooded mine in southern China's Guangdong province for 32 hours were feared dead, it was reported yesterday, AFP says from Hong Kong.

Rescue workers have been struggling since Saturday to reach the 10 who were trapped in the underground mine in Shaoguan when water poured into the shaft, the semi-official China news service said. The chance of the miners surviving was slim, the agency said. The miners, aged between 20 and 35, had been recruited to work in the Simaoping coal mine from neighbouring Hunan province.

**11 die as bus lost control in Russia:** A traffic accident on Sunday killed 11 passengers on a bus and injured 37 others in Kutaisi, Georgia, said an ITAR-Tass news agency report, Xinhua says from Moscow.

The bus was running on the way from Tkibuli to Kutaisi, Georgia's second largest city, when the accident took place, local police were quoted as saying. It was on the outskirts of Kutaisi when the driver suddenly lost his control of the bus, which fell from a 20-meter high cliff.

## Australia expands security contacts with Asia

**KUALA LUMPUR, July 28:** Australia is expanding its security contacts with Asian nations in what Foreign Minister Alexander Downer described Monday as a major breakthrough, reports AP.

Downer said Australia will begin regular bilateral security dialogues with the Philippines, Thailand, China and Vietnam. The talks will involve high-level officials from the foreign and defence ministries, he said.

"These talks add further depth and substance to Australia's regional engagement," he said. "This is a major breakthrough in Australia's regional security network."

Downer, who is in Kuala Lumpur for meetings with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, said the consultations should help enhance confidence among countries in the Asia-Pacific region.

Last year, Australia began regular security talks with South Korea and Japan, Downer said.

He said Australia plans to continue its current level of development assistance to Cambodia despite a coup there, but expects coup leader Hun Sen to respect the 1991 Paris Peace Accords that established the country's current government, protect human rights, and hold free elections as scheduled next year.

## Gujral's revised offer of talks has few takers in Kashmir

Binoos Joshi writes from Srinagar

The optimism created by Prime Minister Inder Kumar Gujral's offer of "unconditional" talks with Kashmiri militants in the Valley has vanished after he revised this to insist that the militants would first have to lay down arms.

Political observers here are asking what the prime minister has gained by making what many perceive as "self-contradictory" statements. "Neither the National Conference nor Hurriyat Conference is happy," said a veteran Kashmiri observer.

"These statements mean nothing," he added, and explained that the offer was "vague" as the militants would not talk with any precondition.

Moreover, by excluding the All Parties Hurriyat Conference from the talks, the "prime minister has foreclosed the option of talking to the political leaders," he pointed out. At the same time he has placed the condition which would keep the militants away from the talks table.

Gujral's statement at Qazigund, a south Kashmir town, on Saturday that he was prepared to hold unconditional talks with "the misguided youth" had created hopes of progress in putting an end to the eight-year-old insurgency which has claimed more than 15,000 lives. Observers had described it as

a "clever move". However, Gujral subsequently qualified his statement by saying that "Talks can be held only after the militants lay down arms. No talks would be worthwhile if the guns boom all around."

## Flash floods claim 32 in Pakistan

**ISLAMABAD, July 28:** Torrential rains and flash floods have claimed 32 lives and created havoc in northern and central Pakistan, officials and police said today, reports AFP.

Officials said 19 people died in northwestern Mansehra district where at least five houses collapsed due to heavy monsoon rains early Sunday.

Four houses also collapsed in Shinkari and another in Bala Kot town burying their inhabitants.

Another 13 people died after they were swept away by gushing waters in central Punjab province as waters cascading down from hills lashed Choa Saidan Shah town, in Chakwal district, on Sunday, the sources said.

Gujral was said to be sore with the Hurriyat Conference for its refusal to participate in the assembly elections to "prove their credentials."

"One does not become leader simply by claiming so," the prime minister said at a press conference where he announced his revised stand on the offer of talks.

The prime minister had taken everyone by surprise when he made the offer of unconditional talks. It was presumed that he had not consulted the National Conference — the ruling party in Jammu and Kashmir — over the issue. That became clear when Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah made no mention of the prime minister's offer at a public meeting at Baramulla, a north Kashmir town where Gujral had gone to lay the foundation stone of Qazigund-Baramulla rail link.

Minister of State for Home Ali Mohammad Sagar told reporters that the state government was not aware of the "Background in which the prime minister had made this announcement." But, he clarified that the "National Conference was in power because of the mandate of the people and cannot be ignored."

— India Abroad News Service

## Ultimatum to Taliban for withdrawal from Kabul

**ISLAMABAD, July 28:** Forces opposing the Afghan Islamic Taliban militia Sunday sent out an ultimatum to the militia, demanding their withdrawal from the capital city of Kabul in 24 hours, informed sources said, reports Xinhua.

The anti-Taliban alliance warned in the ultimatum if the Taliban failed to meet the deadline, they would launch a three-pronged full-scale assault against the Taliban simultaneously from the west, north and east sides of Kabul, said the sources in Peshawar, a major city in northwestern Pakistan.

The Taliban, who have controlled Kabul since September last year, have so far made no comment on the deadline set by the opposition alliance, whose forces have advanced to within the rocket range of Kabul.

Over the past three days, the anti-Taliban forces under commander Ahmad Masood, former Afghan military chief, have kept military pressure on Kabul with jets and artillery bombardments while calling for a Taliban pullout from the beleaguered capital.

Earlier AP says, International aid workers in the beleaguered Afghan capital Sunday refuted claims by Amnesty International that Kabul's Taliban rulers have arrested 2,000 people, all of them members of the country's minority ethnic groups.

The International Committee of the Red Cross, which vis-

its prisoners, registers new prisoners and gets messages to their families, says there have been arrests in Kabul, but it is barely a fraction of the Amnesty International figure.

"It's a fraction, something around 10 per cent of that," said Thomas Gurtner, deputy chief of the Red Cross delegation in Kabul.

## Tigers fire mortar bombs at security forces

**COLOMBO, July 28:** Tamil Tiger guerrillas fired a barrage of mortar bombs at security forces manning new defences in northern Sri Lanka, the Defence Ministry said here today, reports AFP.

Gunmen of the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) kept up the heavy attack at Nedunkerni, the ministry said, without providing any details of casualties.

The ministry said troops returned fire at suspected rebel positions in the area.

Tiger guerrillas seized a truck transporting vegetables in the east of the country Sunday and abducted three crew members, the ministry added.

Troops are conducting a major offensive aimed at opening a key highway in the north through rebel-held territory leading to the Jaffna Peninsula.

## Nat'l Assembly reconvenes after 6-month

# Coup leader terms Khmer's trial of Pol Pot a 'trick'

**PHNOM PENH, Cambodia, July 28:** Coup leader Hun Sen called the reported trial of notorious Khmer Rouge chief Pol Pot by his one-time followers a "trick" Monday and accused him of still controlling guerrilla forces in northern Cambodia, reports AP.

"This is a political game by the Khmer Rouge," Hun Sen told reporters, "Feeling" Friday in Anlong Veng, the guerrillas' northern jungle base, Pol Pot was condemned and sentenced with members of his clique to life imprisonment.

Friction over negotiations between the Khmer Rouge and the government Hun Sen led with his co-premier, Prince Norodom Ranariddh, led to a bloody coup July 5 in which Hun Sen seized power for himself.

Hun Sen has been less open than Ranariddh to negotiations with the rebels, who were reportedly prepared to turn over Pol Pot for a genocide trial in exchange for peace. Hopes of bringing Pol Pot before an international tribunal have been crushed by the coup.

Pol Pot led the Khmer Rouge regime that came to power in 1975 and turned Cambodia into a vast, Maoist-inspired labour camp, causing the deaths of up to 2 million people from overwork, starvation, illness and

execution.

The Khmer Rouge was toppled by a Vietnamese invasion in 1979. Hun Sen, himself a former Khmer Rouge cadre, came to lead the regime installed and supported by Hanoi's troops during the 1980s. He and the Khmer Rouge remain deeply suspicious of each other.

In the group's internal tribunal Friday, representatives of the armed forces, intelligence and ordinary people blasted Pol Pot and his clique as traitors and racist exterminators. They attached similar labels to Hun Sen.

"The army takes part in this meeting to show that our movement is no longer a movement of Pol Pot, led by Pol Pot," a Khmer Rouge general said. "This is a pure and genuine resistance movement of peasants of the peasant class."

The 80-minute trial was attended by at least one American journalist, Nate Thayer, who is believed to have film and video footage of the ailing Pol Pot. The images would lay to rest year-old rumors that Pol Pot was dead.

Observers speculated that the Khmer Rouge was moving to distance itself from Pol Pot so that it could formally align itself with resistance forces loyal to Ranariddh.

Meanwhile, lauding the government's success in purging both Khmer Rouge terrorists and First Prime Minister Norodom Ranariddh, acting head of state Chea Sim opened the National Assembly following a six-month recess Monday.

Chea Sim described a bloody coup in the capital earlier this month as a "mopping up operation" necessary to prevent a terrorist overthrow of the government.

In the July 5-6 power grab, second Prime Minister Hun Sen routed forces loyal to Ranariddh, who remains in exile and unlikely to return in the foreseeable future.

The assembly is expected next week to select Foreign Minister Ung Huot to replace Ranariddh as first prime minister, thus preserving the form of a coalition government set up after the UN-supervised elections of 1993.

Ranariddh last week expelled Ung Huot from the ranks of his royalist FUNCINPEC Party.

"The FUNCINPEC Party has now submitted to the National Assembly the candidacy of a marvelous prime minister," said Chea Sim, urging the legislative body to "Examine this very important candidacy and provide its high decision and its vote of confidence."

## 'Arafat won't push radical cabinet change'

**JERUSALEM, July 28:** Palestinian President Yasser Arafat is considering limited alterations in his self-rule government but not a sweeping cabinet reshuffle, Palestinian sources said today, reports AFP.

Despite calls for the dismissal of minister by a special commission investigating pervasive mismanagement, "Arafat will not push a radical cabinet change," said an official close to Palestinian leader.

"Arafat is expected to make a series of moves such as combining some ministries and making structural changes in some others to straighten out their finances and administration, said the official, who asked not to be named.

"Right now he is naming ministers to replace those who are too ill to conduct their duties," he added.

Talk of a sweeping change in the self-rule government arose after a special commission submitted a report a week ago to Arafat recommending the sacking of several ministers for mismanaging public funds.

Arafat created the commission to investigate an internal audit which found two months ago that some 326 million dollars 40 per cent of the self-rule budget, had been wasted or mismanaged by authority departments in 1996.

Reports of a reshuffle increased with the resignation last week of Arafat government's controversial justice minister, Freigh Abu Midein.

But so far Arafat has made no moves to tough the cabinet, he has yet to appoint either a new justice minister or a new tourism minister to replace Elias Freij.

**KARACHI, Pakistan, July 28:** Helmeted soldiers in camouflage jackets click the safeties off their automatic rifles and take up positions behind a stack of sandbags. An armoured personnel carrier rumbles past, reports AP.

Not far away, flames dance from wrecked buses, and boys throw rocks. Older residents are hiding inside their homes. Shops are shuttered and the streets deserted.

What sounds like a vignette from a city at war is daily life in Pakistan's largest city, Karachi — the commercial and industrial heart and sole port for a country that is home to 140 million people.

Karachi is unique among Pakistan's cities because it is home to a variety of ethnic groups, a volatile mix that is the main cause for its 12 years of strife.

There has not been a local election in more than five years because politicians fear residents will vote along ethnic

## Pakistan's main city is at war with itself

lines, tossing out leaders who have seen their own constituencies dwindle. Without a mayor, city council, planning commission or school boards, people say they have no place to go with their grievances.

Sindh's, the indigenous people of this part of Pakistan, make up barely 5 per cent of the population in Karachi, but hold the majority of government jobs.

The city's largest group is relatively new — Mohajirs, an Urdu word meaning refugees. Most of them fled predominantly Hindu India 50 years ago when the subcontinent gained independence from Britain. They account for 58 per cent of the population, but say they are discriminated against.

Mohajirs demand what they see as the political power their numbers warrant, and some have tried to seize it at gunpoint.

Punjabis from Pakistan's richest state and Pathans from the tribal northwest together make up about a third of the population.

Karachi occasionally sees fights between Sunni and Shi'ite Muslims, but most of Pakistan's sectarian violence occurs in Punjab province.

While the city's ethnic gangs battle and police and soldiers try to control them, Karachi's infrastructure is falling apart because no one can be held responsible for its upkeep. At most half of Karachi's 14 million people live in illegal slum dwellings that do not have running water or sewage disposal.

The police force is considered the most politicised in Pakistan, one used by successive governments to execute enemies.

Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, once revered as a champion of democracy, was dismissed last year amid accusations she sanctioned police hit squads in Karachi, her hometown. Her estranged brother and political rival, Murtaza Bhutto, died in a hall of police bullets outside his home.

Karachi's rich and powerful live fearfully in grand homes, surrounded by walls and armed guards.

"We have no water in our taps. Our roads are falling apart. The electricity is breaking. Even the street lights we fix ourselves," said Yousuf Jamil, chairman of a police-citizens liaison committee.

"We are surviving," he added. "Right now it is controlled anarchy. But for how long?"

From a purely economic point of view, Jamil said, the federal government has to do something to save Karachi.

The city is the source of 70 per cent of every tax dollar the government collects, most of it

## Lakhubhai Pathak cheating case

# Rao opposes CBI plea to examine witnesses abroad

**NEW DELHI, July 28:** Former prime minister P V Narasimha Rao today opposed CBI plea to examine witnesses abroad in the one lakh dollar Lakhubhai Pathak cheating case, reports PTI.

Rao, in an application moved through his counsel said the court has to prima facie satisfy itself whether evidence of the witnesses in question is absolutely necessary and securing their attendance before it is not possible.

"There is no material on record that the said petition by CBI had been filed on the instruction or pursuant to the authority given by the state," said Rao's plea moved through the counsel M A Khandvekar and W A Noman said.

"The plain reading of section 284 of CrPC postulates that it is absolute prerogative of the court to invoke the said provision (issuing a commission)," it said adding that the court was not bound to permit recording of evidence on commission which were not necessary.

Meanwhile, a Delhi Court Monday directed the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) to clarify by August 12 whether government has arrangements for examination of the witnesses in US, Canada and Chile on commission in Lakhubhai Pathak cheating case.

The former prime minister, P V Narasimha Rao, godman Chandraswami and his aide K N

Agarwal are facing trial in the case for allegedly cheating UK-based NRI businessman Lakhubhai Pathak, who has since died.

The additional district and sessions judge, Ajit Bhariholke issued the direction to CBI after Rao's counsel moved an application opposing examination court has to satisfy itself whether the government of India has arrangements for examination of foreign witnesses in the concern governments with US, Canada and Chile for examining witnesses on commission.

## HK chief executive reshuffles 3 top govt posts

**BEIJING, July 28:** Hong Kong Chief Executive Tung Chee-Hwa has carried out a reshuffle of three top government posts less than a month after the territory returned to Chinese rule, the official news agency Xinhua announced today, reports AFP.

The appointments, approved last Wednesday by the State Council, China's highest government body, "were based on the recommendations and nominations" submitted by Tung it said.

A Tung spokeswoman said the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) government would shortly issue a statement.

17 clinics in Korangi, while 623 clinics and dispensaries are privately run.

So far no government seems ready to give Karachi's people the vote — and the chance to solve their own problems.

Benazir Bhutto refused because she didn't want to share power with the Mohajirs. Her successor, Sharif, refused during his first term in office in the early 1990s and has said nothing about the issue so far in his second term.

An indefinite moratorium on local elections is a sure way to guarantee a small civil war in Karachi, warns Mohammed Jalil, a leading Mohajir politician.

That possibility frightens many Pakistanis.

"If Karachi cannot be restored some of its forgotten stability, then it will be very difficult for the rest of the country not to feel the impact," The Harard newsmagazine said. "If Karachi falls apart, the centre certainly will not hold."