

Resolve Kashmir dispute before Powell's visit, Pakistan urges US

AP, Islamabad

Pakistan called yesterday for resolving the Kashmir dispute with India before the visit of US Secretary of State Colin Powell, saying the issue remains the most dangerous source of conflict in South Asia.

"Powell's visit, expected Monday, is very important and taking place at an important juncture," Foreign Ministry spokesman Riaz Mohammed Khan told reporters.

Khan said that in addition to Afghanistan, Powell's talks would focus on Kashmir and the whole range of issues between India and Pakistan.

Powell's visit to the region comes as US planes are bombing Afghanistan to destroy the terrorist base run by Saudi dissident Osama bin Laden the key suspect of the deadly terrorist strikes in the United States on Sept. 11.

Pakistan has emerged as Washington's key ally in the war on terrorism.

Pakistan's new image has undermined New Delhi's claims that the country is a sponsor of terrorism in its part of Kashmir, where Muslim guerrillas are waging a secessionist war since 1989 to end Indian rule.

India accuses Pakistan of fomenting the violence in Pakistan, which also held part of Kashmir, calls it an indigenous movement.

Khan said violence in Kashmir is linked to the Indian repression there.

Scores of innocent people are being killed by Indian forces in Kashmir the only Muslim-majority state of Hindu dominated India, he said.

Human rights groups say more than 60,000 people, most of them civilians, have been killed in Kashmir since 1989.

Khan said Pakistani leaders will stress in their meetings with Powell that the Kashmir issue needs to be addressed meaningfully.

Pakistan wants a vote in Kashmir in line with the UN resolutions to determine whether Kashmiris want to join Pakistan or stay with India.

New Delhi rejects the proposal and calls Kashmir an integral part of India. The two countries have fought two wars over Kashmir since they won independence from Britain in 1947.

India is pressing the United States, to declare guerrillas fighting in Kashmir as terrorists.

The United States yesterday froze the accounts of Pakistan-based Kashmiri militant group

BNP: Durga puja

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Cooperatives, Bhuiyan said the people of the country united in all struggles and movements, including the War of Independence.

"The spirit of our War of Independence has further strengthened the harmony, although the evil forces tried to spoil the harmony through some isolated incidents. But, the evil forces never succeeded in the past, nor will in the days to come," he added.

The attacks on the minorities by miscreants before the October 1 election concern the BNP, Bhuiyan said.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia has already instructed the administration concerned to take stern action against the culprits, thereby checking the untoward incidents.

At the same time, the prime minister has instructed the BNP and its different front organisations as well as conscious citizens to be on guard against any untoward incidents.

Back to the Durga puja, Bhuiyan said the Durga puja is one of the main festivals of Hindus, which the BNP government is determined to let them celebrate unhindered.

"The miscreants who attack the minorities cannot have any political identity...they may not have any

Hasina threatens

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torture alongside BNP-Jamaat terrorists in those seats where Awami League had sure chances of winning, Hasina alleged.

Referring to the post-election repression across the country, she asked, "If people are to suffer torture for casting votes for Awami League, then what was the need for staging the drama in the name of election?"

She said: "They could rather declare results according to the result-sheets prepared beforehand under the blueprint."

Hasina said: "Torture and repression are crossing the limit. Being scared, people are leaving their homes. Thousands of Hindu minority people from Barisal and Bagerhat have taken shelter in Gopalganj."

When these people are leaving their homes in fear of persecution on one hand, the administration on the other is threatening to arrest them if they do not return home, she said.

The AL chief protested the remarks of Home Minister Altaf Hossain Chowdhury about the post-election torture and said the home minister has no information about the actual situation on the ground.

How a charge-sheeted accused in the Udichi murder case could become a cabinet minister, she asked.

Hasina said only a small number of incidents are being published in newspapers protecting the prestige of BNP. Had there been full reports

Jaish-e-Mohammed for its alleged links with bin Laden's al-Qaida organization. India, which says its target of terrorism, has welcomed the move.

Khan said Pakistan will probe the allegations against the Jaish-e-Mohammed and may also freeze its accounts here. "I like to assure you that freedom struggle of Kashmir is not dependent on one group or another," he said. It is a struggle of the people of Kashmir for their legitimate rights. It will go on unabated," he said.

Meanwhile, the Jaish-e-Mohammed termed the United States' decision of freezing its accounts as unjust and said the move won't affect its struggle in Kashmir.

"We have no contradiction with America and are not involved in any sort of terrorist activity," spokesman Rana Farooq Tahir told The Associated Press by telephone from Muzaffarabad, the capital of Pakistani Kashmir.

"We are fighting against Indian repression in Kashmir...to liberate our people and land from the yoke of slavery," he said. "It is a legitimate freedom struggle and cannot be termed terrorism."

Projects

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power project at 126 million dollars for a Russian company that could not complete even phase-1 of the same project in the last five years.

It also approved the Tongi 80 MW project at a very competitive cost of 31 million dollars for a Malaysian company. Unfortunately, the company quit the project immediately after its approval in early August.

Besides, there are a lot of questionable projects under DESA.

Office of DPM

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of at least one of the top ministers who aspired for bigger positions than the ones they have been given, explained another minister. Besides, he added, a DPM would also represent the government in the absence of the prime minister.

The Ershad government had three DPMs under the presidential form. But there was no post of DPM since the parliamentary form of government was reintroduced in 1991.

politics at all...they are only miscreants."

He appealed to the Hindu community for celebration of the Durga puja with due solemnity and unrestrained enthusiasm and for helping the government maintain the image of the country.

JU strike

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ist activities on the campus. They called upon the VC to resign immediately to pave the way for resuming academic and administrative activities at the university. JCD leaders vowed that they would continue their indefinite strike till the VC steps down.

The JU Syndicate postponed its meeting yesterday in the face of agitation by JCD.

JCD activists, suspecting that a meeting might take place at the VC's residence laid a siege to the residence after the rally.

The JU authorities deployed police at VC's residence on Friday fearing attacks by JCD activists.

Meanwhile, SURR also brought out a procession on the campus yesterday.

The SURR leaders warned they would go for a tougher agitation programme if their demands were not met immediately.

on the prevailing situation, people would have understood the terrible situation.

Former AL minister Lt. Gen (ret'd) Noor Uddin Khan, Dr Mostafa Jalal Mohiuddin and other party leaders were present during Hasina's visit to the DMCH.

Shahabuddin

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the presidency should President Shahabuddin decline to continue. Top among them had been Professor AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury, who was later named as the foreign minister.

The name of RA Ghani, a former minister of science and technology in late President Ziaur Rahman's cabinet, also came up with Advocate Khandaker Mahubuddin Ahmed.

Although the Awami League named Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed for the topmost position of the republic in 1996, the former chief justice administered the oath of office to Khaleda Zia on two occasions, first time as the president of a caretaker government.

Meanwhile, President Shahabuddin has already asked his personal staff to start packing his personal belongings to be shifted to a rented house (5/4, Block C, Lalmatia). Some items were already sent there yesterday, it was learnt.

Chandrika, Gayoom greet Khaleda

UNB, Dhaka

Sri Lanka President Chandrika Bandarnaika Kumaratunga and Prime Minister Ratnasiri Wickramanayake, and Maldives President Maumoon Abdul Gaoom in separate letters yesterday congratulated Prime Minister Khaleda Zia.

"It gives me great pleasure to extend you warmest felicitations on behalf of the government and the people of Sri Lanka and on my own behalf on your assumption of office as PM," Kumaratunga said.

The Sri Lanka President hoped to strengthen the present close and friendly relationship between the two countries.

Look forward to working closely with you for enhancing the multifaceted relationship between our two countries and giving added impetus to the process of regional cooperation under the SAARC framework," she said.

Maldives President hope that the existing friendly relationship between the two countries would be further strengthened in the days to come.

Hasina

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oppression on their community members would stop.

They told the AL Chief that in the prevailing situation, the Puja Udjapan Parishad has decided to celebrate the forthcoming Durga Puja in a simple manner.

The AL Chief stressed the need or building up resistance against those who are creating communal disharmony in the country to achieve their political ends.

Other members of the delegation include Prafulla Kumar Halder, CR Majumder, Prof Dr Lalit Mohan Nath, CR Sarker, Sabettri Bhattacharya, Kajal Devanath, Deepen Charatjee, Maju Dhar, Tapash Paul, Advocate Satyendra Chandra Bhaktha, Chandranath Podder, Nirmal Chattarjee and Sukhdhar Baidhya.

AL Presidium member Sayeda Sajeda Chowdhury, Health Secretary of AL central committee Dr Mostafa Jalal Mohiuddin, Publicity Secretary Abdul Mannan, office Secretary Advocate Abdul Mannan, former Chhatra League leader Ashim Kumar Ukil were among others, present on the occasion.

Minister's son

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At one stage of torture, he agreed that he would bring his brother within five days and signed his agreement to get freed.

A day before, the cadres of Bachchu forcibly cut down 300 pieces of bamboo from the adjoining garden of Zahurul's house and took away the villagers said.

On Wednesday, the same terrorist group also picked up weekly Kushtia Kantha Editor Abdul Kalam Azad and beat him seriously, sending a wave of panic among many local journalists.

Not only journalists, local people as well said young women in the area were also harassed by the libertines. At least ten women have been manhandled since the October 1 election, they said.

The villagers said the women included two sisters of a union Parishad chairman and daughter of a school teacher in Maricha union.

Another woman, Anwara, was raped and then killed at Hosenabad.

When contacted, Officer-in-Charge at Daulatpur Police Station Maziibar Rahman admitted to the incidents. But he said he had nothing to do.

The state minister and his son were not available. An aide to the minister in Dhaka dismissed all the allegations as "false". "Even we talked to the chairman and he said this is not true," the aide told UNB.

Aamir Khan

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film star Aamir Khan was to be killed. We then laid a trap for them in a western suburb of Mumbai," he said.

Police told the men to surrender but they began firing at the officers and were killed in the gun battle, the officer said.

Three of the four gangsters have been identified as Tanvir Sheikh, Sanjay Kumar and Abdul Javed.

Ibrahim's hitmen are believed to have gunned down movie mogul Gulshan Kumar in 1998 after he refused to pay protection money.

Mumbai police have registered several cases against Ibrahim and his men, who they say have a strangle-hold on Mumbai's film industry.

Ibrahim, son of a Mumbai police constable, is believed to control a multi-million-rupee extortion, protection and smuggling empire from Karachi in Pakistan.

Ibrahim fled Mumbai in the early 1990s and is wanted for allegedly masterminding a series of bombings in the city in 1993 that killed more than 300 people.

Put aside one day's war cost to rebuild Afghanistan

Wali Khan's call to Washington

REUTERS, Peshawar

Pakistan's leading Pashtun nationalist urged the United States yesterday to put aside funds worth one day's bombing in Afghanistan to reconstruct the battered country once the Taliban are chased from power.

Khan Abdul Wali Khan, 84, a legendary figure in the North West Frontier, said Washington must not forget Afghanistan once the Taliban are gone as it abandoned the rugged landlocked country following the Soviet Union's retreat in 1989.

Wali Khan's Awami National Party (ANP), which seeks autonomy for ethnic Pashtuns in Pakistan, supports Washington's war on terrorism but defends the welfare of fellow Pashtun tribesmen across the colonial-era border in Afghanistan.

"You are today spending millions of dollars a day in destroying Afghanistan," Wali Khan, speaking before hundreds of his supporters in Peshawar, said in an appeal to Washington.

"When things settle down, can we request that you please try and use some money even one day's expenditure on the war and the bombing will be enough to turn Afghanistan, a small and beautiful country, into heaven."

"The last time you were here, the moment the Russians went out of the country, you also packed up and

went as if your only job was to come and destroy this country," Wali Khan said in his appeal to the United States.

Washington's erratic record of backing and then dropping allies in South Asia has caused deep concern among Afghan and Pakistani politicians worried about the region's longer-term stability.

The United States provided vast sums of cash and supplies of weapons to the Mujahideen (holy warriors) while they fought Soviet troops in Afghanistan in the 1980s and finally forced them out in 1989.

It cut off aid to the Mujahideen in 1991, one year before they finally drove the Afghan communists from power in Kabul.

Once in power, the groups fell into a civil war that paved the way for the fundamentalist Taliban to seize power in 1996.

"There is a saying in Pashto when bulls fight, the frogs get crushed," Wali Khan remarked. "The most unfortunate part in this is that they (the Americans) did all the destruction and then they went away."

Wali Khan, whose father Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan was a political ally of Mahatma Gandhi in pre-independence India, said Washington had such widespread support that it could strongly influence the transitional phase to a new power structure in Afghanistan.

"The whole world is on the side of

the Americans," he said Washington should give the Afghan opposition "a chance to convene their own Loya Jirga (grand assembly) and so that they can choose by themselves", he said.

After his speech, his son ANP President Afsandayr Wali Khan said their party supported ex-King Zahir Shah as the best person to convene a Loya Jirga, although it was not calling for a restoration of the monarchy.

Asked if the ANP considered Saudi-born militant Osama bin Laden Washington's prime suspect in the September 11 attacks in the United States as a terrorist, he said there was no doubt about this any more.

"After his last interview on all-Jazeera television, things are very clear," he said.

In contrast to Pakistani religious parties backing the Taliban, which wanted to establish a pure Islamic state in Afghanistan, the ANP is a secular movement that thinks Islam belongs in the mosque and not in politics.

It had 35 of the 80 seats in the North West Frontier Province assembly and 10 of the 217 National Assembly seats when General Pervez Musharraf suspended democratic politics on seizing power in a bloodless coup in 1999.

"Let the mullahs look after religious affairs and leave the other matters to the politicians," Wali Khan said. "This is not a holy war."

Chowdhury, most unfortunate saying that such comment not only frustrated the Hindu Community of the country, but is also contrary to what BNP Chief and Prime Minister Khaleda Zia and LGRD Minister Mannan Bhuiyan had said about the attacks on Hindus.

The Home Minister in an interview with BBC on Friday reportedly commented that the reports of repression on Hindu Community were exaggeratedly portrayed by a vested quarter.

Debnath said when the Prime Minister and the BNP General Secretary assured to deal the incidents with strong hand the comment of the Home Minister would encourage the miscreants who are carrying out attacks, looting and rapping.

Durga Puja without festivity

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on Ashtami (Oct 24) and forming human chain and a hour-long silence during Nabami (Oct 25) at all Puja mandaps.

Talking to UNB immediate past general secretary of Bangladesh Puja Udjapan Committee Kajal Debnath said there was no atmosphere for the Hindu Community to observe the Durga Puja with festivity.

He said the committee also decided not to invite former Chief Advisor of the Caretaker Government Justice Latifur Rahman, advisors Barrister Syed Ishtiaq Ahmed, A Mueyed Chowdhury, Justice BB Roy Chowdhury and Chief Election Commissioner MA Syed to any of the functions of the Hindu Community including the Durga Puja.

Debnath said Justice Rahman, the CEC and Justice BB Roy were declared unwanted as they neither gave any protection to the victims nor took any steps to stop attacks on them, while Barrister Ishtiaq and Mueyed Chowdhury made irresponsible comments over the issue.

About a comment of a former advisor that "communal riot is a natural phenomenon," Debnath said it was "barrister unwanted". He said riot is a two-way traffic but the ongoing atrocities on Hindus is one-sided.

He said that all the Hindus in the civil service were withdrawn from the fields and posted en masse in the Secretariat by the caretaker administration reflecting its 'one-eyed' attitude.

Debnath termed a comment of new Home Minister Altaf Hossain

From frying pan into fire

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The victim, a second year student of the Department of Mass Communication and Journalism, narrated his sad story to this correspondent day after JCD miscreants had beaten him up and forced him to leave the hall at the dead of the night.

"Such stories have become common since emergence of the JCD on the campus," said another victim, a resident of the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Hall.

Students were passing their days in a state of insecurity as a number of unknown faces were roaming at the hall since the JCD staged a comeback, he said.

Shatadal, a final year student and resident of the Jagannath Hall, complained that a group of miscreants came to his room on Thursday night, took him outside the hall at gunpoint and roughed him up.

Campus sources said a good number of residents with or without links with the BCL had already been ousted from their dormitories while many others had left their halls to escape the JCD wrath. The BCL leaders and workers had earlier left the campus fearing backlash.

Terrorists belonging to the JCD

also warned the university correspondent of a daily, brandishing firearms on Wednesday night for reporting against them.

The Dhaka University Journalists Association (DUJA) has expressed deep concern over the incident. In a statement, it urged DU authorities and the student body concerned to take action in this regard and address the uneasy situation now prevailing on the campus.

Sources in the JCD said that genuine leaders and workers are very displeased and also bothered by the presence of criminals and outsiders on the campus and halls.

Many students alleged that despite deployment of police, a large number of JCD activists, most of them outsiders, are roaming around the campus and at all the dormitories along with firearms creating panic among students and teachers.

They are taking meals from various halls canteens and shops of the halls without payment. "Owners of the canteens are facing enormous pressure from these people," said a canteen manager.

Meanwhile, control of different halls has led to heightened tension among different JCD factions. There

are fears that violent clash may erupt any time, as the factions are now engaged in a frenzied race to establish their dominance on the campus.

"We don't want to see them, but the reality is that we have nothing to do at the moment," a top-ranking JCD leader said. "These elements are damaging our reputation."

The Dhaka University authorities have so far done nothing to make the campus free from this new breed of terrorists and outsiders.

A top DU official on condition of anonymity told this correspondent that the hall authorities are not going for action fearing reprisal.

When contacted, Vice-chancellor Professor AK Azad Chowdhury said last night that he had told the law enforcing agencies to round up the culprits. "In the Provost Standing Committee meeting, I also asked provosts and house tutors to round the halls and check identity cards of the student."

The VC also expressed frustration over the atmosphere now prevailing on the campus. He however said he would meet the new home minister soon to discuss the campus situation.

Afghanistan: Ground forces

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wire service. On Thursday, Bush said he would halt air strikes if the Taliban "cough up" bin Laden, an offer he described as a second chance.

"Osama is not the issue and people have realised this by the crimes they are committing," Mullah Jamal said. "Our stance regarding the situation is as before."

"Our jihad (holy struggle) ... will continue until the last breath of the defence of our homeland and Islam."

US warplanes bombed Kabul's airport early yesterday and CNN reported the Taliban's southern stronghold of Kandahar was under attack after a lull of nearly 24 hours out of what Washington said was defence to the Muslim holy day.

At least one civilian was killed and four injured near Kabul airport when a bomb landed near a poor residential area. Six houses near the strike site were flattened by the blast.

The death toll pushed past the 300 mark with more than half from a single village near Jalalabad on the sixth day of the US-led assaults and was set to rise, the Taliban said.

"Such acts of the Americans and their supporters are outrageous and show that their enmity is with Afghans and Muslims," Jamal said. "If their claim is getting rid of the

people who they call terrorists then why they have not succeeded. They're boasting their attacks are precise, so why have they failed?"

The United States says the raids are aimed at flushing out Laden and his al Qaeda network, blamed for last month's devastating attacks on New York and Washington.

It said the initial phase of the operation was aimed at eliminating air defences of Afghanistan's Taliban rulers, who have given sanctuary to bin Laden since 1996.

Exhausted residents of the capital were woken today by at least eight huge explosions, with one strike apparently hitting the airport, which has been the main target.

"From my house I could see a bomb land on the airport, I saw a fireball, debris flying up into the sky and the initial big fire then dimming," one witness said.

Residents said the response by the Taliban's anti-aircraft fire had appeared sluggish and light, suggesting the strikes may have hit the country's rudimentary radar facilities and be hurting gun batteries.

"The shockwaves of the bombs were quite severe but there was less anti-aircraft fire seen in the sky compared to other nights," one said.

Six days of US strikes have robbed Taliban fighters of the ability to launch a counter-offensive,

India hails freezing of Kashmir rebel group's assets

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

India has welcomed the freezing of assets of Pakistan-based militant outfit Jaish-e-Mohammed by the United States and Britain and hoped New Delhi's concerns about other terrorist groups would also be addressed.

India has been demanding a ban on Jaish-e-Mohammed by the US and UK ever since the group took responsibility for the deadly attack on the legislative assembly of Jammu and Kashmir on October 1 which left 38 people, mostly civilians, dead. The action by the US and the UK comes ahead of American Secretary of State Colin Powell's proposed visit to India and Pakistan later this month.

India has repeatedly contended that the war against international terrorism should not remain confined to hunting down of Osama bin Laden and his al Qaida network but should also take into account cross-border terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir as part of a comprehensive battle against the menace.

India recently handed over proof to both the US and the UK relating to funding of militant groups operating in Jammu and Kashmir, including Jaish-e-Mohammed, by al Qaida.

The US-led military operations against Afghanistan as well as India's own concern about terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir have witnessed a stepped-up diplomatic offensive by New Delhi.

After the recent visits to Russia, France, Germany, US and UK by

External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh and National Security Advisor Brajesh Mishra, intensive consultations are on the cards between India, Iran, Germany and Russia. The German Foreign Secretary is now in Delhi holding talks with Indian leadership. Russian Deputy Prime Minister Ilya Klebanov is coming here on October 14 followed by Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Mohsen Aminzadeh the next day.

AP adds: The Bush administration Friday named Jaish-e-Mohammed, the Pakistan-based Islamic militant group that has carried out attacks in Kashmir, among 39 individuals and organisations with suspected terrorist ties that would have their assets frozen. Last week, President Bush had told Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee the group would soon be outlawed.

"I welcome this step," Advani told tens of thousands of cheering supporters at a rally of the ruling BJP in the northern city of Agra. "Now the world knows the danger of terrorism that we have been fighting for more than a decade."