War clouds: What's really

going to happen?

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New

Clouds of a military stand-off

between India and Pakistan appear

to be hovering over the skies of the

two countries following military

build-up on both sides of the border.

But no one is really publicly talking

India has signaled it will explore

all diplomatic options to respond to

the situation arising out of the

December 13 attack on Parliament

here by Pakistan-based terrorist

groups Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-

e-Mohammad but did not rule out

the strike formations of their army

and air force, including missiles, to

forward areas along the border. But

India is watching what action, if

any, is taken by Pakistani President

Pervez Musharraf against Lashkar

and Jaish and New Delhi's response

in the coming days will shape its

envoy to Pakistan and snapped roa

and rail links with Pakistan protest-

ing Pakistan's refusal to act against

the terror groups responsible for the

Highly-placed government sources here said the United States

and Britain have in a joint demarche

submitted to Pakistan Foreign

Minister Abdul Sattar last week

asked Islamabad to take decisive

action against the terrorist outfits in

The sources said Musharraf's

remarks at a press conference in

China a few days back that he might

remain their competitiveness not

only in the global market but also in

Talking to The Daily Star,

Kutubuddin Ahmed, President of

Bangladesh Garment

Manufacturers and Exporters

Association (BGMEA), said,

"Readymade garments sector is

already in deep crisis. The govern-

ment decision will aggravate the

The cost of production will now

Benajir Ahmed, President of

Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and

Industries (DCCI) said.

Bandladesh's economy is already

hit by a global recession and local

industries are already facing an

uneven competition from cheap

smuggled goods. Further increase

in cost of production will lead those

go up. Reducing the system loss

would have been a better option.

the domestic market, they said.

attack on Indian Parliament.

India has already recalled its

what will actually happen?

Both the countries have moved

about a "war", at least in India.

the military option.

response.

that country.

situation."

he said.

Follow building code to avert quake risks

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Housing and Public Works Minister Mirza Abbas has advised the city dwellers to comply with the 'building code' while constructing multistorey structures to avert earthquake risks.

Abbas was talking to newsmen at a Meet-the-Reporters programme on "Urbanisation and risk of earthquake in Bangladesh", organised by Dhaka Reporters Unity at its auditorium yesterday. The minister also said the government is fully prepared to tackle any post-earthquake situation.

The government is fully aware of destruction during earthquake as the country is located in a tremor zone now," he said during an hourlong question-answer session. It was the first such programme since the new executive committee took charge of the organisation on December 7

Referring to the recent tremor that jolted the country, Abbas said the recent quake has sounded an alarming bell and the nations needs to be prepared to save life and property of the people. "The government would launch a massive campaign to create awareness among the people through print and electronic media," the minister announced

DRU President Shahjahan Sarder and its Secretary General Motaher Hossain Masum moderated the session where the housing minister, also a joint-secretary of the ruling BNP, replied to a series of questions on different issues including the latest political develop-

Asked whether the new government has outlined any long-term integrated programme for sound urbanisation, the minister appeared

question. "Integration with whom?" was his first reaction. However. when told about the authorities with whom the public works ministry can work through a co-ordinated approach, he assured the newsmen that he would think about such a proposal.

Giving an account of corruption in the Public Works Department (PWD) and Raidhani Unnavan Katripakkha (RAJUK), the minister said that he was tired to see the corruption by a section of officials and employees. "We would take measures to eliminate those elements and replace them with worthy

Abbas blamed a section of property developers for upsetting the ecological balance of the capital city leading to severe water logging. "As the developers grabbed the lowlving land around the city, the drainage system clogged and waterlogging has now become a common phenomenon '

He said that he had directed the authorities concerned to maintain the ecological balance of the city. "I would be a party to the damaging of

the city's ecology further." Regarding the century-old buildings in the city's old part and unplanned constructions at different parts of the city, the minister said that the people themselves should understand the risk. "Can I refrain someone from committing suicide if he wants to do so?"

Abbas, a former mayor of the Dhaka City Corporation, wants to run for the ensuing mayoral polls, tentatively scheduled in late March next year, if picked by his party for the race. "I love the city very much and am sure that given the chance I would be able to build the city into a

Lashkar-e-Taiba

FROM PAGE 12 In August, they were barred from collecting donations and displaying billboards in southern Sindh province. The drive became more

aggressive after Sept. 11. On Monday, Pakistan froze the financial assets of Lashkar-e-Taiba and Ummah Tameer-e-Nau, based in Kashmir, at the urging of US President George W Bush.

Bush accused Lashkar-e-Taiba of sponsoring terrorism following a Dec. 13 suicide attack on the Indian

Jaish-e-Mohammed was added to the US list of terrorist groups in November because of alleged ties to the Afghan Taliban and Osama bin Laden's al-Qaidza network. Indian officials blame Jaish-e-Mohammed for the Parliament

Both groups have denied

Samad Azad

Shahriar's wife, Fatima Kabir, daughter Arpita Shahriar, son Arpon Shahriar and younger brother Kalandiar Kabir. He expressed sympathies for the family and said his party always stands by people's cause.

Samad Azad highly appreciated the role of the freedom fighter in the movement against the war criminals. Though his activities and writings he always fought for establishing the spirit of the liberation

war." he said. "By arresting Shahriar Kabir, the government, in fact, warned others not to criticise the government. But the government must know the truth never remains veiled, it will come out today or tomorrow," said Samad

Asked about the reaction of western world about the arrest of Shahriar, dubbed by Amnesty International as "imprisoned conscience," the former foreign minister said they had been informed. "They

didn't take it in good spirit, but they

have diplomatic limitations. Samad Azad was accompanied by party presidium member Abdul Jalil, MP, Asaduzzaman Noor, MP

tions are designed to malign what they call a legitimate secessionist war in the section of Kashmir controlled by India.

remaining organisation, Harakat-ul Mujahedeen, has been considered a terrorist operation by Washington for several years.

Pakistan-India relations have deteriorated further since the assault in New Delhi that killed 14, including the five attackers. Both countries have sent troops to Kashmir's borders, where they have frequently exchanged artillery and small-arms fire.

India has demanded the arrest of Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed leaders, but Pakistan says wants evidence of wrongdo-89killed

FROM PAGE 1

Mesbahuddin Tipu, 8, and Imon, 4, brother-in-law Ekramul Haq Bhutto, 18, and sister Ayesa Akhter Pankhi,

Two other victims who were travelling in one of the buses were identified as Firoja Begum, 45, wife of Abul Bashar of Batia, Sudharam, Noakhali, and her daughter Rokshana Begum, 12.

The injured were admitted to Comilla Medical College Hospital and Chouddagram Thana Health

Of the injured people, 17 were identified as Abul Bashar, 50, Jafar, Kawser, 5, Abdul Halim, 35, Anwar Hossain, 25, Ibrahim Khalil, 26. Bachchu Mia. 30. Abdus Salam. 10, Badsha, Enamul Haq, 15, Jalal, 40, Kohinoor, 40, Ziaul Haq, Golam Kibria, 40, Marjina, Sabbir Hossan and Joynab Bibi.

The DC and the SP visited the spot. As per instruction of the DC. bodies of the eight victims were handed over to their families without

The buses were seized, but the drivers and helpers managed to

In Gaibandha, a woman was killed and five others were injured in a road accident at Matherhat on Palashbari-Gaibandha road yester-

day. Witnesses said a Gaibandhabound truck hit Manjuri Begum, 23, at about 8.30 am, killing her on the

While fleeing after the accident, the driver lost control over the steering and the speeding truck entered a roadside tea-stall injuring

five other people.

Polybags to go by Feb

"We would enact tougher legislation in the next parliamentary session, if

necessary. Referring to a hartal called by a section of polythene traders in the Old Dhaka protesting the government move, the environment minister noted that some 4,000 workers were now working at 300 factories producing thin polythene bags. 'Country's 13 crore people should not suffer for such a small number of workers who can easily be rehabili-

The minister described how polythene bags were destroying soil, water and air, thus making the environment unlivable

He blamed a section of businessmen for spreading misleading propaganda that the government had banned polythene of all kinds and plastic goods as well. "Right now, we have banned polythene

go ahead with the ban on thin polythene bags, Siraj said: "We won't move an inch from our decision whatever obstruction we face. Crores of people are with us and our success is a must."

The minister urged housewives not to use polythene bags while preserving foods in refrigerators because polybags damage the quality of foods. "You (housewives) should also discourage others from using the harmful polythene bags

Pointing to a notification by the Department of Environment banning marketing and use of polythene bags from January 1 2002, he said the notice had already been sent to all quarters concerned.

To a question, the environment minister said the stock of polythene bags already produced would be sent outside the capital. "But we want manufacturers and traders to damage their stocks.

Blair

FROM PAGE 1

Both the foreign ministry and the British High Commission were tight lipped about the details of the trip.

"We know nothing about this " said a spokesman of the British High Commission, apparently speaking under very stringent rules of security imposed following the September 11 attacks.

The itinerary of the British premier will include official talks with his counterpart Khaleda Zia and a courtesy call on President AQM Badruddozza Chowdhury.

It is expected that the visit of the British prime minister will help strengthen the bilateral ties. Both the countries have major bilateral interests in trade and investment.

In 1996, the then British prime minister John Major also paid an official visit to Dhaka. Several years earlier, former premier James Callaghan also visited Bangladesh.

Police informant

FROM PAGE 1 him dead. The body was sent to the hospital morgue for autopsy.

The duty officer of Mirpur police station said last night that they were aware of the killing. No case was filed in this connection till filing of this report last night.

With the killing, two police informants were murdered in the city in last three days. Police informant, Parvez Alam alias Pharma Jahangir, 45, was shot dead by hoodlums at Aga Sadek Lane in the city's Kotwali area on Sunday.

Trade gap FROM PAGE 1

participating in an Industrial Trade Fair in Kolkata through its distributors in the West Bengal capital and is attracting huge crowd.

Senior Marketing Executive of Micro Electronics Delwar Hossain told The Daily Star that the new duty would throw a spanner in the company's marketing endeavour.

Enayet Hossain of Bangladesh Electrical Association and also Director of the Federation of Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) said the Indian attitude towards Bangladesh is very conservative and the neighbouring country always tries to discourage Bangladeshi exports through posing tariff and non-tariff barriers.

India's repeated rejection to Bangladesh's long-standing demand for zero-tariff access of its 25-category products only reflects its attitude.

He said Bangladeshi entrepreneurs have already asked the commerce ministry to take up such issues prior to a secretary-leve

AL: No move

FROM PAGE 12

"Though I had informal talks with my Treasury Bench counterpart on the issue, no formal dialogue was

Abdus Shahid had talks with Treasury Bench Chief Whip Khondakar Delwar Hossain on the sidelines of a parliamentary programme in the Philippines recently.

He said Al has nominated members to various House committees

formed in recent weeks "Parliamentary standing committees on various ministries have not yet been formed. If the process begins, we will nominate our representatives to those committees." he

Meanwhile, as AL chief Sheikh Hasina is now in the US, senior party leaders are having consultations among themselves about possible response of the party to fresh acts of violence against AL men allegedly perpetrated by the ruling alliance' men in different

areas of the country. AL will project some recent incidents of violence at a press conference in the city today, party sources said.

Hasina is scheduled to return home on January 8.



be willing to act against terror

groups--even though it comes with

he rider of "credible evidence"may

have provided him with the leverage

he needs in his domestic constitu-

ency to do a turn-around in policy

after the reversal of Pakistan's

policy of backing the Taliban in

Pakistan has ordered the freez-

ing of assets of Lashkar and the

NGO Ummah Tameer-e-Nau set up

by retired Pakistani nuclear scien-

tists who are suspected to have

supplied nuclear secrets to Osama

But Indian High Commissioner to

Pakistan Vjiay K Nambiar has made

it clear this is not enough to meet India's set of demands. If Pakistan

declines to act against the terrorist

groups, India is likely to step up the

diplomatic offensive through

another set of measures including

discontinuing over-flight facility to

Pakistan International Airlines

(PIA), downsizing its mission in

Islamabad and asking Pakistan to

scale down its diplomatic presence

about the sincerity of Musharraf's

steps, if any, against the terrorist

outfits and they should not be mere

cosmetic, according to the sources.

against the terrorist groups will be

discussed at a meeting of the

Cabinet Committee on Security

pressure Pakistan to act against the

terrorist groups reach a dead-end,

New Delhi may run out of non-

dent of DCCI and Chairman of

Bengal Fine Ceramics Ltd, said

ceramic is a gas-based industry. It

became a prospective export item

but production cost has gone up

substantially due to devaluation

Increase in prices of gas and

Executive President of

electricity this time will push the cost

further and reduce its competitive-

Bangladesh Truck Owners

Association Hazi Sayedul Haque

and its General Secretary Md

Rustom Ali Khan in a joint statement

said the road transport sector will

face a disastrous situation if the

decision to increase diesel price by

Ganotantrik Front (JGF) held a rally

in front of its office and brought out a

procession in the city protesting the

The Dhaka city unit of Jatiya

Tk. 1.5 per litre is implemented.

ness in the world market, he said.

If India's diplomatic efforts to

lined up here tomorrow.

military options, they said.

Price hike protested

Pakistan's possible measures

India needs to be convinced

in New Delhi, the source said.

Afghanistan.

bin Laden.

FROM PAGE 12 time. Strangely enough, the BPC

But as the government steadied its oil import tariff at around 70 per cent when oil prices in international market shot up, the BPC could not make profit although price of petrol

The Houston Chronicle report

Meanwhile, price of Brent crude which is considered the benchmark for oil prices -- remains at around \$19.32 a barrel. The country consumes more than 16 lakh tonnes of diesel, 4.5 lakh tonnes of kero-

million tonnes of crude oil and refines it at its processing plant to produce diesel and the likes. It also imports 1.8 million tonnes of petrol and diesel and other petroleum products. The country usually spends around Tk 3,500 crore for

written off. BB sources said such a move could be a double edged sword. On one-hand, the banks would have a healthier balance sheet as their non-performing loan amount would reduce. But on the other, the real problem of pursuing the defaulters and punishing the officials responsible would remain a niggling prob-

BPC move

did not make profits during such

Yet, when the BPC purchased crude for 17-18 dollars between 1991 and 1997, and sold petrol in the domestic market at Tk 13 per litre, it made an astonishing profit of Tk 900 crore in one year and around Tk 400 crore per year in other times.

increased to Tk 23 per litre in 1997.

Ever since, the BPC came up with recommendations to increase oil prices further as it ran into severe liquidity crisis. The BPC argued that as per its analysis oil prices would shoot up again and it would incur more losses

But according to international analysis published in the Houston Chronicle on December 21, Oil prices are likely to be lower, but more volatile than ever, over the next three years. This assessment comes from a survey of energy industry executives who attended the annual Arthur Andersen Energy Symposium held in Houston this

further says that demand for oil would increase in the coming years. The newspaper quoted Victor Burk. managing partner of Andersen's Houston-based energy and utility practice as saying, "This implies an expectation that economies in many countries will recover from the current recession relatively early. with a resulting increase in

sene, two lakh tonnes of petrol and one-lakh tonnes of octane.

The BPC imports about 1.2

Bad loans

FROM PAGE 1 denting their image abroad. As a result, those loans which have been dubbed bad for six years could be

Afghan commander held for alleged ties to al Qaida

Anti-Taliban forces have arrested an Afghan commander in eastern Afghanistan for alleged ties to Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida network, officials said yesterday.

Awal Gul, a mid-level commander who played a key role in persuading Taliban commanders to surrender Nangarhar province to council of tribal leaders, was arrested Sunday, Mohammed Zaman, the province's defence chief

"We have arrested Awal Gul because he was in contact with al-Qaida forces," Zaman said, refusing to elaborate

Gul had helped the Taliban when its forces moved into Nangarhar in 1996 and had established close links with Osama bin Laden and his terrorist network, said Atiqullah Racham, a military aide to provincial governor Abdul Qadir.

This month, anti-Taliban troops backed by US bombing overran the Tora Bora cave complex, a major hideout of al-Qaida fighters in Nangarhar. Many al-Qaida members are still believed to be on the run, with some trying to flee east into Pakistan.

'We didn't want to arrest him the first day we took over Jalalabad. We wanted to first capture Tora Bora, then arrest Awal Gul," Racham said. "He thought he might get a big position in the new government, but the (governing council) wants to arrest anyone who had contact with al-Qaida

Racham said he didn't believe Gul's arrest would have any impact on the stability of Nangarhar province, which borders Pakistan.

Gul commanded a small militia loyal to Yunnis Khalis, a conservative Pashtun tribal elder who was an important leader in the war against the Soviet occupation in the 1980s.

Khalis, an Egypt-educated expert on Islamic law, welcomed the rise of

Today, Khalis is elderly and too ill to leave his home. And while he maintains a small militia, his role in eastern Afghan politics is limited to elder statesman and he holds no formal title in the new government.

SAARC summit Deuba to head Nepal's team

AFP, Kathmandu

Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba is set to head the Nepalese delegation to the forthcoming 11th SAARC summit being held in Kathmandu from January 4 to 6, state-run radio said yesterday.

Other members of the Nepalese team are minister of state for foreign affairs Arjun Jung Bahadur Singh Nepalese ambassadors to India and Sri Lanka Bhek Bahadur Thapa and Bal Bahadur Kunwar respectively National Planning Commission member Shanker Sharma, chief secretary Tirtha Man Sakya and secretaries at the finance, industry and commerce and supplies.

The acting foreign secretary is also among the delegates for the SAARC Nepalese team.

Finance minister Ram Sharan Mahat is scheduled to lead the delegation to the 22nd meeting of the SAARC council of ministers stated for January 2 to 3.

Mahat will be attending the council meeting on behalf of Deuba who also holds the foreign ministry portfolio.

Normally, foreign ministers are

expressed their dissatisfaction as

their senior colleagues have been

reportedly showing 'step-brotherly

attitude' towards them and not

giving them any responsibility.

Cabinet reshuffle

The 'Hawa Bhaban', set up ahead of the eighth parliamentary polls to conduct the party's election activities, has now emerged as the most important establishment after the Prime Minister's Office.

Tareque Rahman, eldest son of Prime Minister Khaleda Zia, is now the supreme authority of the 'Hawa Bhaban'. He is flanked by a group of young politicians, businessmen and administrative officials. As a result of such lobbying, a

stagnation has been prevailing in the administration. Fear of losing jobs or getting undesired transfers among the government officials has also slowed down governance. Rivalry among the ministers over distribution of responsibilities has

also caused lack of coordination in the government's 100-day A number of state ministers have

Sources said the prime minister is closely watching the activities and performances of the ministers, getting feedback from different sources and is also discussing the new portfolio distribution with party policymakers. Speculations are now rife about the reshuffle.

Senior party leaders Oli Ahmed, Khandaker Mahbubuddin Ahmed Ashraf Hossain, Mir Shawkat Ali and some others like Ali Asgar Loby and Nazimuddin Alam are also expecting to get portfolios. Besides, Bangladesh Jatiya Party Chairman Naziur Rahman Manjur and one representative from the Islami Oikya Jote are also trying to make it to the council of ministers.

Christmas celebrated

State Minister for Religious Affairs Mosharraf Hossain Shahjahan attended the reception.

President AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury, Prime Minister Khaleda Zia and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina gave messages on the occasion greeting the country's Christian community.

The president, in his message, said Jesus Christ spent his whole life in the service to distressed humanity and preaching universal message of peace for the mankind. Prime Minister Khaleda Zia said

Jesus Christ, who came to this world only to serve the distressed humanity alongside establishing peace and justice, became immortal mainly due to his own way of living and courage of character.

Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina said Jesus Christ had struggled throughout his life for establishing peace, humanity, justice, and security in society, and the dis-

tressed in particular. St Mary's Cathedral at Kakrail, the Holy Cross at Luxmibazar and churches at Tejgaon, Banani, Asad Gate and Kafrul here organised special prayers.

St Paul's Church in Narayanganj, churches in Chittagong and at other places also observed the day with due religious fervour.

Hotel Pan Pacific Sonargaon and some other leading hotels also held different programmes on the occasion. Bangladesh Television and Bangladesh Betar yesterday aired special programmes. National dailies brought out special supplements highlighting the significance of the day. The day was a national

India moves air force, missiles

buildup on the other side of the border and the cease-fire line that divides the disputed Kashmir prov-

Indian soldiers and Pakistani

troops exchanged heavy fire and

shelled each other through a second night Monday in the Jammu region of Kashmir, an army official said on condition of anonymity. Three Indians were killed yesterday in the cross-border firing.

ince between the two countries.

sector. They also reported sporadic The Press Trust of India, meanwhile, said more than 3,000 civilians have fled their homes in frontier

Security officials in New Delhi

said two soldiers and a woman died

when Pakistani troops targeted

the recent border clashes. The Star TV network said the situation along the India-Pakistan

parliament by five gunmen, which

and Jaish-e-Mohammad Islamic rebel groups and said it was masterminded by Pakistan's military secret Islamabad has rubbished the

Highly-placed defence ministry officials in New Delhi also confirmed the military movements to the borders. "We are re-scheduling forma-

Frontier air bases in western Rajasthan state have been strengthened, an air force official said, adding: "We are ready to counter and combat any eventual-

India has some of its key air

moved to air bases in Bikaner Barmer and Jaisalmer, about 400-550 kilometers southwest of New

Railroad authorities said about a dozen passenger train services on the rail routes linking these air bases and other army facilities have been suspended since Monday. This was done "to facilitate smooth transportation of troops and weaponry to the frontier bases," an official at the

the Indian army said yesterday that it had destroyed eight enemy bunkers since firing in the Galahar sector began Sunday after Pakistani troops shot and killed two Indian soldiers on patrol. More than 2,000 villagers in the Galahar sector, 45 kilometers south

of Jammu have evacuated and moved top safer places. About 600 of them have been sheltered in a government school building, an army official said on condition of

Mortar shelling also continued in two other sectors, Poonch and Naushera, where three Indian soldiers were critically wounded, the

Atal Behari Vajpayee said his government was discussing war, but that diplomacy was the first option.

Nambiar left Islamabad yesterday. On Monday, Delhi expelled a Pakistan High Commission employee in New Delhi for allegedly collecting 'sensitive' national security information. India is also planning an eco-

nomic offensive against Pakistan, which may include scrapping the Most Favored Nation trade status to Pakistan and a treaty on sharing of water from rivers that originate in the Indian territory and flow through Pakistan, the Hindustan Times newspaper reported Tuesday.

stopped from flying its jetliners to India, the report said. New Delhi has already announced to suspend the bus and train services to Pakistan

Alternative roads

risen there since Monday. But due to bad condition of the roads, traffic snarl-ups became frequent. They have urged the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) to immediately repair the roads and remove

encroachments for easy passage of rickshaws and vehicles. Sharif Mollah, a grocery shop owner in Rajabazar, said the government only looks after facilities for people who use expensive vehicles but ignores the need for improvement of 'these lanes and by-lanes'

where rickshaws are allowed to ply. Green Road, one of the most important thoroughfares of the area where rickshaws are still allowed is also in a run-down state. The entire stretch of the Green Road was dug recently for 'mysterious reasons' and the area remains blanketed by dust day and night. Many parts of the Green Road have been encroached by roadside shops and dumping of construction materials on the street.

Local people said if the authorities take measures to remove the encroachments and chalk out a traffic management, it will help thousands living there.

parking of a single vehicle at a wrong place or its effort to make way through a narrow lane," said Taslima Zakir, a teacher from Kalabagar Lake Circus area. With the diverted traffic from

Panthapath, Green Road has to take a greater load of traffic now. The authorities should move fast to remove the obstacles and bring some discipline on the streets, loca people said.

Many residents at Lake Circus said it is beyond comprehension how the authorities allowed hospitals, shopping centers and other commercial buildings along the Green Road without parking facili-

Gas export FROM PAGE 12

tious about massive opposition to the gas-export issue as it felt the need for building public confidence in the export option. To do so, it suggested that the

government pay "careful attention" to transaction transparency and ensure that additional resources are used in public interest. The bank felt that establishing a

strong Public Expenditure Commission could be an important step in this regard.

and Barrister Ameer-ul-Islam. Prof Borhanuddin Khan Zahangir, Prof. Two of the injured were admitted Muntasir Mamun and Nirmul to Gaibandha Sadar Hospital, The Committee leader Kazi Mukul were truck was seized but its driver and also present helper managed to escape.

tated.'

bags up to only 20 microns.' On a note of firm determination to

for shopping."

Indian military posts in Poonch cross-border exchanges of fire. districts of Kashmir since the start of

> frontiers was "volatile" and reported sporadic cross-border artillery and small arm duels between the two Military tensions between the two neighbours have spiralled since

the December 13 strike on India's

left 14 people including the attackers dead. India blamed the attack on Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba

accusations and asked India for evidence to back its charges.

tions and air force squadrons as part of precautionary measures being adopted in view of the amassing of troops on the other side," an official

bases in Rajasthan, a mostly desert region that shares a 1140-kilometer border with Pakistan. More air equipment has been

Indian Railways said. In the Jamnu region of Kashmir,

As gunfire spread to more areas, the army ordered people in two

villages in Hiranagar sector, 60

kilometers south of Jammu, to

Last week, India's Prime Minister

Indian ambassador Vijay K

State-owned Pakistan International Airlines may also be

> "When we come out in the morning, we find the Green Road clogged because of very simple reasons like