

Militants kill three in Kashmir

AFP, Srinagar

Suspected Muslim rebels hanged a young woman and shot dead two former comrades, police said Monday, as the state capital made its annual summer move to the main city Srinagar.

Police blamed rebels for hanging a 22-year-old Muslim woman in northern Baramulla district.

"She was abducted some 20 days ago and later hanged by militants. Her body was recovered late Sunday," a police spokesman said.

He said suspected rebels also shot dead two former colleagues in the district of Baramulla and

Pulwama in the south, but gave no further details.

No group claimed responsibility for the killings.

The state has seen an overall dip in bloodshed since India and Pakistan launched a peace process in January 2004, but violence has surged in the past month during local elections and talks between the New Delhi government and moderate separatists.

Last week 35 unarmed Hindus were killed by suspected militants.

Officially more than 44,000 people have been killed in Kashmir since the eruption of insurgency against Indian rule in 1989.

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Cooperation in Police Matters" will be held at Dhaka Sheraton Hotel two days ahead of the first conference of Saarc home ministers at the same venue. Bangladesh Home Secretary Safar Raj Hossain will inaugurate the police meet.

According to sources in the police,

the police chiefs will discuss anti-terrorism policies of the seven member countries, regional policy on fighting trans-border terrorism, trafficking in women and children, smuggling of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, formation of the "Saarc Police" and signing of extradition treaty.

It is important for Bangladesh Police to have international connection to get rid of "political use" of the police force, said some serving and former police officers.

"We're waiting eagerly to see the formation of the Saarc police because it is very urgent for us to get linked with such an international body to reduce political use of and influence on the police," a top police officer told The Daily Star yesterday on condition of anonymity.

As several Bangladeshi criminals including some top ones hiding in the neighbouring countries especially in India cannot be brought back and tried due to absence of any extradition treaty, the police officials consider the agreement as an urgent issue.

"The top criminals, hiding outside the country, control their network in Bangladesh, but we cannot bring them back," a former inspector general of police told The Daily Star, adding that Bangladesh has extradition treaty only with Thailand.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia will inaugurate Saarc home ministers' conference at the Winter Garden of Dhaka Sheraton Hotel while State Minister for Home Affairs Lutfuzzaman Babar will inaugurate the home secretaries' conference.

discuss the report.

SAARC POLICE, EXTRADITION ISSUES NEED ATTENTION

Top police officers of Bangladesh said they are keen to see the developments in discussion on formation of the "Saarc Police" and signing of extradition treaty.

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Indian heat wave death toll rises to 53

AFP, Lucknow

The death toll from a blistering heat wave across India climbed to 53 yesterday and weather forecasters predicted worse to come with temperatures already above 40 Celsius (104 Fahrenheit).

Six more people had died "of heat stroke in the last 24 hours taking the toll to 25," in Uttar Pradesh said state police official Mukesh Singh.

All the dead were poor and homeless, he said from the state capital Lucknow. Two of the dead were children.

The other deaths were reported

from eastern Orissa state where 27 people died of heat-related problems over the weekend. One death was also reported in the holy city of Amritsar in Punjab state.

In Lucknow the day temperature was likely to rise in the next 24 hours, R.K. Verma, director of the state Meteorological Department, told AFP.

"Hot winds are likely to sweep the plains of Uttar Pradesh, making life more miserable," he warned.

In New Delhi the temperature climbed to 44.5 degrees Celsius at the weekend and dust storms were expected by Wednesday.