

Militants kill 'US spy' in Pak tribal region

AFP, Islamabad

Islamic militants have shot dead a 30-year-old man suspected of spying for the US in a remote Pakistani tribal district near the Afghan border, an official said yesterday.

Rahim Khan's bullet-ridden body was found late Friday near the village of Alikhel, 12 kilometers (around eight miles) west of Miranshah, the main town in North Waziristan.

"A note left on the body said Rahim was spying for the US forces stationed across the border and has met his fate," a security official in Miranshah, where Pakistani forces are battling Taliban and Al-Qaeda fighters sheltering in the region, told AFP.

Militants linked to Afgha-nistan's ousted Taliban militia have killed several pro-government tribesmen and Afghan refugees in the lawless region in recent months on charges of spying for US forces.

Freed academic among Qaeda suspects held in S Arabia

AFP, Riyadh

An Islamist academic who was freed under a royal pardon in 2005 is among a dozen Al-Qaeda suspects detained in Saudi Arabia this month, the interior minister said in comments published yesterday.

Saeed bin Zueir, a former professor of mass communication, and his fellow detainees are "considered among the financiers and inciters of terrorism" in the oil-rich kingdom, Prince Nayef bin Abdul Aziz told the Al-Riyadh daily.

Bin Zueir was arrested in 1994 and sentenced to five years in jail for justifying acts of violence but served barely a year of his sentence before being pardoned.

"Those arrested have an influential role and they could be more important than those who committed the terror attacks themselves," Prince Nayef said.

The Okaz daily meanwhile reported that the number of suspects in custody had risen to 14 after the authorities detained three more.

Announcing the first 11 arrests on Thursday, the interior ministry said one was a suspect in one of Al-Qaeda's most ambitious operations in the kingdom -- a February 2006 assault on the world's biggest oil processing plant.

Two security guards were killed in the attack but the two suicide bombers failed to get inside the Abqaiq plant in Saudi Arabia's eastern oilfields.

Saudi Arabia was the country of Al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden's birth and the militant network has been behind a wave of deadly violence in the kingdom since May 2003.



PHOTO: AL
Awami League President Sheikh Hasina consoles Mostafa Kamal, a Dhanmondi AL leader and victim of August 21 grenade attack, in front of her Sudha Sadan residence in the city yesterday.

Death toll from Oman cyclone hits 49

AFP, Muscat

Cyclone Gonu, which tore through Oman this week before veering towards Iran, killed at least 49 people and left another 27 missing in the Gulf sultanate, police said on Friday.

"The death toll from Cyclone Gonu has risen to 49," a police spokesman told the official ONA news agency.

Oman was lashed by driving rain and heavy winds on Wednesday as thousands of people were evacuated in the face of the storm.

Television broadcast footage of overturned cars and flooded roads on the battered east coast, and a police spokesman said officers even had to

use jet skis in some areas of the seaside capital.

As the sunshine returned to the normally dry sultanate on Thursday, residents ventured into the open to find trees and road signs uprooted and debris washed up along the shore.

Although the storm had raised fears about oil shipments in the Strait of Hormuz, through which about one quarter of the world's crude supplies pass, officials said shipping had not been affected.

Muscat airport, which was closed by the storm, reopened on Friday, flagcarrier Omanair said.

In neighbouring Iran, the storm lost force as it drove inland after

hitting the southern coast late on Wednesday, killing two people and forcing some 40,000 to flee.

By late Thursday, most of those who had been evacuated from coastal areas in the southern Sistan-Baluchestan and Hormozgan provinces had returned to their homes, state television said.

Two people in a truck loaded with emergency supplies were killed in Hormozgan's southern port of Bandar-e Jask when a river overflowed because of the heavy rains, causing the vehicle to overturn, relief officials said.

Iranian Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki telephoned his Omani counterpart, Yusef bin Alawi bin Abdullah, to express sympathy for those affected and to offer help, Iranian state television said Friday.

"(Iran) is ready to offer any kind of aid and assistance to those hurt by the cyclone and the victims' families," Mottaki said.

Iran's elite Revolutionary Guards' air force said it had delivered 40 tons of food to the port city of Chabahar in Sistan-Baluchestan province.



PHOTO: STAR
Police arrest Asaduzzaman Tuhin, a listed criminal and Islami Chhatra Shibir cadre, at Dasmari area near Rajshahi University campus yesterday.

Kim Dae-Jung for 2nd inter-Korean summit

AFP, Seoul

Former South Korea President Kim Dae-Jung yesterday urged a second inter-Korean summit no later than mid-August to help international efforts towards the North's nuclear disarmament.

The Nobel peace prize laureate also said the six-party talks on ending Pyongyang's atomic weapons programme will eventually succeed despite an impasse over the release of the communist state's funds frozen under sanctions.

"Both sides have won what they wanted. If they fail here, there would only be losses for both sides," Kim said in reference to a deal struck in February at the talks including the two Koreas, the United States, China, Russia and Japan.

Through the agreement,

Pyongyang obtained a US commitment for direct dialogue, security guarantee, lifting of economic sanctions and diplomatic ties.

In return, the deal obliged the North to give up its nuclear weapons.

"The six-party talks, despite the impasse over technical issues, will come to a success in the end. There is no alternative but a solution through dialogue and a give-and-take deal," Kim said.

Kim, who was president between 1998 and 2003, met with the North Korean leader in June 2000 in Pyongyang for a landmark summit which led to reconciliation and economic exchanges between the two Cold War rivals.