

## 60 YEARS OF INDEPENDENCE Kashmiris call for end to Indo-Pak divide

AFP, Srinagar

Mughlia Begum was just 18 when partition shook the sub-continent on August 14, 1947. In the bloody turmoil, she lost her father Abdul Aziz, who worked in Peshawar as a cook.

Unable to reach the Indian side of the fractured state of Kashmir, he stayed put in the new Muslim nation of Pakistan and remarried, while still trying to return to visit the other wife and four daughters left behind.

Abdul Aziz never made it back. "It was a telegram that informed us of Aziz's death," says Begum's daughter-in-law Hafiza Nazir, who received the message in 1980.

"It reached us two months after his death and devastated us."

Kashmir is awash with stories of families and friends butchered or lost in the frenzy of one of the largest migrations in history -- and many from the Indian half of the state now say such tales are better left in the past.

For the last three years, the guns have gone silent on the heavily-armed Line of Control (LoC) that divides the Himalayan outpost between India and Pakistan.

New Delhi and Islamabad have re-established bus and other links to unite divided families as part of an effort to make the de facto border "irrelevant", in the words of Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh.

Begum says that after 60 years, it is an idea whose time has come.

"Take it from me, this LoC will not be there. People will dismantle it like the German (Berlin) wall," she told AFP at her cozy house in Indian Kashmir's summer capital Srinagar.

"I know the real pain of partition. I was angry with my father for having left us alone but later I came to know he wanted to return but failed."

Begum says as she wipes away tears with her white headscarf.

## Nuke deal does not prohibit atomic test

### Says Indian PM after uproar in parliament

AP, New Delhi

India is free to test nuclear weapons under a much-touted nuclear deal with the United States, the country's prime minister said yesterday as lawmakers opposed to the pact noisily demanded the agreement be scrapped.

The civilian nuclear cooperation deal reverses three decades of American policy by allowing the U.S. to send nuclear fuel and technology to India, which has never signed major international nonproliferation accords and has tested atomic weapons in the past.

Since it was first announced in July 2005 it has been praised as a cornerstone of an emerging partnership between India and the United States after decades on opposite sides of the Cold War divide. But it has also drawn criticism in both

countries.

In India, many critics simply oppose closer ties with the United States, and some argue the pact undermines the country's cherished nuclear weapons programme.

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh insisted that was not the case in a speech to lawmakers Monday.

"The agreement does not in any way affect India's right to undertake future nuclear tests if it is necessary in India's national interest," he said.

As he spoke, lawmakers from the Hindu nationalist opposition and from communist parties that support Singh but oppose the deal sought to drown out the prime minister, shouting, "cancel the nuclear deal!"

Similar protests by lawmakers earlier in the day had forced the house to adjourn until Singh spoke in the afternoon.

Singh's speech follows the sealing of a technical pact, known

as the 1-2-3 agreement, which details how nuclear cooperation between New Delhi and Washington is to work.

India got nearly everything it wanted in the 1-2-3 agreement, including the right to stockpile and reprocess atomic fuel.

The deal also does not contain a test ban, and some clauses have been interpreted to mean that an Indian test would not automatically scuttle the deal if the move followed tests by either Pakistan or China, India's major rivals.

But the US Congress last year included a test ban when it created an exception for India to American laws that prohibit civilian nuclear cooperation with countries that have not signed the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty.

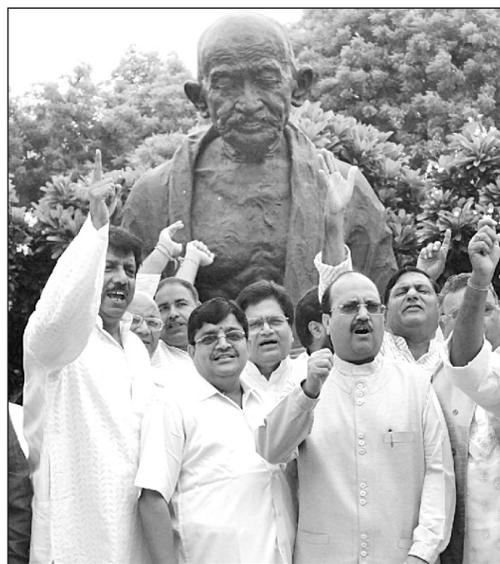


PHOTO: AFP

Indian opposition MPs shout anti-Congress slogans in front of parliament in New Delhi yesterday. The opposition members were protesting against Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's address to the parliament defending the landmark Indo-US civilian nuclear deal.

## Boucher to talk security, politics in Pakistan

AFP, Islamabad

Richard Boucher, Assistant US Secretary of State for South Asia, is due to visit Islamabad for top level security and counter-terrorism talks, officials said yesterday.

Foreign office spokeswoman Tasnim Aslam confirmed the visit but gave no immediate details.

"He is planning a visit but I don't have a precise date," Aslam said.

US and Pakistani media have said he is due to arrive Monday on a one-day visit and is expected to meet with President Pervez Musharraf and Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz, among other senior officials.

Boucher's visit to the key US ally will be his second to Islamabad within a month.

It follows intense pressure on Musharraf to crack down on Taliban and al-Qaeda militants allegedly holed up in Pakistan's troubled northwestern tribal belt bordering Afghanistan.

It also comes in the wake of a political crisis triggered by Musharraf's attempt to sack Pakistan's independent-minded chief justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry in March, which caused widespread protests.

## Case filed against Indian MP for threatening to kill Taslima

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

The police in the southern Indian city of Hyderabad filed a case against a legislator of an Islamic party who had threatened to kill exiled Bangladeshi writer Taslima Nasreen if she visits the city again.

After securing permission from a local magistrate, the police registered the case against Akbaruddin Owaisi, legislator of Majlis-e-Itehadul Muslimeen (MIM), on Saturday night on charges of criminal intimidation.

The case against Owaisi came five days after Nasreen was attacked at a function in Hyderabad Press Club to mark the release of her book "Shodh".

The police have already filed a case against Nasreen on charges of hurting religious sentiments.

The case against Owaisi came against the backdrop of outcry that police was going soft on MIM leaders involved in the attack.



PHOTO: AFP

Chairman of the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), Prachanda gestures as he speaks during a press conference in Kathmandu Sunday. During the conference Prachanda declared that people would revolt if the constituent assembly election does not take place on November 22.

## Maoists threaten to quit Nepali govt

AP, Kathmandu

Nepal's former rebels threatened Sunday to quit an interim coalition government unless their demands were met, which include the creation of a republic and protection against attacks from rival groups.

Communist rebel leader Prachanda told reporters his faction would leave the coalition government, formed as part of a peace deal, and launch protests unless other members of the administration meet the demands.

"We will decide within a week or 10 days," said Prachanda, who goes by one name.

The communists gave up a decade-old armed revolt last year to join the peace process and became part of the Parliament and government this year.

The former rebels have threatened to walk out of the government several times in recent months, but Sunday's warning was likely to be

taken more seriously as it came after a weeklong meeting in the capital, Kathmandu, between local and national-level leaders of the communist movement.

Former communist activists have been attacked by rival groups in recent months. At least 28 communist supporters were killed during one attack by an ethnic minority group on a communist rally in March in southern Nepal.

The former rebels also want other members of the coalition government to reveal the location of hundreds of their militants missing during years of fighting.

The other coalition partners in Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala's government did not comment on Prachanda's threat.

The government is to hold elections for a special assembly in November that would decide on a political system for Nepal, currently a constitutional monarchy, and rewrite the constitution.

## Arabs urged to stop 'genocide campaign' by Iraqi Shias

AP, Baghdad

Iraq's most senior Sunni politician issued a desperate appeal Sunday for Arab nations to help stop what he called an "unprecedented genocide campaign" by Shia militias armed, trained and controlled by Iran.

The US military reported five American soldiers were killed, apparently lured into an al-Qaeda trap.

Adnan al-Dulaimi said "Persians" and "Safawis," Sunni terms for Iranian Shias, were on the brink of total control in Baghdad and soon would threaten Sunni Arab regimes which predominate in the Mideast.

"It is a war that has started in Baghdad and they will not stop there but will expand it to all Arab lands," al-Dulaimi wrote in an impassioned e-mail to The Associated Press.

Sunni Arab regimes throughout the Middle East fear the growing influence of Iran's Shia theocracy

with radical groups like Hezbollah and Hamas as well as the Syrian regime. Raising the specter of Iranian power reaching the Arab doorstep, unlikely in the near-term, betrayed al-Dulaimi's desperation.

But his fears of a Shia takeover of Baghdad were not as farfetched. Mahdi Army militiamen have cleansed entire neighbourhoods of Sunni residents and seized Sunni mosques. Day by day, hundreds have been killed and thousands have fled their homes, seeking safety in the shrinking number of majority Sunni districts.

The fighters, nominally loyal to radical Shia cleric Muqtada al-Sadr, are believed to operate as death squads blamed for much of the country's sectarian slaughter.

Sunni extremists, many with al-Qaeda links, are responsible too, mainly through massive bombings, often carried out by suicide attackers.

## No deal with Musharraf on dual posts: Benazir

PTI, New York

Former Pakistan prime minister Benazir Bhutto has said there is no agreement with Pervez Musharraf that he continue to hold the dual posts of Army Chief and President, but the issue need not be the reason for breaking the talks and could be settled in court.

Benazir, addressing a meeting of her supporters in the city Saturday evening, also said she would call a meet of top officials of her Pakistan People's Party (PPP) here towards the end of this month.

Sources close to her said she is expected to brief them on her meeting with President Musharraf and discuss the future course of action in view the forthcoming elections, including her possible return to the country.