



PHOTO: AFP  
Pakistani frontier constabulary officers pose beside a damaged army vehicle after an ambush by Taliban militants in the Sakhakot area of the Malakand district yesterday. Militants killed two close aides of an Islamist hardline cleric in an ambush on the prison convoy in northwest Pakistan as troops pressed their offensive against the Taliban.

## Militants kill aides of cleric captured by Pak military

AP, Islamabad

Militants ambushed a military convoy carrying prisoners in Pakistan's volatile northwest yesterday, killing two detained aides of a senior Islamist cleric from the Swat Valley, the army said.

A roadside bomb and gunfire hit the convoy as it travelled from Sakhakot town near Swat to the main northwestern city of Peshawar early Saturday, an army statement said. One soldier also died in the attack and five were wounded, it said.

The army identified the prisoners as Muhammad Maulana Alam and Ameer Izzat Khan, top aides to hard-line cleric Sufi Muhammad who negotiated a peace deal with the government that was widely seen as allowing the Taliban to seize control of the Swat Valley.

The deal collapsed earlier this year

when the Taliban advanced into neighbouring districts, triggering a military offensive that prompted a spree of retaliatory attacks by militants in the northwest and beyond.

A military official, speaking on condition of anonymity because he was not authorised to talk to media, said the prisoners' deaths were apparently an accident because the attackers would not have known they were in the convoy.

But Rasul Bahksh Rais, a political scientist at Lahore University, said the killings may have been deliberate to prevent Alam and Khan from giving the military information that could help find Taliban leaders in the Swat region.

"I think it was a targeted killing by the militants because they could identify the whereabouts of some of the militant" leaders, Rais told the Express 24/7 television

network. "They were high-value targets."

No senior Taliban figures have so far been captured or killed in the month-old army offensive in Swat, which is seen as a test of Pakistan's resolve to take on militants who have challenged the central government's rule by strengthening their influence in the border region with Afghanistan.

Security forces detained Alam and Khan during a raid last Thursday at a religious school in a district near Swat. Another aide to Muhammad, Syed Wahab, was also seized. It was not immediately known if Wahab was in the convoy on Saturday.

The Taliban have vowed a campaign of retaliatory attacks for the military offensive, and a series of bombings and shootings have hit security forces and civilian targets, including a marketplace and a bus stop.

## Missing Air France jet sent 24 error messages

CNN ONLINE, Paris

Air France Flight 447 sent out 24 automated error messages - including one saying the aircraft's autopilot had disengaged - before it vanished with 228 people on board, aviation investigators said yesterday.

But even as they analysed the error messages and satellite images of the doomed flight's path, investigators said they still have a lot of work to determine what caused the plane to go down.

"I would just like to ask you to bear in mind that all of this is dynamic and there are a lot of question marks," Paul-Louis Arslanian, head of France's accident investigation bureau told reporters.

## Poison plot against Asians, Blacks by White supremacists busted in UK

ANI, London

A deadly terror plot by suspected white supremacists was busted when the police recovered dangerous ricin meant to poison ethnic minorities in the United Kingdom.

It is feared the lethal nerve toxin was intended for use as part of a biological weapon against blacks and Asians, the Daily Express reports.

The fatal agent, for which there is no antidote, is 6,000 times more poisonous than cyanide. An amount the size of a grain of salt is enough to kill an adult.

During an anti-terror raid at a terraced house in Burnopfield, the police found the ricin in a jam jar in a kitchen cupboard.

Durham's assistant chief constable Mike Barton said: "This shows that the terrorist threat in the UK is real. We believe the people involved to be white supremacist extremists and one of our lines of inquiry was that they were going to target people from ethnic minorities."

## Gilani asks Holbrooke to provide drone tech to Pakistan

ANI, Lahore

Pakistan Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani has reiterated that the United States should provide drone technology to Pakistan, so that it can carry out missile hits on extremists on its own.

Talking to media persons on the sidelines of a foundation laying ceremony at the Aiwan-e-Quaid-e-Azam here, Gilani said Pakistan has clarified its stance on drone attacks to the United States during his recent meeting with US Special Envoy for Pakistan and Afghanistan Richard Holbrooke.

"Pakistan told US if the drone attacks are necessary, so this technology should be given to Pakistan, as these attacks by US forces are harming the war against terrorists," The News quoted Gilani, as saying.

Earlier, addressing a press conference here at the end of his three day visit to Pakistan, Holbrooke said American forces would not enter Pakistan and would respect its sovereignty and integrity. "Pakistani security forces

were responsible for taking action against terrorists on their soil," he said.

Pakistan forces would be made aware of the operation being carried out by the US Air Force in Afghanistan along the Pakistan border so that they could take preventive measures to ensure that there are no spill overs of the terrorists, he added.

Referring to the Swat military offensive, Holbrooke said there is a marked change in the public's attitude toward militancy.

Islamabad is more committed to rooting out terrorism from its soil than ever, and there is greater consensus on the issue of extremism in the country, The News quoted him, as saying.

The United States is aware of the situation in the Swat Valley and is concerned over the exodus of over three million people from the region.

"The United States is committed to supporting democracy, stability and economic prosperity of Pakistan," he added.

## Election Commission favouring UPA in Rajya Sabha polls: BJP

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE, Ranchi

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in Jharkhand has accused the Election Commission of India of trying to help the United Progressive Alliance by holding the election of two Rajya Sabha seats separately in the state.

"The Election Commission is trying to help the UPA by holding the election of two Rajya Sabha seats separately. The election of both Rajya Sabha seats should take place together," BJP leader Raghubar Das told reporters here Saturday.

The election of the two Rajya Sabha seats of Jharkhand will take place June 20.

The two seats fell vacant after former external affairs minister and senior BJP leader Yashwant Sinha was elected to the Lok Sabha. The second seat fell vacant when Janata Dal-United (JD-U) Raja Sabha MP, Digvijay Singh quit to fight the Lok Sabha election as an independent candidate from Banka in Bihar. Singh won the election.

## Pakistani chief justice finally meets Zardari

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE, Islamabad

In a fence-mending move, Supreme Court Chief Justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry has finally met Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari, the man who had bitterly opposed his reinstatement to the post he had been sacked from two years ago.

The 20-minute one-to-one meeting took place Friday evening ahead of Zardari swearing in Justice Agha Rafiq Ahmed Khan as the Chief Justice of the Federal Shariat Court.



PHOTO: AFP  
Handout picture shows Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari (L) talking with Supreme Court Chief Justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry during a meeting in Islamabad on Friday.

## 'Suu Kyi party warned over trial criticism'

AFP, Yangon

Myanmar authorities have summoned members of Aung San Suu Kyi's pro-democracy party to rebuke them for provoking "unrest" over a statement critical of her trial, state media reported yesterday.

Four senior members of the National League for Democracy (NLD) met officials for 30 minutes late Friday after comments by the party's youth wing were leaked to the website of a prominent blogger, the New Light of

Myanmar said.

"Though NLD has rights for freedom of speech, the announcement... has harmed peace and stability and prevalence of law and order in the country and disturbed the trial proceedings of a court," the paper reported in English.

"That can mislead the people into misunderstanding the government, incite activities that may harm the public respect for the government, and cause unrest," it said.

## Violence kills 16 people in Afghanistan

AFP, Kabul

A suicide bomb rocked an Afghan town bordering Pakistan Saturday killing four people as clashes claimed the lives of another 12 in a fresh wave of insurgent violence, authorities said.

The suicide blast, detonated by a man on a bomb-filled motorbike, tore through a busy bus station in the southern town of Spin Boldak, police said.

Including the suspect, five were killed and eight were wounded, said the Kandahar province border police chief, Jawad Ahmad.

The interior ministry said three people -- a man, a woman

and a child -- were killed in a suicide attack. Eleven were wounded including five children, it said, adding the device had exploded before the bomber reached his target.

There was no claim of responsibility for the attack but militants allied to the extremist Taliban militia, which has carried out scores of suicide attacks, are active in southern Afghanistan and across the border in Pakistan.

Also on Saturday, Taliban militants ambushed a private security company in the southwestern province of Nimroz, killing three armed guards and wounding one, provincial governor Ghulam Dastagir Azad said.

## Kashmir row resolution key to Indo-Pak peace

Says Nawaz Sharif

ANI, Islamabad

Former Pakistan prime minister Nawaz Sharif has said the resolution of the Kashmir issue is the key to peace in the region and for India and Pakistan to have cordial ties.

Addressing delegates of the Kashmir American Council, Sharif said Pakistan is committed to resolving the issue.

"Pakistan would continue diplomatic, political and moral support to Kashmiri

people fighting for freedom," The Daily Times quoted Sharif, as saying.

Referring to the murder of two women in Shopian, Sharif said Islamabad is concerned about the "growing violation of human rights in the region."

Kashmir American Council's Executive Director Dr Ghulam Nabi Fai said the right to self-determination of the people in Kashmir could not be compromised in the name of conflict resolution.



PHOTO: AFP  
Pro-Indian political party and Kashmir's main opposition party president Mahbooba Mufti (C) stands with others during a protest in Srinagar yesterday. Mahbooba is demanding registration of case in connection with the alleged rape and murder of Muslim women by Indian security forces.



PHOTO: AFP  
Sri Lankan cinema artistes hold oil lamps during a ceremony in Colombo on Friday to invoke blessings on soldiers who died battling Tamil Tiger rebels. Sri Lanka has been celebrating the mid-May victory over Tamil separatists who have been fighting for independence since 1972.

## UN for Lankan war crimes probe

AP, AFP, United Nations/ London

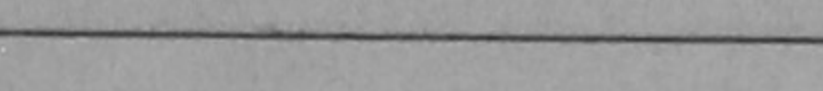
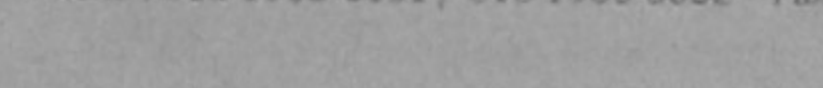
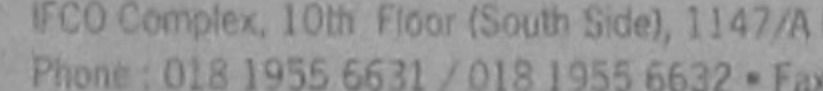
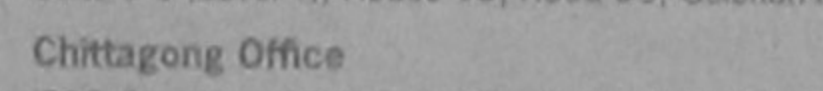
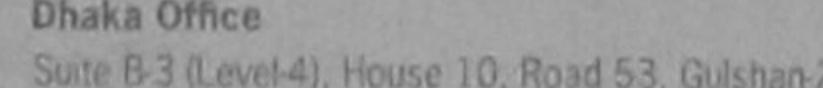
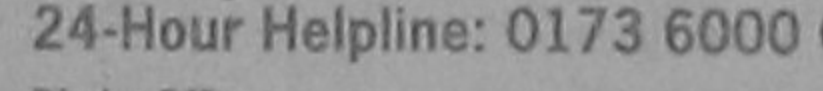
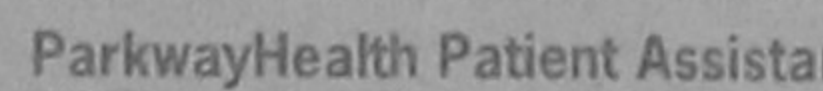
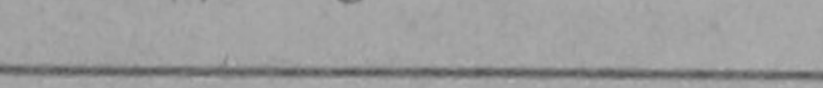
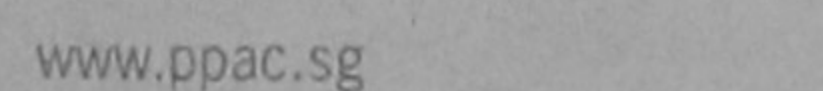
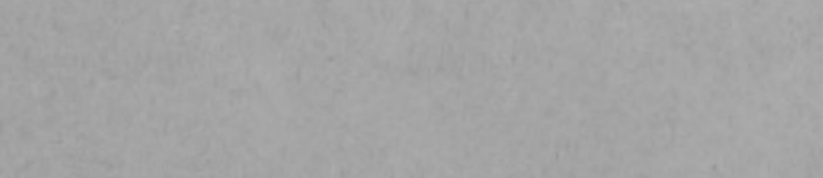
The UN chief lent credence Friday to the possibility of war crimes in Sri Lanka, saying an international investigation is needed to examine the military actions of the government and defeated Tamil Tiger rebels during the civil war.

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, at a closed-door briefing for Security Council members, called for a credible inquiry to be undertaken with international backing and full sup-

port from Sri Lanka's government.

He declined to elaborate on exactly how the inquiry should be done, but he urged an examination of what he said were serious allegations of violations of international humanitarian laws, according to diplomats and UN officials who attended.

"Any inquiry, to be meaningful, should be supported by the members of the United Nations, and also should be very impartial and objective," Ban told reporters Friday at UN headquarters.



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| <b>Gastroenterology</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Colonoscopy</li> <li>Gastroscopy</li> <li>Gastroscopy &amp; Colonoscopy</li> </ul>                                                                                     | <b>Orthopaedic Surgery</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Carpal Tunnel Release</li> <li>Laminectomy/Discectomy</li> <li>Lumbar Decompression &amp; Fusion</li> <li>Total Hip Replacement</li> <li>Total Knee Replacement</li> </ul>                                |
| <b>General Surgery</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Breast Lump Excision</li> <li>Breast Tumour Segmental Mastectomy</li> <li>Stapler Haemorrhoidectomy</li> </ul>                                                          | <b>Urology</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Greenlight™ Photoselective Vaporisation of the Prostate (PVP)</li> <li>Transurethral Resection of Prostate (TURP)</li> <li>Varicocele - Microsurgery</li> <li>Varicocele - Open Surgery</li> <li>Vasectomy</li> </ul> |
| <b>Neurosurgery</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cervical Spine Anterior Decompression &amp; Fusion</li> <li>Pituitary, Excision of Tumour</li> </ul>                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |

\*Terms and conditions apply.

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