



Kashmiri Muslim protesters throw stones towards Indian police during a protest in Srinagar yesterday. Protesters clashed with police as a separatist strike in Indian Kashmir paralysed life for the seventh day over the alleged rape and murder of two young Muslim women.

Top separatist arrested in Kashmir

AFP, Srinagar

Indian police arrested yesterday a hardline Kashmiri separatist for encouraging week-long protests over the alleged rape and murder of two Muslim women.

Syed Ali Geelani, 79, was held after a midnight raid on his house in Srinagar, a police source said, adding that he had been shifted to an undisclosed location to prevent him calling for further demonstrations.

Anger over the death of a 17-year-old girl and her 22-year-old sister-in-law has effectively shut down much of the Muslim-majority Kashmir Valley, including Srinagar, over the past week.

Indian officials say preliminary investigations suggest drowning was the cause of death, but the families of the victims have accused the security forces of abducting, raping and killing the women.

In an attempt to curb the daily protests, which have so far claimed one life and left more than 300 injured, authorities have issued a ban on demonstrations.

11 die as Pakistanis attack Taliban

AP, AFP, Islamabad/Peshawar

Hundreds of Pakistanis banded together and attacked Taliban strongholds in a troubled northwestern region, killing 11 militants, to avenge a deadly suicide bombing at a local mosque, officials said Sunday.

The incident Saturday indicated a swing in the national mood toward a more anti-Taliban stance a shift that comes as suicide attacks have surged and the military wages an offensive in the Swat Valley.

Some 400 villagers from neighbouring Upper Dir district, where a suicide bomber killed 33 worshippers at a mosque in the Haya Gai area on Friday, formed a militia and attacked five villages in the nearby Dhok Darra area, said Atif-ur-Rehman, the district coordination officer.

The citizens' militia has occupied three of the villages since Saturday and is trying to push the Taliban out of the other two. Some 20 houses suspected of harbouring Taliban were destroyed, he said.

At least 11 militants were killed, the district police chief, Ejaz Ahmad, said.

The government has encouraged local citizens to set up militias, known as lashkars, to oust Taliban fighters.

"It is something very positive that tribesmen

are standing against the militants. It will discourage the miscreants," Rehman said.

Ahmad said around 200 militants were putting up a stiff resistance in their strongholds surrounded by the villagers. "We will send security forces, maybe artillery too, if the villagers ask for a reinforcement," he added.

The surge in suicide attacks reached Pakistan's capital, Islamabad, late Saturday when a man wearing an explosive-laden jacket attacked a police compound but was shot down before he could enter the main building. Two officers died and six were wounded, police said.

No one has claimed responsibility for the attack at the police emergency response centre, but it fits with a Taliban threat of strikes in major cities across Pakistan in retaliation for the military's month-old offensive in Swat.

Meanwhile, gunmen killed two Shia Muslim brothers on Sunday in a drive-by shooting in a northwestern Pakistani town troubled by sectarian violence, police said.

The attackers, who were riding on a motorbike, opened fire on the two men in the main bazaar of Dera Ismail Khan town before fleeing the scene, local police officer Naimatullah Khan said.

"The victims who died on the spot were brothers. They belonged to the Shia community," he told AFP.

Battles, ambushes kill 30 in Afghanistan

AP, AFP, Kabul

A joint Afghan and US-led coalition operation against insurgents in southern Afghanistan killed more than 20 Taliban fighters yesterday, while a militant ambush in the northwest killed four policemen, officials said.

The joint operation in Zabul province included ground forces and airstrikes. The battle killed more than 20 Taliban, said provincial police chief Abdul Rahman Sarjung. After the operation, a roadside bomb exploded and killed one Afghan policeman as the forces were returning to base, he said.

Elsewhere, militants attacked a police security post in northwestern Faryab province, sparking a one-hour battle that killed four police, said Khalil Andrabi, the provincial police chief.

The policemen were killed after their remote post was attacked by Taliban rebels riding motorbikes in Faryab province, provincial police chief Khalilullah Ziayee told AFP.

In volatile Kandahar province, a mother and her son were killed when a motorbike they were riding was blown up by a roadside bomb, also on Sunday, the interior ministry said, blaming the attack on insurgents.

"Two civilians, a mother and a son, were killed when a mine... planted by the enemies of Afghanistan exploded under their motorbike," the statement said.

Another Taliban attack in the eastern province of Paktika killed the police chief in Sarhawza district, while militants elsewhere in Paktika ambushed a truck of private security guards, killing four of them, said Hamidullah Zhwak, a spokesman for the governor.

US assesses Pak situation as 'very dire'

ANI, Washington

The United States has assessed the on ground situation in Pakistan as "very dire", following the military operation against the Taliban in tribal areas.

US Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs P J Crowley admitted that the current offensive has had an impact on the Pakistani population and the number of internally-displaced persons is more than two million.

Crowley said the US would do everything in a bid to help Pakistan rehabilitate its IDPs.

"We are going to continue in a variety of ways to assess that and to help the Pakistani government in any way that we can, make sure that we can care for these people," The Nation quoted him, as saying.

On the latest terrorist attacks in Pakistan, Crowley said it is devastating on one hand, but everything that the US sees indicates that there has been progress in the war on terror.

"We know that there's a very difficult situation on the ground. They still have the ability to conduct these kinds of attacks. It would appear that the tide is turning in terms of Pakistani attitudes towards the Taliban. I think we are very encouraged by that," he said.



Supporters of the Unified Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) carry sticks as they take out a protest rally against the Nepalese president and the government in Kathmandu yesterday. The Maoist protesters rallied in Nepal's capital demanding that the country's president Ram Baran Yadav take back his decision to reinstate the army chief.



Indian students rally against racism in Sydney yesterday after a series of highly publicised attacks on them in Melbourne. The latest in a wave of assaults on international students in Australia has been dubbed "curry bashing" by the Indian media, splashing with headlines such as "Australia, land of racists."

Lack of evidence helped Saeed walk free

ANI, Lahore

The Pakistan government did not provide solid evidence to prove Jamaat-ud-Daawa (JuD) chief Hafiz Saeed was involved in the November 2008 Mumbai attack, following which he was acquitted by the Lahore High Court, it has been learnt.

The Lahore High Court has released the detailed judgement of the detention of JuD leaders Saeed and Colonel (retired) Nazir Ahmad, The Daily Times reports.

According to the judg-

ment, the government's decision to detain the JuD leaders was not based on solid evidence and the material provided by the government against them was incorrect and even prepared after their detention.

The Lahore High Court bench observed that the government had no evidence that Saeed and Nazir had any links with al-Qaeda or any other terrorist organisation.

It also observed that not a single document was tabled before it that could prove that JuD leaders were involved in the 26/11 incident.

3,000 Karen villagers flee Myanmar shelling

Say Aid groups

AP, Bangkok

More than 3,000 ethnic Karen villagers have fled into Thailand as Myanmar troops shelled near a camp where they were sheltering, one of the largest movements of refugees across the border in a decade, aid groups said Sunday.

The Thailand-based Free Burma Rangers said that refugees began streaming out of the Ler Per Her camp in eastern Karen state on Friday and that Myanmar

forces started launching mortar attacks Saturday morning during fighting with Karen guerrillas. Myanmar is also known as Burma.

The aid group, which conducts missions across the border inside Myanmar, reported the Karen National Union fighters were engaged in a fierce fire fight continuing Sunday with Myanmar forces near the camp, which lies in one of few last rebel redoubts along the border.



Cloned Indian buffalo calf 'Garima'

Buffalo cloned in India

AFP, New Delhi

Scientists in the Indian state of Haryana have cloned a buffalo using foetal tissue, a report said Sunday. The female calf named Garima weighed 43 kilograms (95 pounds) and was born at the National Dairy Research Institute in the city of Karnal in northern India, according to the Hindu newspaper.

"Garima is absolutely healthy and we are fully optimistic about her survival," institute director AK Srivastava was quoted as saying.

India cloned the world's first buffalo in February, but it died of pneumonia within a week of its birth after being created from the ear tissue of a female buffalo.

Scientists cloned Garima using tissue from a foetus as part of a "hand-guided cloning technique" which allows the sex of the calf to be chosen.

Srivastava said India has the largest population of buffaloes in the world and that cloning would increase the percentage of elite animals in the species.

Some politicians helped Daud spread crime web

FROM PAGE 1 including for murders.

The police claim they came to Bangladesh to accomplish the gang's long-term assignment, but the arrestees say they were just hiding here.

DB sources say the arrested Indian criminals came to Bangladesh at the directive of Chhota Shakil, who is next to Daud Ibrahim. The sources add Shakil handles his network in Bangladesh over

cellphone so tactfully that his operatives here even don't know each other.

ARREST OF ARIF
A DB team raided the Krishi Market area after squeezing information out of detained Abdul Rauf Daud Merchant and Zahid Sheikh and arrested Arif.

During interrogation at the DB office on Minto Road, Arif said Chhota Shakil sent him Tk 1.5 lakh through

Western Union last week to provide legal support to Rauf and Zahid, sources say.

The sources also say Shakil was keeping regular contact with Arif over cellphone to discuss means to free Rauf and Zahid on bail.

Arif was running a meat shop at Krishi Market since he came to Bangladesh and residing at a rented house in Mohammadpur Housing Society.

He told The Daily Star at the DB office that he is accused and arrested in connection with a murder in India. Sakil sent him to Bangladesh in 2001 as he was freed on bail in 2000 after serving around seven years behind bars.

"I received Tk 10,000 per month but after my marriage I am receiving Tk 16,000. In this country I was registered as a voter and was living here

as a stranded Bihari."

Arif admitted without hesitation that he and another gangster gunned down Amar Sohona Bhaskar Shethe in Mumbai in 1993 at the directive of Shakil as Shethe allegedly led the damage to the historic Babri Mosque.

He said he was arrested the same year in connection with that murder.

Arif married a Bangladeshi

national and the couple has two daughters, he said, adding they are trying to settle in Bangladesh by becoming citizens on Shakil's instruction.

REMAND

DB sources say they produced Abdul Rauf, Zahid and their Bangladeshi host Kamal with a prayer for 10 days' remand on completion of earlier eight-day remand yesterday.

The court however granted six days' remand for Rauf and Zahid and another five days for Arif.

DB MENTHREATHENED

DC Monirul said, "I got some ring from Indian cellphone numbers and an ADC received an SMS from a Bangladeshi cellphone number threatening him not to proceed with the matter of Daud Ibrahim's aides."

Health sector jobs grossly politicised

FROM PAGE 16 randomly. Experts say these changes are not being carried out on the basis of merit or skill.

Doctors with no political affiliations say they are the worst sufferers of the situation as there is nobody to lobby for them or back them.

SCP leaders however denied the allegations. From DGHS to Upazila Health Complex. Ninety percent of the directors, deputy directors and assistant directors at the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) have been transferred since the new government took office.

Shah Monir Hossain, who had been an officer on special duty (OSD) for the last seven years, has been made the director general of the DGHS. Changes have also been rampant in other top posts in the DGHS. Leaders of Bangladesh Medical Association (BMA)

allege that the mass transfers and promotions under pressure from SCP is being carried out to manipulate the upcoming BMA election on November 5.

When contacted, SCP General Secretary Iqbal Arslan told The Daily Star that such allegations against the SCP are totally false.

"There are some 600 doctors who were made OSDs while they pursued medical courses. Their appointments have been due for several years now. In addition, 762 trainee doctors are also in queue for permanent posts. The recent promotions and transfers are a reflection of this," Arslan said.

BSMMU It is alleged that in the beginning, right after the government's assumption of power, SCP began to press the administrative high-ups at hospitals to meet their demands. Ultimately, most of those high-ups were forced out

"politically" through transfers.

SCP Secretary Jakaria Swapan has been made proctor of Bangladesh Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU).

NICVD The chiefs of two of the seven units of the surgery department at the National Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases (NICVD) have been transferred since the AL government came to power.

As a result, the capacity of the department has gone down badly. The wait for a surgery date at this very urgent department now goes past three months.

Prof NA Kamrul Ahsan, head of the surgery department, has been made OSD and attached to Chittagong Medical College and Hospital where there is no cardiac surgery unit. Ahsan is the vice president of National Democratic Forum, a pro-Jamaat doctors' association.

Khwaja Nasiruddin Mahmud, president of SCP's NICVD unit and an associate professor at the hospital, has been made in-charge of the department, overtaking two doctors senior to him.

The central leader of SCP, Kajal, a diploma holder in cardiology, has been posted as resident physician (RP) at the hospital although all past RPs at the hospital had FCPS and MD degrees, sources said.

Dr Kamrul Hasan, an office secretary of central SCP and a medical officer at the hospital, has been promoted to the post of resident surgeon of NICVD. He was also made an assistant professor overtaking many others on the gradation list.

DMCH From the posts in the outdoor department to the posts of professors, 80 percent of the manpower structure at Dhaka Medical College and Hospital (DMCH) has been changed within the last four months. A large number of resident

surgeons, registrars and assistant surgeons and there have been no new appointments to the posts vacated because of the promotions.

Experts allege that quality has been compromised as doctors who have completed only part one of the FCPS qualification have been promoted to the post of registrar although guidelines clearly indicate that those appointed to the post should have a postgraduate degree.

Holy Family Red Crescent Hospital AL lawmaker Dr SM Akbar Ali Khan was recently appointed the new chairman of Bangladesh Red Crescent Society.

SCP leader Associate Prof Moniruzzaman Bhuiya has been made acting principal of the Holy Family Medical College, overtaking at least 20 other senior teachers. Sources allege that this has all been because of his "close

association" with Dr Modassir Ali, health adviser of the prime minister.

Other public hospitals

The situation is said to be the same at Suhrawardy Hospital, Khaleda Zia Medical College, Mirford Hospital, National Institute of Traumatology and Orthopaedic Rehabilitation (Nitor) and Cancer Hospital as doctors with political affiliations are getting promotions irrespective of their qualification or experience.

Prof Muzaffer Ahmad, former chairperson of Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) Trustee Board, said if such bad practices are to continue, the country's health services system will collapse.

He also said the health minister should resign from the post of SCP president as he should be serving the nation and not party interests alone.

Buriganga

FROM PAGE 16

On the other side of the road the dry canal stretches beyond the bridge connecting Looter Char with Ghatar Char. Under the bridge several more plots are demarcated by concrete walls. At one corner workers piled about 50 dredger pipes indicating that Atr Khal will soon be filled up there too.

Further down from Waaspur end, the canal is mindlessly filled up and narrowed down to a mere ten feet. And further down, near the landing station of Atr Bazar, a half of the canal has been encroached upon by a retired member of the Bangladesh armed forces.

But the Atr Bazar end of the canal is still extremely busy with river buses and motorboats running between Atr Bazar and Showarighat, and

many other destinations, defying the chokehold.

Khalilur Rahman, a social worker and a freedom fighter from nearby Taranagar said strangulation of Atr Khal will mean enormous sufferings for millions in the area. He said the canal has existed for centuries serving millions in the whole region, and the people there will never like to watch it disappear.

If the canal is dredged and restored to its past glory, the environment of the area will drastically improve. It will also improve the social and economic conditions of the area.

Moreover, canals are the lifelines of any river. Restoring Atr Khal will definitely pump some life into the dying Buriganga, which in turn will share its water, for the canal to survive.