



Indian villagers watch as activists of the People's Committee Against Police Atrocities (PCPA) set the house of a Communist Party of India-Marxist (CPI-M) member on fire in Lalgarh village in Midnapore district, some 200 km west of Kolkata yesterday after days of clashes between tribal villagers and police.

India to review Pakistan's actions on terror before talks, says Manmohan

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE,
On Board Air India One

India would review Pakistan's actions against anti-India terror outfits before deciding on resuming the composite dialogue mid-July, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said Wednesday, a day after he met Pakistan President Asif Ali Zardari in Russia.

The prime minister said he would wait for the outcome of the talks between the foreign secretaries of the two countries, who are expected to meet within a month, before taking a decision on resuming the composite dialogue that stalled after the Mumbai terror attacks nearly seven months ago.

"The purpose of this meeting (between foreign secretaries) is to find what Pakistan had done and what it plans to do on terrorist activities against India," Manmohan Singh told reporters on board his special plane while returning home from the Russian city of Yekaterinburg.

Signalling India's willingness to make peace with Pakistan, Manmohan Singh said he had asked Zardari to show the same determination in preventing terrorist attacks against India as it had shown in combating al-Qaeda and the Taliban.

I told him that we will like to see tangible steps.

There is a time," he replied when asked if there was a timeline for resuming the talks before he meets Zardari again on the sidelines of the Non Aligned Meeting summit in Egypt in July.

"Zardari told me the problems and difficulties he faces. I explained to him why Pakistan has taken effective action against Taliban and al-Qaeda. We have a strong feeling that the elements who perpetrated terror attacks against India are not being brought to justice."

"We can't pre-judge the outcome," Manmohan Singh said when asked whether India will resume the dialogue process over the next month.

US Senate approves enhanced aid bill for Pakistan

ANI, Washington

The US Senate Foreign Relations Committee has passed the enhanced aid bill for Pakistan offering 1.5 billion dollars annually over the next five years.

The bill named the Enhanced Partnership with Pakistan Act, commonly known as the Kerry-Lugar bill, is primarily aimed to counter terrorism.

Addressing the Congress, the Foreign Relations Committee Chairman John Kerry highlighted on the need of assisting Pakistan in its drive to quell extremism from its soil, and rehabilitate thousands of people who have been rendered homeless due to the on-going military operation in Swat and Malakand.

Pakistan to invite Taliban's victims to fight back

AP, Peshawar

Civilians who lived under the Taliban's harsh rule in Pakistan's Swat Valley may soon be recruited to police the region with preference going to those hit hardest during the militants' two-year campaign of terror, a top official says.

Rebuilding the valley's decimated police force is considered crucial to bringing home more than 2 million people displaced by an army offensive and to keeping the Taliban from coming back. It's a process of great interest to the US, which wants Pakistan to eliminate safe havens for militants fighting in neighbouring Afghanistan.

To fight an insurgency, "the people have to be actively with you," Malik Naveed Khan, inspector general of police for the North West Frontier Province, told The Associated Press in an interview Monday.

He said some 6,000 civilians would be recruited, along with a force of 2,500 ex-military personnel that lend further

backing to the police. Authorities plan to open recruiting centres in camps where some 200,000 displaced Swatis and other refugees from surrounding districts are staying.

Khan said the plan needs formal approval from the provincial government, but that "everyone is on board." The goal is to have a full force ready by mid-August.

Bashir Bilour, the province's senior minister, said authorities support the idea because of the citizens' "knowledge of the area, people and local customs and traditions. They will also have a feeling of ownership and participation in the process."

Before the violent Taliban campaign took off in earnest in the valley in 2007, Swat was considered a "soft district," with low crime rates and around 2,000 lightly armed police for a population of 1.75 million, Khan said.

The better-equipped militants quickly targeted police, beheading them, shooting them, attacking their checkpoints and

even forcing some officers' parents to swear on the Quran that their sons would stop patrolling. At least 120 police were killed and around 700 officers fled the force, Khan said.

Candidates for the new policing jobs need to be "able-bodied, tough people with a clear background, giving some preference to those whose houses have been burned and who have been targeted," Khan said in his office in Peshawar.

He didn't respond when asked whether the program was deliberately tapping into a desire for vengeance, but said he expected recruits to be attracted by the salaries \$125 a month, about the same as a police constable earns.

The government has already had some success in raising militias, known as lashkars, to fend off militants elsewhere in the northwest. Troops backed up a militia that arose in the Dir region this month and fought the Taliban, whom they blamed for a mosque bombing.



Pakistani internally displaced children, who fled the military operation in Swat Valley, bathe in a canal near a makeshift camp in Swabi yesterday. Pak President Asif Ali Zardari makes a rare visit to Nato on Wednesday and holds a landmark summit with top European Union officials in Brussels focused on Islamabad's fight against the Taliban.

Pakistan nets 4 men suspected of plotting attacks

AFP, Rawalpindi

Pakistani police said Wednesday they had arrested three men suspected of planning a suicide attack near Islamabad, while a suspect from an al-Qaeda-linked group was held in Karachi.

Pakistan has been hit by a wave of deadly bomb attacks in recent weeks, and security is at unprecedented levels amid fears of more violence from Taliban insurgents avenging a military campaign against them.

"Police have arrested three suspected terrorists with explosives and suicide jackets in Rawalpindi," said a senior police official in the garrison city neighbouring the capital Islamabad.

Another police official in Rawalpindi confirmed the arrests and said the three men were apparently planning to carry out attacks in the city.

LTTE announces 'new transnational govt'

Tiger call for separate state 'hallucinating': Lanka

ANI, AFP, Bangkok/ Colombo

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), the rebel group recently defeated by the Sri Lankan military, have announced the formation of a "provisional transnational government" to pursue an autonomous homeland for the Tamil population.

According to the BBC, Selvarasa Pathmanathan, one of the few Tamil Tiger leaders to survive the military operation, released a statement from an unknown location announcing the formation of the transna-

tional government.

In May, Pathmanathan had acknowledged the Tigers' defeat and claimed that the group had given up violence.

But he is now calling for the next phase of the struggle, and has convened a committee headed by an exiled Tamil lawyer - to facilitate the formation of the new Tamil government.

Until recently, Pathmanathan served as the LTTE's head of international relations, including financing and arms procurement, reports the Christian Science Monitor.

Bangladeshis conquer Mt Annapurna IV

FROM PAGE 16

snowfall and whiteout. And there were chances of falling into crevasse and avalanches, the height and the acute mountain sickness. But teamwork was the key factor that beat all odds.

Sherpa Sardar Som Bahadur Tamang, Ganesh Magar and two-time Everest climber Sherpa Kailash Tamang were in the lead to set the route from camps one and two to the summit. High altitude cook Tashi Tamang and porter Sardar Dawa Tamang were the next great

help in achieving the feat.

A support team of 22 porters and three sherpas had started the journey from Kathmandu on May 29, the day that commemorates Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay's climbing the Mt Everest. The team reached the Annapurna IV base camp at 15,091 ft height on June 03.

The three NACB members reached the base camp on June 08.

The sherpas established camp one at a height of 17,716 ft on June 06 and camp two at a height of 21,817 ft on June 08.

After resting on June 09, the NACB team moved for camp one on June 11. Having a training on climbing rock and ice the team reached camp two the next day.

It was approximately 2:30am on June 14 when the final ascent to the top of Annapurna IV started. The six-member team moved with headlamps and full climbing gears. But the team got stuck halfway from camp two to the summit as all of a sudden a fit crevasse gaped ahead of them.

The sherpas had to open a new route. Climbers had nothing to do but wait for

around two hours, standing on an ice wall of 60 degrees gradient and braving snowfall with strong wind.

Finally, group leader Musa Ibrahim--a sub-editor of The Daily Star, Tawhid Hossain and Sarin Prakash Pradhan reached the summit of Annapurna IV at a height of 24,682 ft without supplementary oxygen. They flew the Bangladesh national flag as a new history for Bangladesh was recorded.

Another group of NACB, consisting of Dhrubho Jyoti Ghosh Mukul, MH Jaiedi

Tusher, Abdul Halim, Munira Farzana Tania and Sk Badruddin Omar, finished the amazing Annapurna Circuit trek that started on May 29.

The NACB team is supposed to reach Kathmandu on June 20 and Dhaka on June 25.

Navana Group was the title sponsor for the NACB's endeavour. Mattra, Summit Group, Kohinor Chemicals, and Destiny Group co-sponsored the trekking while Channel I was its media partner. Incitaa Tourism and Muktinath Holiday's Pvt Ltd were the event partners.

Speaker to decide SQ Chy's fate

FROM PAGE 1

Legal experts, however, say as per the constitution and the Members of Parliament (Determination of Dispute) Act 1980, the EC itself has the authority to strip Salauddin of his parliament membership.

Election Commissioner Muhammed Sohul Hussain yesterday said if the speaker asks the EC to do something, the commission will take up next course of action. "If the speaker thinks it is a dispute, then he will refer it to the Election Commission to settle," Sohul told a group of reporters at his office.

Chief Election Commissioner ATM Shamsul Huda declined to make any comment on the issue.

Senior officials at the Parliament Secretariat said the speaker might ask the EC to take necessary actions as per laws.

Speaker Abdul Hamid told The Daily Star that he would send his opinion after going through the EC's letter and that he might consult with the attorney general on the matter.

Explaining the constitutional provision in his book "Constitutional Law of Bangladesh", eminent jurist and former attorney general Mahmudul Islam says under article 66(4) of the constitution the EC is to hear and decide a dispute as to whether a member of parliament has become subject to any of the disqualifications mentioned in article 66(2), or whether a member should vacate his/her seat after resigning

from the party which nominated him/her as its candidate, or he/she voted in parliament against the party.

The EC earlier vacated membership of BNP lawmaker Major (ret'd) Akhtaruzzaman in the seventh parliament as he joined the House ignoring the BNP Parliamentary Party's boycott decision. In response to the BNP's application, the then speaker sent the matter to the EC to settle.

Legal experts also said the EC could have vacated Salauddin's seat under the Members of Parliament (Determination of Dispute) Act 1980 by taking his offence into cognisance for trial.

According to section 3 of the act, within 30 days after a dispute arises the speaker shall prepare a statement containing the facts relating to the dispute, the name and address of the lawmaker who caused the dispute and those of the person who raised it and send the statement to the EC to hear and determine the dispute.

The act says for the purpose of hearing and determination of a dispute, the EC shall have the powers of a civil court to summon and enforce one's attendance and examine him/her on oath, require discovery and production of any document, receive evidence on affidavit, and issue commissions for the examination of witnesses or documents.

Any proceeding under this act shall be considered as a judicial proceeding within the

meaning of section 193 of the Penal Code.

However, in Salauddin's case, the EC itself filed a petition with the speaker through the Parliament Secretariat to determine the dispute, triggering a fresh dispute as the EC itself raised the complaint and it will have to settle the dispute itself.

Election Commissioner Sohul Hussain said they sent the letter to the Parliament Secretariat to inform the speaker about the dispute. But officials at the EC Secretariat said the matter is new to the commission and it does not find any such precedence.

Legal experts said the EC itself could take Salauddin's offence into cognisance. Besides, the EC can use its inherent power to take action against Salauddin for violating the electoral laws by concealing information in the affidavit.

The Appellate Division of the Supreme Court has given a clear statement about the inherent power of the EC in the Noor Hossain versus Nazrul Islam case. The apex court observed that time and again it held that it is the responsibility of the EC to see that the election is conducted justly, honestly and fairly. If the election is not being held in that manner, then after being satisfied about correctness of the report or allegations the EC would be justified to cancel the result of the election and direct re-poll, observed the Appellate Division.

Govt asked

FROM PAGE 16

public service sectors' at National Press Club.

The speakers also urged to keep primary and secondary education and primary healthcare service from public private partnership (PPP) initiative in order to ensure participation of poor and marginalised people in these sectors.

The speakers said implementation of the budget is a much bigger challenge in the context of current global recession and expectations of the people.

Emphasising the need for retrieving and redistribution of khas land, said Bangladesh Economic Association president Qazi Khaliquzzaman suggesting immediate reformation in the agriculture sector.

Speaking as the chief guest, Deputy Speaker of parliament Shawkat Ali said reform in the public administration is a must to ensure development of the country.

He suggested wind turbine in coastal areas for generating power, regular river dredging and more attention to family planning.

Farash Uddin, former governor of Bangladesh Bank, said though the tax rate in the country is high the rate of tax collection is poor.

Among 24 lakh TIN (tax identification number) holders only eight lakh people regularly pay taxes, he said, suggesting making TIN mandatory for eligible people.

He also recommended starting the fiscal year from January-February instead of May-June.

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