

## Three rebels, woman killed in Kashmir battle

AFP, Srinagar

Three Islamic militants and a female bystander were killed on Monday during a fierce gunbattle with soldiers in Indian-ruled Kashmir, police said.

Fighting broke out near Tral town, about 40km south of the regional capital of Srinagar, when Indian troops raided a suspected militant hideout.

"A woman was killed in the crossfire," a police spokesman said, adding that three troops were injured.

Two of the dead militants were Pakistani nationals, he said.

Muslim rebels have been waging an insurgency since 1989 against India's rule of the region in a conflict that has left more than 47,000 people dead.

Small groups of fighters from Pakistan-administered Kashmir have made repeated attempts to cross into India in recent months.

# Civilians flee Taliban's stronghold in Pakistan

Five tribesmen killed in suicide blast

AP, AFP, Dera Ismail Khan/ Miranshah

Hundreds of civilians were fleeing al-Qaeda and the Taliban's main stronghold in northwest Pakistan after the army and militants asked them to leave, a tribal elder and a witness said Monday, a sign the military could be poised to launch an offensive.

Pakistan has vowed to root out militants in the northwest, many of whom allegedly use the mountainous tribal areas along the border as a base for attacks on American and Nato troops in Afghanistan. Pakistan jets have bombed targets in the stronghold of Waziristan in recent months, but the military has said it would launch full-scale ground operations at the "appropriate" time.

Authorities could not be reached Monday for comment.

Residents said recent days have shown an increase in the number of people leaving the Makeen and Ladha areas of South Waziristan, though many have been fleeing to the relative safety of

nearby towns for months.

"People are leaving the area for their safety," tribal elder Maulana Hassamuddin told The Associated Press by phone. He said the military had urged people to leave in the past few days, so he did.

Resident Amir Ullah said the Taliban had also asked locals to flee. He said he and his friends rented a vehicle to take them to the town of Bannu for more than double the normal price.

Western countries were cheered by a military offensive in the nearby Swat Valley earlier this year. Pakistan's army has moved into the tribal region close to the Afghan border before, however, only to be beaten into a stalemate.

Analysts have questioned whether the army has enough troops, or the will, to take on the militants in Waziristan, where they are well established and heavily armed.

Also Monday, a suicide car bomber attacked a vehicle in Baka Khel, which lies close to Waziristan.

Up to five people were killed, including Maulvi Abdul Hakim, a tribal leader who was instrumental in allowing security forces to pass through the area and gain access to the North Waziristan tribal region, a paramilitary official said. The official spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak to media.

He said at least five died, but police officer Iqbal Marwat put the toll at four.

Pakistan's efforts to fight the insurgency have met with Taliban retaliation. On Saturday, 22 people were killed in the northwest not far from the tribal belt, including 11 in Peshawar, the region's main city.

The two attacks came just days after a top Taliban militant, Qari Hussain Mehsud, warned of increasing suicide attacks if the military did not stop operations.

The Taliban took responsibility for one of Saturday's bombings.

No group immediately claimed responsibility for Monday's car bombing.



PHOTO: AFP

Handout picture shows Indian External Affairs Minister SM Krishna (C) introduces his Pakistani counterpart Shah Mehmood Qureshi (L) to Indian Foreign Secretary Nirupama Rao ahead of a bilateral meeting in New York on Sunday. Pakistan's foreign minister assured his Indian counterpart that Pakistani militants blamed for last year's deadly Mumbai attacks would be tried soon but urged a broader dialogue on all bilateral issues.



PHOTO: AFP

Stranded residents are evacuated with their belongings after heavy rains by typhoon Ketsana in Pasig, east of the Philippine capital of Manila yesterday. The Philippine government said it could not cope with massive flooding that has displaced nearly half a million people, amid fears the death toll could soar well past the official tally.

## Philippines appeals for international aid

AFP, Manila

Overwhelmed Philippine authorities appealed for international aid yesterday as the death toll from once-in-a-lifetime floods soared to 140 and weary survivors sheltered in squalid conditions.

Two days after the horror storm sent torrents of water through the nation's capital Manila and surrounding provinces, the government conceded it was unable to deal with the disaster on its own and needed urgent help.

"We are appealing for international humanitarian assistance," Defence Secretary Gilberto Teodoro said in a nationally televised briefing.

"The potential for a more serious situation is there and we cannot wait for that to happen."

Teodoro launched the appeal as he announced the death toll had climbed sharply to 140, with 32 others still missing and 453,000 forced out of their flooded or destroyed homes.

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## US commander asks for big Afghan troop buildup

AFP, Washington

The US commander in Afghanistan has asked for a dramatic troop buildup in Afghanistan, a top lawmaker said Sunday, as President Barack Obama faced competing advice over war strategy.

The US military has declined to reveal the details of General Stanley McChrystal's troop request but Senator John McCain said the commander had appealed for 30,000-40,000 forces.

"I think it's the worst -- one of the many worst-kept secrets in Washington. It's 30,000 to 40,000 troops," said McCain, the former Republican presidential nominee who urged Obama to meet the commander's request.

McCain's comments were the latest sign of an intense debate over the US-led mission, as Obama weighs whether to send in more troops amid waning public support for the war and an Afghan election marred by fraud allegations.

McChrystal meanwhile said in a profile on CBS television's "60 minutes," that he was slightly surprised by the strength of the insurgency when he took over his post.

"I think that in some areas that the breadth of violence, the geographic spread of violence -- places to the north and to the west -- are a little more than I would have gathered," he said, according to a transcript of the show to air later Sunday.

The president's civilian and military advisers, along with key lawmakers in his own party, are divided over the way ahead, with some top Army officers worried about placing undue strain on an already stretched force, the New York Times reported.

Vice President Joe Biden and national security adviser James Jones, a retired general, are among those sceptical of a major troop increase, while Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, and Richard Holbrooke, the US representative to Afghanistan and Pakistan, have a more hawkish stance, the paper said.

## Global warming may lead to heavier rainstorms in future

ANI, Washington

A new study by researchers at MIT and Caltech has predicted that global warming may lead to heavier rainstorms in the future.

Previous studies have shown that average annual precipitation will increase in both the deep tropics and in temperate zones, but will decrease in the subtropics.

However, it's important to know how the frequency and magnitude of extreme precipitation events will be affected, as these heavy downpours can lead to increased flooding and soil erosion.

It is the frequency of these extreme events that was the subject of this new research.

The research was conducted by Paul O'Gorman, assistant professor in the Department of Earth, Atmospheric and Planetary Sciences at MIT, and Tapio Schneider, professor of environmental science and engineering at Caltech.

Model simulations used in the study suggest that precipitation in extreme events will go up by about 6 percent for every one degree Celsius increase in temperature.

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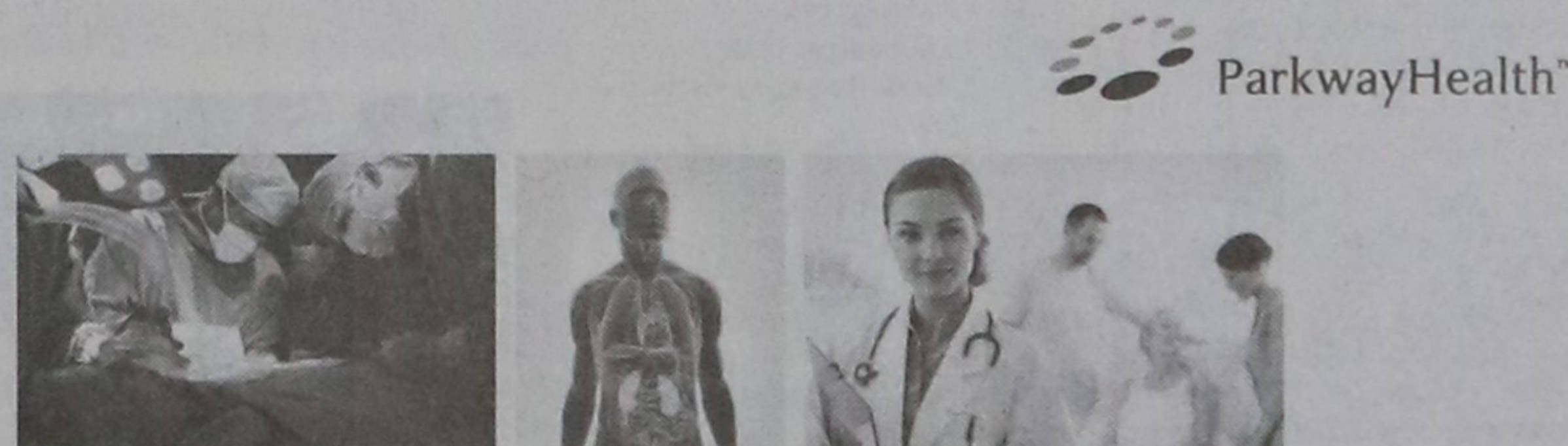
## KATALYST Request for Expression of Interest For appointment of a Facilitator to Promote Furniture Export from Bangladesh

Katalyst is a pro-poor, market development project. It promotes economic growth by collaborating with a wide range of private and public sector organizations in order to leverage its resources and maximize impact.

Katalyst has been working in the furniture sector since 2004 with a vision to develop a vibrant local market and tap the export market, which will help to create employment. Katalyst invites expression of interest from organizations who share a similar vision and approach for pro-poor market development. The organization must fulfill the following criteria:

- Experience in working with the public sector
- Sound understanding of the private sector operating in Bangladesh
- Substantial experience in the furniture sector of Bangladesh
- An ample pool of creative and dedicated human resources with furniture sector experts
- Experience in working on market development projects, especially in export promotion
- Ability and willingness to liaison and network with relevant stakeholders
- Capacity to formulate and implement strategies to establish export
- Expertise in monitoring and evaluation of market development projects and translating project outcomes in a comprehensible, presentable manner.

Interested firms are requested to send in their Expression of Interest elaborating their suitability for this role along with profile of organization and team to the **Director, Industry & Rural Sectors Group, Katalyst, House 20, Road 6, Bandhara, Dhaka** mentioning "EOI for a Facilitator to Promote Furniture Export from Bangladesh" on top of the envelope. The last of submission is **05 October 2009**. We will invite the short listed firms to a meeting on the methodology and Terms of Reference. The final selection for this two-year contract will be made based on proposals sent after the meeting.



## Kidney Failure Is A Life-Threatening But Treatable Condition.

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**Dhaka Office**  
Suite B-3 (Level-4), House 10, Road 53, Gulshan-2, Dhaka-1212, Bangladesh  
Phone: 885 0422 • Fax: 885 4056 • Email: dhaka@parkway-dmrc.com

**Chittagong Office**  
Sensiv, 14, Jamal Khan Road, Chittagong-4000  
Phone: 018 1955 6631 / 018 1955 6632 • Email: chittagong@parkway-dmrc.com