



Indian Border Security Force (BSF) Inspector General Himmat Singh (L), Deputy Inspector General Mohammad Aquil (2nd L) and Commander H S Dhillon (C) and other BSF officials inspect the site where two unexploded rockets were found in the grounds of Border Out Post Kahangarh, near the India-Pakistan Wagah Border at Attari yesterday.

Almost all terror groups active in Pakistan: Antony

PTI, INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE, Kochi

Voicing concern over reports that a large number of militants from PoK are waiting to cross the LoC into Kashmir, Defence Minister AK Antony yesterday said almost all terrorist groups are "still active" in Pakistan which has not cracked down on them, despite repeated requests from India.

India is not a 'war mongering' nation and does not have any extra-territorial ambitions, Antony said Saturday.

"We might have difference of opinion with our neighbours but we have no extra-territorial ambitions," Antony said in response to a

question about reactions from across the border over Indian Army Chief General Deepak Kapoor's recent remarks.

Antony was interacting briefly with reporters here after attending an award ceremony of the Indian Coast Guard.

"This is a matter of concern because in spite of repeated requests from the Indian Government, almost all terrorist outfits operating from across the border are still active and the Government of Pakistan is not taking much steps", he told reporters at the Indian Coast Guard headquarters here.

He said the Kashmir situation was a "matter of concern", though the scenario

has "not worsened" compared to last year. On reports that over 700 terrorists were waiting across the border in Pakistan-occupied-Kashmir (PoK) to sneak into J&K, he said India has taken all precautions to deal with the situation.

Hitting out at Pakistan for its sharp reaction on India's military doctrine, he said, "I don't know why there is this over-reaction. India is not a war-mongering country."

"In spite of our differences with some of the neighbouring countries, we are trying to improve our relations with them. We have no extra-territorial ambition but our concern is to protect the country's territorial integrity."

Cong regrets alliance with Lalu, readies Rahul for Bihar

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE, New Delhi

Allying with the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) of Lalu Prasad was a big mistake, Congress leader Jagdish Tytler has said, as his party prepares for the Bihar assembly elections by highlighting central welfare schemes and targeting youth through Rahul Gandhi.

"The alliance with the RJD was the biggest mistake," Tytler, a former union minister who became the Congress in-charge of Bihar five months ago, told IANS. He said the Congress lost its support base while sharing power with the RJD and the opposition space was filled by caste-based parties.

The Congress won nine seats in the 243-member Bihar assembly in October 2005. The party contested the last two assembly polls in alliance with the RJD. It broke off its alliance during the 2009 Lok Sabha battle.

US missiles kill 4 in Pakistan

AP, AFP, Peshawar

Suspected US missiles killed four people in northwest Pakistan, the latest in a surge of such attacks since a suicide bomber staged a deadly assault on CIA employees just across the border in Afghanistan.

The attack Friday was the sixth in just over a week in North Waziristan, an unusually intense bombardment that also follows repeated calls by the United States for Pakistan to do more against militants there blamed for attacks on American and Nato forces in Afghanistan.

The area is the stronghold of the Haqqani network, an Afghan Taliban group with links to al-Qaeda. Its militants are responsible for cross-border attacks and could have

played a role in the Dec. 30 attack that killed seven CIA employees in Khost province, analysts believe.

The US does not usually comment on the strikes or their targets. It has carried out more than 50 of them since last year, mostly by unmanned planes believed operated by the CIA with the cooperation of Pakistani intelligence. They have become more common since the Obama administration took over.

Two Pakistani intelligence officials said a pair of missiles Friday evening hit a house and a vehicle in a village near Miran Shah in North Waziristan. They said four people were killed and three injured, but did not identify them. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity

because they were not authorised to release the information to the media.

The attacks since last week have killed 31 people, many of them militants, according to Pakistani officials. The area is impossible to visit without the consent of the militants, making independent reporting impossible.

Pakistan's government publicly condemns the drone strikes as violations of its sovereignty, though it is thought to have a secret deal with Washington allowing them. One attack in August killed Baitullah Mehsud, the leader of the Pakistani Taliban, which have been leading an insurgency against the Pakistani government from their sanctuary in the border region.

Pak support vital to Afghan solution

Says Miliband

AFP, Islamabad

British Foreign Secretary David Miliband said yesterday that stability and security in war-torn Afghanistan depended on Pakistan and its own battle with Taliban militants.

Miliband made the comments during a visit to the Pakistani capital Islamabad for talks with the government about security and cooperation in Afghanistan, ahead of a January 28 summit in London on Afghanistan's peace and security.

"Pakistan is a vital partner in finding solutions and progress in Afghanistan," Miliband told a joint press conference after holding talks with Pakistani counterpart Shah Mehmood Qureshi.

"Stability, security, prosperity in Afghanistan depend

in some part on stability, security and prosperity in Pakistan," he said.

"The London conference on Afghanistan will look at Afghanistan's security needs, it will look at its development and government's needs and it will look at the regional contribution."

Miliband said that the international community should give Islamabad more effective support in tackling the Taliban insurgency in the country's northwestern tribal areas bordering Afghanistan.

"In terms of commitment of the international community, I think we can always do better and we should always be seeking to do better in respecting Pakistan's independence and vitality but also recognising its growing needs," he said.



Pakistani Prime Minister Yusuf Raza Gilani greets British Foreign Secretary David Miliband (L) upon arrival for a meeting in Islamabad yesterday. Miliband has hailed the upcoming London Conference on Afghanistan as an 'important step' on the road to achieving prosperity, security and stability in that country.



An Afghan man looks from within a hotel at the site of a rocket explosion near the US consulate in Herat yesterday. Rockets fired at a building that house the US consulate in the western Afghan city damaged two floors but caused no casualties, an Afghan official said Saturday.

Karzai presents his 2nd cabinet list

AP, Kabul

Afghan President Hamid Karzai presented a second slate of nominees to fill his Cabinet on Saturday after parliament rejected 70 percent of his first picks.

Last week's rejection by lawmakers of 17 of 24 nominees was a setback to Karzai's efforts to get his second term in office into full operation so he can focus on badly needed reforms in a country at war for more than eight years.

The US and other donor nations have been pressing Karzai to get his administration assembled ahead of an international conference on Afghanistan to be held Jan. 28 in London.

Second Vice President Karim Khalili announced 16 ministerial candidates, including 15 to replace those rejected the first time plus Karzai's pick to head the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Zalmay Rasoul, a longtime national security adviser. That post was not part of his first submission.

He did not submit names to replace Ishmail Khan, an infamous warlord who currently is the minister of water and energy, who had been rejected in the first vote. He also did not submit a name for telecommunications. He said nominees for those portfolios would be announced soon.

I'll stand by Zardari in his rise and fall: Gilani

ANI, Islamabad

Pakistan Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gilani has clarified that he doesn't have any differences with President Asif Ali Zardari, and he would stand by the PPP chairman in his "rise and fall."

The Daily Times Gilani as telling a private TV channel that he would support Zardari through thick and thin.

Gilani added that he did not think that there were any conspiracies being hatched against the PPP-led government, as the people of Pakistan were supporting the country's leadership despite the surfacing of the NAB cases against them.

Indian man set on fire in latest Australia attack

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE, Melbourne

An Indian man was allegedly attacked and set on fire by four men while he was parking his car in the northwestern part of the city in the early hours of Saturday.

The attack comes a week after an Indian youth was fatally stabbed in this city.

The 29-year-old was taken to hospital with burns to 15 percent of his body after the attack shortly before 2 am in Essendon and was said to be in a serious condition, The Age newspaper reported.

Police were told the man had dropped his wife at home and gone to park his car after a dinner party when he was attacked in Grice Crescent.

As the man was getting out

of the car, four men attacked him, pushing him back against the vehicle and pouring an unidentified fluid on him, police said.

One of the men then ignited the fluid with a lighter and all four fled, police said.

The victim reportedly ran from the car while peeling off his clothes. He suffered burns to his arms, chest and face, the daily said.

The latest attack comes a week after 21-year-old Indian graduate Nitin Garg was stabbed to death in a Yarraville park Jan 2. He staggered to Hungry Jack's restaurant -- where he worked -- and pleaded for help before collapsing. He was taken to the Royal Melbourne Hospital where he died.

EU anti-terror chief favours airport body scanners

AFP, Brussels

The EU's anti-terror coordinator Gilles de Kerchove backs the use of full body scanners at airports, saying they would be "very effective" as long as privacy concerns can be overcome.

"I am in favour of the body scanners, as long as there are rules in place" to assure passengers over the images displayed, he told AFP on Friday.

The Spanish EU Presidency called Thursday for a common European stance on the use of body scanners at airports as member states bicker over the issue, which has been highlighted by a failed plot to blow up a US airplane.

The controversial scanners are capable of

peering through clothes to create three-dimensional images of passengers to reveal any concealed weapons or explosives.

The latest generation of scanners can, for example, prevent the naked image being identified, according to De Kerchove.

"Clearly there also needs to be rules so that the image is not conserved and that it is immediately destroyed," he added.

"It's useful, very useful even, for detecting cases such as the Detroit case where someone hid explosives around his private parts which are not searched by hand."

Several countries, led by the United States, have announced additional security measures at airports after Nigerian Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab was charged with trying to blow up a US-bound jet on Christmas Day.

Moon's thin 'perfume' comes from the Sun!

ANI, Washington

A Japanese craft has sniffed the moon's whiff of an atmosphere, and has confirmed that it comes largely from sunlight brutally hammering the lunar surface.

The atmosphere of the moon, which is so thin, is referred to as an exosphere.

According to a report in Discovery News, using the very first direct measurements of the moon's "exosphere" as the moon passed through the streaming tail of Earth's protective magnetic field, researchers were able to watch the short-lived and ever-changing exosphere in the absence of the hot, magnetized solar wind.

Indian cabinet fails to take decision on Telangana

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE, New Delhi

The cabinet Saturday discussed the vexed issue of statehood for Telangana but could arrive at no decision on the roadmap ahead, informed sources said.

"There was a meeting between the cabinet and the cabinet committee on economic affairs. It lasted about 10 minutes," the sources said.

"The main dilemma is that within the (Congress) party, there seems to be no consensus (on the issue). Maybe there will be more behind the scene discussions before a decision can be arrived at," the sources added.

One possible reason why Saturday's meeting was inconclusive was that Home Minister P Chidambaram was away in Tamil Nadu. Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee and Urban Development Minister Jaipal Reddy were among those who attended the meeting, presided over by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh.



Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir Omar Abdullah addresses delegates during the second day of the Eighth Pravasi Bharatiya Divas 2010 in New Delhi yesterday. Some 1,500 delegates from 50 countries have gathered for the annual gathering of overseas Indians where Khalid Hameed is the chief guest.

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