

### UAE to host world talks on Afghanistan, Pakistan

AFP, Dubai

Delegations from 40 nations will meet in Abu Dhabi today to discuss the problems faced by troubled Afghanistan and Pakistan, an Emirati official said on Monday.

The gathering will also be attended by the foreign ministers of Afghanistan, Pakistan, Jordan, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates, the official said.

"The issues that will be discussed include Pakistan's economic development plans and humanitarian assistance, as well as strengthening democratic institutions in Afghanistan," Dan Feldman, an adviser to US Afghanistan envoy Richard Holbrooke, said in Washington on Thursday.



PHOTO: AFP  
Handout picture shows British Foreign Secretary David Miliband (R) talking with Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari during a meeting in Karachi on Sunday. Three days of violence has killed 48 political party workers in Pakistan's financial capital, Karachi, a security official said, as Miliband urged an end to violence in the country.

# Exchange of fire across India-Pakistan border

## High alert as BSF soldier dies in shootout

AFP, INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE, Srinagar

Pakistani troops shot dead an Indian border guard yesterday during an exchange of fire across the de facto border that splits Kashmir between the two nuclear-armed rivals, Indian officials said.

The incident took place in mountainous Poonch district, about 500km south of Indian Kashmir's summer capital Srinagar.

"The soldier died in firing from across the Line of Control," an Indian Border Security Force spokesman said, referring to the de facto border -- one of the world's most heavily militarised frontiers.

He blamed Pakistani troops for the shooting and termed it as "yet another

ceasefire violation by Pakistanis".

Indian troops returned fire, but it was not immediately known if there were any casualties on the Pakistani side of the border.

After noticing some movement near the border in Kanachak sector, about 35 km west of Jammu, a BSF patrol party opened fire in the early hours of Monday. This led to retaliation from the Pakistani side. "We are not sure if the fire that came from Pakistan was by Pakistani Rangers or a group of militants trying to infiltrate into the Indian side," BSF sources said.

Visibility was poor due to fog. However, once daylight broke the BSF personnel found that the barbed wire fence erected on the Indian side to check infiltration from Pakistan "was cut at two

points". "Militants were taking advantage of the thick fog along the international border," BSF sources said.

Troops along the Indo-Pak border in Jammu and Kashmir have been put on high alert after reports of an increase in infiltration attempts into the state.

"There are intelligence reports of further increase in the cross-border infiltration attempts from Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (PoK). Troops have been put on high alert along the Indo-Pak border and have intensified round-the-clock patrolling," security officials said.

According to intelligence received, 1,000 to 1,200 terrorists are staged along the border in launching pads to infiltrate into Jammu and Kashmir from POK, they said.

### Lanka court frees Tamil editor on bail

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lanka's court of appeal on Monday freed on bail a Tamil editor whose 20-year prison sentence last year for supporting "terrorism" drew international criticism, a court official said.

J.S. Tissainayagam, who edited North Eastern Monthly magazine in Colombo, was told to surrender his passport and to post 50,000 rupees (437 dollars) in bail pending a full appeal hearing, the official said.

Tissainayagam has appealed his conviction in August on charges of raising money for terrorism and of causing racial hatred through his writings about Tamils affected by the country's 37-year separatist conflict.

### Zardari's daughter may seek reopening of Bhutto 'hanging' case

ANI, Lahore

Pakistan Law Minister Babar Awan has said that Asifa Bhutto Zardari, daughter of President Asif Ali Zardari, may file a writ petition for reopening the Zulfikar Ali Bhutto 'death by hanging' case in the Supreme Court.

Awan said some of the judges who decided the ZA Bhutto case in 1979 had already admitted that they had been under pressure while hearing the case, therefore, the court could be moved for a retrial, The Daily Times reports.

He also said that the case could be reopened, as there

are numerous such examples across the world.

Earlier, former Supreme Court Bar Association president Aitzaz Ahsan had termed the case as a 'judicial murder' and said that the apex court could reopen the case.

Ahsan had said that 'exemplary punishment' should be given to those responsible for Bhutto's execution.

Bhutto, Pakistan's first elected Prime Minister, was overthrown by then Pakistani Army chief Gen. Ziaul Haq and hanged on April 4, 1979 after his controversial conspiracy-37-murder conviction.

### Thousands of Tigers 'won't be freed soon'

BBC ONLINE

Thousands of Tamil Tiger suspects in government custody will not be released soon, a Sri Lankan minister has said.

Power and Energy Minister W.D. Seneviratne said there were a "considerable number of suicide bombers" among the 14,000 detainees.

A military spokesman said there were fewer than 12,000 suspects in custody.

In May, Sri Lanka's army defeated Tamil Tiger rebels who had been fighting for a separate homeland for the country's Tamil minority for 26 years.

Speaking to journalists in Ratnapura, Sabaragamuwa province, Seneviratne said some 14,000 suspected members of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, or LTTE, are being held in various detention centres.

"These people are not somebody we can release soon, because some of them are suspected to be connected to very serious incidents," he said.

He added that "a considerable number of suicide bombers" are among the detainees.

However, military spokesman Brig Udaya Nanayakkara told the BBC's Sinhala service that just over 11,000 LTTE suspects are in custody, following the release of 712 former LTTE combatants on Saturday.



PHOTO: AFP  
A demonstrator reacts while being arrested by police during a protest organised by members of the Communist Party of India (CPI) and Communist Party of India-Marxists (CPI-M) against a fare hike by the Andhra Pradesh State Road Transport Corporation (APSRTC) in Hyderabad yesterday.

### India test fires air-to-air Astra missile

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE, Balasore

India Monday successfully test fired the Astra air-to-air missile from its Integrated Test Range (ITR) off the Orissa coast.

The beyond visual range air-to-air missile was tested at the Chandipur test range at about 9.45 a.m.

"The test was a success," SP Dash, director of the ITR, told IANS.

Another Astra missile is scheduled to be tested from the same test range later in the day, he added.

### US drones produce loads of intelligence

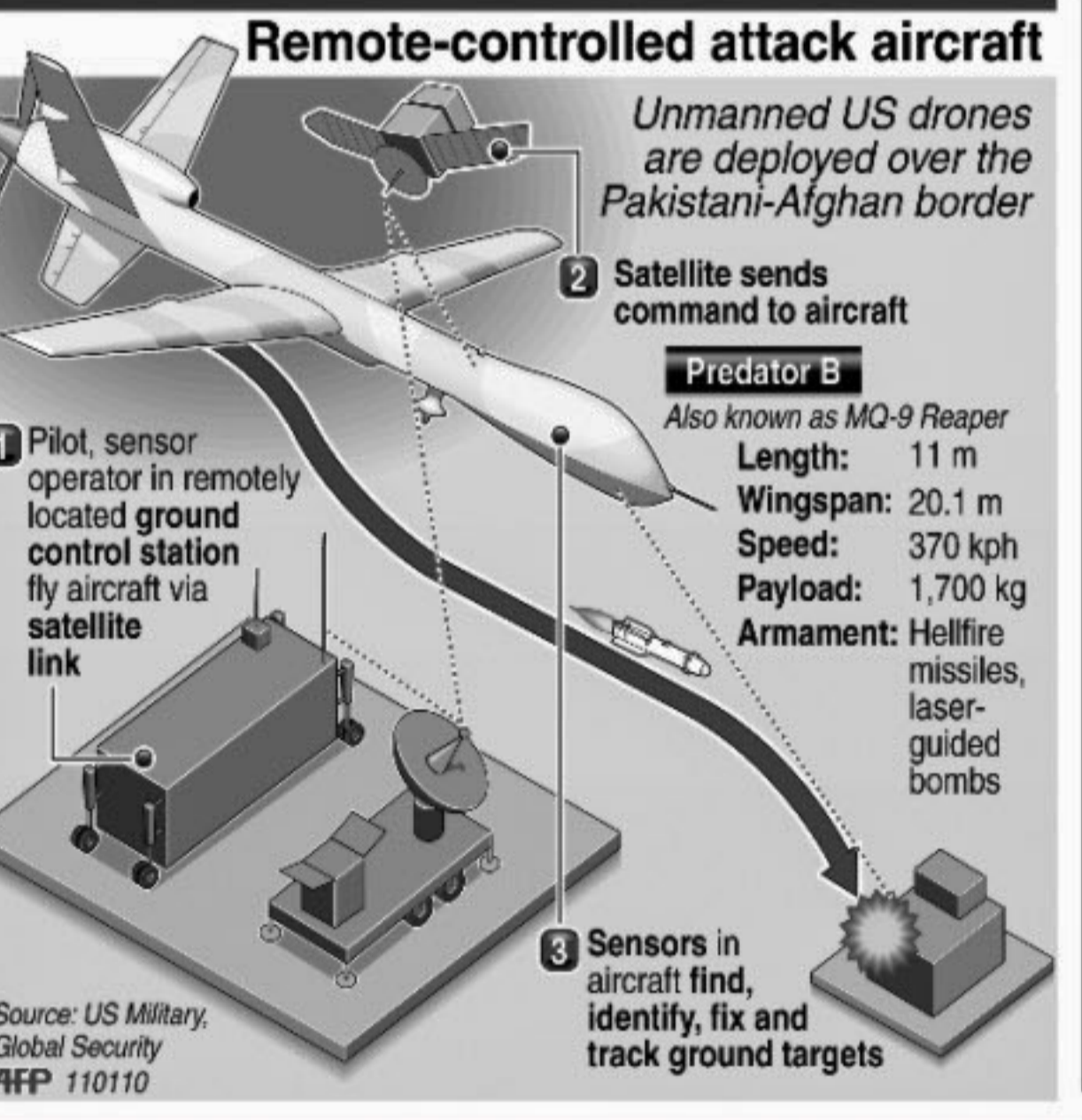
AFP, Washington

US remote-controlled spy drones used over Afghanistan and Iraq are producing so much video intelligence that analysts are finding it more and more difficult to keep up with it, The New York Times reported late Sunday.

The newspaper said the Air Force drones collected nearly three times as much video over Afghanistan and Iraq last year as in 2007 -- about 24 years' worth if watched continuously.

That volume is expected to multiply in the coming years as drones are added to the fleet and as some start using multiple cameras to shoot in many directions, the report said.

A group of young analysts already watches every second of the footage live as it is streamed to Langley Air Force Base in Virginia and to other intelligence centres, and they quickly pass warnings about insurgents and roadside bombs to troops in the field, according to the paper.



### Indo-Pak peace confce begins in Delhi

#### JKLF leader heckled at meet

ANI, PTI, New Delhi

At the 3-day conference 'A Road Map Towards Peace' mooted by peace activists of India and Pakistan, commenced on Sunday in New Delhi.

Political leaders from Kashmir said that they want a permanent solution to the Kashmir issue through peace talks. Mehbooba Mufti, President of People's Democratic Party (PDP), said solving Jammu and Kashmir issue would strengthen people's faith in democracy.

Earlier JKLF leader Yasin Malik was heckled by a group at the Indo-Pak peace meet objecting to his presence and remarks relating to Kashmiri Pandits. As soon as Malik rose to address the conference, some Kashmiri Pandits

stood up, saying he should not be allowed to speak and hurled abuses at him.

Malik said that from 1947 when the country got independence, the people of Kashmir got only conflict. "Three generations of Kashmiris have been consumed by the conflict," he said, pointing out that the people of Kashmir do not have a history of violence in their 5,000-year-old history.

There were repeated disruptions when Malik spoke, with a vocal group of Kashmiri Pandits belonging to organisations like Pannun Kashmir and Roots in Kashmir objecting to his presence. Malik's statement that they (Kashmiri Pandits) were used as the "whipping boys" of the (intelligence) agencies and target him evoked a strong reaction.

### No respite from traffic mess

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signal lights were in operation and the traffic heading Bangla Motor from Mouchak had to wait for about 12 to 15 minutes. On the other hand, traffic to Ramna halted for two to three minutes for each signal that caused impatience among the people heading to Bangla Motor.

Traffic personnel at Farmgate intersection said if drivers are not compelled to obey lanes before reaching the intersections, they can hardly make the vehicles follow lanes.

Sources at the office of the joint commissioner (Traffic)

say DMP could not conduct the 12 traffic monitoring teams each headed by a deputy commissioner (DC) over the last few days due to the Police Week that started on January 5.

Speaking anonymously, a top police official said, "We also noticed that the traffic situation is getting worse. We will ensure strict enforcement of traffic rules to improve the situation."

DC (Traffic West) Selim Mohammad Jahangir said over the last few days traffic personnel had to tackle a huge rush of political activists and their motorcades that also deteriorated the

situation.

He added the Rehab Fair at Sheraton Hotel also worsened the situation as a good number of private cars gathered around the venue every day.

Mohammad Habib from Uttara said, "I got into the bus from Azampur at 11:45am and reached Shabbagh intersection after three hours due to nagging jam yesterday."

His bus moved by inches from Bishwaroad to Banani and from Mohakhali flyover to Farmgate intersection, he said, adding, it took around one and a quarter hours to travel the distance the previous day.

### Scientists getting closer to resurrect extinct animals

ANI, Washington

New research indicates that scientists are making remarkable advances that are bringing us closer than ever before to the possibility of resurrecting extinct species.

In the age of DNA, we now know that vanished creatures, like mammoths and mastodons, ground sloths and sabretooth cats, are ultimately nothing more than sequences of the four letters - A, C, T, and G - that make up the genetic blueprint or code of life.

The codes for extinct animals were thought to have died along with them, until recently, when machines like one at the Smithsonian's DNA lab started working magic.

"Just the study of ancient DNA only broke onto the scene 20 years ago or so. The idea that we could harvest DNA from extinct creatures, from fossil bones, learn something about the past," Sean Carroll, a professor of molecular biology and genetics at the University of Wisconsin.



PHOTO: AFP  
Punan Kashmir demonstrators interrupt an address by Kashmiri separatist leader Yasin Malik during a two-day India-Pakistan peace conference held at the India International Centre (IIC) in New Delhi yesterday.



PHOTO: AFP  
People display their skills during the International Kite Competition at the Sabarmati riverfront in Ahmedabad on Sunday. Ahmedabad's International Kite Festival was formally inaugurated by Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi on Monday.

## NEWS ANALYSIS Tamils emerge as kingmakers

AFP, Colombo

For decades, Sri Lanka's Tamil Tiger rebels fought for an independent ethnic homeland. In May they were defeated, but observers say Tamil voters could now be key to who becomes the next president.

The two main candidates -- incumbent Mahinda Rajapakse and former army chief Sarath Fonseka -- both claim credit for crushing the Tigers and ending the island's bloody ethnic conflict.

With the majority Sinhalese vote split between Rajapakse and Fonseka, a close race is expected and Sri Lanka's 2.5 million battle-scarred Tamils could decide who wins the election on January 26.

Rajapakse and Fonseka have been on the campaign trail in the northern Tamil heartland of Jaffna -- a turn of events unimaginable a year ago, when fighting raged between the Tigers and government troops.

In the first four months of 2009 the United Nations estimates that 7,000 mainly Tamil civilians were killed in the fighting, while between 80,000 and 100,000 people died in nearly 40 years of bloodshed.

At their peak 10 years ago, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) controlled one-third of Sri Lanka. Rajapakse launched his push for complete victory in

2006, and Fonseka led the troops to triumph eight months ago.

The two candidates have sought Tamil support by promising to step up reconstruction in the former war zone and the speedy re-settlement of tens of thousands of Tamil civilians displaced by the final months of battle.

"The president moved about freely and spoke with the civilians," his spokesman said of Sunday's brief visit to Jaffna, while Fonseka addressed a rally in the region a week ago.

Victor Ivan, the editor of the weekly Ravaya newspaper, told AFP the Sinhalese community was still buoyant after the Tigers' defeat but divided over whether to back Rajapakse or Fonseka.

"The Tamil minority will be voting for the first time in 37 years without the presence of the Tigers," he said. "Tamils could decide the next president."

Major questions remain over the Tamil vote -- including whether many in the war-ravaged north and east are registered and able to cast their ballot, and who they might vote for.

Hundreds of thousands are still displaced and their turnout at the poll could be low, said Nimalka Fernando of the Movement for Democracy, a private advocacy group. "Still, the Tamil vote will be a big factor," she said.

There is one independent Tamil candidate in the fray. But a group of Tamil parties known as the Tamil National Alliance (TNA), which has 22 seats in the 225-member parliament, announced last week that it supported Fonseka.

Moderate Tamil politician Dharmalingam Sithadthan said his community could act as kingmaker in the race -- springing the 12.5-percent Tamil minority into an influential position.

"Although the LTTE is dead, their influence could still be around. This means most of the Tamils could vote against Rajapakse because he is seen as the one who took the political decision to crush the Tigers," Sithadthan said.

The TNA, which was once seen as a proxy of the Tigers, called a boycott of the November 2005 presidential vote, which was narrowly won by Rajapakse. Many believe the result would have been different had the Tamils voted.

The Tigers often used violence to stop voting and also carried out suicide bomb attacks and assassinations in the run-up to previous elections.

Fonseka, the architect of the military victory, quit in November accusing the president of sidelining him, and launched his campaign with a direct attack on Rajapakse's failure to deliver a "peace dividend".