

22 militants, 2 troops killed in Pakistan clashes

Car bomb kills 4, militants destroy Nato fuel truck

AP, AFP, Parachinar/ Peshawar

Militants ambushed Pakistani security forces at checkpoints near the Afghan border yesterday, sparking gunbattles that left 22 insurgents and two troops dead, officials said.

Government officials Mohammad Yasin and Mohammad Naseem said two more troops were wounded in the clashes in the Orakzai and Kurram tribal regions. They said a search and clearance operation launched after the clashes also seized 25 suspected insurgents.

A suicide car bomb attack near a police station in troubled northwest Pakistan killed at least four people on Saturday, police said.

The attack took place in Gomal, 25km south of the city of Tank, neighbouring the Taliban stronghold of South Waziristan where Pakistani troops are battling Islamist militants.

"The bomber struck ... outside the police station, killing one policeman and

three passers-by including two children," district police chief Ejaz Abid told AFP.

He said 11 people including five policemen, three passers-by and three prisoners in the police lock-up were injured.

The force commander in Kurram, Col Tausif Akhtar, told reporters the troops had cleared six villages of Taliban fighters. "We have also cut a main route the militants would use to enter the region," he said.

Many militants fleeing a Pakistani military offensive in the Taliban stronghold of South Waziristan have ended up in the two regions, where they often target government forces.

Washington has welcomed the military campaign but is pushing the Pakistani army to do more to target the Taliban blamed for violence across the border in Afghanistan. The Pakistani army has said it is too taxed to launch another operation right now.

"We have gone in Orakzai and Kurram because they were affecting our operations in South Waziristan," Pakistani army spokesman Maj Gen Athar Abbas told DawnNews TV on Friday night. "We are too thin on the ground. We are too over stretched. It is not possible to get into any other area for operations."

The army deployed some 30,000 troops against the Pakistani Taliban in South Waziristan in mid-October and has retained many towns in the region. But many fear the militants have just set up in other parts of the vast, lawless border regions and will continue to threaten the Pakistani government and US troops in Afghanistan.

Meanwhile, Taliban militants on Saturday attacked and destroyed a fuel tanker in northwest Pakistan supplying Nato troops in neighbouring Afghanistan, police said.

A group of 15 armed militants ambushed the truck outside Peshawar and opened fire.



Onlookers watch as firefighters extinguish a burning Nato supply truck outside Peshawar yesterday. Taliban militants attacked and destroyed a fuel tanker in northwest Pakistan supplying oil to Nato troops in neighbouring Afghanistan.



An Indian Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) Jawan stands guard at the Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International Airport in Ahmedabad on Friday. Security was further strengthened in airports across India and sky marshals ordered on flights after intelligence reports that terror groups might target an Air India flight operating from a South Asian country.

High alert as Indo-Pak border fence breached

PTI, INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE, Jammu New Delhi

Throwing security machinery into a tizzy, militants taking advantage of dense fog cut the barbed-wire fence along the Indo-Pak border for the first time in a bid to carry out infiltration.

The incident ahead of Republic Day function prompted the authorities to sound a high alert to thwart any infiltration attempt, a senior BSF officer told PTI yesterday.

"During the checking of the fencing we have detected that the fence has been cut by militants between pillar number 851 and 852 along the International Border in Abdullian Border Out Post

area of Ranbir Singh border belt of Jammu district last evening," he said.

Under the cover of thick fog, the militants had cut nine wires on the Pakistani side and ten wires on the Indian side thereby creating a gap to facilitate infiltration, he said.

During checking it was found that the fence has been cut and immediately BSF, CRPF, police and army were alerted and massive searches conducted in the entire border belt and adjoining areas, 35km from here. This is for the first time that the fence has been cut and a gap created for infiltration of militants, the officers said.

"However, we feel there are less chances of militants

sneaking into this side as there is another fence 500 meters behind the zero line which is intact," he said. Search operations were on in the entire border belt of RS Pura, he said, adding "no foot-prints of infiltrators have been seen."

Meanwhile, in the run up to Republic Day on January 26, the Delhi airport and the Hindon air base in nearby Ghaziabad were put on heightened alert Saturday, a day after intelligence inputs suggested that Pakistan-based militants could strike in India after acquiring para-gliding equipment.

CIA likely to double drone strikes in Pakistan

ANI, Washington

The Pakistan Army's stance to not to open any new front against extremists in the coming months has apparently angered the Central Investigation Agency (CIA), as it may double the use of unmanned drones to strike the extremists' hot bed along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border.

"By next year, the CIA is expected to more than double its fleet of the latest Reaper aircraft, bigger, faster and more heavily armed than the older Predators, to 14 from 6," an Obama administration official said.

The Pakistan Army's announcement, which coincided with US Defence Secretary Robert Gates's visit to the country, has the CIA fuming, particularly after the death of seven American officials in a suicide bombing in Afghanistan's Khost region.

Since the incident, the CIA has hit back at the militants with a vengeance killing 90 suspected extremists in 11 drone strikes, and is believed that the American agency would heavily add to its operation.

"For the CIA, there is certainly an element of wanting to show that they can hit back," The New York Times quoted Bill Roggio, editor of The LongWar Journal, as saying.

Lankan opposition warns of vote-rigging and violence

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lanka's opposition warned yesterday of possible vote-rigging and violence by the ruling party in next week's presidential election as both sides wound up campaigning.

Ahead of final campaign rallies later on Saturday, opposition candidate Sarath Fonseka predicted that the

ruling party, led by President Mahinda Rajapakse, would use violence to intimidate his supporters in Tuesday's vote.

"They want to create violence and discourage people from voting. A lower turnout will help rigging," he told reporters, adding he expected fake voters and forged ballot papers to also be used.

In the run-up to the poll, police say at least four people

have been killed and hundreds wounded in clashes between rival supporters. The house of an influential opposition figure was bombed on Friday.

Fonseka said he and his allies would rely on the protection of the security forces, most of whom he said would vote for him except for a few senior figures who are "trying to please the government."

Infographic for Sri Lanka showing population, ethnic groups, languages, and years of conflict. Includes a map of Sri Lanka and a small globe.

Advertisement for Jahangirnagar University (জাহাঙ্গীরনগর বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়) for the 2009-2010 academic year. It lists various departments and programs, including a 1-year diploma program.

Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh Invitation for Tenders

Table with 13 rows and 2 columns. Row 1: Improvement and widening of road at residential and operational area of Shah Amanat International Airport, Chittagong. Row 2: Source of fund: Capital expenditure (investment of fixed assets) Code-100. Row 3: Tender package no.: 02/2009-2010 (Chittagong). Row 4: Invitation for tender Ref. No. & date: CAAB/W-669/Part-24(Ga)/1101 dated 13-01-2010. Row 5: Eligibility of tenderers: CAAB enlisted A-Unlimited (Civil) contractor/contractor having license of equivalent class in any govt./semi-govt./autonomous organization and who have experience in successful completion of flexible road pavement work valued Tk. 275.00 (two hundred seventy-five) lac in a single work order during last 5 (five) years in any govt./semi-govt./autonomous organization can apply for purchasing tender document. Row 6: Name and address of offices selling tender document: a) Division Commissioner, Chittagong. b) Superintending Engineer, P&D/QS Circle, CAAB, Dhaka. c) Executive Engineer, Civil Division-3, CAAB, Dhaka. d) Accounts Officer, CAAB, Headquarter, Dhaka. e) P.A. to Member (Ops. & Plns.), CAAB, Headquarter, Dhaka. f) P.A. to Chief Engineer, CAAB, Headquarter, Dhaka. g) Airport Manager, Shah Amanat Int'l Airport, Chittagong. Row 7: Name and address of the office receiving tender: Office of the Chief Engineer, CAAB HQ, Kurmitola, Dhaka & Divisional Commissioner, Chittagong. Row 8: Name and address of the office opening tender: Office of the Chief Engineer, CAAB HQ, Kurmitola, Dhaka in presence of the contractor or their authorized representative (if any). Row 9: Last date and time for selling tender document: 18/02/2010 during office hours. Row 10: Last date and time for submission of tender: 23/02/2010 up to 12:00 hours. Row 11: Date and time for opening of tenders: 24/02/2010 at 12:30 hours. Row 12: Special instructions: At the time of purchasing tender document attested copy of affidavit/articles of memorandum/joint venture agreement/partnership agreement to be enclosed along with the application. Row 13: Brief description of goods and services (works and service):

Kashmir row no breeding ground for terrorism Says Gates

ANI, Islamabad

US Defence Secretary Robert Gates has rubbished Pakistan's long standing stance that the unresolved issues like the Kashmir dispute were breeding terrorism and providing food for thought for banned extremist organisations like al-Qaeda.

Interacting with reporters at the residence of US Ambassador, Anne Patterson, here, Gates said groups like al-Qaeda are hardly concerned over the long pending Kashmir issue.

"al-Qaeda doesn't care about Kashmir, what it cares is creating problems and provoking conflict," Gates said.

In an apparent bid to pacify the Pakistani leadership, Gates has said that his statement that any more Mumbai type attacks could probably ignite a war between India and Pakistan was "misunderstood".

Addressing a gathering at the National Defence University here, Gates said the US never encouraged India to attack Pakistan.

"All that I said was that that any repeat of the 2008 Mumbai attacks could have the potential of igniting a war between the two South Asian neighbours," Gates clarified.

Four killed as Maoists trigger blast in Orissa

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE, Bhubaneswar/ Imphal

Maoists Saturday blew up a jeep carrying policemen and some civilians in Orissa's Koraput district, killing four people and injuring eight others, police said.

The rebels triggered a landmine blast under a jeep carrying 14 people, including 10 policemen, near Pallur village in Koraput, about 500 km from Bhubaneswar. The policemen were returning to their camp after conducting search operations in the area.

"The Maoists triggered the landmine blast around 7 a.m. Four civilians were killed. All policemen are safe, although eight of them have sustained minor injuries," Deputy Inspector General of police Sanjeev Panda told IANS.

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