Indian police remove slogan-chanting detained students from rally demanding a separate Telangana state at Osmania University in Hyderabad yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

300 Telangana students held for staging rally

PTI, *Hyderabad*

Over 300 students, who violated prohibitory orders and tried to march towards the State Assembly to disrupt the ongoing budget session in support of separate Telangana, were taken into preventive custody yesterday.

As part of the call given by the Telangana Students Joint Action Committee and Osmania University Students Joint Action Committee to lay siege to the Assembly demanding resignation of elected representatives of the region, hundreds of students began a rally from Osmania University campus, but were stopped by police on Shivam Road near Vidyanagar.

Pak airstrike kills 30 militants
Bombers hit police stations

AFP, *Islamabad*

At least 30 militants were killed in an airstrike by the Pakistani military as two suicide bombers attacked police stations in northwest Pakistan yesterday, officials said.

The airstrike took place in South Waziristan district where the military in October launched an air and ground offensive to flush out Taliban militants.

The "hideout in Shawal mountains was targeted after a tip off received that terrorists were hiding there," the military said in a statement.

The death toll could not be verified independently as the area is under military operations.

Pakistan's military is engaged in offensives against Islamist fighters across much of the northwest including tribal areas bordering Afghanistan, a region branded by Washington the most dangerous place on Earth.

About 30,000 troops poured into South Waziristan in mid-October to try to dismantle strongholds of the Taliban leadership, enraging militants who have responded with a surge of bombings and other attacks.

More than 3,000 people have been killed across Pakistan in attacks by Islamist militants since July 2007.

Washington believes militant safe havens in Pakistan's tribal belt must be eliminated if al-Qaeda is to be defeated and the eight-year war against the Taliban ended in Afghanistan.

US Marines are leading a major offensive against a Taliban bastion in Helmand province, billed as the biggest since the 2001 US-led invasion and the first test of President Barack Obama's strategy to drive out the hardline militia and reassert government control.

In other violence, suicide bombers attacked two police stations in northwest Pakistan, killing a police station chief and wounding six other policemen, police officials said.

In first attack a gunfight broke out when two suicide bombers stormed into a police station in Mansehra, police said.

One of the attackers was shot dead and the other fled, station chief Waheed Khan told AFP.

"We have cordoned the area and are searching for the second attacker," Khan told AFP.

Ali Raza, another police official, told AFP that bomb disposal staff were defusing the explosives strapped to the dead attacker's body.

An AFP photographer at the scene saw the body of the attacker lying in the police station and heard gunshots as police rushed to find the second attacker.

In a separate attack in the neighbouring mountain town of Balakot, a suicide bomber killed police station chief Khalil Khan and wounded three policemen, local police official Sabir Ullah told AFP.

Pak SC gives 'last chance' for implementing verdicts
Law Ministry determined to block NRO cases against Zardari

ANI, *Islamabad*

The Supreme Court of Pakistan has given "a last chance" to the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) chairman to file a progress report on the implementation of National Reconciliation Ordinance (NRO) verdicts.

Despite being warned by the Supreme Court about the implementation of the NRO verdict, the Pakistani Law Ministry looks determined to block the reopening of Swiss corruption cases against President Asif Zardari and others.

On Friday, a three-member bench comprising Chief Justice of Pakistan Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry, Justice Chaudhry Ijaz Ahmed and Justice Ghulam Rabbani expressed displeasure over the implementation of the NRO verdict.

NAB Chairman Naved Ahsan claimed that he was under the impression that certain court directives were to be implemented by the attorney general or the Law Ministry.

The Daily Times quoted the bench, as saying that it was giving the NAB chairman a chance because of his assurance that all necessary steps would be taken to implement the NRO directives.

The court also warned the NAB chairman of a pay freeze in case he failed to implement the court directives.

US in consultation with India, Pakistan to help resolve water dispute

ANI, *Lahore/Washington*

President Obama's Special Envoy to Afghanistan and Pakistan Richard Holbrooke has said Washington is in consultations with India and Pakistan to help both countries resolve water disputes between them.

In an interview with a private television channel, Holbrooke termed Pakistan's water crisis as the second most worry for that country after its sagging economy.

"Pakistan's water crisis is the second most dangerous crisis after its economic turmoil," The Daily Times quoted Holbrooke, as saying.

The Indus Waters Treaty (IWT), inked between India and Pakistan in 1960, provides appointment of a neutral expert by the World Bank as a last option to resolve water related issues between both the countries.

Pakistan has been blaming India for an unsporting attitude during bilateral talks, which were initiated to resolve the impending water dispute.

Pakistan has been opposing the construction of the Kishanganga hydropower project on Ganga River in Kashmir, which is called Neelum upon entering Pakistan. Pakistan has said that the diversion of the waters of the Neelum is not allowed under the 1960 Indus Waters Treaty, and it will face a 27 per cent water deficit, when the project gets completed.

The reduced water flow in the Neelum would not yield the required results of the proposed 1.6 billion dollars Neelum-Jehlum hydropower project that has been designed to generate 969 MW of electricity.

It has said that India has almost completed a 22-kilometre long tunnel to divert Kishanganga waters to Wullar Lake in Jammu and Kashmir.

Earlier the United States has lauded the leaderships of both India and Pakistan for not succumbing to provocation from militants and continuing with next week's planned foreign secretary-level talks.

'Pakistan has lost $35b in war on terror'

ANI, *Islamabad*

Pakistan's Minister of State for Economic Affairs Hina Rabbani Khar has claimed that the war on terror has cost the country almost 35 billion dollars over the last three years.

The Daily Times quoted Khar, as saying that Pakistan had incurred more losses in the war on terror, as Pakistani casualties were more than the total number of casualties of all the Nato forces combined.

During her meeting with Giuseppe Vegas, Italian deputy minister for economy and finance, she said the public sector development programme allocation for the next fiscal would be curtailed due to the rising cost of war on terror.

Vegas said his government would encourage Italian businessmen and entrepreneurs to invest in Pakistan.

He also showed interest in initiating various development projects in Gilgit-Baltistan, particularly in the tourism sector.

Uttar Pradesh sounds terror alert for schools

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE, *Lucknow/ Patna*

With the apprehension of one or more terrorist strikes looming large over India's most populous state, Uttar Pradesh police have sounded an alert for schools.

In an advisory issued to all district police chiefs, the state police headquarters has urged the cops to sensitise schools against terror attacks.

"Our aim is to sensitise heads of all schools across the state to observe certain drills and also create awareness among both staff and students," Additional Director General of Police (law and order) Brij Lal said.

Ukrainian PM quits vote challenge

AP, *Kiev*

Ukrainian Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko yesterday unexpectedly withdrew a complaint over her rival's presidential election victory as a top court reconvened to hear her challenge.

"We are withdrawing our suit," Tymoshenko told the court, saying she didn't see any "sense" in further proceedings.

Malaysian children are seen among participants of "1,000 faces for 1,000 tigers" campaign held at Fo Guang Shan Dong Zen temple in Jenjarom, near Kuala Lumpur yesterday. The campaign aims to help double the number of wild tigers in Malaysia by the next Year of Tiger in 2022.

PHOTO: AFP