



A Pakistani policeman searches a man at a checkpoint in Karachi yesterday. Security has been increased across Pakistan since the arrest of Pakistani origin 30-year-old naturalized American Faisal Shahzad in connection to a failed May 1 terror plot against New York's Times Square.

Lankan emergency laws relaxed

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lanka's parliament yesterday scaled down tough state of emergency laws that were introduced 27 years ago to deal with separatist Tamil rebels.

The assembly in Colombo voted to reduce some of the strictest provisions of the state of emergency, which has been extended monthly since 1983 to give sweeping powers to security forces.

Soldiers will now have reduced powers to carry out search operations, while the police will lose the right to ask for details of householders in any part of the island.

STRIKE ENTERS FOURTH DAY Nepal's Maoists block roads to govt offices

AP, Katmandu

Nepal's Maoist opposition blocked streets leading to key government offices yesterday on the fourth day of their crippling general strike to demand the prime minister's resignation, while the government vowed not to bow to protesters' pressure.

Protesters hoped to disrupt the government by blocking streets leading to the Singhadurbar complex which houses key offices and ministries, but many government ministers already had entered the complex under police protection before sunrise.

The Maoists, known to use violence to back their strike calls, have demanded that residents halt all travel and keep businesses and schools closed since Sunday in their campaign to get Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal to resign and hand power to a Maoist-led government.

The strike has shut down most businesses, schools and transport, with daily activity grinding to a standstill.

The standoff has raised fears of renewed violence in Nepal, where the Maoists ended their decade-old insurgency and joined a peace process in 2006. They won elections in 2008 and briefly led a coalition government, but a dispute over the army chief's firing split the coalition, leading to the formation of the current administration they are trying to topple.

India tightens security

ANI, Sunauli Border

India has tightened security checks along the Nepal-India border following Maoist demonstrations in Nepal.

The Nepalese Armed Police Force (APF), deployed for border security, has also increased its vigilance along the border while large numbers of Seema Suraksha Bal (SSB) personnel have been stationed at major checkpoints.

"Keeping in view the shut-down call given by Maoists in Nepal, strict vigil is being kept on the border area."

Trucks have formed long queues at the Sunauli border as tougher security measures have led to increased checking of goods.

MUMBAI ATTACK Court to give verdict today

ANI, KAKRA DUBAWAL, Uttar Pradesh

Family members of Phool Chand, the Mumbai taxi driver who was shot dead by the 26/11 attackers after they hired his cab to reach their targets, have said Ajmal Amir Kasab, the lone surviving terrorist must be given capital punishment.

Phool Chand's vehicle was commandeered by the attackers after they entered Mumbai through the Arabian Sea on reaching their destination, they shot him dead.

"I would be satisfied only when the man who has killed my husband would be hanged," said Sanju Devi, Phool Chand's widow.

"We are satisfied to a certain extent, but we will be completely satisfied only when he will be given a death sentence and we will hear that he is dead," said Subhash Prajapati, his brother.

Mumbai Special Court has fixed May 6 as the day to announce the quantum of punishment on Kasab.

Earlier, Mumbai Special Public Prosecutor Ujjwal Nikam had formally demanded the death penalty for Kasab. Nikam said that Kasab wanted to inspire others to take part in fideen or suicide attacks.

Afghan Taliban attack govt buildings

Seven bombers killed along with an official

BBC ONLINE

Seven suicide bombers have been killed along with a government official in an attack on government buildings in the Afghan city of Zaranj, officials say.

They say the bombers blew themselves up outside the governor's compound and a gun battle between insurgents and security forces is ongoing.

A Taliban spokesman confirmed to the Reuters news agency that they were responsible for the attack.

Taliban militants are active in much of south-west Afghanistan.

The scene of the attack - in Nimroz province - has traditionally been seen as their stronghold along with nearby Kandahar province.

Nimroz Governor Ghulam Dastagir Azad said that there have been seven explosions so far and that "police are engaged with the attackers in five or six locations including the provincial council and provincial court".

He described the fighting as extremely serious and said at least five policemen had been killed or wounded. Azad said at least one of the gunmen was still holed up in the compound.

The BBC's Martin Patience in Kabul said that police responded quickly to the attacks, killing a number of the attackers as they tried to enter the compound.

Our correspondent says that these types of attacks using multiple fighters have become increasingly common and are designed both to create chaos and give the impression that the government has no control over the security situation.

The latest incident comes only weeks ahead of a major military offensive in southern Kandahar province.

Army major, soldier killed in Kashmir gunfight

INDO ASIAN NEWS SERVICE, Srinagar

An army officer and a soldier succumbed to injuries sustained in a gun battle between separatist guerrillas and security forces in Jammu and Kashmir's Bandipora district, police said yesterday.

A raiding party of the army and local police was moved out Tuesday night to lay a cordon in Chatiband village in the district following specific information that a group of militants was hiding there, police added.

"The operation was launched on specific intelligence and as the troops were closing in on the target area, they were fired upon by terrorists resulting in injuries to one officer and one soldier."

They later succumbed to their injuries in the military hospital. Defence spokesperson Lt Col JS Brar said in a statement.

"Major Yogendra Rajbar and Rifleman Uttam Singh were martyred in an encounter last (Tuesday) night," Brar added.

Vacancy Announcement Promotion of Development and Confidence Building in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. United Nations Development Programme in Bangladesh announces vacancy for "Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Facility" under "Service Contract" modality. The duration of the contract is one year initially and subject to renewal on an annual basis upon satisfactory performance. 1. Communication Officer -1 Position. For details of the Terms of Reference and instructions to apply, please visit our website: http://www.undp.org.bd/jobs. Hard copies of the TOR's can be collected from UNDP-CHTDF Offices of Dhaka, Rangamati, Khagrachari and Bandarban. Applications should be submitted no later than 19 May 2010.

IFIC BANK LIMITED. 1ST QUARTER UN-AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE QUARTER ENDED MARCH 31, 2010. Balance Sheet (Un-audited) As at March 31, 2010. Profit and Loss Account (Provisional & Un-audited) For the Period ended March 31, 2010. Cash Flow Statement (Un-audited) For the Period ended March 31, 2010. Statement of Changes in Equity (Un-audited) For the Period ended March 31, 2010.