

## Maoists shot dead 26 CRPF men in India

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

Maoists yesterday shot dead 26 Indian paramilitary personnel by carrying out an ambush in the central Indian state of Chhattisgarh.

The Maoists opened fire from a hilltop when the personnel of Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) were marching back after opening a road in remote Daurai Road area of Narayanpur district of the state. CRPF Director General Vikram Srivastava said in New Delhi.

The incident took place about 400km away from Chhattisgarh state capital city of Raipur.

This is the third major strike by the Maoists against the CRPF, which was deployed for anti-Naxal duties in various states, since the worst attack on this paramilitary force which killed 75 of its personnel on April 6 in Dantewada district.

## BHOPAL CASE

## Manmohan to ask US to extradite Anderson

REUTERS, New Delhi

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said yesterday India would try to convince the United States to extradite the former chairman of Union Carbide, wanted in connection with the world's deadliest industrial accident.

A court has listed Warren Anderson as an absconder in a case to determine his responsibility in the Bhopal disaster, a gas leak at a Union Carbide pesticide plant that killed thousands of people a quarter of a century ago.

The United States has turned down a previous extradition request for Anderson, who was chairman of Union Carbide when the accident occurred.

But a ministerial panel reviewing the case recommended reviving the extradition request this month as well as examining the liability of Dow Chemical, which bought Union Carbide ten years after the accident.

## US Senate set to OK Petraeus as Afghan commander

REUTERS, BBC ONLINE, Washington

US General David Petraeus faces a confirmation hearing in the Senate yesterday expected to expose growing doubts about the US effort in Afghanistan but broad support for the four-star general chosen to lead it.

One of the US military's biggest stars, Petraeus is widely credited with helping turn the tide in Iraq. President Barack Obama hopes he can do the same with the unpopular, nine-year-old war in Afghanistan.

Petraeus, 57, would replace General Stanley McChrystal, who was fired by Obama last week over comments made by him and his aides belittling the president and his aides and announced his retirement on Monday.

It was the biggest military shake-up of his presidency, and the second time the top Afghan commander was fired since Obama took office last year.

"This is Obama's last chance," Arturo Munoz, a security analyst at the RAND

Corporation, said of Petraeus.

If the general who helped pull Iraq back from the brink and oversaw development of the book on counter-insurgency strategy cannot win the war in Afghanistan, maybe no one can, Munoz added.

### MCCHRISTAL TO RETIRE

The former US commander in Afghanistan, General Stanley McChrystal, who was fired last week by President Barack Obama, is to leave the US Army.

He was dismissed after criticising US administration officials in a Rolling Stone magazine profile.

US Army spokesman Col Tom Collins told AP that Gen McChrystal had notified the service that he wanted to retire but had yet to submit formal plans.

Obama has nominated Gen David Petraeus to replace the sacked general.

Gen McChrystal, a four-star general, and his aides were quoted in the magazine article as making disparaging remarks about Obama and other senior colleagues.

## My own people cornered me: Dahal

NEPALNEWS ONLINE

Unified CPN (Maoist) chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal has lamented his own people had cornered him for raising the issue of nationalism.

Speaking at a programme organised in Kathmandu Monday, Dahal said, he had faced all round opposition including from those considered close for raising the issue of nationalism and liberation of Nepali people.

Dahal said, although it was normal for others to corner him while raising the issue of nationalism, such behaviour from those considered close to him had hurt him.

"It is natural to be cornered from those who were against the people and have been swimming in the pool of people's blood for hundreds of years," said Dahal. "But it hurts when the language of the intimate ones resembles that of the foes."

## Kashmir hit by curfew as protests spread

REUTERS, IANS, Srinagar

The government imposed a curfew in parts of Kashmir and deployed thousands of troops yesterday to quell huge anti-India protests in a region at the core of its dispute with nuclear-armed neighbour Pakistan.

The latest round of demonstrations was sparked by the deaths of eight people blamed on government forces over the past two weeks and was one of the biggest anti-India protests in two years.

Most of the dead were protesters. Six died of bullet wounds, one was hit by a tear-smoke shell and another beaten to death, hospital sources said.

If New Delhi links the protests to Islamabad then they could hurt a tentative process the two sides have begun to repair their relations after the 2008 attacks on Mumbai, which India blames on Pakistan-based militants.

On Tuesday, some Indian media quoted unnamed government sources as saying Pakistan-based "elements" may have been fomenting the protests in Kashmir.

Police and paramilitary soldiers in riot gear patrolled deserted streets in Srinagar, the capital of the mainly Muslim Kashmir,

and warned residents to stay indoors, witnesses said.

At least 13 people were injured in fresh clashes between protesters and security forces across the valley, police said.

India accuses Pakistan of fuelling unrest in Kashmir, which both claim in full but rule in part and over which they have fought two wars. Pakistan says it only lends moral support to what it calls is an independence movement by Kashmiris.

### MOBILE PHONE SERVICES CUT IN N KASHMIR

Mobile phone services remained suspended in north Kashmir for the second day Tuesday for security reasons.

The services were suspended in Sopore, Baramulla, Bandipora, Pattan and Kupwara areas.

"We have been asked to suspend mobile phone services in these areas till further orders," one service provider here said.

Meanwhile, authorities have also suspended SMS news services in the Kashmir Valley.

Although officials here refused to confirm this, subscribers of different SMS news services said they had not got any news alerts since morning.

## German minister warns against Afghan 'end-date'

AFP, BERLIN

Setting an end-date for the withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan would play into the hands of insurgents, Germany's defence minister said yesterday, warning of a "tough summer."

"The least helpful thing for us -- both domestically and as an alliance -- is to set an end-date for departure," Karl-Theodor zu Guttenberg told the Financial Times in an interview.

"That plays into the hands of those who wait for such a date. Instead, it is far better to focus on a starting date, when a process of handover of security to the Afghans can begin."

However zu Guttenberg also warned that the German government would be looking for positive results from the nine-year-old mission by the end of this year.

Nato member Germany is the third-biggest contributor of troops to Afghanistan after the United States and Britain, with 4,400 soldiers stationed in the relatively peaceful but increasingly restive north of the country.

Zu Guttenberg's comments on a visit to London came after Prime Minister David Cameron said last week that he wanted Britain's 9,500 troops home from Afghanistan within five years.

Other countries making up the 46-country, 140,000-strong alliance led by the US, including Canada, the Netherlands and Poland have said they want their troops to come home in the next two years.

Zu Guttenberg also warned of a "tough summer" fighting the Taliban, with 100 foreign troops killed in June according to a tally by the icasualties.org website, the deadliest month in nine years of conflict.



Members of the anti-war CodePink group hold signs during the confirmation hearing of US Gen David Petraeus before the Senate Armed Services Committee to become the head of US and Nato forces in Afghanistan on Capitol Hill in Washington yesterday. The hearing comes just a day after General Stanley McChrystal, who was promptly removed from the post last week after scathing remarks he and his aides made to a magazine about top Obama administration officials, told the US Army he would retire.

PHOTO: AFP

## Lanka denies deal with 'rump Tamil Tigers'

BBC ONLINE

Sri Lankan Defence Secretary Gotabhaya Rajapaksa has denied reports that the government is forming an "alliance" with the "rump" of the Tamil Tigers.

The rebels, known as the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), were defeated by the army last year after more than two decades of war.

Rajapaksa told the BBC that he had recently met a group of "pro-LTTE" diaspora Tamils in Sri Lanka.

He said that the talks had passed off successfully. Rajapaksa said that a detained senior LTTE leader had helped to arrange the visit.

A diaspora representative has confirmed that the group suddenly got an opportunity to visit Sri Lanka and discuss issues of humanitarian concern.

### WAR CRIMES

Rajapaksa said the visitors were a group who realised there was no purpose in continuing to confront the Colombo government and that they now preferred to work with it for the benefit of the Tamil people.

"We want to work with as many groups as possible," he said.

The visitors had gone to the former LTTE strongholds of Jaffna and Kilinochchi and held

discussions on "all the improvements, the good and bad things", he said.

Rajapaksa said that detained LTTE leader Selvarasa Pathmanathan - also known as KP - co-operated with officials to contact the diaspora delegation.

He said diaspora members were also active in initiating the trip.

He said they met Pathmanathan but denied that Pathmanathan accompanied them on their visit to northern Sri Lanka.

There have been some claims that Pathmanathan is even being groomed for government office or is no longer in detention.

Last week a government spokesman said the authorities were considering using him as a pro-government witness in case charges of war crimes were levelled against them.

But Rajapaksa has denied he is moving about freely.

Yet one of the diaspora visitors, Charles Antonidas of the Tamil Health Organisation, told the BBC Sinhala service that Pathmanathan was playing a leading role in helping with the "reconciliation process" after the end of the war.

The biggest Tamil party in Sri Lanka, the Tamil National Alliance (TNA) which is traditionally pro-LTTE, has sharply criticised recent developments.

## Roadside bombs kill five Afghans

IANS, Kabul

Five civilians were killed and five were injured in separate roadside bombs in southern and central Afghanistan, officials said yesterday.

Two civilians were killed and two were injured when a roadside bomb blew up a vehicle in Khakriz district of the southern province of Kandahar Tuesday morning, the provincial government said.

Two other civilians were killed in the western province of Farah Monday when their motorbike was struck by a roadside bomb, the interior ministry said.

In a similar attack, a guard working for a private security company was killed and three others were injured in the central province of Wardak, also on Monday, the statement said.

Roadside bombings increased by 94 percent in the first four months of this year compared to the same period in 2009, according to the UN.

Most of the 318 foreign troops killed so far this year were victims of such attacks.

## US missiles kill 10 in Pakistan

AP, Parachinar

Suspected US missiles hit a house yesterday in a Pakistani tribal region along the Afghan border where the army has been battling Taliban fighters, intelligence officials said. At least 10 suspected militants were killed, including a possible al-Qaeda operative.

The two missiles struck the house, which was near Wana, the main town in the South Waziristan tribal area. The house was known to be frequented by al-Qaeda members, intelligence officials said.

Aside from saying one of the dead was believed to be an al-Qaeda operative, the officials would not speculate on the identities of those killed. They added, however, that they included Arabs, Turkmen and Pakistanis.

Four militants also were wounded in the attack, the four officials said on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak to media on the record.

Pakistan's army has waged a major ground offensive against the Pakistani Taliban in South Waziristan. The operation appears to have cleared much of the rugged region of the militants, though many have simply fled to other parts of the semiautonomous tribal belt. Still, violence continues in South Waziristan itself, indicating the Taliban remain there.

The US has relied heavily on its covert missile campaign to take out al-Qaeda and Taliban targets in the tribal areas. The vast majority of the missile strikes have focused on North Waziristan, home to several militant networks bent on attacking US forces in Afghanistan.

Pakistan has denounced the missile campaign as a violation of its sovereignty. But it is widely believed to secretly assist in at least some of the strikes.



PHOTO: REUTERS

Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh (L) lays a wreath at the Air India memorial in Toronto on Monday. Air India Flight 182 left Toronto on June 23, 1985 and exploded in the sky off the Irish coast, killing all 329 people aboard.

## Opposition calls all-India strike July 5

IANS, New Delhi

The Left parties, AIADMK, Telugu Desam Party, Samajwadi Party, Biju Janata Dal (BJD), Janata Dal-Secular (JD-S) and the Indian National Lok Dal (INLD) yesterday called for a countrywide dawn-to-dusk strike July 5 to protest against the fuel price hike.

The parties accused the Congress-led government of giving 'another cruel blow' to the people by removing controls over petroleum pricing and raising the prices of petrol, diesel, kerosene and cooking gas.

'This (shutdown) comes after its (central government's) refusal to take any effective step to curb price rise of food items and essential commodities which is causing suffering to the people,' said a statement jointly issued by the Left parties here.

'On top of the food inflation at nearly 17 percent and the general inflation rate in double digits, the Congress-led government has callously raised the fuel prices making the burden on the people unbearable,' it said.



Sandra (L) and Thays, daughters of former Panamanian dictator Manuel Noriega, arrive for the first day of his trial at a courthouse in Paris on Monday. Noriega, who risks 10 years jail time in France for money laundering, appeared in court on the first day of a hearing expected to last three days.

PHOTO: REUTERS

## 5 US terror convicts file appeal at Pak court

AP, Islamabad

The defence lawyer for five Americans convicted of plotting terrorist attacks and sentenced to 10 years in jail in Pakistan says he has filed an appeal.

Hasan Dastagir says the appeal filed Monday argues the conviction should be overturned because it did not take into account evidence provided by the defence.

Dastagir says the court will set a date to hear the appeal in a few days.

The five young Americans from the Washington, DC area were arrested in the Pakistani city of Sargodha six months ago and convicted last week.

Prosecutors said evidence proved the men used the Internet to plot terror attacks and meet militant organizations in Pakistan.