



PHOTO: AFP Pakistani rescue workers search for survivors in the wreckage of a crashed passenger plane in the Margalla Hills on the outskirts of Islamabad yesterday. A Pakistani airliner carrying 152 people crashed in a ball of flames into densely wooded hills outside Islamabad amid heavy rain and poor visibility, killing everyone on board.

India, Myanmar ink security, dev assistance deals

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

India and Myanmar inked five pacts on Tuesday night, including one on enhancing security cooperation that will help New Delhi to apprehend insurgents who take shelter along the border between the two countries.

The two countries signed an agreement on mutual legal assistance on criminal matters aiming at deepening bilateral cooperation in tackling trans-border organized crime, terrorism, drug trafficking, money laundering and smuggling of arms and ammunitions.

The leaders of the two countries "reiterated the assurance that the territory of either would not be allowed for activities inimical to the other and resolved not to allow their respective territory to be used for training, sanctuary and other operations by terrorist and

insurgent organizations and their operatives." Gen Shwe and Singh discussed a range of issues like cooperation in fighting terrorism, in energy sector and collaboration in a number of developmental projects.

Four agreements signed seek to build on developmental assistance already provided by India to Myanmar.

The visit by the senior General of Myanmar after six years has helped India in its search for an alternative route to connect Northeastern Indian states to the mainland by building a road through Myanmar, Indian officials said.

The two countries announced construction and revamping of a road at a cost of 60 million dollars to be given by India, to connect northeastern Indian state of Mizoram to other parts of India.

India has offered cooperation in exploration and production in Myanmar's gas and oil sectors and further investment by Indian companies in this sector as also in solar and wind energy.

Myanmar also welcomed the interest shown by Indian companies in that country's mines.

India also announced a ten million dollar grant for Myanmar's procurement of agriculture machinery from India.

The two countries also signed a memorandum of understanding on Indian assistance in restoring the Ananda temple in Bagan, a major Buddhist shrine and major tourist spot in central Myanmar.

Gen Than Shwe is understood to have briefed Singh about the groundwork for elections in Myanmar towards the end of this year. Nobel Laureate Aung San Suu Kyi-led National League for Democracy has decided to stay away from the elections.

Singh, in his turn, has reiterated the need to make the national reconciliation and democratic changes in Myanmar more inclusive.

Besides Singh, Gen Shwe held talks with Indian President Pratibha Patil and External Affairs Minister S M Krishna.

A few human rights groups had protested Gen Shwe's visit alleging human rights violations and crushing of democracy by Myanmar's junta but India has not allowed any ideological consideration to override its national interests in promoting its ties with the military government in Myanmar since the middle of 1990s when it came out with its "Look East" policy of strengthening relations with South East and East Asian countries.

Pakistan must cut militant ties, says Cameron

REUTERS, New Delhi

British Prime Minister David Cameron said yesterday that Pakistan must not become a base for militants and "promote the export of terror" across the globe, saying their bilateral ties depended on that.

Cameron's remarks, made during a visit to Pakistan's arch rival India, are likely to give cheer to officials in Delhi, which has long accused its neighbour of backing attacks on Indian targets.

The two nuclear-armed rivals have fought three wars, and a faltering peace process, which completely stalled after militant attacks in Mumbai in 2008, remains deadlocked.

"We should be very, very clear with Pakistan that we want to see a strong, stable and democratic Pakistan," Cameron told reporters after a speech in the southern Indian city of Bangalore.

"We cannot tolerate in any sense the idea that this country is allowed to look both ways and is able, in any way, to promote the export of terror, whether to India or whether to Afghanistan or anywhere else in the world," he added.

Cameron's remarks come days after classified U.S. military reports published on the

whistleblower WikiLeaks website detail U.S. concern that Pakistan secretly aided Taliban militants while taking billions of dollars in U.S. aid.

U.S. ally Pakistan is seen as key to any negotiations to end the nine-year-old war in Afghanistan because of its influence over the Taliban.

Analysts believe the leadership council of the Afghan Taliban is hiding in Pakistan.

Britain is home to a large minority of people of Pakistani-origin and Cameron stressed the importance of Britain's relationship with the Muslim country.

"It should be a relationship based on a very clear message: that it is not right to have any relationship with groups that are promoting terror," he said.

"Democratic states that want to be part of the developed world cannot do that. The message to Pakistan from the US and the UK is very clear on that point."

Britain has 9,500 troops fighting in Afghanistan and a rising death toll there is making the campaign increasingly unpopular.

Britain justifies the war by saying the majority of terrorist plots uncovered here have their roots in the lawless Afghan-Pakistan border areas.

BDR mutiny

FROM PAGE 16 indicted 824 BNP soldiers along with BNP leader Nasiruddin Ahmed Pintu and Awami League leader Torab Ali on 24 criminal charges like murder, arson, looting, kidnapping of bodies, and sedition.

Investigation officer (IO), CID's Special Superintendent Abdul Kahar Akand submitted the charge sheet to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court of Dhaka, showing 1287 as prosecution witnesses.

However, names of Pintu, Torab Ali and 21 civilians were dropped from the charge sheet even though they were charged earlier.

The IO prayed for issuance of arrest warrants against 21 BDR personnel who were shown as absconding since the mutiny and an order for confiscating their property.

He also appealed to the court to release 1520 BDR jawans and civilians as charges brought against them of possessing firearms, ammunition and explosives were not proven.

Sources said though the names of arrestees were dropped from the charge sheet they would not be tried under the BDR Act if the case was filed under the Explosive Substances Act.

The mutineers had initially decided to hold the officers as hostages to press for their demands and to open fire if necessary, said the IO.

However, the indicted broke into armories, looted arms, ammunition, and explosives, raided Darbar Hall, set officers' houses on fire, and shot 74 people to death including 57 army officers, he said.

They also exploded grenades and fired at a helicopter, he added.

The IO said 64 pistols, 5 Chinese rifles, 1 sub-machine gun and 198 grenades are still missing. He suspects that some of those grenades were used during the mutiny.

Quraishi new CEC of India

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

Veteran bureaucrat SY Quraishi was on Tuesday appointed the new Chief Election Commissioner of India, the first Muslim to occupy the post.

Quraishi, 63, an Indian Administrative Service Officer of 1971 batch, replaces Naveen Chawla who retires tomorrow after heading the Election Commission for a little more than a year.

Quraishi, who has held key posts in the bureaucracy and has already served in the Election Commission in other capacities for more than four years, will head the poll body till June, 2012, a notification issued by the Law Ministry said.

A distinguished author, Quraishi has done Ph.D on "Role of Communication and Social Marketing in Development of Women and Children".

"I feel deeply honored on being entrusted with this assignment. Election Commission of India is an institution in which the nation places a great trust. It would be my utmost endeavour to prove myself worthy of this trust", Quraishi said soon after the government announced his appointment as Chief Election Commissioner.

Quraishi's first major assignment as head of the Election Commission of India will be to conduct the elections to the Bihar state legislative assembly later this year. Ends.

Garment workers'

FROM PAGE 16 vessels' turnaround time at the Chittagong port and suspension of minimum charge for the use of power and gas.

In reaction to the proposed pay structure, Towhidur Rahman, a coordinator of the Garment Sramik Oikya Parishad, said, "Tk 3,000 is not enough. I urge the government to reconsider the proposed pay structure."

Workers have demanded fixing the minimum wage at Tk 5,000 as the prices of essentials and house rent have gone up, he said.

Labour leaders and garment workers yesterday protested the proposed pay.

"We reject the proposed wage structure. We will stage demonstrations against the proposed pay in early August," said Mushrefa Mishu, president of Garment Sramik Oikya Forum, at a rally in the capital's Muktangan area.

The workers, organised for 40,000 workers, organised the rally.

the proposals from the central bank, Centre for Policy Dialogue, a private think tank, and Consumers Association Bangladesh, she said.

"Almost all proposals recommended an average increase of 70 percent. But we decided to raise the wage by 80 percent. I think it is not enough for a worker to maintain a family. But we had to consider the business situation," she said.

The board recommended retaining all existing facilities such as assistance bonus to give a worker the chance to earn a reasonable amount at the end of the month, Shamsunnahar said.

Several incidents of labour unrest over the last few months prompted the government to form the third minimum wage board in January.

The board headed by Iktedar Ahmed was given the responsibility to fix the minimum wage for 3.5 million garment workers.

The first minimum wage board, constituted in 1994, fixed Tk 940 as minimum wage for garment workers.

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