

MUMBAI CARNAGE

Pak minister blames Indian agencies

PTI, New Delhi

Pakistan Interior Minister Rehman Malik yesterday blamed Indian security agencies for their "failure" to prevent the Mumbai terror attack and alleged that Indian non-state actors were involved in the massacre.

Malik also said had there been interaction between Pakistan and India and regular sharing of information, the 26/11 attack could have been prevented.

He said Pakistani-American terrorist David Headley had conspired with al-Qaeda terrorist Ilyas Kashmiri, a retired major of Pakistan Army and three Indian terrorists - Abu Jundal, Jabbiullah and Fahim Ansari - and roamed freely and plotted India's worst terror attack.

"So it is not a state sponsored drama, state sponsored action. It is action by non-state actors. Triangular nexus between Headley, (Ilyas) Kashmiri, the enemy of Pakistan, a Major who deserted the



Rehman Malik

Pakistan Army, having joined LeT and of course three Indians," he said delivering a lecture at Observer Research Foundation.

Malik said during investigation, it has come to be known that they carried out reconnaissance of the targets and shot films uninterrupted and without notice of law enforcement agencies.

"Now the agencies failed. Both here and Pakistan. So, we have failed. Why? Because, there was no interaction between Pakistan and India," he said.

The Pakistani leader advised Indians not to hide matters of terror and investigation else things would go out of hands.

Referring to LeT terrorist Abu Jundal, who was present in LeT control room during 26/11 attack and was deported from Saudi Arabia recently, Mr. Malik said Jundal had confessed that he was a known criminal, having been charged in many cases.

North Korea marks 1st death anniversary of late leader

AFP, Seoul

North Korean leader Kim Jong-Un led thousands of officials yesterday in a memorial ceremony for his late father and ex-ruler Kim Jong-Il, days after a successful long-range rocket launch.

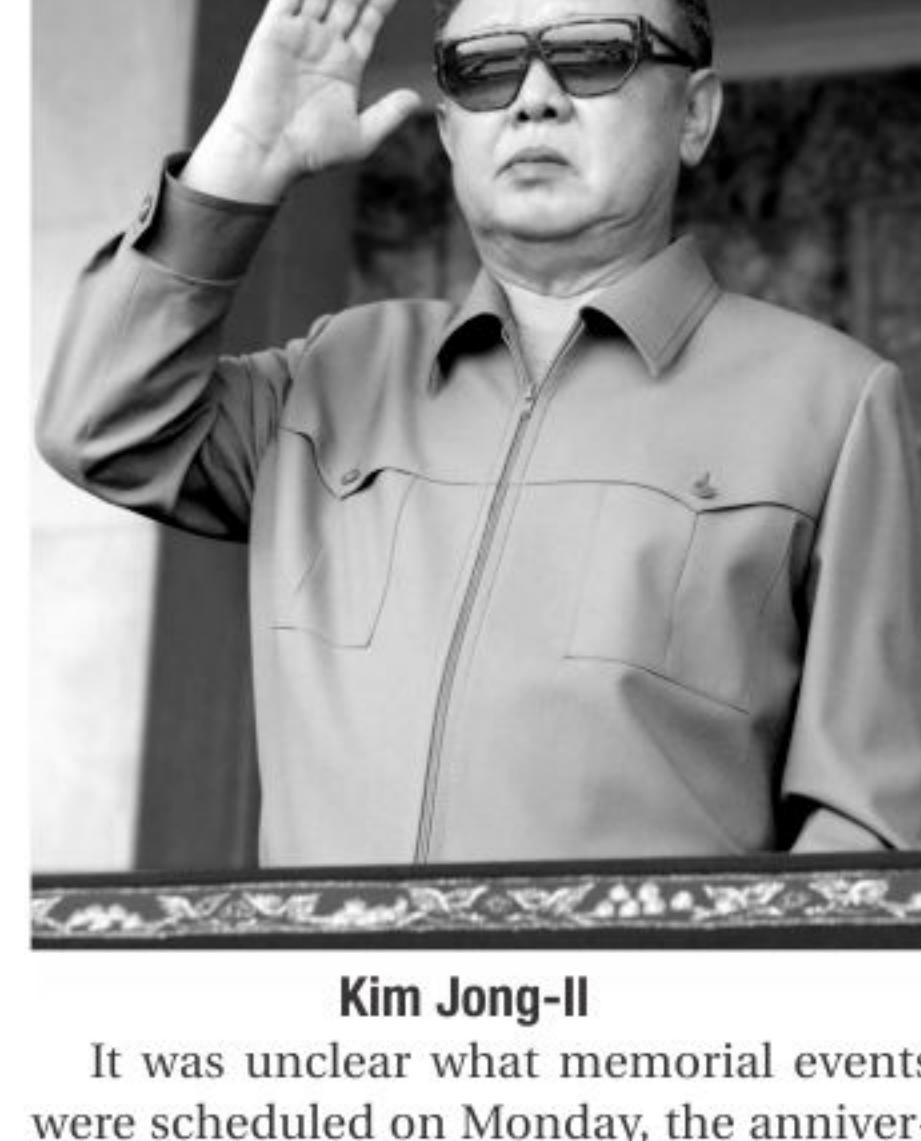
The ceremony followed a mass rally two days earlier hailing the launch of the three-stage rocket, a move which was condemned by the UN Security Council and seen by many countries as a disguised ballistic missile test.

Kim Jong-Il, who ruled the communist state for 17 years, died of a heart attack on December 17 last year.

His youngest son Jong-Un immediately took over, the second dynastic succession by the Kim dynasty which has ruled the isolated country for more than six decades with an iron fist and a pervasive personality cult.

Officials in black suits and uniformed military leaders convened in a cavernous stadium in the capital Pyongyang Sunday morning for the hour-long memorial event, which was televised live on state TV.

Jong-Un, stone-faced and clad in a black Mao suit, sat on stage with dozens of other top officials against the backdrop of a giant red flag featuring a large portrait of a smiling Kim Jong-Il.



Kim Jong-Il

It was unclear what memorial events were scheduled on Monday, the anniversary day.

The North said the apparently successful launch -- its second after a much-heralded but botched mission in April -- was a scientific project to put a weather satellite into orbit.

But the United States and other nations viewed it as a disguised ballistic missile test banned under UN resolutions triggered by its past nuclear tests in 2006 and 2009.

Islamists claim

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The two sides' positions drew out the deep uncertainty and division seen in Egypt over the past three weeks, a period marked by mass protests and deadly clashes.

A small majority of 56.5 percent voted for the draft charter put to half of Egypt's 51 million voters on Saturday, according to the Freedom and Justice Party, the political branch of President Mohamed Morsi's Muslim Brotherhood.

Egyptian media reported roughly the same figure, which fell short of the landslide the Brotherhood had been hoping for to quiet the restive opposition.

But the opposition National Salvation Front coalition said in a statement that it "will not recognise any unofficial result," and will wait for the formal tally after next Saturday's second round of voting.

It reiterated an allegation that the balloting had been "marred by irregularities and violations," but the statement did not repeat the Front's overnight assertion that two-thirds of voters had rejected the draft charter.

The head of the Front,

Mohamed ElBaradei, a former chief of the UN nuclear energy agency, tweeted of the first round: "Country split, flagrant irregularities, low turnout, disillusion with Islamists on the rise. Illiteracy remains a hurdle."

Violence between the charter's supporters and opponents flared in Egypt's two largest cities, Cairo and Alexandria, before and after the referendum, with police repelling an Islamist attack on the liberal Wafd party headquarters in the capital on Saturday night.

On December 5, clashes between pro- and anti-Morsi protesters outside the presidential palace killed eight people, injured hundreds, prompting the army to deploy troops and tanks around the compound.

If the constitution is approved, Morsi hopes it will end a tumultuous transition almost two years after a popular uprising overthrew president Hosni Mubarak and ushered in interim military rule before Morsi's election in June.

Liberals and Christians had boycotted the assembly that drafted the charter, complaining that the Islamist-dominated panel ignored their concerns.

Hisham Kassem, an Egyptian analyst based in Cairo, predicted that if the new charter is adopted, that "is likely to take the country into some sort of paralysis or civil disobedience."

A "serious crisis" would also be likely to ensue for Egypt's already embattled economy, he added.

Violence continues around Pak airport

AFP, Peshawar

Six people were killed yesterday as police and troops battled militants armed with automatic weapons, grenades and mortars in northwest Pakistan's Peshawar, a day after a deadly Taliban raid on the city's airport.

Fierce firing broke out after police acting on an intelligence report stormed a building near the airport, where a suicide and rocket attack on Saturday killed five civilians and five attackers and wounded 50 other people.

The assault late Saturday, claimed by the Pakistani Taliban, sparked prolonged gunfire and forced authorities to close the airport, a commercial hub and Pakistan Air Force (PAF) base in Peshawar on the edge of the tribal belt.

It was the second Islamist militant attack in four months on a military air base in nuclear-armed Pakistan. In August 11 people were killed when heavily-armed insurgents wearing suicide vests stormed a facility in the northwestern town of Kamra.

Police backed by troops launched a raid early yesterday on a building under construction near the airport following reports that five militants who fled after the airport attack had taken refuge there, said provincial information minister Mian Iftikhar Hussain.

In the subsequent shootout three militants and a policeman were killed, police said, while two other officers were wounded.

The clashes ended after six hours when the two remaining militants detonated their suicide vests inside the building, another senior police officer, Imtiaz Altaf, told AFP.

Avalanche kills 6 Indian troops

AFP, Srinagar

An avalanche on the high-altitude Siachen glacier that is disputed between India and Pakistan killed at least six Indian soldiers yesterday when their outpost was swept away before dawn.

Thousands of soldiers from both nations endure bitter conditions on the glacier, which is dubbed "The world's highest battleground", due to the long-running territorial dispute.

An estimated 8,000 troops have died since 1984, almost all of them from avalanches, landslides, frostbite, altitude sickness or heart failure rather than combat.

The avalanche struck a forward post early on Sunday morning, burying 7 soldiers, army spokesman Lt Col JS Brar told AFP.

Body of royal hoax nurse reaches India

AFP, Mangalore

The body of an Indian-born nurse who was found hanged after taking a hoax call to the hospital treating Prince William's wife arrived in Mangalore yesterday following a memorial mass in London.

Jacintha Saldanha, 46, apparently committed suicide after answering the prank telephone call from two Australian radio DJs to the hospital where Catherine was admitted during the early stages of her pregnancy.

Her funeral is expected to take place today near Mangalore in Shirva, the home town of her husband Benedict Barboza. He accompanied her body to India along with their son, 16, and daughter, 14.

Saldanha's body arrived a day after the nurse's children told a service at London's Westminster Cathedral that her death had created "an unfillable void" in their lives.

"We will miss your laughter, the loving memories and the good times we had together. The house is an empty dwelling without your presence," her daughter Lisha said.

A London inquest last week heard that Saldanha, who moved to Britain around 12 years ago, had been found hanged in staff accommodation on December 7 and that there were no suspicious circumstances over her death.



Jacintha Saldanha

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