

Modi's fascist tactics will fail miserably

Says Pak PM Khan, talks with Trump

Pakistan's Prime Minister Imran Khan yesterday said that the Indian government's "fascist tactics" in occupied Kashmir "to smother the Kashmiri liberation struggle will fail miserably". The premier, who has been tweeting regularly in support of Kashmiris after the Indian government stripped the people of occupied Kashmir of their autonomy, said: "The fascist, Hindu supremacist [Narendra] Modi government should know that while armies, militants and terrorists can be defeated by superior forces, history tells us that when a nation unites in a freedom struggle and does not fear death, no force can stop it from achieving its goal." "That is why the Hindutva exclusivist creed of the Modi-led government with its fascist tactics in IOK will fail miserably in its attempt to smother the Kashmiri liberation struggle," declared the premier in a second tweet. Yesterday, Imran Khan spoke to US President Donald Trump about his concerns over the situation in disputed Kashmir region, Islamabad's foreign minister said, ahead of a UN Security Council meeting to discuss the issue. The call comes a day after at least five people were killed in cross-border fire between India and Pakistan, amid heightened tensions between the nuclear-armed rivals since New Delhi controversially ended the autonomous status of the portion of Kashmir it administers.



Kashmiris hold placards as they shout slogans at a protest after Friday prayers against the Indian government's decision to scrap the special constitutional status for Kashmir, in Srinagar, yesterday. Inset, A Kashmiri woman shows her hands with messages at a protest after Friday prayers. PHOTO: AFP

4 killed in blast at Pak mosque

Taliban chief's brother among dead

REUTERS, Quetta A blast at a mosque in southwest Pakistan yesterday killed four people and wounded more than 20, police said, adding the death toll could rise. Taliban sources said the brother of Afghan Taliban leader Haibatullah Akhundzada was among the dead. Hafiz Ahmadullah was the younger brother of the Taliban leader, one of the sources said. The imam of the mosque, located 25 km from the city of Quetta, was also killed in the explosion, police said. "The blast was carried out through a timed device that was planted under the wooden chair of the prayer leader," said Quetta's chief of police Abdul Razzaq Chmeea. Quetta is the provincial capital of the restive province of Balochistan where separatist insurgents and Islamist militants are active. No group has claimed responsibility for the blast. "The death toll could increase as some of the victims were seriously injured," Shafqat Janjua, a police official, told Reuters. Mineral and gas rich Balochistan is at the centre of the \$60 billion China Pakistan Economic Corridor, which is itself part of China's Belt and Road infrastructure project. Violence in Balochistan, which borders Afghanistan and Iran, has fuelled concerns about the security of projects such as a planned energy link from western China to Pakistan's southern port of Gwadar. Five people, including two policemen, were killed and 27 injured in a blast near a police station in Quetta in July, a week after a similar explosion killed two people.

'NO FIRST USE' OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS

India may change policy

Says Rajnath Singh as tension with Pakistan soars

NDTV ONLINE Indian Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh yesterday underscored that India reserves the right to change its policy of 'No First Use', which has been the cornerstone of India's nuclear weapons policy for decades. The government firmly stands by its 'No First Use' policy but "what happens in future will depend on the circumstances," the minister said at Pokhran in Rajasthan, the site of two nuclear tests by India. "Pokhran is the area which witnessed Atalji (former prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's) firm resolve to make India a nuclear power and yet remain firmly committed to the doctrine of 'No First Use'. It is true that till now, India has strictly adhered to the 'No First Use' policy. What happens in future depends on the circumstances," Rajnath Singh told reporters in Pokhran, where he attended the closing ceremony of the army scout master competition in Pokhran.

Rajnath Singh made the comment as he paid tribute to Vajpayee on his first death anniversary at Pokhran where India held nuclear tests in 1974 (under the Indira Gandhi government) and in 1998, when the Vajpayee-led BJP was in power. BJP's manifesto for the 2014 polls included a promise to "revise and update India's nuclear doctrine". The defence minister's comment has been read by many as a well-timed warning amid tension with Pakistan, which has targeted India over the government's move to end special status to Jammu and Kashmir under Article 370. Vipin Narang, a nuclear affairs expert at MIT in the United States, said that Singh's comments were a sign the policy on 'no first use' could change in the future. "Make no mistake: this is by far the highest official statement that India may not be forever bound by No First Use," Narang said on Twitter.



'Kashmiris caged like animals'

Former J&K CM's daughter writes to New Delhi

HINDUSTAN TIMES ONLINE In a strongly-worded letter to Indian Home Minister Amit Shah, daughter of former J&K chief minister Mehbooba Mufti said, "Kashmiris have been caged like animals and deprived of basic human rights." Sana Iltija Javed claimed she had been threatened "with dire consequences" if she speaks up again. The daughter has given several interviews and released voice messages, including to Hindustan Times, since Mehbooba Mufti and Omar Abdullah were taken into custody on August 4, a day before the government effectively removed Article 370 which gave Jammu and Kashmir its special status. "Today while the rest of the country celebrates India's Independence Day, Kashmiris have been caged like animals and deprived of basic human rights," she wrote in the letter addressed to Amit Shah. It was, however, never sent across.

She explained. "Apologies for not posting this letter but as you're aware postal services in Jammu and Kashmir have been suspended," the letter said. Sana Iltija Javed said she was not allowed to step out of her home and asked for an explanation for her alleged detention. "Unfortunately, for reasons best known to you, I also have been placed



under detention at my residence. We are not even told when visitors are turned away from the gate and I am not allowed to step out either. Odd, since I am not affiliated to any political party and have always been a law abiding citizen," she said in a letter that was released to the media, along with a voice message.

Doesn't a citizen of the "world's largest democracy," have the right to speak up in the "face of unimaginable repression," Iltija asked, adding, "It's a tragic irony that I am being treated like a war criminal for stating the inconvenient truth," she said. "I am being treated like a criminal and I am under constant surveillance. I fear for my life along with those Kashmiris who have spoken up," Iltija said in the audio message. Saying it was suffocating and humiliating to be treated in this manner, she wanted to know under which law she had been detained. Kashmir has been under strict curfew since the midnight of August 4, when mainstream leaders were placed under house arrest and all communications blocked. The following morning, home minister Amit Shah announced the dramatic revocation of Article 370 and tabled the Reorganisation Bill that converted the former state of Jammu and Kashmir into two union territories.

INDIAN FILMS, ADS

Pakistan launches crackdown

DAWN/ANN Pakistan government has launched a crackdown on sale of Indian movies and banned airing of advertisements for India-made products on television channels in the wake of tensions over the situation in Kashmir. "We have banned Indian advertisements and launched a crackdown on CD shops to confiscate Indian movies," said Firdous Ashiq Awan, the Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Information. Talking to Dawn on Thursday, she said the interior ministry had already started a crackdown on Indian movies in the federal capital and it would be expanded to other parts of the country soon in collaboration with the provincial governments. "Today the interior ministry raided some compact disc shops in Islamabad and confiscated Indian movies." Meanwhile, the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (Pemra) has prohibited airing of advertisements for India-made products on television and radio networks. In a letter circulated to all its television and radio licences on Wednesday, the authority recalled that it had withdrawn permission for airing Indian channels and content on the Supreme Court's directive in October last year. Pemra said airing of advertisements produced in India, and carrying Indian celebrities, on Pakistani media was tantamount to "negating the state policy". According to Pemra, it had now decided to ban the broadcast of all advertisements featuring Indian products or personalities.

KASHMIR'S HARSH LOCKDOWN

Stories of a birth and a death

REUTERS, Srinagar Around the time Mohammad Sikander Bhat lay dying at home in Indian Kashmir's main city of Srinagar, Shafiq Ahmed was racing to get his pregnant wife to a hospital, negotiating about 85 km (53 miles) of highways through a maze of heavily guarded checkpoints. Amid severe movement restrictions and a total communications blockade, triggered by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's decision to withdraw special rights for Jammu and Kashmir state, one man perished without his last wish fulfilled: that of seeing his three daughters. The other battled the odds, saved his wife, and became father to a son. The death and the birth and both families' struggles reflect the human cost of the government's harsh clampdown in the Kashmir valley, home to nearly seven million people. For the first five days after the government's move, parts of Srinagar had been turned into a fortress,



blanketed with armed paramilitary and rolls of concertina wire blocking main streets. Anyone attempting to cross the checkpoints faced questions. It was around 2 pm on Aug 7 that Bhat - suffering from cancer in his 70s - asked his son to go fetch his daughters, his son said, declining to be named because he feared authorities could disapprove of him talking to the press. On most days, it would not take more than 10 minutes to drive to their

homes, he said. That day it took more than an hour. "By the time I came back, father had passed away," he told Reuters. He could not even call a doctor because of the lockdown. And there were hardly any relatives present he laid his father to rest. Kokernag, a town in southern Kashmir, where Ahmed lives with his wife and daughter, was also locked down on Aug 7, he said. A lean man with a

CLIMATE CHANGE

Pacific nations chide Australia

REUTERS, Funafuti Small Pacific islands nations at risk from rising sea levels lambasted Australia yesterday after it blocked moves at a regional forum to set down tough policies to combat climate change. Leaders of 18 countries in the Pacific Islands Forum concluded their meeting in Funafuti, the capital of Tuvalu, on Thursday with a communique that lacked any commitment to the policies it endorsed. The final document encouraged policies to limit temperature rises to no more than 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7°F) above pre-industrial levels and called for an immediate halt to coal mining. But it also said member states could ignore any measures they opposed. After being unable to find a consensus, host nation Tuvalu made it clear that Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison, whose strong backing of a controversial new coal mine was a key factor in his recent election victory, was central to the dispute.

Top army official sacked for sexual harassment

A major general serving in Assam Rifles in the north east of India has been dismissed without pension over a case of sexual harassment involving another serving officer. The court martial proceedings against Major General RS Jaswal were confirmed by Indian Army chief General Bipin Rawat yesterday. An Army General Court Martial had in December last year recommended the dismissal of the major general. The alleged sexual harassment incident took place in late 2016 when the major general was attached to Chandimandir under the Army's Western Command, ANI reported. The officer had denied the charges against him by the captain-rank woman officer.

Sudan allows Al-Jazeera to reopen office

Sudan has allowed Qatari broadcaster Al-Jazeera to reopen its Khartoum office, which they had shut down in May, the channel's director in the Sudanese capital told AFP yesterday. "The Sudanese authorities have agreed to let us resume our work in covering Sudan," Al-Musallami Al-Kabbashi said. The Al-Jazeera crew had been informed in late May, at the height of the protests that brought down longtime ruler Omar al-Bashir, that their licence and work permits were being withdrawn. The news channel's staff had handed over equipment and closed down the office after being notified of the decision by the country's Transitional Military Council.

FMs of China, Japan, S Korea to hold talks

Top diplomats of South Korea and Japan plan to meet their Chinese counterpart in Beijing next week amid a flare-up in tension over trade and history, Seoul's foreign ministry said yesterday. Foreign ministers Kang Kyung-wha of South Korea, Taro Kono of Japan and Wang Yi of China will meet from Tuesday to Thursday, the ministry said. Kang and Kono are also expected to meet separately on the sidelines of the event. South Korean President Moon Jae-in on Thursday urged dialogue to mend ties. Ties between the neighbours are arguably at their lowest ebb since their relationship was normalised in 1965, hit by a heated feud over the issue South Korean forced labour during World War Two which spilled over into a bitter tit-for-tat trade row. SOURCE: AFP

