

NEWSIN
brief

Taliban car bomb blast
kills 4 Afghan troops

REUTERS, Kabul

A suicide bomber targeted an Afghan Special Forces base in Kabul yesterday, killing at least four commandos, officials said, as violence continued to escalate following the collapse of peace talks between the United States and Taliban insurgents. The bomber blew up an explosives-laden minibus at the entrance to the camp in Chahar Asyab district, killing the four special forces members and wounding another three. Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid issued a statement claiming responsibility for the attack.

Jihadists kill nine
Nigerian troops

AFP, Kano

At least nine Nigerian soldiers were killed and 27 are missing after IS-affiliated jihadists ambushed a military convoy in the country's restive northeast, two military sources have told AFP. Jihadist fighters assaulted the convoy with heavy machine guns and rocket-propelled grenades as it was en route to the town of Gudumbali in Borno state on Monday. Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP), which is affiliated with the Islamic State group, has claimed responsibility for the attack.

Arms depot blasts
damage Cyprus hotel

AFP, Nicosia

Multiple explosions at a Turkish military base in northern Cyprus damaged a hotel in a neighbouring holiday resort early yesterday, prompting the evacuation of terrified tourists, officials said. Fire broke out in the arms depot at the base in Catalkoy, west of the town of Kyrenia, without causing any casualties, police said. The nearby Acapulco Hotel was damaged in the explosions, which began around 1:30 am and continued until 5:00 am.

'Electric shocks, beatings'

Kashmiris accuse Indian army of resorting to violence and intimidation during night-time raids amid ongoing lockdown

ALJAZEERA ONLINE

The Indian soldiers descended on Bashir Ahmed Dar's house in southern Kashmir on August 10, a few days after the government in New Delhi stripped the disputed Himalayan region of its autonomy and launched a crackdown.

Over the next 48 hours, the 50-year-old plumber said he was subjected to two separate rounds of beatings by soldiers.

They demanded that he find his younger brother, who had joined rebels opposing India's presence in the Muslim-majority region, and persuaded him to surrender or else "face the music".

In a second beating at a military camp, Dar said he was struck with sticks by three soldiers until he was unconscious. He woke up at home, "unable to sit on my bruised

Spokesman of Indian army
dismissed the villagers' accounts
as "baseless"

Since the crackdown began,
3,000 people, mostly young
men, have been arrested



and bloodied buttocks and aching back", he said.

But it was not over. On August 14, soldiers returned to his house in the village of Heff Shirmal and destroyed his family's supply of rice and other foodstuffs by mixing it with fertiliser and kerosene.

Dar's account of violence and intimidation by Indian soldiers was not unusual.

In more than 50 interviews, residents in a dozen villages in Kashmir told The Associated Press that the military had raided their homes since India's government imposed a security crackdown in the region on August 5.

They said the soldiers inflicted

beatings and electric shocks and forced them to eat dirt or drink filthy water.

Asked to respond to the recent allegations of abuse, Colonel Rajesh Kalia, spokesman of the Northern Command, the Indian army's headquarters in Srinagar, dismissed the villagers' accounts as "completely baseless" and asserted the Indian army valued human rights.

The abuses in the night-time raids by troops began in early August as New Delhi took action on Kashmir, according to interviews with at least 200 people. The change in status nullified decades-old constitutional provisions that gave Jammu and Kashmir state, as it is officially

called, some political autonomy and land inheritance rights.

In the village of Parigam, the family of baker Sonaullah Sofi was asleep when army troops raided his home. The soldiers took his two sons into a street, hitting them with gun butts, iron chains and sticks, Sofi said.

"Helpless, I heard my sons scream as soldiers started beating them up mercilessly in the middle of the road," Sofi said.

Soon, soldiers brought 10 more young men to the village square, seeking names of anti-India protesters, said Muzaffar Ahmed, Sofi's 20-year-old son, recounting the August 7 incident.

"They hit our backs and legs for three hours. They gave us electric shocks," Ahmed said, lifting his shirt to show his burned and bruised back.

"As we cried and pleaded [with] them to let us go, they became more relentless and ruthless in their beating. They forced us to eat dust and drink water from a drain."

Since the crackdown began, at least 3,000 people, mostly young men, have been arrested, according to police officials and records reviewed by the AP.



A Turkish military convoy heads towards an observation point near the town of Maar Hitat in Syria's northern Idlib province yesterday. Damascus said last week it strongly opposes joint patrols in northeast Syria by the United States and Turkey, calling it a flagrant "aggression" that seeks to prolong the country's eight-year conflict.

India, Chinese soldiers
scuffle in Ladakh border

Tensions eased after delegation-level talks

INDIA TODAY ONLINE

Tensions along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) flared up on Wednesday following a face-off between Indian and Chinese troops in eastern Ladakh. The standoff that lasted a day, however, ended after delegation-level talks were held.

The Indian and Chinese troops were reportedly engaged in a confrontation near the northern bank of the Pangong lake in Ladakh, two-thirds of which is controlled by China.

Army sources said tensions escalated when Indian troops on patrol were confronted by the soldiers of the People's Liberation Army of China. This resulted in a scuffle with the two sides sending more soldiers to the area, sources added.

"There was a face-off between the two armies but it got over after the delegation-level talks between two sides. The face-off is over now and it had de-escalated and disengaged fully after delegation-level talks yesterday [Wednesday]," the Indian Army

said.

Incidentally, the confrontation took place in the same area where Indian and Chinese troops had engaged in a bitter scuffle during the Doklam standoff.

The Indian Army has said similar incidents can take place along the LAC in view of its exercise next month.

The Army had on Wednesday announced its plan to hold an exercise in Arunachal Pradesh.

The Indian Army had said war games will be organised in Arunachal Pradesh starting October in which the Indian Air Force and the Army will jointly exercise real war scenario inside the Indian territory.

This comes around a month ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping on October 10-12 near Chennai.

Line of Actual Control (LAC) stability and trade ties are likely to be the focus of discussion when PM Modi meets Xi Jinping.

'You will never break our will'

Palestinians reject Netanyahu vow to annex Jordan Valley;
UN chief warns the move would violate int'l law

REUTERS, Jifitlik

Palestinians tilling the fertile Jordan Valley said on Wednesday they have been rooted for generations to the West Bank land that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu plans to annex, and they vowed never to give it up.

"We tell Netanyahu, and whoever follows him, you will not break the Palestinians' will, you will never break our will, never, never," said Hassan Al-Abedi, a 55-year-old farmer who lives in the village of Jifitlik.

"It's our parents' and grandparents' land. We will hold onto it no matter what it costs."

The right-wing Netanyahu announced on Tuesday that he plans to "apply Israeli sovereignty" to the Jordan Valley and adjacent northern Dead Sea if he prevails in what is shaping up as a tough battle for re-election on Sept. 17.

The plan drew condemnation from Arab leaders and from Palestinians, who seek to establish a state in all of the Israeli-occupied West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

The office of UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said the plan "would constitute a

serious violation of international law."

Palestinian leaders said it would also effectively nullify interim peace deals from the 1990s that included security cooperation.

Against the backdrop of Jordan's desert mountain range to the east, Palestinian farmers tended their crops and worried about their



future in an area where the town of Jericho and the River Jordan are reminders of a biblical past.

"This is not Netanyahu's land to give," said Ismael Hassan, a 75-year-old Palestinian from Zbeidat village. "Whether or not Netanyahu succeeds (in the election) we won't accept it. This land is for Palestine, for the Palestinians."

In Israel, which captured the West Bank in a 1967 war, Netanyahu's declaration was widely seen as a bid to sap support from far-right election rivals who advocate annexation of Jewish settlements, and from a centre-left that for decades has argued that the Jordan Valley should be kept on security grounds.

Retaining the Jordan Valley would effectively leave Israel encircling any Palestinian political entity that emerges.

Following up on his speech with remarks on Facebook on Wednesday, Netanyahu took credit for having persuaded US President Donald Trump to recognise Israeli sovereignty over another strategic slice of occupied territory - the Golan Heights, captured from Syria in 1967 - and to relocate the US Embassy to Jerusalem.

The White House was informed in advance of Tuesday's annexation announcement, Netanyahu said, adding that he was "crafting opinion in favour of recognition of Israeli sovereignty in Judea and Samaria and the Jordan Valley".

A US official confirmed Washington had been notified but said the announcement was not coordinated.

'Make due efforts'
on North Korea

Chinese FM urges US

AFP, Beijing

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi yesterday called on the United States to make efforts to resolve the North Korean nuclear issue, warning that applying "maximum pressure" would never work.

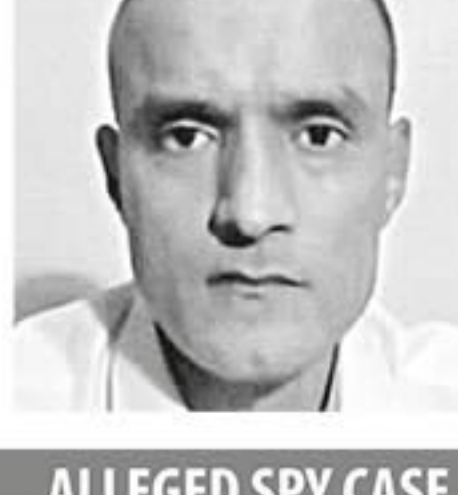
Wang also repeated Beijing's suggestion that the United Nations Security Council should consider discussions on easing sanctions against the North.

The isolated regime is under heavy US and UN sanctions over its weapons programme, and has criticised Washington's position that they will not be lifted until the country gives up its nuclear arsenal.

"Since last year, the DPRK has taken a series of positive measures, and on these grounds requested the US to meet halfway and make a positive response," Wang told reporters, using the initials of North Korea's official name.

"We think this is fair and reasonable. We hope that the US side can also take practical measures in this regard, and make due efforts to ease the situation and promote dialogue," he said, after meeting Malaysian Foreign Minister Saifuddin Bin Abdullah.

Pyeongyang said this week it was willing to hold working-level talks on denuclearisation this month with the United States.



ALLEGED SPY CASE

India won't get
2nd consular
access: Pak

ANI, Islamabad

Pakistan yesterday said that India would not get second consular access to Kulbhushan Jadhav, the retired Indian Navy officer who has been sentenced to death by a military court on the basis of extracted confession of "espionage and terrorism" following a closed trial in April 2017.

"There would be no second consular access to Kulbhushan Jadhav," said Dr Mohammad Faisal, spokesperson, Pakistan's ministry of foreign affairs.

Pakistan had first offered the consular access to Jadhav on August 2 but India had insisted that the consular access should be "effective and unhindered."

On September 2, India's deputy high commissioner to Pakistan Gaurav Ahluwalia met Jadhav in the presence of Pakistani officials. It was a recorded meeting.

After Pakistan announced in April 2017 that Jadhav has given death sentence by a military court, India moved the International Court of Justice (ICJ), rejecting Pakistan's allegations about Jadhav's involvement in spying and subversive activities.

The ICJ in July had asked Pakistan to comply with the Vienna Conventions and provide consular access to Jadhav and to ensure "effective review and reconsideration of his conviction and sentences".

India has maintained that Jadhav was kidnapped by from Iranian port of Chabahar, where he was running a business.

Trump warns Iran on
uranium enrichment

Leaves door open to lifting sanctions

AFP, Washington

President Donald Trump on Wednesday warned Iran against further uranium enrichment but left open the possibility the US could lift sanctions to pave the way to a meeting with President Hassan Rouhani.

Asked if he would ease crippling sanctions to help bring about a meeting with the Iranian leader, Trump replied "we will see what happens," while warning it would be "very, very dangerous" for Iran to boost its enriched uranium stockpiles.

Trump said he believes Iran would like to make a deal because "they have tremendous financial difficulty, and the sanctions are getting tougher and tougher."

"We cannot let Iran have a nuclear weapon, and they never will have a nuclear weapon," he said.

"If they are thinking about enrichment,

they can forget about it. Because it's going to be very dangerous for them to enrich. Very, very dangerous, okay?"

Rouhani has dismissed meeting with Trump, insisting that Washington must lift the sanctions it has imposed on Iran.

"The Americans must understand that bellicosity and warmongering don't work in their favor. Both... must be abandoned," Rouhani told his cabinet earlier Wednesday.

"The enemy imposed 'maximum pressure' on us. Our response is to resist and confront this," he said, referring to the US sanctions.

Trump has used sanctions to step up pressure on Tehran since he pulled the United States out of a 2015 deal under which Iran agreed to curbs on its nuclear program in return for a lifting of sanctions. But speaking the day after he fired John Bolton Trump said his administration was dealing with both Iran and North Korea "at a very high level."



People try to take selfies at the grave of Indonesia's former president B.J. Habibie following his funeral ceremony in Jakarta yesterday. Habibie, who ushered in an era of democratic reforms after the downfall of long-time dictator Suharto, died on September 11 at the age of 83 in Jakarta.

PHOTO: AFP