

# Violence escalates in Indian Kashmir

5 suspected militants killed a day after 5 soldiers shot dead

AFP, Srinagar

Government forces killed five suspected rebels in India-administered Kashmir, police said yesterday, a day after militants shot dead five soldiers.

It comes as the restive territory -- contested by nuclear-armed neighbours India and Pakistan -- is hit by a string of civilian shootings, with seven killed last week in attacks claimed by anti-India militant group The Resistance Front.

Police said the five men were killed in two separate incidents in the southern Shopian area of the Muslim-majority region. Three of those killed were members of the TRF, police alleged, saying one of them was responsible for the death of a street hawker last week.

It comes after five soldiers were killed Monday in a mountain pass near the Line of Control (LoC) dividing the area from Pakistan-administered Kashmir. It was the deadliest attack on military forces in the area since a 2013 ceasefire along the LoC was renewed in February.

Two suspected rebels also died in separate incidents on Monday, with one of them blamed by police for killing a taxi driver last week -- allegations disputed by his family.

Tensions have soared after Hindu-nationalist Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government revoked Kashmir's semi-autonomy in August 2019.

Nearly 200 people, including 157 soldiers and rebels, have been killed in the violence in Kashmir this year so far, according to an AFP tally.

The latest civilian killings have been condemned in Kashmir and across the country. Officials told AFP at least 650 people with suspected links to banned religious and militant groups were detained in a sweeping crackdown across the Kashmir valley during their investigation into the recent civilian deaths.



India's Congress party leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra (C) attends a mass gathering to pay their respects to the nine people who lost their lives when a car ran over protesting farmers on October 3 in Lakhimpur Kheri, in Tikunia Village, India yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

# Taliban meet EU-US delegation

EU pledges 1b euros Afghan aid package at virtual G20 summit as UN chief warns of humanitarian crisis, laments broken promises

AFP, Doha

The Taliban held their first face-to-face talks with a joint US-EU delegation yesterday in Qatar as Brussels pledged one billion euros (\$1.2 billion) in aid for Afghanistan.

The hardline Islamists are seeking recognition, as well as assistance to avoid a humanitarian disaster, after they returned to power in August following the withdrawal of US troops after 20 years of war.

UN chief Antonio Guterres earlier urged the world to donate to drought-hit and impoverished Afghanistan to head off economic collapse, but also slammed the Taliban's "broken" promises to Afghan women and girls.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen announced the EU aid package, meant "to avert a major humanitarian and socio-economic collapse", at a virtual G20 summit hosted by Italy yesterday.

She stressed the funds are "direct



support" for Afghans and would be channelled to international organisations working on the ground, not to the Taliban's interim government which Brussels does not recognise.

"We have been clear about our conditions for any engagement with the Afghan authorities, including on the respect of human rights," she said.

The Taliban badly need assistance as Afghanistan's economy is in a parlous state with most aid cut off even as winter nears, food prices rising and unemployment spiking.

EU countries are wary at the

prospect of a surge of Afghan asylum-seekers trying to enter the bloc, as happened in 2015 with Syrians fleeing their war.

Brussels' calculation is that donating money to help stabilise Afghanistan and assist countries between it and Europe could stem any flow.

The Taliban regime is still yet to be recognised as a legitimate government by any other country..

Guterres earlier underscored discontent with the Taliban over its treatment of women despite vows it would not repeat its earlier headline rule. "I am particularly alarmed to see promises made to Afghan women and girls by the Taliban being broken," he told reporters Monday.

Afghanistan's boys were allowed to return to secondary schools three weeks ago, but girls have been told to stay at home along with women teachers in much of the country, though they can attend primary school.

# Nobel academy head rules out quotas for prizes

AL JAZEERA ONLINE

The head of the academy that awards Nobel Prizes in science has ruled out introducing gender or ethnicity quotas after this year's Nobel laureates included only one woman, continuing a historic imbalance among recipients.

Göran Hansson, the head of the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences, said on Monday that he regretted that there were "so few women Nobel laureates" but added the prizes must go to "those who are found the most worthy".

"We have decided we will not have quotas for gender or ethnicity. We want every laureate [to] be accepted ... because they made the most important discovery, and not because of gender or ethnicity," Hansson told the AFP news agency.

The Norwegian Nobel Committee has handed out 609 prizes to 975 laureates since they were first awarded in 1901. Of those, 59 have gone to women, accounting for 6.2 percent of the total.

Investigative journalist Maria Ressa of the Philippines was the only woman honoured this year. She shared the Nobel Peace Prize with Russian journalist Dmitry Muratov.

Hansson, whose remit covers awards for chemistry, physics and economics, said the disproportionate lack of female prize winners reflects historic and persistent "unfair conditions in society".

"There's so much more to do," he said, citing the disproportionate lack of female professors in natural sciences across the world.

"We need different attitudes to women going into sciences ... so that they get a chance to make these discoveries that are being awarded."

Hansson said that some progress had been made in recent decades, with the trend of female winners increasing, albeit from a "very low level".

## MORE NEWS

### India okays Covaxin for kids aged 2-18 years

An expert panel set up by the Indian government yesterday recommended Covaxin, India's indigenous Covid-19 vaccine manufactured by Bharat Biotech, for use on children between the ages of two and 18, Health Ministry sources said. The final clearance for the use of Covaxin on children will be given by the Drug Controller General of India. When that approval does come, Covaxin will be the second vaccine cleared for use on children after Indian pharma major Zydus Cadila's three-dose DNA vaccine was approved in August for use on children over 12. A third potential vaccine for children is Serum Institute of India's Novavax for which the DCGI last month cleared trials for children between seven and 11 years.

### Russia says no progress in talks with US over standoff

Talks in Moscow between Russian and US officials to resolve a diplomatic standoff yesterday ended without any breakthroughs, but were still "useful", Moscow's deputy foreign minister said. The discussions held behind closed doors saw Russia's Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov and US Under Secretary of State Victoria Nuland discuss a long-running row over embassy staffing limits, among other issues. The meeting comes with Washington's ties with Moscow under particular strain over a long list of disagreements including the conflict in Ukraine, which Ryabkov said was not discussed. As part of tit-for-tat sanctions, Russia earlier this year prohibited the US embassy in Moscow from employing foreign nationals and formally designated the United States as an "unfriendly state."



### UK gov't botched initial Covid response: MPs' probe

UK lawmakers yesterday said that the government's response when Covid-19 swept into Europe cost lives and was "one of the most important public health failures" in the country's history. In a damning assessment, a cross-party group of MPs found that official pandemic planning was too focused on influenza and had failed to learn the lessons from prior outbreaks of SARS, MERS and Ebola. The 151-page study, published by two parliamentary committees after months of hearings, comes ahead of an independent public inquiry into the government's coronavirus handling due to begin next year. Britain has suffered one of the highest tolls in Europe with nearly 138,000 Covid-19 deaths since March last year, raising questions about why it has fared worse than comparable nations. The MPs said Prime Minister Boris Johnson's government had waited too long to act in early 2020.

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS



This handout photo taken on October 11, 2021 and received yesterday from Gonzaga Municipal Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office, shows rescuers evacuating residents from their homes near a swollen river due to heavy rains brought about by Tropical Storm Kompasu in Gonzaga town, Cagayan province, north of Manila. Nine people have been killed in the Philippines and 11 were missing yesterday due to floods and landslides caused by heavy rain from Kompasu, the national disaster agency said.

PHOTO: AFP

## DESTRUCTION OF THE BRAZILIAN AMAZON

# Bolsonaro accused of 'crimes against humanity' at ICC

AFP, Paris

Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro was yesterday accused of "crimes against humanity" at the International Criminal Court (ICC) for his alleged role in the destruction of the Amazon, the first case seeking to explicitly link deforestation to loss of life.

Planet-warming greenhouse gas emissions from burning and industrial-scale agriculture in the Amazon are higher than the total annual emissions of Italy or Spain. Deforestation in the region already releases more CO2 than the rest of the Amazon can absorb.

Austrian environmental justice campaigners Allrise filed the official complaint at The Hague-based court yesterday morning. They asked for legal proceedings against Bolsonaro and his administration for actions "directly connected to the negative impacts of climate change around the world".

The complaint accuses the Brazilian leader of waging a widespread campaign resulting in the murder of environmental defenders and of endangering the global population through emissions caused by deforestation.

It harnesses the growing field of

climate attribution science, which allows researchers to prove a link between extreme weather events, on the one hand, and global heating and environmental degradation, on the other.

The team behind it said that Bolsonaro's administration had sought to "systematically remove, neuter, and eviscerate laws, agencies and individuals that serve to protect the Amazon".

It said that Bolsonaro was responsible for approximately 4,000 square kilometres of lost rainforest each year, and that he had presided over monthly deforestation rates that had accelerated by up to 88 percent since taking office on January 1, 2019.

Bolsonaro's office did not respond to a request for comment from AFP.

The team of experts estimated that emissions attributable to the Bolsonaro administration due to rampant deforestation will cause over 180,000 excess heat-related deaths globally this century.

While there have been at least three other complaints by indigenous groups against Bolsonaro at the ICC since 2016, organisers say this one is the first to highlight the clear link between forest loss and global human health.

## Quote of the day



"We are losing our suicidal war against nature. Ecosystem collapse could cost almost \$3 trillion annually by 2030 -- its greatest impact will be on some of the poorest and highly indebted countries."

UN CHIEF ANTONIO GUTERRES AT UN BIODIVERSITY SUMMIT

# US is 'root cause' of tensions

Flanked by missiles, North Korea's Kim says Washington and Seoul threaten peace

AFP, Seoul

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has blamed the United States for tensions on the peninsula and accused the South of hypocrisy, state media reported yesterday, as he opened an exhibition showcasing his nuclear-armed country's weapons.

The "wrong judgment and acts" of the US meant instability could not be resolved, he said in an address to the "Self-Defence 2021" display, according to the official Korean Central News Agency.

Pyongyang is under multiple international sanctions over its banned nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programmes, which have made rapid progress under Kim.

In 2017, it tested missiles that can reach the whole of the continental United States and carried out its most powerful nuclear explosion to date. Pyongyang says it needs its arsenal to protect itself against a US invasion.

Analysts say North Korea is seeking to normalise its status as a nuclear power.

The Biden administration has repeatedly

stated that it has no hostile intent towards Pyongyang, but Kim said: "Its behaviours provide us with no reason why we should believe in them."

"I wonder if there is any person or state who believes in its claim," he added according to KCNA, "and, if any, I am curious to know who they are."

But he insisted that North Korea's weapons were for self-defence and not aimed at any particular country.

Pictures carried by state media showed Kim at the exhibition in front of the gigantic intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) revealed at a night-time military parade last year.

His address came after North Korea in recent weeks tested a long-range cruise missile, a train-launched weapon, and what it said was a hypersonic warhead.

In 2018, Kim became the first North Korean leader ever to meet a sitting US president at a headline-grabbing Singapore summit.

But the talks process has been largely at a standstill

since a second meeting in Hanoi the following year collapsed over sanctions relief and what Pyongyang would be willing to give up in return.

The Biden administration has said it is willing to meet North Korean officials at any time or place, without preconditions, in its efforts to seek denuclearisation.

Washington and Seoul are security allies and the United States stations around 28,500 troops in South Korea to defend it against its neighbour, which invaded in 1950.

The South and the United States held joint military exercises in August. The wargames always infuriate Pyongyang, which decries them as preparations for an invasion.

Last week, Pyongyang and Seoul reconnected their cross-border hotline in a sign of thawing ties, with only a few months left in office for South Korea's pro-engagement President Moon Jae-in.

But Kim accused Seoul of "avaricious ambition" and a "double-dealing, illogical and brigandish" attitude.

## NO TIME TO DIE

QUIZ CONTEST

The Daily Star | STAR CHANNEL

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QUIZ - 05 Is James Bond alive?

WINNERS LIST OF QUIZ - 04

1. Farhat Zishan, Shantinagar.
2. S. M. Habibur Rahman, Mirpur-1.
3. Mashfiur Rahman Antor, North Goran.
4. Rabeya Mahmuda Ripa, Uttara.
5. Nayan Akter Papia, Sabujbag.
6. Arif Hossain, Elephant Road.
7. Sanjida Eunus Era, Gulshan.
8. Md. Rafiqul Islam, Dhanmondi.
9. Md Imran Hossain Bhuiyan, Khilgaon.
10. Md. Mainul Hossain Mojumder, Dhaka.