

8 teachers killed in Pak school shootings

REUTERS, Dera Ismail Khan

At least seven teachers were killed in a shooting at a school in northwestern Pakistan yesterday in what appeared to be retaliation for an attack shortly before in which another teacher was shot dead, officials said.

Both incidents took place yesterday in the Parachinar area of Kurram tribal district near the border with Afghanistan.

It said the motive behind the killings remained unclear, and that the teachers killed in both incidents belong to the country's Shia Muslim minority.

The tribal district contains a majority Shia population who are often attacked by Sunni militant groups as part of the local Taliban movement.

Local police said they were gathering more information and investigating the incident.



A medic carries an injured man to safety during clashes between Israeli forces and Palestinians following an Israeli army raid in the occupied West Bank city of Nablus yesterday. Israeli troops killed three people during the raid, the Palestinian health ministry said.

PHOTO: AFP

Relief for Amartya Sen

Calcutta HC stays Visva Bharati's eviction notice

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

The Calcutta High Court yesterday gave an interim stay against a move by Visva Bharati University to evict Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen from a part of land allegedly illegally occupied by him at his house in Santiniketan.

The ruling was given by Justice Bibhas Ranjan De.

Economist Amartya Sen moved the Calcutta High Court on Wednesday seeking the interim relief as the university had passed an order directing him to vacate 0.13 acres (5,500 sq ft) of land at his ancestral Santiniketan residence by May 6.

Amartya Sen had earlier moved a court in Suri near Santiniketan against the eviction notice but the court set May 15 as the date of hearing, well after the university's deadline to vacate the land.

The Visva Bharati claimed that the land is under the "illegal occupation" of the economist and had said it would evict him if he failed to vacate it within the deadline.

In his petition, the economist argued that in October 1943, the then Visva Bharati general secretary Rathindranath Tagore had given 1.38 acre of land for a lease of 99 years to Amartya's father Ashutosh Sen who later built the house 'Pratichi' in Santiniketan.

Sen has been the holder of the land after the death of his parents. Currently in the US, he is expected to return to Santiniketan in June.



MANIPUR STATE

Indian army steps in to quell violence

REUTERS, Guwahati

Soldiers of the Indian Army held flag marches and evacuated thousands of civilians amid a dawn-to-dusk curfew to quell violence between tribal and non-tribal groups in the remote northeastern state of Manipur, officials said yesterday.

Violence initially broke out during a protest march yesterday by thousands of tribal people opposing a demand by a non-tribal group for the constitutionally defined status of a scheduled tribe.

Indian army sources said troops and the paramilitary Assam Rifles evacuated more than 7,500 people of different communities through Wednesday night and yesterday, sheltering them in the troops' camps and government premises.

"We are working on a war footing with army and paramilitary troopers deployed in strength to defuse any kind of communal clashes..." a senior police officer told Reuters from the state capital of Imphal.

Mobile internet services have been suspended for five days statewide, amid incidents of fighting among young men and volunteers of different communities.

In a social media post, N. Biren Singh, the chief minister of Manipur, pleaded with joined hands for people to maintain peace and harmony.

Putin must face justice

Zelensky, in The Hague, insists on creation of special court over Russian aggression; US denies any involvement in Kremlin drone attack

AGENCIES

Russian President Vladimir Putin must be brought to justice for his war in Ukraine, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said yesterday in The Hague, calling for the creation of a war crimes tribunal separate to the International Criminal Court.

"The aggressor must feel the full power of justice. This is our historical responsibility," Zelensky said in a speech.

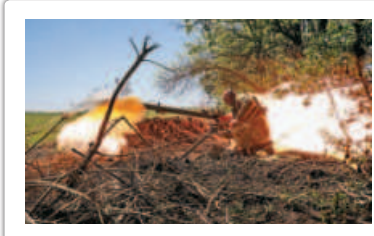
"Only one institution is capable of responding to the original crime, the crime of aggression: a tribunal. Not some compromise that will allow politicians to say that the case is allegedly done, but a true, really true, full-fledged tribunal."

An act of aggression is defined by the United Nations as the "invasion or attack by the armed forces of a state (on) the territory of another state, or any military occupation".

The ICC, which is based in The Hague and which Zelensky visited earlier in the day, issued an arrest warrant for Putin for suspected deportation of children from Ukraine, reports Reuters.

But it does not have jurisdiction over alleged crimes of aggression, and the European Commission, among others, has already brought its support for the creation of a separate international centre for the prosecution of the crime of aggression in Ukraine, that would be set up in The Hague.

Meanwhile, Russia yesterday accused the US of masterminding a drone attack on the Kremlin and said sabotage attacks by Ukraine behind Russian lines had reached "unprecedented momentum".



The Kremlin has said Ukraine carried out the attack with two drones aiming to kill President Vladimir Putin – a charge which Kyiv has denied, reports AFP.

"Decisions on such attacks are not made in Kyiv, but in Washington," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said. "Kyiv only does what it is told to do."

"Washington should understand clearly that we know this," he said.

White House national security spokesman John Kirby said Russia's claims that the United States is behind a drone attack on the Kremlin are false.

"I can assure you that there was no involvement by the United States in this. Whatever it was did not involve us," Kirby told MSNBC in an interview. "We had nothing to do with this."

Peskov said Putin was working in his office in the Kremlin as normal yesterday but added that security measures in Moscow would be beefed up following the attack, which the Kremlin said occurred in the night between Tuesday and Wednesday.

"Of course, everything will be strengthened. Everything has already been strengthened in preparation for the Victory Day parade" on May 9, he said.

EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell warned Moscow to not use an alleged drone attack that it said targeted the Kremlin to escalate its war in Ukraine.

"We call on Russia not to use this alleged attack as an excuse to continue the escalation of the war," Borrell told journalists as he went in to attend an EU ministers meeting in Brussels yesterday.

Sudan truce efforts in tatters

Gunfire, explosions grip Khartoum; Biden threatens sanctions

AFP, Khartoum

Gunfire and explosions gripped Khartoum for a 20th straight day yesterday leaving the latest ceasefire effort in tatters, as UN chief Antonio Guterres acknowledged the international community had "failed" Sudan and US President Joe Biden threatened sanctions.

Biden yesterday said the weeks-long fighting in Sudan "must end" and authorised potential new sanctions against those responsible for the bloodshed.

"The violence taking place in Sudan is a tragedy -- and it is a betrayal of the Sudanese people's clear demand for civilian government and a transition to democracy," he said in a statement. "It must end."

As the latest ceasefire expired at midnight Wednesday, the regular army said it was ready to abide by a new seven-day truce agreed with South Sudanese mediators, but there was no word from its foes in the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF).

In Khartoum, witnesses reported loud explosions and exchanges of fire on the streets around dawn.

Deadly urban combat broke out on April 15 between Sudan's de facto leader Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, who commands the regular army, and his deputy turned rival Mohamed Hamdan Daglo, who heads the RSF.

At least 550 people have been killed and 4,926 wounded, according to the latest health ministry figures.

"The UN was taken by surprise" by the conflict, because the world body and others were hopeful that negotiations towards a civilian transition would be successful, the UN chief told reporters in Nairobi Wednesday.

SCO MEETING

Pak FM Bilawal arrives in Goa

DAWN ONLINE

Pakistan Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari arrived in the Indian city of Goa yesterday to attend the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Council of Foreign Ministers meeting. In a video message on Twitter, Bilawal – the first foreign minister to head to India in over a decade – confirmed that he had reached Goa. Bilawal said that he would first hold meetings with his counterparts from Russia and Uzbekistan, which will be followed by a formal dinner for all the foreign ministers at the SCO. "I will give one or two interviews and that is the programme for today," he added. The SCO's Council of Foreign Ministers in Goa was scheduled to be held yesterday and today. Indian news agency ANI shared photos of Bilawal and Chinese counterpart Qin Gang in Goa.

Laos political activist survived shooting

AFP, Bangkok

A Laotian political activist who was reported to have died after being shot twice at close range in fact survived the attack, Human Rights Watch said yesterday. Anousa "Jack" Luangsuphom was shot in the face and side in a Vientiane cafe on Saturday and was reported dead by HRW, Amnesty International, a Laos newspaper and the dissident Facebook page he helped to run. Yesterday, however, HRW said it had received confirmation from family and other sources that Anousa was still alive and being treated in hospital. "Reports received from multiple sources that Anousa 'Jack' Luangsuphom died on the way to the hospital on April 29, 2023, proved to be false," HRW said in a statement. The statement came after a post on a Facebook page late on Wednesday, saying he had survived the attack.



China-based networks sowing disinfo in West

Says Facebook owner Meta

AFP, Hong Kong, China

A China-based online network tried to recruit protesters in Europe and set up a media firm in Britain as part of a disinformation campaign, Facebook owner Meta said.

The network's social media accounts – which ranged from Facebook to YouTube, Telegram and Twitter – pushed content focusing on incendiary political issues in Europe and the United States, according to Meta.

Meta said it had removed more than 100 Facebook pages, profiles and Instagram accounts linked to the network, accusing them of violating its policies against coordinated inauthentic behaviour.

Another 50 accounts linked to another China-based network had also been taken down. "These latest networks experimented with a range of tactics we haven't seen in China-based operations before," Meta said in its quarterly Adversarial Threat Report, published on Wednesday.

"The latest behaviours included creating a front media company in the West, hiring freelance writers around the world, offering to recruit protesters..."

While Meta had taken down some of the accounts, much of the networks' content remains online.



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