

Separatists kill eight Pakistanis in Iran

AFP, Islamabad

Separatists killed eight Pakistanis in Iran, Islamabad said yesterday, across the border from Pakistan's Balochistan province where there are regular deadly attacks.

The Baloch Nationalist Army (BNA), a Pakistani separatist group, and Jaish al-Adl, a Baloch jihadist group that is based in Pakistan but is also active in Iran, claimed responsibility for the attack.

Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif condemned the "brutal killings of eight Pakistanis", calling on Tehran to "immediately arrest the culprits, give them appropriate punishment, and make the reasons behind this brutal act public".

The eight men killed were from Pakistan's most populous province, Punjab, according to the Associated Press of Pakistan news agency.



In this handout photograph, taken and released by the Ukrainian Emergency Service yesterday, a rescuer works to extinguish a fire at the site of a Russian missile attack in Sumy, northeastern Ukraine.

PHOTO: AFP

India deploys troops after protests over Waqf Act

More than 150 arrested

AGENCIES

Indian authorities have deployed troops to crack down on deadly protests in the eastern state of West Bengal over a recently passed controversial bill that critics say would dilute the rights of Muslims to manage religious endowments (Waqf) worth more than \$14bn.

Protests over the federal Waqf amendment bill in West Bengal's Muslim-majority Murshidabad district escalated on Friday and Saturday, resulting in three deaths and the arrests of more than 150 people, according to The Times of India.

The daily said yesterday that the Calcutta High Court had ordered the "immediate" deployment of the paramilitary Border Security Force (BSF) to the area. Karni Singh, inspector general of the BSF's South Bengal Frontier division, said forces were sent to "help" local police, not for "independent action".

The bill, which amended a 1995 law on governing Waqf or Muslim properties donated for religious or charitable purposes, was passed earlier this month after heated debates in both houses of Parliament.

Waqf refers to personal property – movable or immovable – that is permanently donated by Muslims for religious or charitable purposes.

Israeli missiles strike Gaza hospital

Hundreds of patients evacuated; separate strikes in Khan Younis kill 14, including police head, brothers

REUTERS, Cairo

Two Israeli missiles hit a building inside a main Gaza hospital yesterday, destroying the emergency and reception department and damaging other structures, medics said, in a strike which Israel said was against Hamas fighters exploiting the facility.

Health officials at the Al-Ahli Arab Baptist Hospital evacuated the patients from the building after a phone call from someone who identified himself as Israeli security shortly before the attack.

No casualties were reported in the strike. The Israeli military said in a statement it had taken steps to reduce harm to civilians before it struck the compound, which was being used by Hamas members to plan attacks.

The hospital – an institution of the Anglican Church and a major medical facility – was knocked out of operation, according to Gaza's health ministry. The strikes also came after the United Nations

warned that medicines and related supplies are rapidly running out in Gaza as casualties surge.

"Hundreds of patients and injured people had to be evacuated in the middle of the night, and many of them are now out in the streets without medical care, which puts their lives at risk," said the ministry's spokesperson, Khalil Al-Deqran.

Separate strikes in the enclave yesterday killed at least 14 Palestinians, including the head of a police station in Khan Younis, in the southern part of the Hamas-run enclave, according to Hamas and health authorities. Six brothers were killed when an Israeli strike hit their car in Deir Al-Balah in central Gaza Strip, medics said.

Yesterday's strikes at the Baptist Hospital came as Hamas leaders began a fresh round of talks in Cairo, in a bid to salvage a stalled ceasefire agreement with Israel, as Egypt, Qatar, and the United States have stepped up efforts to bridge gaps between the sides.

Fellow DU students

FROM PAGE 2

"We are trying to verify the evidence," he said.

Two installations – Portrait of Fascism, presumably depicting deposed Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, and Dove of Peace – were set ablaze on the premises of DU's Faculty of Fine Arts early Saturday.

The fire destroyed Portrait of Fascism, while Dove of Peace was partially damaged.

On Saturday, police claimed that the arson was "a deliberate act."

After reviewing CCTV footage, police and university authorities said a young man wearing a black T-shirt, brown pants, and sandals, with his hair tied in a bun, was seen entering and exiting the premises by climbing over the central gate between 4:44am and 4:46am, before heading toward the Chhobir Haat gate of Suhrawardy Udyan.

The suspect was seen pouring a liquid – presumably flammable – on Portrait of Fascism and igniting it with a lighter.

The DU administration has formed a five-member committee, headed by Prof Dr Mohammad Siddique Rahman Khan, dean of the Faculty of Arts, to investigate the incident.

Khaled Mansur, officer-in-charge of Shahbagh Police Station, said a case has been filed under the Special Powers Act, 1974, over the incident.

This year's Borsho Boron Anondo Shobhajatra theme – Symphony of the New Year, End of Fascism – was designed to reflect the spirit of the July mass uprising.

According to organisers, Face of Fascism was the main motif for the rally. Standing 20 feet tall and crafted from bamboo and cane, the structure portrayed a woman with a toothy grin, four horns on her head, a large nose, and two fearful eyes. The striking image led many to believe it resembled ousted PM Sheikh Hasina.

SUDAN'S DARFUR

56 killed in paramilitary attacks: UN

AFP, Port Sudan

Sudan's paramilitaries killed 56 civilians over two days in attacks on a newly-retaken town on the road to El-Fasher, the last major city in Darfur still in army hands, activists said yesterday.

The killings, which occurred on April 11 and 12, targeted residents in Um Kadadah, around 180 kilometres (112 miles) east of El-Fasher, "on an ethnic basis", said resistance committee.

Tk 3,100 crore promised: BIDA

FROM PAGE 12

for improvement. However, this was our first attempt to organise an investment summit of a global standard..."

Around Tk 5 crore was spent on organising the summit, of which around Tk 1.5 crore came from the government and the rest from partner organisations.

If the costs and returns are compared, the outcome is fantastic, Ashik said.

He said that those experienced in such events understand that significant investments don't happen overnight; investors must first visit and experience the

country. The summit played a key role in changing global perceptions of Bangladesh. Many foreign participants remarked that what they saw online was different from reality.

Concerning the process for converting potential investments into actual investments, he said that a diligent registration process was followed, collecting contact information to maintain engagement with interested parties. Follow-ups are planned to ascertain their decision-making progress and the potential for further visits, aligning with standard business

development practices.

During the BIDA's executive committee meeting, Chief Adviser's Press Secretary Shafiqul Alam said the chief adviser directed to form a committee to expedite the launch of the third terminal of Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport. Additionally, a directive was issued to explore bringing various investment promotion agencies, about eight, under a single umbrella for better coordination. The chief adviser also suggested developing an exclusive economic zone for Nepal.

Shafiq said that there

is also strong interest of foreign investors in the Chittagong Port.

The BIDA executive chairman said a decision has been made to cancel the plan of developing 10 economic zones. "We don't think these are necessary."

Acknowledging the current higher costs of flying goods from Dhaka compared to transshipping via Kolkata or Delhi, he said that the government is considering India's revocation of transshipment facility for Bangladesh as an opportunity to enhance the efficiency of Bangladesh's airports.

Arrest warrants issued against Hasina

FROM PAGE 12

Rehana's daughters Tulip Siddiq, Azmina Siddiq and her son Radwan Mujib Siddiq Bobby are among those against whom the arrest warrants were issued.

Judge Md Zakir Hossain of Dhaka Metropolitan Senior Special Judge's Court passed the order after accepting the charges brought against them.

The court has now accepted charges against Hasina and her family members in four out of a total of six cases filed over the plot allocation irregularities, said an

official of the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC).

The ACC officials showed all the 23 accused as fugitives, as they did not secure bail from any courts in the country.

The judge directed the officers-in-charge of over a dozen police stations in Dhaka and other parts of the country to submit progress reports on the execution of the arrest warrants by April 27.

On March 25, the ACC pressed charges against Hasina, Rehana, Tulip, Radwan, Azmina and 18

others in these three cases. On the same day, charges were pressed in the other three cases as well.

The ACC filed six separate cases over alleged irregularities in the allocation of the six plots, each measuring 10 kathas, in the diplomatic zone of Sector-27 in the Purbachal New Town project.

Hasina has been made a common accused in all the six cases filed in connection to the irregularities.

According to ACC documents, Hasina, in collusion with senior Rajuk officials, had six

plots allotted to herself, her son Sajeeb Wazed Joy, daughter Saima Wazed Putul, Rehana, Radwan, Bobby, and Tulip and Azmina, in violation of rules.

On April 10, the same court issued arrest warrants against 18 people, including Hasina and her daughter Saima Wazed Putul, in one of the cases over the plot allocation irregularities.

The court is scheduled to pass an order on April 15 on whether it would take cognisance of the charges in the two remaining cases.

Pahela Baishakh a symbol of our harmony

FROM PAGE 12

are united by a shared diversity of language, culture, and tradition.

The International Buddhist Monastery, he said, is one of the symbols of communal harmony in Bangladesh. Since its inception, it has played a significant role in issues of national interest, including those related to the

Buddhist community.

Referring to Gautam Buddha's message of non-violence and equality, Prof Yunus said the monastery has been engaged in various public welfare programmes, such as preserving the religious, social, and cultural heritage of the Buddhist community and providing technical

education.

He expressed hope that the "Sampriti Bhaban" will play a notable role both nationally and internationally by reflecting the values of harmony and humanity upheld in Bangladesh.

Religious Affairs Adviser Dr AFM Khalid Hossain, Chattogram Hill Tracts Affairs Adviser Supradip

Chakma, Army Chief General Waker-Uz-Zaman, Religious Affairs Secretary AKM Aftab Hossain Pramanik, Bangladesh Buddhist Federation Advisory Council Acting Chairman Prof Sukomal Barua, and International Buddhist Monastery Deputy Chief Ven Bhikkhu Sunandapriya also spoke at the event.

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