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The POST

Sunday, October 3, 2010

LAHOER: PML-N chief Muhammad Nawaz Sharif talks to US Ambassador Anne W Patterson during a farewell meeting. – APP PHOTO

Islamic University VC shot dead in Mardan

ASSOCIATED PRESS OF PAKISTAN

PESHAWAR: Renowned religious scholar and Islamic University Malakand Vice Chancellor Dr. Farooq Khan was shot dead in his clinic here on Saturday in Mardan.

According to police, Dr. Farooq Khan was sitting in his private clinic at Muqam Mandi area in Mardan when two armed persons opened indiscriminate fire at him. As a result, Dr. Farooq Khan died instantly while his assistant Salim sustained injuries.

Salim was rushed to Mardan Medical Complex and admitted in serious condition.

Police have registered a case against the unknown culprits and started investigation.

PM condemns murder of Dr Farooq Khan: Prime Minister Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani has strongly condemned the brutal murder of Dr. Farooq Khan, vice-chancellor Swat Islamic University.

The prime minister lauded the services of Dr. Farooq Khan for the promotion of education in underdeveloped areas of Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa. He rendered valuable services, he said, in suggesting transformations in the curricula in accordance with the Islamic teachings.

Reaffirming the government's resolve to fight terrorism, the Prime Minister said his government is committed to eradicate the menace of terrorism in all its forms at all costs. Those elements which are playing with the lives of innocent people, he added would not escape the law of the land. The prime minister also directed the concerned authorities to investigate into the sad incident.

The Prime Minister expressed his heartfelt condolences with the bereaved family and prayed to Allah Almighty to rest the departed soul in peace and grant courage to the members of bereaved family to bear this irreparable loss with equanimity.

26/11 case: court defers decision on commission

THE POST MONITORING

LAHORE: A Pakistani anti-terrorism court conducting the trial of LeT commander Zakiur Rehman Lakhvi and six others charged with involvement in the Mumbai attacks Saturday put off a decision on the government's request to form a commission to interview key witnesses in India.

Judge Malik Muhammad Akram Awan of the Rawalpindi - based anti-terrorism court asked the prosecution to inform him whether the Indian government has granted permission for the commission to visit that country to interview 24 witnesses, including lone surviving Mumbai attacker Ajmal Kasab.

The prosecution told the judge that the government has received India's "verbal" assent for the commission's visit but Awan said this was not adequate. Awan said the prosecution should inform him at the next hearing on October 16 on whether Indian authorities have granted permission in writing for the commission to visit India.

The prosecution's application for obtaining voice samples of the seven suspects will no longer be part of the proceedings though there was confusion on whether the judge had rejected it or it was withdrawn by the prosecution. The trial is being conducted in-camera and the media is barred from reporting on the proceedings. The court accepted an application filed by defence lawyers seeking key documents related to several Indian witnesses named in the fourth chargesheet filed recently by the prosecution.

IMF reforms key for Pak after floods

THE POST MONITORING

LAHORE: Pakistan should stick to an IMF reform program in order to secure enough financial support to rebuild after devastating summer floods and stabilize its economy, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) said.

Pakistan is reeling from floods, which made more than 10 million people homeless, ripped apart infrastructure and damaged or destroyed crops over an area of 2.4 million hectares. More than 1,750 people were killed.

Heavy financial support was critical for Pakistan long before one of the country's worst natural disasters struck. An International Monetary Fund (IMF) reform package agreed in 2008 had helped keep the economy afloat. Although pressure on Pakistan eased after the IMF approved a $451 million emergency fund to help it rebuild after the floods, the ADB said delaying reforms would only hurt the country.

"What Pakistan should not have a problem with is continuing with the reform agenda. I am sure actually (this would) underpin a lot of donor support for not only the floods but for the stabilization of the economy," said Juan Miranda, ADB's director general for its Central and West Asia department. "We must continue with the reforms. This is our position. That's the way in which you can help people in the longer run.

Pakistan turned to the IMF for an emergency package of $7.6 billion in November 2008 to avert a balance of payments crisis and shore up reserves. The loan was increased to $11.3 billion in July last year, and the central bank received a fifth tranche of $1.13 billion in May.

The emergency fund is not part of the loan program. Under the loan program, the government pledged to implement tax and energy sector reforms and show fiscal discipline. However, the country has been missing the IMF targets regularly. "We still have a program with the IMF, and that is not something that you stop and then you start again. The economy will benefit by a continuation of the reforms. It's not a question of just money," Miranda said in a telephone interview. "My biggest worry is that the reform agenda gets derailed. That we lose momentum." The World Bank and Asian Development Bank are completing a damage assessment for Pakistan, which will give the government and donors an estimate of how much rebuilding will cost.

The floods could knock Pakistan's economic growth this year to as low as 2 percent because of heavy damage to crops, said Miranda, lowering his forecast from 3 percent in late August. Pakistan's official target was 4.5 percent.

Pakistan's central bank said this week economic growth for fiscal 2010/11 could fall to 2.5 percent. Agriculture is Pakistan's second-largest sector, accounting for over 21 percent of gross domestic product. Nearly 62 percent of the population depends on agriculture for their livelihoods.

Reconstruction could cost tens of billions of dollars. The World Bank said on Thursday it had approved over $400 million in credit to help Pakistan rebuild from massive flooding. It said the funds were part of the Bank's $1 billion commitment to Pakistan in this fiscal year. The World Bank and the United States have urged Pakistan to take steps to reassure donor countries it is capable of using aid responsibly.

Pak receives $1630.35m aid commitments

ASSOCIATED PRESS OF PAKISTAN

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has received aid commitments of US $ 1630.35 million from various countries and donor organisations for the flood-affected people till October 1, a senior official of the Ministry of Economic Affairs Division (EAD) said.

He said the response of the international community and donors was very positive.

According to the details, $ 520.44 million are grants, $ 10 million soft loans and in kind commitments 746.44 million. Countries and organizations with the highest commitments are: Saudi Arabia US $ 105.29 million, Saudi Fund for Development US $ 20.00 million, Saudi public fund relief US $ 242 million, US/USAID $ 359.81 million, UKDFID US & 115.0 million, Australia US $ 67.50 million, Canada $ 33 million, Denmark US $ 33.0 million, Canada US $ 33.0 million, EU US $ 87.50 million.

Kayani wanted removal of corrupt ministers

THE POST MONITORING

LAHORE: Pakistan Chief of Army Staff (CoAS) General Ashfaq Parvez Kayani reportedly demanded from President Asif Ali Zardari to depose all corrupt ministers from the cabinet, a British newspaper has claimed.

The newspaper, citing western and Pakistani officials, reported that Kayani wanted Zardari's loyalists to be ousted from the cabinet, a news channel reported.

According to the report, the army chief, Zardari and Prime Minister Gilani held a meeting in Islamabad on Friday night.

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Indian troops martyr 8 Kashmiri youth

ASSOCIATED PRESS OF PAKISTAN

ISLAMABAD: Indian troops, in their fresh acts of state terrorism, martyred eight more innocent Kashmiri youth in Kupwara and Ganderbal districts in Indian occupied Kashmir.

During violent military operations, the troops of 8 Dogra and 45 Rashtriya Rifles killed five youth at Maidan Behak-Ringmala in Machil area of Kupwara while three other youth were shot dead by the personnel of 24 Rashtriya Rifles and Special Operations Group at Chak-Akhalin in Kangan area of Ganderbal, Kashmir Media Service reported. Earlier, an Indian policeman was killed and several others were injured in an attack in Kangan.

'India using every tactic to sabotage movement': Veteran Kashmiri Hurriyet leader, Syed Ali Gilani has said the Indian government and the occupation authorities are utilizing every tactic to sabotage the Kashmiris' ongoing movement for securing their right to self-determination. Syed Ali Gilani reiterated the pledge to continue the just struggle till its logical end at all costs, Kashmir Media Service reported.

He said the occupation authorities were using curfew as a tool of collective punishment. "A government that wages a war against its own people has no moral right to continue ruling them," he added.

The veteran leader termed the seizure of local newspapers and beating of journalists as an attempt to muzzle the voice of the Kashmiris.

He pointed out that such tactics by the authorities couldn't weaken the courage of the people of Kashmir.

He deplored the police and troops were not even honouring curfew passes issued by the district administration. "The police and troopers have been given a licence by New Delhi to quell the ongoing movement by using brute force," he said.

"Our programmes are devised for taking the movement to its logical conclusion. Shutdowns and relaxations are part of our programs.

Curfew is imposed on the day of relaxations to sabotage our programmes and cause inconvenience to the people particularly the students," he maintained.

Curbs on media, assaults on journalists in Kashmir flayed: Various journalist forums and pro-liberation leaders have condemned the seizure of newspapers and beating of media-persons by Indian policemen and paramilitary troopers in Srinagar.

Kashmir Journalists Corps (KJC) and the Kashmir Press Association in their separate statements denounced the highhandedness of the puppet administration and its intelligence agencies against the media in the Kashmir valley, Kashmir Media Service reported. "It seems that there is a pattern behind the harassment and beating of the media-persons," the KJC said. It maintained that the assault on senior journalists at Barzulla on Friday was part of the conspiracy hatched by the men in uniform to muzzle the Kashmir press, which had been discharging its duties in difficult circumstances. The Press Guild of Kashmir in a meeting chaired of its President, Bashir Ahmad Bashir said that the authorities were hell bent upon impeding the distribution of newspapers, a practice that had been going on for past almost three months. It added that the authorities had been making it virtually impossible for local newspapers to continue their publication.

Bomb kills two NATO soldiers

AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE

KABUL: Two soldiers from NATO's International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) were killed in a bomb explosion in eastern Afghanistan, the alliance said on Saturday.

NATO did not release the nationalities of the soldiers, but the incident took the number of foreign troops killed in the war so far this year to 551 -- the deadliest on record.

"Two ISAF service members died following an improvised explosive device (IED) attack in eastern Afghanistan yesterday (Friday)," a NATO statement said.

Homemade bombs cause the majority of casualties among foreign and Afghan troops fighting the Taliban.

On Friday a roadside bomb ripped through a vehicle in Shah Wali Kot district of southern Kandahar province, killing two civilians and wounding four others, an official statement said.

Separately six insurgents were killed on Friday in a joint Afghan and NATO operation in Zahri district of Kandahar.

In neighbouring Uruzgan province five insurgents were killed in an air strike overnight, provincial police chief Juma Gul Himat told AFP.

The United States and NATO allies have increased the number of foreign troops fighting a nine-year Taliban insurgency in Afghanistan to more than 152,000.

US-led forces have stepped up attacks on insurgents since the spring as part of a new strategy aiming to root out Taliban militants before drawing down the military presence next year.

Meanwhile, The United Nations kept a lid on a report into widespread human rights violations between 1978 and 2001 that accused Soviets, Islamists and US forces of "atrocities", a Swiss newspaper said on Saturday.

The revelations emerged a day after the UN published a hotly contested report into crimes committed by armed groups in the eastern Democratic Republic Congo at the end of the 1990s.

A UN report "on crimes committed in Afghanistan between April 1978 and December 2001 was deliberately suppressed by the United Nations for political reasons", Le Temps said after obtaining a copy of the 300-page document.

"The famous 'mapping report', which was finalised in December 2004 after a year of work, was supposed to be published in January 2005," the newspaper said. "It was not and, after a succession of other reports, was forgotten."

The report covered the tumultuous period from the military coup in April 1978 through the Soviet invasion, the rise and fall of the Taliban up against the US-led coalition force.

It accused "Soviets, communist chiefs, Islamist militants and even American forces" of having "taken part to varying degrees in atrocities", the newspaper said, citing torture, summary executions, mass rape and the use of child warriors.

One of the report's three authors, American Barnett Rubin, said that the UN must have decided not to publish it "at the request of (Afghan President Hamid) Karzai because it mentioned people still in the Afghan government".

Who want Mush back are his enemies

THE POST MONITORING

LAHORE: The contrast could scarcely have been more striking. When Pervez Musharraf entered politics in 1999, he was an army chief, seizing power in a bloodless coup. Now Pakistan's former military ruler is reduced to making a feeble second attempt thousands of miles away in London, to barely a hall full of people.

According to The Independent, deploying his characteristically brusque tones, Mr Musharraf said there was a need to "bring all patriotic people under one flag, that flag should be the All Pakistan Muslim League." The reference was the name of his new party, one he had to assemble after his supporters in Pakistan deserted him. Mr Musharraf said that he would return to Pakistan, with the same uneasy insistence with which he used to claim he would never leave.

Mr Musharraf boasted he remains popular in Pakistan and stood a chance at returning to the presidency. "Illusion," observed Oscar Wilde, "is the first of all pleasures." That at least is how many Pakistanis regarded yesterday's launch.

After nearly nine years in power, he has left behind bitter memories of military rule, once-loyal generals and politicians keen to distance themselves from his legacy, and charges ranging from political assassination to stoking extremism - even high treason for violating the constitution.

Few think he will return. "Musharraf will remain away from Pakistan for many years," said a senior Western diplomat. His former interior minister, Aftab Sherpao, agreed: "He has no political base here. He won't be able to move around because of the security risk. Even the programme he's offering is what he said he'd do in power. He failed then, he has no chance now."

Excitable television news channels resisted treating the launch as a serious event. Some ran montages recalling his taste for the good life. Others interviewed opponents who vented a litany of criticisms.

"There's one thing to be army chief in Pakistan and another to enter politics as an ex-general," said former cricket legend Imran Khan. "Gen Musharraf will notice that difference if he does return."

That's not to say Pakistanis are not looking forward to Mr Musharraf, if for the reasons that will keep him away. The Baluch leaders want him tried for the 2006 assassination of Akbar Bugti. In the southern province of Sindh, supporters of the slain former prime minister Benazir Bhutto have questions about his failure to provide adequate security, as outlined in the UN's report.

In the Punjab, former prime minister Nawaz Sharif would like him tried for "high treason" for the 1999 coup and imposing a state of emergency in November 2007. And in the northwest, he is blamed for allowing militancy to mushroom though deals with the Taliban.

"He's united the country," said Talat Hussain, a senior journalist. "But it's united against him."

One person who may smile on the prospect of Mr Musharraf returning is President Asif Ali Zardari, as it would divert hostile attention from his struggling government.