

National news

Kerala man fighting for IS in Afghanistan killed, second in a fortnight

Agency
New Delhi Aug 8,

A Kerala man who went missing last year and joined the Islamic State has been killed in an operation by Afghan-US forces in Afghanistan, a senior intelligence official said on Wednesday.

Saifuddin is the second resident from the state to have been killed fighting for the IS in Afghanistan over the last fortnight, a fact that underlines the deepening influence of the extreme Salafi ideology in the state.

Security agencies have been able to track 98 cases of men, women and children from

Kerala joining IS terrorists. By June this year, 38 of them had died.

Malappuram, 350 km from state capital Thiruvananthapuram that was home to Saifuddin, is among the top three districts that have accounted for the largest number of people who joined the uber radical group comprising IS remnants from Syria and Iraq that are trying to expand their footprint towards Kabul.

Kannur and Kasargod are the other two. Saifuddin had turned to extreme Salafism when he was still completing his studies. His interest in the Salafi ideology deepened after 2014

when he migrated to Saudi Arabia to get himself a job. He found one in the Saudi kingdom's port city of Jisan and also kept attending Salafi religious classes at different centres, a security official said. Intelligence officials who have profiled Saifuddin pointed there were no indications that he would take the leap and join the Salafi-jihadist group IS. But in September last year, Saifuddin abruptly headed back home in September 2018. He spent 10 days at home in Malappuram's Pookiparambu. Then, Saifuddin had got himself a visa to travel to Dubai and quietly left home. Saifuddin did occasionally keep in touch with his family

mobile messaging services. But he never really told them where he was, or the job that he had picked up. The closest that he came to giving any information about what he was doing was in April this year when he told his sister that he was in the UAE to learn more about religion. Intelligence officials said they were trying to ascertain links between Saifuddin and other IS recruits from Kerala. For now, they found that Saifuddin wasn't the only one in his locality who may have been recruited by the IS. A friend of Saifuddin, is also missing for some time, is also believed to have been recruited.

'Invoking alarmist vision, won't succeed': India responds to Pak, seeks review

Agency
New Delhi Aug 8,

India on Thursday rebutted Pakistan that had downgraded diplomatic ties over New Delhi's move to strip Jammu and Kashmir of its special status, insisting that it was an "internal matter" designed to fast track development in J&K. "The Constitution of India was, and will always be a sovereign matter. Seeking to interfere in that jurisdiction by invoking an alarmist vision of the region will never succeed," foreign ministry spokesperson Raveesh Kumar said in a statement. New Delhi also asked Islamabad to revisit its



decision so that normal channels for diplomatic communications are preserved. Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan's government, which had been under pressure to respond to India's decision on Kashmir, had yesterday announced a slew of measures including the

expulsion of the Indian envoy, suspension of bilateral trade, and review of bilateral arrangements. New Delhi said the "intention behind these measures is obviously to present an alarming picture to the world of our bilateral ties". India stressed that the "recent

decisions" taken by the government were driven by a commitment to extend to J&K opportunities for development that were earlier denied by a temporary provision in the Constitution. It would, India explained, remove gender and socio-economic discrimination, lead to an upswing of economic activity and improve the livelihood prospects of all people.

"It is not surprising that such developmental initiatives that could address any disaffection in Jammu and Kashmir should be negatively perceived in Pakistan, which has utilized such sentiments to justify its cross-border terrorism," the foreign ministry said.

International News

Boon Keng 5-room HDB flat sells for record \$1.2 million in July but resale prices dip 0.2%

Courtesy: The Straits Times
Singapore Aug 8,

Despite a Boon Keng five-roomer selling for a record sum, HDB resale prices remained pretty much stable last month, new figures show.

The 39th-floor unit at City View @ Boon Keng went for \$1,205,000 - \$5,000 more than the previous record for a HDB resale set by a five-room flat in Boon Tiong Road, in Tiong Bahru, in April.

It was the second time this year that a City View unit has claimed the record after another five-room unit in the adjacent Block 9 sold for \$1,185,000 in January.

The 714-unit development was completed in 2011, and five of the nine flats there that were sold this year have gone for over a million dollars.

Analysts say it has proved popular because it is a new development located among ageing counterparts in a mature estate and is in close proximity to two MRT stations - Bendemeer on the Downtown Line and Boon Keng on the North-East Line.

Despite that record price, HDB resale prices in July decreased by 0.2 per cent from June, although the number of resale transactions went up by 11.9 per cent, according to data released by SRX Property on Thursday (Aug 8).

The prices of three-room and five-room flats fell by 0.9 and 0.1 per cent respectively. Four-room prices remained

flat while prices for executive flats saw an increase of 0.3 per cent.

Non-mature estate prices increased by 0.2 per cent while prices for mature estate flats were 0.8 per cent lower.

"What we are seeing in mature estates on one end is the value of older flats beginning to dip as the flats age, and on the other newer flats like those at City View starting to enter the resale market at higher prices," said property agent Orange Tee & Tie's head of research and consultancy Christine Sun.

Newer estates tend to be taller and flats on the highest floors can command very high prices, especially if new MRT stations have opened in the vicinity, said ERA Realty head of research and consultancy Nicholas Mak.

"We are seeing more million-dollar flats now but it's important to bear in mind that they are still outliers and rarely seen," he added. There were 71 HDB flats sold for more than \$1 million last year, about 3 per cent of the total number of resale transactions which stood at 23,099.

The highest transaction price for a non-mature estate resale flat last month was for an executive flat in Hougang which sold for \$908,000.

Overall, resale prices were 0.8 per cent lower than in July last year. There were 2,120 resale transactions last month, up from 1,895 in June. This was 17 per cent lower than in July

last year, but 19.7 per cent higher than the average volume in July for the last five years.

The increased sales volume can be attributed to a number of factors, said Ms Sun.

"Sales activities usually pick up after the June holidays," she added.

"Demand for resale flats, especially older units, may have increased after the recent CPF rule changes that allow buyers to use more of their CPF savings as well as get bigger HDB loans for older flats.

"But prices may remain weak due to the increasing supply of flats that have reached MOP (minimum occupation period), with more sellers vying for buyers."

SRX estimated in its report that 680 flats could enter the resale market within the next three months as these units approach their five-year MOP.

The overall median transaction over X-value (TOX) was negative \$1,000 last month, a decrease of \$1,000 from the previous month.

The median TOX measures whether people are overpaying (positive TOX) or underpaying (negative TOX) relative to the SRX Property X-value estimated market value for flats.

Only three-room flats had a positive median TOX of \$2,000 last month. Four-room, five-room and executive flats saw a median TOX of negative \$1,000, negative \$1,000 and negative \$7,000 respectively. Kallang Whampoa saw the highest median TOX of \$18,000.

Sport News

Nadal advances in rain-hit ATP Montreal Masters opener

Courtesy: The Straits Times
Montreal (AFP) Aug 8,

World number two Rafael Nadal stayed patient through a two-hour rain delay on Wednesday (Aug 7) in defeating Britain's Daniel Evans 7-6 (8/6), 6-4 to reach the third round of the ATP Montreal Masters.

With weather forecasts dicey for the next few days, the Spanish top seed got a taste of the conditions he might face as he defends his Canadian title in an event that alternates between Montreal and Toronto. Nadal advanced after two hours

of play but because of rain it took almost four and a half hours after the first ball was struck.

"I'm happy to get through a difficult match," the four-time Canadian champion said.

"I have great memories of this tournament, back to the third time I won the title here (Montreal) in 2005."

Nadal started on the back foot as he lost his opening serve but clawed back.

Evans saved two set points in the 10th game before a first brief weather break at 6-5 for Nadal. The seed eventually took the set in a tiebreaker and began

the second with a break before the major stoppage of the afternoon.

Nadal lost his early break as Evans levelled 3-3 but the Spaniard got one back a game later on the way to the win.

Nadal is seeking his third title of the season and now stands 38-6 in 2019.

He was playing for the first time since losing a Wimbledon semifinal to Roger Federer a month ago.

Former US Open winner Marin Cilic, seeded 14th, advanced to the last 16, beating Australian lucky loser John Millman 6-3, 6-4.

India asks Pakistan to review its decision to downgrade diplomatic ties

Agency
New Delhi Aug 8,

Islamabad's unilateral actions in respect to its bilateral relations with India, including the downgrading of diplomatic relations, are intended to present an alarming picture to the world.

The Ministry of External Affairs said, the reasons for these steps cited by Pakistan are not supported by facts on the ground.

Expressing regret over the steps taken by Pakistan, it urged Islamabad to review

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The Ministry of External Affairs said, the reasons for these steps cited by Pakistan are not supported by facts on the ground.

Expressing regret over the steps taken by Pakistan, it urged Islamabad to review

them so that normal channels for diplomatic communications are preserved.

In a statement, the Ministry of External Affairs said the recent decisions by the Government and Parliament of India are driven by a commitment to extend to Jammu and Kashmir opportunities for development that were earlier denied by a temporary provision in the Constitution.

Its impact would also result in the removal of gender and socio-economic discrimination. The Ministry said, the decision taken by India is also expected to result in an upswing of economic activity and improvement in the livelihood prospects of all people of Jammu and Kashmir.

The Ministry said, it is not surprising that such developmental initiatives that could address any disaffection in Jammu and Kashmir should be negatively perceived in Pakistan, which has utilized such sentiments to justify its cross-border terrorism.

It said, the recent developments pertaining to Article 370 are entirely the internal affair of India. The Constitution of India was, and will always be a sovereign matter. Seeking to interfere in that jurisdiction by invoking an alarmist vision of the region will never succeed.

Situation by and large peaceful in Jammu & Kashmir

Agency
New Delhi Aug 8,

In Jammu and Kashmir, the situation in all the three regions is by and large peaceful for the fourth consecutive day today. Some shops opened in Srinagar and movement of people on roads picked up yesterday despite the restrictions.

However, people in the rest of the Kashmir the Valley continued to remain confined mostly indoors due to strict enforcement of Section 144.

In Jammu district, the administration has eased restrictions from 11 am till 4 pm. Restrictions have been completely lifted in neighbouring Kathua district. However, restrictions continue to remain enforced in Rajouri, Doda, Kathua and Poonch districts of Jammu Division.

Shops re-opened in most parts of Jammu and Kathua districts and private traffic is plying normally today. In Kathua district, Government offices, Banks and Public Sector Undertakings are functioning normally today.

Schools and colleges also re-opened in the district. In Ramban district of Jammu Division, a six-hour relaxation has been given in the ongoing restrictions on the movement of people and vehicles from 10 am to 4 pm in the major towns except in Banihal.

In Reasi, Government offices and Banks resumed functioning from today. Schools and colleges will continue to remain closed in Jammu Division except Kathua district till further orders. In Kargil district of Ladakh, the District Magistrate has imposed

Section 144 as a precautionary measure in view of the bandh call given by some political parties.

Meanwhile, Deputy Commissioner of Srinagar, Shahid Iqbal Choudhary informed that the Government has established two helplines for residents or students living outside Jammu and Kashmir.

Certificate Lost

I, the undersigned, Komsam Indira Devi, have lost my original certificate of my High School Leaving Certificate Examination, issued by the Board of Secondary Education, Manipur bearing Roll No. Roll no. 30037 of 1990 on the way between Kangpokpi and Sekmai Bazar, on 2nd August 2019. Finders are requested to hand over it to the undersigned.

Sd/-
Komsam Indira Devi
Chingmierong Maning Leikai, Imphal East.
PO. Porompat PS. Lamphel.
Contact no. 9856109513.

IT/Adv/1day

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