B B C NEWS

You are in: World: South Asia

Front Page Tuesday, 21 March, 2000, 20:09 GMT

World Kashmir killings overshadow Clinton visit



Americas Asia-Pacific Europe Middle East South Asia

Correspondent

Letter From America

UK

UK Politics

Business Sci/Tech

Education

Sport

Entertainment **Talking Point** In Depth

AudioVideo



From Our Own India has blamed two Pakistani-backed groups for the attack

The funerals have taken place of 36 Sikhs gunned down in Kashmir as President Clinton began a landmark visit to India.

There were emotional scenes as the bodies were cremated at the local temple in the mainly Sikh village of Chattisinghpora, 70km south of the state capital Srinagar.

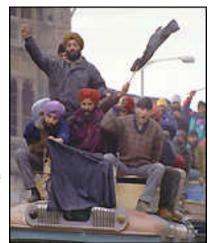
A crowd of more than 1,000 people had gathered to take part in the ceremonies.

Health The attack on Monday night was carried out by 40 to 50 gunmen, according to police.

> They forced the residents from their homes, segregating the men from the women.

They then opened fire on the men with automatic weapons. Thirty-four died instantly, while one died in hospital later.

In another incident in Kashmir, police say separatist militants have stormed a camp used by Indian security personnel in the capital, Srinagar.



Sikhs have not been targetted before in Kashmir

The camp has now been surrounded by Indian forces.

A spokesman for a militant group, Lashkar-e Toiba, said the

Search BBC News Online

Advanced search options

BBC ONE TV NEWS

WORLD NEWS SUMMARY



Click here for a guide to President Clinton's tour

Key stories:

- ► What did the trip achieve?
- ▶ Protecting the president
- ► South Asia's nuclear race
- ▶Clinton and the Kashmir question

Economic ties:

- ► Americans eye South Asia
- ►India's high-tech hopes

Features:

- ► Village gets makeover
- ▶Story in pictures

TALKING POINT

Kashmir: Should Clinton mediate?

See also:

21 Mar 00 | South Asia Eyewitness: Outpouring of grief

21 Mar 00 | South Asia Militants storm Kashmir police camp

20 Mar 00 | South Asia

The BBC's Mike attack on the camp was carried out by members of a death squad. Wooldridge reports "No one had expected an attack on a Sikhs village"

Condemnation

The killings of the Sikhs have been condemned by all sides.

At a news conference in Delhi, Mr Clinton said it was a "brutal attack" and a reminder of the violence which had blighted the

u real **28k**

He also urged India and Pakistan to open a dialogue to resolve the Kashmir dispute.

"The violence must end," said Mr Clinton.

Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpavee described it as an act of ethnic cleansing, and said: "We have the means and the will to eliminate this menace."



We have the means and the will to eliminate this menace

Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee

Pakistan has condemned the killings and demanded a thorough investigation.

"We will very much look forward to a thorough inquiry to be conducted so that it is not exploited for purposes of propaganda in order to deflect attention from Indian repression in Kashmir," said Pakistan's Foreign Minister Abdul Sattar.

India's National Security Adviser, Brajesh Mishra, said India had evidence the killings were carried out by two Pakistani-backed militant groups, Lashkar-e-Toiba and Hizbul Mujahideen.

A spokesman for one of the groups denied involvement, and said the Indian authorities carried out the attack in order to discredit separatist groups.

Monday's killings were the first in which members of the tiny Sikh community have been killed anywhere in Indian-administered Kashmir.

Links to other South Asia stories

Kashmir: Can the US help?

21 Mar 00 | South Asia Safety fears for Kashmir's Sikhs

07 Mar 00 | South Asia Kashmir: The unbearable cost of conflict

06 Mar 00 | South Asia Kashmir's economic woes

Internet links:

United States Embassy, Dhaka

Embassy of Bangladesh, Washington DC

The White House

The BBC is not responsible for the content of external internet sites

Links to other South Asia stories are at the foot of the page.



^^ Back to top

 $\frac{News\ Front\ Page\ |\ World\ |\ UK\ |\ UK\ Politics\ |\ Business\ |\ Sci/Tech\ |\ Health\ |\ Education\ |\ Sport\ |\ Entertainment\ |\ In-Depth\ |\ Talking\ Point\ |\ Audio/Video}$