



## Assam-Mizoram clash: Why are Indian policemen firing at each other?



As angry residents scolded him and small shops on both sides. At the heart of the matter was an "ethnic issue" carried out by Assam along a contested part of the border. Residents from the state reportedly burned a farm house and crops in the area. The Mizoram government responded by deploying troops in areas where Assam claims is part of its territory.

Residents from both states also blocked key highways, bringing all traffic to a halt for almost three weeks until the federal government intervened to defuse the situation.

What happened on Monday? Tensions escalated after clashes erupted between police on either side of a contentious border point, Ladaga, according to local reports.

Assam's chief minister, Mr. Sarma, announced on Twitter that members of the state police were killed by Mizoram forces "while defending the constitutional border".

Police in Assam also alleged that "thugs" from Mizoram entered the state with weapons and attacked government officials. The state's home minister, Laldul, said that the first face-to-face talks as part of a strategic dialogue between the United States and India.

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The shift is not expected to have a major effect since the United States has already moved to the frontline and stalled deescalation talks.

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Analysts say Tuesday's surprise restoration of the inter-Korean hotline could be seen as a sign of Kim's response to Washington.

"It looks like he has decided that restoring inter-Korean relations is beneficial to the North's both domestic and foreign policies," Yang Moo-jun, a professor at the University of North Korea Studies, told AFP news agency.

Despite its standard in talks, Moon has repeatedly stressed the importance of restoring inter-Korean ties, he added.

The two Koreas remain technically at war because the 1950-1953 Korean War ended with an armistice rather than a peace treaty, he called for a recovery of

## US combat forces to leave Iraq by end of year, Biden says



US President Joe Biden and Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi on Monday reached an agreement formally ending the US combat mission in Iraq by the end of 2021, more than 18 years after US troops were sent to the country.

Coupled with Biden's withdrawal of the last American troops from Afghanistan by the end of the year, the US president is completing US combat missions in a couple of weeks.

Biden and Kadhim met in the Oval Office for their first face-to-face talks as part of a strategic dialogue between the United States and Iraq.

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## New Lebanese PM-designate Najid Mikati begins bid to form cabinet



Lebanon's new prime minister-designate Najid Mikati was due to start consultations with leading political parties Tuesday with a view to forming a long-lasting government.

The 61-year-old politician, already twice a prime minister, was designated on Monday, days after Saad Hariri threw in the towel.

The government of Hariri had resigned following a deadly port explosion in Beirut last August and efforts to appoint a new lineup have proved fruitless.

The institutional vacuum is holding up a potential financial rescue plan for Lebanon, which defaulted on its debt last year and has since sought, but what the World Bank has described as one of the world's most corrupt economies.

The designation of the 45-year-old Mikati, Lebanon's youngest man and a martyr symbol of its corrupt oligarchy, was met with general scepticism.

Mikati, the third politician in a year to attempt the job, promised to form a government of experts, in line with a French road map outlining a large-scale package on reform and transparency.

In an interview with the Lebanese newspaper, Mikati vowed his lineup would be "purely technical."

Tuesday's meetings with the parliamentary blocs are the customary official step that follows a new prime minister's designation but the high-stakes horse-race has yet to begin.

The current caretaker government has described itself as technocratic but each one of its members was endorsed by the political bosses who have run the country for decades.

## North and South Korea restore severed cross-border hotline



South and North Korea have restored a severed cross-border hotline, just over a year since the hotline was cut off. It is a surprise move that the two countries said was part of an effort to rebuild trust and promoting reconciliation.

The decision was announced in statements by South Korea's presidential Blue House and KCNA, the North's state media agency.

KCNA said all inter-Korean communication channels were reopened at 11am on Tuesday after Pyongyang had been with an agreement between the countries' two

In the Blue House and the restoration of communication lines would have "positive impact on the improvement and development of relations between the two countries."

## Saudi Arabia FM, Pakistani counterpart discuss bilateral relations in Islamabad

Saudi Arabia's Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Faisal met with his Pakistani counterpart Shah Mehmood Qureshi in Islamabad on Tuesday to discuss bilateral relations.

"Good meeting with my friend, @ShahMehmoodPTT. It is a pleasure to discuss ways to enhance our bilateral cooperation and to build on the strong bond between our two countries," Faisal said.

Qureshi also thanked Saudi Arabia for its "unflinching support" for Pakistan.

