

BRIEFLY

Maoist rebels kill 22 in Peru: Maoist guerrillas killed 22 militia members in three remote communities in the Andean highlands of Peru in the last few days, military sources said on Monday, reports Reuter from Peru.

Thirteen, including several women, were killed late on Friday when Shining Path militants raided the town of Nupupuquio, 350 km (210 miles) southeast of Lima.

A day later, nine more militia members were killed in the nearby towns of Patahuasi and Chichucancha.

The Shining Path has targeted militias in the countryside for attacks, branding them traitors for collaborating with the military in the 11-year guerrilla war. President Alberto Fujimori has made arming the militias a key element of his anti-guerrilla strategy.

More than 23,000 people, mostly indigenous Peruvians, have been killed since the Shining Path took up arms in 1980.

One held with arms at UN: A Mexican on Monday tried to enter the United Nations with a hidden revolver and more than 100 rounds of ammunition, a UN spokesman said, reports Reuter.

The man, identified as Santiago Lopez, was searched by UN guards as he came through the metal detector at the tourist entrance of the east river United Nations complex.

They found a 22-calibre automatic pistol, two clips with 17 rounds of ammunition and a box holding another 81 shells, spokesman Fred Eckhard said.

The man, who said he was a Mexican and lived in Florida, had no licence to carry a weapon in the United States, the spokesman said.

New York police were called and arrested Lopez.

"He said he came to see someone in Human Rights although it doesn't appear he had an appointment with any specific individual," said Eckhard.

Child mortality quadruples in Iraq: Infant and child mortality in Iraq has nearly quadrupled since the end of the Gulf war because of food and medicine shortages and widespread contamination of drinking water and poor sanitation, according to a draft private report, says AP from Washington.

In addition, more than 900,000 Iraqi children under five years of age are malnourished, and the rate of low birth weight has doubled or tripled since the war ended, said the report funded by the United Nations Children's Fund and by several private foundations.

The report, a final version of which is to be released on Tuesday in London, was obtained by The Associated Press.

Several members of the US House of Representatives charged Monday that the Bush administration and the United Nations seem unaware of the gravity of the problem or are content merely to blame Iraqi President Saddam Hussein for the situation.

Guatemala govt meets rebel leaders: The Guatemalan government met leftist guerrilla leaders on Monday to try to break a deadlock in talks to end a 30-year insurgency which has cost 100,000 lives, reports Reuter from Mexico.

"We are beginning this round with confidence that it will be truly positive," moderator Bishop Rodolfo Quesada told reporters at the start of the talks in a Mexico city hotel.

"We believe that this time we will be able to find viable mechanisms to ensure human rights in Guatemala."

The round of talks is the fifth between the government and guerrillas of the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Union (URNG). The last two rounds bogged down over how to protect human rights in the central American nation.

At the last meeting the guerrillas presented an 11-point document restraining abuse of human rights by the armed forces, but the government rejected it as unconstitutional.

Eight killed in Lebanon: Eight people were killed and 14 wounded when rival Muslim Shi'ite groups fought violently for five hours Monday, prompting the intervention of Syrian troops, security services reported, says AFP from Lebanon.

The clashes began with automatic weapons fire, but degenerated into pitched battles involving anti-tank rockets and mortars.

The Syrian army, which has been deployed in the Baalbeck area since 1976, arrived in large numbers to stop the fighting.

The pro-Iranian Hezbollah, which joined the Medjay Clan in fighting against the Jaafar Clan, withdrew its militiamen from the streets after Syrian commanders shouted orders through loudspeakers.

According to security services sources, the fundamentalist militiamen abducted 25 members of the Jaafar Clan.

26 killed in fierce Croatian fighting

BELGRADE, Oct 22: The Yugoslav Army and Croatian rebels have ignored a new European Community-backed truce and battled on with mortar duels and shelling, killing at least 26 people in the past three days, reports Reuter.

Croatian Radio said fierce fighting raged in towns dotting the Adriatic coast south of the port city of Dubrovnik, itself under siege by the Federal Army for three weeks.

"The resorts of Zupa, Kupari, Plat and Milini are destroyed. Not a single hotel is still whole," a Croatian Radio reporter in the region said.

The army has been pushing towards the historic port city at the southern tip of Croatia, whose medieval old town is known as the "pearl of the Adriatic". Dubrovnik is now virtually cut off from the outside world.

Quoting the Dubrovnik Medical Centre, the reporter said 26 people had been killed and 264 wounded in the area since the start of military operations against the city early this month.

The army kept its artillery and tank shelling on Monday across the rebel republic of 4.5 million people, which sparked the worst bloodshed in Yugoslavia since World War II by declaring independence on June 25.

More than 1000 Croats and an unknown number of federal soldiers and their Serbian allies have been killed since June.

Heavy mortar duels were reported in Podravska Slatina and Mikleus in central Croatia and around Vukovar and Ostjck in the east on Monday. Mortar rounds were fired near a dozen other Croatian towns as well.

Teenager hijacks Czech plane, frees hostages

PRAGUE (Czechoslovakia), Oct 22: A teenager hijacked a Czechoslovak Airlines plane carrying 30 people on a domestic flight Monday, but then freed everyone but the captain before surrendering to police, reports AP.

The pilot escaped the plane while the teen negotiated at the airport with a police psychologist.

Czechoslovak TV reported the air bandit was a 17-year-old apprentice. Airport security official Miroslav Holub said the youth's identity was known, but he would not reveal it. He said the youth was a Czechoslovak citizen who was facing charges for a robbery committed last February.

Interior Ministry spokesman Martin Fendrych said the plane was carrying 24 passengers and six crew members and that all those released were in good health.

The official news agency CSTK said Flight OK585 was hijacked while bound for Prague from the Slovak capital of Bratislava.

Holub said the hijacker threatened the crew of the TU-134 plane in flight with an explosive he said was Semtex, the Czech-made explosive believed to be used by terrorists to blow up a Pan Am flight over Scotland in 1989, killing 270 people.

Czechoslovak officials said the young man kept changing his demands as negotiations proceeded.

It's a Nobel agitation prize for Suu Kyi: Burmese paper

RANGOON, Oct 22: Burma's military junta suggested today that leading dissident Aung San Suu Kyi did not deserve the Nobel peace prize, reports Reuter.

Cartoons in the state newspaper suggested the prize should have gone to United Nations Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar or to Nelson Mandela, who was jailed by the South African government for 27 years.

"It's especially strange that they should mention Perez de Cuellar, seeing as he has made more than one call for Aung San Suu Kyi's release," a diplomat in Rangoon said.

A UN mission led by Japanese Professor Yozo Yokota arrived in Rangoon on Monday to investigate widespread reports of human rights abuses by the junta, which the Nobel committee described as "characterised by brutality".

Diplomats doubted the junta would allow Yokota access to Aung San Suu Kyi or other detained dissidents. It greatly restricted the movements of the similar UN mission last year.

UN observers to attend confce : Palestinians name final list Bush, Gorbachev to meet ahead of ME peace talks in Madrid

WASHINGTON, Oct 22: President George Bush will meet Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev in Madrid the day before Mideast peace talks open there next week and leave immediately after the opening session, the White House said on Monday, reports Reuter.

The Bush-Gorbachev meeting on Tuesday, October 29 will be the seventh in 2 1/2 years.

White House spokesman Martin Fitzwater said Bush would leave Washington on Monday evening and meet Gorbachev in the Spanish capital the next day after an overnight flight.

Bush also planned to meet one or more other leaders on Tuesday and hold a news conference, Fitzwater said.

Bush and Gorbachev were to address the opening session of the Middle East peace conference on Wednesday, October 30, Fitzwater said Bush will return to Washington immediately after the talks begin.

Syria, Jordan and Lebanon have agreed to attend the historic meeting with Israel in Madrid. Palestinian representatives will attend as part of the Jordanian delegation.



Khmer won't force repatriation of 350,000 Cambodians

PARIS, Oct 22: The Khmer Rouge have agreed not to attempt any forced repatriations of the 350,000 Cambodians living in camps along the Thai border, a French spokesman said Monday, reports AFP.

The agreement was made in a memorandum signed between the Cambodian Supreme National Council (SNC), of which they are a component, and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

The announcement came amid reports that the Khmer Rouge were planning to move large numbers of key personnel from the refugee camps — notably from Site 8, which is under their control — into territory they hold in Cambodia ahead of a peace treaty to be signed here Wednesday.

Indonesia's Duryono, a ranking UNHCR official just back from the refugee camps, on Monday told the Paris conference on Cambodia's coordinating committee that "in the face of immediate reaction from the international community... any temptations they (the Khmer Rouge) may have had, have, at least provisionally, disappeared."

French spokesman Daniel Bernard said the reports had initially created "some emotion" but the 12 members of the SNC, which groups all four Cambodian factions, had agreed "without discussion" to sign a memorandum of understanding with the UNHCR on how the repatriation issue would be handled.

He also said that at its session Monday, the committee of experts had decided to expand the text of the treaty's final act — a sort of summary of the three agreements that make up a peace treaty — to include references to human rights and individual freedoms in Cambodia.

The memorandum on the refugee repatriations will later be transformed into one of the formal agreements dealing with the application of the

Israeli planes bomb Hizbollah base

NABATIYEH (Lebanon), Oct 22: Israeli warplanes attacked a medical base of the pro-Iranian Hizbollah guerrilla movement in south Lebanon Monday, one day after three Israeli soldiers were killed in an ambush, security sources said, reports Reuter.

The Lebanese security sources said Israeli F-16 warplanes fired rockets which flattened the base, which was used as a military hospital, in the village of Jibsheit, eight km north of Israel's security zone in the south.

There were no immediate reports of casualties in the raid, the first by the Israeli air force in Lebanon since July 24,



Egypt and the Saudi Arabian-led Gulf Cooperation Council plan to go as observers.

The opening session in Madrid is intended to be the ceremonial start of prolonged multi-track negotiations on peace, borders and numerous other issues.

At their Moscow summit last July, the US and Soviet presidents set the stage for the negotiations between Israel and its Arab neighbours by announcing they would co-sponsor the conference.

Secretary of State James Baker and Soviet Foreign Minister Boris Pankin were to preside over the conference following opening ceremonies. The countries involved were to be represented by their respective foreign ministers.

AP from United Nations adds: UN observers will attend the opening ceremony of the Mideast peace conference in Madrid, but will make no speeches and play no active role, UN official said Monday.

Another report from Amman says: The Palestinians named a "final list" on Monday of 14 delegates to Mideast peace talks, many of them PLO supporters, and a six-member "advisory group" that includes people who have been negotiating with US Secretary of State James A Baker III.

Mahmoud Aloul, a member of the Central Committee of Yasser Arafat's Fatah group, the main PLO faction, said the list of delegates was submitted Saturday to the US Consulate in Jerusalem. They would be part of a joint delegation with Jordan.

Most of the delegates either support Arafat or are independents or communists. Aloul said all are from the Israeli-occupied West Bank and Gaza. They are:

- Delegation leader Haider Abdul-Shafi, a physician from the Gaza Strip and chief of the Red Crescent Society, the Muslim equivalent of the Red Cross.
- Sameh Kanaan, born in Nablus of a Jewish mother, an employee of the city's Chamber of Commerce.
- Abdul Rahman Hamad, a Nablus resident and political science lecturer at An-Najah.
- Nabil Qassis, born in Bethlehem, a professor of English Literature at Bir Zeit University in the West Bank.
- Sami al-Kilani, from Yabaad near Jenin, West Bank. A lecturer at An-Najah.
- Ghassan al-Khatib, from Ramallah, West Bank.
- Nabil al-Jaabari, a West Banker born in Hebron, a dentist and president of Hebron University.
- Elias Freij, mayor of Bethlehem.
- Zakharia Al-Agha from Gaza, a physician and head of the Gaza Medical Association.
- Freih Abu Meddein from Gaza, a lawyer and chief of the Gaza Bar Association.
- Mustafa Al-Natshe, a former mayor of Hebron.
- Ahmad Al-Yaziji, a Gaza-born businessman.
- Mamdouh Al-Akar, said to be a lawyer from Hebron.
- Aloul said the advisory committee consists of Jerusalem residents and figures from the diaspora of 5 million Palestinians around the world.

He listed its members as:

- Faisal Husseini, director of the Palestine Research Department.
- Hanan Ashrawi, a political science professor at Bir Zeit.
- Sari Nuseibeh, political science professor at Bir Zeit.
- Kamil Mansour, an author living in Paris.
- Anis al-Qassem, a lawyer who has been living in London.
- Rashid al-Khalidi, a political science lecturer at Chicago State University in Illinois.

S. Korean PM in North for high-level talks

SEOUL (South Korea), Oct 22: Prime Minister Chung Won-shik travelled to North Korea for rare high-level talks Tuesday, saying he would demand the Communist North halt nuclear weapons development and allow international nuclear inspections, reports AP.

It was the first time the South said it would broach the controversial subject at prime minister-level talks about easing enduring Cold War tensions on the divided Korean peninsula.

Seoul has waged an escalating public campaign recently, warning that the North could develop nuclear weapons by 1995 and threatening military action or UN sanctions to stop it.

On Monday, North Korea said the promised withdrawal of US nuclear weapons from pro-Western South Korea would not be enough to make North Korea allow outside inspection of its nuclear facilities.

North Korea demands that South Korea also open its facilities for inspections.

The South Korean prime minister walked with a 40-member delegation across the border at the truce village of Panmunjom north of Seoul. They were met by North Korean officials and eight children who presented them with flowers, Chung waved, but appeared serious.

The South Korean group was immediately driven to the North Korean border town of Kaesung for a four-hour train trip to the capital, Pyongyang. The South Koreans are scheduled to return home Friday.

PPP deputy escapes from police custody

KARACHI, Oct 22: A provincial deputy of Pakistani opposition leader Benazir Bhutto's party (PPP) escaped from police custody Monday, government officials said, reports BSS.

They said they believed Sind province assembly member Khwaja Mohammad escaped through a window of a hospital in the provincial capital Karachi where he was receiving medical treatment. His two police guards are missing.

Mohammad was arrested with another PPP provincial deputy in February on charges of keeping illegal weapons.

A court acquitted both men on Saturday, but Mohammad was re-arrested on Sunday for alleged involvement in four bomb blasts in Karachi on October 5 that killed four people and injured 40.

Local PPP members said the authorities were victimising Mohammad.

760 counted as dead in Indian quake

UTTARKASHI (India), Oct 22: With torn nails and bleeding fingers Jagat Singh clawed away for two hours at a stone wall of his home. The 32-year-old farmer was lucky among hundreds of others who perished in the ravaging Himalayan earthquake, reports AP.

Singh saved all his 10 family members.

"Outside, the entire village was waiting, but what could I do? All of us were in the same boat," said Singh, tears streaming down his ruddy unshaven face.

He managed to save his entire family when the devastating earthquake Sunday destroyed more than 50 houses in his Ganeshpur village outside Uttarkashi town, the center of the seismic upheaval that killed at least 361 people by official count.

State government officials said they had confirmed 361 deaths in the quake, while a federal government team reported 415. An Indian Red Cross worker in this Hindu pilgrim town said she had counted 670 names on death lists compiled by the headmen in 125 villages.

The Red Cross worker's lists have not been verified, but most government officials have said they expected the toll to rise.

Two days after the earthquake struck the foothills of the Himalayas, tens of thousands of people were struggling to survive. There were fear of fatal infections from untreated wounds as road blocks and inadequate transport facilities were preventing medical relief.

Off the Record

Gun used to kill Kennedy will be auctioned

NEW YORK: The gun Jack Ruby used to kill President John Kennedy's assassin will go up for auction in December, Ruby's brother said Monday, reports AFP.

The gun was fired on Lee Harvey Oswald in the basement of the Dallas city jail on November 24, 1963 two days after Oswald killed Kennedy said Carl Ruby, 76, adding that he is still trying to clear his brother's name.

The bidding of the 38 caliber (9mm) Colt cobra revolver, which Ruby bought for 62.50 dollars in a Dallas gun shop should begin at 100,000 dollars and could go for a "quarter million", said Herman Darvick, an autographs and historical documents specialist who will stage the sale.

It has to be the most valuable gun in private hands he said people saw this live on television. The auction is scheduled for December 26. Besides, the gun Ruby's hat and shoes and the telegram he received congratulating him on the shooting will also be auctioned off.

Ruby was convicted of murder in 1964 and was sentenced to die in the electric chair the conviction was overturned in 1966 but Ruby died a year later before a new trial could be held.



LONDON: The princess of Wales attends the launching of London transport's child pedestrian road safety campaign. — AFP/UNB photo

Forged paintings money-spinners

LONDON: Artist and art dealer Eric Hebborn, who says he forged more than a thousand drawings since the 1960s, says some dealers are happy to sell work they know is forged as long as there is enough money in it, reports AP.

In an autobiography to be published next month, the 57-year-old Briton reportedly claims he also made some oil paintings in the manner of the Old Masters that were commissioned by dealers and have gone to "very important" but unspecified places.

Hebborn says his work has appeared in the collections of the British Museum, the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York and the national gallery of Denmark.

In an interview Monday with the British Broadcasting Corporation Hebborn scored the art experts he claims to have fooled.

Dealers were happy to invent a history that appeared to validate a work of art as genuine, Hebborn said.

"It does irritate me when they pretend to be gentlemen. If they simply said, 'We're in it for the money, we don't really care much about art, all we want to do is to buy it and sell it, then that would be all right with me,' he said.

"If anyone wants to take me to court they can, but I think they will be too embarrassed to do so." The Times of London quoted him as saying from his home near Rome. "They will have to admit to having been fooled over so many years."

The independent newspaper quoted Hebborn as saying, "There is no such thing as a fake drawing or painting."

Cattle, pigs ordered off Gorgian streets

MOSCOW: Local authorities in a Georgian town have imposed a selective dusk-to-dawn curfew and violators face punishment of death, reports Reuter.

The town of Lentekhi in the southern Soviet republic has ordered cattle and pigs off streets and squares after dark. Tass news agency reported on Monday.

The agency quoting a local newspaper said livestock found in public places would be sent straight to the slaughter house and owners would receive no compensation.