

'Hundreds of Afghan guerillas killed'

ISLAMABAD, Nov 13: Afghan government forces defending the eastern city of Jalalabad have killed hundreds of guerillas in a major counter-offensive, Kabul radio said today, reports Reuter.

115 killed as troops open fire on Timor protesters

JAKARTA (Indonesia), Nov 13: Indonesian troops who fired on pro-independence demonstrators in East Timor have killed dozens of people protesting Indonesia's 15-year rule of the tiny island, officials say, reports AP.

Timor, a spokeswoman said. She did not spell out what reports were referred to, but separatist rebels said up to 100 people were killed or wounded when Indonesian soldiers opened fire on Tuesday on a funeral procession of youths protesting against Jakarta's rule over the former Portuguese colony, annexed by Indonesia in 1976.

Off the Record

Sale of globes sends prices into orbit

LONDON: AUCTIONEERS Christie's set a world record price of £1,023,000 for the sale of two globes.



The pair, a terrestrial globe (of the earth) and a celestial globe (of the heavens) are thought to have been made in the workshop of Gerard Mercator, the cartographer who gave his name to the Mercator projection seen in most atlases today.

The globes had been difficult to estimate as no comparable object had appeared before on the market. They were the only known surviving instruments from Mercator's workshop.

Gorby ignored Bush's warning

MOSCOW: President Mikhail S Gorbachev said Tuesday he had ignored a warning from President Bush that a coup was brewing in the Soviet Union, reports AP.

Malaysian living with 150 poisonous snakes

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysian snake charmer Ibrahim Kassim has moved into a glass enclosure in a shopping center with 150 poisonous snakes, trying to break his own record by living with them for more than 40 days, reports AP.

Riyadh to buy \$3b US Patriot missiles

WASHINGTON, Nov 13: The Bush administration has told the US Congress it plans to sell 14 batteries of Patriot anti-aircraft missiles made by Raytheon Co to Saudi Arabia for an estimated three billion dollars, US defence officials said on Tuesday, reports Reuter.

Palestinians seek control over W. Bank, Gaza Strip

JERUSALEM, Nov 13: Palestinian negotiators say they want broad control over the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip with only a restricted Israeli military presence during a five-year period ending in full independence, reports Reuter.

"Israeli will retain its military occupation in the form of military presence in specific military and strategic areas," said Ghassan Al-Khatib, a strategist on the Palestinian peace negotiating team.

Although a venue has not been agreed for direct Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, talks are expected to start during the next month.

During eight months of diplomacy, US Secretary of State James Baker coaxed Israelis and Palestinians to negotiate a two-stage settlement, starting with five years of local self-rule for 1.75 million Palestinians in the occupied territories.

LTTE leader commits suicide

MADRAS, Nov 13: A high ranking LTTE leader, Santhan Alias Pertya Santhan committed suicide by swallowing cyanide when officials of the Special Investigating Team (SIT) probing the Rajiv Gandhi assassination case and the Tamil Nadu police raided his hide out in the early hours today in the suburbs of Thiruchirappalli, reports PTI.

Straw poll for top UN job

Zimbabwean Finance Minister takes lead

UNITED NATIONS, Nov 13: Zimbabwe's Finance Minister Bernard Chidzero took the lead in an unofficial poll on Tuesday for UN Secretary-General, closely followed by Egyptian Deputy Prime Minister Boutros Ghali, reports Reuter.



MOSCOW, Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev with a Russian publisher listens to reporters questions during a press conference held to launch his book 'Putsch' (The Coup). Gorbachev confirmed that he had been warned before hand about the coup by US President George Bush.

Asia as important as Europe to US security, says Bush

NEW YORK, Nov 13: President George Bush said on Tuesday that Asia was just as important as Europe to US security and prosperity and pledged to build a closer American partnership with countries on the Pacific rim, reports Reuter.

Straw poll for top UN job

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History's greatest political survivor Sihanouk returns home today



BEIJING: Cambodian Prince Norodom Sihanouk and his Italian-born wife Monique wave from their limousine after welcoming Prime Minister Hun Sen at the Beijing airport. Hun Sen will escort the former monarch back to Phnom Penh today.

BRIEFLY

Japanese nurses stage strike: Japanese nurses staged a national strike Wednesday to press for fewer nightshifts and more days off, reports Reuter from Tokyo.

Lightning kills 7 Indonesians: Lightning killed seven Indonesian farmers while they were sheltering from heavy rain in the northern coast of central Java, the Suara Karya daily said Wednesday, reports AFP from Jakarta.

NATO setting-up links with Estonia: The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation is establishing diplomatic links with the newly independent Baltic republic of Estonia, similar to those it has set up with the former Warsaw pact states in eastern Europe, NATO said Tuesday, reports AFP Wednesday from Brussels.

US to upgrade ties with Laos: President George Bush Tuesday said the United States would soon upgrade its relations with Laos to the ambassadorial level, calling the move another example of constructive cooperation with the nations of southeast Asia, reports AFP Wednesday from New York.

'Karala' a cure for diabetes

CALCUTTA, Nov 13: Research has been made to locate proven anti-diabetic compounds in commonly-cultivated mushrooms (agaricus bisporus) which contain traces of hypoglycaemic substances, according to the National Diabetic Association of India, reports PTI.

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia, Nov 13: One of modern history's greatest political survivors - Prince Norodom Sihanouk - returns from exile to his ear-shattered homeland Thursday faced with perhaps the most difficult task of his stranger-than-fiction life, reports AP.