

8 fundamentalists to die in Jordan

AMMAN, Nov 26: Jordan has sentenced eight Muslim fundamentalists to death for planting car bombs, attacking a foreign bank and setting fire to a liquor store and a nightclub, reports Reuters.

A 30-page court judgment, made available to journalists on Monday, said the three-man military tribunal found the eight guilty on Sunday after a trial which began in September. Two of the men were tried in absentia.

Twelve other defendants received prison sentences ranging from four years to life with hard labour.

The defendants cannot appeal against the sentences but King Hussein and his Prime Minister can commute them.

Prosecutors said they were members of the "Prophet

Mohammad's army" and underground fundamentalist group dedicated to setting up an Islamic state in Jordan.

All of those sentenced to hang were convicted of attempted premeditated murder among a range of other charges. The court documents did not include details of the defence.

The court found them guilty of attacking a branch of the British bank of the Middle East and planting two car bombs in which a security official and the daughter of president each lost a leg. They also set fire to the liquor store and nightclub named "The Jordan Blowup."

The group planned other attacks on foreign owned banks and had put the Canadian ambassador under surveillance, it added.

Palestinians to attend talks : Ashrawi PLO officials barred from entering US

WASHINGTON, Nov 26: The United States will not modify its visa policy to allow Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) officials to enter the country for bilateral peace talks here, the State Department said Monday, reports AFP.

US law bars officials, representatives or spokespersons of the PLO from entering the United States, but State Department spokeswoman Margaret Tutwiler noted that exceptions can be made at the secretary of State's request.

Our Visa policy has not changed and it will not be altered, Tutwiler said.

Several Palestinian officials have expressed a desire for PLO members to be allowed into the United States to follow Arab Israeli bilateral peace talks proposed for December 4 in Washington.

PLO officials went to Madrid for last month's opening of the US and Soviet sponsored Middle East peace conference. They did not participate in the talks but were on hand to monitor their progress.

Only Jordan and Lebanon have formally accepted the US invitation to resume the talks in Washington, Tutwiler said.

Tutwiler also said Washington had no plans to remove Syria from a list of countries that Washington considers as sponsors of terrorism. Syrian officials have indicated that Damascus would demand such a removal as a condition for attending the talks in Washington.

It's not something the United States is planning on doing, Tutwiler said of removing Syria from the list.

Hanan Ashrawi, spokeswoman for Palestinian negotiations at Middle East peace talks, on Monday said the delegation had agreed in principle to attend peace negotiations with Israel in Washington December 4.

The Palestinian response is positive in principle, she announced after a meeting with the consuls of the United States and the Soviet union, whose governments are sponsoring the Middle East peace conference.

We need assurances and our definitive response depends on different factors.

She said the delegation was notably looking for assurances that visas would be accorded by US officials to Palestinians from outside the occupied territories, an apparent reference to members of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO).

The PLO, dismissed here as a terrorist group, has been banned from playing any direct role in the conference, which opened with a plenary session in Madrid October 30 and an initial round of bilateral Arab-Israeli contacts four days later.

Ashrawi's remarks Monday differed from those of delegation Chairman Iqbal Abdul Shafi, who said in Amman Sunday that the Palestinians had agreed to attend the next round of bilateral talks and made no mention of conditions.

The Palestinian delegation must have the same freedom as other delegations, she insisted.

Shi'ite leader banned from entering NWFP

ISLAMABAD, Nov 26: A Shi'ite Muslim political leader was banned from Pakistan's North West Frontier Province where he was due to address a big rally with opposition leader Benazir Bhutto, reports Reuters.

A senior frontier official said Allama Sajid Naqvi had been barred from the province for a week to prevent disturbances.

Tension has been running high between Sunni and minority Shi'ite Muslim in Peshawar since former provincial governor Lieutenant-General Fazle Haq was murdered in the city in October.

Bush to visit Japan Jan 7

TOKYO, Nov 26: US President George Bush will make a state visit to Japan from January 7 to 10 on the last leg of his Asia-Pacific tour, the government officially announced today, reports AFP.

After arriving here from Seoul via Osaka in Western Japan, Bush is to hold talks with Japanese Prime Minister Kiichi Miyazawa on January 8 and 9.

Off the Record

A heroic saviour indeed

KUWAIT: Former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, under fire at home for arrogance and disloyalty, was showered with praise in distant Kuwait, where her role in the Gulf crisis has won her the reputation of a heroic saviour, reports Reuters.

At a ceremony awarding her an honorary doctorate Monday Kuwaitis vied to eulogise the visiting politician, who played a leading part in rallying western support for Kuwait after the Iraqi invasion of August last year.

"During Kuwait's darkest moments, your voice was a beacon of hope to those inside and outside Kuwait steadfastly resisting the evil forces of occupation," said Racha al-Sahab of the board of Kuwait University.

Minister of Higher Education Ali Abdallah Al-Shamlan, who presented her the Doctorate in Philosophy in the name of the Emir of Kuwait, Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, said: "In paying homage to your noble stand. We wish you to know that your name will remain forever enshrined in the hearts of the people of Kuwait."



4,000 thieves surrender

BEIJING: Nearly 4,000 thieves have given themselves up in Shanghai ahead of a deadline issued last month that gave them until Saturday to confess their crimes or face harsh punishment, a report said, says AFP.

The authorities in China's largest city announced October 5 that thieves would have 55 days to surrender as part of a sweeping anti-theft campaign.

So far 5,600 criminals have been caught, including 3,983 thieves who gave themselves up to the police, Shanghai's Liberation Daily said.

The newspaper said enterprises and other work units had played an important role in uncovering "moths" — or people and workers who were active in crime — and strengthening the anti-theft drive.

Ni Hongfu, the city's Deputy Communist Party Secretary, told a conference that although the campaign had shown initial results, the security situation was still serious.

Ni stressed the need to keep up the attack on theft and "push the fight against theft to a new climax."

The city authorities said when they issued the deadline that thieves who surrendered would be treated leniently while those who remained at large would be punished severely or even executed in serious cases.

Miracle of aesthetics

NEW DELHI: Ecology combined with aesthetics can directly influence human behaviour, inculcating qualities of dedication, discipline, hard work and providing cure to many an ailment, reports PTI.

Bio-aesthetics is a comprehensive approach to the problems of environment, taking into account ecology of the area and aesthetics. It restores balance between the person and the agroclimatic environment.

The latest research by renowned landscape designer and horticulturist Dr GS Ranadhawa shows that problems of environmental pollution, civil ugliness and a deteriorating environment can be combated with bio-aesthetic planning.

Topography, soil fertility, soil and water management, inter relationship between plants and agroclimates are so the factors taken into account while implementing the bio-aesthetic approach, Dr Ranadhawa told PTI in an interview.

'Boycott Chinese toys as they're made by child labour'

WASHINGTON: US trade unions and The National Consumers' League on Monday urged a boycott of toys made in China on grounds they are made by child labour, reports Reuters.

Consumers' League Executive Director Linda Goldner said that 55 per cent of doll imports are made in China as are 40 per cent of other toys, such as games, puzzles and cars.

Goldner said her group knew of the child labour through Chinese press reports citing children under 16 years of age who left school to work in export-oriented toy factories.

She told consumers in a statement that "when you pick out holiday gifts, check the label — the country of origin label — an don't buy Chinese toys."

Goldner said many garfield cats, snoopy dogs, barbie dolls and teenage mutant ninja turtles are made in China.

She added that about 100 American toy companies import toys from China, with many owning manufacturing plants there.

'Perez accomplishes toughest job on earth'

MADRID: UN Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar on Monday received Spain's highest civil award for a foreigner for his performance in what King Juna Carlos called "the toughest job on Earth," reports AP.

Perez de Cuellar, 71, a Peruvian who is retiring from his UN post after nine years at it, received the Order of Isabella the Catholic.

"The role of the United Nations and yours as secretary-general — have contributed in a very relevant way to the defense of the ideals of peace, justice and freedom," Juan Carlos told Perez de Cuellar, who was honoured in a ceremony at the Zarzuela Palace.



Three NLD MPs lose seats

Husband asked to persuade Suu Kyi to leave Burma

UNITED NATIONS, Nov 26: The husband of Nobel Prize winner Aung San Suu Kyi said on Monday that letters to his wife under house arrest in Burma would remain undelivered unless he persuaded her to go into exile, reports Reuters.

Michael Aris, a Briton who is a visiting professor at Harvard, told a news conference earlier this year had offered to allow letters to get through "if I asked her to leave", he refused.

"She is not going to accept exile," he said. "She will remain with her supporters there. She is very committed to this," he said.

Aris spoke to reporters at a hotel near the United Nations as more than 20 countries pressed the UN General Assembly to adopt its first resolution on Wednesday critical of Burma's military government.

He said the last letter he had received was 16 months ago. Since then he had "absolutely no news of her whatsoever."

"All I have had is a lot of rumours," he said. "I worry all the time, is she eating enough, is she able to look after her self?"

His press conference was to mark the publication of his wife's first book, "Freedom From Fear And Other Writings", which includes 20 essays by Suu, who was placed under house arrest in Rangoon in July 1989.



NEW YORK: Michael Aris stands beside a poster of the book cover for a collection of writings by his wife, 1991 Nobel Peace Prize winner, Aung San Suu Kyi, at a news conference on Monday. The book, "Freedom From Fear and Other Writings", is to be published in December as an opportunity for Suu Kyi, who is under house arrest in Burma, to be heard.

Nearly a year later her party, The National League for Democracy, won more than 80 per cent of parliamentary seats

in an open election but the ruling military junta has refused to relinquish power.

The new draft UN resolution

tion from Sweden is a mild one but immediately drew opposition from China as well as Rangoon's representatives at the United Nations, diplomats negotiating the document said.

From Bangkok AFP adds, three members of parliament from Burma's main opposition political party, The National League for Democracy (NLD), lost their elected parliamentary posts Monday, the official Radio Rangoon said.

The three NLD members — Saw Peter Klike, Mann Naing Aye and Daw San Mav — had their names removed from the list of elected members in parliament after authorities found they had violated the National Security Act, the Radio said in a dispatch monitored here.

Details of the charges were not provided by the radio.

Saw Peter and Mann Naing were elected as People's Assembly representatives from the Southern Burmese state of Karen during the 1990 general election, organised by the military junta. The Radio said, adding that the opposition leader San Mav was elected from a constituency in Rangoon Division.

Burmese police have arrested a man carrying a large quantity of Indian-made explosives near the country's border with India, the official Radio Rangoon said in a report monitored here today, reports AFP.

The Radio said police arrested the man in western Chin state with 191 sticks of Indian-made explosives packed in a cardboard box in his bag.

Thai military junta curbs powers of Senators

BANGKOK, Nov 26: In a surprise move, legislators decided Monday to alter a proposed new constitution to reduce the powers granted to a Senate appointed by the ruling military junta, reports AP.

The amendments came after the newspaper The Nation quoted national Legislative Assembly President Ukrit Mongkolkeha as saying the weekend that no more changes would be made. It said this indicated the ruling junta would compromise further.

On Sunday, however, seven major political parties and 45 private groups issued a statement urging the assembly to amend the draft constitution's four-year provisional clauses.

The draft document has been widely criticized by politicians, academics, students and the press. Critics say its provisional clauses would perpetuate military rule through the junta-appointed Senate.

The junta has said it will withdraw from the govern-

ment after national elections, expected as early as next March.

Monday's changes deleted sections that would have given senators the right to vote on the prime minister, the annual budget and national security matters.

But the assembly retained clauses that would let senators introduce and vote on no-confidence motions and on parliamentary rules and regulations.

AI releases list of East Timor victims

SYDNEY, Nov 26: Amnesty International has released the names of 60 people it claims were killed by Indonesian troops in the former Portuguese colony of East Timor on November 12 reports AP.

According to an Amnesty report released here on Monday, at least 42 people and possibly as many as 300, have been detained since the massacre, it claimed some have been tortured and killed in police and military custody.

The Indonesian government's official death toll stands at 19 dead

Defence lawyer in Rajiv killing case arrested

NEW DELHI, Nov 26: Police in India's southern Tamil Nadu state have arrested the defence lawyer who was acting for some of the accused in the Rajiv Gandhi assassination case, newspapers here said Tuesday, reports AFP.

D. Veeracharan was picked up from his Madras home and taken into custody Monday night the Madras-based Hindu newspaper said.

The Statesman newspaper said the lawyer was arrested under the terrorist and Disruptive Activities (prevention) Act, known as TADA.

It was remanded into judicial custody until January 8, 1992, and charged with harboring the accused in an earlier multiple-murder case in which the Sri Lankan Tamil militant group, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), were the main suspects.

The LTTE are prime suspects in Gandhi's May 21 slaying by a suicide bomber while he was on an election tour of Tamil Nadu state.

Veeracharan was acting for three of the accused in the Gandhi case — Suba Sundaram, Perarivalan and Ghana Sebastian, all three arrested by team probing the assassination.

Martens resigns

BRUSSELS, Nov 26: Belgian Prime Minister Wilfried Martens presented the resignation of his centre-left government to King Baudouin here Monday following the government's reverses in a general election on Sunday, reports AFP.

The King accepted the resignation, ten charged the Martens government to carry on the day-to-day running of the country pending the formation of a new coalition government.

The election produced an eight percent swing away from the four-party coalition of Flemish and Francophone Christian democrats and socialists.

The main beneficiaries were the extreme-right Vlaams block in Dutch-speaking Flanders and ecologists in French-speaking Wallonia.

The coalition maintained its absolute majority of 120 seats in the 212-seat Chamber of Deputies, which was well short of the two-thirds majority needed to push through plans for constitutional reform.

Formation of a new coalition is likely to take weeks or even months. After the last 1987 election, a new coalition merged after 147 days of haggling.

United Nations indebted by one billion dollars

UNITED NATIONS, Nov 26: The United Nations won't be able to meet its bills beyond the end of the month unless some of its members who owe nearly a billion dollars, pay up soon, according to a UN report on Monday, reports Reuters.

"In summary, the situation has now deteriorated to the point of crisis," Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar said in proposing a package of revolutionary measures to deal with the organisation's perennial cash crunch.

These include charging interest on unpaid assessments setting up a billion dollar UN Peace Endowment Fund with contributions from govern-

ments the private sector and individuals, and as a last resort, borrowing money on a commercial basis.

As of October 31 UN members owed 524.6 million dollars in regular budget dues, including 386.2 million dollars for 1991 and the rest for previous years. Another 463.5 million dollars was outstanding for peace keeping operations for a grand total of 988.1 million dollars.

The United States which is assessed 25 per cent of the UN regular budget and an even larger share of peace keeping operations, has been paying some of its arrears, but by the end of October still owed a total of 485.4 million dollars. This included 3445 million

dollars for the regular budget for 1991 and previous years and 141 million dollars for peace keeping.

The failure of member states to pay their assessed contributions, whether for the regular budget or for peace keeping operations in full and on time has kept the United Nations on the brink of insolvency for a number of years, the Secretary General said.

The payments received to date for the regular budget are only sufficient to meet budget requirements until the end of November added Perez de Cuellar, who will be succeeded as Secretary General on January 1 by Egypt's Deputy Prime Minister Boutros

Boutros-Ghali.

By the end of September only 57 UN members had paid their regular budget assessments in full while another 102 were in arrears, may owing more than one year's dues.

UN membership now totals 166 with the addition of seven countries during September.

The UN Chief whose proposals will be discussed soon by the General Assembly said it is a source of profound concern to me that the same membership which deems it appropriate to entrust the United Nations Secretariat with unprecedented new responsibilities has not taken the necessary action to ensure at the same time, that the minimum financial resources re-

quired to carry out those responsibilities are provided on a reliable and predictable basis.

The United Nations already has seven peace keeping operations financed by assessed contributions on the Golan Heights in southern Lebanon, Angola, Central America, in western Sahara on the Iraq-Kuwait border, and in El Salvador.

One of its most ambitious operations expected to cost more than one billion dollars will soon begin in Cambodia and will involve administering the war-ravaged Asian country pending the holding of free elections.

The interest from the proposed one billion dollar UN

Peace Endowment Fund, likely to take years to raise would be used to finance the start up costs of future UN peace keeping operations and related activities.

A few UN specialised agencies including the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and the UN Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), already have authority to borrow money commercially.

Others steps proposed by the Secretary General included raising the UN working capital fund from 100 million dollars to 250 million dollars.