

Tamil massacre  
21 Sinhalese

COLOMBO, Apr 21: Tamil rebels shot and hacked to death 13 Sinhalese children and eight adults in the endless spiral of revenge between the main ethnic groups on this one-time tourist haven, according to government reports Sunday, reports AP.

They were among 82 people reported killed Saturday in attacks that spanned nearly the entire length of the Indian Ocean island.

Thirty-eight Tamil rebels and three Tamil civilians died in a series of operations across the heartland of the Tamil minority, military officials said.

More than 16,000 people have been killed since 1983 when militants from the Tamil minority launched a separatist campaign of guerrilla warfare and massacres against the Sinhalese majority that controls the government.

Military officials said Tamil rebels carrying guns and machetes rampaged through Okkampitiya, about 150 kilometers (90 miles) east of Colombo village Saturday night. They hacked to death seven girls and six boys, all younger than 15, and four women, the officials said, speaking on their usual condition of anonymity. Four men were shot to death, they added.

The attack came a few hours after Saddam expressed readiness "to discuss everything with the Kurdish side except secession," said one source close to the Kurdish leadership. All of the sources spoke on condition of anonymity.

The Kurds had been reluctant to negotiate with Saddam, fearing he would renege on any agreement once his government recovered from its shattering defeat in Kuwait.

But a spokesman for one Kurdish group said rebel leaders were spurred to act by the plight of hundreds of thousands of Kurdish refugees who are struggling against cold, hunger and disease in the mountains along the borders with Turkey and Iran.

The refugees fled their homes in northern Iraq when Saddam's forces crushed the rebel uprising, which began after Iraq's defeat in the Gulf war.

The United States and other Western nations are sending troops into northern Iraq to build camps for the Kurdish refugees and protect them from the Iraqi army. But the allies made clear they would not intervene to help the Kurds' rebellion, and Kurdish leaders have conceded they could not topple Saddam without foreign help.

A rebel source said the leaders went to Baghdad after consulting with the permanent members of the UN Security Council — the United States, Britain, France, China and the Soviet Union.

"They were asked whether they would be prepared to guarantee any agreements reached with Saddam and some have already agreed to do so," the source said. The

## Four suffocated to death in Bombay

NEW DELHI, Apr 21: Four men suffocated to death in an abandoned well where they were trying to immerse and offering to their goddess, the Press Trust of India said on Saturday, reports Reuter.

The agency quoted police as saying the men had climbed into the well at Ichalkaranji, some 300 km (200 miles) south of Bombay, on Friday to put a bamboo basket in the water in a local ritual offering to a Hindu goddess.

## BRIEFLY

## SAARC summit in Lanka in Nov:

The sixth summit of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) will be held in Colombo in early November this year, according to Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Harold Herat, says Xinhua from Colombo.

Herat told Xinhua when he attended a reception in the Chinese Embassy here Friday evening that the exact date for the summit can only be decided after the general election in India in May.

However, government sources said that the sixth SAARC summit is scheduled to be held from November 7 to 9 at the Bandaranaike Memorial International Congress Hall here.

Herat said that his government has commenced intensive preparations for the summit of the SAARC which groups Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka.

Several subcommittees have been formed to look into various aspects such as roads, buildings and hotel bookings. A cabinet subcommittee has also been appointed to look into various aspects of the conference and the Foreign Ministry is coordinating all the work government sources said.

**Iraqi amnesty for Kurds:** Iraq on Saturday extended a 15-day-old amnesty for Kurds to all rebels including Shi'ite Muslims who took part in a failed rebellion against President Saddam Hussein, the Iraqi news agency (INA) reported, says Reuter from Nicosia.

The amnesty was first announced on April 5 for Kurdish rebels except those found guilty of premeditated murder, rape and looting. It was dismissed as a sick joke by rebel leaders.

INA said Saturday's decision by the Revolution Command Council (RCC), chaired by Saddam, affected "all Iraqis whether in the north, south of central Iraq."

The Armed Forces crushed the post-war uprisings by Kurds in the north and Shiites in the south, triggering a massive influx of refugees to Iran and Turkey and prompting western steps to set up havens for them in northern Iraq.

**Thatcher to visit S. Africa:** The African National Congress (ANC) and the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC) plan to disrupt the visit to South Africa of former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher next month, the Sunday Times newspaper reported, says AFP from Johannesburg.

Mrs. Thatcher, a long-time opponent of sanctions is expected to arrive in mid-May at the invitation of the government.

She also has been invited to attend a special Johannesburg City Council meeting in her honour where she will be presented with a citation, a city official said.

**Black rain in Bahrain:** Black rain fell over scattered parts of the Gulf island of Bahrain on Saturday as black smoke from burning Kuwait oil wells drifted southward, officials at the Bahrain Meteorological Department reported, says AP from Manama (Bahrain).

Meteorologist Salah al-Manai said "thick smoke was up to 13,000 feet (4,000 meters) and could mingle with the cloud patches, causing black rain."

Manai said lighter drops of acid rain fell in recent days but Saturday's was the "thickest concentration of oil in raindrops" to date.

The rain fell on parts of the small island state 325 kilometers (200 miles) southeast of Kuwait.

The black rain caused panic in Bahrain. One person telephoned a local newspaper office to shout: "It's raining oil."

One Arab man was seen moving around in circles to check the black stains left on his dishdashas, the traditional white robes.

Manai said dense smoke had been blowing in from Kuwait for the last few days.

**Rightists set to win Iceland poll:** An opposition right-wing party made the biggest gains on Saturday in Iceland's parliamentary elections which focused on concern about ties with the European Community and a weak economy, reports Reuter from Reykjavik.

First unofficial television projections, based on a count of about 15 per cent of votes cast, showed the Independence Party would win 40.8 per cent of the vote.

The result would make the party favourite to lead the next government, replacing a five-party centre-left coalition.

## International

## Kurdish leaders in Baghdad to talk settlement with Saddam



ISIKVEREN, Turkey (Iraqi border) : An Iraqi Kurdish girl pours rain water into a bottle here April 20, in the camp where more than hundred thousand Iraqi Kurds took refuge. Five hundred US Marines landed in northern Iraq Saturday to create a "Security Zone" for the Kurds as part of operation "Provide Comfort".

—AFP photo

source would not give any specific details.

A US diplomat at the

United Nations, who also

spoke on condition of

anonymity, said she was

unaware of any discussions

with the Kurds in New York.

But she said the permanent

members had a regularly

scheduled meeting Monday

and that the Kurdish situation

had been a prominent topic in

the recent meetings.

The White House said

Saturday it had no knowledge

of the meeting in Baghdad, but

did not object to talks that

might lead to a peaceful return

for the refugees.

"If the Kurds are able to

work out an arrangement for

their safe return, than obviously we would welcome such a development," White House spokesman John Herrick said.

Falak el-Den Kakai, a spokesman for the Kurdistan Democratic Party in Damascus, Syria, said the trip followed meetings between the Kurdish groups and a delegation from the Iraqi government.

He said the Kurdish leaders

included Jalal Talabani of the

Patriotic Union of Kurdistan,

Matcheervan Barzani of the

Kurdish Democratic Party,

Sami Abdul-Rahman of the

People's Party of Kurdistan and

Rasoul Mamoud of the Kurdish Socialist Party.

Talabani, who negotiated a

ceasefire with Saddam to end

unrest in 1984, was the only man the Iraqi President did not grant amnesty to following Saddam's 1988 campaign against the Kurds.

The Kurds' main demand is

full respect for a 1970 agree-

ment granting them full auton-

omy in northern Iraq. The

leaders also want a truly

democratic and pluralistic

political system in Iraq and an

end to the dictatorship of

Saddam's Arab Socialist Baath

Party, sources said.

The Kurds also are seeking

hefty compensation from Iraq's

oil revenues for the thousands

of Kurdish towns razed in re-

cent years to depopulate the

border regions, the sources

said.

## Seven Muslim militants shot dead in Kashmir

NEW DELHI, Apr 21: Security Forces shot dead seven Muslim separatists in India's Kashmir state, where two Swedish kidnapped late last month by rebels remained missing Sunday, reports AFP.

Paramilitary forces killed the seven after coming under attack from Muslim militants during a house to house sweep for guerrillas and arms at Milagam town in the Kashmir valley late Saturday, the Press Trust of India (PTI) reported.

No further details were available.

Muslim guerrillas also fired a rocket at a security post elsewhere in Kashmir before dawn Sunday, but missed the target, the news agency said. No one was wounded in the attack.

The Guerrillas also bombed and damaged a bridge in Kashmir, India's only Muslim majority state, where more than 2,200 people have been killed since January 1990 in a bloody separatist campaign.

Meanwhile, Indian Security Forces continued searching Sunday for two Swedish engineers seized by Muslim guerrillas March 31, and for six Kashmiri civilians also abducted by separated separatists, PTI said.

The Muslim Janbaz Force (MJF), which has claimed responsibility for the kidnapping of Swedish Olli Loman and John Jansoon, has said the two could be freed if New Delhi permitted international human rights groups to visit Kashmir.

The MJF has rejected international appeals demanding the unconditional release of the Swedish engineers, who were employed at a hydroelectric project in Kashmir's Uri district.

## Off the Record

## What's in a name?

APIA: Nobody in western Samoa would ask the question "what's in a name?" Because the answer here is obvious — everything, reports AFP.

Names were a very important factor when this Pacific Island state 3,000 kilometres (1,800 miles) north of New Zealand went to the polls in its first elections held under universal suffrage.

Since independence in 1962 only family heads known as Matai have been able to vote and only Matai can stand as candidates in this election.

But there are Matai and there are Matai.

First there is the simple division between the Ali'i or high chiefs and the Tulafale or talking chiefs.

The Ali'i get all the honours, but for the politically conscious it's more fund being a Tulafale, especially in a culture in which oratory is a fine art.

Each title is the property of a family in a village and it comes with a block of land and a place on the village council.

The titles have a status and at village occasions, the rankings, which never change, are ritually recited.

Everything in people's names flows from their relationship to a Matai, with untitled people normally taking the name of their Matai's title.

Thus the son of Samoa's first Prime Minister Tupua Tamasese McLewas is known as a Matai Tamasese.

When his father died, Efi Tamasese acquired other titles and decided to run for Parliament.

## Wanted help for zoo animals

LONDON: The London Zoo is asking the public to donate 17 million Dollars to allow the 165-year-old menagerie to stay open and keep its 8,000 animals in Regent's Park, reports AP.

Zoo director David Jones said in a statement Monday night announcing the Save Our Zoo appeal: "Without public support and financing assistance, the zoo cannot be retained."

The London newspaper The Sunday Times reported the zoo needs 22 million Dollars in emergency funding from the government to remain open beyond next September.

The Department of the Environment said in a statement that in 1988 the department gave the zoo — which is run by a private charity, the Royal Zoological Society — a one-time allotment of 17 million Dollars.

The statement said David Trippier, minister for the environment and countryside, told zoo officials at a meeting last month that there would be no additional government funds.

"There has been a decision in principle to close the zoo," the department statement added, referring to a decision it was made by the zoological society.

Jones said that after meeting with Trippier, the zoo's governing council made provisional plans to close the zoo and transfer most of the 8,000 animals to its wildlife park at Whipsnade, 30 miles (50 kilometers) from the capital.

Kim's son may take on diplomatic activities

Nine killed in South African violence

TOKYO, Apr 21: Kim Jong-Il, son of North Korean President Kim Il-Sung, may take on diplomatic activities, a leading newspaper reported today, reports AFP.

The Aminichi Shinbun quoted Kim Yong-Sun, Director of the International Department of Pyongyang's ruling Korean Workers' Party, as telling Aminichi reporters in the North Korean capital Saturday that Kim Jong-Il, heir apparent to his father, would step up his direct diplomatic activities.

Singh has pledged to reserve half of all government jobs for these castes, projecting the plan as weapon to break an upper-caste hold over both the bureaucracy and society at large.

The BJP hopes to strike a nerve which motivates electoral blocks across the country.

This time former Prime Minister Vishwanath Pratap Singh hopes his Janata Dal will strike that nerve across the thousands of castes which make up the lower half of the Hindu social hierarchy.

Singh has pledged to reserve half of all government jobs for these castes, projecting the plan as weapon to break an upper-caste hold over both the bureaucracy and society at large.

The paper said Kim Yong-Sun's remark indicated that the younger Kim would visit foreign countries or meet foreign dignitaries in Pyongyang on his father's behalf.

The victim had been decapitated and his hands and feet had been cut off," the police reported.

He was found near a mainly Zulu hostel for migrant workers and police said he appeared to have been dragged from there towards the homes of rivals mostly loyal to the African National Congress (ANC).</p