

### Terrorism rises in Asia

HONG KONG, May 20: A suspected police informer, both hands cut off, lies bleeding to death in central Sri Lanka. Beside him three others are already dead, reports Reuter.

The next day, the bodies of 48 suspected rebels are found at the same spot, apparently selected and killed by government vigilantes pursuing a brutal 12-for-one retaliation policy.

Such violence, intended to strike terror into the hearts of those who survive rather than as a form of justice, is reaching new heights in parts of Asia.

Whether it is ethnic violence such as the Tamil rebellion in Sri Lanka or religious strife in the Indian state of Kashmir, the last 18 months has seen a dramatic rise in politically motivated violence and the deaths of thousands of innocent civilians.

In a report entitled "Patterns of global terrorism - 1990" published this month, the US state department notes a dramatic increase in such violence in Asia in 1990.

There was a marked increase in international terrorism in Asia in 1990, primarily because of increased activity by the communist New People's Army (NPA) in the Philippines," the report said.

"At the same time, south Asia suffered from a notable upsurge in terrorism, particularly in Pakistan where the Afghan secret service was responsible for a rash of terrorist attacks.

"Domestic political violence including sectarian and communal violence in India, particularly in Kashmir and Punjab, and the festering insurgency in Sri Lanka were also of concern in 1990."

In India, nearly 5,000 civilians were killed in 1990 in a Sikh militant campaign for an independent homeland in Punjab - more than twice as many as the previous year, it said.

## Millions of Indians turn out to vote amid tight security

NEW DELHI, May 20: Millions of Indians turned out to vote for a new government today under some of the tightest security the country has seen amid sporadic violence and speculation of a hung parliament, reports AFP.

Former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, trounced in the last elections in 1989 but tipped by opinion polls as the front runner this time, voted early in New Delhi, which was on red alert after two bloody attacks here on his nominees.

"We will win," a visibly campaign-weary Gandhi told journalists held back by security police from the school where he and his Italian-born wife Sonia voted.

Domestic news agencies reported brisk polling in most of the country except the capital. Some 197 million of the country's 514 million voters are eligible to vote today in 204 constituencies.

Streets in the capital were semi-deserted and voters jittery following a late Sunday night attack on one of Gandhi's Congress (I) party candidates, Sajjan Kumar, by grenade and automatic rifle wielding Sikh militants.

Four persons, two of them police, were killed and 37 others wounded in the attack, police said. Kumar, the second Congress (I) nominee to be attacked by suspected Sikh militants here in the past three days, escaped unhurt.

Today's voting is the first of three days of staggered elections which end May 26 for India's 545-seat Lok Sabha or Federal Parliament.

The violence-torn states of Punjab and Assam will vote separately in June and only Kashmir, wracked by a bloody secessionist rebellion, has been excluded from the polls.

Initial reports trickling in from the states said polling started briskly in most areas with voters turning out early to beat the searing heat.

The army was called out to combat violence in the north-



NEW DELHI: Madan Lal Gandhi, masquerading as Mahatma Gandhi, casts his ballot 20 May, in the Indian capital where he is a candidate for the so-called Bharatiya Avasarwadi or Indian Opportunists' Party. Madan Lal Gandhi is a retired government clerk.

ern city of Kanpur in Uttar Pradesh state where election violence erupted over the weekend.

National television said the army was on stand by in two districts in Bihar, India's most violence-prone state. The election commission reported poll-linked violence in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, which account for 139 Lok Sabha seats.

The Press Trust of India (PTI) said that for the first time Federal Paramilitary forces were patrolling the streets of Patna, Bihar's capital, with sten guns and self-loading rifles.

Two of the principal contenders in Patna are Finance Minister Yashwant Sinha, a former bureaucrat, and former Foreign Minister Inder Kumar Gujral, who was earlier India's ambassador in Moscow. Chief Election Commissioner TN Seshan said here that balloting had been suspended in three polling stations of Bihar's Sitapur constituency after "thugs"

hired by candidates raided the voting centres.

He also reported "Extensive booth capturing" - a euphemism to describe the takeover and stuffing of ballot boxes - in Patna.

Seshan, who has vowed to ensure a free and fair poll, said similar complaints were also pouring in from at least nine constituencies of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh.

PTI reported clashes between supporters of the Congress (I) and the Hindu-revivalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP, or Indian People's Party) in the desert state of Rajasthan in which 12 people were injured.

Some 600,000 paramilitary troops have been deployed countrywide to assist 15 million police and civilian home guards, and Seshan has warned that voting will be suspended in areas if widespread violence breaks out.

Eleventh-hour opinion polls have tipped the right-wing BJP

as the main threat to the Congress (I) and newspapers today hinted that many of India's 100 million strong Muslim community might vote for Congress (I) in an attempt to thwart a possible BJP victory.

Most Muslims were earlier seen favouring the third main contender in the polls, the Janata Dal (People's Party) of former Premier Vishwanath Pratap Singh, who is running in alliance with the country's formidable and staunchly secular left parties on an egalitarian platform.

But a leading newspaper reported today, that talks were on between the left parties, notably the country's strongest Communist Party of India (Marxist), and the Congress.

The Indian Express said the two were talking with an eye to forming a post-election alliance in the event of a hung parliament, motivated by fears that the BJP might improve its standing enough to make a push for power at the centre.

- AFP photo

### Put democracy to a test, Bush tells Castro

WASHINGTON, May 20: President George Bush promised today relations with Cuba would "improve significantly" if Cuban President Fidel Castro agreed to hold free and fair elections and release political prisoners on the island, reports AFP.

"Put democracy to a test.... hold free and fair elections under international supervision," Bush said in a speech prepared for broadcast on the US government's radio Marti, marking the island's 89th year of independence.

The president said ties between the United States and Cuba would "improve significantly" if a democratic vote was held.

The United States broke off relations with Cuba in January 1961 and imposed an economic embargo on the country.

The Soviet Union has helped the Castro revolution survive against its hostile superpower neighbour, but supplies have been declining recently amid economic and political upheaval in the East.

### Abu Nidal not based in Libya: Gaddafi

CAIRO, May 20: Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi said on Sunday that Palestinian guerrilla Chief Abu Nidal, named by Washington as head of the world's most dangerous terrorist group, was not based in Libya, reports Reuter.

"Abu Nidal does not work from Libya," said Gaddafi at a joint news conference in the Libyan coastal town of Ras Lanuf with visiting Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak.

"He is not in Libya. Since the first and the second Gulf War, he is no longer here," Gaddafi said in remarks carried by Egypt's National Middle East News Agency (MENA).

The first Gulf War between Iran and Iraq, lasted from 1980 to 1988. The second Gulf conflict started on January 17 and ended on February 28 when US led forces drove Iraqi troops from Kuwait.

Sabri al-Banna, better known by his Nom De Guerre Abu Nidal, is accused by the United States of carrying out over 90 attacks on civilians

since 1974 in 20 countries. Shortly after Iraq invaded Kuwait last August 2, US administration sources said unconfirmed reports suggested that Abu Nidal may have returned to Baghdad after a seven-year rift.

He was headquartered in Iraq from 1974 to 1983, but when he fell out with the government he moved his operations to Syria until 1987 after which he was reported to have gone to Libya.

Gaddafi said there was an Abu Nidal in Libya, but he was a Libyan doctor who worked for the Red Crescent Society.

"He is in charge of the Red Crescent and there were telegrams coming out of Abu Nidal's camps which were in fact Red Crescent camps," Gaddafi said.

"We went to these camps, searched them and found the Libyan Abu Nidal, not the well-known Abu Nidal."

Mubarak, according to MENA, interrupted Gaddafi and said: "It is true. Abu Nidal is not in Libya."

### Hearing of 300 cases of collaboration begins

## 6 Kuwaitis get 15 years for wearing Saddam T-shirt

KUWAIT CITY, May 20: A special court has begun hearing the cases of more than 300 people suspected of collaborating with the Iraqi occupation. Lawyers are objecting that the trials are held under unfair conditions, reports AP.

On the first day of trials on Sunday, six men were convicted, with the harshest sentence of 15 years in prison given to an Iraqi accused of wearing a Saddam Hussein T-shirt. It was not clear if he was suspected of other occupation offenses as well.

Defense attorneys, most appointed after each defendant

was read the charges, objected that the trials were not fair because much of the evidence was not made public and some charges were based on confessions exacted under torture.

"I had no idea about the case," said Attorney Mona Al-Rais after the panel of three civilian and two military judges asked her to defend a man just minutes after she stepped into the courtroom to watch the proceedings.

The defendants were kept in a metal cage on one side of the courtroom, with no contact with the lawyers called on to defend them.

More serious cases that could result in the death penalty were not scheduled to start until Tuesday.

Lawyers said more than 300 people, mostly foreigners, will be brought to trial.

They are charged with aiding the Iraqis during their seven-month occupation that began with the Aug. 2 invasion of Kuwait and ended Feb. 26 when allied forces routed Iraqi forces.

Many Kuwaiti lawyers and others hope the trials will be scrupulously fair to clear Kuwait's human rights reputation.

## BRIEFLY

**Record turnout in Greek polls:** Early results Monday in Sunday's elections for the Greek sector's parliament showed a record turnout and a lead of the Conservative Democratic Party, which obtained 36 per cent of the vote, AFP reports from Nicosia.

The Communist Party won 28 per cent, the Center-Right Democratic Party obtained 20 per cent and the Socialist Party garnered 13 per cent, according to interior ministry results based on 16 per cent of the vote.

Turnout was a record 94 per cent. Non-voter must pay a fine.

**Mujahideen opens bank branch:** The Afghan resistance opened its first bank in an area controlled by rebel leader Ahmed Shah Masood, the rebel publication Afghan News received in Islamabad Sunday reports, AFP reports.

Commander Masood inaugurated the bank, in the Takhar province capital of Taloan in northeast Afghanistan, on April 22, the bi-monthly newspaper said.

The bank will provide financial services to merchants and transactions will be conducted according to Islamic Law, Afghan News said without giving details.

**US pulling out troops from Asia:** The United States has begun to shift thousands of troops out of Asia in the first phase of a plan to shrink the country's Armed Forces by about 25 per cent, Pentagon sources said, AFP reports from Washington.

It's already started, said a high level official who asked not to be named.

The military official said 14,000 troops will be withdrawn from Asia by the end of 1992-7,000 from the 44,000 troops stationed in South Korea.

5,000 of the 50,000 troops in Japan and 2,000 of the 15,000 stationed in the Philippines.

He said the reductions in Asia would be milder than those planned for Europe in the military reform package announced by Defense Secretary Dick Cheney last April.

**Polish miners go back to work:** Poland's copper miners went back to work early Sunday, ending a five-day strike and putting off their demand for a 100 pct pay rise until the industry is privatised, Reuter reports from Warsaw.

A spokesman for the state copper combine KGHM told Reuter by telephone the 20,000 miners agreed temporarily to withdraw their claim for the increase from May 1.

"We're back to work because things have to keep running," said a worker at Polkowice, one of the four mines in Poland's Silesian copper basin.

**Quayle in Tokyo:** US Vice-President Dan Quayle arrived in Japan Monday for trade talks with Prime Minister Toshiki Kaifu, a day later than originally scheduled, Reuter reports from Tokyo.

Quayle was to have arrived in Japan on Sunday for visits to the US aircraft carrier midway and a Japanese minesweeper but his plane was delayed in Alaska because of mechanical problems.

Quayle is also scheduled on Monday to meet Emperor Akihito and the Japanese finance, trade and form ministers.

A US embassy spokesman said he would hold a news conference before leaving for Singapore and Indonesia on Tuesday.

### 'I'll vote for whoever can help me'

BADARPUR (India), May 20: Forty-year-old Dayavati brushed the cow dung off her hands and said "I'll vote for whoever can help me," reports Reuter.

Dayavati, a mother of six who lives in Badarpur, a town about 35 kms (22 miles) south of Delhi, was making plate-sized dung patties that are dried in the sun and used later as fuel for cooking.

She has been talking with village members of Rajiv Gandhi's Congress Party about getting a small plot of land for a house, and said she would reserve her vote for whoever can produce the goods.

Voting began today in election that opinion polls suggest will end six days later with no party winning a majority.

India's poor hold no illusions that elections will change their lot, but see the polls as a time when they can bargain their vote for some improvement in local conditions.

Demands are small. They are looking for gravel roads to be paved and the installation of hand pumps to improve water supplies. Most want access to electricity. All hope for better housing.

"Whoever will help us with daily necessities like water, or making our tents into proper houses, we will vote for them, said Balam, 26, a father of two, who earns 2.50 dollars a day, smashing rocks with a mallet to make hardcore for road constructions.

A migrant from nearby Uttar Pradesh state, he is forced by his circumstances to live in a tent by the roadside with hundreds of other poor labourers.

Mannu Lal, 25, acknowledged that the left-leaning Janata Dal Party of Vishwanath Pratap Singh managed to provide his family with crucial ration and identity cards during its 11-month rule that ended last November.

But few of the workers at a stone-cutting site on the outskirts of Delhi said they would vote for Singh.

Most saw Gandhi's Congress Party as better placed to ensure political stability and hold down rising prices of basic commodities.

"My mother has been voting for Congress for 40 years, and I will do the same" said Lal, standing outside his metre (three foot) high thatched home along a railway track.

### Will Ryzhkov be Russian President?

MOSCOW, May 20: The Communist Party of Russia (CPR) emerged on the political scene as the republican organisation of the Soviet Communist Party only 10 months ago, reports IAN.

The latest plenary meeting of the CPR Central Committee (the fourth in ten months) would not have attracted serious attention if it had not been for one factor. The point is that, in addition to charting social protection policy for the period of the implementation of anti-crisis programmes and determining its stand in the forthcoming presidential election in Russia, the first in its history, the meeting named the CPR nominee - the former head of the federal government, Nikolai Ryzhkov.

Addressing a news conference devoted to the results of the plenary meeting, Gennady Zjuganov, a member of the Politburo and Secretary of the CPR Central Committee, said that Ryzhkov had been proposed by the staffs of businesses and by public organisations in more than 50 republics and regions of Russia right after the nomination had begun. Hundreds of thousands of signatures were already collected - many times more than the number required by the Law on the Presidential Election in Russia. This is why, according to Zjuganov, Ryzhkov was chosen almost unanimously from among several potential CPR candidates taking part in the plenary meeting.

Soviet and foreign media people showered CPR leaders with questions on a multitude of subjects ranging from the candidate's political predilections to his health (Ryzhkov had a heart attack several months ago, following which he resigned as Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers). Many reporters asked why Ryzhkov was so popular. In this respect, as it follows from the news conference, social protection discussed by the meeting and Ryzhkov's political credo were interconnected.

Asked by Novosti whether the CPR's social protection programme differed from similar programmes of other political forces, Alexander Melnikov, Secretary of the CPR Central Committee, answered

that the very approach was different. Other political parties which called themselves democratically-minded aimed for the budding strata of businessmen, financiers and cooperative workers, whereas the CPR set itself the task of protecting the interests of commodity producers and people living on incomes from their personal work.

Melnikov said current social tensions in society were largely explained by the fact that the people who created national wealth with their own hands got too small a share of it in return and this at a time when incomes of people belonging to new structures (nine-tenth of which produce nothing and engage only in redistribution) were growing steeply.

Against the background of recent developments, Melnikov pointed out, ordinary people were concerned at the prospect of losing their social gains, such as free housing, education and health care.

In the light of all this, Melnikov added, Ryzhkov's programmes for switching to market-relations were much more balanced and scientifically substantiated, they were meant to be implemented gradually, certain instruments of the planned economy were to remain in place, and social protection of the working people was to receive special attention.

Melnikov said Ryzhkov remained committed to those principles. "If you study attentively the current situation - I'm referring to the demands of Trade Union, strike committees and other groups, you will see that his programme is worth a try," he stressed.

He described Ryzhkov as a person of principles, a highly qualified professional and an exacting person well aware of the working people's interests and sharing them.



ZAHKO, Iraq: Iraqi Kurdish kids play with a damaged anti-aircraft weapon in the Allied-protected security zone near here. A first batch of United Nations security agents also arrived May 18 in Baghdad to relieve the Allied forces.

-Photo: AFP/ UNB

## Off the Record

### I may be dying, I feel great: Landon

MALIBU (California): Michael Landon says that despite his diagnosis of inoperable and usually fatal cancer "death's gonna have to do a lot of fighting to get me," reports AP.

"Look, there's two things that can happen. I can win or I can lose. And I can handle both," he said in an interview in the June issue of Life magazine to be published Monday.

The 54-year-old star of "Bonanza", "Little House on the Prairie" and "Highway to Heaven" was diagnosed in April with cancer of the pancreas and liver.

Only 3 per cent of pancreatic cancer patients survive more than five years after diagnosis, according to the American Cancer Society's "Cancer Facts and Figures - 1991."

Since his diagnosis Landon, a father of nine, has spent his time on the Malibu ranch where he lives with his third wife, Cindy, 34. He said he first tried traditional chemotherapy, but didn't like it and turned to a mixture of alternative treatments, including an experimental therapy that pits drug-dispensing bubbles of fat against the tumor in his pancreas.

In the Life interview, Landon talks about cancer, as well as his troubled childhood, his career in Hollywood and his hopes. Here are excerpts:

On being diagnosed with inoperable cancer: "I'm not the kind of person who gives up without a fight. If I'm gonna die, death's gonna have to do a lot of fighting to get me. I'm not just gonna lie down and let it happen."

On his treatment regimen, which includes diet and vitamins: "Damn carrots are turning me orange. And every time I eat or drink, I swallow digestive enzymes to replace what the pancreas has stopped producing. And then, once a day, I take a tried-and-true remedy for intestinal irritation - a coffee enema. Yup, I get filled to the rim. Organic coffee, I might add. "And you know what? The same day I started this new programme, the cramps stopped. And they've never come back... No pain. I feel great. Crazy, isn't it? I may be dying and I feel great."

### Land around Prophet's mosque auctioned

RIYADH: Land around the mosque of the Prophet Mohammad in the Saudi holy Muslim city of Medina was auctioned off for record prices on Saturday, making it some of the priciest real estate in the world, reports Reuter.

The Saudi Gazette newspaper reported that 25 leading Saudi businessmen bid one plot up to 116,000 riyals (\$1,000 dollars) per square metre for the honour of owning land around one of Islam's holiest places.

The biggest plot of 6,000 square metres went for 347 million riyals (\$2 million dollars) the paper said.

The paper said the executive office responsible for developing the land around the pilgrimage centre sold participants in the auction a 22-page booklet detailing rules and construction regulations for 5,000 riyals (1,300 dollars) each.