

Slovenia acquires missiles

LONDON, July 7: Slovenia has acquired surface-to-air missiles which it is ready to use if attacked by federal war planes, the Observer newspaper reported today, reports AFP.

Some of the missiles are believed to be Warsaw Pact weapons captured by the rebellious republic's forces from federal armouries. Others are western missiles purchased on the international arms market, the newspaper said.

An official in the Slovenian Defence Ministry and two local defence officers had confirmed the story, the report said.

"We feel much happier about our air defences now," one of the officers was quoted as saying. "If they try to bomb us again we will be able to shoot them down."

Eighty people have been killed in fighting between Slovenian and Yugoslav army forces.

Tamils butcher 19 Muslims: 10 militants killed in Lanka

COLOMBO, July 7: Suspected Tamil Tiger guerrillas today butchered 19 Muslim villagers in eastern Sri Lanka as security forces stepped up their drive against the militants, officials here said, reports AFP.

About 40 to 50 gunmen believed to be from the rebel Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) shot dead 10 civilians in the village of Puthur in eastern Polonnaruwa district and nine others at a nearby inland fish pond.

The massacre came as troops renewed attack against the separate LTTE guerrillas killing 10 of them inside a newly built bunker in northern Vavuniya district Saturday, military spokesman here said.

The terrorists flee to the jungle after their killing spree in Puthur, the spokesman said. A search was underway in the area to look for the attackers.

The LTTE is known to be opposed to minority Muslims and Sinhalese of the majority community living in the Tamil dominated northern and eastern parts of Sri Lanka where the guerrillas are fighting to establish a separate state.

The military spokesman said troops had expanded their area of control in the small islet of manner in the northwest and engaged rebels in sporadic clashes across the embattled northeastern region Saturday.

There were no immediate reports of casualties among security forces, who are usually backed by intense air cover.

Some 7,410 people have died since fresh fighting broke out in June last year at the end of 14 months of failed peace talks between the LTTE and Colombo.

Reuter adds: The Sri Lankan government is closely examining a British decision to suspend aid and restrict arms sales in retaliation for the expulsion of its high commissioner (ambassador), a spokesman said on Saturday.

"We are closely examining all aspects of the (British) note handed to our high commissioner in London last week," Presidential Adviser Bradman Weerakoon told reporters.

Britain said Sri Lanka's

High Commissioner Sepala Attygalle was summoned to the foreign office on July 3 and given a note explaining the decision.

Colombo expelled High Commissioner David Gladstone in June saying he had interfered in local government elections.

Defence Ministry Secretary General Cyril Ranatunga said Sri Lanka military personnel were still being trained in the United Kingdom and arms and ammunition for the fight against Tamil separatists had been bought from many sources not just Britain.

"Whatever the new policy on arms sales it would not affect our fighting capability," he said.

PLO arms being removed from Sidon

SIDON (Lebanon), July 7: The PLO started to remove its heavy weapons from Palestinian refugee camps near this southern port city late Saturday, avoiding a new showdown as a Lebanese government deadline drew to a close, reports AFP.

The Palestine Liberation Organisation's representative in Lebanon, Zeid Wehbe, said earlier that Palestinian fighters would not be able to meet the 1600 GMT deadline because of technical reasons.

A Lebanese military source declining to be identified warned the army could use force if the evacuation of weapons failed to take place as scheduled.

But Wehbe later retracted his statement and said the PLO was totally committed, to the accord it had reached with the government Thursday, ending three days of fighting that killed more than 50 people.

Sanctions against S Africa should continue: Mandela

DURBAN, July 7: Nelson Mandela, the newly-elected President of the African National Congress, said Sunday that international sanctions against South Africa should continue, reports AP.

But he also said the ANC must show "flexibility and imagination" in its sanctions policy.

Mandela spoke after the ANC elected a headline governing body and reaffirmed its boycott of constitutional talks with the government in a meeting that ended early Sunday.

Winnie Mandela, Nelson's controversial wife, and Communist Party leader Joe Slovo were among the 50 members chosen Saturday by secret ballot to the National Executive Committee.

Off the Record

Reagan a true actor, Thatcher talkative

TOKYO: A court official who interpreted for the late Japanese Emperor Hirohito for 25 years says former US President Ronald Reagan was a "true actor" and former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher "did all the talking," reports Reuter.

Hideki Masaki's recollections, published by the daily Yomiuri Shimbun on Sunday, present a rare glimpse into Hirohito's personal dealings with foreign dignitaries.

Masaki describes Britain's Princess Diana as an "unassuming person" and said the late Philippine dictator Ferdinand Marcos "was nervous and restless" in meetings with Hirohito.

Marcos's successor, Corazon Aquino, was "a person who always said she wanted to go back home and become a housewife again," Masaki said.

During Aquino's visit to Japan in 1986, Hirohito reportedly apologised for the Japanese Army's behaviour during World War II. "Japan has caused you much trouble," Hirohito was quoted as telling Aquino.

Hirohito, who died in 1989 aged 87 after ruling for more than 60 years, did not mind Reagan's showmanship and actively participated in his performances, Masaki said.

At a farewell ceremony during his 1983 visit to Japan, Reagan pointed at media photographers and told Hirohito: "These people here are our very good friends," laughing hard as he joked.

"He (Reagan) was a true actor," Masaki said in the interview.

Tamerlaine being filmed

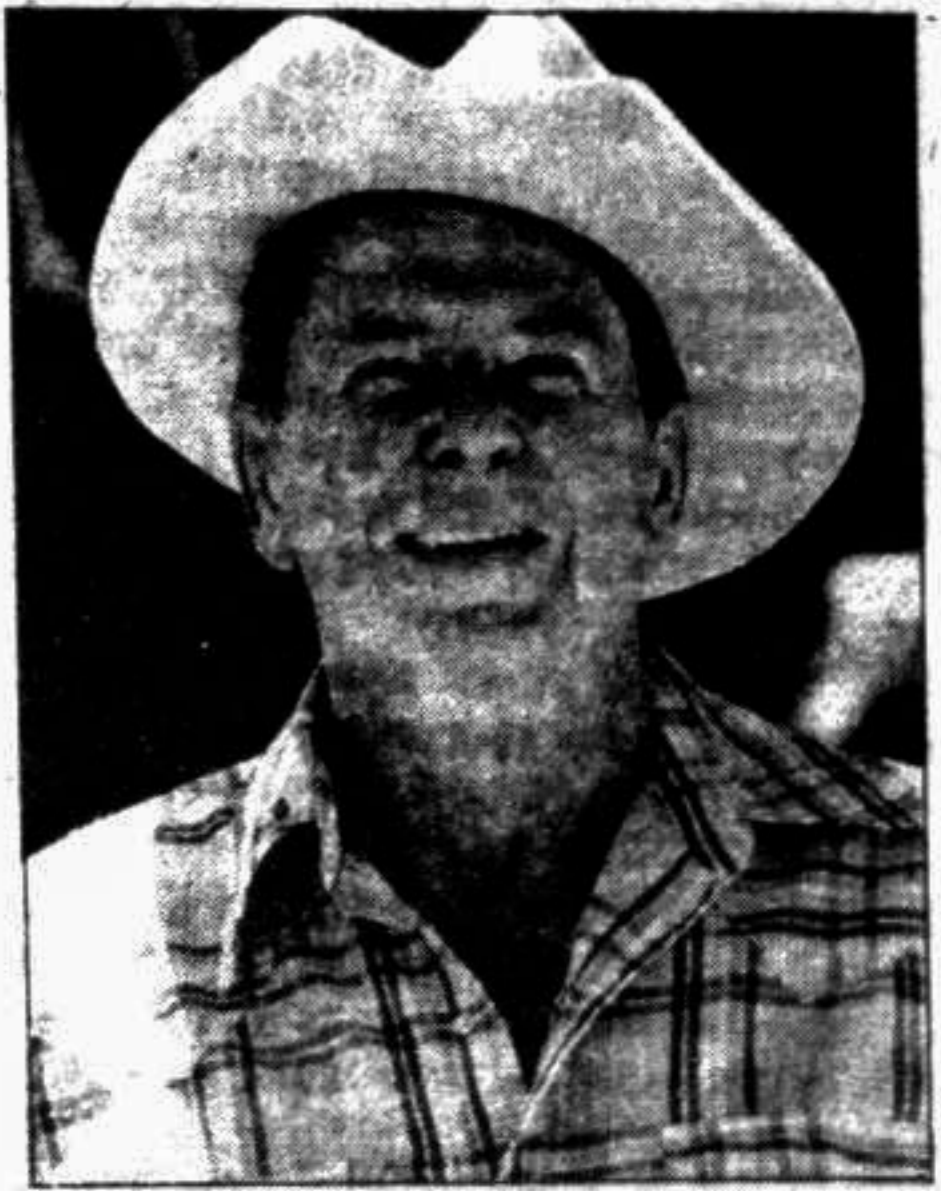
TASHKENT: Preparations continue at "Samarkandfilm" for the filming of a historical miniseries called "Tamerlaine" (Amir Temur) which is being made in conjunction with "International Cinema Company" of Italy, reports IAN.

"There is enormous interest in the film" says Ali Khamrayev the Director & Producer. Recently some young people came here from the Pendjikent region of Tadzhikistan. They were equipped for their long journey by other people from their village who had learned that work had begun in Tashkent on the film about their fellow countryman the great Tamerlaine.

After all the famous general was from the Barl Clan like the residents of several villages in that region. The messengers from Pendjikent brought some of the savings of their region as a contribution to production of the film.

Public organisations, factories, collective farms, cooperatives and private individuals can participate in the creation of "Tamerlaine." Everybody will be mentioned in the credits which the audience will see in English, Italian, Arabic and Uzbek.

"Samarkandfilm" will begin filming in this year. The film should be ready for release by the beginning of 1993.



Soviet Muslim leader ousted for selling donated Qurans

MOSCOW, July 7: A controversial Muslim leader has been dismissed for allegedly embezzling 20 million dollars in international Islamic aid and selling donated Qurans, a religious official said Saturday, reports AP.

The Assembly of Muslim Communities in Tashkent voted unanimously on Friday to remove Mufti Mohammed Sodik as chairman of the Muslim Board of Central Asia and Kazakhstan, a spokesman said. Sodik had held the post since February 1989.

The assembly accused Sodik of 10 offenses, including appropriating 20 million dollars donated by Pakistan, Yemen, Saudi Arabia and Syria intended for Soviet Muslims, according to Abdul Rashid Sariv, head of the Uzbek nationalist movement, Birlik, or Unity.

The assembly tried to unseat Sodik last August, accusing him of embezzling dollars 9 million, but later dropped the accusation. Sodik is also a deputy on the Supreme Soviet legislature.

On Friday, the assembly also accused Sodik of "sacrilege" for selling copies of the Quran donated by Saudi Arabia. Sodik allegedly made 5 million dollars from the sales.

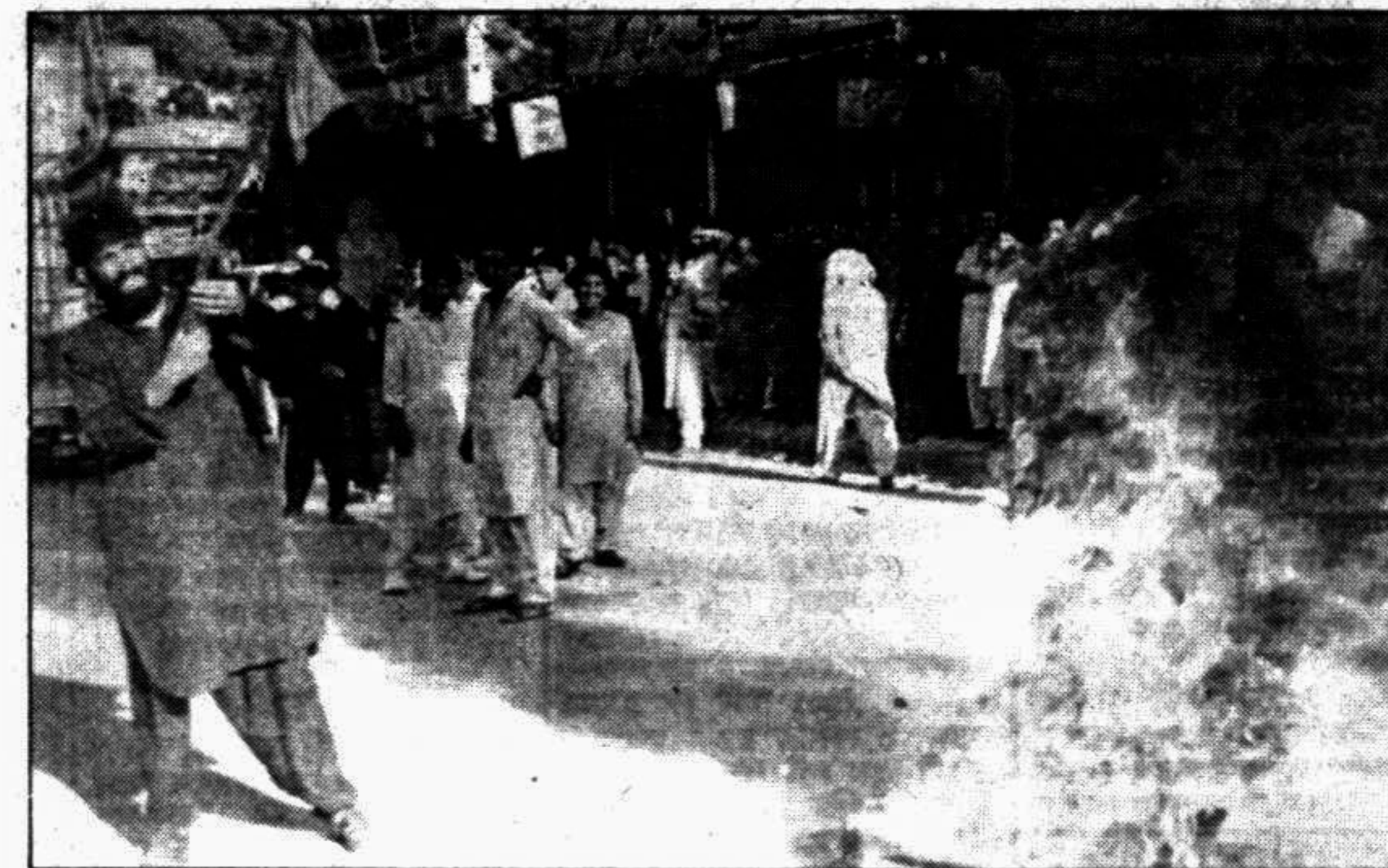
"You can't sell Qurans, it's a sin," Sariv said.

He said Muslim pilgrims at the Saudi holy city of Mecca were told the Saudis were unhappy with Sodik.

They expressed displeasures as the Qurans were a personal gift from the king of Saudi Arabia, Sariv said. "So it's as if the king himself is involved in some sort of dirty deed."

Sariv said Sodik was also accused of giving important positions to family members and created disunity within the Muslim community.

Sodik did not attend the assembly's meeting on Friday.



MUZAFFARBAD (Pakistan controlled Kashmir): A supporter of the People's Party waves a flag July 6 close to a burning tire during a demonstration in support of deposed Premier Mumtaz Rathore. Rathore was arrested July 5 after defying federal authorities and rejecting his party's rout in the June poll.

Rathore's arrest paves way for Kashmir's independence: Benazir

ISLAMABAD, July 7: Opposition leader Benazir Bhutto said in a statement published here today that the government had committed an historic error by arresting the Premier of Pakistan-controlled Kashmir, reports AFP.

Ms Bhutto, who is in London on a private visit, said the arrest of Mumtaz Hussain Rathore on Thursday was "naked interference" in the affairs of the state, which has its own constitution and political structure.

"By this act they have paved the way for an independent state of Kashmir which would deprive Pakistan of its strategic border with China," the statement released from her Karachi residence said.

Rathore, a political ally of Ms Bhutto, was detained after he declared the elections to the State Assembly as void, alleging they were massively rigged by the Pakistani authorities in favour of his rival Muslim Conference party.

He won from two constituencies but his People's Party was routed in the June 29 polls with Rathore at the helm as state caretaker Premier after he ordered snap elections a few months ago as Prime Minister.

Ms Bhutto said the ruling Islamic Democratic Alliance (IJI) government led by Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif had its only Muslim-majority state where more than 2000 people have died since early 1990 in violence linked to a militant Muslim separatist campaign.

Pakistan says it only gives moral and political support to what it calls the self-determination struggle in Indian-controlled Kashmir, but India accuses it of training and arming secessionist elements.

A former caretaker Prime Minister, Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi, said the dismissal and detention of Rathore had "badly damaged" the cause of the Kashmiris.

In an interview published today by local newspaper Muslim Jato, a prominent IJI leader, said the action was a serious encroachment on the autonomy of Kashmir.

Rathore was arrested on Friday night on charge of creating hostile situation which could lead to armed conflict in Pakistan controlled Kashmir he reports said adding that the government is considering treason trial for him.

The federal government appointed Sardar Mohammad Ashraf Khan caretaker Prime Minister of Kashmir shortly after the removal and arrest of Rathore.

Hamidati in northern Iraq on Saturday, resuming their dialogue on Kurdish autonomy.

The official Iraqi news agency said Izzat Ibrahim, the Vice-Chairman of Iraq's decision-making revolutionary command council, and Deputy Premier Tareq Aziz, also attended the talks in April.

"It was agreed to pursue the sessions of dialogue over the next few days," said the agency monitored in Cyprus.

A spokesman for the democratic party of Kurdistan, which is headed by Barzani, said earlier that the rebels had delivered their counter-proposals to the government's conditions for an agreement on Kurdish autonomy.

The meeting took place in Arbil, rather than Baghdad, in keeping with Kurdish demands, the spokesman told Agence France-Presse in Teheran.

Brazani has been more optimistic on the prospects for striking a deal with Baghdad than his coalition partner Talabani, who heads the patriotic union of Kurdistan.



alincated pro-Pakistan Kashmiris by its "intervention" and "played right into Indian hands." India controls most of the divided Kashmir territory as

Kurds attack police stations in southeast Turkey

DIYARBAKIR (Turkey), July 7: Separatist Kurds attacked police stations with machine guns and rocket launchers in southeast Turkey near the Iraqi border on Saturday, Turkish authorities said, reports Reuter.

They said members from the outlawed Kurdish workers' Party (PKK) fired on the central police station in the town of Cizre, near the intersection of the Turkish, Iraqi and Syrian borders.

In another attack in the border town of Silopi, PKK members fired rockets at the police and gendarme stations, causing heavy damage, the authorities said.

They said some police might have been wounded in both attacks but no details were available.

In other incidents on Saturday, authorities said rebels killed seven villagers, five of them from the same family, and burned the tents of nomads grazing their sheep in Kahramanmaraş Province.



NEW DELHI: After 97 days of captivity Swedish engineers Johan Jansson (2nd L) and Olle (2nd R) are greeted by Swedish Ambassador Par Kettis (R) July 6 at Palam Airport near the Indian capital. Both men were held hostages by Kashmiri Muslim militants before escaping unharmed earlier in the day. Man L is journalist.

18 top army officers executed in Iran

MANAMA, July 7: Eighteen Iraqi Army Generals and high-ranking officers were executed last month for plotting to overthrow President Saddam Hussein, United Nations sources said here today, reports AFP.

The sources, who took part in recent UN missions to Iraq, said the officers were hanged rather than killed by a firing squad, as is the normal practice in the military for high-ranking officers.

The identities of those said to have been executed were not disclosed.

The army has mounted three coup attempts since Iraq was ousted from Kuwait by a US-led multinational force in late February, according to the sources who said the information came from Iraqi interlocutors.

The latest bid seems to have taken place shortly after the Muslim religious holiday of Al-Adha, in the last week of June, the sources said.

The army's Chief-of-Staff, General Hussein Rashid Al-Takriti, was sacked last month without any announcement of a new posting, indicating that he had been sanctioned.

General Abdel-Wahab Mohammad Hussein was also summarily dismissed from his post as Iraq's coordinator with the allied forces that were deployed in northern Iraq after an aborted anti-government revolt by the Kurds.

Kurdish sources said the General had been arrested on charges of "activities against the regime."

10 Russian MPs for Gorbachev's exit

MOSCOW, July 7: A group of 10 Russian Communists in the Russian republic's Parliament openly attacked Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev on Saturday, saying he should be removed from the party leadership, reports Reuter.

A President who cannot ensure observance of the constitution, who issues decrees none of which is implemented, cannot hold the post of party leader any longer, said a statement quoted by the official Soviet News Agency TASS.

The agency did not name the 10 signatories who also demanded the sacking of the leaders of the Russian republic's community party at a for the coming plenum, and a complete change in its strategy and tactics.

The leaderships silence on Gorbachev was taken as complete approval of his actions, their statement said.

In conditions of massive dissatisfaction among Communists with the actions or rather lack of action of the Soviet President, this silence can only be described as political suicide or the murder of the party.

The latest onslaught from the right on Gorbachev's reform programme which includes introducing a market economy came just over a week after a slightly more veiled attack by party chiefs of 11 Siberian cities and regions.

Conservative Communists accuse the Kremlin leader of giving in to the Soviet Union's western adversaries and trying to restore capitalism here.

Gorbachev's more liberal supporters also say he should resign the party leadership

BRIEFLY

Perez to hold talks on Cyprus: United Nations Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar arrived Saturday for talks with Turkish officials aimed at finding a solution to the division of Cyprus, Xinhua reports from Istanbul.

The UN Chief has been trying to work out a formula acceptable to both Greece and Turkey as well as the Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities.

Cyprus has been divided since 1974 when Turkey sent troops to the island following an abortive coup masterminded by the then Greek Junta. Turkish Cypriots proclaimed a "Turkish Republic of northern Cyprus" in 1983, recognised only by Turkey.

UN sponsored negotiations to end the division have failed to yield progress so far. The UN Chief would like to find a way to restart a peace process.

Non-Kuwaitis can take back savings: Foreigners dismissed from government jobs in Kuwait during the Iraqi occupation will be allowed to return to collect severance pay and bank savings, a newspaper said Saturday, reports AP from Kuwait City.

The Kuwaiti government, exiled for seven months after Iraq invaded last August, terminated the services of all non-Kuwaitis. It has said some may be rehired, but only if no Kuwaitis are available.

The decision could affect tens of thousands of workers, mostly Palestinians but also nationals from Yemen, Sudan, Jordan and Iraq.

About 100,000 foreigners worked as civil servants prior to the invasion, and news reports have said that up to 45,000 foreigners will be told they cannot return to work.

The Al-Gabas newspaper quoted unidentified sources as saying that former government employees could obtain visitors' visas to complete paperwork for severance pay.

Quake rolls through S. California: A moderate earthquake shook the downtown area and surrounding valleys Saturday, but no injuries or damage were reported, AP from Los Angeles says.

Scientists called it a strong after-shock to a deadly temblor in June.

The quake, measuring 4.0 on the Richter scale, hit at 3:54 p.m. local time (2354 GMT) and was centered in the San Gabriel Valley about 25 miles (14 kilometers) northeast of downtown Los Angeles, said Robert Pinn, spokesman for the seismology laboratory at the California Institute of Technology in Pasadena.

The quake was one of the strongest after-shocks yet to a June 18 quake measuring 5.8 on the Richter scale, Pinn said. That quake, centered near the community of Sierra Madre, killed two people and caused more than \$3 billion in damage.

Saddam criticises Western nations: Iraqi President Saddam Hussein once again strongly criticised Western nations on Saturday, accusing them of applying double standards in their demands for disarmament in the region, AFP from Nicosia says.

When they talk of peace and disarmament in the Middle East, in practice they apply that policy only to the Arabs and even only to Iraq, Hussein said. INA speech carried by the official Iraqi News Agency and monitored here.

Particularly singling out the United States, the Iraqi leader went on they talk about the importance of peace but at the same time they stress the need for Israel to become a strategic reserve for their arsenals and supply their most modern weapons to the Hebrew state.

Hussein made the speech to a visiting delegation of workers from Tunisia INA said.

41 expelled by Kuwaiti authorities: A group of 41 people expelled by the Kuwaiti authorities for allegedly collaborating with Iraqi forces during the occupation of the Emirate arrived in the southern Iraqi town of Safwan on Saturday, sources in the port city of Basra said, AFP reports from Baghdad.

The group, made up of 26 Iraqis, nine Sudanese, three Somalis, two Jordanians and one Palestinian, appeared "very tired and bore traces of torture," the sources said.

They said a second group was expected to arrive in Safwan on Tuesday.