

4,500 flee Bhutan to Nepal

KATHMANDU, Oct 29: More than 4,500 refugees of Nepali origin have fled the Himalayan kingdom of Bhutan to makeshift camps in Nepal, where nearly 50 have died of hunger and disease, Nepal's RSS national news agency said on Monday, reports Reuter.

Quoting health officials, the agency said the refugees were streaming into eastern Nepal where they had built settlements of thatched huts on the banks of the Kankal river near Jhapa town.

Tensions have risen between Nepal and Bhutan, both wedged between India and China and separated by a narrow strip of Indian territory, since Nepal's monarchy bowed to mass protest last year and surrendered its powers to a multi-party parliament.

Around the same time, vio-

lent protests erupted in southern Bhutan among Nepali-origin dissidents, who allege ethnic discrimination and demand a Western-style parliament in place of Bhutan's largely consultative National Assembly.

Relatively prosperous Bhutan, saying it feared its Buddhist Drukpa culture and welfare state facilities would be swamped by an uncontrolled influx of Hindus from impoverished Nepal, cracked down on illegal immigration about three years ago.

It also launched a programme to promote Bhutanese dress, Buddhist ethics and the Dzongkha national language.

Bhutan, about the size of Switzerland, says 28 per cent of its 600,000 population is of Nepali origin.



MADRID: Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev (C) accompanied by Spanish Premier Felipe Gonzales (R) waves to onlookers, arriving under tight security at Madrid airport late Monday. — AFP/UNB photo

20 insurgents surrender to Myanmar govt

YANGON, Oct 29: Twenty insurgents from seven armed organisations surrendered to Myanmar authorities between September 10 and 18, according to an official report today, says Xinhua.

They are from the Kachin Independence Army in northern Myanmar, the Kayin National Union in southeast Myanmar and some other armed groups in several command areas of the country.

They brought with them a group of assorted arms including automatic rifles and ammunition, the report said.

Bush signs appropriation bill of \$ 2 b

WASHINGTON, Oct 29: President George Bush Monday signed an appropriations bill which included two billion dollars for a project to build a U.S. space station, reports Reuter.

Bush, who signed the appropriation as part of a 81 billion dollar measure for this fiscal year, called the space station freedom "an essential step in meeting future space objectives."

The measure provides two billion dollars for the space station in fiscal 1992, which began October 1.

14,000 troops guard Madrid

MADRID, Oct 29: Jolted under its heavy security blanket by reports of violence tied to the conference it is hosting, Madrid put the final touches today to Middle East talks aiming to end 43 years of bloody conflict, reports AFP.

More than 14,000 security forces were deployed in this city of four million in readiness for the conference, which will for the first time see Arab countries, Israelis and Palestinians around the same negotiating table.

Roadblocks and police cordons were thrown around hotels, heavily armed and visibly tense a paramilitary Civil Guards conducted spot identity checks, sharpshooters were positioned on rooftops and sirens wailed as police vehicles cleared a path for arriving delegations in a massive security action condemned operation peace.

Two Israeli settlers were killed on the West Bank as they headed for a right-wing demonstration in Tel Aviv, Islamic Jihad said it killed a US diplomat and badly wounded an Egyptian in bomb attacks in the Turkish capital of Ankara, and Jordanian demonstrators fro and against

the talks fought in the streets of Amman.

Whether the conference will live up to the strong feelings it generated throughout the Middle East remained a moot point, with no signs of flexibility on either side.

Representatives here for both the Palestinians and their adversaries, Israeli settlers in the occupied territories, used the West Bank killings to justify their respective

peace," Madad said, referring to his lobbying mission on the sidelines of the talks, "but to protect the Jewish presence in Judea and Samaria," the biblical term for the West Bank.

Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev arrived Monday night for Wednesday's opening session, and his conference cohort, US President George Bush, was expected later Tuesday.

The two men will discuss

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Crowds hurl stones at Koirala

KATHMANDU, Oct 29: Communist-led crowds in Nepal hurled stones on Monday at Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala, the Himalayan kingdom's first freely-elected leader in three decades, witnesses said, reports Reuter.

The witnesses said in telephone interviews that Koirala, whose liberal Nepali Congress Party won a narrow victory over communist parties in May elections was unhurt.

Protests broke out when he visited his eastern Biratnagar constituency.

Police baton charged the protesters to drive them away, the witnesses said.

Police sources said a policeman was wounded and seven communist activists were briefly detained.

Demonstrators chanted slogans accusing Koirala of doing too little to help the 60 per cent of Nepal's 18 million people who lie below the poverty line.

Khmer Rouge leaders may be tried

CANBERRA, Oct 29: Pol Pot and other Khmer Rouge leaders who killed more than one million Cambodians during the 1970s could be tried for war crimes if they are apprehended, an Australian official said Tuesday, reports AP.

The Khmer Rouge, who ruled Cambodia from 1975 to 1978, signed a peace treaty last week with the current Phnom Penh government and three other guerrilla factions ending 13 years of civil war. Under the pact, the Khmer Rouge is to take part in a transition government.

Kabul protests 'Pak plot' to blow up dams

ISLAMABAD, Oct 29: The Afghan Foreign Ministry summoned Pakistan's top diplomat in Kabul on Monday to protest over what it said was a plot to blow up three of the country's hydroelectric dams, reports Reuter.

Kabul radio monitored in Islamabad, reported that the Afghan government had exact information about plans by the Pakistani army and intelligence services to destroy the dams.

Abida made Pak envoy to US

ISLAMABAD, Oct 29: Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's conservative government on Monday named a woman politician, Abida Hussain, as Pakistan's ambassador to the United States, reports Reuter.

Hussain's appointment came five months after Sharif made her the only woman member of his cabinet as advisor on population planning. Her husband, Fakhr Imam, is Education Minister.

Hussain, 45, is a member of the minority Shia Muslim sect. As a member of parliament she was one of the toughest opponents of former Premier Benazir Bhutto's administration.

She became Information Minister in a caretaker government after President Ishaq Khan sacked Bhutto in August last year on disputed charges of abuse of power.

But Hussain lost a subsequent election to the national assembly, the Lower House, and has been attacked by a fundamentalist group of the majority Sunni Muslim sect after sectarian clashes in her home town of Jhang in Punjab province.

VP Singh barred from entering Faizabad

LUCKNOW, Oct 29: The Janata Dal leader VP Singh, was prevented this morning from entering Faizabad district by the authorities, reports PTI.

The convoy of Singh was stopped near the inspection Bungalow at Ram Sanchi Ghat, about 80 km from here, police said.

Singh, followed by a host of National Front leaders, was proceeding to Faizabad en route to Ayodhya to participate in the dharna and Satyagrah to protest the demolition of some temples and acquisition of land near the disputed Ram janam-bhoomi Babri Masjid site.

The leaders included Mufti Mohd Sayeed, Prof Madhu Dandawate, Mrs Promila Dandawate, Chitta Basu (Forward Bloc), Samar Mukherjee, Subhashini Ali, Ram Sumer Yadav, Chaturannan Mishra, (all CPI-M leaders), KP Unnikrishanna and SC Sinha (Cong-S).

BRIEFLY

Belgian troops asked to leave Zaire: Embattled Zairean President Mobutu Sese Seko on Monday ordered Belgian troops still remaining in his country to withdraw as Belgium said it wanted the Organisation of African Unity to send a force to Zaire, reports AFP from Kinshasa.

There were also unconfirmed reports that Mobutu may make a new effort to reach agreement with the opposition, which reacted angrily to his sacking last week of opposition leader Etienne Tshisekedi from the post.

Speculation about a new pact followed a meeting between Mobutu and an opposition delegation, which included Tshisekedi.

The meeting was officially called to discuss the formation of a government by the unpopular opposition leader Bendian Mugul Diaka who Mobutu appointed to succeed Tshisekedi. The new government had not been appointed by late Monday.

An authoritative source said meanwhile that the mission of the Belgian troops in Zaire had now come to its end, and they were being asked to leave.

Rao to attend SAARC summit: Indian Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao, will attend the SAARC summit to be held in Colombo from November 7, an External Affairs Ministry spokesman said Monday, ending media speculations that his visit might not take place because of security reasons, reports PTI from Delhi.

The spokesman, however, said at a press briefing that Rao's itinerary was still being finalised.

He declined comments on press reports that Rao would be visiting Colombo for only half a day to sign the SAARC declaration on the concluding day—November 9.

The Indian High Commissioner to Sri Lanka, N N Jha, has returned to Colombo after consultations here on various aspects of the SAARC summit and Rao's visit to the island nation.

Two Bangladeshis die in Singapore: Two Bangladesh workers died of carbon monoxide poisoning when they tried to remove a water pump from a manhole, a local press report said Monday, reports AFP from Singapore.

Shamsuzzaman, 25, and Supen Kanti Dutta, 24 were supposed to draw water from the six-metre (20-feet) deep manhole by using a bucket so that the water could be then sprayed on to grass with a pump, the Straits Times said.

But the two men decided to lower the pump into the manhole so that they could draw the water up directly and went back into the manhole after they had finished to take the pump out, the newspaper said.

Italy urges US, UK to join UNESCO: Italian Foreign Minister Gianni De Michelis on Monday pressed the United States and Britain to rejoin the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), reports Reuter from Rome.

The big changes we're seeing in the world have given UNESCO a new role," he wrote in letters to US Secretary of State James Baker and British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd.

"It is of fundamental importance to have your two countries back in the organisation," he added.

The US was to have provided about a quarter of UNESCO's budget when it left in 1984, accusing the agency of inefficiency, financial mismanagement and political bias against Western countries. Britain and Singapore followed in 1985.

15 prisoners killed in fire: Fifteen inmates were killed and more than 30 seriously burned in a fire started by rebellious prisoners at a Rio De Janeiro prison on Monday, a police official said, reports Reuter from Brazil.

Rebellious inmates threw a homemade bomb into an open cellblock of the Ary Franco prison in an effort to spark an uprising minutes after prison authorities discovered a tunnel to have been used in a jailbreak, detective Abel Fernandes said in a telephone interview.

But the bomb ignited a fire that quickly spread throughout the gallery, trapping many inmates in their cells.

"There are at least 30 prisoners with very bad burns over more than two-thirds of their bodies. There may be more," said Fernandes, a detective in the district where the prison is located.

War leaves 22,000 Croats dead: The war in Croatia has left between 20,000 and 22,000 Croats dead since it broke out June, the Belgrade newspaper Politika said Monday, quoting sources close to the leadership of the federal army, reports AFP from Belgrade.

The estimate was much higher than others made to date of casualties in the war.

The paper which is close to the Serbian leadership, also quoted a federal army commander based at Knin, in the Croatian coastal region of Dalmatia, as saying that the Croatian forces in their attacks on army units are suffering enormous losses.

On Sunday, Croatian Foreign Minister Zvonimir Separovic said in a letter addressed to the European Community, that 5,000 people had died on the Croatian side.



KARACHI: Nobel Prize winner Mother Teresa (C) listens to a tale of alleged police torture, while in their custody, by opposition People's Party activists Shehla Raza (L) and Raheela Tiwana at a reception hosted by the People's Party in Karachi. — AFP/UNB photo

Muslims set up 200-member Parliament in Britain

LONDON, Oct 29: A pro-Iranian Muslim group said on Monday it was setting up its own parliament in Britain to promote the interests of 1.5 million Muslims in the country, reports Reuter.

The Muslim Institute launched the 200-seat assembly which is scheduled to meet for the first time on January 4.

Members will pass mandates which are expected to be obeyed on moral grounds by Muslims. A spokesman for the Muslim Institute said the mandates would not conflict with British law.

The Muslim parliament is not a law-making body. It will always function within the parameters of laws enacted by parliament at Westminster, the spokesman said.

But a statement by the group said, "Any British government that attempts to ride

Yeltsin bans nuclear test

MOSCOW, Oct 29: Russian President Boris Yeltsin issued a decree on Monday imposing a one-year moratorium on nuclear tests in the Russian Federation, Interfax news agency reported, says AFP.

The decision to ban nuclear tests on Russian territory affects the Novaya Zemlya underground testing site on an island in the Arct Sea, the non-official news agency said.

roughshod over us will find us an immovable object, as the Tory (conservative) government and the opposition discovered in the 'Satanic verses' affair.

Muslim institute director Kalim Sadiqui, elected as leader of the parliament at a meeting in London, last year endorsed a statement by Iran's former spiritual leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini that British author Salman Rushdie should be killed on the grounds that his book the 'Satanic verses' blasphemed Islam.

At the top of the parliament's agenda will be measures to provide courses on Islamic history, culture and religion for Muslim children at weekend colleges.

5,000 VHP supporters in Ayodhya for assault on Babri Masjid

AYODHYA, Oct 29: Police warned on Monday that they would arrest former prime minister Vishwanath Pratap Singh if he carries out a threat to lead a public protest against Hindu militants in the north Indian town of Ayodhya, reports Reuter.

The town is the scene of a bitter dispute between Muslims and Hindus over ownership of a shrine which has claimed at least 2,000 lives in rioting over the past two years.

Singh, himself a Hindu, plans to lead a sit-in demonstration against Hindu militants today. He says he is act-

ing in defence of India's constitutional ideal of secularism.

At the same time police chief Mohan Saraswat said, 5,000 supporters of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (World Hindu Organisation-VHP) had come to Ayodhya for a possible assault of the mosque.

But a senior police officer said, "If V. P. Singh is not arrested by the time he reaches here, we will take him into custody. He will not allow another confrontation to build."

The dispute over the shrine played a part in the fall of Singh's government, which lost a vote of confidence in

1990.

He had ordered a crackdown against Hindu militants resigning the shrine, a centuries-old Babri Masjid mosque which they say stands on the site of the birthplace of the god Rama.

Singh told a news conference in Lucknow, 200 km (125 miles) from Ayodhya, that he was determined to lead the sit-in despite the police warning.

VHP sources said they planned ceremonies to commemorate the anniversary of Singh's crackdown

Off the Record

'Get it at your doorstep from 4 p.m to 3 a.m'

PARIS: First pizzas, now condoms — a Paris company has started offering home deliveries of rubber contraceptives, reports Reuter.

"SOS-preservatifs" will deliver condoms to your doorstep from four in the afternoon to three in the morning.

Deliveryman Jean Braier said afternoon and evening callers were usually people who found it embarrassing to buy condoms in chemists and supermarkets or needed personal advice.

"From 10 pm onwards it's mostly people who have been to an night club or met someone at a cafe and have been caught in an emergency situation," he told French television.



NEW YORK: Former Philippine First Lady Imelda Marcos signs, at her home in New York, a document accepting the terms allowing her return to the Philippines. Philippine Consul General Rodolfo Arizala looks on. — AFP/UNB photo

Hillary in NZ banknotes

WELLINGTON, New Zealand: Mountaineer Sir Edmund Hillary says he's really honoured to have his face chosen to grace New Zealand's new five-dollar banknote, but he's non-plussed nonetheless, reports AP.

"It takes quite a bit to surprise me these days," said Hillary, who teamed with Sherpa Tenzing Norgay in becoming the first to ever conquer the world's highest summit, Mt. Everest, 38 years ago.

Now 72, Hillary said it was probably more desirable to have people on the banknotes who are dead. "I pointed out I was not quite in that condition yet."

"The only trouble I feel about it is that I will have to be respectable for the rest of my life."

And the fact he was chosen for the lowest denomination? "Oh, I don't mind in the slightest. I'm perfectly happy to be of any value."

Sharp-eared man in quest of quiet

LONDON: Even in the tranquillity of the Highlands Mr Kenneth Young has been driven out of nine homes in five years by noises in the night.

Mr Young, 68, from Prestwick, Manchester, was born with hyper-sensitive hearing.

The condition troubled him little in his younger years, but as he grew older he found that even almost imperceptible sounds would penetrate his slumber.

Now he feels lucky if he manages four hours' sleep a night between disturbances, despite needing, he claims, at least nine.

His decision to move from Tomintoul, Grampian, which spends much of the winter cut off by snow, to the Black Isle peninsula near Inverness was inspired by finding himself forced into the airing cupboard in his quest for peace and quiet.

"I took to the drying closet to try to block out the noises, but it was no use," said Mr Young, a retired philosophy lecturer.

"I've tried pretty well everything to solve the problem, all without success so far."

After just three months at Ellick Farm, Tomintoul, on his second try in the village, he has found new accommodation in the hamlet of Cullicudden on the south-east side of the Cromarty Firth.

He said: "There is very little traffic around Cullicudden even in daytime, so hopefully the nights will bring peace and allow me to end my travels."

Mr Young, who plugs his ears with wet cotton wool to keep daytime sounds to an acceptable level, has investigated the idea of a soundproof room, but says scientists have dismissed it as both costly and problematical.

He added: "I am sure this problem is not unique to me, and I would be interested now to hear from other sufferers. I think it needs someone to properly research it, and perhaps come up with some affordable solutions."

The condition is very disruptive of all one's activities. It would be no use if I still had a regular job with normal hours, because I would be off sick all the time.

"As it is, the cost is ruinous. I feel I can't buy a house, but even living in rented accommodation the business of moving so often, with advertising and legal fees, runs to a small fortune. It has cost me countless thousands over the years."

Mr Young, who did most of his lecturing in the United States, keeps a beside log of offending noises, and has recorded up to 15 noises a night that wake him.

Car horns and "yapping" dogs top the list. He can hear either from a mile away, he says, and trains from further still.

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ZAGREB: A Croatian police official shows the first sample of the new Croatian passport which will soon substitute the Yugoslav one. — AFP/UNB photo

No more proxy for wives in Algeria

ALGIERS: Wives won the right to vote in Algeria's first multiparty general election when the Constitutional Council on Monday threw out a law that would let husbands vote in their place, reports Reuter.

The council ruled that an article of the new electoral law allowing one married partner to vote for another did not conform with Algeria's Constitution, which bans sexual or religious discrimination.

The Algerian National Assembly, dominated by members of the former ruling National Liberation Front (FLN), had approved the article