115 killed as troops open

'Hundreds of Afghan guerillas killed'

ISLAMABAD, Nov 13: Afghan government forces defending the eastern city of Jalalabad have killed hundreds of guerillas in a major counter- offensive, Kabul radio said today. reports Reuter.

The radio, claiming victory, said government troops pushed back Mujahideen fighters who have been attacking the city intermittently for a month.

It said 22 field commanders were among hundreds of guerillas killed and many wounded

Seven Pakistani soldiers and 47 Arabs fighting with the Mujahideen were also killed in the fighting which destroyed

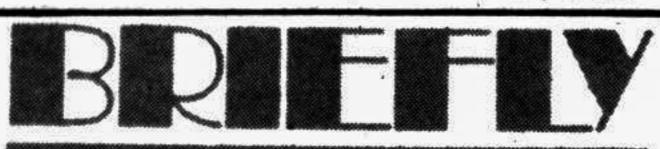
nine guerilla armoured vehicles and large quantities of

The battle took place as a

guerilla delegation was in Moscow for talks with senior Soviet officials on ways of finding a political end to Afghanistan's 13- year-old civil demonstrators in East Timor have killed dozens of people protesting Indonesia's 15-year

Jalalabad, which lies between Kabul and the Pakistani city of Peshawar, where guerilla leaders are based, was the scene of a humiliating Mujahideen defeat in 1989.

Guerilla forces, hoping then to capitalise on the final pullout of Soviet troops, discarded guerilla tactics for conventional warfare and were repulsed with heavy losses.



Japanese nurses staged a national strike Wednesday to press

for fewer nightshifts and more days off, reports Reuter from spokesman for the Japan Federation of Medical

Workers' Unions said 120,000 nurses and other medical workers stopped work for between 30 minutes and half a day. This was rare event in a country where there have been no industry-wide strikes since the early 1970s.

The federation wants to limit nightshifts to six per month, establish a five-day week and place the wage scale on a par with the national average.

Lightning kills 7 Indonesians : Lightning killed seven Indonesian farmers while they were sheltering from heavy rain in the northern coast of central Java, the Suara Karya daily said Wednesday, reports AFP from Jakarta.

The farmers, who had been tilling their fields at the village of Cipluk Sidokumpul, sought shelter in a nearby makeshift hut when heavy rains started to fall late on Sunday, the Suara Karya said,

A bolt of lightning struck the hut, killing all seven men, the daily quoted a witness as saying.

NATO setting-up links with Estonia:

The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation is establishing diplomatic links with the newly independent Baltic republic of Estonia, similar to those it has set up with the former WARSAW pact states in eastern Europe, NATO Said Tuesday, reports AFP Wednesday from Brunels.

Secretary-General Mafred Woerner expressed hope that the other two Baltic states Latvia and Lithuania, would also agree to establish the links.

He stressed however, that such links which have been set up with former WARSAW part states since the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 did not imply any formal security guaran-

Woerner said he hoped the new links would contribute to the stability of the whole region."

US to upgrade ties with Laos: President George Bush Tuesday said the United States would soon upgrade its relations with Laos to the ambassadorial

level, calling the move another example of constructive cooperation with the nations of southeast Asia, reports AFP Wednesday from New York. The conflict in Indo-China has preoccupied this nation for

years, finally we have entered into a period of healing and constructive cooperation, Bush said in remarks prepared for delivery to the Asia Society. We will work step by step to resolve the painful issues left

by this war, Bush said in the speech.

'Karala' a cure for diabetes

CALCUTTA, Nov 13 Research has been made to locate proven anti-diabetic compounds in commonly-cultivated mushrooms (agaricus bisporus) which contain traces of hypoglycaemic substances, according to the National Diabetic Association of India. reports PTI.

This traditional remedy, possessing a glucose-lowering effect as well as an insulinsparing effect, is being closely studied for application to diabettes. But it is doubtful whether normal or even excessive consumption of this mushroom would be adequately effective alone, although it could provide a useful dietary adjunct to other treatment, as association publication says.

It says that another kind of mushroom commonly known as lawyers wig (comporinus comatus), had already been found to have anti-diabetic quality as also the power to lower glucose concentrations in animals. 'Lawyers' wig' is,

however, not without draw backs due to its ability to accumulate heavy metals, such as lead, which can have a toxic effect if consumed in excess. But not all varieties of

mushrooms contain the remedial effects, as the kind, known as Amonita Phalloides to the biologists, has earned the notoriety of having fata hypogly caemic effect. In the fifties, a French physician described the benefits of this mushroom, but it was later found to cause irreversible liver damage.

On the common karala and cerasee vegetables, both of which have shown glucoselowering effects without stimulating insulin, the association publication says these are not substitutes for insulin. Karala has been reported to interact with sulphonylurea drugs and increase their hypogly caemic effect. This should be a cau tionary reminder that it may not be appropriate to mix traditional treatment with conventional drugs, it adds.

fire on Timor protesters JAKAKIA (Indonesia), Nov 13 : Indonesian troops who fired on pro-independence

rule of the tiny island, officials says, reports AP. . An Indonesian military statement said the protesters attacked the soldiers Tuesday and "the incident could not be avoided." But an American journalist who witnessed the shooting said the demonstrators were defenseless, carrying

only banners and crosses. The exact number of casualties in the East Timor capital of Dili was not known. East Timor had been under

Portuguese rule. East Timor's 700,000 peo-

NEW YORK, Nov 13:

President George Bush said on

Tuesday that Asia was just as

important as Europe to US se-

curity and prosperity and

pledged to build a closer

American partnership with

Bush also said he was

countries on the pacific rim,

tions with Laos and could for

see normal relations with one

time enemy Vietnam in the

that we will upgrade our rela-

tions with Laos and that we

soon will place an ambassador

in Vientiane," he said in a

speech to the Asia society, a

private group devoted to im-

tions with Vietnam as the logi-

cal conclusion of a step-by-step

process that begins by resolv-

ing the problems in Cambodia

and by addressing thoroughly.

openly and conclusively the

status of American POW-MIAs.

the countries of Indochina

represent the first thaw since

the Vietnam war, which raged

from the early 1960s, to the

height involved more than

500,000 US troops, cost over

50,000 American lives, divided

the country and ended in the

first US military defeat in his-

tory. The war spilled over the

boundaries of Vietnam to Laos

and Cambodia.

That conflict, which at its

The US overtures towards

"We envision normal rela-

proving ties with Asia.

the President said.

"Today I am announcing

reports Reuter.

near future.

ple are mostly Roman Catholic, whereas Indonesia is Muslim. Indonesian troops for years have fought Fretilin, a small leftist group of native Timorese seeking independence for East Timor.

In Portugal, a rebel spokesman, Jose Ramos Horta, said reports from witnesses indicated about 60 people were killed Tuesday in the

Amy Goodman, an American reporter for the Pacifica Radio network, said the crowd gathered at a church for a mass in memorial to a man who had been killed by police while taking refuge in the church.

The crowd grew to several thousands brought out a pro-

MOSCOW, Soviet President Mihail Gorbachev with a Russian publisher listens to reporters

questions during a press conference held to launch his book 'Putsch' (The Coup). Gorbachev

confirmed that he had been warned before hand about the coup by US President George

Asia as important as Europe

to US security, says Bush

"The conflict in Indochina

has preoccupied this nation for

years," Bush said. "Finally, we

have entered into a period of

healing and constructive coop-

eration. We will work step by

step to resolve the painful is-

tative arrived in Cambodia on

Monday as part of a United

Nations-sponsored process to

end that country's long civil

war, ending 16 years of es-

Washington and Phnom Penh

trangement between

to Hanoi to try to resolve the

US officials are also talking

UNITED NATIONS, Nov 13:

Zimbabwe's Finance Minister

Bernard Chidzero took the

lead in an unofficial poll on

Tuesday for UN Secretary-

General, closely followed by

Egyptian Deputy Prime

Minister Boutros Ghali, reports

permanent security council

members, according to figures

obtained from council sources.

cent series of so-called 'straw

polls to register not only post

tive votes, negative votes and

abstentions, but also to dis-

close whether any of the nega

tive votes were cast by perma-

This was the first in a re-

Both escaped any veto by

Reuter.

A US diplomatic represen-

sues left by that war."

cession to the cemetery where the man is buried, she told The Associated Press in a telephone interview from a hospital in Guam, where she had been treated for injuries suf-

fered in the incident. The military statement said demonstrators turned violent because of the postponement of a fact-finding visit by Portuguese legislators.

Ms. Goodman, interviewed from New York, said the soldiers screamed Politics, Politics," knocked her to the ground and started beating her with rifle butt.

Reuter from United Nations adds: UN Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar on Tuesday deplored the loss of innocent lives reported in East

-AFP/UNB photo

status of Americans lost in the

Vietnam war and whose fate is

Bush's speech on the im-

portance of close ties with Asia

came just one week after he

postponed a 10-day trip to the

region scheduled for later this

The official explanation was

his need to stay atop congres

sional action, but political jit-

ters caused by a slack US

economy that has caused Bush

to skid in the polls on the eve

of his re-election drive con-

tributed to the postponement.

nent council members - equiv-

in favour, one against and

received 10 positive votes, two

negative votes and three ab-

among eight Africans in a field

of 14 official candidates to

succeed Secretary- General

Javier Perez de Cuellar when

he retires at the end of this

Chidzero and Ghali are

Chidzero obtained 11 votes

still uncertain.

month.

Straw poll for top UN job

Zimbabwean Finance

Minister takes lead

alent vetoes.

ganisation.

Timor, a spokeswoman said.

She did not spell out what reports were referred to, but separatist rebels said up to 100 people were killed or wounded when Indonesian soldiers opened fire on Tuesday on a funeral procession of youths protesting against Jakarta's rule over the Former Portuguese colony, annexed by Indonesia in 1976.

The UN spokeswoman said : "The Secretary-General has seen the press reports regarding events in East Timor and he deplores the loss of innocent lives."

He hoped effective measures would be taken to avoid any recurrence, the spokeswoman added.

Palestinians seek control Gaza Strip

JERUSALEM, Nov 13: Palestinian negotiators say they want broad control over the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip with only a restricted Israeli military presence during a five-year period ending in full independence, reports Reuter.

"Israeli will retain its military occupation in the form of military presence in specific military and strategic areas," said Ghassan Al-Khatib, a strategist on the Palestinian

Palestinian negotiations, back from Middle East peace in Madrid, say talks Palestinian control of land and legislation during the five-year interim period is at the heart of their negotiating strategy.

the limited self-rule offer from hardline Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir who says he does not intend to withdraw from any land.

been agree for direct Israeli Palestinian negotiations, talks are expected to start during the next month.

"We are working on steps that would ensure the smooth running of this process, creating the conditions that would lead to transitional arrangements that would support the creation of independent Palestinian Institutions and a Palestinian infrastructure," said Hanan Ashrawi, spokewoman for the

Palestinian negotiating team. During eight months of diplomacy, US Secretary of State James baker coaxed Israelis and Palestinians to negotiate a two-stage settlement, starting with five years of local self-rule for 1.75 million Palestinians in the occupied territories.

LTTE leader commits suicide

ranking LTTE leaders three abstentions, while Ghali Santhan Alias Pertya Santhan committed suicide by swallowing cyanide when officials of the Special Investigating Team (SIT) probing the Rajiv Gandhi assassination case and the Tamil Nadu police raided his hide out in the early hours today in the suburbs of

year after two five-year-terms. African countries insist it is time a candidate from their continent head the world ormorning.

over W. Bank,

peace negotiating team.

"But we must have control of the land, including crossing points (from Jordan and Egypt), " he said.

Their position contrast with

Although a venue has not

MADRAS, Nov 13: A high Thiruchirapplli, reports PTI.

Officials sources told PTI here that SIT and police officials blasted their way through to a house in Naviapautt area in Thiruchirapplli Wednesday

Off the Record

Sale of globes sends prices into orbit

LONDON: AUCTIONEERS Christie's set a world record price of £1,023,000 for the sale of two globes.

The pair, a terrestrial globe (of the earth) an celestial globe (of the heavens) are thought to have been made in the workshop of Gerard Mercator, the cartographer who gave his name to the Mercator projection seen in most atlases today.

The 16th century Renaissance gilt metal globes made for the Turkish Sultan Murad III, grandson Suleiman Magnificent, shot rapidly past the £400,000/ £600,000 estimate before being bought by an unnamed private European collector for five times the previous record price.

auction by a European



The globes were sent for

family who had had them for four generations.

The delicately engraved spheres, approximately one foot in diameter, showed the continents peopled with animals and men - Africa had a dragon, a rhino and King Prester John, the legendary Christian ruler, sitting on a throne.

They were inscribed with Murad's personal Tughra (cipher) and dated 1597. However, the Sultan's observatory, for which the globes

were probably intended, was closed down at the end of the same year. After the sale, Mr Tom Lamb, a Christie's specialist, said that the globes had been difficult to estimate as no comparable object had appeared before on the market.

They were the only known surviving instruments from Mercator's workshop.

Gorby ignored Bush's warning

MOSCOW: President Mikhail S Gorbachev said Tuesday he had ignored a warning from President Bush that a coup was brewing in the Soviet Union, reports AP. Gorbachev told reporters at a news conference unveiling

his book about the coup that Bush telephoned him to issue the warning. He did not say when the call took place, but implied it was well before the Aug 18-21 putsch. Gorbachev also said he believed some of the conspirators

had bugged a critical conversation he had with trusted advisers shortly before the coup. They learned from the wiretap that he was planning major personnel changes, and their fear of losing their jobs prompted them to act when they did, he Gorbachev did not specify who did the bugging. But the

likely suspects would include former KGB Chairman Vladimir Kryuchkov and Valery Boldi, the President's former chief of staff, both of whom are facing treason charges for their role in the abortive, hard-line coup.

Malaysian living with 150 poisonous snakes

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysian snake charmer Ibrahim Kassim has moved into a glass enclosure in a shopping center with 150 poisonous snakes, trying to break his own record by living with them for more than 40 days, reports AP. His son, Sultan Ibrahim 16, said Tuesday his family is wor-

ried because senior Ibrahim, 43, has been bitten three times

by the snakes in his six days so far in the enclosure in Penang, 400 kilometers (250 miles) north of Kuala Lumpur. He is reported armed with his own secret device for

combatting snake Venom, an object that looks like a piece of More than 5,000 people have paid one or two ringgit (dlrs

0.37 or 0.74) to watch Ibrahim in his attempt to break his record. The money is to go for the children's associations in Penang.

Ibrahim told reporters he was sorry about putting his family through the worry, and he hoped his effort would not

Riyadh to buy \$3b US Patriot missiles down Iraqi Scud missiles in WASHINGTON, Nov 13

The Bush administration has told the US Congress it plans to sell 14 batteries of Patriot anti-aircraft missiles made by Raytheon Co to Saudi Arabia for an estimated three billion dollars, US defence officials said on Tuesday, reports Reuter.

The officials, who asked not to be identified, said formal notification of the plan was expected to go to Congress in early December after which lawmakers would have 30 days to raise any objections. The officials said they did

not expect Congress to disapprove the sale of such defensive equipment, which would include as many as 700 Patriots. The missiles were used with success in shooting

the Gulf War. Each of the 14 batteries would include eight launchers.

The officials said administration representatives discussed the sale informally last week with congressional lead-

It comes at a time when Washington is pushing for peace in the Gulf and Middle East and when members of Congress are pressing for a slowdown in the military buildup in the volatile region.

The Pentagon recently sent two US Patriot batteries from Europe to Saudi Arabia, but Defence officials said on Tuesday those would be withdrawn after the Saudis began setting up their own batteries.

History's greatest political survivor Sihanouk returns home today

PHNOM PENH, Cambodía, Nov 13: One of modern history's greatest political survivors - Prince Norodom Sthanouk- returns from exfle to his ear-shattered homeland Thursday faced with perhaps the most difficult task of his stranger-than-fiction life, re-

ports AP. For half a century, the Prince has captured center stage in Cambodia: asking, independence hero, head of state, guerrilla chief and international diplomat par excel-

lence. Now he returns to the fairytale Royal Palace where as a 19-year-old he was enthroned by French colonials who thought he would prove a playboy puppet whose strings they could eastly pull.

From his regained seat of power, the 69-year-old Prince must try to quell fierce hatred among the country's four opposing factions and attract enough international good will and hard cash to rebuild a land bled dry by two decades of

Analysts say Sthanouk's role as head of an interim Supreme National Council will be pivotal in the next 18 months as UN peacekeepers attempt to disarm more than 150,000 soldiers and the country strives

for democratic elections. "He is probably the only Cambodian universally respected, universally recognized as the only Cambodian who can bring this nation together," Charles H. Twining, the new US envoy in Phnom

Penh, said in an interview. To Sthanouk's advantage are a charismatic personality, widespread domestic popularity and finely honed skills which awed even seasoned diplomats as they watched him cajole, badger and outmaneu-

Perhaps his strongest card is solid backing from the international community, including the United States, China and Soviet Union. These and other nations brokered the peace accord signed last



BELJING: Cambodian Prince Nordom Sihanouk and his Italian-born wife Monique wave from their limousine after welcoming Prime Minister Hun Sen at the Beijing airport. Hun Sen will escort the former monarch back to Phnom Penh today. -AFP/UNB photo

month that seeks to end Cambodia's 13-year civil war and allowed Sthanouk's return.

Over the years the eccentric Prince - who brings his fluffy dog Micky to the conference table-has attracted admires. And even among his most acerbic critics there is acknowledgment that he is the best choice among a Cambodian leadership line-up which ranges from ineffectual has-beens to mass murderers.

Often in the past, Sthanouk had been counted down and out-only to bounce back.

To the French, young Sihanouk seemed made o malleable stuff.

Indeed, while war enflamed neighbouring Vietnam and Laos, Sthanouk managed to steer Cambodia along a per-flous but peaceful course. He allowed Vietnamese communists to use Cambodian border areas as sanctuaries and looked the other way when American planes bombed them.

right or to the left is my concern because I work only in the interests of may own country," he said, explaining before his 1970 overthrew why he sided alternately with the communists and the West.

"Whether I swing to the

Internally, he tried to root out opponents, including communists who would later be known as the Khmer Rouge. He also drew bitter criticism from the educated urban class, fed up with his one-man show and the rampant corruption of his wife Princess Monique and others of the inner circle.

This anti-Sihanouk sentiment, too, remains, internal Khmer Rouge documents have described Sihanouk as "90 per cent rancid, debauched" while non-communists in Phnom Penh today fear the old corruption will return on the prince's coattails.

The anti-Sihanoukists, encouraged by the United States, staged a coup in 1970, sparking a brutal, five-year war be-

tween communist-led rebels and the US -backed government of Gen Lon No 1. From his extle in Beijing Sthanouk served as the nomi-

nal head of a resistance front dominated by the Khmer Rouge. Many in Cambodia sided with Khmer Rouge because of their loyalty to Sthanouk, who in the eyes of some historians thus shares responsibility for the destruction of his country.

"The Khmer Rouge do not like me at all, and I know that, Ooh, la, la.... It is clear to me. When they no longer need me they will spit me out like a cherry pit, " he said in a 1973 interview. His predictions proved true

Around htm, the Khmer Rouge was trying to reshape society by first destroying it. Their victims - hundreds of thousands of them - lie scattered as bones throughout Cambodia and include more than a dozen of Sihanouk's own children and grandchildren.