

Moscow protesters call for return to communism

MOSCOW, Jan 20: Up to a thousand communist sympathisers protested outside the Mausoleum of Vladimir Lenin in Moscow on Sunday to mark the 68th anniversary of the revolutionary leader's death, reports Reuters.

The protesters denounced Russian President Boris Yeltsin and called for a return to communism and to the United Soviet State that collapsed last month after seven decades. "Hands off Lenin," read one banner, in a reference to the expected removal of the embalmed corpse from its place of honour on Red Square.

Army mutiny in Congo, Prime Minister removed

BRAZZAVILLE, Jan 20: Congolese military authorities announced today that they had removed the country's interim Prime Minister from office and imposed a curfew in the capital, reports AFP.

In a rebellion which began on Wednesday, army units have also surrounded the army chief of staff headquarters and taken over Brazzaville airport, although one occasion they have not paralysed everyday activity.

Blast kills 3 Vietnamese policemen

HANOI, Jan 20: Three Vietnamese policemen died in Ho Chi Minh City when firecrackers confiscated from illegal producers and traders blew up the official Saigon Newsreader bulletin said today, reports Reuters.

It said the firecrackers stored at a police station exploded last Thursday while three policemen were asleep. The blast killed one policeman and his two colleagues from burns in hospital.

New regime heads toward dictatorship: FIS Political activities to be banned in Algeria

ALGIERS, Jan 20: As the army-backed committee which has taken power in Algeria prepared to restrict the activities of political parties, the Muslim group which is the main target of the measures said the new regime was headed towards dictatorship, reports AFP.

Abdelkader Hashani, whose Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) is believed to face a possible ban under the new measures, told a meeting of elected Islamic officials here on Sunday that the regime which took power after the departure of President Chadli Bendjedid contained "the seeds of dictatorship."

The new regime "is headed for certain death," Hashani said. "The Islamic project will be carried out because the Algerian people want a change," the fundamentalist leader said.

He went on to reiterate earlier accusations that hundreds of FIS activists have been arrested since the new authorities took power on January 11, forcing President Chadli to step down.



BERLIN: German President of Parliament, Rita Suessmuth, Interior Minister Rudolf Seiters (C) and H Galinski, Director of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, look at photographs showing the dormitories of the prisoners in a concentration camp in the exhibition rooms of the "House of the Wannsee Conference" that opened January 19. Fifty years ago the Nazis decided how to organise the "Final Solution" — the extermination of about 11 million European Jews, during conference in this house in Berlin.

Arafat in Delhi to receive Indira Gandhi Award Indian participation in ME peace talks sought

NEW DELHI, Jan 20: Palestine Liberation Organization leader Yasser Arafat arrived in India on Monday to accept the first Indira Gandhi International Award for Justice and Harmony, reports AP.

Arafat declined to elaborate on what sort of role India might play in the peace talks but said he would discuss the question with Indian leaders during his three-day visit to New Delhi.

The PLO leader, dressed in his customary dark green batic fatigues and black-and-white checkered headdress, has long had cordial ties with Indian leaders. India was one of the first non-Arab nations to recognize Arafat as the president of Palestine and accord the PLO office here the status of an embassy.

Arafat was accorded the 21-gun salute reserved for heads of state as he arrived at the presidential palace and embraced Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao and President Ramaswamy Venkataraman.

In a brief exchange with reporters after the ceremony, he said he would welcome Indian participation in the Arab-Israeli peace talks.

Arafat said the Palestinian role in the next round of talks, scheduled for January 28-30 in Moscow, would be determined after a meeting of Arab foreign ministers.

ASEAN to okay US base in Singapore with caution

SINGAPORE, Jan 20: Southeast Asian leaders will accept Singapore's plan to grant the United States greater access to military facilities at next week's summit here, but not without a few notes of caution, analysts said today, reports Reuters.

Some members of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) have objected in principle to a strong direct US military presence in the region, citing their 20-year-old ideal of making ASEAN a neutral zone.

Investment was their highest priority. "Both Indonesia and Malaysia have experienced rapid economic growth and it has helped their regimes to stay in power," Acharya said.

ASEAN members agreed in 1971 on a Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality (ZOPFAN), pledging to keep southeast Asia "free from any form or manner of interference by outside powers."

Off the Record

Juice ignites violence

WASHINGTON: The film "Juice," an urban drama about four black Harlem youths, has premiered with violence in eight states, leaving one teenage girl dead and four other people wounded, reports AFP.

Deadly seduction

BEIJING: A Chinese woman in the northern city of Harbin used sex to lure at least four men to her apartment where her husband murdered them and dismembered their corpses, an official newspaper said, reports Reuters.

Dangerous dog nut

NEW DELHI: A dog lover, set to go to a dog show, killed his wife after she disapproved of his fondness for the canines, a newspaper said Monday, reports AP.

ROK wants to install hot-line with DPRK

SEOUL, Jan 20: South Korea will seek agreement with rival North Korea to install a military hot-line and open liaison offices in this year's first half under a reconciliation accord signed in December, officials said Monday, reports AP.

Snowstorms render 13,000 homeless in Mexico

MEXICO CITY, Jan 20: At least 50 people have died in heavy rains and snowstorms in northern Mexico which have left 13,000 people homeless, press reports said Sunday, says AFP.

Zaire suspends confce on democracy

KISHASA, Jan 20: The Zairean government said late Sunday that it was suspending "until further notice" the proceedings of a national conference set up to chart a democratic future for the country, reports AFP.

China dumping N-waste in Tibet, says Dalai Lama

NEW DELHI, Jan 20: The Dalai Lama said Sunday that China is dumping nuclear waste in Tibet, where he said information indicated that Beijing had set up a nuclear weapons factory, the Press Trust of India (PTI) reported, says AFP.

Four killed in S African violence

PRETORIA, Jan 20: Four people were killed and at least 14 people were injured in political violence in nine South African black townships overnight, police said, reports AFP.

BRIEFLY

Clashes claim 5 Croatian troops: Five Croatian soldiers died and two were injured, one seriously, on Sunday in the most serious breach to date of a 16-day old ceasefire, the Croatian news agency Hina said, reports AFP from Zagreb.

The agency, quoting local military officials, said the casualties came in heavy fighting officials, said the casualties came in heavy fighting between Croatian forces and an "enemy commando group" near the town of Gospic, some 200 kilometres south of Zagreb.

It said some 30 members of the pro-Serbian forces had used anti-tank and other infantry weapons in a surprise attack on Croatian forces at around midday. The attack was later repelled.

The Croatian forces had reported two other attacks during the afternoon, but had not reported.

UN soldier stabbed in Lebanon: A Fijian soldier serving with a United Nations peacekeeping force in South Lebanon was stabbed and wounded on Sunday, reports Reuters from Tyre, Lebanon.

The soldier was manning a checkpoint of the UN Interim Forces in South Lebanon (UNIFIL) near the village of Aitheet when a man stabbed him and fled in a red car, security sources said.

A UN helicopter flew the Fijian, who was not identified, to hospital where doctors said he was in a stable condition.

The 5,800-strong UNIFIL force has been stationed in South Lebanon since 1978.

US professor killed in Jerusalem: A US professor of Archaeology at Bir Zeit, a Palestinian university on the Israeli-occupied West Bank, was shot dead late Sunday north of Jerusalem, police said, AFP reports from Jerusalem.

They identified the victim as Albert Gluck and said he was shot at point-blank range by a masked assailant near the locality of Ram as he got out of his car parked near the home of a woman who worked as his assistant.

Police launched an inquiry into the killing but said the motives were not clear.

G M Syed supporters call strike: The followers of an ageing secessionist Pakistani politician on Sunday called for a protest strike in their home province of Sindh on Wednesday after authorities put him under house arrest, Reuters reports from Hyderabad.

Ghulam Murtaza Syed was put under arrest at his home in the provincial capital Karachi on Saturday night, the day after he was released from hospital to celebrate his 89th birthday, police said on Sunday.