

Maoist rebels kill 33 upper caste Hindus in Bihar

NEW DELHI, Feb 13: Maoist extremists killed 33 upper caste Hindus in India's Northern Bihar state in apparent retaliation for the killing of 10 "untouchables" two months ago, Indian News Agencies reported today, says Reuter.

The Press Trust of India said about 1,000 extremists of the Maoist Communist center attacked Bara village in Bihar's Gaya district late on Wednesday.

The agency said the Maoists swooped on the village, set 15 houses on fire, rounded up men as they fled and took them to a nearby canal where they were shot or hacked to death.

It said an unknown number of Maoists were killed by the police in a clash following the massacre.

The United News of India (UNI) quoted senior Bihar policeman D N Sahay as saying 33 people were killed.

UNI quoted senior policeman Arun Chaudhury as saying all the victims were upper caste Hindus and the massacre appeared to be revenge for the killing of 10 Harijans "untouchables".

At the bottom of the Hindu caste hierarchy, in Gaya district on December 23, Chaudhury blamed the Sevaram Liberation Front, described by UNI as a private army of landlords, for those killings.

JKLF to resume march on Indian-held Kashmir soon

MUZAFFARAHAD, Feb 13: The Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) said today they had freed their leader from military arrest and would resume their march on Indian-held Kashmir "as soon as possible," reports AFP.

Up to 17 people died according to Pakistani press reports and more than 100 were injured on Wednesday as thousands of marchers clashed with security forces who blocked their march near Chinari. Eight kilometres (five miles) from the border between the Pakistan and Indian-held parts of Kashmir.

The official death toll remains at seven, with 22 people seriously injured. The JKLF, campaign for an independent Kashmir, said Wednesday that their leader Amanullah Khan and 150 other marchers had been arrested by Pakistani security forces, a claim the Pakistani authorities denied.

JKLF spokesman Mohammed Iqbal said Khan's supporters had "snatched" him from the military, but did not elaborate.

Bad weather was delaying the march but it would resume from Chinari as soon as possible, he said, denying that any negotiations were taking place with the authorities.

In New Delhi the Indian army, closely monitoring Pakistani troops holding back the Muslim militants from entering Indian-held Kashmir, said Thursday no one had yet succeeded in crossing the border.

An Indian army spokesman said at 11.00 a.m. (0530 GMT) that latest reports received here indicated that JKLF militants had been checked from storming the line of control.

"The Pakistanis are keeping a tight and close vigil and are not allowing anyone to come in to Indian-held Kashmir," the official said from the Defence Ministry complex.

"Not a single chap has so far crossed," he said, but added that he could not say if the JKLF activists were still trying to break through the line dividing the Indian and Pakistani sides of partitioned Kashmir.

Military sources said the Defence Ministry was keeping round-the-clock vigil on the situation, and army officers were in contact with their counterparts on the other side of the line of control.

BRIEFLY

Darwin's birthday celebrated: Dozens of biology students celebrated the birthday of Charles Darwin on Wednesday with a bowl of "primordial punch" and a visit from the Missing Link. AP reports from Chicago.

"If it wasn't for Darwin, we wouldn't be studying what we do," said Chris Felitz, 30, a biology graduate student studying ecology and evolution, and one of the party's organizers.

"He had a huge influence, not only on science, but on society as well," Felitz said.

More than 50 students at the University of Illinois at Chicago paid homage to the British naturalist, born Feb 12, 1809, the same day and year as another bearded notable — Abraham Lincoln.

The party was designed not only to recall the contributions of Darwin, whose 1859 book, "On The Origin of Species by means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favored Races in the Struggle for Life," was the first to contain detailed factual support for the evolution theory of creation.

It also had a serious purpose — to lure undergraduate students into the field.

"It's mainly for the undergrads it's an educational thing. We tell them who Darwin was, his influence, and we might get a few interested," Felitz said.

Storm kills 6 in California: Southern California's worst storm of this century pounded the area for a fourth straight day on Wednesday, killing six people and making driving conditions so bad millions were warned to stay home. Reuter reports from Los Angeles.

Four other people were missing and feared dead in a storm Meteorologists said it surpassed the two previous worst 20th century storms — those of 1938 and 1983 — both in rainfall and fatalities.

More than 10 inches (25 cm) of rain have fallen in two days, setting off floods and landslides that closed highways, creating a "potentially deadly situation" for motorists, the California highway patrol said.

Earthquake hits Alaska: Strong earthquakes struck in the Aleutian Islands south of Alaska on Wednesday and in the Vanuatu Islands in the South Pacific, but caused little damage and no injuries, officials said.

The South Pacific quake measured 7 on the Richter scale and was centred 200 miles (320 kilometers) northwest of Port Vila, Vanuatu, and 1,160 miles (1,886 kilometers) northeast of Brisbane, Australia, according to the US Geological Survey in Washington. It struck at 8:20 pm EST (0120 GMT Thursday).

USGS spokeswoman Rebecca Phibbs said the earthquake-prone area is sparsely populated, and no damage or injuries were reported.

In a populated area, magnitude 7 would rank as a major earthquake, capable of wide-spread damage.

The Alaska quake Wednesday evening measured 5.9 on the Richter scale and was centred about 50 miles south of Dutch Harbor, said geophysicist Guy Urban of the Alaska Tsunami Warning Center in Palmer.

Swedish MPs condemn violence: Members of the Swedish government and parliament took part in a torchlight procession against violence and racism on Wednesday following a series of attacks on immigrants, reports Reuter from Sweden.

They marched from parliament in Stockholm to a church where a service, attended by King Carl Gustaf XVI and Queen Silvia, was held.

Immigrants from Latin America, Africa and the Mediterranean have been shot and wounded in six attacks since January 22.

Police suspect the attacks are probably the work of one or more right-wing extremists, but have made no arrests.

NASA administrator resigns: Richard Truly, who guided the National Aeronautics and Space Administration in its comeback from the Challenger disaster, has submitted his resignation to President Bush, administration sources said Wednesday. AP reports from Washington.

The reason was not known.

Truly, an astronaut who flew two space shuttle voyages, became head of the shuttle programme shortly after the 1986 explosion of the Challenger, in which seven astronauts died.

He took over as administrator of the agency in July 1989.

Truly, a Navy rear admiral was commanding the Naval Space Command when NASA asked him to return to the agency.

Under his direction, shuttles began flying again in 1988 after being grounded for more than two years. Truly was named head of the agency by President Reagan upon the resignation of the late James Fletcher.

South Korea asks North to resolve N-issues

SEOUL, South Korea, Feb 13: Seoul's prime minister told North Korea Thursday that it must make progress on resolving nuclear issues before summit talks can be held, reports AP.

Chung Won-Shik's remarks were seen as an effort to pressure the North to agree to early nuclear inspections. They also were aimed at diffusing criticism in South Korea that the government is pushing for a summit meeting without resolving nuclear matters first.

North Korea's suspected nuclear weapons development has alarmed major powers and is expected to top the agenda at a meeting next week between the prime ministers of the rival Koreas. The South is expected to renew demands that the North allow early inspections of its nuclear facilities.

South Korea "has no intention of hurriedly pushing for summit talks with the North before concrete and visible results are made in inter-Korean relations," Chung told a Cabinet meeting.

North Korea, one of the last hard-line communist states, signed a nuclear safeguards accord two weeks ago with the International Atomic Energy Agency but has yet to take actions to allow mandatory nuclear inspections.

Under a separate agreement signed with South Korea in December, the North also pledged to accept reciprocal inspections of suspected nuclear weapons sites with the South.

Last week the North rejected the South's call for early inter-Korean inspections, leading to speculation that it might be stalling for time to further develop its alleged weapons programme.



CHAKOTI: Amanullah Khan, chairman of the JKLF addresses militants whilst having a trophy helmet, captured from a policeman during clashes with paramilitary forces, placed on his head. Cashes occurred as police tried to prevent militants from removing barriers blocking their way to the line of control dividing Pak and India held Kashmir. — photo AFP/UNB

Sharif's statement positive: Pawar

CALCUTTA, Feb 13: The Defence Minister, Sharad Pawar Thursday described as "positive one" the Pakistani Prime Minister, Nawaz Sharif's statement that they had no interest in going into fourth war with India adding Sharif should "honour it" to keep the Indo-Pak relation out of tension, reports PTI.

Talking to newsmen after his first visit to the eastern command headquarters here, Pawar referred to the Pakistani Prime Minister's commitment that the year 1992 would be observed as the year of reconciliation for strengthening the Indo-Pak relationship.

"But non-adherence to his commitment and certain changes in decision raised tension between the two countries. It is good that Sharif has realised his mistake and committed further to keep his words Pawar said.

Replying to a question Pawar ensured that the present situation across the line of control in Indo-Pak border was normal.

ASEAN tries to thwart donors' efforts to link aid with human rights

JAKARTA, Feb 13: Indonesian President Suharto hit out today at countries which attempted to impose their values on other countries, claiming it was a violation of human rights, reports AFP.

He made his comments at the palace here when receiving the credentials of new Dutch Ambassador, Robert Dudley Van Roijen.

The Netherlands has threatened to cut aid to Jakarta after Indonesian troops shot dead 50 people at a memorial ceremony in Dili, east Timor, in November. Other sources said the death toll probably topped 100.

Indonesia and other member states of the Association of South East Asian Nations

(ASEAN)—Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand — have been trying to thwart efforts by their main western donors and trading partners to link aid and trade with human rights issues.

Suharto said: "There is not a single nation obliged to apply values of life which it cannot understand and are incompatible with its own fundamental values. If they are imposed, it would be equal to negating human rights itself and the fundamental rights of a sovereign state."

He said Indonesia recognized that there were fundamental rights which were universal in nature and cited human rights, democracy and freedom.

However, he said those values, if they originated from abroad, would only be able to grow healthily in another country if they incorporated local values.

"In this world which is increasingly becoming unified, the importance of the meaning of mutual understanding and mutual respect between countries is increasingly felt," Suharto said.

Suharto said Indonesia was determined to develop itself by its own means. "But we also are aware of the importance of co-operation and aid from other countries in accelerating the development, without sacrificing the fundamental principles of a sovereign country."

The President last month unveiled a draft state budget

for the upcoming fiscal year which begins in April in which the rule of foreign aid in development was drastically reduced. Instead Indonesia will rely more on internal revenues generated from tax and exports.

The future of the world was the responsibility of all nations. One country or group of nations, no matter how powerful, would not be able to govern the world alone, Suharto said.

"A world regulated by a single country or group of countries only, would give rise to injustice which will itself turn into a seed for global unrest," said Suharto, leader of the world's fourth most populous nation with more than 150 million inhabitants.



MOSCOW: A Moscowite stands on a street corner trying to sell cheese in central Moscow as a second man begs money by playing the accordion. Price increases of food and other basic goods have made the most people struggle to make ends meet. — photo AFP/UNB

UN to send peace-keepers to ensure free polls in Cambodia

NEW YORK, Feb 13: The United Nations hopes to send 15,000 peace-keeping troops and 6,000 civilian staff to Cambodia to ensure free and fair elections in that country in 1993, diplomatic sources said Wednesday, reports AFP.

Yashuji Akashi, recently named chief of the UN Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC), has returned from Cambodia to prepare the report UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali will present to the Security Council soon.

Diplomatic sources said the report would recommend launching one of the biggest operations yet undertaken by the United Nations, comparable in scale only to the planned peace-keeping mission in Yugoslavia.

The October 23 Paris Peace Treaty among Cambodia's four warring factions gave the UNTAC three basic roles, which the United Nations plans to fulfill with thousands of military and civilian personnel.

Some 6000 international officials and local recruits will carry out the first, essentially administrative task of running the ministries of Foreign Affairs, Defence, Finance, Public Security and Information.

The armed forces of the warring factions are expected to be demobilized or confined to barracks by the end of September.

UNTAC's third mission is to organize and oversee general elections by the end of April 1993. UN officials will have to register some 4.3 million people in 200 districts, 1,500 communities and more than 13,000 towns by December 1992.

83,000 Nigerians may die of AIDS by '95

LAGOS, Feb 13: More than 108,000 people in Nigeria, including 39,000 children, might be infected with AIDS HIV virus between 1990 and 1995, the official News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) Wednesday quoted a health official as saying.

About 83,000 people might die of the disease during the same period, the Director-General in Southern Oyo state hospitals management board, Dr T Ipadola, said Tuesday in Ibadan, 140 kilometers (90 miles) north of here, at a symposium on the control of sexually transmitted diseases.

Ninety per cent of HIV infections in Nigeria are through heterosexual intercourse, he said.

Off the Record



VIGAN: A young boy among the crowd looks intensely at the shoes of former first lady Imelda Marcos as she speaks during a political rally in Northern Philippines Mrs Marcos, who left a thousand pairs of shoes at the presidential palace when her family fled into US in 1986, is running for president in the coming May II national elections. — photo AFP/ UNB

Birth control for birds and bees

SAN FRANCISCO: Violet the orangutan is on the pill. King Lear the bison was rendered harmless with a bovine vasectomy. And Maxine the cougar is pushing high-tech boundaries with a Norplant-style implant, reports AP.

Birds do it. Bees do it. But at the San Francisco Zoo, some of the romantically inclined are taking precautions.

Responsible zoo sex has been promoted at American zoos for more than a decade. Zoos that are pressed for space want better breeding management to prevent unwanted offspring ending up in dismal wayside attractions or being used as quarry at private big-game ranches.

"It's nice to have little bodies, it's a crowd pleaser and things like that, but we've got an overall responsibility," said zoo veterinarian Dr. Freeland Dunker.

The zoo has a special R-rated sex tour jam-packed with fascinating facts. Foreplay can last from over a month for rhinos to hours for the aptly named slow loris, a tree-dwelling primate.

Orangutans can do it upside down, while rhinos carry on for up to an hour. Lions take pride in engaging up to 50 times in a 24-hour span, koalas exercise restraint with 40 seconds three times a year.

Zoo officials had been administering their new birth control vaccine on a regular basis.

The bad news came this month with the discovery of a tubby bundle of joy snuggled next to her. Zoo officials speculate they weren't giving the right dosage or something went wrong with the dart gun.

"Like most contraceptives, they're not always 100 percent effective," explained zoo spokeswoman Suzanne Campbell.

Bush trades on 'everybody's grandma' Barbara

WASHINGTON: With a whole firmament of politicians to choose from, George Bush tapped his wife Barbara to introduce his reelection announcement Wednesday. Small wonder: She's popular one in the First Family, reports AP.

"Nobody doesn't like Barbara Bush," said a vilager in Warner, N.H. who she campaigned there last week in advance of Wednesday's formal declaration.

On the campaign trail she was greeted with this sign: "We like you, Barbara! But you're sleeping with the enemy."

When they announced their candidacy, politicians are usually introduced by other politicians. On Wednesday that honor didn't fall to Vice President Quayle, who was there, or members of the Cabinet or Republican bigwigs but to Mrs. Bush.

"I'm so grateful for this opportunity to say a few words about George Bush," she began. "You think of George as the president of the United States, the leader of the free world, and I am proud to say, so do I."

Mrs. Bush has grown into "Everybody's grandmother," as she puts it. And Bush trades on it.

When his subject is domestic issues, or sensitive matters with which he feels uncomfortable, Bush mentions Barbara.

"I know the heartbeat of this state," he told one group of New Hampshire factory workers. "I know the people and I care about them, and so does Barbara Bush."

Because of her value as an unseen running mate, Mrs. Bush gets her own campaign schedule. There are many who think she does more good for him than he can do for himself.

Who led whom to snake?

SCOTTSBORO, Ala.: Did a snake-handling preacher try to kill his wife by forcing her hand into a cage of rattlesnakes? Or was she trying to kill him when a serpent struck her?

The Rev. Glenn Summerford, 47 pastor of the Church of Jesus With Signs Following, went on trial Monday on charges of attempted murder and first-degree assault. He faces a maximum sentence of life in prison if convicted, reports AP.

His wife, Darlene, testified that he twice forced her hand into a cage of poisonous snakes during a "week of hell" in the fall of 1991.

However, after the prosecution rested its case Tuesday, the defense sprung a surprise witness, a 23-year-old follower of Summerford in Scottsboro, a mountain town in northeast Alabama.

Tammy Flippo testified that Mrs. Summerford plotted to kill the preacher with one of his own serpents.

"She told me that she got Glenn so drunk he passed out and (she) went out to the shed to get a snake to put on him but it bit her instead," Mr. Flippo said.

Under cross-examination, Ms. Flippo denied dating or having any social relationship with Summerford, other than attending his church. Summerford is free on \$20,000 bond raised by his congregation.

Mrs. Summerford testified that her husband accused her of dating another preacher.

"He said I had to die because he wanted to marry another woman," she said.

Malaysia reshuffles top army officers

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 13: Malaysia has named its Sandhurst trained Army Chief, General Yaacob Mohammed Zain, as its new armed forces commander in a reshuffle of top military officers, reports Reuter.

Yaacob 56, will take over from General Hashim Mohamed Ali, who is retiring a Defence Ministry statement said on Wednesday. The appointments take effect on April 11.

Yaacob joined the army in 1963 and had served as military intelligence Director and Chief of Staff (Operations) before he was promoted to army chief in 1987.

Hashim, who turns 57 April is brother in law of Prime Minister Mahathir Mohammad. He was due to retire in 1990 but was given a two year extension by King Sultan Azlan Shah, who is also Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces.