

BRIEFLY

Violence claims 14 in Punjab : Two scholars from Punjab University and a Sikh political party leader were among 14 people killed in the troubled state of Punjab since late Saturday, PTI reported.

Sikh militants shot dead Balwant Singh Sarhal and his three bodyguards at Cheema village in Punjab's Jalandhar district Sunday, PTI said. Sarhal, a leader of the Sikh Akali Dal (Khal) group Party, was a former Punjab state legislator.

The assailants fled taking the guns of the three guards, the news agency said without giving details.

Elsewhere in Punjab, K. L. Sharma, a sociologist, and Bhushan Agarwal, a reader in chemical engineering, were slain late Saturday in their homes in Mohali, outside the state capital, Chandigarh.

Libya frees 14 Italian fishermen: Tripoli set free Sunday 14 Italian fishermen detained two weeks ago by coastguards after a storm forced their fishing boats into Libyan waters, the official Libyan news agency JANA said.

The fishermen, from three boats, were released at Darnah, on Libya's eastern coast, into the care of the Italian consul general.

Rome requested their release on April 12.

39 killed in Iranian plane crash : All 39 passengers and crew on board an airliner chartered by Iran's National Oil Company were killed after it crashed today near Saveh, southwest of Tehran, state-run television said.

Officials said the Fokker Friendship plane was owned by Saha Airline, which belongs to the air force. It was taking oil workers to the capital from Mashahr Petrochemical Complex in the southern province of Khuzestan.

It was unclear what caused the crash near Saveh, around 150 kilometres from Tehran, but the official IRNA news agency said it could have been bad weather.

Y'slav planes bomb Bosnian towns: Yugoslav federal air force planes bombed and rocketed two towns in the centre of Bosnia-Herzegovina late Sunday, shortly after the start of talks on the future of the federal forces in the republic, Bosnian TV said.

The television said the towns hit were Vitez and Busovaca. Police in Vitez, which is some 60 kilometres (35 miles) northwest of Sarajevo, said the planes had targeted a dynamic factory in the suburbs, but there were no casualties.

China recognises Slovenia, Croatia : China Monday recognised Slovenia and Croatia, said a foreign ministry spokesman cited by Xinhua news agency, reports AFP from Beijing.

Foreign Minister Qian Qichen has sent a telegram to his opposite numbers in the new republics informing them of the decision, it said.

China waited until after major Western countries recognised the two former Yugoslav republics before taking similar action. But Beijing has not recognised Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Libyan FM arrives in Egypt: Libyan Foreign Minister Ibrahim Bishari arrived in Marsa Matruh on Egypt's northern coast Sunday on his way to Cairo, where he is to attend a meeting of the Arab League, reports AFP from Egypt.

Bishari, travelling by land, crossed into Egypt at the border post of Salum.

Egypt continues to enforce a UN air embargo against Libya for its refusal to hand over two Libyan suspects sought for trial in connection with the bombing of a US airliner over Scotland in 1988.

Iraq calls for united Arab stand to defend 'freedom': BAHGDAD Apr 27: Foreign Minister Ahmed Hussein on Sunday called on the Arab states to stand united in order to defend the interest freedom and the future of the Arab nation, reports Xinhua.

Speaking before leaving here for Cairo to attend meetings of the 97th session of the Arab League Council Tuesday, Hussein said, Iraq has earlier warned of the new conspiracy against the brother Arab people of Libya.

It has "declared in public that the US aggression on Iraq is the first episode of Washington's plot against every honorable Arab," the Iraqi news agency quoted Hussein as saying.

The UN air, arms and diplomatic sanctions against Libya took effect on April 15 to punish its refusal to hand over two suspects of blowing up an American airliner over Scotland in 1988.

The UN imposed all-round sanctions against Iraq in August 1990 to punish its invasion of Kuwait. But the Iraqi Minister compared the two as the same US "plot" launched against the Arab nation.

"The people of Iraq, as they dress their wounds and bid farewell everyday to the victims of the UN just embargo, including children, women and old-aged people, express their full support for the Libyan people despite their own sufferings," he added.

Violence claims 24 more in Kashmir: SRINAGAR, Apr 27: At least 24 people were killed in separatist violence in Kashmir, where militants were fighting to end Indian rule, police said on Sunday, reports Reuter.

Nine civilians were killed when their vehicle was blown up by a landmine at Wasoura village in Pulwama district of Jammu and Kashmir, India's only Muslim-majority state.

Unofficial sources said the landmine could have been planted by militants targeting patrolling vehicles carrying security men.

Police said security troops shot dead three militants in a gunbattle at Lapur village in Baramulla district and captured 12 AK 47 rifles.

A leader of Allah's tigers, a militant group, was found dead at Kangan, outside Srinagar, the state summer capital and centre of separatist insurgency.

Relatives of Mohammad Shaif alleged that he was tortured to death by security men who picked him up for questioning a few days ago.

In another incident, security troops killed seven militants in an attack on Saturday near Anantnag town, 60 km from Srinagar. The troops also seized 18 AK 47 rifles during the attack on militant hideouts.

But witnesses put the death toll in the Anantnag attack at 11, taking the number of people killed in separatist vio-

Politics banned for Nepali school teachers
Communists attack Koirala's motorcade, damage cars

KATHMANDU, Apr 27: Prime Minister Girja Prasad Koirala escaped unharmed as communist activists stoned his car, smashing a window, but others in his motorcade were injured, Home Ministry officials said.

Ten activists were arrested after the incident which occurred during the premier's provincial tour of the south west, they said Sunday.

The demonstrators, waving black flags and screaming abuse, halted the premier's car for more than 15 minutes.

Eventually Koirala's chauffeur accelerated away through the crowd under a hail of stones.

Three other cars following the prime minister's were badly damaged and some occupants received head injuries, police sources said.

Koirala later addressed a mass rally attended by more than 20,000 people, mostly Nepal Congress activists, youths and students, and attacked the communists for their "vandalism and anarchism."

He said "the government would not spare those acting against the constitution and perpetrating violence and arson in the country."

He said communists were taking advantage of the government's commitment to democracy and free speech as a sign of weakness.

But they were "violating law and order in the name of protest," he added.

Koirala pledged to take strong measures to prevent anarchic activities.

Those showing black flags indicate they don't want to see

democracy attained after 30 years of ceaseless struggle. They were seeking a revival of communism at a time when the entire world had turned its back on this political creed.

Koirala has been using the trip to mobilise support for his Nepal Congress Party in upcoming elections and for government plans to liberalise the economy.

Earlier this month seven people were killed when police fired on anti-government demonstrators. Communist groups have been calling for a general strike to protest rising prices.

Meanwhile, the Nepalese government has banned the country's 37,000 school teachers from any kind of political activities, an official of the Ministry of Education and

Culture said Monday, reports AFP.

The officials said they were prohibited from joining any political party or campaigning for it, adding that the ban applied to teachers at both primary and secondary level.

The official said the prohibition had been decreed in the interest of students and "the expectations of the people" for a "pure" academic environment.

Political observers here said the central Nepal Congress government had implemented the prohibition ahead of local council elections in a month's time. They noted that most younger teachers were leftist-oriented and in the May 1991 general election had tended to support the communist parties.

7 killed as bandits attack train near Hyderabad

KARACHI, Apr 27 : Seven people including three women were killed and 18 seriously injured when bandits attacked a train near Hyderabad about 150 kilometres (90 miles) north of here Sunday night, local press reports said today, reports AFP.

The Mirpur Khas-bound Mehran Express was attacked with automatic weapons as it passed through Tando Jam station, the reports said.

According to railway police the bandits smashed the engine's lights and continued indiscriminate firing on the moving train.

The reports said a paramilitary squad which usually rides on night expresses in Pakistan's southern Sindh province, a hot bed of bandit activity, had not been provided.



PESHAWAR: Afghanis citizens, based in Pakistan, loyal to the Hezb-i-Islami of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar hold up the front pages of the local newspaper April 26 during a demonstration called to celebrate the fall of the Afghan capital of Kabul.

Bush was all for aiding Iraq even two months before Kuwait invasion

LOS ANGELES, Apr 27: Two months before Iraqi troops over ran Kuwait in 1990, senior Bush administration officials met secretly at the White House and decided to continue a policy of funneling aid to Saddam Hussein, the Los Angeles Times said on Sunday, reports Reuter.

The classified agenda of the May 29, 1990, meeting, which was attended by officials of the State Department, Central Intelligence Agency and other

agencies, listed several options for getting tough with Iraq, which was openly threatening Kuwait, the Times said.

The options included a halt to US food aid, the withholding of intelligence data supplied to Iraq in its war against Iran, the paper said.

Consideration was even given to having President George Bush send a strong, personal message to Saddam, it added.

But no action was taken. There was a reluctance to

jettison the existing policy, an unnamed official who attended the session was quoted as saying.

"People really weren't too focused on Iraq, I don't remember any heated disagreement with continuing things as they were."

The meeting in the high-security White House situation room was a demonstration of the Bush administration's failure to recognise that Saddam had become a threat to US interests, the Times said.

The United States for years had been providing economic aid and advanced weapons technology to Iraq.

Right up until Iraq invaded Kuwait, Bush and his inner circle were convinced that Saddam had not become a threat and that he could be controlled, sources close to the debate said.

The United States led a coalition of countries that reclaimed Kuwait in early 1991

Kuwait repatriates 210 Filipinos

KUWAIT CITY, Apr 27: Kuwait on Sunday repatriated the last 210 of a group of Filipinos stranded in their country's embassy here for months after being abused by their employers, the Philippines mission said, reports AFP.

On Friday, the Kuwaiti government paid for the flight home of another 117 Filipinos who had taken shelter in the embassy.

The embassy will not receive any more cases, a source at the mission said, although many young Filipinos were still lodging complaints at the embassy that they had not been paid for several months or had been beaten.

Kuwaiti and Philippine officials are discussing a proposal to guarantee the rights of Asian domestic workers mistreated by their employers, he said.

As many as 1,000 maids have sought refuge in the mission since July.

Winnie won't back out of politics

JOHANNESBURG, Apr 26: Winnie Mandela said Sunday that she will continue to play a leading political role despite separating from her husband and accusations that she was involved in assault and murder, reports UNB.

Unbowed by the controversy surrounding her, Mrs Mandela appeared relaxed in an interview with M-NEL, a pay television station.

It was her first media interview since her husband, African National Congress President Nelson Mandela, announced on April 13 that the couple was separating.

The previous week, newspapers reported allegations that Mrs Mandela ordered the murder of a prominent doctor who would have been a key witness in her kidnapping and assault trial last year.

Mrs Mandela refused to discuss the criminal accusations or her marital problems in the interview.

When asked about controversial statements she has made in the past, in particular her endorsement in 1986 of so-called "necklace" killings of

government collaborators, she said, "I haven't a single victim in my hands." She also said she was quoted out of context in that speech.

Necklacing involves throwing a gasoline-soaked tire

around a person's neck and setting it on fire.

Regarding the latest accusations against her, Mrs Mandela said, "My hands are

clean, there's nothing I can say. I look forward to the day ... I can give explanations."

Mrs Mandela was convicted in May 1991 on charges of kidnapping and accessory to assault in connection with an attack on four young black men in Soweto in 1988. One of the youths was later killed.

In recent weeks, two co-defendants have said they lied in court to protect Mrs Mandela, who was sentenced, to six years in prison and is free pending appeal.

In addition, the U.S.-based Christian Science Monitor newspaper and the Southam News newspaper chain of Canada have quoted witnesses as saying that Mrs Mandela ordered the slaying of Dr Abu-Baker Awat.

Awat was shot to death shortly after the young men were assaulted, allegedly because he would not back Mrs Mandela's version of events, the newspapers reported.

Police are re-investigating the case in light of the reports.

Mrs Mandela has denied wrongdoing and say the allegations come from bitter foes seeking revenge.

Biggest work stoppages in post-war Germany

BERLIN, Apr 27: Hundreds of thousands of Germans walked, rode bicycles or hitchhiked to work Monday as a first wave of public employees' strikes hit many parts of the country, reports AP.

Union officials say the strikes will be the biggest labour stoppages in post-war Germany.

The extensive and efficient networks of buses, subways and local commuter trains stood idle in western Berlin. Stuttgart, Hanover and dozens of other western German cities.

The jump in the number of private cars on the road brought traffic to a standstill in many areas.

Union officials said 35,000 public transportation workers were taking part in the one-day strike, which is to be followed by other walkouts throughout the week.

It is the first public employees' strike since 1974.

Public transportation was the primary target of the first day, although thousands of workers in other sectors also stayed off the job.

In the central state of Hesse, garbage collectors refused to pick up trash. In Hamburg, harbour workers walked out, disrupting the city's busy shipping traffic.

Some intercity train service was also affected in western parts of the country.

Off the Record

Grand daughter pays respect to World War 11 dictator

PREDAPPIO, Italy : Days after taking her seat in Parliament, Benito Mussolini's granddaughter paid her respects Sunday at the tomb of the World War 11 dictator, AP reports.

Alessandra Mussolini, a 29-year-old actress, won election for the neo-Fascist Italian Social Movement Party earlier this month.

She traveled to Predappio, the dictator's boyhood home about 300 kilometers north of Rome, for a Sunday Mass in memory of her grandfather and those who died for the Fascist state, the Italian news agency NASA said.

Her father Romano, a jazz pianist, and other relatives were present, as well as several hundred neo-Fascist sympathizers, NASA said. Some wore the black shirts of Mussolini's Fascist movement.

After the Mass, the dictator's granddaughter paid her respects at Mussolini's tomb, in a crypt in Predappio's cemetery, the report said.

The neo-Fascist party got 5.4 per cent of the vote in this month's parliamentary vote, down .5 per cent from the last elections in 1987. Mussolini took her seat when Parliament opened on Thursday.

Barbra celebrates 50th birthday with kids

LOS ANGELES: Hollywood's biggest movers and shakers turned out for Barbra Streisand's 50th birthday celebration, but the day belonged to the kids who were welcomed to 'Barbra's Magic Castle,' AP reports.

Among the 350 guests at Saturday's celebration were Tom Hanks, Soldie Warren, Nick Nolte, Meryl Streep and George Hamilton. Hawn Beatty and wife, Annette Bening, also showed up, carrying their infant daughter.

The party was dedicated to Miss Streisand, who turned 50 on Friday, but young people were treated as well. Her former beau, producer Jon Peters, transformed his estate into an enchanted castle.

More than 100 youngsters, mostly offspring of some of Miss Streisand's not-so-rich-and-famous friends, roamed the grounds munching on hot dogs, popcorn and hamburgers and enjoying circus animals and carnival games.

Many youngsters lined up for rides on a circus elephant. Others marveled at feters' private menagerie of pigs, horses, goats and peacocks.

Before the party broke up at dusk, a huge birthday cake decorated like a castle was presented and all sang 'Happy Birthday.'

Show brings scientists artists together

SEATTLE: An exhibit put on by an unlikely collaboration of artists and scientists to save an experimental nuclear reactor features a dance depicting the fusion and fission of atoms — performed to electronic music, reports AP.

The artists and scientists who created 'Load the Reactor Art' hope it will help preserve the Fast Flux Test Facility at the Hanford Nuclear Reservation. Fast Flux is facing shutdown by the US Energy Department.

The show features a mock nuclear reactor the size of a refrigerator, into which fuel rods are loaded by an overhead crane.

A pulsating, red glow appears and lights flash on command consoles studded with dials and gauges.

Men and women dressed in white emerge to perform 'The Dance of the Neutrons' to electronic music.

Films are projected on the walls, including one featuring scenes from Hanford, about 150 miles (250 kilometers) southeast of Seattle.

The show was created by about 10 artists working with Hanford scientists. It opened Saturday and runs through June 6 at the Fremont Fine Arts Foundry in the Seattle neighborhood, where residents have planted signs declaring its nuclear-free zone.

He grabs tongue of a bear

TOKYO: A 74-year-old Japanese farmer grabbed the tongue of a bear that was savaging him and the beast ran off, police said Monday, Reuter reports.

A police spokesman in Fukui prefecture in western Japan said Shigetaro Matsuura was coming down a mountain on Saturday when he suddenly found a 1.5 metre bear standing just two metres away.

The bear knocked him down and started to bite his arms and legs. A desperate Matsuura grabbed its tongue — and it ran away.

"I think the move really surprised the bear," the officer said. "It is rare for bears to attack people, they usually run away. I guess the bear was caught by surprise and didn't have time." Matsuura is in hospital for treatment to his injuries.

Deng warns of another Tiananmen type crackdown

BEIJING, Apr 27: China will use force to crush any democratic movement as it did at Tiananmen Square in 1989, senior leader Deng Xiaoping was quoted as saying in the People's Daily Monday, reports AFP.

"After the political disturbance in 1989, comrade Deng Xiaoping stressed again that this turmoil showed us the importance of stability," the official communist party newspaper said.

The article seemed to confirm that recent calls for reform — spearheaded by the 87-year-old Patriarch himself — will be strictly confined to the economic sphere and that no challenge to the communists' political monopoly will be tol-

erated.

"If the need arises henceforth, as soon as elements of turmoil appear, we will not hesitate to take any means whatsoever to eliminate them as quickly as possible," Deng was quoted as saying.

The remarks' warning of swift action compared to the experience of 1989, when in-fighting paralyzed the leadership for seven weeks of pro-democracy demonstrations before troops were finally sent in on June 4.

The bloody military crackdown left hundreds, if not thousands, of student-led demonstrators dead.

"We should use martial law or take measures even stricter than martial law to prevent any

interference from outside," Deng said.

"Why did we treat the problem of the students' agitation so seriously and, moreover, deal with it so speedily?" he asked. "Because China can have no more unrest and no more upheaval."

Deng's remarks were given added weight by their appearance in a page-long article on the People's Daily's authoritative ideology pages.

The author, writing under the name Leng Rong, praised Deng's recent instructions to act more boldly and quicken the pace of economic reform and opening to the outside.

Deng's calls for faster reform are a good thing, exiled dissident Yan Jiaqi said in a recent

interview in Paris. "But you can't forget that behind it is the survival of the communists' authority."

"Economic reform is the only way they can preserve the authoritarian system that allowed June 4 to happen in the first place," said Yan, a political scientist who fled China to escape persecution for his leading role in the 1989 movement.

The People's Daily said, "comrade Deng Xiaoping has advanced a series of important ideas." Earnest study of his thoughts, it added, was "of the highest significance" for "correctly understanding and directing the current reform."

The newspaper quoted Deng as saying that bourgeois

liberalization — official jargon for western influences deemed negative here — had harmed stability and modernization in the past.

China's leading legal newspaper, the legal daily, warned on the other hand that any threat to reform would be quashed, while it applauded a court's decision to sentence to death a disgruntled worker who tried to kill his reformist boss.

"All political and law departments should quickly deal with criminal cases that harm reform and opening, especially by protecting the personal safety of trail-blazing reformists," the official daily said Monday.

The commentary accom-

Thatcher in UAE

ABU DHABI, Apr 27 : Former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher arrived in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) today for a visit at the invitation of the Federation's President, Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al-Nahayan, reports AFP.

A British embassy spokesman here said Thatcher would meet Sheikh Zayed and open a British trade fair in neighbouring Dubai on Tuesday. More than 250 British firms are participating in the three-day show.

Thatcher, making her second trip to the UAE, flew in from Oman, another member of the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council.