

**BRIEFLY**

**Pro-Arafat activist killed:** Assassins armed with submachine guns killed an activist of PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat's mainstream Fatah guerilla faction Saturday, police reported, AP says from Tyre.

They identified the victim as Mohammed Ali Howaidi, 34, and said he was gunned down as he climbed out of his car in front of his house in suburban Jall el-Bahr on the outskirts of the southern port city of Tyre.

The assailants fled in a waiting car. No one claimed responsibility for the murder.

But police said they believed Howaidi's assassination was part of the continuing bloody feud between Arafat's loyalists and terrorist mastermind Abu Nidal's Fatah-Revolutionary council breakaway faction.

**Quakes hit Japanese Island:** Two earthquakes, shook the southern Japanese island of Iriomotejima yesterday, the fifth successive day a strong tremor has hit the area, the meteorological agency said, Reuter reports from Tokyo.

There were no reports of injury or damage.

The first shock measured four on the Japanese scale of seven and was followed by one measuring five a minute later, the agency said. A strength-five shock is strong enough to damage houses.

The agency said 192 tremors, including minor ones, shook the remote island in the Okinawa chain in the past 30 days. Iriomotejima has a population of about 1,700.

**Knesset member off to Tunis:** An Israeli Arab member of the Knesset left Cairo yesterday for Tunis to meet Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) leader Yasser Arafat, challenging an increasingly flouted law banning such contacts, Reuter reports from Cairo.

Abdul-Wahab Darawshe, leader of the Arab Democratic Party which has two seats in the Knesset, told reporters at Cairo airport.

The visit is aimed at breaking the encirclement which Israel tries to impose on the Arab masses inside it and prevent them from meeting their Palestinian Arab brothers.

"We will have talks with Arafat aimed at supporting the peace process and strengthening the logical and courageous positions shown by the PLO by its continuing peace talks with the Israeli delegation," he added.

**ROK teacher commits suicide:** A 46-year-old middle school teacher has killed herself in remorse for inflicting corporal punishment on a student, police said Sunday, AP reports from Seoul.

Chun Young-ae, a teacher at a Seoul middle school, died Saturday after jumping from her seventh-floor apartment, police said.

In a suicide note, Chun apologized to the parents of a student who suffered a crack in his arm bone after she punished him with a baton last month.

Along with five other classmates, the student was caught playing poker during her class.

Corporal punishment is widespread at schools in South Korea, where the Confucian tradition of high respect for teachers is still strong.

**Blast kills one in West Bank:** A bomb blew up an Israeli van in the occupied West Bank on Saturday night, killing one passenger and seriously injuring two others, official military sources said, AP reports from Tel Aviv.

It appeared to be the latest in a series of Palestinian attacks that killed two Israeli farmers last week.

Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin ascribed the latest violence partly to Palestinian disenchantment with the Arab-Israeli peace talks resuming in Washington on Wednesday.

The sources, speaking on condition of anonymity pending final assessment of the casualty toll, said the explosion occurred on the road to the Jewish settlement of Mattityahu, in the Ramallah region. They did not say how many people were in the van.

**Violence claims 4 in Algeria:** Gunmen killed a police commissioner, his wife and two officers as they sat in a car Saturday, a bloody attack following successes claimed by authorities in breaking up armed Islamic terror groups, AP reports from Algiers.

Police said that the four victims were sitting in a car near the Bab el-Oued slum of Algiers, a stronghold of the banned Islamic Salvation Front. The identities of the gunmen and other details were not disclosed.

More than 200 police officers and soldiers have been killed by armed Islamic groups since the military seized power in January and cancelled parliamentary elections that the fundamentalist Salvation Front, then a legal party, was winning.

**Lankan press demands action against Tigers**

COLOMBO, Oct 18: The Sri Lankan press Sunday demanded tougher action against Tamil guerillas responsible for a massacre of 166 people and said the killings showed that the militants were uninterested in a political settlement, reports AFP.

There was no alternative to fighting the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) to defend civilians in multi-ethnic eastern province where 146 Muslim villagers and 20 security men were killed Thursday, the Sunday Island said.

"A tremendously difficult task, but one which the government cannot shy away from," the Island said while lamenting that no one in the administration was taking political responsibility for the carnage.

Another privately owned weekly, the Sunday Times, echoed similar sentiments and proposed that civilians be armed to protect themselves against attacks from the LTTE.

"A basic responsibility of the government is to protect its citizens.

There have been far too many and far too costly failures in this regard and it is time that drastic and decisive action is taken," the Times said.

The state-run Sunday Observer reproduced an editorial used in its sister paper, the Daily Observer Friday, demanding that Human Rights Organisations condemn the massacre.

**Two Abu Nidal men killed in Lebanon**

SIDON, LEBANON, Oct 18: Two member of Abu Nidal's extremist Fatah Revolutionary Council died instantly today when attackers riddled their car with machine-gun fire on the sea front of this southern port security sources said, reports AFP.

The attackers travelling in another car, hit Riad Kawash and Jiyab Rifai at point blank range.

They were the latest in a bloody feud between the Abu Nidal group, which opposes the Middle East peace talks and the main Palestine Liberation Organisation group Fatah, which is in favour of them.

Attacks have left at least 20 dead from both sides in the past three months.

**PDA to launch anti-govt campaign tomorrow**  
**Islamabad plans political package for Sind**

ISLAMABAD, Oct 18: The Pakistani government said on Saturday it was planning a political package for troubled Sind province before pulling back troops now fighting crime there, reports Reuter.

Petroleum and Natural Resources Minister Nisar Ali Khan told reporters the political package and an administrative framework were being worked out at the highest level to fill in the vacuum after the army's withdrawal. But he gave no details.

Opposition parties regard the present Sind government of chief Minister Muzaffar Hussain Shah as unconstitutional, saying it has lost control of the provincial assembly after the main group in his coalition resigned its parliamentary seats.

But Shah, a political ally of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, says he still enjoys a majority in the assembly in which national opposition leader Benazir Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party (PPP) is the largest single group.

Bhutto said on Friday the PPP-led People's Democratic Alliance (PDA) would launch a nationwide anti-government campaign from Tuesday.

Nisar said the threat showed PDA's "political bankruptcy and lack of direction of its leadership", and added it would meet the fate of two previous failed attempts.

The PDA says Sharif's 23-month-old government is the product of a rigged election in 1990 and wants fresh elections under a neutral interim administration. The government rejects the rigging charge and the demand for elections.

The Pakistani army said earlier this month it had completed the crime crackdown in Sind and was ready to pull back to barracks.

But it said it would stay on if told by the government, which had ordered the campaign against banditry, sabotage and kidnapping last May.

Nisar said the army felt it had achieved its "initial objectives" and the government too had the view that the troops should be allowed to withdraw.

In May the government ordered the army into rural Sind, where more than 2,000 people have been killed in ethnic, political or criminal violence since 1986.



COLOMBIA: Two children walk alongside a street which was split by an earthquake Oct 17. The earthquake, registered at 6.6 on the Richter Scale, hit northwest Colombia early October 17 leaving some 500 resident of the fishing village homeless. There were no immediate reports of fatalities.

**Quake victims teargassed in Cairo**

CAIRO, Oct. 18: Around 5,000 people left homeless by a killer earthquake demonstrated in Cairo and Giza. Police used tear gas and fired shots in the air to disperse one group of protesters, reports AP.

About 1,000 demonstrators in the Boulaq area of downtown Cairo, site of two major state-owned newspapers, Al-Ahram and Al-Akhabar, took to the streets Saturday, burning tires and throwing stones at street lights, shop windows and at an old building of Al-Akhabar.

Police denied there were clashes with the demonstrators in Boulaq, which is also the site of Cairo Radio and Television building. But reporters who went to the scene, said the smell of tear gas lingered in the air.

At least six truckloads of riot police and two armoured personnel carriers guarded the area.

Mj. Gen. Bahaa Eddine Ibrahim, the interior Ministry spokesman, said Cairo was calm and quiet but stopped short of denying there were clashes.

"All I know is that Cairo is now quiet," Ibrahim said. He said Prime Minister Ataf Sedki was to issue a statement later, and declined further comment.

The official Middle East News Agency quoted a senior security official admitting that clashes took place, but insisting that the situation is completely under control. He said there was no loss of lives, injuries or important damage.

It quoted Maj. Gen. Reda Abdel-Aziz, an assistant to the interior minister as saying that

some teenagers were responsible for the riots and that 50 of them have been arrested.

Following a Cabinet meeting, Information Minister Safwat el-Sherif alleged that extremist elements were exploiting the situation, inciting rioting and destruction.

El-Sherif did not elaborate, but he was apparently referring to Muslim extremists.

The demonstrators were protesting alleged government foot-dragging in providing help and housing.

Earlier Saturday, about 1,000 men and women gathered near Sedki's office in downtown Cairo, angrily demanding help five days after the earthquake. Three truckloads of riot police stood nearby but did not intervene.

"Oh Mubarak, son of shame, Gather up your shame, Gather up your children from the streets," chanted some of the protesters.

One female protester, Fayza Ahmed Hamdi, bitterly complained: "I have been in the street for five days. I have five children, and we have received no tents, no shelter, nothing."

The Deputy Speaker of the People's Assembly or Parliament, Abdel-Ahmed Gamal El-Din, met with the protesters in the courtyard of a nearby government building and listened to their complaints.

In Giza, across the Nile from the capital, 3,000 villagers left homeless protested at a provincial headquarters.

Since Monday, when the earthquake measured at 5.9 on the Richter scale rocked Egypt, people made homeless by the quake have complained of official dithering and red tape.

**Blast at Myanmar embassy in Thailand**

BANGKOK, Oct 18: A bomb was thrown into the compound of the Myanmar Embassy early Sunday but there were no injuries and little damage. Thai police said, reports AP.

The bomb, thrown over a wall at about 3am (2000 GMT Saturday), broke one window and made a hole 90 centimeters (35 inches) wide and 20 centimeters (8 inches) deep in the ground, Channel 7 television quoted police as saying.

None of the three policemen posted outside the embassy wall saw anything, but a political motive was suspected in the attack, the television added, quoting an unnamed police officer.

It was the third time in recent years that an explosive device has gone off in the embassy grounds. Damage has been light on each occasion.

**Off the Record**

**'Go for the million because you're lucky'**

SACRAMENTO, California: A nun, who took a vow of poverty 54 years ago, has won a million dollars in a lottery organised by the state of California. It was announced here, reports AFP.

Sister Josephine Contris, 71, said the money would go to the retirement home run by her order, the Sisters of Saint Francis in Sacramento.

Sister Josephine said her winning ticket offered her the choice of taking 40,000 dollars immediately or chancing her luck to win a million dollars.

"The sisters always tell me I'm always lucky, so they told me: go for it. Don't just take the 40,000 dollars. Go for the million because you're lucky."

**Sentence for cursing husband**

NASHVILLE: Country singer Lynn Anderson was in jail Saturday, serving a two-day sentence for violating a court order for cursing her ex-husband in front of their children, reports AP.

"I am serving this time even though I feel my freedom of speech has been violated, and doubt very seriously that any woman has ever received a similar sentence," Anderson said in a statement issued Friday, the day she reported to the Metro Nashville Jail. She was to be released Sunday.

Circuit Judge Muriel Robinson Rice sentenced Anderson last year after ruling the singer violated a court order by cursing and ridiculing ex-husband Harold (Spook) Stream III in front of their children, William Gray Stream, 13, and Melissa Stream, 11. The Tennessee Court of Appeals upheld the ruling in August.

The order was issued during a legal battle between Stream and Anderson for custody of the children.

Anderson, 45, is best known for the song "I Never Promised You a Rose Garden."

**It took her 3 yrs to finish the letter**

NEW DELHI: A 20-year-old Indian girl Roopleen, claimed to have written the longest letter in the world, reports Xinhua.

The 3.6-kilometer-long letter covers politics, education, sports, astrology, astronomy, psychology and science and technology in 1,773,286 words, English daily The Times of India reported today.

The letter consumed 1.86 liters of ink and 3.6 liters of gum, and it took the girl three years to finish the writing.

The letter will be delivered to the United States President George Bush shortly.

Roopleen, who is now in the third year of her course in a college in Pattiala, western state of Punjab, plans to write to the Guinness Book of Records for recognition of her feat.

**Russia selling advanced arms systems to China**

NEW YORK, Oct 18: Russia is selling missile-guidance technology, rocket engines and other advanced weapons systems to China, the New York Times, quoting US officials, reported in its Sunday edition, reports Reuter.

The exports to Beijing are cause for worry and undercut efforts stem the spread of arms, Bush administration officials told the newspaper.

The officials said Washington feared that the advanced technology would be re-sold by Beijing to third world countries.

"You don't know what the Chinese will do with the stuff once they get the high-tech capabilities," one unnamed official was quoted as saying.

Arms factories and military-related institutes have been forced to seek export possibilities in the face of a reduction in military spending and shortage of hard currency, the newspaper reported.

One senior Bush administration official told the newspaper that in addition to weapons, Moscow was selling technology to the Chinese that could be used to enrich uranium.

The newspaper said the administration was worried that Beijing would use the technology to improve the design of its nuclear power plants, thus making them attractive to third world buyers and further undermining efforts to stop the spread of nuclear arms.

**Yeltsin agrees to postpone 7th congress**

MOSCOW, Oct 18: President Boris Yeltsin has accepted a proposal from the Constitutional Commission to postpone the seventh congress of the People's Deputies from December 1 to at least next March, reports AFP.

ITAR-Tass news agency reported that Yeltsin endorsed the proposal Friday.

The decision, which must be approved by parliament, is officially blamed on delay in preparing Russia's new constitution.

The text of the constitution must not be unitary (overly centralist) in style. This provokes an epidemic reaction in the republics, fuels distrust toward Russia, weakens the Russian federation.

**10 Indian actors sentenced in UAE**

ABU DHABI, Oct 18: Ten Indian actors sentenced to six years in jail in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) on charges of blasphemy will appeal the verdict, court sources said Saturday, reports AFP.

The actors, all Hindus from Kerala, were sentenced last week for having insulted both Islam and Christianity in a recent play. They are to be deported after completing their jail terms.

"Yes they have decided to appeal," one source said. "They hope the sentence will be reduced or abolished."

The actors were given 15 days to appear before the court of appeal by Judge Abdul Rahman Ibn Taleea, who issued the verdict against them.

Vasudeyan Pillai, a Kerala-based writer who adapted the play into Hindi, was also sentenced in absentia to six years in prison.

But in a statement issued Friday in Kerala he denied writing the play and said he would seek legal protection from the according to Indian sources here.

Entitled "ants feast on corpses," the play opens with three corpses lying on the stage. A villager asks if he can eat one of the corpses, which scholars who saw a videotape said represented the Prophet Mohammed (SM). The other two corpses were Jesus Christ and Karl Marx.

It was staged at the Indian association in Sharjah for two consecutive days in May.

**Radical Palestinians reject council's vote**

TUNIS, Tunisia, Oct 18: Radical Palestinians on Saturday warned against pursuing peace negotiations with Israel and said making a hasty deal with the Jewish state would be a scenario for surrender, reports AP.

Their protest came after the 80-member Central Council of the Palestine Liberation organization voted to approve Yasser Arafat's policy of continuing to participate in the talks.

The radicals argued it was pointless to remain in the process when Israel rejects most Palestinian demands: Autonomy leading to a state in the occupied West Bank and Gaza strip, withdrawal from the territories occupied in 1967, including east Jerusalem, and the right of refugees to return.

Israel has offered only limited autonomy for the 1.7 million Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza strip.

Members of one of the larger PLO factions, the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, earlier walked out of the meeting hall and refused to vote in the final session of the council.

Sajj Salameh, a member of the group's political bureau, told a news conference his group had information the Palestinian negotiators were moving toward concluding a deal with Israel that would not be favourable for the Palestinians.

Salameh said the mandate given to the negotiators in Saturday's council vote would be used as a cover to legitimize the alleged deal. But he declined to give further details.

"This is very serious and it affects the rights and the interests of millions of our people," he said.

Abu Ali Musafa, a leader of the Poplar Front for the Liberation of Palestine, also claimed a flawed deal would be struck at the next round of talks that begins Wednesday in Washington.

He described it as a "scenario for surrender".

"If the (PLO leadership) make more concessions that violate our rights... nobody can predict the destructive consequences of the rift in the Palestinian arena," he said.

His group rejected the council's vote.

Ten radical Palestinian factions, including the DFPL, the PFLP, and the Islamic fundamentalist Hamas, have formed a front that calls for a pullout from the talks.

The decision of the Central Council, a watchdog assembly, was a major triumph for Arafat

**Bosnian army lifts road blockade in Sarajevo**

SARAJEVO, Oct 18: Bosnian army forces on Sunday morning removed a blockade on the main road into the capital, allowing the flow of relief supplies to resume to the needy population, reports AP.

Troops using an armored earthmover pushed aside the barrier in a five-minute operation, disregarding small arms fire — apparently from Serbian-held lines — that struck the earth-moving machine.

Two UN armored personnel carriers oversaw the operation from the city's side of the barricade. Another three waited on the other side.

The decision made Saturday to remove the barrier ended a contest of wills between Bosnian and UN forces, and followed afternoon negotiations among government, army and UN officials.

Gen Mustafa Hajrulahovic, speaking at Bosnian army headquarters, said the road connecting Sarajevo airport to the city would be cleared early Sunday out of concern for the city's 400,000 residents.

Hajrulahovic said the army did not retract its accusations that Serb rebels planned to use the road to mount an armored attack on government-help suburbs, cutting them off from the rest of the city.

But he said his forces would install anti-tank weapons and rely on the United Nations to ensure that the Serbs do not violate an agreement that the road not be used for military purposes.

UN officials could not be reached immediately for comment. Hundreds of tons of relief aid had piled up at Sarajevo airport while government troops and the United Nations dickered over the roadblock.

Sarajevo was relatively quiet after overnight fighting in several western suburbs.

But Croatian radio reported heavy Serb artillery attacks on the northern Bosnian towns of Maglaj and Bihac, where Serb rebels are trying to expand their control of the region. Much of Maglaj was in flames, the radio said, but there was no independent confirmation.

At least 14,000 people have died in fighting and more than 1 million are homeless since ethnic Serbs took up arms against Bosnia's majority Muslims and Croats, who voted in February to secede from Serb-dominated Yugoslavia.

Hundreds of thousands of people could die of starvation or exposure as the war heads into its first full winter, the United Nations predicted last month.

In Geneva, Yugoslav Premier Milan Panic, seeking an end to UN sanctions imposed on his country for fomenting the Bosnian war, offered the use of Yugoslav airports and 100 trucks for the international aid effort.



SARAJEVO: A man searches for a grave in the Sarajevo cemetery yesterday. Bosnian forces removed barricades from main road linking the city with airport.