

Indian students continue protest against job quota

NEW DELHI, Nov 20: Students attacked trains and post offices and disrupted traffic, across north India on Thursday, stepping up their protest against a court ruling on job quotas, local news agencies said, reports Reuter.

Activists set up road blocks in New Delhi on the third day of their demonstration against Monday's supreme court ruling which reserves more jobs for lower castes.

Resident doctors and medical students in the capital went on strike in protest against the police's use of force to break up Wednesday's peaceful rally against the court decision.

As the protests spread to

G-7 meets to curb high tech exports to Iran, other states

WASHINGTON, Nov 20: Officials from seven industrialized nations are meeting at a secret location to try to forge a common policy on high technology exports to Iran and other countries, US officials said, reports AP.

State Department spokesman Richard Boucher confirmed Thursday that the United States is taking part in a meeting on exports to Iran, but he offered little additional information.

Other officials, asking not to be identified, said representatives of the "Group of Seven" nations — the United States, France, Italy, Japan, Germany, Canada and Britain — are participating Friday's meeting.

Besides Iran, the officials will discuss curbing exports to

Iraq, North Korea and Libya, the sources said. All but Libya are suspected of trying to develop a nuclear weapons capability.

Asked about the secrecy, Boucher said: "It's a private meeting. They're not seeking any publicity." He refused to say in what country the meeting is taking place.

The virtual news blackout appeared to reflect the sensitivity of the topic and the broad disagreement among the seven about the Iranian situation.

Boucher said the meeting is part of the ongoing work that we have with key allies on improving and harmonizing export controls.

"We think our allies share our concerns about prolifera-

tion of sensitive goods and technologies," he said.

German and Japanese exports to Iran have skyrocketed in recent years, and US officials are worried that technology imports from these countries may be contributing to an Iranian military buildup.

The US concern is focused not only on Iran's nuclear weapons potential but also on possible Iranian development of ballistic missiles and germ warfare capability.

US officials also are disturbed by Iran's recent purchase of Russian submarines, contending they could disrupt Gulf shipping.

The Bush administration is weighing the possibility of selling a super-secret spy satellite to the United Arab Emirates to help that pro-

Western country monitor possible military preparations by Iran. A small island claimed by the UAE was seized by Iran recently.

The industrialized countries have refrained from selling Iran military or nuclear-related equipment, but there is no common position on the sale of dual-use technology, which can be applied to either civilian or military purposes.

The Washington Post reported recently that German exports to Iran have quadrupled since 1989, to a projected level of \$5 billion, while Japan's have tripled over the same period, to a projected \$2.5 billion. It said much of the equipment is for civilian projects but can be converted to military use.



WASHINGTON: US First Lady Barbara Bush (L) embarrasses Hillary Clinton, wife of President-elect Bill Clinton outside the White House November 19. Mrs. Bush gave Mrs. Clinton a tour of the private quarters of the White House the same day. — AFP/UNB photo

Bhutanese refugees demonstrate in Nepal

KATHMANDU, Nov 20: A group of refugees from Bhutan demonstrated against the Bhutan government in front of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) office here today, witnesses said, reports AFP.

They said the protestors included senior officials of the Bhutan National Democratic Party and the Human Rights Organisation of Bhutan, and even a few young children who held placards reading "I want to go back to my school in Bhutan" and "schools are for students, not for security

forces."

Other placards called for the release of political prisoners, the respect of Human Rights in Bhutan, and the right of the refugees — mostly ethnic Nepalese — to return to the tiny Himalayan kingdom.

Despite the protest, experts from SAARC countries discussed the South Asian development fund inside the secretariat, under the chairmanship of Bhutanese Foreign Minister Lyonpo Dawa Tsering.

The meeting was not disturbed, officials said.

UN imposes arms ban on Liberia



UN Security Council holds a meeting to impose arms embargo on Liberia. — Star TV photo

UNITED NATIONS, Nov 20: The Security Council on Thursday imposed an arms embargo on Liberia and dispatched a special UN representative to the west African state in its first involvement in the civil war that has claimed 60,000 lives, reports Reuter.

The document represents an endorsement from the council of peace efforts by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), which has a force in Liberia.

The vote was a unanimous 15-0 following a debate featuring Foreign Ministers and other officials from Benin, Senegal, Ivory Coast, Burkina Faso, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Togo and the interim Liberian government.

The six-nation ECOWAS force of 15,000 dominated by military-led Nigeria, is using warplanes, gunboats and artillery in fierce fighting against rebel Charles Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL), which attacked the west African troops in Monrovia.

BRIEFLY

10 Sikh rebels shot dead: Ten Sikh militants were shot dead in an exchange of gunfire with security forces in the northern state of Punjab, the Press Trust of India (PTI) said, reports AFP from New Delhi.

The sporadic gunfire that erupted between an unspecified number of militants and security troops at Khude Halla village in Punjab's Ferozpur district overnight Wednesday ended late Thursday, police were quoted as saying.

PTI did not say if security forces sustained any casualties. Ten other militants and seven civilians were killed in other incidents linked to the bloody militancy elsewhere in Punjab late Wednesday and Thursday, the news agency said.

Fire kills 7 in New Zealand: Seven people died and two others were injured in a fire in a Christ Church Maori hostel for homeless street children and drug addicts early on Friday, police said, reports Reuter from New Zealand.

The fire was through to have broken out in a shed at the rear of the hostel and the seven were all in their teens.

"We get the feeling they were probably street kids," a fire service official told reporters.

The hostel is administered by a Maori Trust to help get homeless children and drug abusers off the street.

Japan to host G-7 summit in July: Japan will host the next Group of Seven Summit in Tokyo from July 7 to 9, chief Cabinet Secretary Koichi Kato announced Friday, reports AFP from Tokyo.

The Japanese government formally fixed the date at Friday's cabinet meeting.

Kato said the leaders of the G7 nations — Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the United States — would gather at the Akasaka state guest house.

The G7 summit had previously taken place in Tokyo in 1979 and 1986.

Kato told a press conference that Japan had not yet decided whether Russian president Boris Yeltsin would be invited to the summit.

30 die in Chinese coal mine mishaps: More than 30 people have died and 41 are missing, believed dead, in two coal mine disasters in northern China this month, the China Daily said Friday, reports Reuter from Beijing.

It said a gas explosion on November 5 at a mine in Shanxi province's Jingmao town buried 21 people.

On the same day a mine in the province's Mengxiang county flooded. Rescuers recovered the bodies of 10 miners, while 41 were missing but believed dead.

China's coal mines have a bad safety record. Almost 10,000 miners were killed in accidents last year, a daily death toll of 27, local media reported recently.

The appalling death rate — six deaths per million tonnes of coal — had spurred China to enact its first mining safety law next May.

Fresh clash in Nagorno-Karabakh: Renewed fighting broke out Thursday between Azerbaijani and Armenian forces in the disputed region of Nagorno-Karabakh, according to a Russia radio report monitored here by the BBC, reports AFP from London.

The radio said Azerbaijani troops had launched a large-scale attack on the Armenian village of Kichan in the Mardakert district.

"Karabakh self-defence forces are containing the assault by Azerbaijani forces in intense fighting," the radio said.

Fighting between Armenians and Azerbaijanis in the mainly Armenian Karabakh enclave inside Azerbaijan erupted four years ago and has left more than 2,000 dead.

Disastrous consequences on human life warned

Euro parliament calls for tougher control on plutonium shipments

STRASBOURG, France, Nov 20: The European parliament called for tougher controls on plutonium shipments on Thursday as a Japanese freighter carried its radioactive cargo home from France, reports Reuter.

A resolution from the European Community's largely advisory assembly warned of "disastrous consequences on human life and the environment" from any plutonium leak.

While ruling out minority demands for a ban on international shipments of plutonium, the parliament said it opposed transporting any type of radioactive material by air.

The Japanese Akatsuki Maru ship left France on

November 7 for a seven week voyage home under armed escort carrying its record 1.7-tonne cargo of plutonium.

But the route which Japan has tried to keep secret has been publicised by environmentalist group Greenpeace, whose ship, the solo, is trailing the cargo.

EC Energy Commissioner Antonio Cardoso E Cunha told anxious deputies on Wednesday that Japan was only repatriating plutonium which it had sent to France for reprocessing in 1984.

As long as international safety standards were met, shipping plutonium or other nuclear matter posed no real threat, he said.

Despite objections to the

Akatsuki Maru trip and differences within a government sensitive to poor international publicity, Tokyo said last Monday its policy would not change.

Japan would greatly increase its nuclear power generation, feeding conventional nuclear plants and fast breeder reactors with plutonium reprocessed in Europe over the next decade.

AP adds: A ship carrying deadly plutonium to Japan neared the equator in the south Atlantic Thursday, apparently by passing a possible route through the Panama Canal, said the environmentalist group Greenpeace.

Caribbean nations, along with countries along other po-

tential routes, had bitterly protested the shipment, fearing an accident.

The cargo ship was about 660 miles west-southwest of Monrovia, Liberia at 1 pm GMT, about 30 miles north of the equator, said Greenpeace spokesman Damon Moglen.

"It is clear that the ship is not going to the Caribbean," Moglen said in a telephone interview. "We firmly believe that the public protest and political pressure from the region blocked this deadly shipment."

France and Japan have kept secret the ship's itinerary, and countries along potential routes have strongly protested or even banned the shipment from their waters.

Bush's mother dead

WASHINGTON, Nov 20: President George Bush's mother, the woman he credits with teaching him both humility and competitiveness, died on Thursday, Dorothy Walker Bush was 91 years old and had suffered a stroke, the White House said, reports Reuter.

The President's mother, Mrs Prescott Bush, 91, died at 5:05 pm (EST) this evening at the family home in Greenwich, Connecticut, spokesman Marlin Fitzwater said in a statement.

The President was notified immediately by Nancy Ellis, the President's sister, Fitzwater said.

The death came just two weeks after Bush lost his bid for re-election

Neo-Nazis carry out 1,760 attacks on foreigners

HANOVER, Germany, Nov 20: Radical rightists and neo-Nazis have carried out 1,760 attacks in Germany in 1992, 300 more than all of last year, state officials reported Thursday, reports AP.

Since late August, when five nights of riots against an overcrowded asylum center in the Baltic port city of Rostock erupted, there have been almost daily reports of rightist attacks against foreigners and Jewish targets in Germany.

Claus Henning of the Lower Saxony Interior Ministry said that up until Nov. 8, there were 1,760 rightist attacks this year compared to 1,483 for all of 1991. Eleven people have been killed in the vio-

lence.

According to Henning, about one-third of the violence was arson and bomb attacks against asylum seekers and foreigners. He also said 70 per cent of the radicals carrying out the violence were between the ages of 16 and 21.

Other violence included everything from rock throwing at asylum shelters, to attacking foreigners on streets and desecration of Jewish cemeteries and memorials.

Meanwhile, police in Duisburg said that unknown assailants fired five shots at an asylum home in that Ruhr valley city shortly after midnight Thursday. No injuries were reported.

Major to visit EC capitals next week

LONDON, Nov 20: Prime Minister John Major will make a whirlwind tour of European capitals next week to win support for his vision of the European Community's future, his Downing Street office said Friday, reports AP.

Major's tour starts Monday in the Netherlands, and will take him to all 11 other EC countries in the run-up to the Dec. 11-12 EC summit in the Scottish capital Edinburgh.

Major intends to sound out his fellow leaders on the agenda for the summit, a spokesman for his office said, requesting customary anonymity. Britain currently holds the rotating EC presidency.

Off the Record

Bishops firm to oust prurient priests

WASHINGTON: US Roman Catholic bishops on Thursday toughened their stand on ousting sex-molesting priests and pledged care and help for victims, reports AP.

Citing the "pain, anguish and sense of alienation felt by the victims," the bishops vowed a "healing ministry" to them and their families and asked firm action against clergy sex offenders.

It was the first joint policy declaration by the bishops on a problem that has surfaced in numerous dioceses, involving a growing number of priests and victimized youngsters.

"It just can't be tolerated," said Archbishop Daniel E. Pitarczyk of Cincinnati, pounding the table at a new conference at the close of the bishops' four-day meeting here. "But it's there and we've got to deal with it."

Pitarczyk, the bishops outgoing president, added, "We're just humiliated and embarrassed at this kind of behaviour." He said that although the number of priests involved is "minuscule," it's too much and must be prevented.

In their closing session, the bishops also approved a pastoral letter on stewardship dealing with support to the church's ministry and adopted a national plan and strategy of evangelism.

Charles gives lawyer new tapes of Diana as evidence

LONDON: Prince Charles has given a lawyer new tapes featuring his wife Diana and an admirer, and the recording could be evidence if the marriage ends in divorce, the Daily Express reported Friday, says AP.

The London tabloid's gossip columnist Ross Benson wrote that lawyer Lord Goodman has been called in to mediate between Charles, 44, and Princess Diana, 31, and that Charles has given him the tapes.

Goodman, 79, who has advised former Prime Minister Lord Wilson among other leading figures on legal matters, is one of London's most eminent lawyers.

Benson's reports follows months of speculation by London's tabloids that the 11-year-old marriage of Charles and Diana is on the rocks.

Benson gave no attribution for his report and did not name the admirer.

Buckingham Palace made no comment.

Benson said a widely held theory exists of a conspiracy to destroy the royal family.

Benson did not say why anyone would want to damage the royal family in this way. But he said Prime Minister John Major's Cabinet believes that a divorce between Charles and Diana would spell the end of the monarchy. Charles is the eldest son and heir to Queen Elizabeth II.

In August, The Sun published transcripts of what it said was a Sun said it was recorded between Diana and bachelor James Gilbey. The Sun said it was recorded without their knowledge in December 1989 by radio ham Cyril Reenan, a retired bank manager.

Pornography roused his lust to rape

WASHINGTON: Dianne choked back tears as she stepped to the microphone Thursday to tell of her daughter's rape last year at age 3. The assault was only 12. The real culprit, contended Dianne, was pornography the boy had seen at summer camp, reports AP.

"What he saw on those pages not only gave him the ideas of what to do and how to do it, but it gave him the permission to treat females in a degrading and debasing manner," the Arizona resident said.

The woman, identified only by her first name, spoke at a news conference publicizing the launching of "Enough Is Enough," an anti-pornography campaign that planners hope will be taken up by women nationwide.

Equipped with a manual that includes advice on dealing with the news media and data on studies linking pornography to crime, women will fight for enforcement of laws banning child pornography and other obscene material, sponsors hope.

Ramos declares X-mas truce with communists

MANILA, Nov 20: President Fidel Ramos declared Friday a unilateral cease-fire with Communist rebels during the Christmas holidays, reports AP.

Presidential spokeswoman Annabelle Abaya said Ramos approved the recommendation of the National Unification Commission for a suspension of military operations against the New People's Army from 12:01 am on Dec 24 to midnight of Dec 25, and from 12:01 am Dec 31 to midnight on Jan 2.

Radioactive devices being stolen from Russian plants

MOSCOW, Nov 20: Increasing amounts of lethal radioactive material are being stolen from plants and hidden in homes, exposed to the atmosphere or smuggled out of Russia, a newspaper said Thursday, reports AP.

Thirteen radioactive "instruments" have been stolen since August from the Phosphorit plant in the town of Kingisepp on the Russian-Estonian border, the daily Izvestia reported. Five of them were retrieved from a ship bound from Estonia to Finland.

"We have become accustomed to theft and negligence here in Russia, but this was the first such theft of dangerously radioactive devices," the newspaper commented.

Izvestia did not explain exactly what kind of devices were stolen from the Estonian plant or why they were radioactive, saying only the instruments "can kill a man in several hours if the protective screen is removed."

Izvestia said a man suspected of robbing the Phosphorit plant was arrested in Estonia with two of the instruments, both of which were found without their protective shells.

The man who kept the

devices punished himself and everybody around," Izvestia said. It did not say what happened to the men.

Investigators said Estonian smugglers were interested in cesium, a radioactive metallic chemical used in radiation therapy and research that can be sold for high prices in western Europe.

Izvestia said the plant's managers discovered the theft months after they had occurred, but that such "negligence" was typical. Radioactive equipment was stolen from many plants, including one where a worker

der with Poland. It gave few other details.

Commonwealth television aired a special report on Thursday in which their TV crew, along with a crew from Germany's RTL television, demonstrated the ease of nuclear theft by stealing radioactive material from a nuclear fuel depot in the northern Russian city of Murmansk.

The clip showed the crews driving a television van filled with radioactive material out of the depot compound while guards stood by idly next to open gates, letting the van go unhindered.

The ITAR-Tass news agency reported Thursday that three radioactive instruments recently were stolen from a factory in the town of Mikashevichi on Belarus' bor-

der with Poland. It gave few other details.

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The clip showed the crews driving a television van filled with radioactive material out of the depot compound while guards stood by idly next to open gates, letting the van go unhindered.

Italians ask govt to protest action against Benazir

ROME, Nov 20: Italian politicians asked the government on today to make an official protest against the banishment of former Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto from Islamabad, reports Reuter.

"We, as democrats, fear that Pakistani leaders no longer care about fundamental liberties or human rights," 50 members of parliament said in a statement.

They asked the government to protest against the action by the Pakistani government.