

### Gunmen kill five MQM workers

KARACHI, Jan 5: Five people were killed and six injured when gunmen from a break-away faction of an ethnic party in Pakistan opened fire on rivals in the southern port city of Karachi, officials said today, reports Reuter.

The gunmen opened fire with kalashnikov assault rifles when five members of the Mohajir National Movement (MQM) returned home late on Monday from six months in hiding after the army launched a crackdown on the ethnic-based party.

"Five people were killed and six injured by terrorists from the MQM (Haqiqi) group," a spokesman said for the main MQM party said.

An army spokesman said the law enforcement agencies were investigating the incident, and one person had been arrested.

The killing of the MQM workers at a time when the operation clean-up was going on in the province has increased the sense of insecurity among Mohajirs, MQM party leader Azim Ahmed Ahmed Tariq said in a statement.

The army moved into the troubled southern province of Sindh in June to end escalating violence and included the MQM in its crackdown after finding 23 torture chambers run by the party in Karachi to punish its opponents. The MQM said the charges were fabricated.

Hundreds of MQM workers went underground and thousands were arrested, and the party split into rival factions.

The party was founded 16 years ago to speak for Muslim Mohajir immigrants who came to Pakistan from India at the partition and independence of the subcontinent in 1947.

# Ship with plutonium returns to Japan

TOKAI, Japan, Jan 5: As a cargo of plutonium reprocessed in France arrived in this port north of Tokyo today the head of the project apologised for Japan's policy of secrecy about the shipment, which spurred protests around the world, reports Reuter.

"We regret having caused unnecessary worries," said Tokao Ishiwatari, president of the Power Reactor and Nuclear Fuel Development Corporation. "We shouldn't have been so secretive. We need a great deal of reflection."

Ishiwatari was speaking at a news conference after the Akatsuki Maru berthed in the purpose-built port at Tokai, 125 km (75 miles) northeast of Tokyo.

Prime Minister Kiichi Miyazawa released a sigh of relief. "We are glad that (the ship) has returned home safely," he told reporters. "We also owe a debt of gratitude to the French and US governments for their help in this matter."

The freighter, with its cargo of 1.7 tonnes of highly toxic nuclear fuel and its specially built escort, the Shikishima, completed a two-month voyage from Cherbourg, tracked much of the way by ships and aircraft of the environmental group Greenpeace.

Ishiwatari said much of the furore over the shipment arose because people were not aware of Japan's plutonium programme and safety precautions.

"We must be more positive in getting people to understand what Japan is thinking and what it is doing," he said. "We realise we must think about disclosing more information in the future."

Environmentalists had concentrated their fire on potential dangers involved in the shipment and had charged that an accident could cause widespread pollution.

Japanese secrecy about the path the ship would follow and a lack of official explanations of the dangers added considerably to anxiety and protest in countries that might be along the route.

The ship's actual landing did not stop the protests. Outside the research facility where Ishiwatari was speaking, a crowd of about 500 people marched along the perimeter. They were led by four Buddhist monks with shaven heads and

yellow robes and men carrying a canoe holding a black box in the shape of the plutonium container, with a radioactive symbol on it.

Their banners read: "love mother earth", "save the earth and stop the transport of plutonium" and "solidarity with the people of the world and stop Japan developing nuclear weapons."

"This is a sad day for Japan," one demonstrator said. "We have not been able to stop this shipment and more will come. The government does not listen to us."

There were no arrests. Japan plans to ship another 10 tonnes of plutonium from France before its own reprocessing centre is up and operating in about 10 years.

The Japanese government had tried to keep the shipment under a cloak of secrecy, saying it was necessary to guard against potential attacks or attempts to seize the cargo.

Miyazawa defended the policy. "To ensure that the shipment went safely and without any accidents, this (secrecy) was very important," he told reporters.

Greenpeace, however, trailed the Akatsuki Maru for much of the time, announcing its position along the way.

Ishiwatari said the example of France, where the plutonium started its journey to noisy anti-nuclear demonstrations, had lessons for Japan.

"Watching television, I saw that if you have enough security, more openness is possible," he said. "If it's true that we didn't provide enough in-

formation about the shipment, we must make more effort to do so in the future."

A news corps of around 700 descended on this small coastal town to report the ship's arrival. Many people crammed into an exhibition building full of brightly lit panels explaining why Japan needed nuclear programmes and how safe they were.

Exhibits ranged from "Japan's need of reflective utilisation of uranium" to "schematic of molecular laser isotope separation."

### Christopher ready for takeover as Secy of State

WASHINGTON, Jan 5: Without ceremony, Warren M Christopher moved Monday into a first-floor office at the State Department to prepare to take over as Secretary of State in two weeks, reports AP.

Democratic party sources said he hoped to meet "fairly soon" after that with Russian Foreign Minister Andrei V Kozirev to make arrangements for a Clinton-Yeltsin summit.

Christopher was accompanied by a small staff, a security detail. He has the use of a government car. Among his first tasks: finding a new home in the area.

Christopher is not new to the State Department. He served from 1977 to 1981 as the deputy secretary during President Carter's administration.

## Rabin "damages" Israel's image



MARJ EZ-ZOUHOUR: Palestinian deportees use a donkey to carry water for drinking and washing on Monday in Marj Ez-Zouhour in south Lebanon. —AFP/UNB photo

JERUSALEM, Jan 5: After six months' hard work to improve Israel's image around the world, Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin has succeeded in throwing away most of the progress achieved by expelling 415 suspected fundamentalists, reports AFP.

The move, which drew international condemnation, has led to alarmist diplomatic reports about how other countries now view Israel.

On Sunday Federico Mayor, the Director General of the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation called off visit because of the December 17 deportations.

When Rabin took office in July he called for an opening-up to the world, an end to the fortress mentality associated with the old guard led by the outgoing premier, Yitzhak Shamir.

"No longer is it true that the whole world is against us," Rabin stated. "We must overcome the sense of isolation... we must join the international movement towards peace, reconciliation and cooperation."

He pledged to work to improve ailing ties with the United States and to strengthen relations with the European Community, Russia, China and "every country that responds to our outstretched

hand."

Since then the government could claim to have made serious progress.

In August, Rabin won 10 billion dollar in US loan guarantees, which Washington had refused to grant Shamir, after slashing settlement building in the occupied territories.

He became the first Israeli premier to visit Cairo for six years and was warmly received in Germany, Britain and Italy.

But the December expulsions stunned the same countries which encouraged Israel in the arduous Middle East peace process, and the hard-line refusal to reconsider the deportations has only made things worse.

Rabin was forced to admit to the cabinet on Sunday that with the 415 men still stranded in a freezing no-man's land in south Lebanon, the United Nations Security Council might impose sanctions against Israel.

Ministers should have "nerves of steel" to ride out the outcry over the deportations, he urged.

In a speech to the world union of Jewish students the same day Rabin sought refuge in the same scornful language he often accused the right-wing Likud government of using.

## Clinton to work for quick ratification of Start-II

LITTLE ROCK, Arkansas, Jan 5: President-elect Bill Clinton told Russian President Boris Yeltsin on Monday he would work for quick ratification of the sweeping disarmament treaty signed Sunday, a

The President-elect pledged to do everything he could to get early ratification of this treaty," Stephanopoulos said, referring to the Start-II treaty signed in Moscow by President George Bush and Yeltsin.

Clinton has accepted Yeltsin's invitation for a summit meeting, but declined to set a date. Stephanopoulos said, adding that Secretary of State-designate Warren Christopher would work on the matter with Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozirev.

On Sunday, Clinton told reporters he had received a lengthy letter from Yeltsin and looked forward to meeting him but that the scheduling of a summit meeting would depend on progress in his domestic programme.

Clinton has scheduled a meeting Thursday with his economic team to discuss policy recommendations prior to the January 20 inauguration, Stephanopoulos said.



Clinton spokesman said, reports AFP.

Meanwhile, Reuter added: President Yeltsin spoke to US President-elect Bill Clinton on Monday, promising to do all he could to ensure the success of the Start-II treaty on nuclear



Clinton spokesman said, reports AFP.

### First hanging in US since '65

OLYMPIA, Washington, Jan 5: Convicted child killer Wesley Dodd was executed by hanging at his own request early Tuesday, hours after the state Supreme Court rejected arguments that hanging was unconstitutional, reports AFP.

After falling through a trap door shortly after midnight, Dodd, 31, became the first death row inmate to be hanged in the United States since 1965.

He chose hanging instead of lethal injection—the only other choice in Washington — because that was how he killed his third victim, a four-year-old boy.

"I must die because I know I will kill again," he said once. Dodd admitted he raped and murdered three boys in 1989.

A thin screen only allowed Dodd's silhouette to be seen by witnesses.

The state supreme court earlier Monday voted 7-1 to uphold the death sentence after a hearing in which American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) lawyers argued that hanging is "cruel and unusual punishment" and therefore violates the US constitution.

"The real issue is not whether Dodd wants to die. The real issue is whether Washington should have the right to hang him," said Leigh Dingerson of the national coalition to abolish the death penalty.

## BRIEFLY

**Kurtenbach AP's Asia news editor:** Elaine Kurtenbach, a newswoman in the Tokyo bureau of The Associated Press, has been named the news cooperative's Asia news editor, AP reports from New York.

The appointment was announced Monday by AP President Louis D Baccant.

Kurtenbach, 33, who will be based in Tokyo, succeeds Dan Iliers, who has been transferred to the AP's Beijing bureau.

She joined the AP in Tokyo in 1987 after working as a researcher and teacher at the Chinese University of Hong Kong's Department of Government and Public Administration. She had also been a reporter and editor at the Japan Times, one of Tokyo's four English-language daily newspapers.

**Plea to stop Honecker's trial:** Lawyers for Erich Honecker asked judges Monday to stop his manslaughter trial, saying that the former head of East Germany was suffering from nausea and stomach and head pains, AFP reports from Berlin.

Honecker, 80, who is charged with giving "shoot to kill" orders to border guards attempting to halt fleeing East Germans, had undergone a "considerable deterioration" in his health, defence advocates told the court here.

The lawyers' request follows an appeal court ruling on December 30 that the trial should continue despite medical opinion that Honecker, who has liver cancer, had no more than six months to live.

**Quake hits Indonesian island:** An intense earthquake measuring 5.5 on the Richter scale was recorded Monday north of the Indonesian island of Halmahera, the Hong Kong Observatory reported, AP says from Hong Kong.

The quake, recorded at 9:30 am (0130 GMT), was centered about 2,500 kilometers (1,550 miles) northeast of Jakarta. The observatory gave no further details.

The Richter scale is a gauge of the energy released by an earthquake as measured by ground motion recorded on a seismograph.

Every increase of one on the scale means that the ground motion is 10 times greater. A quake of magnitude 6 can cause severe damage on land while a tremor of magnitude 7 is capable of causing widespread and heavy damage.

**Snow closes Italian airports:** Snowstorms closed airports across Italy on Monday, and southern Italy, used to mild winter weather, shoveled out from snowfall for a third straight day, AP reports from Italy.

Snow also continued to fall farther north, in the Umbria region south of Florence, and in Abruzzo east of Rome.

Medical authorities blamed the cold for the heart attack that killed an 87-year-old Perugia farmer, who tried to remove snow from the roof of his cowstalls, the news agency ANSA said.

Snowfall isolated small towns near Naples in the south and 1 Aquila, east of Rome. A bus outside of the capital slide over on an embankment, injuring eight people.

**Pak-Iran accord to form Islamic parliamentary conference**

TEHRAN, Jan 5: Iranian and Pakistani parliament speakers agreed here today to form an Islamic parliamentary conference independent of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), reports Xinhua.

The two Speakers, in their second round of talks, also agreed to set up sub-committees to speed up implementation of bilateral agreements between the two countries.

Setting up a parliamentary assembly consisting of parliament speakers of the member states of the Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO), which also groups Turkey, Afghanistan and six central Asian republics of the former Soviet Union.

## START II accord caps US arms control efforts in '92

WASHINGTON, Jan 5: The administration capped its 1992 arms control achievements with President Bush's announcement December 30 that the United States and Russia had resolved the few remaining technical issues blocking agreement on a follow-on Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START), reports USIS.

The START Two agreement, which was signed by Bush and Russian President Yeltsin in Moscow January 3, will reduce the strategic nuclear arsenals of the two countries by two-thirds.

Bush said the historic new treaty "is good for all mankind." It will build upon the July 1991 START accord by requiring the elimination of the most destabilising strategic weapons: land-based multi-warhead and heavy intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs). The accord will codify the Joint Understanding agreed to by the two nations at the June 1992 Washington summit.

In other areas of arms control in 1992, Bush pursued initiatives to prevent the emergence of any new nuclear-weapons states and to inhibit the proliferation of technology needed for weapons of mass destruction.

Stemming the proliferation of arms is high on the post-Cold War agenda. Ronald Lehman, outgoing director of the US Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, says, arms control will

be important to us in the future as a tool for conflict management and threat reduction — just as it has been in the era of East West confrontation we are leaving behind."

And Bush's successor, President-elect Clinton, pledges to do his best to end the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction — a challenge which he says must be dealt with throughout his term of office.

Following are some of the achievements in arms control in 1992:

**Strategic Arms:** The United States and Russia agreed December 31 to sign the START Two agreement at the January 3 Moscow summit. The White House said the treaty will implement the most sweeping strategic nuclear arms reductions in history and Secretary of State Eagleburger said the last minute mutual accommodations required to achieve it represent "the quality of the new relationship between Russia and the United States."

Under START Two, the United States and Russia have agreed to eliminate heavy intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs), all other multi-warhead ICBMs, and to reduce dramatically the total number of strategic nuclear weapons in their stockpiles.

**Nuclear Non-Proliferation:** Setting an example for other regions, President Bush announced a series of supplementary US non-

proliferation efforts in July including a decision not to produce plutonium and highly enriched uranium for nuclear explosives.

He noted that "the potential spread of the capability to produce or acquire weapons of mass destruction and the means to deliver them constitutes a growing threat to US national security interests."

**Chemical and Biological Weapons:** Significant progress was achieved in 1992 toward attaining the goal of a worldwide Chemical Weapons Convention.

In December the UN General Assembly approved the treaty to ban the production, use and stockpiling of chemical weapons. The accord also calls for the destruction of all chemical weapons and weapons production facilities.

The convention will be open for signature in Paris beginning January 13. Treaty ratification requires the signature of at least 65 nations.

**Tactical Nuclear Weapons:** The United States announced in July that it had completely withdrawn all tactical nuclear weapons deployed abroad and returned them to US territory.

The withdrawal covers US nuclear artillery shells, Lance missile warheads and naval nuclear depth bombs. In addition the Navy removed all tactical nuclear weapons, including nuclear cruise missiles, from its combatant surface ships and attack submarines.

Nuclear Testing: The administration held firm on its policy to continue limited nuclear tests, despite some objections in Congress.

The House of Representatives passed legislation during the summer calling for a one-year US test moratorium, and the Senate approved a similar measure.

In a letter to Senator Bennett Johnston, the Bush administration stressed the need for "a modest nuclear testing programme" in order to maintain confidence in a significantly reduced US nuclear deterrent.

The letter noted, however, that there were no plans to exercise more than six tests annually for the next five years, or to conduct more than three tests per year "in excess of 35 kilotons."

**Conventional Arms:** The 1990 Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty, which entered into force November 9, marked "a cornerstone of the new cooperative security order" that the United States and its allies sought to build in Europe, according to State Department spokesman Richard Boucher.

The agreement sets limits on categories of conventional weapons such as artillery, tanks, armoured combat vehicles, and combat aircraft and helicopters. Weapons in excess of established limits will be destroyed.

### Kenya's elections marred by irregularities: US

WASHINGTON, Jan 5: The United States said Monday that Kenya's elections were marred by serious irregularities that favoured the ruling party, reports AFP.

"It is clear...that the electoral process was marred by serious shortcomings," said Joe Snyder, a State Department spokesman.

President Daniel Arap Moi, who has ruled for 14 years, defeated three opponents to win a new term last Tuesday in Kenya's first multi-party elections in 26 years.

His party won 40 per cent of the votes cast, while 15 of his cabinet ministers lost their seats and opposition parties won 84 of the 200 seats in parliament.

## Off the Record

### Bush belly-flopped like a wounded swan

CASCADE, Colorado: President George Bush won the Millard Fillmore Society's Medal of Mediocrity Monday on the strength of his plunge from record high popularity after the Gulf War to the November 3 presidential loss, reports AFP.

"Fresh from the flutter of a million yellow ribbons, and a 90 per cent approval rate, President Bush belly-flopped like a wounded swan into the lake of American despair," said Phil Arkow, vice president of the group.

The group named itself after former US President Fillmore, who was sworn in after Zachary Taylor died in 1850, was defeated in 1852 and finished a distant third when he ran in 1856.

It honours "mediocrity to combat the rising tide of over-achievers," Arkow said.

Bush beat out top contenders Woody Allen, recently in the news for his personal problems, the US postal service and Vice President Dan Quayle, a 1988 winner who coached a New Jersey schoolboy to misspell "potato" this year.

Previous winners include Prince Charles and Princess Diana, singer Boy George and former baseball star Pete Rose.

### 'Churchill, The End of Glory'

LONDON: Winston Churchill could have saved tens of thousands of lives and Britain's empire by accepting Hitler's offers of peace, according to a new book that is being fiercely debated by historians, reports AP.

The revisionist biography, "Churchill, The End of Glory," by John Charmley, argues that the wartime leader should have saved all the "blood, toil, tears and sweat" he offered Britain in 1940.

"Hitler would have invaded Russia and the world's two nastiest dictators would have faced each other like two great overweight heavyweight boxers," Charmley said Monday in a telephone interview from Fulton, Mo.

"The victor" would have been either Russia or Germany and they would have been so shattered by the effort that they would not have been in a position to threaten anyone."

Charmley, an English history lecturer at the University of East Anglia, is currently on leave at Westminster College in Fulton, where Churchill made his famous "Iron Curtain" speech in 1946.

### Report on Lankan polls next week

COLOMBO, Jan 5: A long-awaited report on Sri Lanka's 1988 presidential election, which was won by current leader Ranasinghe Premadasa, will be presented to parliament next week, government sources said today, reports Reuter.

The sources, who declined to be named, said copies of the 800-page election commissioner's report had been sent to the cabinet. Parliament begins sitting next Tuesday (January 12).

Elections commissioner Chandrananda De Silva declined to give a date of which the report would be presented or to confirm that it was ready.

Opposition politicians have urged the commissioner to issue the document quickly because of alleged abuses during the 1988 poll and the likelihood of a snap presidential election.

"Conditions were the same in 1988," one analyst said.