

About 500 killed in Bombay riots

BOMBAY, Jan 13: Four people were stabbed to death Wednesday in fresh Hindu-Muslim violence that has left nearly 500 people dead in eight days of rioting, news reports said, according to AP.

Press Trust of India news agency said the stabbings were reported from Andheri and Deonar areas, but did not give details. Other riot-torn neighbourhoods were tense, but calm, the news agency said.

Police opened fire in three areas overnight, injuring five people, the police control room said.

Riots are diminishing in and around Bombay, but arson is still heavy," said the spokesman, who cannot be identified under briefing rules. Twenty-nine fires were reported during the night, he said.

According to Bombay police chief Shreekanth Bapat, the toll

as of Tuesday evening was 147. But Indian news reports, quoting hospital officials, say at least 470 people have been killed.

Hindus and Muslims armed with knives, clubs and fire-bombs have clashed in several parts of Bombay, India's largest city and home to 12 million people.

News reports say the victims have been predominantly Muslims.

"Bombay has not seen such barbaric behaviour during its 300-year-old history," said The Times of India, the country's leading daily newspaper.

At least 18 neighbourhoods are under curfew, but shopping districts, schools, cinemas, banks and offices in almost every part of the city have remained shut. Traffic is off the streets. The Bombay Stock Exchange, the country's largest, has not done any business for the last three days.

The violence resulted from the December 6 demolition of a Muslim mosque by Hindu zealots in the northern town of Ayodhya. In the ensuing week-long violence, that also gripped many parts of the country, at least 202 people were killed in Bombay. At least 1,000 more were killed in other towns and cities of India.

The deep-rooted Hindu-Muslim hatred resurfaced on January 6 when people of the two communities attacked each other in the slums of Bombay. Soon, the violence spread to fashionable districts.

The Times of India newspaper, published from Bombay, said the predominantly Hindu residents of high-rise apartments are strengthening security in their buildings to protect Muslim neighbours from Hindu marauders.



LITTLE ROCK: US President-elect Bill Clinton (L) and wife Hillary stand behind a painting, which is packed and ready for their move to Washington, prior to an interview at the Arkansas governor's mansion on Tuesday. The interview is scheduled to be aired today on ABC's 'Prime Time Live'. — AFP/UNB photo

Honecker freed

BERLIN, Jan 13: A Berlin court released former East German leader Erich Honecker from jail on Wednesday by lifting a last arrest warrant relating to corruption charges, a court spokesman said, reports Reuter.

Meanwhile, Honecker prepared today to depart for Chile, leaving behind the uneasy feeling that only his terminal liver cancer had saved him from paying for his country's crimes.

Honecker's trial for manslaughter along the Berlin Wall, billed as the most spectacular in Germany since the 1945 Nuremberg War Crimes Tribunal, ended on Tuesday when a Berlin court ruled his continued imprisonment violated basic human rights.

Ignoring a last-minute appeal by prosecutors, Berlin officials ordered a passport for the man who denied million of east Germans the right to travel and organised a last police escort to take him to the airport from jail.

Resigned but proud of their country's impartial justice, the

German press agreed there was no alternative to releasing the dying Honecker, 80, and letting him join his wife and daughter in exile in Chile.

"It may hurt many former citizens of East Germany," the Berliner Zeitung daily commented. "But the trial against Erich Honecker could not be continued."

"Nobody should shed a tear for him," it added, echoing the comment which East Berlin's communists made when frustrated East Germans fled their country by their thousands in the dramatic months before Honecker's fall from power in 1989.

The Frankfurter Rundschau wrote that United Germany could not refuse Honecker's right to die in peace even if his communist state denied that to many during its 40-year life.

"Honecker bears political responsibility for East Germany's crimes," it said. "In this sense, he remains guilty before history."

Will Clinton be world's policeman?

WASHINGTON, Jan 13: As the first post-cold war American President, Bill Clinton will be free from the ideological conflict with the former Soviet empire but he will inherit other tough international problems, reports AFP.

He must fashion an imaginative global policy in a world complicated by the rise of nationalist struggles in Europe and the disappearance of Moscow's influence over client countries after the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

As the sole remaining superpower, the United States is increasingly being called on to help settle conflicts whether in the Middle East, the Balkans or Africa, and Clinton must decide whether the United States wants to take on the role of the world's policeman.

He must also restore the

United States' economic health which he has said is indispensable for maintaining US power and meeting the competition posed by Asia and Europe while resisting protectionist policies.

The former Governor of Arkansas has been criticized for his lack of international experience and he has compensated by choosing cabinet members steeped in international affairs from the Carter administration.

For Secretary of State, he tapped Warren Christopher, who was Carter's Deputy Secretary of State. For National Security Advisor, he selected Anthony Lake, a former State Department Director of Policy planning under Carter and special assistant to Nixon for national security affairs.

He has met several times with Russian President Boris Yeltsin and advocates eco-

economic aid to Russia, which remains the world's second nuclear power and whose flight from communism he does not yet see as irreversible.

Clinton must also uphold agreements such as the Strategic Arms Reduction START I and II treaties signed by Washington and Moscow and persuade other countries who inherited Soviet nuclear power to follow suit.

In the former Yugoslavia, Clinton inherits Bush administration promises to ensure the "no-fly" zones are respected, to open prison camps, to put perpetrators of a war crimes on trial, and not to recognize Serbian territorial gains made by force.

During the election campaign, Clinton urged a stronger response to end the tragedy in Bosnia and reproached Bush for abandoning the field to the

Serbs by rejecting armed intervention in the former Yugoslavia.

Bush sent US troops into Somalia knowing that Clinton would inherit that issue, and the new president must now ensure they accomplish their humanitarian mission and return home without leaving Somalia in chaos.

In Iraq, Saddam Hussein has outlasted Bush despite his Gulf War retreat, leaving to Clinton the task of continuing Baghdad's isolation or finding a way to bring the country, which is vital to the cohesion of the Arab World, back into the community of nations.

The most ambitious international initiative by Bush and his Secretary of State James Baker was to get the Middle East peace talks underway with the seemingly impossible task of striking a durable peace.

Off the Record

Worst-dressed

LOS ANGELES: Madonna topped Blackwell's 33rd annual Worst Dressed list Tuesday and received a scolding from the sharp-tongued critic for luring America's youth toward what he called a fashion trend of overexposure, reports AP.

"What if your daughters and the youth of America were to clone Madonna?" Blackwell asked, standing before a photo of the singer-actress in bare-bosomed gown.

Blackwell, whose real name is Richard Sylvan Selze, said the latest edition of his list was the most difficult, declaring that the state of fashion had fallen to a new low.

"What looks terrible... has become fashionable," he said.

Following Madonna on the list were actresses Geena Davis, "Big Bird in Hells," and Glenn Close, who Blackwell described as "Dracula's Daughter." Television star Delta Burke ranked fourth.

Of shaven-headed singer Sinead O'Connor, No 5 on the list, he said, "No tresses, no dresses. The high priestess of pretense downright depresses."

Others on the list were actresses Shirley Maclaine, Juliette Lewis, Demi Moore, Goldie Hawn, and singer LaToya Jackson.



Television star Delta Burke ranked fourth.

Junta hints at indefinite detention of Suu Kyi

YANGON, Jan 13: The military junta indicated Tuesday that opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi would be detained indefinitely, saying it would leave the question of her release to the next government, reports AP.

The junta has said it could not hold elections for a new government until a new constitution is drafted. A convention to endorse guidelines for the charter began Saturday, but there has been no word on how long that would last or when the charter would be finished.

Mrs. Suu Kyi, 47, won the 1991 Nobel Peace Prize for standing up to the junta, which has been criticized worldwide for human rights abuses. She has been under strict house arrest since July, 1989.

US marine shot dead in Somalia

WASHINGTON, Jan 13: A Marine patrolling near Mogadishu airport was killed Tuesday in a firefight with Somali gunmen in the first death of a US serviceman in Operation Restore Hope, a Pentagon official said Tuesday, reports AP.

The dead Marine was with the 3rd Battalion, 11th Marine Regiment, based at Twentynine Palms Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Centre in California according to base spokesman Capt. John Manky. His name was withheld until relatives could be notified.

The Marines were on a security patrol near the Mogadishu airport when the shooting occurred, the Pentagon official said. He said the unit "took some fire; they returned fire and pulled their people back."

When the unit regrouped, a head count was taken and one

Marine was found to be missing. When the Marines returned to the scene of the incident, the Marine's body was found, the officials said.

There was no word on any other casualties in the firefight.

US servicemen on the ground in the area "had been taking sniper fire off and on for days," the official added.

In the past several days, the Marines have become far more aggressive in terms of dealing with Somali gunmen and their weapons and had been conducting arms sweeps in the city.

Prior to the Marine's death, the US military had reported one of their quietest days since they arrived.

US military spokesmen reported no gunfights as Marines concentrated on rounding up weapons in Mogadishu.

In the last two days, the

Marines reported carrying away 16 truckloads of weapons and ammunition from gun markets and caches, including 265 rifles and assault guns and 55 machine guns.

A spokesman for Marine commander Maj Gen Charles Wilhelm quoted the general as saying he hoped he would have a safer Mogadishu by Feb 1, with more arms off the streets so that relief workers could move around without armed guards.

The US military has 22,500 men and women in Somalia, including those aboard the Navy's ships offshore.

The operation to assist the starving in Somalia has been under way since Dec 9.

A civilian Army employee was killed December 23 near the city of Bardera when the vehicle he was riding in hit a land mine.

Peres' move to avert UN sanctions

JERUSALEM, Jan 13: Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres will meet UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali in Paris today in an attempt to avert sanctions over the deportation of 415 Palestinians to Lebanon, reports Reuter.

Bahira Barguda, a Peres aide, said Israel believed the United Nations was moving closer to imposing sanctions on Israel which refuses to comply with a UN resolution demanding the return of all the deportees.

"He (Peres) will try to explain how important it is to no impose sanctions, we want to prevent any attempt like this," Barguda said. Peres and Boutros-Ghali will both be in Paris for the signing of UN treaty banning chemical weapons.

Fire breaks out at Chernobyl N-plant

KIEV, Jan 13: Fire broke out at the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Station, site of the world's worst nuclear accident more than six years ago, but officials said today there had been no increase in radiation, reports Reuter.

Ukrinform news agency quoted an official at the station, 140 km (80 miles) north of Kiev, as saying the fire broke out late on Tuesday in a room housing technical equipment between the station's first and second reactors.

"This has nothing to do with the nuclear process," Viktor Borisenko, technical shift foreman told the agency. "There was no change in radiation levels. There was no violation of safety norms. No one was injured."

Chernobyl spokesman Oleg Golekskov told Reuters sta-

tion employees wearing gas masks fought the fire for an hour before bringing it under control.

Initial investigation showed the blaze could have been started after melted snow dripping from the roof came into contact with a high tension cable housed in a metal box.

Here was no danger to the first reactor, in a separate building 30 meters (100 feet) away.

Officials have acknowledged safety incidents remain a serious problem at Ukraine's five nuclear power stations.

The Chernobyl accident, which sent clouds of radiation over all of Europe, demoralised the industry and fostered fierce public opposition to nuclear power.

2 peacekeepers killed in Cambodia

SIEM REAP, Cambodia, Jan 13: Unidentified attackers fired B-40 rockets and automatic weapons at the houses of UN peacekeepers in a night attack near this central Cambodian city, killing two UN civilian staff and injuring two UN civilian police, UN officials here said today, reports AP.

A building housing Japanese civilian police serving with the UN Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) burned to the ground. A Ghanian police officer was shot in both hands by an AK-47 and an Indian police officer also sustained "minor" injuries, according to an initial report from the scene. It was not immediately known if any Japanese were injured.

Those killed were two women employed by UNTAC to register voters for elections scheduled for May.

The Royal date

TOKYO: Starting off with a ride in a black limousine to nothing less than an imperial palace, it wasn't you run-of-the-mill pizza and a movie sort of rendezvous, reports AP.

But in what newspapers and TV announcers hailed as Crown Prince Naruhito's first bride since his wedding plans were revealed last week, princess-to-be Masako Owada spent an afternoon Wednesday with her royal fiancé.

"It has been a long time since we last met, so there are many things I would like to talk about with him," Miss Owada said as the limousine arrived to take her to Akasaka Palace, where Naruhito lives with his parents, Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko.

Tight security ensured the two a respite from the swarms of cameramen who have followed their every move since the engagement was made public last Wednesday. Dozens remain camped out outside the Owadas' home.

Their meeting was the first since Christmas, when Naruhito formally introduced Miss Owada, whose father is Japan's top career diplomat, to his parents, media reports said.



Akihito and Empress Michiko.

'Japan plans to become N-power'

TOKYO, Jan 13: North Korea claimed Wednesday that a recent shipment of 1.7 tons of plutonium from France to Japan shows that Tokyo plans to become a nuclear power, reports AP.

Rodong Simman, the North Korean Workers' (Communist) Party newspaper, said Japan's intention to stockpile large amounts of plutonium contradicts its claim of being a peaceful state.

A special freighter arrived in Japan last week carrying the plutonium, the first of more than 30 tons that Japan plans to acquire from Britain and France in the coming decade.

Love tape may cost Charles' throne

SYDNEY, Jan 13: A magazine on Wednesday published a transcript of what it said was an intimate exchange between Prince Charles of Britain and a longtime female friend in a notorious 1989 phone conversation, three years before the prince separated from his wife, reports AP.

In the transcript published by New Idea magazine, Charles tells Camilla Parker Bowles, "I'll just live inside your trousers."

The magazine said the conversation, which contains explicit references to love and desire, was recorded by a radio enthusiast who scanned London's mobile telephone frequencies on December 8, 1989.

Some details of the conver-

Love tape may cost Charles' throne

sation appeared in the British press last year.

Charles, the heir apparent to the British throne, and his wife, Diana, separated in December after 11 years of marriage.

In one part of the transcript, Parker Bowles says she needs Charles all the time. The prince replies: "Oh God, I'll just live inside your trousers or something. It would be much easier."

Much of the alleged conversation deals with how and where the two can meet that week. Near the end, they state their love for each other.

Camilla: "I do love you, and I'm so proud of you."

Charles: "Oh, I'm so proud of you."

Camilla: "Don't be so silly. I have never achieved anything."

Charles: "Yes you have."

Camilla: "No I haven't."

Charles: "Your great achievement is to love me."

Camilla: "Oh, darling, easier than falling off a chair."

Charles: "You suffer all these indignities and tortures and calamities."

Camilla: "Oh, darling, don't be so silly. I'd suffer anything for you. That's love. It's the strength of love."

An earlier Reuter report from London adds: Britain's Royal family may be plunged into a fresh scandal following published details of a sexually explicit conversation said to be between Prince Charles and his long-time friend, Camilla Parker Bowles, reports Reuter.

Reports of the taped conversation were published just a day after the British heir to the throne and his estranged wife, Princess Diana, were accused of using the media to publicise personal accounts of their marriage break-up.

Details of the six-minute conversation filled the front sections of Wednesday editions of Britain's tabloid newspapers.

In a rare move, tabloid editors met on Tuesday and agreed not to publish the full transcript of the recording, dubbed the "Camillagate tape", at a time when the British government is studying a report calling for a crackdown on the press.

The transcript was published in the Australian magazine new idea, owned by media tycoon Rupert Murdoch,

Albert Reynolds re-elected PM

DUBLIN (Ireland), Jan 13: Parliament on Tuesday re-elected Prime Minister Albert Reynolds and he immediately named his popular new coalition partner, Dick Spring, as deputy prime minister and foreign minister, reports AP.

Reynolds re-election sealed the pact between his long-dominant Fianna Fail party, which suffered a major setback in the November 25 general election, and Spring's left-leaning Labour Party, which was the big winner.

Members of the Dail, Ireland's parliament, gathered in mid-afternoon and voted 102-60 for Reynolds.

who is also proprietor of Britain's mass circulation Sun tabloid.

The Daily Mail newspaper said magazines in Germany, the Netherlands and Belgium were planning to use the transcript.

"Six-minute love tape could cost Charles throne", ran the Sun's front-page headline. The paper described the tape as sexually explicit, with the couple constantly declaring their love for each other. The paper may publish the full transcript soon.

It would seem ridiculous for publications in other parts of the world to be able to publish the full transcript and for people in this country not to know what it contains," The Sun's deputy editor, Stuart Higgins, said.