

Clashes leave 53 dead in Rwanda

KIGALI, Jan 27: Ethnic and political clashes in northern Rwanda have killed 53 people in the last five days, the government said Tuesday, reports AP.

Prime Minister Dismas Nsengiyaremye said in a statement the casualties were among minority Tutsi tribesmen, who oppose President Juvénal Habyarimana, as well as opposition party members.

The killings began Thursday by supporters of the president, who belongs to the majority Hutu ethnic group, according to sources in the prime minister's office.

Nsengiyaremye said at a news conference carried on state-run radio that the attacks occurred in the president's home region.

There were no immediate reports of deaths among the president's supporters and no official word on what sparked the violence.

But Habyarimana's supporters are opposed to a January 9 agreement between the government and the insurgents. They believe the rebels got more representation in a proposed interim government than they deserve.

The Hutus consider all Tutsi sympathizers of the rebel Rwandese Patriotic Front.

The rebels are predominantly Tutsi who fled to neighbouring countries after losing to the Hutus in bloody power struggles more than 30 years ago.

They began returning to their homeland in 1990.

Iraqi troops have scattered to avoid air strikes

CAMP DOHA (Kuwait), Jan 27: Thousands of Saddam Hussein's troops have scattered in southern Iraq to avoid US and allied air strikes, the US Commander here said Tuesday, reports AFP.

Since the first air strikes against Iraq on January 13, two Iraqi divisions have moved out of their barracks to areas around Basra, according to General Robert Frix, the head of the US Task Force sent to Kuwait as a deterrent this month.

The allies targeted Iraqi air defence systems, including missile batteries and not Iraqi troops.

US experts have also gathered intelligence which shows Iraq has no intention of firing its missiles on Kuwait. "At this time" even though it is capable of doing so, Frix added.

Several batteries of US patriot anti-missile missiles were deployed last week as a precaution.

"If you feel you're going to come under attack, you disperse," Frix said during a meeting with foreign journalists at the US army base here for the 1,100-strong unit of the 1st cavalry division.

"You don't put your eggs in one basket," he said.

The General, a Gulf War veteran, said the troop movements were strictly for protection and represented no threat at all to Kuwait, which Iraq invaded August 2, 1990 and occupied for seven months until US led forces drove them out.

There has been "no major ground force threat" to Kuwait at least the past six months, Frix said.

The troops, moving to areas around the southern Iraqi port of Basra were from a mechanised infantry division and an armoured division, he said.

The remarks came despite Saddam Hussein's renewed claims on Kuwait and Kuwaiti anxiety during the recent crisis.

Although only 1,400 US troops — 1,100 in the task force and 300 additional special forces — are on the ground in Kuwait, Frix said Kuwait could easily be defended because of massive allied air power in the Gulf.

"If I felt threatened, I would be able to ask for more resources," he said referring to an estimated 200 allied warplanes in Saudi Arabia and 75 warplanes on a US aircraft carrier.

At the same time, allied

military intelligence has extensive capabilities to monitor ground troop movements that would give advance warning.

Aircraft will be used to support ground units in upcoming military exercises with Kuwaiti troops, he added.

Frix added that Kuwaiti troops — estimated at 20,000 — have made major improvements since the Iraqi invasion.

"When the allied air strikes started, they had a general defence plan and executed the general defence plan and went into the field with confidence," he said.

This was not the case at the time of the invasion.

But they still need to improve further and must also acquire "newer weapons systems."

"You can't create armies overnight," he added.

Azeri PM resigns

MOSCOW, Jan 27: Azerbaijan's Prime Minister Ragim Guseinov resigned on Tuesday and was succeeded by his Deputy, Ilar-Tass news agency said, reports Reuters.

Azeri President Abulfaz Elchibey issued a decree replacing Guseinov with first Deputy Prime Minister Ali Masimov, the 40-year-old head of the State Economics and Planning Committee.

Tass quoted the decree as saying Guseinov had offered to resign but gave no details. Officials in the former Soviet republic could not be contacted to confirm the report.

It seemed likely that Guseinov, one of the team who took power after the Azeri popular front deposed former President Ayaz Muttalibov last May, could have been a victim to internal politics.

The popular front consistently pressed for full independence from Russia and rest of the Commonwealth of Independent States, which Azerbaijan formally left in October.

Ghali committed to UN reforms

UNDATED, Jan 27: Secretary-General Boutros Ghali remains strongly committed to UN administrative and fiscal reform, his spokesman said January 26, reports AP.

Confirming the departure March 1 of Undersecretary General for Administration and Management Dick Thornburgh, UN spokesman Joe Sills said that the secretary general wanted to "give every assurance" of his interest in continuing the UN reforms after Thornburgh leaves.

Sills' comments were in response to an article in the Washington Post which said Thornburgh wrote to Clinton transition officials in December urging them to quickly nominate a replacement or risk losing US influence over efforts to reduce UN waste, fraud and abuse that have been spearheaded by the United States and other Western nations.

The reforms at the United Nations in terms of staffing, budget, and management started before the arrival of Mr Thornburgh and will certainly continue after he departs," Sills said. "The person responsible — and the only person with overall responsibility — is the secretary general. Reforms are very much in his hands."

Havel elected Czech President

PRAGUE, Jan 27: Vaclav Havel was elected President of the Czech Republic today by the new nation's parliament, reports AFP.

Havel, the former President of the United Czechoslovakia which gave way to two independent states on January 1, was elected to a five year

Off the Record



Big debate is raging across the United States over implant of silicon breasts and its after effects. There are conflicting opinions and varied experiences of the women who underwent surgery for a number of reasons including correction of 'deformity'. Photo shows a woman with implant silicon breasts who is 'doing fine'. There are about 2 million women in the US with implants. — Star TV photo

It was all play-acting

MANILA, Jan 27: A 13-year-old high school student killed a friend as they re-enacted a fight scene they had seen on television, police reported Wednesday, reports AP.

Reynald Panaduan of suburban Kalookan City stabbed neighbour Henry Palanas, 12, in the chest Tuesday night with the fold away knife of a nail clipper, officers said.

"I did not intend to do it. I thought the knife was not folded out," Panaduan told police. "It was all play-acting. I would stab him and he would play dead just like what we saw on TV."

Doctors said the knife punctured the heart of Palanas, who died while being treated at a hospital.

Homicide investigator Alfredo Orbeta said Panaduan was released to his parents' custody pending further investigation.

Free air tickets to homosexuals

JERUSALEM, Jan 27: A court gave a gay El Al airlines flight attendant a chance Tuesday to demand free tickets for his partner, in the first ruling recognising the rights of Israeli gay couples, news reports said, according to AP.

The labour court in Tel Aviv said the flight attendant was entitled to claim free tickets if he can prove his partner lives with him permanently, the national news agency Ilim said. A hearing was scheduled for March to let him present evidence of the relationship's stability.

El Al gives free tickets to the domestic partners of heterosexual employees who cannot marry for some reason, such as religious authorities ban on marriages by people of different religions.

The ruling Tuesday was the first time an Israeli court recognised the right of homosexuals to live as a couple and receive benefits granted to heterosexual couples, Israel television reported.

The television report did not give the flight attendant's name. An El Al spokesman was not immediately available for comment.

I'll do what my husband asks me to do

NEW YORK, Jan 27: Hillary Rodham Clinton got a quick start Tuesday on her job heading her husband's health care task force, pursuing advice from award-winning health care volunteers, reports AP.

She also worked New York school kids, one of whom declared she was pretty, wonderful "and I think she's powerful."

Mrs. Clinton picked up a community service award on her first trip outside Washington as first lady, and used the occasion to question other winners of the award whose projects involve health care for children.

The Lewis Hine award was for her service to children over the years.

Mrs. Clinton said she met informally with the Hine health care winners to learn more about the programmes, why they've been singled out, get their advice about what will work.

Drug trafficking in Europe may increase again

BRUSSELS, Jan 27: Drug trafficking in Europe is likely to increase again in 1993, mainly on the Balkan routes and through East European countries, the Customs Co-operation Council said on Tuesday, reports Reuters.

More than 4,500 kg (9,900 lbs) of heroin were seized in Europe in 1992, more than 50 per cent up in 1991, principally along the Balkan route, the 126-nation Council said in provisional figures issued on Tuesday.

It said customs and police also found 12,000 kg (26,400 lbs) of cocaine in the first 10 months of the year, up from 9,974 kg (21,900 lbs) in the whole of 1991.

Already in 1991 cocaine seizures had increased a massive 85 per cent and heroin by

13 per cent, the Brussels based council said.

"The problem with heroin is that it is penetrating Europe by the Balkan route. It comes from Turkey and passes through Yugoslavia and Germany," Georges Davrou Deputy Director of the Council's Technique Directorate told a news conference.

He said it was difficult to control drugs smuggling through eastern European countries because it was done mainly with lorries and routes were diversifying quickly.

Davrou said Greece and Italy were traditional routes but Georgia and the former east Germany were emerging as Prime Channels for drug trafficking.

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Stephanopoulos said Clinton met with Pickering in Little Rock during the transition and was "deeply impressed" by Pickering's "knowledge and wisdom."

A career Foreign Service officer, Pickering previously served as US permanent representative to the United Nations.

Clinton chose Pickering "because he believes there is no more important challenge than assisting our Russian friends."

BRIEFLY

Quake hits Hawaii Island: A moderate earthquake struck Hawaii Island Tuesday, but there were no immediate reports of injuries or damage, says AP from Volcano.

The tremor, measuring 5.7 on the Richter scale, occurred just before 5:30 am local time (1500 GMT) somewhere in Hawaiian Volcanoes National Park, said Mike Blackford, a scientist at the Pacific Tsunami Warning Centre in Honolulu.

No tsunami, or tidal wave, was generated, Blackford said. Hawaii Island police reported calls from island residents wondering what happened.

Fire kills 8 in Mississippi: An apartment fire early Tuesday killed eight members of one family, who may have been trapped by a barred window, reports AP from Bruce.

The victims were a 53-year-old woman, six of her grandchildren and an infant great-grandchild, said Dr. Gene Beadle, Calhoun county medical examiner.

"It was a real tragic thing," said Bruce Mayor Elmo W. Overby.

Beadle said most of the bodies were found near a window. The window had steel bars and I assume they were making an effort to get out but could not," he said.

Storm claims 5 in Indonesia: At least five people were killed and more than 750 houses were destroyed as a tropical storm hit the eastern Indonesian islands of Flores and Sumba, a news report said Wednesday, AP reports from Jakarta.

The daily Kompas said at least five people were killed on Flores when the storm hit the area over the weekend. Flores is about 1,600 kilometers (1,000 miles) east of Jakarta.

The storm also destroyed 400 houses in eastern Flores and 350 others in the central part of the island, along with scores of others in the western part of Sumba Island.

Rebels kill 4 cops in Peru: Marxist guerrillas launching an offensive in the run-up to Friday's municipal elections attacked a police station in an open-air market and a police checkpoint on Tuesday, killing four policemen, officials said, reports Reuters from Lima.

At least two Shining Path guerrillas were also killed in the attacks and another policeman wounded, they said.

About 10 guerrillas launched a pre-dawn attack on a police post in Lima's main wholesale market, killing two policemen and wounding a third, a police spokesman said.

New Zealanders free to travel Russia: New Zealand has lifted all travel restrictions on Russian passport holders, Minister for External Relations and Trade Don McKinnon said yesterday, reports Reuters from Wellington.

The agreement was reciprocal. In the past it was difficult for New Zealanders to travel within the former Soviet Union as huge regions were closed to foreigners.

Under the new arrangements New Zealanders living in Russia will have the same freedom of movement as the Russian public.

US to give Ukraine \$175m for dismantling N-arms

KIEV, Jan 27: President Bill Clinton told Ukraine's leader Leonid Kravchuk by telephone that he would honour a US pledge to provide 175 million dollars for the disposal of former Soviet missiles, Ukrainian television said on Tuesday, reports Reuters.

"Clinton confirmed the intention of the American administration to allocate to Ukraine a minimum of 175 million dollars in connection with the destruction and dismantling of nuclear missiles," the television said.

Kravchuk and other Ukrainian leaders have insisted on receiving financial compensation and security guarantees before ratifying the START II Treaty under which it is to turn over to Russia 176 strategic missiles for destruction.

Ukrainian officials estimate the costs of dismantling at about 1.2 billion dollars — to make safe missile silos, guard against ecological accidents and retrain military staff.

Delays in ratifying START I, signed in 1991, have strained relations between the United States and Ukraine. Parliament is due to debate the pact at its current session.

Clinton's call, less than week after his inauguration, indicated Washington's wish to maintain good relations with the second most powerful of the former Soviet republics.

The television said both Presidents agreed. US Secretary of State Warren Christopher and Ukrainian Foreign Minister Anatoly Zlenko should meet as soon as possible.



NEW DELHI: Deputy Imam (priest) Ahmad Bukhari (C) holds a copy of the Indian constitution as he works his way through a crowd outside the Jamma Masjid (Friday mosque, background) on Tuesday to protest India's 44th Republic Day celebrations as a black chapter in the nation's secular history. Bukhari led 5000 Muslims in the protest which was stopped peacefully by police before it reached parliament. —AFP/UNB photo

UN to withdraw troops from Angola if fighting continues

UNITED NATIONS, Jan 27: UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali recommended Tuesday that the United Nations reduce its presence in Angola to a minimum and withdraw completely if no progress on a cease-fire is achieved by the spring, reports AP.

The 15 nation Security Council, however, reached no consensus in private consultations about whether to accept his recommendation and withdraw the peacekeeping force it deployed in Angola in June 1991.

In a report to the council, Boutros-Ghali proposed that the United Nations pull back

personnel to the capital of Luanda and reduce their number to 64, down from the mandated 714. He said that if fighting persisted and negotiations remained on hold, the UN force should be shut down by April 30.

A 1991 peace accord in Angola has failed, in part because the United Nations organized elections before both sides in Angola's 17-year civil war had been disarmed. Rebels were able to contest the outcome by force when their movement lost parliamentary and presidential elections last September.

Fighting between rebels and government forces has now

spread to dozens of towns.

The Security Council scheduled more consultations on Boutros-Ghali's recommendations for Wednesday afternoon.

Despite the problems, Ambassador Jose Jesus of Cape Verde said the United Nations would not throw in the towel on Angola.

"We have a unanimous view that we should not give up," Jesus said of he and the other Security Council members.

As part of that effort, the United Nations dispatched a plane Tuesday to airlift UNITA rebels from Angola to peace talks scheduled Wednesday in Ethiopian capital, Addis Ababa.



NEW YORK: First Lady Hillary Clinton watches over as 12 year old Chevon Perry works on a lesson at PS 115 Elementary School on Tuesday. Hillary made her first trip as first lady to New York to receive an award for her service to children. —AFP/UNB photo

Australia for moderate expansion of Japan's military

CANBERRA, Jan 27: Australian Prime Minister Paul Keating has expressed his support for a moderate expansion of Japanese military, terming such a move as "reasonable," reports Xinhua.

However, Keating warned against Japan trying to fill any vacuum left by a shrinking US military presence in the region.

The Australian Prime Minister made these remarks in an interview with the Australian Financial Review newspaper, which was published today.

Clinton has more millionaire advisers than Reagan or Bush

WASHINGTON, Jan 27: President Clinton, who made a campaign issue of Republican favoritism of the wealthy, has more millionaires among his top advisers than either Ronald Reagan or George Bush, reports AP.

Clinton has at least nine millionaires at the top of his administration, including several well-to-do lawyers and two Wall Street executives whose fortunes dwarf Clinton's reported \$863,000 in assets.

Among the top Cabinet members are Treasury Secretary Lloyd Bentsen, worth at least \$1.5 billion, and Secretary of State Warren Christopher, who is worth at least \$1.2 million.

But even their fortunes are easily topped by the two top economic advisers Clinton bor-

rowed from Wall Street, Robert Rubin and Roger Altman. Each is worth tens of millions of dollars.

In addition, four other Cabinet members and a UN ambassador with Cabinet level status are millionaires, and five other top aides may well have the distinction, an Associated Press review of their financial disclosure reports reveals.

Another millionaire, Zoe Baird, withdrew her nomination for attorney general last week. She would have given up a \$1.5 million-a-year job as a corporate counsel to work for the government.

Reagan counted seven millionaires in his first administration while Bush's first Cabinet had six.

For Republicans, still smarting from Clinton campaign at-

tacks they catered to the wealthy during the 1980s, the composition of the new Democratic Cabinet is ironic.

"What they're going to say is, 'Our millionaires are better than their millionaires were,'" said former Commerce Secretary Robert Mosbacher, one of the Bush Cabinet's top millionaires.

"Being a millionaire should not be thought of as a negative or a pejorative. But let's face it, there have been claims about populism that have been made, and the reality has obviously been very different," he said.

Michael Deaver, a former Reagan White House aide, said the irony is that many Clinton Cabinet appointees made their fortunes during the 1980s when Republican policies held

sway.

the very best of what the '80s had to offer, and they're here saying that the '80s were bad," Deaver said.

During the campaign, Clinton repeatedly criticized Bush for being "out of touch" with average Americans and concerned more with the interests of the wealthy.

For instance, in a Labour Day speech in Independence, Mo., Clinton accused Bush of waking up "every morning worrying about how to lower taxes one more time on millionaires."

White House spokeswoman Dee Dee Myers said "wealth had nothing to do" with the Clinton's cabinet picks.

"Clinton chose his cabinet looking for talent and diversity, and I think he got that. I just don't think that was a

consideration one way or another," she said.

Alan Brinkley, a Columbia University history professor who specializes in issues of populism, said he doesn't think the large concentration of millionaires conflicts with the populist themes of Clinton's campaign.

"Remember, 1 million dollars isn't what it used to be. It may not seem that way to most Americans, but any attorney or well-paid professional, after a number of years at work, stands a good chance to have made 1 million dollars," he said.

In addition to Bentsen and Christopher, other Cabinet members who are millionaires include Energy Secretary Hazel O'Leary, worth at least \$1.2 million; Labor

Secretary Robert Reich, at least \$1.4 million; and Education Secretary Richard Riley, at least \$1.2 million.

Commerce Secretary Ronald Brown was paid more than \$1.7 million last year, plus \$1.1 million to sever a partnership arrangement with his Washington law firm.

UN Ambassador-designate Madeleine K. Albright, who has Cabinet level status, reported assets of at least \$1.1 million.

"Because appointees must only describe the value of their assets in broad ranges, it is difficult to tell whether some other appointees may also be millionaires."

For instance, Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt reported assets valued between \$1.8 million and \$2.5 million.

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