

Nagas kill 10 more

NEW DELHI, Sept 29: Tribal militants with automatic guns raided a rival tribe's village in northeastern India and killed 10 people on Wednesday, a news agency reported, says AP.

The attack by Naga guerrillas apparently avenged the killing of four comrades earlier Wednesday by fighters of the rival Kuki tribe, United News of India said.

The killings were the latest in a series of daily clashes between the two groups in the remote hilly state of Manipur. The area is 1,650 kilometres (1,000 miles) east of New Delhi.

More than 300 people have been killed in the past year in the war between the two tribes. In the most brutal attack so far, a group of Nagas hacked, burned and shot to death 90 Kuki civilians on September 14.

The decades-old enmity between the two tribes is over control of land. Also, the Nagas, once a headhunting tribe, see the Kukis as an obstacle in their goal to set up an independent nation, which proposes to include some predominantly Kuki areas.

The Nagas have been fighting a low-key insurgency with Indian security forces for the last 40 years. The Kukis have recently begun campaigning for a separate state within India.

ISLAMABAD, Sept 29: Campaigning has picked up after a slow start as the countdown to Pakistan's parliamentary elections begins, reports AFP.

The main contenders, Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif, were addressing an average of a dozen rallies each day on whirlwind tours up and down the country.

At a rally in Gujranwala on Monday, Bhutto reportedly alleged that Sharif had collected 2,000 million rupees (about 67 million dollars) from drug barons, smugglers and big industrialists for his electioneering, a charge he has denied.

During his 30-month rule until mid-July, Sharif "plundered" the country and added nine big factories to his industrial empire through "ill gotten" money, she was quoted in the local press as saying.

Hussain Haqqani, Sharif's former Ambassador to Sri Lanka and now a close aid of Bhutto, said Sharif imposed a culture of money.

"Corruption has been institutionalised for the first time in this country," he has said.

Sharif, fighting back, has blamed Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party (PPP) for the 1971 split of Pakistan, and has also accused her of hatching a "conspiracy" with former President Ghulam Ishaq Khan to

grab power.

Since its creation in 1967, the PPP has been working against Pakistan's integrity and solidarity, he was quoted as telling a crowd the same day, pledging to fulfil his "mission of finishing the anti-Pakistan party."

While the two main parties engage in bitter verbal jousting, a third party, the Pakistan Islamic Front (PIF) led by fundamentalist Qazi Hussain Ahmed, has condemned both of them as American puppets.

Bhutto and Sharif are indistinguishable, he says.

Sharif is campaigning on a pro-business ticket, trying to capitalise on his past performance.

Other leaders promise but Nawaz Sharif delivers," a newspaper AD says, highlighting his liberalisation of the economy, improvements in communications and an employment scheme for jobless youths.

Another Sharif AD attacks the PPP leadership for allegedly taking millions of rupees in a secret sale of party nominations to candidates while Bhutto's husband Asif Zardari is accused of abetting terrorism and receiving kickbacks during her 20-month rule which ended in

August 1990.

A code of conduct, drafted by the election commission and endorsed by all parties, prohibits the use of abusive language, the fanning of ethnic or linguistic sentiment, including calling opponents traitors or saying they were disloyal to Islam.

Complaints are pouring in daily at the commission's office

about code violations, an official said.

The commission said it had issued notices to both Bhutto and Sharif to answer allegations of violations.

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BRIEFLY

Four Russian judges resign

Judges from Russia's Constitutional Court announced their resignations Tuesday in protest at the "political games" being played by the court's President Valery Zorkin, AFP reports from Moscow.

Nikolai Vitrak, the court vice-president, and judges Ernest Ametov, Tamara Morschakova and Anatoli Konovodov said they would boycott the court, the Itar-Tass news agency reported.

Earlier Ametov had said that the "complacency and influence of the court had led the country into a legal impasse."

Rabin starts China visit Oct 10:

Yitzhak Rabin will make the first visit to China by an Israeli Prime Minister next month as the two countries, which established relations only last year, move rapidly to cement their ties, Reuter reports from Beijing.

Rabin will make an official goodwill visit from October 10 to 14 at the invitation of China's Premier Li Peng, the Foreign Ministry said in a statement issued through the official Xinhua news agency Wednesday.

China, long a staunch supporter of the Palestinian cause, established diplomatic relations with Israel in January 1992.

One executed in Texas:

An inmate was executed by injection early Tuesday for the slaying of a college instructor who was abducted, raped and then run over with her own car, AP reports from Huntsville.

Antonio Bonham, 33, went to his death just after midnight after asking the Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles and Governor Ann Richards to commute his sentence to life without parole. He had no final statement.

He was convicted in the 1981 murder of 62-year-old Marie McGowen.

One gunned down in S Africa:

Gummen with AK-47s opened fire on a black commuter taxi Tuesday, killing the driver and injuring eight passengers, police said, AP reports from Johannesburg.

The attack occurred on a road south of Johannesburg that has been the site of several similar attacks linked to political fighting. More than 45 blacks died in those shootings, which occurred over the past three weeks.

Irish President in Agra:

Irish President Mary Robinson left yesterday for the Taj Mahal town of Agra after ending the official stage of a six-day trip to India, officials said, AFP reports from New Delhi.

Robinson, 49, was seen off at the forecourt of the presidential palace by President Shankar Dayal Sharma, Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao and a host of Indian ministers before an inter-service guard of honour.

Robinson, accompanied by her husband, was then taken by the India Air Force to Agra, nearly 200 kilometers (125 miles) south of New Delhi to see the Taj Mahal, a 17th century Moghul-built architectural marvel.

21 die in Indian bus mishap:

Twenty one persons were killed, 18 on the spot, when bus in which they were travelling overturned near Srisailam dam in Kurnool district yesterday, PTI reports from Hyderabad.

The bus was carrying 38 persons working in the Srisailam dam project, police said.

Three persons succumbed to injuries at the Kurnool government hospital, where the injured have been admitted, police added.

Ranariddh, Hun Sen off to UN:

Cambodia's two prime ministers left for New York Wednesday where they will thank the United Nations for helping bring peace to the war-ravaged country and seek guarantees of financial aid, Reuter reports from Phnom Penh.

First Prime Minister Prince Norodom Ranariddh and second Prime Minister Hun Sen will represent Cambodia at the UN General Assembly for the first time.

Hamm-Bruecher to run for German presidency

BONN, Sept 29: Veteran liberal politician Hildegarde Hamm-Bruecher said Tuesday she would run against Chancellor Helmut Kohl's choice for President if picked by her party, the junior partner in Kohl's coalition, reports AFP.

The Free Democratic Party (FDP) has rejected Kohl's staunchly Conservative candidate Steffen Heitmann, the justice minister in the regional parliament of the East German state of Saxony.

Hamm-Bruecher, 72, told reporters in Frankfurt on Tuesday she had discussed the matter with FDP leader Klaus Kinkel.

If elected she would be Germany's first woman president. Asked if she was up to the job, she replied, "You can see so yourself."

The FDP has not yet taken an official stance on its candidate for the election.

Pak election campaign gets momentum

Benazir, Sharif go neck and neck

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US Senate says 'no' to abortion

WASHINGTON, Sept 29: The Senate, in a defeat for abortion-rights supporters, Tuesday refused to lift the 17-year-old ban on federally financed abortions for the poor, reports AP.

By a 59-40 roll call vote, senators voted instead to slightly liberalise current restrictions. Medicaid can now be used to pay only for abortions for women whose lives are in jeopardy; under the bill, funds would also be provided when pregnancies result from rape or incest.

The vote signalled defeat of this year's effort by abortion-rights advocates to use the Ascension of President Clinton to the White House to dramatically expand the use of federal funds for abortions. The House last June refused to drop the ban and settled for the same restrictions that the Senate approved today.

When the year began, abortion-rights supporters had high hopes. Gone were the veto threats Republican Presidents Reagan and Bush had issued for the past dozen years every time efforts were made to expand access to federal abortion assistance.

Supporters were also bolstered by the addition of four women to the Senate in last fall's elections, all of them Democrats and backers of abortion rights.



US First Lady Hillary Clinton testifies before the House Ways and Means Committee on Tuesday on Capitol Hill. Mrs. Clinton implored members of Congress "as a mother, a wife, a daughter, a sister, a woman," to work with the administration to overhaul America's health care system. — AFP photo

Off the Record

AIDS victim wins suit two years after death

BLOEMFONTEIN, South Africa: Two years after his death from AIDS, a man has won a lawsuit against the doctor who rejected his condition to his golfing buddies, reports AP.

An appeals court Tuesday rejected an earlier court's dismissal of the case and ordered Dr. Matthys J Kruger to pay the man's estates 5,000 rand (dls 1,470) in damages for breach of confidentiality.

The AIDS patient, Barry McGahey sued Kruger in 1991 after Kruger told other doctors during a golf game of McGahey's illness. McGahey demanded 50,000 rand (dls 14,700) in damages.

Kruger defended his action by saying he felt obligated to tell other doctors who might treat McGahey of his condition.

In October 1991, a judge dismissed the suit, saying McGahey's right to privacy was superseded by the doctor's right to warn people of his condition. McGahey had died a month earlier.

Because of her sexual orgies

BONN: Madonna said Tuesday she had no intention of changing her scheduled show in Frankfurt on Saturday despite demands from a conservative parliamentarian that the show be banned on grounds of obscenity, reports AFP.

Norbert Gies, an official of the Christian Socialist Party (CSU), the Bavarian Sister Party of Chancellor Helmut Kohl's Christian Democrats, on Monday called for the show to be stopped or at least banned for minors because of the American singer's "sexual orgies" on stage.

But Hansl Hoffmann, one of the concert organisers, said "the singer has not even once appeared totally naked on stage, she always wears a bra and pants."

The show in Frankfurt will be Madonna's only appearance in Germany on her world tour which began Saturday in London.

Gies bitterly complained on Tuesday that most German media had made his earlier comments sound ridiculous.

"The organisers should be aware that there are still people in Germany who question the morality and need for such shows," he said.

Boeing 727 gives smokers their right back

LOS ANGELES: A new charter service that makes the skies smoker-friendly made its first Chicago-to-Los Angeles flight Tuesday as passengers puffed to their hearts' content, reports AP.

The Freedom Air flight carrying 50 to 60 passengers arrived at Los Angeles International Airport late Tuesday morning.

Other flights are scheduled for October 5 and October 12, said Freedom Air spokesman Randy Reich, who added that the charter's future will depend on the success of those flights.

Freedom Air gets around the federal smoking ban on commercial flights of six hours or less because it is considered a club, requiring a one-time membership fee of 20 dollars.

"It's basically a public charter service to give smokers their rights back," said Reich. "I don't smoke, but I do believe in people's rights."

Freedom Air's Boeing 727 seats 165 passengers, but Reich said he didn't know how many passengers were needed to make a flight profitable.

A one-way fare for the Chicago-Los Angeles trip was 201 dollars and a round-trip fare was 402 dollars.

Freedom Air was founded by former United Airlines pilot Ted Hall and his wife Jinni. The couple invested 300,000 dollars to start the business.

New US strategy on Somalia soon

LONDON, Sept 29: Author Salman Rushdie appealed to British Airways (BA) on Tuesday to overturn a decision to ban him from its flights and said he had the backing of Prime Minister John Major in his fight to be allowed on board, says Reuter.