

Zhirinovsky asked to leave Slovenia

BLED, Slovenia, Jan 29: Slovenia asked extreme Russian nationalist Vladimir Zhirinovsky to leave the country for disturbing the public order in a resort town, the Foreign Ministry said Friday, reports AFP.

The ministry's request followed reports from local journalists that Zhirinovsky and his group damaged property in the resort town of Bled during a bout of drinking.

A ministry spokesman said local citizens had complained to police, but he refused to comment further about what he termed 'night' incidents.

The ministry asked Zhirinovsky and his delegation "to leave Slovenia as soon as possible," the official said Friday night. He spoke on condition of anonymity.

"It is a provocation," Zhirinovsky's adviser Alexander Zoubkov said late Friday. "We are staying as we had planned, and we will leave on Sunday."

BRIEFLY

BJP wins Satna seat: The BJP candidate, Brajendra Pathak, yesterday won the Satna assembly seat defeating the Congress (I) candidate, Sayeed Ahmed, by 1,638 votes, PTI reports from Bhopal.

Pathak polled 24,772 votes against Ahmed's 23,134. Polling for this assembly constituency of Madhya Pradesh was held on January 24.

PFA chairman dead: Dr Kim Sang Man, Chairman of the Manila-based Press Foundation of Asia (PFA), died in Seoul, South Korea on Wednesday. He was 84. Bernama reports from Kuala Lumpur.

A PFA press release issued in Kuala Lumpur Friday said Dr Kim, who was also the chairman of South Korea's largest independent newspaper Dong-A Ilbo (Oriental Daily News), at the time of his death was honorary life member of the International Press Institute (IPI). He was an IPI executive board member from 1978 to 1985.

The statement said he had the other PFA board members Mochtar Lubis of Indonesia, Amitabh Chowdhury of India, the late Tarzie Vittachi of Sri Lanka and Joaquin Chino Process of the Philippines, fought for press freedom in Asia.

Grib new president of Belarus: Two days after dumping its reform-minded head of state, the Belarus parliament on Friday elected a former Communist to replace him, AP reports from Minsk.

Mechislav Grib, until now head of parliament's Commission of National Security, Defence and Anti-Crime Struggle, replaces the ousted Stanislav Shushkevich.

Grib, 57, won on a 183-55 vote, receiving nine more votes than required. His formal title is chairman of the Belarussian Supreme Soviet, or parliament, which makes him head of state under the constitution.

NLF man killed in Tripura: One insurgent relieved to be of the National Liberation Front of Tripura (NLF) was killed in an encounter with police near Ambassa in north Tripura district yesterday, according to police sources. PTI reports from Agartala.

The encounter took place when a group of insurgents in olive green fatigues attacked a police patrol four km away from Ambassa police station yesterday morning. The police opened fire in retaliation killing one insurgent on the spot. The other insurgents fled.

Top police official of the district have rushed to the spot and a combing operation has been launched in the area, the sources added.

UNIFIL mandate extended: The UN Council agreed unanimously on Friday to extend mandate of the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) for another six months to July 31, 1994, Xinhua reports from United Nations.

The decision was made according to a report by Secretary-General Boutros Ghali, who said although UNIFIL continued to be prevented from implementing its mandate, its contribution to stability and the protection it is able to afford the population of the area remained important.

UNIFIL was established in March 1978 by a Security Council resolution.

Mexico free 38 prisoners: Under pressure from human rights groups, the government freed 38 of 70 prisoners held on suspicion of participating in a New Year's rebellion in southern Mexico, AP reports from San Cristobal De Las Casas.

It also ordered an investigation into the deaths of five guerrillas the army denies having executed.

The government said the release was another step in its efforts to restore calm to southern Mexico. But it also appeared to be directed at human rights groups, which have accused the military of abuses.

Russian PM meets Pope: Pope John Paul II and Russia's Prime Minister met Friday in an unusually long audience in which they reportedly discussed the Balkan war and Catholic-Orthodox relations, AP reports from Vatican City.

Viktor Chernomyrdin spent nearly an hour with the pope, more than twice the usual length of a papal audience. The Vatican said the two men talked about Russia's international situation, and that John Paul raised the issue of religious liberty.

Relations have at times been tense between the dominant Russian Orthodox Church and Roman Catholic community, which numbers several hundred thousand.

Indo-Pak origin traders victim of Madagascar riot

ANTANANARIVO, Jan 29: Rioters burned about a dozen shops and homes of traders of Indian and Pakistani origin in the Madagascan town of Antsirabe, 175 kilometers (110 miles) south of here, officials said Friday, reports AFP.

A night-time curfew was imposed on the town after Thursday's incidents, which accompanied a strike by government workers and school teachers, whose representatives met Civil Service Minister Henri Rakotovorona.

Trouble-makers got out of control and began attacking the stores of the traders, known as Karanas, when schoolchildren took to the streets, as the negotiations were under way, witnesses said.

Ghali sets terms for air raids against Bosnian Serbs

UNITED NATIONS, Jan 29: Secretary General Boutros-Ghali Friday set terms for air raids against Bosnia's Serbs, but took care to avoid triggering allied military intervention in the republic's war, reports AFP.

In a six-page letter to Security Council and in later remarks to the Council and reporters, the UN chief took precautions on both the diplomatic and operational fronts.

Asked earlier by The Associated Press what should happen in war-torn Bosnia, Zhirinovsky revealed clear sympathies for its division between neighbouring Serbs and Croats.

"Who are the Muslims?" he asked. "Muslims do not exist. Let it be greater Croatia and Greater Serbia."

Boutros-Ghali also said he had given his special representative in the former Yugoslavia,

Yasushi Akashi, authority to give the green light if the commander of the UN Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in the former Yugoslavia's Serbs, but took care to avoid triggering allied military intervention in the republic's war, reports AFP.

These involve opening the Serb-encircled airfield in the northeastern city of Tuzla and proceeding with scheduled rotation of UN troops in the towns of Zepa and Srebrenica in the east.

He suggested that the United Nations would try to negotiate to allow Dutch troops to relieve Ukrainian troops in Zepa and Canadian troops in Srebrenica by the end of February. Serb besiegers have prevented the rotation so far.

Boutros-Ghali said the United Nations planned to take control of the airport in Tuzla to begin an airlift of badly-needed humanitarian supplies. The airport is con-

trolled by the Muslims, as is the city, but surrounded by Bosnian Serb forces who fear the airport could be used to smuggle in arms for mainly Muslim government forces.

In an effort to show that air raids would be a last resort, Boutros-Ghali stressed that he hoped the two UN objectives would be achieved through negotiation. He also hinted that the negotiations might take a while.

On the diplomatic front Boutros-Ghali sought a consensus on the air raids, aware that Russia is opposed to air raids against the Serbs and insists that such action must be approved by the Security Council.

Diplomats said that during talks after he presented his letter, Boutros-Ghali repeated several times that he would keep the council briefed on the situation. However, he stressed that this did not

amount to consultation.

Russian ambassador Yuli Vorontsov said he would not object to air raids if UN forces were attacked, but questioned giving Akashi the authority to request the raids, diplomats said.

France and Britain, two countries with major contingents in the UN force, approved delegating that authority to the envoy.

Reuter adds: Serbs slit the throats of three elderly Muslims in their homes and flogged a Muslim tied to a tree in an unrelenting campaign of ethnic terror in North Bosnia. UN officials said on Friday.

"The vicious persecution of minorities continues," said UN relief spokesman Ron Redmond, referring to the region around Banja Luka, biggest city in the 70 per cent of Bosnia held by nationalist Serb forces.

Snowfall paralyses Tokyo

TOKYO, Jan 29: The heaviest snowfall in two years paralysed Tokyo today delaying rail, road and air transports and leaving more than 100 people injured, the meteorological agency officials said, reports AFP.

Overnight fall covered the Tokyo metropolitan area, measuring as deep as 10 centimeters (1.6 inches) in Chiba prefecture southeast of the capital, agency officials said.

The officials said at least 102 people, mostly unwary pedestrians, were injured, and 33 of them were hospitalised. No deaths were reported. Officials said 32 flights were cancelled at the Tokyo Haneda Airport and highways were closed.

Railway company officials said there were delays of up to 10 minutes on Shinkansen bullet train.

Chernobyl plant closes a reactor today

MOSCOW, Jan 29: Ukraine will shut down tomorrow the first of several nuclear reactors to be closed this year since it does not have the money to buy fuel from Russia, the Interfax news agency said today, reports AFP.

The report, which quoted the press service for Ukraine's State Committee for nuclear energy, said all the country's nuclear power plants were threatened with closure by 1995 if funding is not found to buy the fuel needed to run the stations.

The Chernobyl Power Plant will shut down one reactor tomorrow and another March 31.

Reactors at the nuclear plants in Zaporozhye in the southeast and Yuzhnoukrainskaya might also be shut down in May and August respectively, the report said.

Senate supports Germany, Japan's SC membership

WASHINGTON, Jan 29: The US Senate Friday gave support in principle to German and Japanese permanent membership of the United Nations Security Council, reports Reuter.

But it added in an amendment to a State Department bill that neither country should be admitted "until each is capable of discharging the full range of responsibilities accepted by all current permanent members."

The non-binding amendment was proposed by Senator William Roth, a Delaware Republican, who said Germans and Japanese had traditionally interpreted their constitutions as barring full participation in UN peacekeeping operations.

Off the Record

An unprecedented order

NEW DELHI: In an unprecedented order, a Delhi court has suo motu directed immediate arrest of an alleged rapist and passed severe strictures against police authorities for trying to hush up the case of gang-rape of a 13-year-old girl, reports PTI.

Metropolitan Magistrate C K Chaturvedi on Friday issued non-bailable warrants against Rajju, who along with six others allegedly raped a minor girl at a public lavatory in a south Delhi locality in September 1992, and ordered the police to produce him in the court on February one.

The magistrate took strong objection to the Assistant Police Commissioner's action in cancelling the investigation report in the case, and pulled up the police officer for 'usurping the functions of judiciary' by concluding that rape had not been committed.

The ordeal of the girl and her family began when she was allegedly gang-raped by seven boys of the area on the night of September 14, 1992. The horrified parents ran from police choki to police headquarters to get justice, but became victims of the 'police callousness and negligence', the order noted.

The girl named an accused, Rajju, whom she knew earlier and could have identified others if produced before her, as they were residents of the same locality.

Briton reunites with his Russian bride after 50 yrs

LONDON: In November 1944, British sailor William Greenhalgh waved goodbye to his Russian bride of one night and told her they would soon be together in Britain. It took nearly 50 years for her to make it, reports AP.

Their story in many ways epitomises the Cold War and the promise of reconciliation that the collapse of the Iron Curtain has brought to East-West relations.

When they met, he was a Royal Navy telegraph operator on the Empire Peacemaker, a rescue vessel assigned to World War II convoy duties and based in Archangel, just south of the Arctic Circle. She was a bookkeeper.

"She and her brother had missed their last tram home and we jokingly got involved in a snowball fight," he recalled. "It was love at first sight."

She didn't speak English. He hardly spoke Russian, but it didn't matter. They went to the circus, the movies, dinner with her family. They were going to get married when he got out of the Navy, but word spread that brides of British servicemen would get visas to follow their husbands home.

The day before Greenhalgh sailed for Britain, he married Alexandra Alexandrovna Rasheva, whom he calls, 'Shura,' in a civil ceremony with no friends or relatives. They had a one-night honeymoon.

Dog wins reprieve

NEWARK: A dog sentenced to die after it injured a child won a reprieve Friday from Gov Christie Whitman, but can never return to New Jersey, reports AP.

Whitman decreed that Taro, a 110-pound (50 kilos) Akita, be exiled from the state and get new owners.

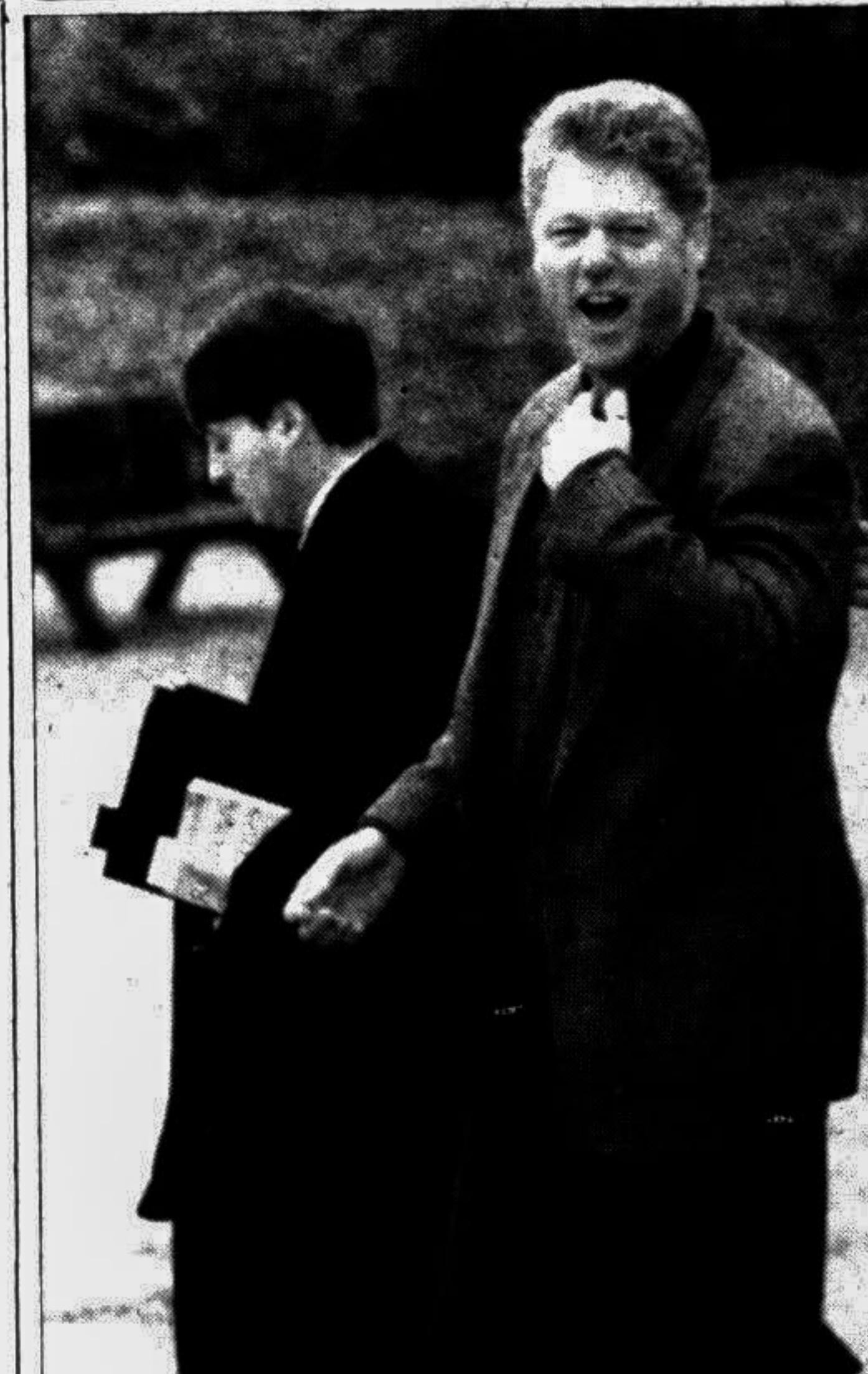
The dog's owners, Lonnie and Sandy Lehrer of Haworth, have 30 days to agree to the terms.

"I am delighted that we have saved Taro's life," Lonnie Lehrer said in a statement released by the Animal Rights Law Centre of the Rutgers Law School.

Taro has been on death row at the Bergen County Jail since February 1991. The borough of Haworth ordered him destroyed after he injured 10-year-old Brie Halfond on Christmas Day 1990.

Borough officials said the dog bit the girl's lip, but the Lehrer said the child provoked the dog and was scratched. The girl is the Lehrer's niece.

Taro had been declared "potentially dangerous" before the Christmas Day incident for killing a neighbour's dog and attacking two other animals.



President Bill Clinton (R) points to his throat as he walks past reporters on the South Lawn of the White House on Friday. President Clinton lost his voice after delivering the state of the union address January 18. — AFP photo

Many Myanmar people furtively curse military junta

YANGON, Jan 29: With a gun in one hand and promises of prosperity in the other, the generals appear to have taken full control of Myanmar, whatever the world may say about their human rights record, reports AP.

Many Myanmar people furtively curse the junta, which savagely crushed a student-led democracy revolt five years ago. But, as one also added in a hushed voice: "We can't beat them, so we have to join them. We have been bought by the military."

Seemingly taking its cues from neighbouring China, the military has rooted out all political opponents while liberalising the economy so the people can enjoy the best standard of living in three decades.

Yangon, once a moribund city, pulsates with fleets of new foreign cars and shoppers loaded with hitherto unavailable goods. Private restaurants and hotels have opened. Discos, previously banned as decadent, rock into the night.

Loosening up, the centralised economy has raised prices paid to farmers and some benefit has trickled down to workers, mainly through a construction boom and investments by Thais, Singaporeans, South Koreans and other foreigners.

"Politically, it is a nightmare state, economically you can do what you like, even break the law, as long as you don't ruffle the military's feathers," said Mya Maung, an expert on Myanmar at Boston

College in the United States. "They have bought everybody off except the dissident students. To protest is stupid."

Anyone who did protest has paid for it. Nobody doubts the military would use force again if another popular uprising took place in this Southeast Asian nation, which now calls itself Myanmar.

International human rights groups accuse the ruling State Law and Order Restoration Council of torture and detentions without trial. They condemn it for refusing to honour the landslide victory of the National League for Democracy in the 1990 general elections.

About 2,000 political prisoners have been released since April 1992 and the information minister, Brig Gen Myo

Thant, said in an interview that only "tens" remain. But Amnesty International and other organisations estimate several hundred of the military's opponents remain in jail.

Those still locked up include students, Buddhist monks, artists and about 35 members of the parliament elected in 1990.

Aung San Suu Kyi, leader of the democracy movement and Nobel Peace laureate, has been under strict house arrest for more than four years. Diplomats doubt she will be freed until after the next election, not expected until 1995.

The military, which has ruled Myanmar since a coup 30 years ago, should be in an even stronger position by then, barring an economic crisis or a

lucrative oil, fishing, logging and gem-mining deals with foreign companies pass through the generals' hands. Myanmar has been described as "the world's richest basket case."

Earlier in January, the military's sensitivity to students was demonstrated when one was fatally stabbed by four pickpockets. As other students organised a protest, the government summarily sentenced the four to death and punished several senior police officers.

The generals have made major progress toward ending a bloody, expensive insurgency by ethnic minority groups that has plagued Myanmars since shortly after independence from Britain in 1948.

BEIRUT: In 1990: A gunman shot and killed the first secretary at the Jordanian Embassy in Beirut Saturday morning, the first assassination of a foreign diplomat since Lebanon's 15-year civil war ended in 1990, reports AP.

Police said at least one gunman fired at Nayeb Abu Zeid Khalil Maaytah, killing him instantly as he drove out of the parking lot near his house in Beirut's seaside Raouche residential district to go to the embassy.

Maaytah was hit by seven bullets that pierced the windshield of his limousine, police said. His body was taken to the American University Hospital for a possible autopsy prior to being buried, police said.