

BRIEFLY

Next C'wealth summit in NZ:

Auckland will host next year's Commonwealth heads of government meeting. New Zealand Prime Minister Jim Bolger said yesterday. Reuter reports from Wellington.

New Zealand was chosen last year to host the biennial meeting of Commonwealth leaders.

Wellington parliament members and others had lobbied for the meeting to be in the capital, but Bolger said only Auckland had the necessary capacity for the 1,500 delegates.

40 die in Indonesian bus plunge:

Forty people died and 10 were injured when their bus plunged into a ravine in north Sumatra, police in the provincial capital of Medan said yesterday. AFP reports from Jakarta.

The bus, packed with passengers, mostly traders, fell into a 75 metre (247 foot) deep ravine near Siholbung village on the road linking the northern Sumatan towns of Padang Sidempuan and Gunung Tua in the early hours of Thursday, north Sumatra police spokesman Lieutenant Colonel Leo Sukardi said.

A total of 37 people died on the spot, three others died later Thursday at a nearby hospital, seven people were severely injured and three others lightly hurt, Sukardi said on the phone.

UK crime report not correct:

A study released by British Home Office yesterday suggests that there may be 16 times more racial crimes committed in England and Wales than police figures show. Xinhua reports from London.

The study estimates that in 1991 there were 130,000 crimes of racial victimisation or threats against the Black and Asian population in England and Wales.

The finding are substantially higher than those provided by British police, who registered less than 8,000 such crimes in that year.

Iran's move to stem flow of drugs:

Iran is building an "iron curtain" along its eastern border with Pakistan and Afghanistan in a bid to stem the flow of drugs from the two countries, which has grown to alarming proportions in recent years. AFP reports from Tehran.

Iranian Interior Minister Ali Mohamad Besharati said Tuesday 840 kilometers (504 miles), or nearly one-third, of the country's eastern border had been sealed off in the war against drug traffickers, which has been waged since 1989.

Myanmar destroys poppy fields:

Myanmar authorities have destroyed some 230 acres (92 hectares) of poppy fields in northeast Myanmar over the past two weeks, state-run radio Yangon reported in a broadcast monitored in Bangkok Thursday. AFP reports from Bangkok.

The poppy fields — near the town of Theini in Myanmar's Shan state — were destroyed by soldiers and civilians.

Theini is located near to Myanmar's section of the Golden Triangle, the world's largest heroin producing area which also comprises areas of northern Thailand and southwest Laos. Western anti-narcotics officials estimate that the region produces over 2,000 tonnes of opium a year.

Gunmen kill McGlinchey:

Dominic McGlinchey, the much feared former head of the Irish National Liberation Army, died Thursday night as he predicted in a 1983 interview — by assassins' bullets, reports AP.

McGlinchey, who claimed he'd killed 30 people in 11 years of bombing, shooting and robbery and at one time was hunted both sides of the Irish border by security forces and rivals alike, was slain by gunmen in Drogheda 30 miles (50 km) north of Dublin.

Kennedy Onassis has cancer:

Former First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis has non-hodgkin's lymphoma, a treatable form of cancer of the lymphatic system, and has been undergoing chemotherapy for about a month, the New York Times reported in its Friday edition. Reuter says from New York.

The newspaper said Onassis, 64, had not interrupted her personal routines or her duties as a book editor.

"She is undergoing a course of treatment and there is every expectation that it will be successful," the newspaper quoted Onassis' spokeswoman Nancy Tuckerman as saying.

Discovery's landing delayed:

Five astronauts and a cosmonaut aboard space shuttle Discovery headed home Friday after eight days in space, although bad weather at the Florida landing site threatened their plans. AP reports from Houston.

Forecasters said rain, low clouds and high winds were possible at the Kennedy Space Centre in Florida, where Landing was scheduled for 12:44pm EST (1744 GMT) Friday.

Mission control kept open the possibility of sending Discovery to Edwards Air Force Base in California later in the afternoon. The shuttle also could stay up an extra day if Florida weather looked better for Saturday.

Court refuses to release Abdel-Rahman

NEW YORK, Feb 11: A federal judge refused Thursday to release Sheikh Omar Abdel-Rahman temporarily so that he can deliver religious sermons and lectures during the Islamic holy month of Ramadan, reports AP.

Abdel-Rahman is among 15 men charged in a conspiracy to harm the United States through a series of bombings, assassinations and kidnappings. Attacks on the United Nations, the federal building housing the FBI and New York commuter tunnels and a bridge were allegedly planned.

Abdel-Rahman had proposed through his legal adviser that he be allowed to live under house arrest with US marshals on the premises. The 55-

Nobel laureate Temin dies of lung cancer

MADISON, Feb 11: Nobel Prize winner Howard Temin, a cancer researcher who campaigned for years against cigarette smoking, died of lung cancer. He was 59, reports AP.

Temin, a University of Wisconsin-Madison professor who specialised in cancer and AIDS research, made a brief public announcement in 1992 to discuss his illness and to note that he had never been a cigarette smoker.

He won the Nobel Prize for physiology in 1975 when he was honoured with two other scientists for their research into possible links between viruses and cancer.

Some go to civilians at bargain sales, although tanks and other deadly stuff is off-limits to them.

Need a pickup truck? More than 2,000 Chevrolet pickups

Hundreds of people defy curfew in Kanpur

Army called out to quell riot

NEW DELHI, Feb 11: Army and military forces were called out to maintain law and order in parts of Kanpur in India's northern state yesterday as many more areas of the city were brought under curfew to control mob violence, reports reaching here today said, reports Xinhua.

At least 50 activists of the Indian opposition party, the Indian People's Party, were arrested in connection with mob violence on Wednesday following killing of a former corporator of the party.

Troops staged a flag march in the violence-hit areas of the city and indefinite curfew was clamped in areas falling under 15 police stations. The army has been assisting civil authorities to enforce curfew restrictions in the city.

So far the death toll in the violence has risen to four, but unconfirmed reports put the death toll at five.

Meanwhile, tension in the eastern part of northern state also mounted with reports of relevant killing of two brahmins by haryans in Barun village of Ghazipur district on Thursday.

However, officials described the situation as absolutely under control though highly tense.

AP from Delhi says: Hundreds of people defied a curfew early Friday in a town hit by Hindu-Muslim violence, and some of them opened fire with weapons and set fire to buildings.

Police armed with clubs charged one mob of people that took to the streets of Kanpur in northern India to protest the arrest of a local Hindu politician, Press Trust of India reported.

The clashes began Wednesday when unidentified attackers killed a local Hindu politician with a bomb, setting off the worst religious violence

in India in months. Three people, at least two of them Muslims, died when Hindus rioted after Kala Bachcha was slain while riding a motor-scooter with a relative in Kanpur.

Bachcha's supporters set fire to dozens of cars and threw stones at shops owned by Muslims before police chased them away Wednesday, according to a local journalist, Pravin Srivastava.

Bachcha was a member of the right-wing Bharatiya Janata Party, which promotes Hindu nationalism, and he allegedly led attacks on several Muslim homes during previous religious riots in Kanpur.

An indefinite curfew was imposed Thursday in Kanpur, in the state of Uttar Pradesh about 275 miles east of New Delhi, and soldiers and police patrolled the streets and intersections.

But violence broke out again

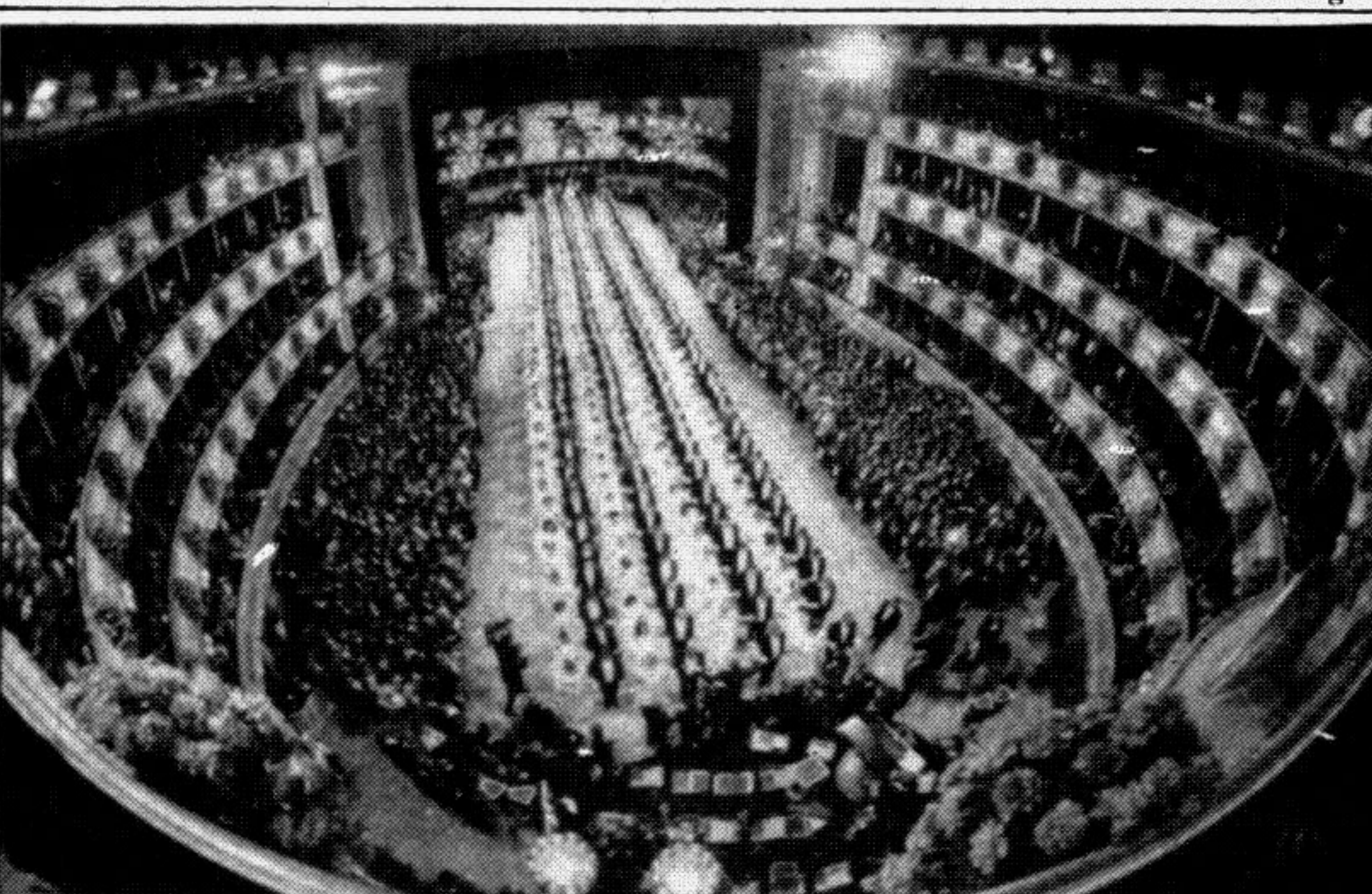
Thursday night and early Friday when people took to the streets in violation of the curfew.

One crowd shot and wounded a man while he pulled his bicycle rickshaw down a street, and other assailants set fire to two stores and one home, the PTI news agency said. The report did not say whether the victims were Hindus or Muslims.

When police arrested Vijay Nagar, a local Bharatiya Janata Party politician in Kanpur on unidentified charges early Friday, they had to swing clubs at a mob of people who charged at them.

India's worst religious violence in four decades occurred last year after Hindu extremists destroyed an ancient mosque, setting off two months of nationwide riots that killed 2,000 people.

The country had remained largely peaceful since then.



All the splendour of the annual Vienna Opera Ball is captured in this fish-eye view of the opening dancing sequence at the State Opera House on Thursday. The ball was attended by 4,000 including political and diplomatic dignitaries, celebrities and Austrian President Thomas Klestil.

12 killed as Pak tribes clash

QUETTA, Pakistan, Feb 11: At least 12 people were killed in gunfights between rival tribes on Thursday in Pakistan's southeastern province of Baluchistan, government officials said, reports Reuter.

Six people, including a government official and his son, were killed in a gunfight between Tarin and Nasar tribes near the northern Baluchistan town of Ziarat, the officials said in the provincial capital Quetta.

Government Assistant Commissioner Faqir Mohammad Tarin, his son and some other members of his Tarin tribe were driving to Quetta when they were attacked, officials sources said.

Six more people were killed in a clash between Raisani and Rind tribes at Dhadar in central Baluchistan, government officials said.

Indo-US talks resume Feb 16

NEW DELHI, Feb 11: In spite of the controversy generated by President Clinton's letters dealing with Kashmir, Sikh rights and continuing pressures on the non-proliferation front, India and the United States will resume their bilateral dialogue at senior officials' level in New Delhi next week, official sources said today, reports Xinhua.

Ron Lorton, State Department's desk officer for India, Nepal and Sri Lanka, will come here on February 16 and have wide ranging discussions with senior officials of the ministries of External and Economic Affairs during his five-day stay in a bid to update bilateral relations.

The initiative for the dialogue has been taken by Washington, which appears keen on strengthening comprehensive relations in political, economic and technological fields with India, the sources said.

3 Asian films nominated for Academy Awards

BEVERLY HILLS, California Feb 11: Three Asian films were nominated for best foreign film Wednesday for the Academy Awards to be handed out next month, reports AFP.

The nominations were "Farewell, My Concubine" (Hong Kong), a tale of life in the Beijing opera, "The Scent of Green Papaya" (Vietnam) about a girl growing up in Vietnam during the war, and "The Wedding Banquet" (Taiwan), a comedy about a gay man who marries in order to hide his homosexuality.

Other nominations included "Belle Epoque" of Spain and "Heddy Wynn," a Welsh-language film from the United Kingdom.

The Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences will present the 66th annual Academy Awards in Hollywood on March 21.

South Asia most likely area for N-war

WASHINGTON, Feb 11: South Asia, where India and Pakistan have fought three wars, is the most likely area of the world for a nuclear conflict in the next five years, a senior Clinton administration official contended Thursday, reports AP.

Both countries soon will be able to deploy nuclear weapons and they are developing ballistic missiles that could carry the weapons to targets, the official told the Arms Control Association at the private research group's annual meeting.

"If a nuclear weapons is detonated in anger in the next five years, the most likely place that could happen is South Asia," he said, speaking to the group and reporters on the condition that he not be identified. "The area looks very dangerous."

Most attention is now focussed on North Korea, where the Clinton administration is trying through negotiations to get nuclear facilities opened to international inspection.

The United States is threatening to ask the United Nations to impose sanctions to hurt the North Korean economy if negotiations do not produce a solution. And that, the official said, "could mean a nuclear conflict on the Korean peninsula."

The official also singled out Iran as an area of concern. There, he said, a radical regime is developing nuclear and chemical weapons and aims to expand its authority in the Gulf region.

He said the administration is trying to persuade Russia and China not to sell nuclear

reactors to Iran.

But South Asia, he said, is the most likely area to explode. "The situation is very dangerous," he said.

India and Pakistan have fought three wars and are in a crisis over Kashmir, and Indian territory in which Pakistan supports a secessionist movement, that "could erupt at any time," said the official, who refused to be identified.

He said the administration was trying to involve Russia and China in a diplomatic effort to avert a blowup and was hoping President Clinton's proposal to end worldwide production of fashionable material for weapons — highly enriched uranium and process plutonium — would be adopted.

"This would be a very significant step," he said.

Serbs allow peacekeepers into frontline positions

SAARAJEVO, Feb 11: Serb troops, threatened by NATO air attacks, began handing over to United Nations peacekeepers the frontline positions they had used to bludgeon Sarajevo in 22 months of civil war, reports Reuter.

But the ceasefire agreed as part of a local UN brokered Serb withdrawal deal was shattered by a brief bout of intense shelling and machinegun fire on the city centre on Thursday night.

The attack came after a day of calm when besieging Serb forces allowed UN troops to start moving into six battle-front positions around Sarajevo in the plan to lift the siege of the Bosnian capital.

Three shells crashed into the city centre at 11 pm (2200 GMT) and were followed by a heavy burst of machinegun fire which lasted about 10 minutes, witnesses said.

The attack came from one of the most fiercely contested and volatile frontline positions at Vrbanja bridge which, significantly, was not handed over to UN peacekeepers in Thursday's operation. Here were no immediate casualty reports.

NATO threatened to destroy the big Serb guns with air strikes unless the weapons were moved out of range within the 10 days. The alliance was nudged into action by world outrage over the killing of 68 people in a mortar attack on a Sarajevo market

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Off the Record

Dog survives death penalty

HACKENSACK (New Jersey): A dog accused of biting a 10-year-old girl was released from death row Thursday on the condition that it leave the state and never return, reports AFP.

Taro, a 50-kilo (110-pound) Akita owned by Lonnie and Sandy Lehrer, had been held by the county sheriff since early 1991 after it injured the couple's niece on Christmas, 1990.

Haworth town officials said Taro bit the girl's lip and demanded that it be put down. The Lehrers said the girl had teased the Akita as it slept and that the girl had been only scratched, not bitten.

An estimated 100,000 dollars in legal fees and three years later, New Jersey governor Christine Whitman signed an executive order saying the dog could be freed, if it left the state.

The dog is going to be home of a New York woman who has promised the Lehrers unlimited visits.

Because their bones are less dense

BOSTON: Women who smoke cigarettes have a greater risk of fractures because their bones are less dense, a study to be released Thursday said, reports AFP.

The report in the New England Journal of Medicine by Australian researchers John Hopper and Ego Seeman of the University of Melbourne found compelling evidence of an association between smoking and reduced bone density in women.

Although the study did not reach a conclusion on why smoking reduced bone density, the researchers speculated that tobacco can interfere with estrogen production in the body.

Earlier studies have found similar links between smoking and fractures in men. But brittle bones, or osteoporosis, pose a greater health risk for women.

An editorial published with the study said the findings should encourage doctors to continue to emphasise the risks of smoking.

Whether the prospect of a dowager's hump of a disability due to a hip fracture will provide a stronger incentive to stop smoking than the prospect of long cancer is unknown, said the editorial by Dr Charles Slemends of Indiana University.

Schmidt seeks apology for quoting from Hitler

OTTAWA: Werner Schmidt stood up in the Canadian parliament Thursday to apologise for quoting Adolf Hitler in his electoral district party newsletter, reports Reuter.

The unfortunate reference in the newsletter's famous quotes section reproduced the Nazi leader's words: "What luck for rulers that men do not think."

The quote sparked a public outcry by the Jewish community. Schmidt is a member of the right-wing Reform Party.

"I was not aware of, nor do I condone the inclusion of the quotation in the newsletter," Schmidt told the House of Commons. "This will not happen again."

Schmidt is member of parliament for Okanagan Centre in British Columbia, where he won the elections in November for the new Reform Party led by western populist Preston Manning.

Doctors able to discover sex of foetus

LONDON: British doctors reported on Friday they were able to discover the sex of a foetus as early as four weeks and five days after conception, reports Reuter.

Many women do not even realise they are pregnant at this early stage and the sex of the baby is not usually determined until about 16 weeks into pregnancy.

Writing in the Lancet medical journal, a team at St Mary's Hospital Medical School in London said their test involved looking for DNA sequences from the Y chromosome in foetal cells present in the mother's blood.



A museum's worker, carrying removed picture frames, walks behind a dissembled statue of Lenin at the former Lenin's museum, in Moscow on Thursday. All statues, pictures and other Lenin items have to be removed from this building — but officials are encountering one major problem — where to find a large enough store-house to keep them.

— AFP photo

US plans to get rid of excess Cold War property

and Blazer rough-terrain vehicles are among some 14,000 vehicles at the 460-acre Germersheim surplus depot. They'll be auctioned off in batches every few weeks.

Some have only the mileage of driving them on and off the ships that brought them to Europe, and a recent batch of the 1983-89 vehicles went for an average of 2,000 dollar each to eager German civilians and American GIs.

"A very good price," said Bob Hirschman of the US Army's marketing office in Wiesbaden. "We don't usually get that much."

All are painted in military green or camouflage colours

avoiding the cost of taking it to a landfill, which is quite expensive in Germany," Hirschman said.

For more than 40 years of Cold War, the United States spent hundreds of billions of dollars on equipment to be ready for war and to keep hundreds of thousands of troops and their families in Europe.

Now with arms reduction treaties between the United States and Russia and the US troop strength in Europe being cut from 313,000 in the late 1980s to 100,000 by the end of 1996, there's a huge backlog of excess property. It's mainly in Germany where most troops

were based.

Only about 20 per cent of the vehicles will go back to the United States for use by the military. It takes about 200 US Army people to keep track of what comes and goes at the vehicle depot, 56 kilometers (35 miles) south of Heidelberg.

Last year we shipped out more than 12,000 pieces of rolling stock and took in 6,500 pieces," said Col. William Kyle of the army's 29th Area Support Group.

What they can't sell or give to friendly nations goes to the Army's marketing organisation, which has 28 offices in Europe to organise sales to civilians.

The US Army isn't the only one having a yard sale.

"There's a lot of sales competition on the civilian market, because other NATO countries and even the former Warsaw Pact nations are ridding themselves of excess military property," said Richard Brown, spokesman of the marketing organisation.

The German government is auctioning off vehicles and other property Germany paid for in support of US, British and French forces over the years in West Berlin. The Berliner Zeitung newspaper reported Wednesday that an old Volkswagen van sold for 860 dollars at a recent auction.

Addressing as chief guest at the inauguration of Akhwan Science College in the suburban area of Punjab capital, the president said that abysmally poor literacy rate is the basic hurdle towards national development.

Leghari calls for national consensus

LAHORE, Feb 11: President Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari today said that all political leaders should develop a consensus of opinion to resolve issues of national security, economy and education to crane out the nation from crises that it has been facing due to perennial neglect and inattention, reports AFP.