

BRIEFLY

Kiev summit begins Nov 29: Russian President Boris Yeltsin and his Ukrainian counterpart Leonid Kuchma will hold a summit on November 29 and 30 in Kiev. Interfax reported on Saturday, quoting a Kiev Foreign Ministry source. AFP reports from Moscow.

Yeltsin's press office said, however, it had not been informed of the official dates for the long-awaited meeting, which is due to see the two leaders sign a friendship and cooperation treaty when Kuchma returns on November 22 from an official visit to the United States.

Eiffel Tower reopens: The Eiffel Tower, the central Paris landmark and major tourist attraction, reopened Saturday evening after being closed for 32 hours by a strike by employees demanding extra staff. AFP reports from Paris.

As the strike ended at 6:00 PM (1700 GMT), a banner wrapped around the base of Eiffel Tower builder Gustave Eiffel, proclaiming "Gustave is with us", was taken down and the 160 people who work in the monument took elevators up to their posts.

Mother Teresa in Poland: Mother Teresa of Calcutta attended the ordination of six nuns to her religious order, the Missionaries of Charity, in Warsaw on Saturday, the news agency PAP reported. AFP says from Warsaw.

The 84-year-old Nobel peace laureate took part in the ceremony at the Pauline Fathers Church in Warsaw alongside Cardinal Jozef Kowalczyk, the papal envoy in Poland.

3 N Koreans defect to South: Three North Koreans, including two loggers in Siberia, have arrived in Seoul seeking asylum in the capitalist South, the foreign ministry said on Sunday, reports AP from Seoul.

Choi Ho-Yong and Kim Ho were admitted to South Korea on Saturday after they escaped logging camps run by communist North Korea under contracts signed with the former Soviet Union. The ministry identified the other defector as Park Myung-Nam, a North Korean cool in a former Soviet republic.

German rightist meet stopped: Police in the southern German City of Stuttgart broke up a far-right meeting on Saturday as some 150 extremists gathered in a tavern to launch a new neo-Nazi organisation, police said. AFP reports from Stuttgart.

Around 100 policemen were called in by the city council to avert the public disturbance it was feared the meeting would create.

ROK officers to train in Russia: South Korea will for the first time send officers to Russia for military training, the defence ministry said in a statement yesterday. AFP reports from Seoul.

Eight officers will leave November 10 for two years in different Russian military academies, including language training, under an exchange programme agreed in April this year.

Floods claim 37 in Indonesia: Flash floods raging through a village on Indonesia's popular tourist island of Lombok have killed 37 people and injured six, the official Antara news agency said yesterday. Reuter reports from Jakarta.

Some 200 people living along a river at Aikmel village in eastern Lombok have been evacuated since the floods first hit on Thursday.

Liberian peace talks begin: The foreign ministers of Ghana and Nigeria opened talks with Liberia's militia warlords on Saturday night to try to end five years of civil war and anarchy in Africa's oldest independent republic. Reuter reports from Accra.

The meeting began at a secret venue in or near Accra, the Ghanaian capital, after most of the participants spent the day waiting for militia leader Charles Taylor, the man who launched the war in 1989.

Over 250 die of cholera in Guinea: More than 250 people have died of cholera in the past month in Guinea-Bissau and a further 1,391 have contracted the disease in an epidemic that has spread across the entire country, officials said on Saturday. AFP reports from Bissau.

The epidemic began at the start of October in the Bijagos archipelago but quickly took hold elsewhere, hitting the capital particularly badly, the health ministry said.

SA church reformer killed: An outspoken reformer who led the church of white Afrikaners away from apartheid and condemned racist policies as a sin has been shot dead, police said, AP reports from Pretoria.

John Heyns 66, former head of the Dutch Reformed Church, died instantly Saturday night when an unknown attacker fired a single shot through a window of Heyns' home. He was shot in the back of the head with a heavy caliber rifle.



British writer Salman Rushdie salutes his audience as he takes the microphone at the second International Writers Parliament in Strasbourg on Saturday. The author of the Satanic Verses introduced a declaration, adopted by acclamation, condemning the restrictions on Algerians entering French territory. — AFP photo

Iran denies link with killing of Shapour Bakhtiar

TEHRAN, Nov 6: Iran on Saturday denied any family links between the alleged killers of former Prime Minister Shapour Bakhtiar and Iranian leaders, reports AFP.

The trial is underway in Paris of three Iranians suspected of involvement in the 1991 assassination of Bakhtiar, Iran's last prime minister before the 1979 Islamic revolution who sought asylum in France and became an opposition leader.

Two of the suspects — Massoud Hendi, 47, and Zeynabedin Sarhadi, 28 — were alleged to be the grand-nephew of Iranian President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani and the nephew of late Khomeini, respectively.

International

Malakand clash death toll rises to 23

Pak troops recapture airport

PESHAWAR, Nov 6: The death toll from two days of clashes in northern Pakistan between security forces and militants demanding a stricter Islamic administration rose today to 23, residents and other sources said, reports AFP.

The Frontier Constabulary (FC) was battling to restore order in many districts of the hilly Malakand division, the sources said.

Six FC troops and a member of the airport security force were among the dead. Another 32 people were reported wounded, the sources said.

Clashes erupted around a campaign by the fundamentalist Tanzeem Nifaz-e-Shariat Mohammadi (TNSM) group demanding rigid application of Islamic Sharia laws.

The TNSM ended a siege of Mingora Airport and freed

some hostages in the main town and tourist centre of Swat region. But the militants were said to be regrouping at the neighbouring town of Matta where other hostages, including judges and police, were being held.

One provincial assembly member was killed when TNSM activists reportedly went on the rampage on Thursday, attacking buildings and taking hostages to press their demand for the enforcement of strict Muslim laws.

FC forces were said to be moving on to Matta, about 20 kilometers (12 miles) away, where militants were reportedly holding 60 hostages including judges, police and officials.

Sources in Mingora said TNSM activists had regrouped there in large numbers to resist government forces.

Unconfirmed reports said TNSM supporters have cut off traffic on the Karakoram highway, which cuts through the high mountains to the Chinese border, blocking it at Dasu with big boulders.

The Kohistan area, through which the road passes, is inhabited by the militant tribesmen, whose chief Sofi Mohammad, is reported to have gone underground.

Press reports said several TNSM leaders and scores of supporters have been arrested.

Interior Minister Nasreullah Babar, in a statement published today, said the government had decided not to use the regular army to control the disturbances in Malakand.

The Malakand situation "has much to do with politics," the minister said, without elaborating. The disturbances caused the postponement of a by-election to fill a vacant seat in the North West Frontier Province assembly.

The provincial government has already announced measures to implement provisions of the Sharia in Malakand.

4 Tiananmen activists released

BEIJING, Nov 6: Four activists imprisoned in the crackdown on the 1989 pro-democracy protests have been released before the end of their sentences, the state-run press announced Sunday, reports AP.

The government also announced in a separate report that four political prisoners in Tibet were released.

All eight had been imprisoned for anti-government activities, the official Xinhua News Agency reported.

The activists from the 1989 protests across the country that centred on Tiananmen Square included two intellectuals — Wang Xinlong, 49, a political studies professor at Shanxi University sentenced to eight years, and Ge Hu, 35, also a teacher from Shanxi province, sentenced to seven years.

The others were Wu Zhaoqiang, 27, who was unemployed at the time of his arrest and sentenced to seven years in prison, and Leng Wanda, 34, a worker in Changchun in northeast Jilin province, sentenced to eight years.

All were paroled because of good behaviour in prison, and Ge was released so that he could seek medical treatment, Xinhua said. It did not give any details about his illness.

Iran attacks opposition base in Iraq

NICOSIA, Nov 6: Iran today attacked an Iranian opposition group's base inside Iraq after a party of its guerrillas tried to cross into Iran to hit oil installations, the official Iranian news agency Iran reported.

"Early reports from inside Iraq indicated that the MKO (Mujahideen Khalq) operational base sustained heavy damage and a number of MKO terrorists were killed in the attack," it said.

Iran said the base of the Mujahideen Khalq was located 30 km (20 miles) from Baghdad in the Abu Ghoraib area.

It said the attack was part of a pursuit operation by border guards who earlier today killed two Mujahideen guerrillas and arrested three others trying to cross to Iraq to bomb oil installations in the Mousian region.

Simultaneously with the chase operation of the Iranian border guards, at least four strong explosions were heard from inside the MKO terrorist base called Ashraf," Iran said.

The fund was set up by UAE President Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahayan. Its soft loans are intended as an incentive to local men not to opt for less costly weddings to foreign women.

Abut three quarters of the UAE's two million people are foreign expatriates.

Off the Record

Diana determined to remarry



The Princess of Wales carries flowers given to her by well-wishers as she arrives at St David's Hall in Cardiff yesterday to attend the Wales Festival of Remembrance.

— AFP photo

Muslims, Croats tighten grip on strategic town Kupres

SARAJEVO, Nov 6: An alliance of Muslims and Croats are tightening their grip on a strategic town and positioning themselves to strike at the heartland of Serb-held western Bosnia, reports AP.

But they expected to be able to hold their gains and continue moving. Croat forces to the northwest and the Bosnian suburb of Butmir. One woman was injured when artillery hit Breza, north of Sarajevo.

Despite the allies, battle successes in the past two weeks, military analysts warn that the Serb have an advantage in weaponry, have called for a general mobilisation and still control a large majority of the former Yugoslav republic. Winter is also fast approaching.

Amid conflicting claims about front-line advances, Croat and the Muslim-led Bosnian government troops dug in at Kupres, a town 60 miles (100 kilometers) west of Sarajevo and their biggest prize in the 31-month-old war.

In the past 10 days, Bosnian Serbs have lost up 160 square miles (400 square kilometers) of territory.

Late Saturday, the Serbs shelled a government-held town and suburb outside Bosnia's capital, Sarajevo, wounding at least 12 people, Sarajevo radio said in a report monitored by the British Broadcasting Corp. in London.

Six people were wounded

in the town of Viosko, northwest of the capital, it reported.

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Alagic's goal appears to be to link up with the 5th Corps, which opened the government's broad offensive by breaking Serb lines around the northwestern Muslim enclave of Bihac. The 5th drove south and east and now is outside Bosanska Krupa, an advance of about 18 miles (30 kms).

UN spokesman Maj Herve Gourmelon, in Sarajevo, said the next target could be the Serb-held town of Donji Vakuf. The town lies just north of Bugojno. Alagic's 7th Corps headquarters, along a main road leading into Serb-held territory in western Bosnia.

Parliament okays new PM

Haitian army officer held for extortion

LEOGANE, Haiti, Nov 6: As thousands of local citizens cheered, Haitian army commander was arrested for extortion and complicity in a 1993 murder, a US army official said Saturday, reports Reuter.

Haitian army commander Lieutenant Shubert Lazarre was arrested on Friday on a warrant issued by Judge Max Mathurin for extorting money from local residents and complicity in the murder of Pachino Dort in March, 1993.

Dort, a supporter of then-exiled President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, had also been the leader of a popular street band, the Saint Rose. His alleged killer, Baguidy Calixte, had already been arrested and imprisoned.

American special forces

Sergeant Jerry Hartsock said Lazarre was indicted and arrested in the military headquarters where he had been in command, based on evidence accumulated by the victim's family.

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