

## Clashes leave 21 dead in southwest Rwanda

KIGALI, Nov 25: At least 21 people have been killed in clashes in southwest Rwanda, 13 of them when a government soldier hurled a hand-grenade into a crowd, a UN spokesman said here Thursday, reports AFP.

The Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA) for its part said five of its soldiers had been killed in various attacks in the region during the past week and blamed extremist Hutu "infiltrators" and routed troops of the former regime.

A reliable source had told AFP the grenade was thrown as RPA troops tried Tuesday to arrest a suspect in the Cyan-gu region.

The RPA stated that the troops had been caught in an ambush by "bandits" in the village of Kamembe and that a soldier had struck back with the grenade. No soldiers were injured.

Sammy Buo, spokesman for

the UN Assistance Mission in Rwanda (UNAMIR), on Thursday confirmed the incident and revised the reported death toll up from 12 to 13.

Crossborder infiltration by troops of the former Hutu majority regime and extremist militia men exiled with scores of thousands of refugees in eastern Zairean camps had been reported in southwest Rwanda, Buo added.

Eight Rwandans were killed and three wounded in another incident on Monday in the village of Ramba, near the border town of Gikongoro, during an attack by an armed gang led by a former inhabitant of the community, Buo said.

He added that on the same day, rustlers stole 46 cows in the village and a one time farmer in the region was blamed, but Buo was unable to say whether the killings were politically motivated or an act of banditry.

## Major threatens to hold fresh polls if defeated in EU budget vote

LONDON, Nov 25: British Prime Minister John Major has turned the thumbscrews on Euro-rebels in his ruling Conservative Party, saying that if they defy him over a European Union budget vote next week he will call elections, reports Reuters.

Political commentators said his threat was likely to ensure any revolt fails but they were carefully counting heads.

Uncertainty lingered as some rebels vowed to fight on despite the danger to a government only two years into a five-year term and all his cabinet colleagues had agreed to stand or fall together over the vote on Monday to authorise a hefty rise in Britain's contribution to next year's EU budget.

"If the government were defeated, the government would resign and the Prime Minister would ask the Queen

to dissolve parliament," his unusual statement said.

Cabinet members publicly declared their support, to quell reports that their ranks contained "Euro-sceptic" rebels — politicians ready to challenge Major for the leadership.

Party leaders said rebels were wrong to think they could crack a united front to avoid elections, and insisted no one would bid for Major's job if the budget bill sank.

In a key victory for Major, rebels failed to oust his man Marcus Fox from the leadership of a key panel of Conservative back bench MPs.

The closed-door vote was widely seen as a challenge by proxy to Major's authority, but the real test will come on Monday.

The public row is highly damaging to a party and government already blackened by

splits and by scandals involving members shady private morals and financial ethics.

"Just one thing after another," said the editorial in Friday's left-wing Guardian newspaper.

Many hardcore anti-EU politicians are also critical of Major's handling of the government since he took over from "iron lady" Margaret Thatcher in 1990 in a party coup.

Major, 31 percentage points behind the main opposition Labour Party in the latest poll, has long been hounded by unrest over Europe, his party's most divisive issue.

After victory in the last general election in 1992, he narrowly survived a similar crisis over a crucial vote to ratify the Maastricht treaty on closer political ties in the EU.

on Thursday, rebel William Cash said some 15 conservatives would vote for an amendment to the bill withholding extra cash until they had EU cracked down on fraud.

He said he doubted Major would really call an election if he lost and, even after Major's statement, rebels vowed defiance.

With a majority of 14 in parliament, a minimum of eight rebels votes would be needed to defeat the budget bill.

Opposition parties, desperate for an early election they are likely to benefit from, are set to vote against, except for nine members of Northern Ireland's Ulster Unionist Party.

If they back Major, the Euro-rebels would need 17 votes more than they are likely to muster.

## Off the Record



Katherine Higgins, press officer at Christie's in South Kensington has an eye-to-eye Thursday with one of Hollywood's most famous birds "The Maltese Falcon" from the film of the same name starring Humphrey Bogart and Sydney Greenstreet. The falcon is expected to realise up to 47,100 dollars, when it goes under the hammer at Christie's East, New York on December 6. — AFP photo

### Crackdown on flies

BEIJING: The southern Chinese city of Guangzhou has launched an intensive campaign against flies, stipulating heavy fines of 2,000 yuan (235 dollar) for every insect discovered, the Beijing Daily said today, reports AFP.

The municipal government took the decision to introduce the fine in recent days, as part of efforts to rid the booming city of flies, the report said.

It cited two recent cases of restaurants being punished after flies were discovered in the establishments, apparently before the introduction of the standard rate.

The Huangsha restaurant was fined 15,000 yuan and ordered to clean up its act when dozens of flies were found hovering on live fowls kept in cages by the door, and at least 10 were discovered in the kitchen, it said, adding that the Yuguan restaurant was forced to pay 10,000 yuan for just two flies.

### Persona non grata

MONTREAL: John Bobbitt may be persona non grata in Canada, but his reattached penis is getting a wide reception here, reports AFP.

Some 50,000 copies of the porno video "John Wayne Bobbitt: Uncut" have been scooped up by Canadians eager to catch a glimpse of the famous member which Lorena Bobbitt sliced off after she said her husband raped her.

At 79.95 Canadian dollars (58 US) a shot, the Montreal distributor is doing brisk business, but critics have panned the film as a worthless pornographic docudrama.

And "Uncut" co-star Tiffany Lords has added her two cents, saying the celebrated organ "was no big deal."

## Khmers kill 27 abducted Thai wood-cutters

BANGKOK, Nov 25: Khmer Rouge guerrillas massacred 27 Thai wood-cutters they abducted in Cambodia after only part of the ransom they demanded was paid, a survivor told Thai television on Thursday, reports AFP.

Sikua Buajoom, 45, said 115 Khmer Rouge guerrillas raided a site in the Chom Ksan district of Preah Vihear province, where a Thai wood-processing company operated a concession, and seized 33 Thai workers on November 17.

Sikua said from his hospital bed in the northeast province of Ubon Ratchathani that the guerrillas torched the company's machinery and demanded five million baht (200,000 dollars) in ransom.

The Khmer Rouge guerrillas, who are outlawed by the Phnom Penh government, herded the Thai captives 71 kilometres (44 miles) from the Thai-Cambodian border deep into Cambodia, Channel 7 reported.

Sikua said the wood-processing company later enraged the captors when it handed over a ransom of only 300,000 baht (12,000 dollars).

The Khmer Rouge guerrillas ordered all the hostages to be put to death, in groups of four at a time, Channel 7 quoted

reprocessing plant scheduled in the early 2000s had been delayed by at least 10 years.

Japan has 47 nuclear reactors providing about 30 per cent of the nation's electricity needs. A further five reactors are currently under construction.

Asked whether Japan might decide to produce nuclear weapons in the future, the STA officials reiterated Japan's pledge to stick with its current policy of banning the production, possession and presence on its soil of all nuclear weapons.

Development of nuclear weapons will only bring about international tension, particularly from our Asian neighbours, isolation from the international society and a subsequent rupture of the economic society, Uzumi said.

The amnesty on the birthday of Prophet Mohammad's (SM) daughter, Fatima Zahra (R), was granted at the request of Iran's chief justice Ayatollah Mohammad Yazdi, it said.

Khamenei grants amnesty to prisoners several times a year on religious and national feasts. Of the total 100,000 prisoners in Iran some 6,000 are women, according to official figures.

## Iran pardons 190 women prisoners

TEHRAN, Nov 25: Iranian leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei pardoned 190 women prisoners on Thursday to mark a religious figure's birthday, reports AFP.

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## BRIEFLY

**Quake rocks Morocco:** An earthquake of an unknown magnitude rocked the Moroccan region of Fes, about 200 kilometres (120 miles) east of Rabat, at dawn yesterday, residents and police reported, says AFP from Rabat.

Police said the quake hit the town of Sefrou and Bahlil, 28 kilometres (18 miles) east of Fes. The extent of damage and the number of possible casualties was unknown.

**3 Filipinos hacked to death:** Three members of a family were hacked to pieces and their body parts scattered in what is suspected to be a cult murder near a southern city, a police official said yesterday, AFP reports from Cagayan de Oro, Philippines.

Farmer Brigido Valle, 60, his wife Herodia and 27-year-old son Gorio were sleeping in their hut in Malipbog town in neighbouring Bukidnon province late Wednesday when several people entered, chopped them to pieces and scattered some of the parts outside.

**Blasts claim 14 in China:** Fourteen people, including nine children, have been killed in explosions over the past six weeks in a town in South China manufacturing fireworks, it was reported yesterday, AFP reports from Hong Kong.

The series of accidents have prompted authorities to regulate the fireworks factories in a suburb of Heyuan City in Guangdong province, the China-run Ta Kung Pao daily said.

**Latvia ratifies accord with Russia:** The Latvian parliament ratified on Thursday an agreement between Latvia and Russia linked to the withdrawal of Russian troops, the Itar Tass news agency reported, AFP says from Moscow.

In ratifying the accord the Latvians gave the guarantees demanded by the Russians when their troops left at the end of August. Under the agreement, signed in late April in Moscow and already ratified by the Russian parliament, a Russian presence will be maintained at a radar base at Skrundra for four years.

**US to reduce troops in Haiti:** The United States will reduce its troops strength in Haiti to 6,000 by mid-December, Defence Secretary William Perry said Thursday, AFP reports from Port Au-Prince.

Perry made the remarks to some 200 US soldiers at an event at the presidential palace attended by President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, during a brief visit to Haiti to spend the Thanksgiving holiday with US troops.

**3 die in German plane crash:** Three people were killed and one person seriously injured when a private aircraft crashed on Thursday near the southern city of Heidelberg, police said, Reuters reports from Stuttgart.

The plane, a twin-engine Cessna, landed suddenly in a wooded area while flying between the German cities of Augsburg and Kassel, police said.

**Plane collapses in Phnom Penh:** The undercarriage of a Vietnam airlines passenger plane collapsed after the plane landed in the Cambodian capital Phnom Penh yesterday but no one was hurt, airport official said, Reuters reports from Phnom Penh.

They told Reuters part of the undercarriage of the Russian-made Tupolev 134 collapsed after the plane touched down at Pochentong airport and while it was taxiing.

**One hanged for trafficking heroin:** Hong Kong national Daniel Chan Chilpun, convicted of trafficking heroin, was hanged in Singapore early Friday, a prison official said, AFP reports from Singapore.

Chan, 38, went to the gallows at Singapore's high security Changi Prison at dawn after his appeal for clemency from President Ong Teng Cheong was rejected recently.

**2 die in Polish rock concert fire:** Two people died and more than 200 suffered burns in a fire that broke out during a rock concert in the Baltic port of Gdansk on Thursday night, police said, AP reports from Warsaw.

The fire broke out at the Gdansk shipyard concert hall, where some 600 spectators were watching a live broadcast of MTV European Music Award ceremony from Berlin. Superintendent Miroslaw Caban of the Gdansk provincial police headquarters said.

**Fires claim 12000 in Russia:** About 12,000 Russians died in fires this year and another 10,000 were injured twice as many as last year, a senior Interior Ministry official told Itar-Tass news agency on Thursday, Reuters reports from Moscow.

Yevgeny Kiryukhantsev said drunken people were to blame for about 45 per cent of all fires. Faulty television sets started between 7,000 and 8,000 fires every year in which some 1,000 people died, he said.

## ROK opposition leader Lee to quit parliament

SEOUL, Nov 25: South Korea's Opposition leader Lee Ki-Taek said on Friday he was quitting parliament in protest against a prosecution decision not to charge two former presidents for staging a military coup in 1979, reports Reuters.

But Lee said he would remain as the head of the main opposition Democratic Party.

Lee urged his parliamentary colleagues to follow his example to bring pressure on President Kim Young Sam to prosecute his two immediate predecessors Chun Doo-Whan and Roh Tae-Woo.



US President Bill Clinton serves First Lady Hillary some turkey on Thursday during Thanksgiving dinner at Camp David Maryland as Chelsea (C) looks on. This is the second year the Clintons have been together at Camp David for the holiday. — AFP photo

## Benazir goes to UK tomorrow to drum up investment

ISLAMABAD, Nov 25: Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto leaves here on Sunday for a five-day official visit to Britain, aimed at drumming up millions of dollars of British investment in this former colony, diplomatic sources here said, reports AFP.

The highpoint will be a meeting between Bhutto and British Prime Minister John Major, attended by business captains from the Confederation of British Industry (CBI), the sources said.

Two major investment contracts, each worth 100 million dollars, will be announced during Bhutto's stay.

One will involve Britain's national power corporation investing in the Hubco power plant near the southern city of Karachi, while under the other, chemical giant ICI will invest in a textile factory in the same area.

Bhutto, who will be accompanied by the Queen, will be accompanied to London by a large delegation including her husband, Asif Zardari — who has been closely involved in several of Pakistan's international deals — foreign Minister Asif Ahmed Ali, and Petroleum and Natural Resources minister Anwar Saifullah Khan.

The visit's economic agenda will dwell on investment in the gas and electricity generation and distribution, a sector that has been the object of a major privatisation drive over recent months.

On the political front, Bhutto is expected to raise the sensitive issue of Kashmir, a region that has been a flare-point between Pakistan and India ever since the sub-continent gained independence from Britain and was divided in 1947.

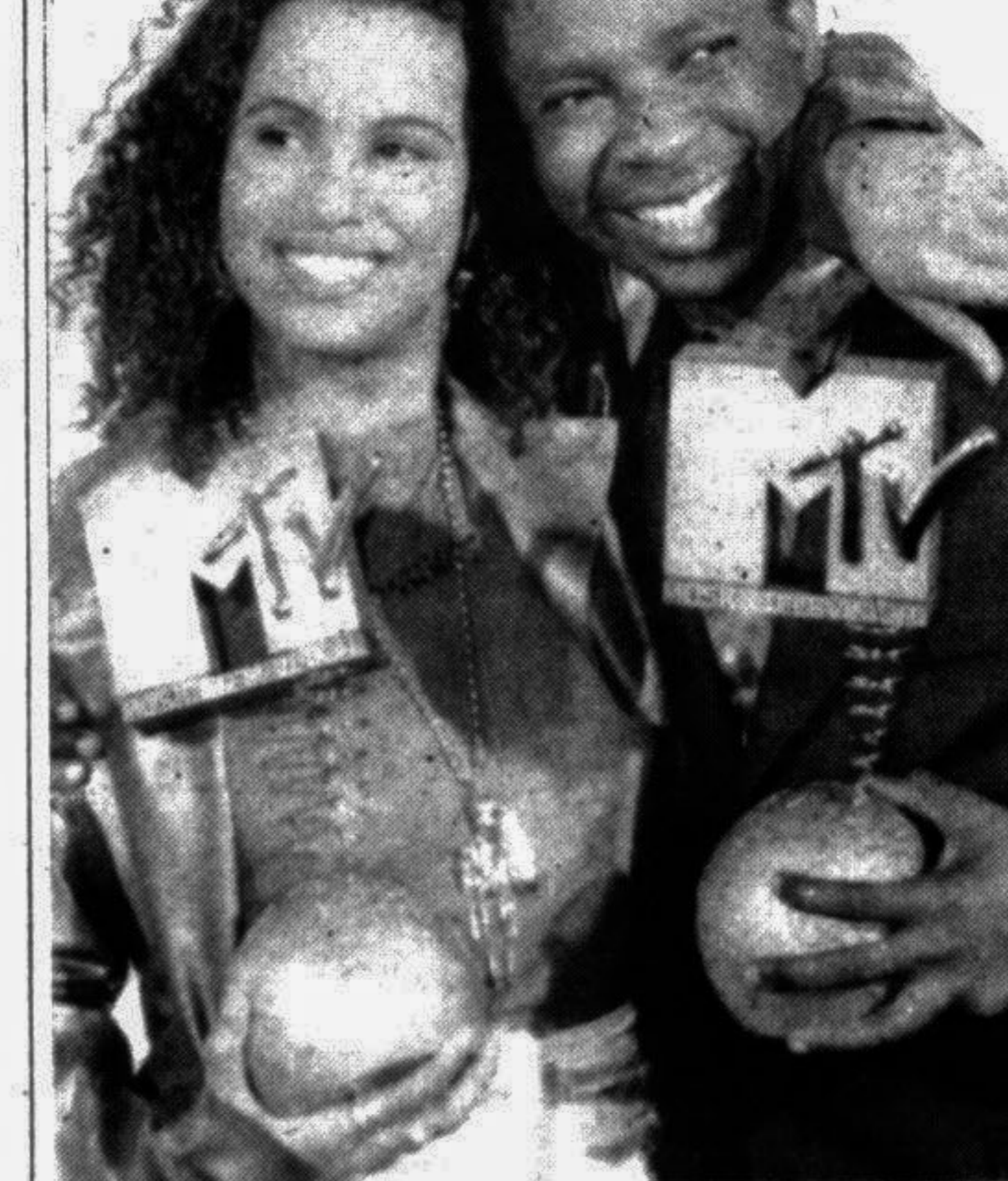
A diplomat said Bhutto would discuss the issue with

British officials, but not expect any change of stance.

London, while condemning human rights abuses in the Kashmir valley — control of which is divided, between Islamabad and New Delhi — favours direct talks between Pakistan and India to resolve the dispute.

Islamabad, on the other hand, has for several years called for the matter be dealt with on an international level.

Britain has also called for the ending of any military support for the Kashmiri militant separatists fighting Indian rule, being provided from the Pakistani-controlled zone — a claim that is hotly denied by Islamabad.



Singers Neneh Cherry (L) and Youssou N'Dour smile after they received the MTV award for the best song "Seven Seconds" during the MTV gala in front of Berlin's Brandenburg Gate late Thursday. — AFP photo

## Japan discloses plutonium holdings for first time

of which some 3.4 tonnes are likely to be fissile.

Some 6.2 tonnes was in facilities in Japan and Britain.

The white paper, quoting international reports, said estimated worldwide stockpiles of separated plutonium outside reactors for non-military purposes, totalled about 72 tonnes at the end of 1990, mainly in Britain and the former Soviet Union.

Military stocks were estimated at 257 tonnes.

Izumi told reporters, Japan's stocks were safeguarded under the supervision of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the energy arm of the United Nations.

Most of it was already in or close to fuel-mixture form — meaning the material cannot be directly used to make high-powered weapons. Weapons-grade plutonium needs to be over 93 per cent fissile, Izumi added.

The white paper showed a big increase in the plutonium stockpile in 1993, but Izumi said this was due to a special 1.5 tonne shipment from a reprocessing plant in France.

Take away the shipment from abroad and consumption is slightly greater than production and this deficit will remain until around the year 2000, Yasutaka Moriguchi, STA's director of nuclear fuels division told Reuters.

Up to 2000, when Japan's first commercial fuel reprocessing plant in Rokkasho-Mura starts, the country's annual plutonium consumption at its reactors is likely to be about 0.6 tonnes.

Moriguchi said Japan might repeat a controversial 1993 shipment of high-grade plutonium from Europe to make up any shortfall until the Rokkasho plant is on stream.

If the start-up of the Rokkasho plant is delayed, we might have to ship a few tonnes of high-grade plutonium again," he said. "Otherwise, our planned shipment from Europe totalling 30 tonnes will be in the form of mix fuel (a mixture of pluto-

nium and uranium), which cannot be directly used to make weapons."

The white paper said Japan, which relies on Middle East oil for a large part of its energy needs, still sees plutonium recycling using Fast Breeder Reactors (FBRs), which produce more plutonium than they consume, as the ultimate solution to its need for stable energy supplies.

But earlier this year it scaled down its ambitious recycling programme due to international concerns over its burgeoning plutonium stockpile and high development costs.

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reprocessing plant scheduled in the early 2000s had been delayed by at least 10 years.

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