

BRIEFLY

Kashmiri killed in prison: Police fired on imprisoned Kashmiri rebels Sunday, killing one person after the prisoners tried to resist a search of their cells. AP reports from Jammu.

Police were looking for books and pamphlets eulogising the Muslim insurrection when they were attacked by prisoners armed with stones in the Kot Bhalwal prison on the outskirts of Jammu, the northern state's winter capital. Ashok Kumar Suri, inspector-general of police said. Police fired bullets after tear gas failed to control the prisoners. Twelve policemen were injured in the violence, Suri said.

Iranian writer Sirjani dies: A liberal Iranian writer died yesterday of a heart attack while under house arrest on drug and alcohol charges, the official news agency IRNA reported. AFP says from Tehran.

All Akbar Saidi Sirjani's health deteriorated in "the early hours" of yesterday and he died several hours later "despite efforts" to save his life, informed sources told IRNA. The 50-year-old writer was detained in March and then put under house arrest for allegedly keeping drugs at home and for drug and alcohol addiction.

Russian sub for Aussie museum: Russia has sold a submarine to an Australian museum to raise cash to build housing for its sailors, the ITAR-Tass news agency reported yesterday. AFP says from Moscow.

The submarine is a diesel-powered boat from the Pacific Fleet and was recently withdrawn from service. It was sold by the State Arms Enterprise to the Australian company Toledo which, according to officers of the fleet, plans to put it on display for three years as part of a floating museum of ships of the world.

UNITA urged to free 4 hostages: Angolan state radio yesterday repeated a government demand for the release of four helicopter crewmen alleged to have been captured by Jonas Savimbi's UNITA rebels after being shot down in the south, Reuter reports from Luanda.

The Luanda government charged on Saturday that rebels shot down the helicopter, killing 22 people on board, while it was ferrying wounded soldiers from the southeastern city of Cuito-Cuanavale.

Rocket attack on Kabul: Eighteen rockets and mortar rounds hit government-held parts of Kabul on Saturday, killing one person and wounding six, the official Kabul Radio said. Reuter reports from Islamabad.

The radio, monitored in Islamabad, blamed the bombardment on the forces of opposition leader Gulbuddin Hekmatyar.

Zhirinovskiy to run for president: Russian ultra-nationalist Vladimir Zhirinovskiy announced Saturday he would stand as a candidate in presidential elections in June 1996, the ITAR-Tass agency said. AFP reports from Moscow.

Zhirinovskiy, who has enraged public opinion at home and abroad with nationalist anti-semitic and war-mongering statements made the announcement to supporters gathered in Novgorod, near Saint Petersburg.



Cambodian youths attack a placard of visiting American evangelist Mike Evans on Friday in Phnom Penh. After miracle attempts to cure blindness and heal lifelong injuries failed, people rioted Friday and police officers have advised the preacher to flee the country for his own safety. —AFP photo

Republicans oppose accord with DPRK

NEW YORK, Nov 27: Republican leaders in the US Senate will seek to overturn the Clinton administration's nuclear accord with North Korea by withholding funds to carry it out, a newspaper reported on Sunday. says AP.

Republican senators said in interviews with The New York Times that they were upset that 4 billion dollars in international aid had been promised to North Korea to build nuclear reactors even though the Communist nation was not expected to permit inspections of several of its nuclear sites for five years.

Japan and South Korea are expected to provide most of the money to help North Korea build light-water nuclear reactors. It is harder to extract plutonium for use in nuclear weapons from such reactors.

Under the October agreement, the United States was expected to spend tens of millions of dollars to provide North Korea with oil until the reactors are built.

But Sen Frank Murkowski of Alaska, who is likely to become the chairman of the Senate subcommittee on East Asian affairs when the new Republican-controlled Congress is seated in January, said he would try to block US funding for the oil purchase.

"I don't support the Administration's concessions, which I find totally unacceptable," Murkowski told the Times.

Sen Bob Dole of Kansas, who is expected to become the Senate Majority Leader, and Sen Jesse Helms, the likely chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, have also criticised the accord.

Malaysia to buy anti-tank guided missiles

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 27: Malaysian Defence Minister Najib Razak today said the country would beef up its armed forces by buying anti-tank guided missiles and other weapons. Berdama news agency reported, says AFP.

This will enhance the capability and fire power of the Malaysian armed forces. Defence Minister Najib Razak said during a visit to Malaysia's central Pahang State.

The guided missiles were initially planned for the use of Malaysian peacekeepers in Bosnia, said Najib.

US, Europe insensitive to sufferings of Kashmiris?

SRINAGAR, Nov 27: Mush-taq Ahmed winces in pain as a doctor probes his belly for internal bleeding, reports Reuter.

"If this happened to Clinton's child, the US president might care what's going on here in Kashmir," says the doctor.

"Like many victims of violence in a five-year rebellion in the Himalayan state of Jammu and Kashmir, Ahmed has been rushed to the state hospital for bone and joint surgery in the state's summer capital of Srinagar.

Everyday the squalid hospital admits 20 to 30 victims of beatings and torture at the hands of security forces, doctors said.

Ahmed, a 21-year-old shop-keeper had been picked up by paramilitary forces following a bomb blast. His mother said he was kicked and beaten then dumped on a roadside. He has concussion, possible brain damage and undetermined damage to his stomach, the doctor says.

Violence, killing rampant in Karachi
Gunmen attack govt office: 4 die

KARACHI, Nov 27: Gunmen attacked a local government office in Karachi Saturday killing four people and wounding two, police said, reports Reuter.

Four or five assailants got out of a taxi and went upstairs to a first floor municipal office in district central, in the north of the Pakistani port city.

They sprayed bullets at its occupants, killing Kanwar Kazmi, a local government official appointed by the ruling Pakistan People's Party (PPP) a police constable and two other people, before escaping in the cab, police said.

The motive for the attack, which took place at about 11 pm (1800 GMT) in a district dominated by the Mohajir National Movement (MQM), was not immediately clear.

More than 80 people have been killed in the city this month in violence involving rival MQM factions and security forces.

The MQM seeks to redress what it calls the injustice and discrimination meted out to Karachi's Mohajir majority — Urdu speakers who fled to Pakistan from India at partition in 1947.

More than 2,500 people have been killed in ethnic, sectarian and political violence in Karachi since 1986.

Xinhua adds: Karachi, Pakistan's biggest city and most important industrial and commercial centre which contributes 65 per cent to the national Exchequer, violence and killing are becoming a daily routine, with millions of dollars of losses having been

caused to the city's economy. Most Mohammad, a member of National Assembly from Karachi, capital of Sindh Province, said street violence claimed more than 1,000 lives during the last 12 months and at least 140 were killed in the past two months alone.

Hundreds of citizens in Karachi staged a peace march Wednesday, demanding peace and protection, as the law and order situation there was deteriorating day by day.

Life has become miserable for common citizens and businessmen in the city, Karachi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) President Ahmed Sattar said.

A vast amount of money was being robbed every day from banks and businesses in the city and millions of dollars in goods were being looted from factories and trucks, he said.

"While returning home you never know if there will be a murder, a curfew, my children will still be there or water and power have not been cut off," said taxi driver Francis De Costa.

According to chairman of All Pakistan Organisation of Small Traders and Cottage Industries Muahammad Under Saliya, a total of 672 businessmen and small traders have been killed in attacks and other incidents of violence this year.

Statistics compiled from newspaper reports and police records, 1,893 robberies took place this year and 1,321 cars were stolen.

Jayewardene may lose some privileges

COLOMBO, Nov 27: Prime Minister Sirimavo Bandaranaike has said her government would not take away the civic rights of the former president J R Jayewardene but he may lose some of the privileges he was enjoying, reports PTI.

"A large amount of public money is spent on him now. It is a sin to spend such a large amount of money on an individual. By the proposed new constitution some of the privileges enjoyed by him would be taken away," the 78-year-old prime minister said in an interview to a Sinhala newspaper "Lankadeepa."

President Jayewardene had deprived Bandaranaike of her civic rights in 1977 and had to vacate her seat at Attangala. She was stripped of her civic rights for seven years on October 16, 1980 when a presidential commission found her guilty of abuse of power.

Pro-Kurdish protesters clash with FRG police

BONN, Nov 27: Hundreds of pro-Kurdish demonstrators took to the streets of German cities on Saturday sparking clashes with police that left several people wounded and provoked scores of arrests, officials said, reports AFP.

The protesters were marking the first anniversary of the banning by German authorities of the separatist Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), which is fighting for a Kurdish homeland in southwest Turkey.

In Darmstadt, western Germany, a policeman was seriously wounded and three others slightly.

In Hanover, northwestern Germany, violence flared as police arrested part of a crowd of 150 to 200 people brandishing German flags bearing the outlawed PKK insignia.

In the southern city of Stuttgart, 48 people were detained for carrying offensive weapons and PKK symbols.

Iran fears civil strife

NICOSIA, Nov 27: Thousands of Iranian troops began a nationwide show of force on Saturday amid fears that worsening economic and social conditions could lead to civil strife, reports AP.

The Islamic Republic News Agency gave no details of the exercises or how long they would last. But past manoeuvres have included setting up checkpoints to search cars and pedestrians for weapons or contraband goods.

Over the past two years, riots have erupted in nearly every major Iranian cities. A series of bombings, including three in the capital, have killed dozens.



Muslim girls holding the Bosnian flag brush their tears away during a peace rally in Zagreb on Saturday. Several thousand demonstrators gathered in the city centre to protest Serbian invasion of Bihac and demanded further NATO air strikes against Bosnian-Serb positions. —AFP photo

Maoist rebels vow to disrupt elections in Andhra Pradesh

VANGARA, India, Nov 27: Indian Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao's village here is under the shadow of the gun as Maoist militants lock horns with security forces over next week's crucial elections in the country's south, reports AFP.

The guerillas have called for a boycott of the ballot in Rao's home state of Andhra Pradesh on December 1 and 5 and vowed to kill those who vote in this small village and its neighbourhood.

On Saturday, a landmine blast, suspected to be the work of the rebels, killed 13 police commandos and three civilian guards in the district of Karimnagar.

Because of the guerillas' penchant for landmines, police have warned candidates not to travel in cars or jeeps.

The authorities are taking

no chances, and have posted 20 paramilitary troops to guard the prime minister's ancestral home here, following threats by the outlawed People's War Group (PWG) to blast it.

No member of Rao's extended family lives at the to-storied house, having moved to safer areas in recent years, fearing the PWG.

The PWG has warned villagers against taking up jobs at the Rao Farms.

For Rao's Congress (I) Party, which rules Andhra Pradesh, ensuring a reasonable turnout of voters has become a prestige issue. The first phase of polling in the south was held on Saturday in the adjoining state of Karnataka.

"Violence cannot stop democracy," said Superintendent of Police Sudeep

Lakhtakia in Warrangal town, nearly 40 kilometres (25 miles) away, referring to the PWG violent campaign against the polls.

"If the poll process is sought to be obstructed with a bullet, we will reply with a bullet," said Andhra Pradesh police chief M V Vthaskar Rao.

The staggered ballot is considered a crucial test for the 73-year-old Rao's political future. A defeat in Andhra Pradesh, one of India's biggest states, could spark a party rebellion against the premier.

The prime minister has made no reference in his hectic campaign tour to the PWG, which has pasted thousands of posters throughout Andhra Pradesh urging the people to boycott the elections and beat up contestants.



Islamic militants waving black flags reading "there is no god but Allah and Mohammad is his prophet" march through the crowd during a rally called by the Islamic group Hamas in Gaza City on Saturday. Some 12,000 people attended. —AFP photo

Saudi dissident denied asylum in Britain

LONDON, Nov 27: Britain has refused to grant political asylum to a prominent Saudi Arabian dissident who faces possible "imprisonment and torture" if he is forced to go home. The Independent on Sunday newspaper reported, says AFP.

Mohammed Al-Masari, a 48-year-old physics teacher and spokesman for the Saudi Committee for the Defence of Legitimate Rights (CDLR), arrived in Britain last April after fleeing first to Yemen.

The Independent on Sunday said Al-Masari had immediately put in an application for political asylum but the Home Office notified him last week that he was an "illegal entrant" and had to leave Britain and return to Yemen.

The Home Office says that he should go to Yemen where Mohammed Al-Masari believes

he would be kidnapped or assassinated," the paper said.

"Specialists on Yemen says that his return ... would be an effective sentence of death or incarceration since Saudi Arabia has long had several of the country's most powerful tribes and politicians on its payroll," the paper said.

Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh told one source that his country could not protect Al-Masari. The Independent on Sunday wrote.

AP adds: While in London, Al-Masari has organised dissent against the Saudi government and publicised allegations of corruption against a defuncting Saudi diplomat, as well as the details of Mark Thatcher's business deals in the Arab world, which made the son of the former prime minister a multimillionaire.

Off the Record

Crocodile kills attendant as horrified tourists look on

BRISBANE, Australia: A crocodile killed an attendant on Sunday at a crocodile farm in the Australian state of Queensland as horrified tourists looked on, police said, reports Reuter.

A police spokesman said the 27-year-old man was showing a group around the Johnstone river crocodile farm at Innisfail near Cairns.

He had entered an enclosure and was trying to attract the attention of 4.1 metre (13-foot) saltwater crocodile when the reptile seized his arm and dragged him into the pool enclosure.

Some of the tourists tried in vain to get the crocodile to release its victim by throwing stones and poking it with a pole. Police had to shoot it to reach the attendant but he was already dead.

Monkey feast

LOPBURI, Thailand: It wasn't quite monkey see, monkey do in this Thai town Sunday, reports AP.

While dozens of the wild primates took their places at buffet tables in the sixth annual monkey feast, hundreds more refused to follow their lead.

They hung back and watched as their outgoing peers made their way past thousands of people to sit atop red tablecloths and gorge themselves on trays piled high with everything from bananas and peanuts to watermelon and cabbage. A baby monkey climbed inside a pumpkin to claim it while munching on pineapple pieces. Fights broke out periodically over boiled eggs and cucumbers.

The local belief is that keeping the monkeys happy brings good luck, and those who didn't join in the feast looked well-fed anyway.

From their home in a centuries-old stone temple in the centre of Lopburi, about 150 kilometres (95 miles) from Bangkok, they simply stared back at the people who turned out to watch them eat.

The Lopburi Inn, sponsor of the feast, accommodated even these late-comers by refilling trays throughout the day from a stock of more the 100 kilograms (220 pounds) of treats.

Abandoned baby found alive

SANTIAGO: An abandoned baby was found alive in Val paraiso, authorities said Saturday amid concern about the growing number of infant bodies discovered in Santiago and other cities in Chile, reports AFP.

Police responding to an anonymous phone tip, rescued the baby in the seaside resort about 100 kilometres (62 miles) west of Santiago.

A series of dead baby discoveries began November 13 with an abandoned baby's body found in the Santiago general cemetery.

That same day a 17-year-old woman was arrested after the body of her newborn daughter was found in a trash bin.

Two days later another dead abandoned infant was discovered in the Santiago cemetery.

The latest grisly discovery came last Thursday, when two dead tiny twin girls in a garbage dump in Rancagua, about 80 kilometres (50 miles) south of the capital.

Order to evacuate Chechen presidential palace

GROZNY, Russia, Nov 27: Government officials on Sunday ordered the evacuation of the presidential palace as opposition forces geared up for another assault on the Chechen capital, reports AP.

A major offensive on Saturday failed to wrest Grozny, the capital of the breakaway region, from government control, but an opposition spokesman said the fighting was not over.

"We will be in the presidential building tomorrow," a spokesman for opposition leader Ruslan Khasbulatov said on Sunday.

Khasbulatov, meeting with military advisers at his base 20 kilometres (13 miles) north of Grozny, also indicated that the offensive was not finished. Asked by The Associated Press what his plans were, he replied, "No comment. We'll talk there (the presidential

palace) tomorrow."

Chechen President Dzhokhar Dudayev on Saturday vowed to fight to the end against what he called Russian aggression. "If Russia continues this path, we have no other option — Russia is the aggressor," he said in a telephone interview.

Chechnya, a mostly Muslim area of 1.2 million in the Caucasus Mountains, declared independence in 1991. Dudayev loyalists say Moscow wants to oust the former Soviet air force general so Chechnya will return to the Kremlin's fold.

Moscow, which backs the opposition politically and reportedly gives financial support, has denied providing any military help.

Outside Khasbulatov's headquarters, Russian-speaking crews climbed into seven T-72 tanks and prepared for the next confrontation.

Koirala to support Communist Party to form govt

KATHMANDU, Nov 27: Outgoing Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala has pledged to support a government led by the Nepal Communist Party-United Marxist and Leninist (NCP-UML), a Communist Party official said, yesterday, reports AFP.

Koirala has assured me of his full support for the new Communist Party government to be formed," NCP-UML Secretary General Madhav Kumar Nepal said after talks between the Communist Party and the premier's Nepal Congress.

During the talks, Nepal appealed for support from the NC in parliament so that the NCP-UML could survive a vote of confidence to be tabled a month after the formation of the Communist-led minority government, he said.

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