

International

Enraged protesters assault police

Gunmen attack Sunni Muslim mosque in Multan: 20 killed

MULTAN, Pakistan, Sept. 23: Four gunmen attacked a Sunni Muslim mosque in the Pakistani city of Multan today killing at least 20 people and wounding many more, police said, reports Reuter.

Hundreds of enraged protesters later assaulted police outside the mosque, chanting slogans against them and against militant Shiite Muslims held responsible for the killings.

Witnesses said crowds threw stones at several Shiite homes and a Shiite place of worship in the same area, and blocked the main Multan-Bahawalpur Road with burning tyres.

"The people are understandably very agitated," said Police Deputy Superintendent Mirza Magbood Beg at the scene.

The shooting followed the killing on Sunday night of a leader of the militant Shiite Sipah-i-Mohammad Pakistan (SMP) group in Bahawalpur, about 95 km (60 miles) south of Multan.

Shahid Ansari, a local councillor said his father had been in the mosque frequented

Shiite sources in Islamabad said Qamar Haider, described as a divisional commander of the SMP, had been shot dead by unidentified gunmen while sitting in his shop.

The Mosque attack occurred three days after Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto's estranged brother Murtaza was shot dead in the southern city of Karachi when police rushed with his guards.

It was the latest in a bloody feud between religious militants in Pakistan. Shiites account for about 15 per cent of the country's 130 million people, most of whom are Sunnis.

Witnesses in Multan said three gunmen burst into the Al-Khain Mosque in the densely-populated Mumtazabad area and opened fire as the congregation was offering *Fazr* prayers. They escaped in a white car driven by a fourth.

The mosque was run by the hardline Sunni Sipah-i-Sabah Pakistan (SSP) group to which Ahl-e-Hadith is affiliated.

Sectarian tension has been especially acute in the populous Punjab province, where Multan and Bahawalpur are located.

The SMP's leader Shiite

Murid Abbas Yazdani, was shot dead at his home in Islamabad on September 12.

Gunmen killed 12 people in an SSP service in Karachi on August 14. Up to 18 Shiites died four days later in an attack on a community meeting near Mailsi, in Punjab.

AP adds, the dead were all Sunni Muslims like most Pakistanis in this Islamic nation of 140 million people.

No one has taken responsibility for the killings, but officials here believe it was linked to the sectarian violence of late.

Last month, also in southern Punjab, 18 Shiite Muslims were gunned down while offering their prayers. At least 100 others were injured.

At the time they blamed militant members of the rival Sunni sect.

The government has arrested dozens of leaders of both sects in an attempt to quell the violence which has begun anew in Pakistan in recent months.



A Bosnian-Croat woman prays in a destroyed church in Sarajevo's former frontline suburb of Stup on Sunday. The international organisers of Bosnia's elections, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation (OSCE), announced on Saturday that the flaws in vote counts will complicate Bosnia's peace process. Validation of the election results could be delayed for several days. — AFP/UNB photo

UK police foils IRA bomb attack : One person was killed and five others arrested in dawn raids Monday which police said had foiled a massive IRA bomb attack. AP reports from London.

Police said they uncovered large quantities of arms, explosives and bomb-making equipment in the raids at addresses in London and southern England.

"The operation has undoubtedly frustrated a serious imminent IRA terrorist attack on the British mainland involving the deployment of a large vehicle bomb likely to have caused grave loss of life and massive disruption," a police statement said.

Egypt backs Ghali for 2nd term :

Egypt on Sunday reaffirmed its support for besieged UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali and said he has a right to seek another term even if it prompts the United States to exercise its veto power. AP reports from United Nations.

In an interview with the news agency, Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Moussa said that Boutros-Ghali's future remains "a point of disagreement" between Cairo and Washington on the eve of the annual meeting of the UN General Assembly.

"Our position is that Boutros-Ghali should continue as secretary general," he said, dismissing the attacks against the 73-year-old UN leader as "unjustified."

Hashimoto leaves for UN speech:

Japanese Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto flew to New York Monday for a brief trip that includes a meeting with President Clinton and a speech at the United Nations, AP reports from Tokyo.

Like Clinton, Hashimoto faces the voters soon in an election for Japan's lower house of Parliament expected October 20.

The prime minister is expected to use his Tuesday meeting with the president to advertise progress in settling disputes involving US military bases on the southern Japanese island of Okinawa.

10 miners killed in SA : Unknown attackers set off a series of explosions, then beat and stabbed people to death at a farm where transient miners live west of Johannesburg, AP reports from Stilfontein, South Africa.

Police said Monday the attack on Sunday killed 10 people and injured 18 at the Springvale farm in Stilfontein, about 180 kilometres (110 miles) from Johannesburg.

Eight home-made bombs constructed out of mining explosives went off before dawn Sunday at the farm, where miners were working at gold mines in the area, police Superintendent Pieter du Plessis said.

Colombian troops kill 16 rebels :

Clashes with the army left at least 16 rebels dead this weekend after the armed forces were placed on alert in the face of growing guerrilla attacks, police said Sunday. AP reports from Bogota.

Thirteen rebels were gunned down in violent battles with government troops late Saturday and Sunday in the northern province of Antioquia, where rebels of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and the National Liberation Army (ELN) tried to block major highways.

Rebel barricades along major highways in more than a third of Colombia's provinces have nearly paralysed cargo and passenger traffic.

Pope back home ending France visit : Pope John Paul II returned home on Sunday after a controversial four-day visit to France, AP reports from Rome.

Travelling on an Air France jet from Reims, the Roman Catholic pontiff touched down at 9:40 pm (1940 gmt) in Rome, from where he proceeded to his residence at Castelgandolfo, south of the Italian capital.

While in flight, the Pope sent a message of thanks to French President Jacques Chirac for the welcome he had received during his visit.

Chad bans independent candidates : Chadian officials have banned independent candidates from parliamentary elections in November, state-run radio reported Sunday. AP says from N'djamena, Chad.

The Higher Transitional Council voted 27 to 18 on Friday to require candidates to be nominated by a legally constituted political party or group of political parties, the report said.

The council did not say why it amended the electoral code.

10 killed in China car plunge : At least 10 people were killed and two went missing when a cable car plunged into a river in southwestern China, it was reported yesterday. AP says from Hong Kong.

The accident happened on September 9 at the construction site of a hydroelectric plant at Ynlai in Sichuan province, the Hong Kong China News Service said in a report. Three workers were seriously injured in the accident in which the cable broke and all the people on board fell into the river, it said.

Guterres meets Mahathir : Portuguese Prime Minister Antonio Guterres met for two hours Sunday with his Malaysian counterpart Mahathir Mohamad at the Setia Palace, near Lisbon, officials said, AP reports from Lisbon.

Pak police shoot dead 5 robbers: Pakistani police said they had shot dead five armed robbers yesterday during a gunbattle in the southern port city of Karachi, Reuter reports from Karachi.

A police officer said the bandits had fired on a police unit that was responding to an emergency call from a house that was being looted in district central's new Karachi area. All five robbers died in the 15-minute shootout, he said. No injuries were reported among police or occupants of the house.

In advance of that session, Defence Secretary William Perry met in Helsinki with Antti Taina, Finland's defence secretary.

Afterward, Mrs. Taina told reporters the international community must stay in Bosnia after December. And, she said, "I think the presence of the USA is very important."

For America's allies the question is whether a follow-on force can be effective without US participation.

But with the presidential election only six weeks away, Clinton administration officials are reluctant to speculate publicly about whether US troops will be in Bosnia next year and beyond.

Private discussion of what comes next in Bosnia will be at the top of the agenda this week when NATO defence ministers meet in Bergen, Norway.

"We really have to take it one step at a time," said Secretary of State Warren Christopher.

"Whether something is needed afterward on the military side is not yet clear," said

Robert Hunter, the US ambassador to NATO.

Christopher and Hunter spoke shortly after voters in Bosnia chose a three-member presidency for the ethnically fractured country in an election carried out remarkably free of violence.

But even as Christopher was declaring the election "a major victory for the democratic process," it remained unclear whether the ballot box has overcome the guerrilla in Bosnia.

Perry listened to Mrs. Taina's analysis without comment. Other senior US officials were equally cautious.

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ethnically cleansed to try to recover through the ballot box the control over their homes," said a senior US official, speaking on condition of anonymity.

The administration hopes the municipal elections will be held before December 20, the date for withdrawal of the NATO force.

"We are going to continue to keep robust military forces up until the moment the IFOR (NATO's Implementation Force) mandate expires," said Hunter, in hopes that the military presence will be available to make the municipal elections come off with as little violence as the presidential balloting.

For example, no date has been set for the more difficult municipal elections, which will involve far more travel by Bosnians of all ethnic groups to communities from which they were expelled over the past three years.

"It's the municipal elections that hold the potential for the

Scandals that rocked Indian politics in past decades

NEW DELHI, Sept. 23: A criminal case which forced former Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao to resign as Congress Party leader on Saturday is the latest in a series of scandals that have rocked Indian politics in the past decade, reports Reuter.

Following are summaries of major political scandals:

Vote-buying scandal — Lawmakers of the regional Jharkhand Mukti Morcha party said they were paid 100,000 dollars to vote against a 1993 no-confidence motion, which Rao's Congress-led government survived by a wafer-thin margin. Earlier this year the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) filed a case accusing Rao and other Congress leaders of buying the votes. They have denied any wrongdoing.

Urea scandal — The CBI in June named one of Rao's sons, PV Prabhakara Rao, in a 40 million dollar kickback scandal related to the import of urea fertiliser from Turkey which never arrived. Prabhakara Rao, questioned by the CBI, denied the charges.

Cheating scandal — A Delhi criminal court judge summoned Rao to testify in a cheating case involving an expatriate Indian, Lakshmi Pathak, who testified that he paid 100,000 dollars to a Rao acquaintance in 1983 in a failed attempt to win a government contract. A special Delhi court upheld the summons on Saturday and ordered Rao to appear as a co-accused on September 30. Rao, who denied any involvement, resigned as Congress Party head.

Perot sets goal of 25 pc vote

WASHINGTON, Sept. 23: Ross Perot says he's in the presidential race to win, but he seems to cast doubt on his prospects by setting a goal of drawing 25 per cent of the vote, reports AP.

Running as the Reform Party nominee, Perot said he would file a lawsuit Monday seeking an injunction against sponsorship of the presidential debates by the bipartisan commission that voted to exclude him.

"We will not sit by," he said. Regardless of whether he gets in the debates, Perot said: "My goal is to make sure this new party gets at a minimum 25 per cent of the vote and I think that is easily obtainable."

North Korea demands return of Submarine from South

SEOUL, Sept. 23: North Korea today demanded the return of a submarine which ran aground on South Korea last week, triggering a massive manhunt in which 20 of its crew were killed, reports AFP.

The south side must unconditionally return to the North the submarine and its crew including the dead bodies at once, a spokesman for North's Armed Forces Ministry said in a statement released by the Korean Central News Agency (KCNA).

With Muslims the most numerous people in Bosnia, Izetbegovic's Party of Democracy Action had 19 seats in the House of Representatives. Krajsnik's Serb Democratic Party had nine, and Zubak's Croatian Democratic Union seven.

Twenty of the fugitives from the sub have been killed, 11 of them apparently shot by their own colleagues and nine shot dead by South Korean troops.

Three South Korean soldiers have also been shot dead during the manhunt.

Reuter adds: South Korean troops shot dead a civilian by mistake today.

Off the Record

Speeding vehicles putting bird's populations at risk

BIRMINGHAM, England: Speeding vehicles on country lanes are slaughtering birds like owls and swallows across Europe, environmentalists said on Monday, reports Reuter.

Powerful, modern cars and the spread of roads across the countryside are now putting some bird populations at risk, they told Britain's main annual science festival.

Figures from the Westphalia area of Germany have shown 10 to 15 per cent of barn owl deaths alone are caused by vehicles, said Chris Mead of the British Ecological Society.

"This can't be sustained. Populations will inevitably decline," he added.

But simple changes in road planning, like lower speed restrictions on country roads, could have a dramatic effect.

The spread of roads is also dramatically reducing the areas available for wildlife.

"If we keep on building roads, we're simply going to lose wildlife sites altogether," said Mark Avery of Britain's Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.

Unique way to make fund

QUITO: Equadorian President Abdala Bucaram went on national television Sunday morning to shave off his mustache for one million dollars in cash and medicine for poor children, reports AFP.

Bucaram had agreed to auction off his Hitler-style mustache while campaigning for the presidency.

After shaving off the mustache he had worn for 25 years, Bucaram said, "I feel a little naked, but I look like a spring chicken."

Republican presidential nominee Bob Dole, has characterised Pentagon statements on the withdrawal of US troops by the December 20 deadline as "Alice in Wonderland."

"The American people believe the whole involvement in the operation will be over in 12 months," said McCain, who was instrumental in setting the original one-year limit on the operation. "We have an Alice in Wonderland dialogue here."

The Bosnian elections were a big step forward, but conditions in the country still are far short of what the White House would like to see.

Among the most important requirements seen are a military balance of power and a political commitment to peaceful resolution of differences, particularly the difficult question of claims for justice by thou-

sands of people driven from their homes.

The administration is eager to press ahead with plans to arm and train Bosnia government troops to place them on a par militarily with Bosnian Serb forces. That plan is encountering opposition from the European allies.

Another unmet goal is a 40 per cent reduction of heavy weapons. There has been no cutback, as all sides argue over who has how many of the big guns.

"I'm not saying we can say with confidence that conditions to make things self-sustaining are going to be there on December 20," said the senior US official. "The question is how far short of the mark are we, and what range of options needs to be put together for 1997."

Int'l force will be needed after NATO peacekeepers leave Bosnia

ATHENS, Sept. 23: Incumbent Greek Prime Minister Costas Simitis declared Sunday that his Socialist Party Pasok had won general elections defeating its main rightwing rival New Democracy, reports AFP.

"The popular verdict has sent a very clear message on Sunday. The Greeks want to take a new direction," Simitis said in a televised speech.

"This is a victory for all the Greeks who want peace, and cooperation but who also want to defend our sovereign rights," he added.

His statement came after New Democracy leader Miltiadis Evert earlier conceded defeat, after exit polls gave the Panhellenic socialist movement (Pasok) a four point lead in the elections.

The two parties had fought a close battle, with opinion polls carried out before Sunday's vote showing they were running neck and neck.

Outgoing Greek Prime Minister and President of the ruling Panhellenic Socialist party (PASOK) Costas Simitis gestures with a beaming face following a press conference at Zappion hall where he announced the victory of his PASOK party during the general elections on Sunday.