

International

Several officials sacked, detained students freed

Wattoo vows to fight 'undemocratic' methods in country

ISLAMABAD, Nov 4: Manzoor Wattoo, a bitter rival of Pakistan Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, sacked several officials and ordered detained students freed today, a day after a court reinstated him as head of the country's largest province, reports AFP.

Wattoo, who resumed office as Chief Minister of Punjab on Sunday, 14 months after his dismissal by a presidential decree, vowed to fight 'undemocratic' methods in the country.

The Chief Minister, in his first press conference after the ruling by the Lahore High Court, said he ordered the release of students detained for protesting the privatisation of schools and colleges.

He also said he would fight nepotism by providing 'jobs strictly on merit'. Wattoo was ousted in September 1995 after he fell out with Benazir for allegedly ignoring her party's interests.

Her ally Arif Nakai was elected in his place by the 248-member Punjab Assembly.

After a year-long hearing, the Lahore High Court ruled that Nakai's election as Chief Minister on September 13, 1995 was 'unlawful' and ordered that Wattoo be returned to his post.

Wattoo's reinstatement at the head of the provincial government after the widely publicised contretemps with Benazir, sparked intense political ma-

neuvering in the Punjab, considered crucial for national stability.

Asif Ali Zardari, Benazir's husband and also federal Minister for Investment, has been in the provincial capital, Lahore, for a week in an apparent bid to maintain the ruling coalition's unity and defeat the political threat.

The People's Democratic Front (PDF) alliance led by the embattled Benazir moved a no-trust motion against Wattoo soon after the court declared his September 1995 dismissal illegal.

Benazir said the judgement was 'acceptable' to her government but warned the Punjab Assembly would decide Wattoo's future.

The verdict came as Benazir was locked in bitter confrontation with the opposition over her economic policies and with the Muslim fundamentalist Jamaat-I-Islami (JI) Party leading nationwide street protests against her.

Benazir is also under immense pressure over the deteriorating law and order situation in Punjab, sectarian killings and frequent bomb blasts.

Wattoo has launched hectic efforts to muster support, saying 'I will submit to the decision of the assembly members' and condemned political corruption, adding 'the tendency of horse-trading must be discouraged'.

CWC unlikely to reach a common stand

Congress (I) meets to review support for UF govt

NEW DELHI, Nov 4: India's scandal-plagued Congress party opened a key meeting today to review its support for Prime Minister H D Deve Gowda's five-month-old minority coalition government, reports Reuters.

But party officials said members of the Congress Working Committee (CWC), the party's top decision-making body, were unlikely to reach a common stand.

The party is grappling with corruption allegations including charges against former prime minister PV Narasimha Rao, who stepped down in September as party president while retaining the post as leader of Congress's Parliamentary Party.

Ours is a democratic party and there are different opinions on important issues. So we will be discussing ways to narrow

down the differences, a senior party leader, who asked not to be identified, told Reuters on Monday.

Congress president Sitaram Kesri has had several meetings with Deve Gowda to ease ties with the ruling centre-left alliance.

But party officials said these had not prevented some senior Congress members from demanding a withdrawal of support for the 13-group coalition.

Deve Gowda formed his coalition in June with the tacit support of Congress after inconclusive general elections in April and May gave his group just 115 seats in the 545-member lower house of parliament.

Congress, despite its worst ever defeat in a general election, won 142 seats. The party has ruled India most of the time since independence from

Britain in 1947.

Simmering tensions between the Congress and the United Front worsened last month when the parties backed rival leaders for the chief minister's job in India's most populous state, Uttar Pradesh, where local polls produced a hung assembly.

Though it is unlikely that the impasse over Uttar Pradesh would lead to a breaking point, the relationship is not going to recover its earlier untroubled and accommodation spirit, the Hindu newspaper said on Monday.

A Congress Party spokesman said 'we had promised support to Deve Gowda on certain principles like fighting communalism. This meeting on

Monday will consider how much of that has been followed.'



Ashfaqur Rahman, High Commissioner of Bangladesh to Singapore and his wife Dilshad Rahman with President Ong Teng Cheong of Singapore and his wife Mrs. Ong Teng Cheong after presenting his credentials at the President House recently.

Refugees fleeing from Goma to north

UN calls for int'l presence to secure humanitarian aid corridors in E Zaire

GENEVA, Nov 4: UN High Commissioner for Refugees Sadako Ogata on Sunday called for an 'international presence' to guarantee the security of humanitarian aid corridors which she said should be set up to avert thousands of deaths in Eastern Zaire, reports AFP.

'We will have to negotiate both with the Rwandan and Zairean government to set up safety assurance for which I think international presence would be required,' Ogata told the BBC.

Earlier on Sunday, Ogata had urged in a statement: 'We must open emergency lifelines to the refugees and displaced people now, wherever they are. We must open humanitarian corridors to enable refugees to return in safety to Rwanda and Burundi.'

More than one million civilians are fleeing fighting between rebels and Zairean troops.

Ogata said Assistant High Commissioner Sergio Vieira De Mello would leave Monday for Rwanda and Zaire to discuss with officials how to ease the crisis.

Meanwhile the EU Commissioner for Humanitarian Action, Emma Bonino, called Sunday for urgent action to help refugees caught in the crossfire in Eastern Zaire.

In a communique, she said that 800,000 people — more than half of them children under the age of 14 — faced death due to a lack of food, drinking water and medical aid.

AP adds, in the shadow of the towering Mount Nyiragongo Volcano, a seemingly endless line of refugees trudged northward Sunday from the Zairian city of Goma to escape the advance of Zaire's Tutsi rebels and their Rwandan allies.

From a hillside on the Rwandan side of the border it was

impossible to see a beginning or end to the stream of humanity heading past the once teeming Kibumba refugee camp in the valley below.

A lone Rwandan guard refused to allow reporters to cross into Zaire at the dirt track Mutova border past 30 kilometres (20 miles) north of Gisenyi.

He muttered that the camp below was filled with dead Zairian soldiers and Inter-hamwe, the Rwanda Hutu militiamen who fled to Zaire after killing some 500,000 Tutsis in Rwanda in 1994. It was impossible to verify his claim from the Rwandan side of the border.

The refugees, clutching bundles of meager belongings, headed up the valley road past the active volcano and towards the refugee camp at Katala some 40 kilometres (25 miles) further north, or the town of Rutshuru 15 kilometres (10 miles) beyond.

Jackson's nurse expecting Jackson Jr!

LONDON, Nov 4: Michael Jackson's nurse is expecting his son, to be named Michael Jackson Jr., a tabloid reported Sunday, reports AP.

The News of the World quoted Debbie Rowe as saying Jackson is paying her 528,000 dollars to have the infant, which was conceived by artificial insemination at the Los Angeles Fertility Institute and is due in February.

Rowe, 37, has known Jackson for 15 years and has helped treat the star for vitiligo, the ailment that has lightened his skin, the newspaper said.

'Michael is so excited,' the News of the World quoted her as saying. 'He keeps saying how he can't wait and how nine months is too long.'

There was no immediate comment from Jackson's entourage. Telephone queries were left with Bob Jones, head of public relations for Michael Jackson Corp., and with Jackson's personal manager Sandy Gallin.

The newspaper ran the item under the headline 'I'm Having Jacko's Baby.' The paper included a grainy picture that appeared to show her with Jackson.

The News of the World said it had acquired taped conversations in which Rowe discussed the pregnancy. The newspaper did not say how it got the tapes or whether it paid for them.

The News of the World said the couple do not plan to marry. But it said Rowe had confided to a friend that the 38-year-old Jackson will raise the child himself, though she will receive visiting rights.

Mother Teresa may be replaced as head of the Missionaries of Charity

CALCUTTA, Nov 4: Mother Teresa could be replaced as head of the Missionaries of Charity in January when the order votes to choose a successor to the ailing Nobel laureate, a newspaper reported today, reports AFP.

The 86-year-old Roman Catholic nun, who founded the order in 1950 and has often talked of standing down today, declined to comment on the upcoming elections.

These are in the hands of god, we do not talk on these things, Mother Teresa told AFP from her headquarters in the eastern Indian city of Calcutta. Sister Priscilla Lewis, spokeswoman for the Missionaries of Charity, was quoted as saying by The Telegraph newspaper Sunday that plans were afoot to conduct the elections in two months.

'Preparations are underway even as we wait for Mother Teresa to recover fully,' she said.

'It was god's wish that Mother should continue to lead his work of love for the poorest of the poor, added sister Priscilla.

Cambodian boy testifies diplomat paid him for sex

CANBERRA, Nov 4: A Cambodian teen-ager testified Monday that the Australian ambassador who was instrumental in crafting the Cambodian peace plan paid 2 US dollars to have sex with him in Phnom Penh, reports AP.

The boy told the Magistrates court he had sex twice with John Scott Holloway, 53.

Holloway is facing a commitment hearing on charges of sexual abuse at a temple in Phnom Penh in 1994.

He has not entered a plea, but has publicly denied the charges. Early in the 1990s, working with then-Foreign Minister Gareth Evans, Holloway helped devise the UN peace accord that led to the departure of the occupying Vietnamese army, and elections in 1993 to replace the Hun Sen-backed regime with a new coalition government.

More recently Holloway has been an advisor to the Cambodian government.

Holloway has been charged under a 1994 Australian law prohibiting child sex tourism. Under the law, Australians who commit child sex crimes overseas can be prosecuted as if the offenses had been committed within Australia.



Indonesian opposition leader Megawati Sukarnoputri prays on Sunday during a ceremony 100 days since the violent July 27 riots, at her home. Hundreds of supporters along with relatives of persons still missing attended the ceremony, during which Megawati gave an emotional speech. — AFP/UNB photo

Off the Record

T-shirt dilemma

DELAWARE, Ohio: A school that discouraged the wearing of satanic T-shirts is trying to decide whether to extend that policy to all religious messages, including Christian ones, reports AP.

That doesn't sit well with eighth-grader Sarah Hayatt, whose wardrobe includes shirts with the slogans 'Pray Hard,' 'It's a God Thing' and 'Jesus'.

'I've been wearing these shirts since the sixth grade, and nobody has said anything until now,' the 13-year-old said Friday. 'There's nothing wrong with them. They're not offensive.'

The issue arose a couple of weeks ago when students who wore shirts with satanic themes were asked by school officials to leave them at home, said Principal Santha Stall-Friedman.

Those students then asked that classmates not wear shirts with Christian themes, Stall-Friedman said Sunday.

The principal said she formed a panel of 13 students from all sides of the issue — including Sarah — plus a couple of administrators to study the issue. She said she hopes they will make a recommendation to the school board later this week.

A 1960 US Supreme Court decision gave public school students wide latitude in what they can wear, said Gary Marx, spokesman for the American Association of School Administrators in Arlington, Virginia.

Graham Swift's 'Last Orders' wins Booker Prize

LONDON Nov 4: The winner of the 1996 Booker Prize for the best novel of 1996 is Graham Swift, author of Last Orders, described as 'A Black Comedy' about four men from east London who meet to carry out a butcher friend's dying wish that his ashes be scattered at a seaside resort, reports LPS.

The chairman of the panel of judges, Carmen Callil, writer and co-founder of the publishing house Virago, declared: 'This is a very worthy winner indeed in what has been a wonderful year for fiction. One of the criteria the panel insisted on was that the chosen book should be likely to stand the test of time. It is our judgment that Graham Swift's book will still be read in 50 years.'

Graham Swift, South Londoner son of a civil servant who is the author of four other novels which have been translated into many overseas languages, receives £20,000 as his prize.

He wrote Last Orders in just under two years and was 'thrilled' by the award which was a 'deeply rewarding recognition of my work'. Swift was previously shortlisted for the 1983 prize with Waterland, a reflective story of love and death set in the Fenland district of eastern England.

Said Carmen Callil: 'We had an extremely high standard shortlist and there was no real dispute over who should be the outright winner. We had lively discussions, of course. That is part of the fun of the Booker.'

Each year the chairman of the Booker panel reads some 150 novels. The judges then consider 25 likely contenders and from these choose a short

list of six. Carmen Callil added: 'These books we consider to have real merit are read two or three times. That is regarded as the ultimate test. If they survive that, they are in with a chance.'

The Booker founded in 1968 is widely regarded as the most prestigious event in the English literary year.

A Booker spokesman said: 'The intention has always been to reward merit, raise the stature of the author in the eyes of the public and increase sales of the books.'

Graham Swift, who is 47, has been supplementing his income from novels by teaching English. He says he writes every day. 'It is an addiction which is only rivalled by fishing. I am longing to get back to my desk to start on a new book.'

On the present state of British fiction, he said: 'There is plenty of good writing, a lot of talent out there. It comes under attack from time to time, but it is well able to look after itself.'

'No early end to IRA violence'

LONDON, Nov 4: Northern Ireland's new police chief Ronnie Flanagan said Monday he anticipates no early end to IRA violence, reports AP.

'We have nothing to suggest an imminent restoration of the ceasefire,' he said in a BBC radio interview on the first day in his new post on taking over from Sir High Annesley, who retired.

Asked about news reports the Irish Republican Army held a rare top-level meeting of its ruling General Army Convention at the weekend

back. So the people have turned to guns to protect themselves. A parking lot attendant, a hotel receptionist or a mechanic typically has an AK-47 strapped to his shoulder. A Chinese-made Kalashnikov can be bought for 500 to 2,000 dinars (17 dollars to 67 dollars) on the black market.

But even during major battles like those that erupted in October, death tolls are relatively low. All sides have limited artillery power. Only small groups of fighters take part in offensives.

Shootouts in town are rare, and seldom deadly. In September, Arif Mehmed's photo shop in downtown Irbil was attacked by robbers. The store's two guards shot back. When it was over, one guard had an arm injury.

BRIEFLY

Rescuers find bodies of US couple in Himalayas

Rescuers dug through 2 and half metres (eight feet) of snow Sunday to uncover the bodies of a US medical school dean, his wife and three Nepalese who died while sleeping in their tent in the high Himalayas. AP reports from Kathmandu.

The bodies of Philip J. Fialkow, 62, of the University of Washington medical school in Seattle, and his wife, Helen, also 62, were flown to Dunaal, 300 kilometres (180 miles) northwest of Kathmandu, the Nepalese capital, said Maj. Kisendra Shahi, the helicopter pilot.

AIDS cases rising fast in Jamaica

AIDS is spreading quickly in Jamaica and its victims are increasingly women and children, a Health Ministry report states. AP reports from Kingston.

Three hundred new cases of AIDS were reported in the first nine months of 1996 — double the number recorded during the same period in 1994, according to the report. As of the end of September, a total of 1,823 cases of AIDS had been reported on the Caribbean island since 1982, when the government began keeping track of the disease, the report stated.

4 burnt to death in Malaysia

Four Malaysians were burnt to death in a fire that razed their house early yesterday in the central state of Selangor police said, AFP reports from Kuala Lumpur.

A police spokesman said the dead — three brothers and a woman, all of whom worked in a factory — were trapped in separate rooms. But the 18 other occupants of the rented two-storey house managed to escape or were away at work.

2 killed in Indian road mishap

An angry mob set a passenger bus ablaze in the western Indian state of Maharashtra after the bus ran out of control and crushed two pedestrians to death, the Press Trust of India reports yesterday, AFP reports from New Delhi.

It said another person was seriously injured when the private bus ploughed through people in the state's bead district on Sunday. The driver escaped and the mob told the passengers to get out before torching the vehicle.

US businessman shot dead in Moscow

A US businessman who has been involved in a long dispute over control of one of Moscow's best-known hotels was shot to death Sunday by an unknown assailant, AP reports from Moscow.

Paul Tatum was killed by a single attacker who fired his submachine-gun at the businessman near the entrance to the Kievsky metro station in downtown Moscow, a police spokesman said. The station is located just near the Radisson-Slavayanskaya Hotel where Tatum had his office. President Clinton has been staying at the hotel during his trips to Moscow, most recently in April.

3 trawlers seized in S Korea

South Korean maritime police seized 35 Chinese fishermen and three trawlers on charges of illegal fishing in South Korean maritime waters, reports said yesterday, AFP reports from Seoul.

The three 90-tonne boats, the Lurongyu 1371, 1372 and 1373, and their crews were taken into police custody on Sunday after being caught 11 to 13 miles (17 to 20 kilometres) from Maenggol Island. Yonhap news agency said.

Swedish PM meets Li

Swedish Prime Minister Goran Persson has met with his Chinese counterpart Li Peng for talks intended to strengthen relations between the two countries, AP reports from Beijing.

Persson, accompanied by about 30 Swedish executives, emphasised in the Sunday meeting that Sweden believes there are broad prospects for furthering economic cooperation, the state-run Xinhua News Agency reported Monday.

Court permits Wang Dan to appeal his 11-yr term

BEIJING, Nov 4: Beijing's Supreme Court gave permission today for dissident Wang Dan to appeal his 11-year sentence for plotting to overthrow the government, reports AFP.

But an appeal will be held in Camera, with the presence of either Wang Dan or his defence team his lawyer Yang Dunxia said.

'A court official called up this afternoon and asked me bring my appeal documents to the Supreme Court next Monday, the dissident's mother Wang Lingyun said in a telephone interview with AFP.

'The appeal will be held in private, but I asked to see Wang Dan before and the court said it would see what it could do,' she added.

Wang Lingyun co-defended her son along with Yang at his trial at the Beijing Intermediate People's Court on October 30.

Peninsula, to the Stonecutter's Island naval base, the report said.

Both bases were established by the British but are to be handed over to the Chinese military.

The source added that China plans to post about 6,000 troops to Hong Kong, with 300 likely to be deployed as an advance party early next year, Ming Pao reported.

China has not yet formally announced how many troops it will station in Hong Kong or how they would be deployed.

Fighting for parties becomes most legitimate work for Iraqi Kurds

AQRA, Iraq, Nov 4: As night falls, the streets of this small Kurdish town are crowded with men carrying machine guns, reports AP.

The restaurant owner, the mechanic and the barber flaunt their semi-automatics. A Kalashnikov on the counter tells would-be robbers to try somewhere else.

This is the Wild West of the Middle East. But instead of a revolver holstered on every hip, there is an assault rifle slung on every shoulder.

In Iraqi Kurdistan, weapons and violence have become a way of life.

The chaotic politics of nearly a dozen Kurdish factions, marked by suddenly shifting alliances of guerrilla fighters and town populations, make for an unstable society.

and Iran — have sometimes shrunk from getting involved in the feuding that has been going on for decades in the craggy mountains of northern Iraq.

The party in charge of a city one day may be retreating under gunfire the next. The townsfolk change the flags in their windows to reflect the winner of the latest power struggle.

'I sleep with my Kalashnikov under my pillow every night, so it is not stolen — because it's expensive — and so nobody can harm me even during my sleep,' said Hushiyar Fars, a 23-year-old fighter spending his time off from the Iraqgammoo.

'You cannot trust anyone in Kurdistan. But your gun you can. It's my best friend,' said Fars. He fights for the Kurdistan Democratic Party, which is

getting support from Saddam Hussein's Iraqi government in its fight with the Iran-backed Patriotic Union of Kurdistan.

The two parties signed an agreement Thursday promising to maintain the latest US-brokered ceasefire and rebuild a regional government that collapsed three years ago. The parties have been fighting intensely for two years and have broken several ceasefires.

Those who live here know part of the reason for the fighting: There is nothing else to do.

'This is the best job — well the only one actually — that I could find,' said Fars.

There isn't much to spend that pay on: Flimsy clothes, Pepsi and cheap Turkish candy bars.

After an unsuccessful uprising against Saddam Hussein in 1990, the Kurds formed a de facto state in an enclave protected by a US-led allied force.

But they are subject to the same UN economic sanctions imposed on Iraq after Saddam's army invaded Kuwait, and also were punished by a cutoff of supplies from Baghdad. This has left the Kurdish region without a meaningful economy, with few resources and no jobs.

Fighting for one of the 11 political parties has become the most legitimate work.

The strongest factions — the KDP and the PUK — governed jointly until they fell out in August over the form of autonomy that Kurdistan should have and over the division of

customs duties.

During peacetime, the KDP and PUK have 70,000 guerrillas, who are known as 'peshmergas' — 'those who face death.' During times of war, that number is estimated to go up to 120,000 — in a population of 3.5 million.

Smaller political groups have their own guerrilla forces, and they switch alliances between the two main parties.

The KDP and PUK have their own police forces in the cities they control.

But the de facto state never becoming a real state has caused a power vacuum in which lawlessness flourishes.

Gunmen, sometimes government peshmergas, can 'ask' for money in the middle of the day in Irbil, the Kurdish capital. Seeking help from the quasi-police or non-functioning courts never brings the money

back. So the people have turned to guns to protect themselves.

A parking lot attendant, a hotel receptionist or a mechanic typically has an AK-47 strapped to his shoulder. A Chinese-made Kalashnikov can be bought for 500 to 2,000 dinars (17 dollars to 67 dollars) on the black market.

But even during major battles like those that erupted in October, death tolls are relatively low. All sides have limited artillery power. Only small groups of fighters take part in offensives.

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In September, Arif Mehmed's photo shop in downtown Irbil was attacked by robbers. The store's two guards shot back. When it was over, one guard had an arm injury.

5,700 PLA troops to enter HK after handover

HONG KONG, Nov 4: Some 5,700 Chinese troops, along with warplanes and navy ships will enter Hong Kong immediately after the territory returns to China, reports said today, according to AP.

A Chinese military source was quoted by the independent Chinese language Ming Pao Daily as saying the People's Liberation Army (PLA) troops would enter Hong Kong via the Huanggang border checkpoint from neighboring Guangdong province at the stroke of midnight.

Air force jets would simultaneously land at the Shek Kong Airbase and warships would travel through Victoria Harbour, the channel separating Hong Kong from the Kowloon