

Deposed Pak PM alleges

Opponents using Imran to install Islamic regime

CAIRO, Nov 24: Deposed Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto has accused her political opponents of wanting to install an Islamic regime in Pakistan using former cricket star Imran Khan as their 'fictitious' leader, reports AFP.

Benazir was sacked on November 5 by a former close ally President Farooq Ahmed Leghari for alleged corruption and misrule of her government but is currently campaigning to revive her political fortunes.



Russian President Boris Yeltsin meets with his Kazakh counterpart Nursultan Nazarbayev at a sanatorium outside Moscow Saturday in his first meeting with a foreign leader since his heart bypass operation earlier this month.

Israel destroying ME peace: Syria

DAMASCUS, Nov 24: Syria on Saturday accused Israel of working deliberately to destroy the peace process after the rightwing government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced plans to build hundreds of new homes for settlers on the annexed Golan Heights, reports AFP.

Comoros plane crash 100 bodies found, 52 survive

MORONI, Nov 24: Fifty-two people survived when a hijacked Ethiopian airliner carrying up to 180 people crashed into the Indian Ocean off the Comoros islands Saturday a crisis centre set up by Comorian Foreign Ministry said, reports AFP.

The plane plummeted into the sea just north of the islands after being hijacked on a flight from Addis Ababa to Nairobi. Local divers and boat owners rushed to help as the Boeing 767 crashed into the waters hitting a coral reef about 40 kilometres (24 miles) north of the capital Moroni.

Witnesses said about 100 bodies had been counted. Among the survivors were three Italians two of them officials with the Italian Embassy in Addis Ababa, the Italian Foreign Ministry said.

224 reburied in Bosnia

BILJANI, Bosnia, Nov 24: About 10,000 Muslims on Saturday reburied the bodies of 224 of their ethnic kin, who the Bosnian government alleges were massacred by Serb forces in a somber ceremony in the destroyed village of Biljani, reports Reuter.

Peace prevails at Bangalore

New Miss World pledges to work for ailing, handicapped

BANGALORE, India, Nov 24: The New Miss World Greek model Irene Skliva, today said India had been her most unforgettable experience and pledged to work for the ailing and the handicapped, reports AFP.

"I thank India. It has been good and hospitable to me. This has been the biggest experience of my life... you are the best," the 18-year old told a news conference here, hours after winning the title.

Columbian Carolina Arango was the first runner up while Brazilian Anuska Prado won third place in the early Sunday finale here.

raiser for welfare projects, including open heart surgery for poor children and projects for spastics. She will remain in India for a week before going home.

Sporting a purple silk sari, trimmed with a white, red and gold border, and a traditional Indian dot or 'bindi' on her forehead, Skliva said she felt totally at ease in the outfit.

"I like the sari I am wearing. I feel comfortable in it," she said.

The five-foot nine-inch brunette, who described the role of a woman in society as of a 'wife, mother and career woman' said she planned to 'travel the world and have fun'.

She refused to answer questions about a boyfriend, saying: "I don't like to speak about my private life."

The journalism student, who speaks Greek, some English and a smattering of Italian, said she would take one-year break from her studies.

"I was nervous and happy when I heard I had won," she said. "I spoke to my family late and they were crying with joy."

Miss World International Vice President Julia Morley said there had been no formal decision on whether the event would be hosted in India again next year.

"We are yet to take a decision. I think we have a three-year contract with (local organiser) Amitabh Bachchan Corp Ltd. Anyway we have to take a decision by January."

"We have yet to evaluate how this year's event went off," she added.

Peace restored

Another report says: There was widespread relief in Bangalore in yesterday as the Miss World contest ended without the threatened violence and suicide protests from Indian feminists and nationalists.

Police chief in the southern city, Sarat Chandra Burman said the extravaganza, marred by threats of self-immolations, bomb attacks and kidnappings, had enjoyed a successful finale early yesterday. The title went to Miss Greece Irene Skliva.



Newly crowned Miss World Irene Skliva of Greece waves to the audience moments after winning the beauty contest Saturday at Bangalore.

BRIEFLY

Hillary in Thailand: US First Lady Hillary Clinton arrived in Thailand yesterday to pounding drums and cymbals and hundreds of dancers and flag-bearers in the colourful costumes of the local Lanna hilltribes. AFP says from Chiang Rai, Thailand.

The flight of US President Bill Clinton touched down on an official flight from Manila at 3 pm (0800 GMT), leaving her husband at the summit of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation forum for a day and half while she visits northern Thailand. She will visit education programmes designed to stem the outflow of female students who leave primary school for prostitution.

Kumaratunga to visit France: Sri Lankan President Chandrika Kumaratunga leaves on a three-day state visit to France on Monday, on an invitation by French Prime Minister Jacques Chirac, the foreign ministry said Sunday. AP reports from Colombo.

During her visit, the first by a Sri Lankan president, Kumaratunga will meet Chirac and French businessmen to discuss investment in Sri Lanka, a ministry statement said. Kumaratunga has had close ties with France since she studied development economics at the Sorbonne in Paris in the early 1970s.

UN for reducing Macedonia force: The United Nations is recommending a phased reduction in the 1,100-member UN force in the former Yugoslav republic of Macedonia, AP reports from United Nations.

In a report released Saturday, UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali recommended that 300 troops be withdrawn from the UN Preventive Deployment Force.

Clinton meets Zemin privately: MANILA, Nov 24: US President Bill Clinton met privately with Chinese President Jiang Zemin today for talks aimed at resolving differences between the two nations, reports Reuter.

"We've had good meetings and we'll have another one," Clinton said after shaking hands with Jiang as they met on the fringes of an Asia-Pacific trade summit in the Philippines. It was the fourth time the two men have met.

Clinton was asked by a reporter if he was concerned that some human rights groups objected to the meeting because of alleged abuses by Beijing. "No, we're doing the right thing," he replied.

The two leaders posed briefly for pictures, with their respective flags behind them. Both smiled as photographers and television camera crews captured the moment.

A senior US official said it was likely the talks, slated to last one hour, would solidify a tentative agreement that Chinese Foreign Minister Qian Qichen would visit Washington in February or March, followed by a visit by Vice President Al Gore to Beijing in the first half of 1997.

Chinese Premier Li Peng would then visit the United States followed by a Clinton-Jiang summit in Washington in the second half of 1997. Clinton would likely visit China in 1998.

No commitment for military action in Zaire Donors end talks on coordinating relief for Central Africa

GENEVA, Nov 24: Western aid chiefs and donors ended talks on Saturday to coordinate relief for Central Africa's refugee crisis with pledges to help Rwanda resettle its Hutu returnees but no commitment for a military force in east Zaire, reports Reuter.

It's still necessary to provide aid to the refugees. But no one wants a military force to go there for no reason. If people allow that aid to go in by other means that's fine, Canada's international Cooperation Minister, Don Boudria told a news briefing at the end of the one-day talks behind closed doors.

Boudria said senior European and US aid officials and heads of relief agencies who attended the meeting agreed to boost help for Rwanda to resettle 500,000 Rwandan Hutu refugees who fled a Tutsi revolt in east Zaire.

Participants also urged Zaire, Rwanda and Tutsi rebels to urgently help provide aid agencies access to hundreds of thousands of refugees on the run in east Zaire, where rebels

who control large swathes of the area are blocking aid agencies from pushing deeper into Zaire to find and assist the Hutus.

The Geneva meeting coincided with inconclusive talks for a second day on Saturday in Stuttgart, Germany between prospective troop-contributing nations for a planned military mission, where participants could not agree on the number of refugees at risk.

Disagreement between the US government, the United Nations Refugee Agency UNHCR and several other agencies over the number of refugees in need in eastern Zaire has complicated talks over what kind of relief should be sent and where.

Meanwhile Rwandan refugees are emerging from the forests of eastern Zaire saying many more are on their way, but just how many appears to be critical with the despatch of a promised international military force still in the balance.

The US army, which has been using surveillance aircraft, put the numbers roaming the region at just over 200,000 — a third of the UN refugee agency's projection.

In Stuttgart, Germany, western and African military leaders sought to establish how many refugees needed help in Zaire amid signs interest in the multi-national mission was flagging.

It seems now as though more people will favour keeping the status quo and not stepping up the commitment since the situation is starting to take care of itself, "one European official there said.

Western aid chiefs and donors ended talks on Saturday to coordinate relief with pledges to help Rwanda resettle its Hutu returnees but no commitment for a military force in east Zaire.

Zairean rebels have agreed to let international relief organisations launch a programme to assess the number of Rwandan refugees still in Zaire and what assistance they need.

Clashes claim 43 in Angola last week

LISBON, Nov 24: As many as 43 people were killed in Angola in the five days up to Saturday in attacks by unidentified gunmen on civilian vehicles including one belonging to an Italian aid worker, the Portuguese news agency Lusa reported, citing UN sources reports AFP.

A total of six attacks had taken place since Wednesday, the report said.

That against a vehicle of the Italian non government cestas organisation, took place in Bengo province between Ucuca and Caxito and left three injured, the report said.

On Friday between Benguela and Huambo 10 and 20 people were killed in two separate attacks while on Wednesday a bus was ambushed near Kanjala in Benguela province and ten passengers including three policemen were shot dead.

Another three people died in an ambush near Bailundo, Lusa said.

Angolan police have blamed the attacks on soldiers of the former rebel UNITA movement.

The United Nations verification mission in Angola has opened its own enquiry to identify the culprits.

8 prisoners executed in China

BEIJING, Nov 24: Authorities in China's southwestern Guizhou province have executed eight prisoners convicted of taking part in a vigilante jailbreak, the Guizhou daily said, reports Reuter.

The eight were shot after a mass sentencing in a prison in the provincial capital of Guiyang on November 18, the newspaper said in an edition seen in Beijing on Saturday.

They had been convicted of taking part in an attempt to escape from prison in which several guards and inmates were killed and injured.

Clashes leave 20 dead in Colombia

BOGOTA, Nov 24: Three separate attacks from rightwing paramilitary groups left at least 20 dead Saturday in northern and western Colombia, officials said, reports AFP.

Off the Record

\$ 7.86 b of \$ 10 b total royal fortune belongs to queen

LONDON: The total fortune of Britain's royal family amounts to almost six billion pounds (10 billion dollars), of which 4.68 billion pounds (7.86 billion dollars) belongs to the Queen, the Sunday Business Weekly reported, says AFP.

The paper published the results of a six-month investigation into the assets of royal family members but admitted that its figures were based on estimations.

For Queen Elizabeth II, the paper counted the value of the crown estates, which though legally her property, have been technically the property of the state since 1760 in exchange for an annual allowance paid to the monarch.

In the event that the queen decided to buy back the crown estates, Sunday Business said her fortune would come to 4.68 billion pounds. This would include art collections estimated at 1.1 billion pounds (1.8 billion dollars) which belong to her personally.

She wished she had a double

WARSAW: After winning this year's Nobel Prize for literature, media-shy poet Wislawa Szymborska said she wished she had a double to make public appearances for her. So a Polish tabloid decided to help her find one, reports AP.

The popular Super Express newspaper announced a look-alike contest Friday, asking readers to send in a photo if they thought they could pass for the 73-year-old poet — a distinguished-looking woman with short salt-and-pepper hair.

The winner will be selected during a Christmas television show and will get a diploma with the title official double. Super Express said.

Antoni Pawlak, head of Super Express weekend section, said Szymborska had agreed to appear on the show. But her publisher and friend, Ryszard Krynicki, told The Associated Press he knew nothing about the contest. "I personally doubt if she would appear on a TV show for that reason," he said.

Andre Malraux: Homage to a French champion of freedom, democracy

Toufique Imrose Khalidi writes from Paris

Andre Malraux, the great Frenchman who fought for freedom all his life, was remembered in grandiose fashion in France 20 years after his death. He passionately espoused the cause of Bangladesh during the nation's painful birth.

Stately ceremonies officiated by President Jacques Chirac marked the transfer of the ashes of the beloved statesman, the celebrated author, the great Resistance leader, and the minister for culture under Charles de Gaulle, to the Pantheon, where the French head of state pays his homage to dead heroes of the nation annually.

On Saturday, the 20th anniversary of his death, Malraux is hailed as the one having involved himself in all the great causes of our century until his death in 1976.

Described as an aesthete and greatly reputed as an art critic, he fought against French colonialism in Indochina, fascism in Spain and Nazi Germany.

While his high soaring lyricism as the minister for culture is remembered, special mention is made in official biographies of his travel 'towards the end of his life' to war-devastated Bangladesh 'as the messenger and precursor of a kindred spirit that did not yet bear the name of humanitarian aid.'

Bangladesh State Minister for Culture Obaidul Quader is in Paris to attend the commemoration ceremony along with dignitaries from around the world.

As the first French minister for culture, a position he had held for 12 years until 1969, he outlined his vision of culture and is eulogised as the one who 'introduced the French public to the wealth of civilisations and cultures outside Europe.'

Malraux, as a writer and thinker denounced the misery of man and exalted his greatness. Winner of France's most prestigious literary prize for his 1933 novel 'Man's Fate', his second, he painted the great dramas of history in 'The Conquerors' (1928), 'Days of Hope' (1937) and 'The Walnut Trees of Altenburg' (1943).

A Spanish Civil War veteran as an arman who later joined the French military, Malraux became a celebrity for his film on the War, 'L'Espoir.'

Wounded and imprisoned during the war against Germany, he escaped to join politics and eventually become the general secretary of the political party founded by De Gaulle.

In 1971, Malraux threatened to join the Liberation War of Bangladesh, but was persuaded to continue his work towards mobilising support for the cause.

He was the first and perhaps the only international celebrity who worked in Western Europe for the Liberation struggle for Bangladesh. Prithwindra Mukherjee, a celebrated Indian musician whose poems on the movement in French newspapers drew the attention of Malraux, recalled in December 1970, Mukherjee said. Le Monde dedicated a full page on the events leading to the war.

In fact, Malraux inspired other younger intellectuals in France and other contraries to fight for the cause. Mukherjee said.



Andre Malraux