

Naga tribals kill 30 bus passengers

GAUHATI, India, Dec 10: Suspected separatist rebels stopped a bus full of Christmas shoppers in a remote Indian state and sprayed automatic fire on the passengers, killing 30 people, including three children, police said Tuesday, reports AP.

Monday's massacre was the worst violence in the ongoing conflict between warring tribes in Nagaland, a northeastern Indian state that borders Myanmar.

Another 31 people were injured in the shooting. Most were admitted to the military hospital in Dimapur, about 2,500 kilometers east of New Delhi.

The bus rented for a shopping trip in Dimapur by villagers of the Kuki community, a minority in Nagaland, was attacked by 15 suspected members of the National Socialist Council of Nagaland, said S.S. Tripathi, police chief of Dimapur.

The bus was carrying 64 people, of whom only three managed to escape unhurt, from the predominantly Kuki village of Aithung.

After stopping the bus, the gunmen asked if there were passengers of the predominant Naga tribe. When nobody an-

swered, they stood at the door of the bus and fired with AK-47s and other automatic weapons, Tripathi said, quoting witnesses who were in another bus coming from Dimapur.

Silajdzic nominated as co-chairman

SARAJEVO, Dec 10: Bosnia's main Muslim party on Monday nominated wartime Prime Minister Haris Silajdzic to serve as co-chairman of the newly formed central government, state television reported, says Reuter.

The move, which has to be formally approved by an inter-ethnic parliament, confirmed media speculation that Silajdzic would be chosen for the post.

Silajdzic resigned as premier after breaking with the Nationalist Muslim Party of Democratic Action (SDA) in 1995, and formed a rival party to back his own campaign for president in the country's first post-war elections this year.

Silajdzic lost to Alija Izetbegovic of the SDA, who now heads the three-man collective presidency.

BRIEFLY

Yeltsin leaves his country house :

Russian President Boris Yeltsin left his country house outside Moscow by a helicopter Monday for another residence further north where he will "complete his convalescence," officials said. AFP reports from Moscow.

Yeltsin, who underwent a quintuplet bypass operation on November 5, left the village of Gorky-9 west of Moscow for Zavidovo, 100 kilometers (60 miles) northwest of the Russian capital, said the Kremlin press service, cited by news agencies. The press service, which presented the transfer as a sign of the president's improving health, said Yeltsin would "complete his convalescence" at Zavidovo, where he would continue to "work and rest actively" for a week.

Papua New Guinea air crash kills 4:

Four Australians, including a business executive and his son, were killed in an aircraft crash on Monday in the Papua New Guinea highlands near the Porgera gold mine, civil aviation authorities said yesterday. Reuter reports from Port Moresby.

The Piper Navajo aircraft crashed and burst into flames at the Kairiru airstrip in the Enga province in central Papua New Guinea. The aircraft was owned by industrial and retail firm, Collins and Leahy.

7 hurt in food riots in India: Seven people were injured as hundreds of villagers went on a looting spree and fought with police in central India in the country's first food riots in years, newspapers reported yesterday. AFP reports from New Delhi.

The violence erupted Sunday at a rural market in Madhya Pradesh state after local authorities refused to sell wheat to the villagers at subsidised rates, the Indian Express and other dailies said. The villages, mainly tribals, looted several shops of food stocks and clashed with the police, who opened fire at the mob. Four policemen and three villagers were injured in the violence.

Dinosaur skeleton found in China: A 21m long, six-m high dinosaur skeleton has been unearthed in a "dinosaur cemetery" in North China's inner Mongolia autonomous region, Xinhua reports from Hohhot.

Chinese scientists say that the dinosaur, which had lizard-like feet and weighed nearly 100 tons, is the largest ever found in Asia. The "cemetery" in the western part of the Xilin Gol Gasslands, was an expanse of lakes and tropical forests some 70-130 million years ago when several species of dinosaurs dominated the area.

US-Serbia meet cancelled : The United States has cancelled a meeting with Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic to intensify pressure on the Belgrade government over anti-democratic moves, officials said on Monday. Reuter reports from Washington.

They said that Assistant Secretary of State John Kornblum, the special envoy on Bosnia, had been scheduled to meet Milosevic in Belgrade later this week after a NATO meeting but had decided to call off the visit.

US couple killed in S Arabia : An American computer programmer and his wife were murdered at a housing compound in the Saudi Arabian capital Riyadh and Saudi police have arrested a Filipino suspect, a US Embassy spokesman in Riyadh said on Monday. Reuter reports from Dubai.

The spokesman named the victims as Barry Bailey and Mary Anne Bailey. He said they were in their 50s and from Texas, but did not give their hometown. Bailey, who was attacked in his house, identified his attacker by name on the way to the hospital where he died. His wife died earlier at a neighbor's house, the spokesman said.

LTTE's woman suicide cadre killed:

Tamil Tiger guerrillas yesterday said they lost a woman suicide cadre in an abortive attempt to attack a strategic naval base in northeastern Sri Lanka. AFP reports from Colombo.

The rebel Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) said the woman fighter from the elite "Black sea Tiger" unit was killed as she tried to ram an explosives laden boat into the port of Trincomalee on Sunday. The clandestine radio of the LTTE, the voice of Tigers, did not say how their attack misfired but officials said the navy had blasted the suicide woman's boat out of the water before she could cause any damage.

Coalition govt in NZ soon: The National New Zealand First Party will form a coalition with the National Party, ending two months of uncertainty since a general election on October 12. NZ First leader Winston Peters said yesterday. Reuter reports from Wellington.

Peters said his choice reflected the wish of the New Zealand people for a secure government, economic stability and new social initiatives. "The New Zealand First Caucus and Executive Council have chosen this afternoon by consensus to form a coalition government with the National Party until the next general election in 1999," Peters said.

China dismisses US concerns about missile-tech sale to Pakistan, Iran

WASHINGTON, Dec 10: China's Defence Minister Chi Haotian dismissed Monday US concerns about sales of missiles and nuclear technology to Iran and Pakistan as exaggerated by the western press, reports AP.

"Some of these issues have been exaggerated, and some of these issues simply do not exist," Chi said at the start of two days of meetings with US leaders.

Defence Secretary William Perry, welcoming Chi to the Pentagon with full military honours, said the issue of weapons of mass destruction would be discussed Monday and expressed hope for an agree-

ment.

The UN Humanitarian Affairs Department says health

'Uganda facing crisis as insurgency drive mounts in north'

KAMPALA, Uganda, Dec 10: Every night in a town in northern Uganda, about 6,000 people sleep at the local hospital. Fifteen thousand more take refuge in other public buildings, driven from their homes by fear of rebel groups, reports AP.

A report by the United Nations issued last week in Nairobi, Kenya, describes these conditions in its warning that the northern third of Uganda is in a state of crisis because of a spreading rebel insurgency.

For 10 years, President Yoweri Museveni has fought rebels in the north. Now, the threat is growing in central and western Uganda, the report said. Already, fighting has forced thousands of people to flee their villages in the north and west.

Calling the attacks grave human rights abuses, the report said the patients were maimed as punishment for riding bicycles, which the rebels say can be used to deliver intelligence to the Ugandan army.

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and education services are in a state of collapse and that rampant insecurity is preventing relief agencies from providing even basic emergency assistance.

The United Nations blamed two groups — the West Nile Bank Front and the Lord's Resistance Army — for attacks on civilians in the north.

Based on a weeklong fact-finding mission in November, the report said a hospital in the northern town of Lachor recently started seeing patients whose feet were hacked off by rebels of the Lord's Resistance Army.

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in 1986 after a six-year war, won a presidential vote in May. In June, Uganda held its first legislative elections in 16 years.

Museveni brought stability after the ruinous regimes of Idi Amin and Milton Obote, but that stability is now threatened by rebel groups. They include:

The Lord's Resistance Army. It aims to replace Museveni with a government based on the Ten Commandments. Fighting since 1988, it has become a serious challenge to the army in the north. Uganda is predominantly Christian, with a growing Muslim population.

The West Nile Bank Front: Led by a member of Idi Amin's former government, it started fighting in 1991 and has taken over the northwestern corner of Uganda that borders Sudan and

Zaire.

The Allied Democratic Force: The newest group, on November 13 it started attacking army positions and villages in the west from bases across the border in Zaire. It has not declared its political objectives, but the government says it is made up of Muslim youths who want an Islamic state in Uganda. The attacks have forced tens of thousands of people from their villages near the town of Kasese, about 380 kilometers (235 miles) west of Kampala.

The Uganda Federal Democratic Alliance: Fighting for the establishment of a federation of semi-autonomous regions, it attacks police stations and other government targets in central Uganda. Its leader, Durcun Kafeero, lives in exile in Britain.

These rebel groups have nothing in common, but they have a common facilitation from Sudan, presidential press secretary Hope Kivengere said Friday.

Sudan has denied aiding Uganda's rebels. Instead, it accuses Uganda of aiding Sudanese rebels. Uganda severed diplomatic ties with Sudan in April 1995.

Despite increasing pressure from the legislature to reach a political settlement with the rebels, Museveni supports a military solution.

"My answer is to build up the army so that it becomes an important shield to the constitution," Museveni told reporters recently. "Our army, supported by the population, has the capacity to defend the constitution. Those engaging in treason will perish."

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