

Militants attack village: 36 massacred

# Blast kills 21 in Algiers

ALGIERS, Algeria, Jan 20: Five years into a bloody insurgency that has killed more than 60,000 people since 1992, Algeria convulsed anew in a weekend of violence that claimed at least 57 lives, reports AP.

A car bomb outside a cafe in the heart of Algiers killed at least 21 people and wounded 60 others Sunday night. 30 of them seriously. It exploded just hours after armed men attacked a village, decapitating some of their victims in a massacre of 36 people.

"It's carnage," said one man helping at the scene of the car bomb. The street was littered with bodies covered by sheets borrowed from nearby residents.

Another explosion was reported Sunday near Reghala, about 30 kilometres (18 miles) east of Algiers, residents said. There were reports of injuries and damage, but no immediate details.

Government security forces, speaking on condition of

anonymity, said Sunday might have been even more bloody had they not managed to dismantle at least six other car bombs placed around the capital.

Witnesses said the force of the blast caused heavy damage to shops and other buildings.

In Beni-Slimane, a small village 70 kilometres (45 miles) south of Algiers, an armed group killed 36 people in bloodshed that lasted for several hours, security forces said. The official APS news agency said some of the victims were decapitated.

It was unclear whether the massacre occurred late Saturday or early Sunday. No one immediately claimed responsibility for either attack, but suspicion fell on Islamic radicals fighting to overthrow the government and install strict Koranic rule.

Witnesses said the bomb exploded in front of a cafe next to the Le Musset cinema in the heart of Belcourt just as local

Algeria's insurgency began in January 1992.

## US balloonist breaks world record for flight duration

CHICAGO, Jan 20: US balloonist Steve Fossett broke the world record for flight duration at 0519 GMT Monday, but must continue his flight for another hour for the feat to be entered into the record book, a member of his tracking team told AFP.

"He's in a limbo period unless he flies per cent over the record he doesn't get the credit," Alan Blunt said. The current record on the books is of six days and 16 minutes. Fossett is expected to complete that at 0619 GMT and I expect he'll be coming down about ten minutes after that, he said.

The landing site is still an unknown but the tracking team said Fossett would probably come down near a town called Faizabad in eastern India, giving up his quest to circle the globe non-stop.

Alan Noble, project director for the manufacturer of the balloon said earlier that the American adventurer had travelled "somewhere around 13,600 kilometres (8,500 miles)" easily beating the prior distance record of 8,640 kilometers.

## India develops antidote to fight radiation effects

NEW DELHI, Jan 20: India has developed an antidote to help fight the effects of radiation, which will be given to troops in case of nuclear attack, a newspaper reported today.

The antidote has been produced by the Defence Research and Development Organisation after seven years of research and extensive testing on animals and plants, the Asian Age said.

"We worked on the antidote because it is a must for the mechanised infantry," an unnamed Defence Ministry official was quoted as saying.

"It helps soldiers to withstand radiation several times more than normal levels, thus reducing the casualty figures. It also delays the onset of damage to human organs."

## Russia supports Egypt's policy on ME peace

CAIRO, Jan 20: Russia fully supports Egypt's policy on the Mideast peace process and the two countries share identical views regarding a number of regional and international issues, a Russian envoy said here yesterday, reports Xinhua.

Boris Quozek, Russian President Boris Yeltsin's personal envoy, hailed Egypt's "positive efforts and pioneer role" in the peace process following his meeting with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak.

He voiced Iran's readiness to make every endeavour to help restore a just and lasting peace in Tajikistan, Iran's official

news agency IRNA reported.

The IRNA said, representatives of the Tajik government and the United Islamic Opposition reached an agreement on several major issues to guarantee a lasting peace in the Republic of Tajikistan, reports Xinhua.

Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Veliyati told reporters after the negotiations that the peace talks in Tehran succeeded in preparing the ground for signing the final document on national reconciliation in the next round of talks in Tehran or Moscow in a five weeks time.

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The plane, which took off from an airfield near Colombo to hunt for guerilla arms-smugglers, reported that it was descending to take a close look at a ship in the Gulf of Mannar, an arm of the Indian Ocean, when contact was lost.

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He added his thanks to his parents for their "insightful generosity" and to his wife Nicole Kidman for her "warmth

and all the love and support she gave me."

Forman was picked best motion picture director for "The People vs. Larry Flynt." Mel Gibson, last year's director winner for "Braveheart," handed Forman the trophy.

"Last time I got a cigar from Mel, this is better," Forman told the audience during the nationally televised 54th Hollywood Foreign Press Association presentations.

When screenwriters Scott Alexander and Larry Karaszewski were announced winners for "The People vs. Larry Flynt" about the pornography publisher's battles against censorship, the hugged Larry Flynt, who sat nearby in his gold-plated wheelchair.

Veteran actress Lauren Bacall, who played the possessive mother of Barbra Streisand in "The Mirror Has Two Faces," and Edward Norton, the suspected killer in "Primal Fear," won movie supporting actor trophies.

Bacall waved her Golden Globe aloft to hoots of joy as the audience rose to its feet.

"I'm in a state of shock," she said. "This is the first time I've been nominated for an award in

any role."

She thanked presenter Jeff Bridges, another star in "The Mirror Has Two Faces," and especially Streisand, "Without whom the picture would not have been made."

The 72-year-old Bacall then uttered: "It's taken a long time to get here and I'm not giving it (the Golden Globe) back."

Norton came to the stage declaring, "It puts me on the floor to be included with the other nominees" — Gooding, Samuel L. Jackson, Paul Scofield and James Woods.

The English Patient," the critically acclaimed British drama that led nominees going into the show with seven, won its first trophy for original score.

In the television category, "The X-Files" was voted to TV drama and its stars, David Duchovny and Gillian Anderson, won top TV dramatic actor honours.

NBC-TV's "3rd Rock From the Sun" won for top TV musical or comedy series and its star, John Lithgow, won the Golden Globe for best actor in that category. Helen Hunt of "Mad About You" was the top TV comedy actress.

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## International

### By-polls defeat may force Major to declare early election

LONDON, Jan 20: A poll showing British Prime Minister John Major's ruling Conservatives will be defeated in a crucial by-election could force him to push forward the date of the general election, The Sun newspaper said today, reports AFP.

The country's top-selling tabloid said a Mori poll shows the opposition Labour Party, which is widely tipped to win the general election that Major must call by May, will win the Wirral South constituency in northern England with a 16-point swing.

"No government has held office after suffering a swing of more than five per cent in the last by-election," the newspaper said.

Major must choose a date for the by-election following the death of Conservative member of parliament Barry Porter last year. Porter won the seat in 1992 with a majority of 8,123.

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### 55 Pak women to contest Feb 3 polls, but focus likely to be on Bhutto dynasty

KARACHI, Jan 20: Around 55 women are running in Pakistan's elections next month, but interest is likely to focus on three members of the Bhutto dynasty who share the political legacy of their influential family, reports AFP.

Prominent male members of the Bhutto family have met violent deaths, leaving behind widows and daughter to protect the political future of a family riven by rivalry.

Deposed premier Benazir Bhutto, veteran of three election campaigns faces a stiff challenge from Chinva, the widow of Benazir's slain husband Murtaza Bhutto.

Lebanese-born Chinva was pushed into the political spotlight after Murtaza — a political foe of his sister Benazir — and seven of his colleagues were killed in a police shootout last September in Karachi.

Chinva, 30, now heads her

slain husband's party and has

fielded candidates against Benazir's Pakistan People's Party.

Chinva critical of Benazir as was Murtaza before his death is herself contesting against her mother-in-law Nusrat Bhutto for a national assembly seat in the Benazir's ancestral home town of Larkana.

"It is a family tussle" says Azra Abbas a well known poetess.

"In a country like ours, women can cash in on the bodies of their relatives but end up doing what male rulers do, she said, expressing disappointment with the performance of successive governments.

Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Benazir and Murtaza's father was overthrown as prime minister in a military coup in 1977 and hanged in 1979 after being convicted for murder in a controversial trial.

Oxford educated Benazir

Bhutto became the Muslim na-

tered our dreams.

"No one of them stood against victimisation of women and the general isolation of women in our society, she added.

Former premier Nawaz

Sharif's Pakistan Muslim League and former cricket star turned politician Imran Khan's Movement for Justice and other parties have also fielded women candidates.

In Pakistan's tribal areas where they have been given the vote for the first time women have been told by tribal leaders not to vote as they think this will hurt their "honour and dignity."

But I see hope, whenever women try to participate in the election process," said school teacher Shamsa Najaam.

Twenty seats for women were reserved in the national assembly until the practice was abandoned in 1990.

## BRIEFLY



Chechen separatist commander Shamil Basayev, who headed the Chechen troops in the Budenovskoy hostage taking, speaks to supporters during a pre-election campaign in the city of Shchelkovskaya, Saturday, at the Russian-Chechen border. The presidential elections in Chechnya are scheduled for January 27th.

— AFP/UNB photo

**Qatar, Bahrain to sign accord:** Qatar and Bahrain will sign an agreement at week's end in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, to improve ties frayed by escalations over a decades-long dispute, the Qatar Foreign Minister announced Sunday night. AFP reports from Doha.

Qatar and Bahrain will sign in Jeddah at week's end the text of an agreement to bolster ties between the two members of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). Sheikh Hamad ibn Jassim ibn Jaber al-Thani told reporters after a meeting of the foreign ministers of the other four GCC states — Kuwait, Oman, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

**Atlantis undocks from Mir:** With cries of "see you guys," the Atlantis astronauts hugged the three men on the Russian space station Mir goodbye, then sealed the hatches and flew away. AP reports from Cape Canaveral.

Shuttle Atlantis undocked slowly and gently from Mir Sunday after five days of joined flight, as the spacecraft soared more than 240 miles (384 kilometers) above Russia.

**NATO Secy Gen meets Russian FM:** NATO Secretary General Javier Solana and Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov began talks Monday on resolving tension over the Western alliance's plans to expand in to eastern Europe despite Russian opposition. AP reports from Moscow.

The goal of the visit by the general secretary is to start working out a new relationship with Russia before a NATO summit in Madrid in July at which some of Russia's former allies of the defunct Warsaw Pact are expected to be invited to join.

## English Patient', 'Evita', Madonna, Tom Cruise, 'X-Files' big winners

## Golden Globe awards announced

BEVERLY HILLS, Jan 20: The Golden Globes for drama had a definite foreign tone with winners "The English Patient" as best picture, England's Brenda Blethyn as top actress for "Secrets and Lies" and Australia's Geoffrey Rush for "Shine," respectively.

"Evita" was a triple winner — as best musical or comedy movie, best musical-comedy actress for its star Madonna and best original song for "You Must Love Me."

The Hollywood Foreign Press Association also bestowed honours on "The People vs. Larry Flynt," with awards to director Milos Forman and writers Scott Alexander and Larry Karaszewski.

The Golden Globe for best foreign language film went to the Czech Republic's "Koly."

The Golden Globes, which often presage the Oscars, launch Hollywood's movie awards season.

"I have been so incredibly blessed in this past year," a grateful Madonna, who also had her first baby last year, said in accepting her Golden Globe. "Making this picture has been a great experience artistically and spiritually. I will

never forget it."

Tom Cruise, the sports agent of "Jerry Maguire," was the musical or comedy actor winner.

Blethyn, the mother of a black daughter she never knew in "Secrets and Lies," was virtually unknown to American audiences before.

"I'm so happy to be in the building much less standing up here," she said in accepting her award.

Rush, who played the mentally troubled piano virtuoso of "Shine," was a hugely popular winner with the stellar Beverly Hilton Hotel audience, which gave him an unusual standing ovation.

"I'm very proud to be part of a film that has taken such a vulnerable, peculiar and very human character and placed him at the heart of a film," Rush said.

Cruise, like Madonna a popular winner with the dinner crowd, began by acknowledging the other nominees, then paid tribute to his fellow actor Cuba Gooding Jr., who played the supporting actor trophy.

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