

Blast at railway track in Kashmir: 5 hurt

AMRITSAR, India, Sept 7: A bomb explosion on a railway track in India's northern Jammu and Kashmir state derailed the engine and five carriages of a train and injured five people, police said Sunday, reports AP.

No deaths were reported though the condition of two of the injured were serious.

The explosion took place late Saturday night, just as the Delhi-bound Shalimar Express crossed Vijaipur, a town two-and-a-half kilometres (1.2 miles) from India's border with Pakistan.

More than 600 people were believed to be traveling on the train.

Police said they suspected Pakistan-backed Kashmiri separatists were behind the blast. This is the fifth explosion on the Vijaipur railway track in the last 18 months.

An Islamic-led secessionist movement has been on in Kashmir since 1989. More than 16,000 people have died in the fighting between militants and Indian security forces.

India has accused neighbouring Pakistan of supporting the separatists but Islamabad denies the charges.



The body of Mother Teresa is carried in an open coffin from the Missionaries of Charity in Calcutta Sunday. The funeral will take place Saturday at St Thomas Church in the Loreto College in Calcutta. — AFP/UNB photo

Mother Teresa to lie in state for public homage in India

CALCUTTA, Sept 7: The frail women in rain-soaked saris were turned away, as were the labourers with somber faces who came to pay their respects to Mother Teresa, the tiny woman who took up the burden of the world's poor and downtrodden, reports AP.

The nuns of her order decided the convent chapel where her body lay was too small to accommodate crowds Saturday.

They posted hand-lettered signs saying mourners could pay respects at a larger chapel to which Mother Teresa's body was to be moved Sunday. Her body will lie in state at St. Thomas's Church until her state funeral Saturday.

Early Sunday morning, children at a Missionaries of Charity orphanage in Calcutta held a memorial service for Mother Teresa, as hundreds of Indian gathered about a block away at the headquarters of her order, waiting for her body to be moved to St. Thomas'. Some held tube roses, or photos of the Nobel laureate nun.

"Today, more than ever, we thank God for the gift of Mother us and to the world," Father Camille Bouche told about 30 orphans and as many nuns sitting on jute mats in the orphanage chapel.

A woman who gave her name only as Mala wept when told she would not be able to enter the order's chapel where Mother Teresa's body lay early Sunday. She said she had knelt in the chapel every day, and that Mother Teresa had often joined in her prayers that her four-year-old daughter be healed of a kidney ailment.

"What will I do now?" she wailed.

The site of Mother Teresa's funeral was not announced. She will be buried at the convent in central Calcutta that was her home and the headquarters of her Missionaries of Charity order, according to Sister Brunet at the mission.

Mother Teresa's body was laid out, bare feet toward the altar, in the simple habit worn by members of her order — a blue-trimmed white cotton sari and a long-sleeved blouse. A fan placed at her head gently rustled a bouquet of yellow roses. Wreaths and bouquets of white roses filled the room.

"Today, Mother Teresa is enjoying the presence of Jesus, whom she loves and to whom she dedicated her work. We should all be rejoicing today, for we have a great intercessor in heaven," said Father Sebastian, who celebrated the Mass.

The service ended with one nun making the sign of the cross on Mother Teresa's forehead.

In New Delhi, Prime Minister Inder Kumar Gujral ordered a state funeral for Mother Teresa, and honour normally conferred only on serving presidents and prime ministers. Flags flew at half-staff across the nations.

Pope John Paul II celebrated a Mass for her at his summer residence in Italy on Saturday, praising her "unshakable faith".

His voice trembling and speaking freely of his emotion over her death, he said he hoped her tireless dedication to the poor would inspire humanity.

Queen Elizabeth II, who attended the funeral of Princess Diana on Saturday, also sent condolences.

US President Bill Clinton called Mother Teresa "an incredible person".

"She was ready to die. Mother told me, 'Jesus wants me and I will go to him,'" said Sister Dorothy, who spoke to Mother Teresa on Wednesday.

One nun at the convent, Sister Brunet, said her last words were: "Jesus, I love you. Jesus, I love you".

The frail, 4-foot-11-inch (150-centimetre) nun was born in Europe but became an Indian citizen during her six decades on the Subcontinent. She had suffered heart problems and other ailments for years and gave up leadership of her order in March.

Dalai Lama's govt in exile allowed to set up office in Taipei

TAIPEI, Sept 7: The Taiwanese government in a low-key move has quietly given approval to the Dalai Lama and his Tibetan government in exile to set up an office in Taipei, it was reported here Sunday, says AFP.

The inauguration of the office will mark a milestone in ties between Taiwan and Tibet, but could further harm already frosty relations with Beijing, the United Daily News said.

It will help facilitate the exchange of Han and Tibet cultures and spread Buddhist doctrines here. Kao Koong-Lian, chairman of Taiwan's cabinet-level Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs Commission, was quoted as saying.

Han Chinese are the majority ethnic culture in both Taiwan and China, which split at the end of a civil war in 1949.

Di accepted Blair's offer of special ambassadorship

LONDON, Sept 7: Diana, Princess of Wales was offered — and had accepted — a role as a special ambassador for Britain by Prime Minister Tony Blair weeks before her death. Downing Street confirmed Saturday, reports AFP.

The Prime Minister regarded her as a potential standard bearer for Britain of unparalleled ability and Downing Street sources said Blair and Diana had discussed a role for her several weeks ago.

Over 2b people watch DI's funeral worldwide

PARIS, Sept 7: The death of Diana seemed to affect everyone, as more than 2 billion people were estimated to have watched the majestic procession that was the funeral of this regal yet accessible princess, reports AP.

BBC Television transmitted the funeral service worldwide. BBC Radio broadcast it in 44 languages.

In Singapore, in Moscow, in Houston, viewers spoke not of watching the mourning for a British princess, but of sharing it.

"I see this as a very family funeral," said Donata Gilardi, a 60-year-old nurse who watched the funeral live in Venice. "It touches the bottom of my heart. I feel like I'm participating — it's not just a matter of curiosity."

"This is a funeral that has mobilised an entire people, even the people of the whole world,"

said Louise Berlioz, who watched it in Lyon, France.

Across Asia, people devoted hours to watching the rites live on television.

In the Bangladeshi town of Comilla, Liaqat Ali Dulal changed the name of his cafe from Comilla Restaurant to Diana Restaurant, then served up free food to 5,000 destitute people — saying he sought God's blessing for the princess.

Even in India, still reeling from Mother Teresa's death Friday, state-run television and radio were broadcasting the funeral live. Indian newspapers carried front-page stories comparing the selfless service of Mother Teresa and Diana.

In the bar at the American Club in Singapore, patrons watched the funeral on six television sets. When Archbishop of Canterbury George Carey asked

those around the world to recite the prayer Jesus taught his disciples many in the bar prayed the words aloud.

In Paris, the boss of one of 10 paparazzi under investigation in Diana's fatal car crash insisted he felt the loss of Diana as much as anyone — even as much as Diana's brother, who attacked the prying press in his eulogy Saturday.

"He can't say he loved Lady Di more than I loved Lady Di," Goksin Sipahioglu, the president of Sipa Press, protested. "I cried too."

While hushed throngs in London strained to see the coffin pass to and from Westminster Abbey, mourners placed bouquets on the site of the crash in Paris, at a monument to land-mine victims in Geneva, and at British embassies around the world. At New York City's Rockefeller Plaza, a Union

Jack at half-staff waved forlornly in the gray morning light.

Perhaps the only place where Diana's funeral did not halt all other proceedings was in the French city of Lorient, where residents appeared more concerned about the loss of Henri Paul, the driver who also was killed in the car crash.

Mourners had arrived at church only to find Paul's funeral was postponed because of new blood tests being done on his body.

Residents of Lorient appeared indifferent to Diana's funeral.

The Rotonde was the only cafe on the port's main square to have the television switched on during Diana's funeral broadcast live on French TV. Not one person watched the ceremony.

Tears streamed down Alex Mahlke's face while he stood

watching the funeral in the darkened Britannia Pub in Santa Monica, California.

"It's not so much that she was a princess, but a real person. The circumstances of her death are so tragic and unnecessary," Mahlke said.

In Russia, President Boris Yeltsin took time at a celebration of Moscow's 850th anniversary to say, "We remember that in Britain there is a tragedy."

"It was classy, like she was," said Houston's Michelle Lara, who woke up hours early to watch the service.

"In Paris, the staff of the swank Ritz Hotel, where Diana spent her last hours, observed a minute of silence at noon."

"Coming here, watching this funeral, is like setting everything to rest," said Ted Spate, a London-born New Yorker watching the funeral at a Greenwich Village pub.

Charles appeals for 'time, space' for William, Harry

LONDON, Sept 7: Prince Charles appealed today for "time and space" for William and Harry to come to terms with the loss of their mother, reports AP.

He told aides that following the funeral of the Princess of Wales, the boys needed privacy to prepare for the future without her.

The royal family has also called on the media to stay away from Eton and Ludgrove when William and Harry return to their respective schools.

Clinton shed tears while listening to Elton John's song

MARTHA'S VINEYARD, Massachusetts, Sept 7: US President Bill Clinton said he shed tears while listening to Elton John sing a modified version of "Candle in the Wind" at Princess Diana's funeral Saturday, reports AP.

"That's my favourite Elton John song," Clinton told reporters after having lunch with his daughter, Chelsea, at a restaurant in Vineyard Haven, a town on Martha's Vineyard where he is vacationing.

"You know Marilyn Monroe was 36 when she died, too," Clinton said, referring to the original version of "Candle in the Wind" that eulogised the US icon.

BRIEFLY

Hamas leader held in Amman: Ibrahim Ghoshe, spokesman for the radical Palestinian group Hamas, was arrested by the Jordanian authorities at his home in Amman yesterday, his son, Anas Ghoshe said, AFP reports from Amman.

"They did not give any reason or explanation" for the arrest of his father, Anas Ghoshe told AFP. He said members of the security forces arrived at the Ghoshe home around 11:00 pm Saturday night and took his father away around 2:00 am.

10 die as jet crashes in Borneo Island: A Dornier 228 aircraft with 10 people on board crashed in Lambir Hill, on the Malaysian part of Borneo Island, Saturday night, reports said yesterday, AFP reports from Kuala Lumpur.

It is not known if the eight passengers and two pilots survived the accident, Bernama news agency reported, quoting the department of civil aviation officials. The aircraft, flight number BI 238, was flying from the Brunei capital Bandar Seri Begawan to Miri.

2 Pakistanis beheaded in KSA: Saudi Arabia yesterday beheaded two Pakistanis, for killing and raping a compatriot in the Makkah area, the Interior Ministry said, AFP reports from Riyadh.

Mohammad Riyadh Barkudar and Mohammed Sharuf Ahmed Deen stabbed dead another Pakistani, Jawid Mohammad Latif, who was then sexually violated, the ministry said in a statement carried by the official news agency SPA.

Mishap claims 36 in Ethiopia: One of the worst road accidents happened in Ethiopia during the weekend, killing 36 people, the Southern African Broadcasting Association reported Saturday, Xinhua says from Johannesburg.

Radio Ethiopia was quoted as saying that a bus, with 50 people on board, plunged into a ravine 130-metre deep, killing the 36 people instantly. Only one woman managed to escape with minor injuries and 13 others were seriously injured.

EU envoy meets Iranian official: An envoy of the European Union held talks with an Iranian Foreign Ministry official in Tehran to discuss strained diplomatic ties, the official news agency IRNA said, Reuter reports from Tehran.

Israeli troops arrest 170

JERUSALEM, Sept 7: Israeli troops arrested 170 Palestinians in a vast overnight sweep on the West Bank, bringing to some 270 the number of suspected militants detained since a triple suicide bombing last week in Jerusalem, the army said, reports AP.

Those picked up in the pre-dawn raids were suspected of "hostile terrorist" activities, an army spokesman said.

It was the largest number of arrests in one night since Thursday's suicide attack on a pedestrian mall in central Jerusalem which killed four Israelis and wounded more than 170.

Palestinian sources said most of the arrests took place around Hebron and Bethlehem.

Maoist rebels kill 30 in Bihar

PATNA, India, Sept 7: Maoist rebels are believed to have shot dead 30 people from a rival faction in an attack on a village in the eastern Indian state of Bihar Sunday, officials said today, reports Reuter.

"Exact casualties are not known but initial reports suggest that 30 persons have been killed," DP Maheshwari, the state's home (interior) secretary, told Reuters by telephone.

The Press Trust of India (PTI) had earlier reported that Maoist rebels killed at least 11 people, but the United News of India (UNI) said at least 30 people were killed in the attack.

Maheshwari said the armed militants, belonging to the outlawed Maoist Communist Centre (MCC), attacked a meeting of the rival Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) at Ankudar village in Chitra district, about 275 kms (170 miles) from the state capital Patna.

Hezbollah attacks Israeli posts in S Lebanon

NABATIYEH, Lebanon, Sept 7: Shi'ite Muslim guerillas attacked an Israeli position in southern Lebanon on Sunday, drawing retaliatory artillery barrages, Lebanese security officials said, reports AP.

The security officials said one Israeli soldier was killed. There was no immediate confirmation of the report from Jerusalem.

Hezbollah guerillas used rocket-propelled grenades, mortars and automatic weapons in their morning attack on Dabashe, about 3 kilometres (2 miles) north of this southern market town, the officials said. They spoke on customary condition of anonymity.

Officials said Israeli gunners responded with barrages of 155 mm howitzer rounds on the villages of Kfar Rumman and Arab Saleem and the outskirts of Nabatiyeh, which is 60 kilometres (35 miles) southeast of the capital, Beirut.

The officials said panicked civilians raced for shelters, fearing the fighting would escalate. They said the shelling lasted more than three hours.

The Iranian-backed Hezbollah, or the Party of God, claimed responsibility for Sunday's attack, saying "Our warriors scored direct hits in the enemy position."

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