

International

Int'l acclaim for E Timor vote

DILI, East Timor, Aug 31 : The reported deaths of three United Nations workers and a militia siege reignited tensions Tuesday after the international acclaim for East Timor's landmark autonomy vote, reports AFP.

New violence blamed on pro-Indonesian groups underlined fears that Monday's ballot will not herald a peaceful new beginning for East Timor after 24 years of often brutal Indonesian rule.

Former Australian deputy prime minister Tim Fischer said the killings took place during a militia siege of an UN office in Ermera district, where a local poll worker was stabbed to death after polls closed Monday.

"I was told by a UNAMET (United Nations Mission in East Timor) source that the three were killed just near Ermera," Fischer, who is head of the Australian government delegation for East Timor's vote, told AFP.

But a duty policeman in Ermera town denied anyone there

had been any deaths since Monday's murder of a UNAMET poll worker, who was set upon by a mob accusing him of bias after polls had closed.

"It is not true, the only UN local staffer killed was in Atsabe yesterday," said the policeman.

An estimated 140 people, including UN staff, were blockaded by militiamen at their compound in the Ermera town of Gleno, 60 km southwest of the territory's capital Dili.

The bad news is there is a continuing standoff. Some progress has been made. The UN has had some access this afternoon. It continues to unfold and points to the tension that has sadly returned to East Timor," Fischer told Australia's ABC radio.

An independent source told AFP that Indonesian police present appeared powerless to defuse the situation.

Following the murder of the UNAMET assistant at Atsabe, the first UN worker to die in East Timor, the latest deaths threatened to overshadow praise of the overwhelming

turnout. Ballot boxes were flown by helicopters to Dili for central collation. The final results are expected around next Tuesday.

East Timor, invaded by Indonesia in 1975, is widely expected to reject autonomy and take its first strides toward independence.

UN Secretary General Kofi Annan paid tribute to the Indonesian police in East Timor despite the poll worker's death.

The United States, Australia and other nations urged all sides to accept the result of the vote, which went ahead after months of violence and intimidation largely blamed on pro-Indonesian militias.

Dili remained tense after the vote, with Aitarak militiamen patrolling Comoro airport and residents heading back to safety in the hills surrounding the capital after heading down to vote.

Aitarak commander Eurico Guterres said his members were there to block any East Timorese leaders from fleeing.

The militia leader added that

Fresh militia attacks, intimidation

he would attend a planned meeting of 10 pro-Indonesian and 10 pro-independence leaders on Tuesday, organised by the United Nations to discuss disarmament and reconciliation.

Fresh militia intimidation targeting local United Nations staff was reported Tuesday, after a poll worker was murdered, as fearful East Timorese headed back to safety in the hills.

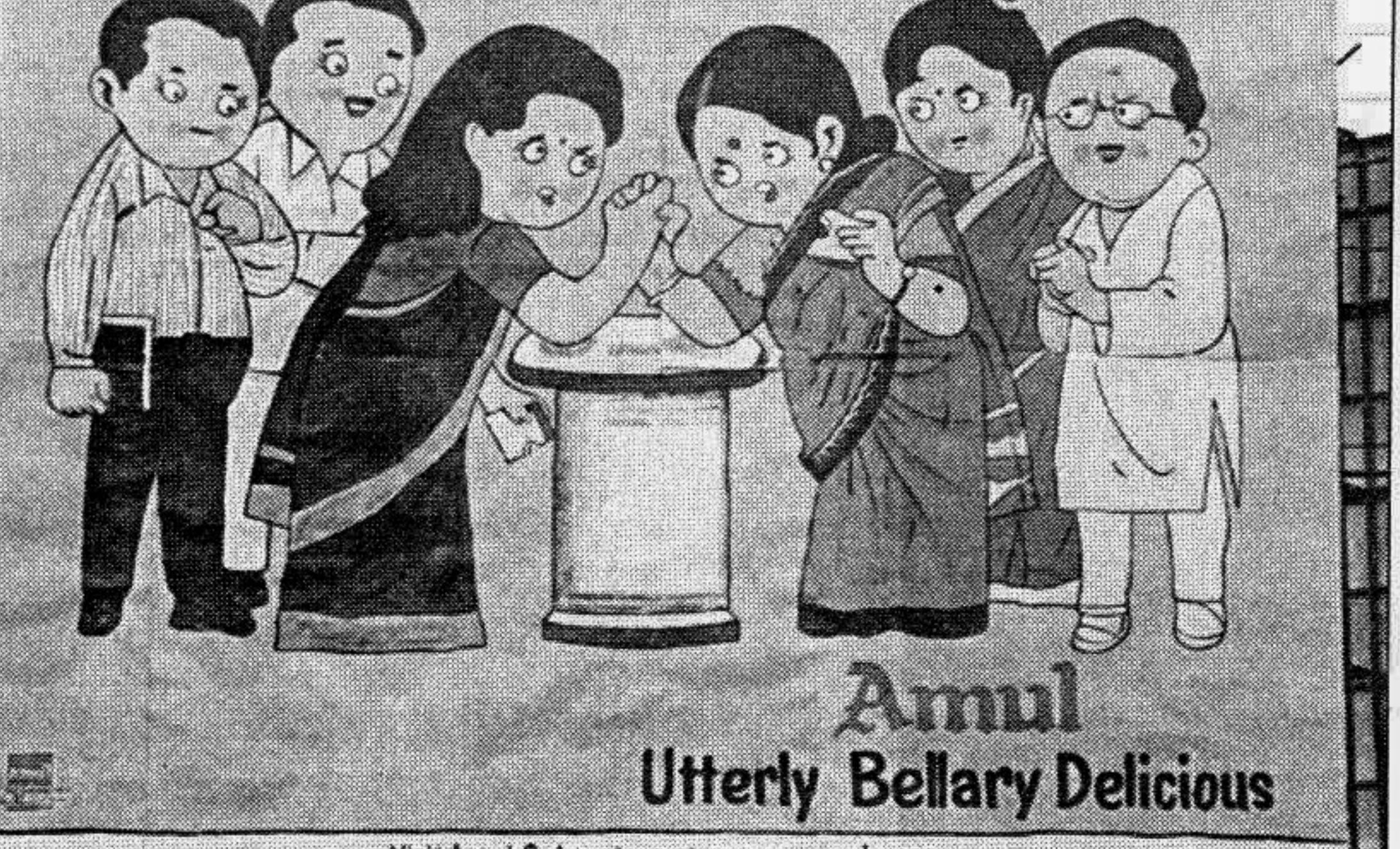
A pro-Indonesian militia attack on two student activists underlined fears that Monday's landmark autonomy ballot does not herald a peaceful new beginning for East Timor after 24 years of often brutal Indonesian rule.

Carina Perelli, the head of the UN electoral advisory body which ran Monday's vote on the territory wanted to remain under Indonesian rule, said 432,287 people cast ballots.

Indonesia deploys 4 Australian TV crew

Indonesian authorities on Tuesday deported four Australian journalists from East Timor, accusing them of inciting violence during the territory's autonomy ballot, a military official said.

Her Raj or Swaraj?



An Indian hoarding shows Congress (I) Sonia Gandhi and her rival Sushma Swaraj of BJP (R) in a show of strength, displayed on the Eastern Express Highway Tuesday in central Bombay. Both are contesting for the Bellary constituency seat, south India in the upcoming general elections.

— AFP photo

Mammoth security operation underway for Indian polls

NEW DELHI, Aug 31 : India has begun moving its paramilitary brigades for the upcoming general elections, owing to plug any possible security breach during the world's biggest democratic exercise, reports AFP.

Like the election itself which begins Sunday, the security logistics are daunting, even though the five days of actual polling have been staggered over a month so as not to stretch resources.

Some 250,000 paramilitary troops will reinforce more than one million state police personnel at 800,000 polling stations in 26 states and seven federal territories.

The paramilitary brigades are already being deployed, amid vows by Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee's govern-

ment to maintain law and order at all costs.

Special emphasis will be placed on Kashmir and the northeastern states, where separatist groups have called for a boycott of the elections and threatened to disrupt polling.

There are also fears that Pakistani Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) units will seek to foment unrest in more volatile states.

Full security will be provided to all states for the smooth conduct of the polls in view of the ISI threat," promised Home Minister Lal Krishna Advani.

Kashmir only has six parliamentary seats, but so sensitive is the region that polling will be split over three days with only two constituencies voting at any one time.

In Kashmir, where a Moslem insurgency has claimed more than 25,000 lives since 1989, up to 15 guards will be posted at each of the state's 6,510 polling booths.

We have enough personnel this time," Kashmir police chief Gurbachan Jagat told AFP, referring to the 100,000 paramilitaries already in place to reinforce the state's 70,000-strong police force.

Neither (foreign) mercenaries nor the (Moslem) militants will be allowed to disrupt the elections in Kashmir," added deputy chief election commissioner G.V.G. Krishnamurthy.

Kashmir only has six parliamentary seats, but so sensitive is the region that polling will be split over three days with only two constituencies voting at any one time.

'UN should hold referendum in Kashmir following E Timor vote'

ISLAMABAD, Aug 31 : The United Nations should implement its resolutions for a referendum in Kashmir following the historic vote in East Timor, a Kashmiri politician said in a statement published Tuesday, reports AFP.

If the UN can hold a ballot in East Timor there is no reason for it to ignore its own decisions on Kashmir, said Sultan Mahmood, head of the state government in Pakistani Kashmir.

The world body should give up a double standard and implement its own (1948-49) resolutions for a plebiscite in Kashmir," he said in the statement.

Pakistan and India, which holds two-thirds of Kashmir, have been locked in a dispute over the ownership of the Himalayan territory since the partition of the sub-continent in 1947.

The row has caused two of the three wars between the two neighbours and they recently came dangerously close to another war over the territory.

Grass was his only option

TOKYO, Aug 31 : A 52-year-old Japanese hiker survived for 13 days while lost on a mountain by eating grass, police said Tuesday, reports AFP.

Masanori Motomiya, who started climbing Mount Kogashi in eastern Japan on August 16, was found by a passerby on Sunday, a police spokesman said.

The local man heard somebody groaning under a cliff when he was preparing for takeoff on a paraglider, the spokesman said. "It is unusual ... he lived on stream water and grass for that length of time."

Motomiya had only one pre-packed rice and meat meal with him when he started climbing the 580-meter (1,900-foot) mountain, police said.

Analysts here predicted that negotiators from both sides would discuss possible US lifting of sanctions on North Korea in return for its giving up missile threats at the talks in Berlin September 7-11.

But the North's renewed call for a US troop withdrawal prompted fears it could make it a stumbling block to progress in the talks.

Despite Pyongyang's repeated demands, Washington and its ally Seoul have flatly rejected any troop withdrawal until a peace treaty is signed.

Rodong Sinmun hinted that the communist regime would stick to its decades-old demand for the pullout of US troops during the talks.

The DPRK's principled stand towards the DPRK-US relations remains unchanged," it said.

The call came a week before North Korea was to meet US officials in Berlin for talks focussing on the Stalinist state's suspected plans to launch a new missile, but aimed at improving ties between the Cold War enemies.

If the United States truly wants improved DPRK (North Korea-US) relations, it should pull its forces out of South Korea," the North's official Rodong Sinmun newspaper said, according to the Korean Central News Agency.

It also said that Washington should "give up the moves for stifling the DPRK and lift economic sanctions against it."

Analysts here predicted that negotiators from both sides would discuss possible US lifting of sanctions on North Korea in return for its giving up missile threats at the talks in Berlin September 7-11.

But the North's renewed call for a US troop withdrawal prompted fears it could make it a stumbling block to progress in the talks.

Despite Pyongyang's repeated demands, Washington and its ally Seoul have flatly rejected any troop withdrawal until a peace treaty is signed.

Rodong Sinmun hinted that the communist regime would stick to its decades-old demand for the pullout of US troops during the talks.

The DPRK's principled stand towards the DPRK-US relations remains unchanged," it said.

The call came a week before North Korea was to meet US officials in Berlin for talks focussing on the Stalinist state's suspected plans to launch a new missile, but aimed at improving ties between the Cold War enemies.

If the United States truly wants improved DPRK (North Korea-US) relations, it should pull its forces out of South Korea," the North's official Rodong Sinmun newspaper said, according to the Korean Central News Agency.

It also said that Washington should "give up the moves for stifling the DPRK and lift economic sanctions against it."

Analysts here predicted that negotiators from both sides would discuss possible US lifting of sanctions on North Korea in return for its giving up missile threats at the talks in Berlin September 7-11.

But the North's renewed call for a US troop withdrawal prompted fears it could make it a stumbling block to progress in the talks.

Despite Pyongyang's repeated demands, Washington and its ally Seoul have flatly rejected any troop withdrawal until a peace treaty is signed.

Rodong Sinmun hinted that the communist regime would stick to its decades-old demand for the pullout of US troops during the talks.

The call came a week before North Korea was to meet US officials in Berlin for talks focussing on the Stalinist state's suspected plans to launch a new missile, but aimed at improving ties between the Cold War enemies.

If the United States truly wants improved DPRK (North Korea-US) relations, it should pull its forces out of South Korea," the North's official Rodong Sinmun newspaper said, according to the Korean Central News Agency.

Analysts here predicted that negotiators from both sides would discuss possible US lifting of sanctions on North Korea in return for its giving up missile threats at the talks in Berlin September 7-11.

But the North's renewed call for a US troop withdrawal prompted fears it could make it a stumbling block to progress in the talks.

Despite Pyongyang's repeated demands, Washington and its ally Seoul have flatly rejected any troop withdrawal until a peace treaty is signed.

Rodong Sinmun hinted that the communist regime would stick to its decades-old demand for the pullout of US troops during the talks.

The call came a week before North Korea was to meet US officials in Berlin for talks focussing on the Stalinist state's suspected plans to launch a new missile, but aimed at improving ties between the Cold War enemies.

If the United States truly wants improved DPRK (North Korea-US) relations, it should pull its forces out of South Korea," the North's official Rodong Sinmun newspaper said, according to the Korean Central News Agency.

Analysts here predicted that negotiators from both sides would discuss possible US lifting of sanctions on North Korea in return for its giving up missile threats at the talks in Berlin September 7-11.

But the North's renewed call for a US troop withdrawal prompted fears it could make it a stumbling block to progress in the talks.

Despite Pyongyang's repeated demands, Washington and its ally Seoul have flatly rejected any troop withdrawal until a peace treaty is signed.

Rodong Sinmun hinted that the communist regime would stick to its decades-old demand for the pullout of US troops during the talks.

The call came a week before North Korea was to meet US officials in Berlin for talks focussing on the Stalinist state's suspected plans to launch a new missile, but aimed at improving ties between the Cold War enemies.

If the United States truly wants improved DPRK (North Korea-US) relations, it should pull its forces out of South Korea," the North's official Rodong Sinmun newspaper said, according to the Korean Central News Agency.

Analysts here predicted that negotiators from both sides would discuss possible US lifting of sanctions on North Korea in return for its giving up missile threats at the talks in Berlin September 7-11.

But the North's renewed call for a US troop withdrawal prompted fears it could make it a stumbling block to progress in the talks.

Despite Pyongyang's repeated demands, Washington and its ally Seoul have flatly rejected any troop withdrawal until a peace treaty is signed.

Rodong Sinmun hinted that the communist regime would stick to its decades-old demand for the pullout of US troops during the talks.

The call came a week before North Korea was to meet US officials in Berlin for talks focussing on the Stalinist state's suspected plans to launch a new missile, but aimed at improving ties between the Cold War enemies.

If the United States truly wants improved DPRK (North Korea-US) relations, it should pull its forces out of South Korea," the North's official Rodong Sinmun newspaper said, according to the Korean Central News Agency.

Analysts here predicted that negotiators from both sides would discuss possible US lifting of sanctions on North Korea in return for its giving up missile threats at the talks in Berlin September 7-11.

But the North's renewed call for a US troop withdrawal prompted fears it could make it a stumbling block to progress in the talks.

Despite Pyongyang's repeated demands, Washington and its ally Seoul have flatly rejected any troop withdrawal until a peace treaty is signed.

Rodong Sinmun hinted that the communist regime would stick to its decades-old demand for the pullout of US troops during the talks.

The call came a week before North Korea was to meet US officials in Berlin for talks focussing on the Stalinist state's suspected plans to launch a new missile, but aimed at improving ties between the Cold War enemies.

If the United States truly wants improved DPRK (North Korea-US) relations, it should pull its forces out of South Korea," the North's official Rodong Sinmun newspaper said, according to the Korean Central News Agency.

Analysts here predicted that negotiators from both sides would discuss possible US lifting of sanctions on North Korea in return for its giving up missile threats at the talks in Berlin September 7-11.

But the North's renewed call for a US troop withdrawal prompted fears it could make it a stumbling block to progress in the talks.

Despite Pyongyang's repeated demands, Washington and its ally Seoul have flatly rejected any troop withdrawal until a peace treaty is signed.

Rodong Sinmun hinted that the communist regime would stick to its decades-old demand for the pullout of US troops during the talks.

The call came a week before North Korea was to meet US officials in Berlin for talks focussing on the Stalinist state's suspected plans to launch a new missile, but aimed at improving ties between the Cold War enemies.

If the United States truly wants improved DPRK (North Korea-US) relations, it should pull its forces out of South Korea," the North's official Rodong Sinmun newspaper said, according to the Korean Central News Agency.

Analysts here predicted that negotiators from both sides would discuss possible US lifting of sanctions on North Korea in return for its giving up missile threats at the talks in Berlin September 7-11.

But the North's renewed call for a US troop withdrawal prompted fears it could make it a stumbling block to progress in the talks.

Despite Pyongyang's repeated demands, Washington and its ally Seoul have flatly rejected any troop withdrawal until a peace treaty is signed.

Rodong Sinmun hinted that the communist regime would stick to its decades-old demand for the pullout of US troops during the talks.

The call came a week before North Korea was to meet US officials in Berlin for talks focussing on the Stalinist state's suspected plans to launch a new missile, but aimed at improving ties between the Cold War enemies.

If the United States truly wants improved DPRK (North Korea-US) relations, it should pull its forces out of South Korea," the North's official Rodong Sinmun newspaper said, according to the Korean Central News Agency.

Analysts here predicted that negotiators from both sides would discuss possible US lifting of sanctions on North Korea in return for its giving up missile threats at the talks in Berlin September 7-11.

But the North's renewed call for a US troop withdrawal prompted fears it could make it a stumbling block to progress in the talks.

Despite Pyongyang's repeated demands, Washington and its ally Seoul have flatly rejected any troop withdrawal until a peace treaty is signed.