

# Militiamen attack refugees at ICRC compound

## Indonesian Army enacting terrifying 'Plan B' in E Timor

JAKARTA, Sept 6: Pro-Indonesian militias in East Timor Monday attacked the Red Cross compound and the home of Nobel laureate Bishop Carlos Felipe Ximenes Belo, both packed with thousands of refugees, sources said, reports AFP.

Indonesian soldiers and militiamen were marching screaming refugees at gunpoint and herding them onto trucks to drive them out of East Timor, journalists said.

East Timor police spokesman Captain Widodo told the Antara news agency that Belo was unhurt and in Baucau, 115 km east of Dili where he was meeting with Baucau Bishop Basilio do Nascimento.

He said Belo had left on a helicopter and would be back later Monday.

A group of Aitarak militias, who had come from around the

Dili residence of the bishop, attacked the ICRC (International Committee of the Red Cross) compound at around 11.00 a.m. (0300 GMT), a source in close contact with the Red Cross in Dili said.

Some 2,000 refugees had been inside the compound, while about 5,000 were at the residence of Dili Bishop Belo, the source said.

"We strongly condemn the attack," a Red Cross source in Jakarta said. Militiamen fired shots at the ICRC compound and while it was not immediately clear if there were any casualties, the attack caused "intense panic," the first source said.

A British journalist who was staying in a seaside hotel next to the ICRC compound said soldiers and militiamen had herded the screaming refugees, most of them women, to the

beach across the street.

"As I left (the hotel) I saw hundreds of refugees marching at gunpoint on the beach, marching towards the east surrounded by military. I repeat the military and not the militiamen," the journalist said.

Dutch journalist Tjitske Lingsma told CNN from Dili that militiamen "fired into the ground and into the air" when they entered the bishop's residence.

Religious and pro-independence sources in Dili said it was believed one of Bishop Belo's secretaries had been killed in the attack.

"There are 6,000 refugees in his garden. They fled into the house. The militiamen then forced them out, and at the moment the militiamen are negotiating with the bishop," Lingsma said.

She said it was believed the militiamen wanted to take the

refugees by truck to Indonesian West Timor, in line with a process she said was going on elsewhere in Dili and other parts of East Timor.

Church and pro-independence sources said later they heard the refugees were being loaded onto two navy vessels in Dili harbour.

The journalist said the forced evacuations were part of Aitarak militia commander Eurico Guterres' avowed aim of partitioning East Timor after it voted overwhelmingly for independence a week ago.

A source with the UN Mission in East Timor (UNAMET), which Monday was evacuating non-essential staff from Dili, cited reports that the Indonesian police and military "are pressuring internally displaced persons to move to sanctuary and safety in western Timor."

The reports said they were "loading them in trucks and moving them out in order to support official contentions" that they are fleeing of their own volition, the UNAMET source told AFP.

The Indonesian army, having lost its battle to retain East Timor through the ballot box, is enacting an apocalyptic "Plan B" of mass evacuation and mass murder, Western sources said Monday.

Events of the past 72 hours, which have seen army-backed pro-Jakarta militias opening fire on refugees and herding them onto trucks heading out of East Timor, were part of a pre-conceived strategy to lay waste to the territory once independence was chosen in last week's vote, they said.

A Western intelligence source told AFP the plan's main objective was to partition the former Portuguese territory through a forced population shift to Indonesian West Timor.

The plan will also see members of the East Timorese resistance, their supporters and the small intellectual elite -- mainly students -- eliminated," he said.

"Plan B" will further target members of the Roman Catholic church which most East Timorese follow and which is seen by the armed forces as an arm of the pro-independence movement, he said.

The Nobel laureate bishop of Dili, Carlos Felipe Ximenes

Belo, fled his residence in the capital as militiamen attacked it Monday, driving some of around 5,000 refugees cowering in the grounds out onto waiting trucks, witnesses said.

Part of the alleged Indonesian army plan is nearing completion. Foreign journalists, poll observers and United Nations officials in Dili and elsewhere are being driven out of East Timor through fearful militia intimidation.

Observers say the intimidation has been calculated in stopping largely short of physically hurting foreigners, which could prompt stronger action from the international community as it dithers over whether to send in armed peacekeepers.

Western specialists said "Plan B" had the code-name "Operasi Sapu Jagad" (Operation Total Cleansing) and became operational in March, when militia violence began to reach Dili.

**Indonesian military behind killing**

The UN is compiling eyewitness evidence that the Indonesian military orchestrated a campaign of killings by pro-Jakarta militias in East Timor, according to a leaked report published in Australia Monday.

Citing leaked United Nations' assessments, the Sydney Morning Herald said 14,000 soldiers under officers hand-picked by Indonesian Defence Minister General Wiranto had condoned and in some cases directed attacks by anti-independence militias.

The military had also ordered the 8,000-strong Indonesian police contingent to remain passive during many assaults, with open threats to their families if they intervened, the paper said.

**170 killed in violence**

At least 170 people died at the hands of Indonesian military and their militia allies in strife-torn East Timor, according to an unconfirmed report here Monday.

Citing local contacts, East Timorese International Support Centre spokeswoman Maria Do Ceu Frederie said 77 people had died Monday in three villages outside the capital, Dili.

# Optimism running high in both BJP, Cong camps

NEW DELHI, Sept 6: India's ruling coalition as well as Sonia Gandhi's opposition claimed major gains after the first day of federal elections that have evoked hope of political stability in the world's largest democracy after a string of wobbly governments, reports AP.

About 80 million votes cast in Sunday's balloting, kept in thousands of sealed metal boxes, were put under lock and key and were being guarded at government buildings across the country Monday by hundreds of armed police and paramilitary. They would be opened under armed guard on October 6 when counting of votes begins.

Sunday's voting was for 145 of 543 seats in the Lok Sabha or lower house of parliament.

Thousands of electronic push-button voting machines, used for the first time by Indian voters in a general election,

were also transported to secure election commission hubs. But only 25 million of the 160 million eligible voters had access to the machines in the first phase of the staggered poll that ends on October 5.

Authorities began preparations for voting on Saturday, the second round of balloting in the five-phase election that will produce India's fourth government in three years. Hundreds of thousands of police and paramilitary posted at balloting stations will be shifted and deployed to other areas.

Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's ruling coalition, widely expected to return to power with a runaway majority, claimed it would win at least 100 of the 145 seats where voting was held Sunday. The Hindu newspaper reported Monday. Most surveys indicate Vajpayee could win over 300 seats, enabling him to lead a stable government that could

last its full five-year term.

Sonia Gandhi's Congress Party in turn claimed it had made early and significant gains.

"The people have sent a clear message," Congress Party spokesman Kapil Sibal told reporters.

The Federal Election Commission has prohibited exit polls, saying the announcement of possible results in one phase of balloting could influence voters in other parts of the country in the next round. But a private television network owned by a lawmaker from Vajpayee's Bharatiya Janata Party said it had conducted an exit poll defying the commission, and promised the results later Monday.

A drop in violence and voter turnout marked the first phase of elections.

Six party activists died, and dozens of people were injured.



United Nations personnel leave Darwin Airport Monday after being airlifted from the East Timor capital, Dili. The troubled capital had been turned into a ghost town and the Indonesian Army accused of orchestrating a campaign of terror. —AFP photo

# 'Kashmiris reject Indian rule by boycotting polls'

ISLAMABAD, Sept 6: Pakistan said Monday the Kashmiri people had rejected India's "illegal occupation" by boycotting Sunday's elections in Indian-held Kashmir, reports AFP.

The boycott by the "vast majority" of the voters demonstrated the Kashmiri people's determination to continue their struggle for their "right" to self-determination, Foreign Minister Sartaj Aziz said.

It also "exposes India's false propaganda campaign that the Kashmiri struggle is being sustained by infiltration from outside," he said.

"By refusing to participate in these so-called elections, the Kashmiri people have once again rejected the illegal occupation of Kashmir by India," the minister said in a statement.

He said independent news reports had "clearly shown to the

world that almost all the polling stations in Srinagar and other parts of Kashmir remained deserted on the polling day."

Aziz congratulated the Kashmiri umbrella Freedom Conference body for organising the boycott and for continuing their struggle for a United Nations-supervised referendum to decide the future of Kashmir.

The lowest ever turnout in these sham elections should once again focus international attention on the reality of the Kashmir issue -- the denial of basic democratic rights to the people of Kashmir," he said.

India cannot talk about its democratic credentials as long as it "refuses to recognise the Kashmiri's democratic right of self-determination," he said.

"Not a single country in the world has ever accepted that the territory of Kashmir is a part of India."

"Yet India has forcibly occupied this disputed territory with the help of 700,000 troops, who are carrying out a brutal repression of the Kashmiri people and violating their basic human rights."

Reports from New Delhi said 85 percent of voters mostly remained indoors in the capital city of Srinagar and nearby areas in Indian Kashmir. Some polling centres failed to record a single vote.

Among the Kashmiri Muslims who did vote, some alleged they were forced to do so by Indian security forces.

The two countries came dangerously close to another war during the recent Kashmir conflict as Indian forces battled to evict what they called Pakistani infiltrators and troops from key peaks on its side of the disputed border.

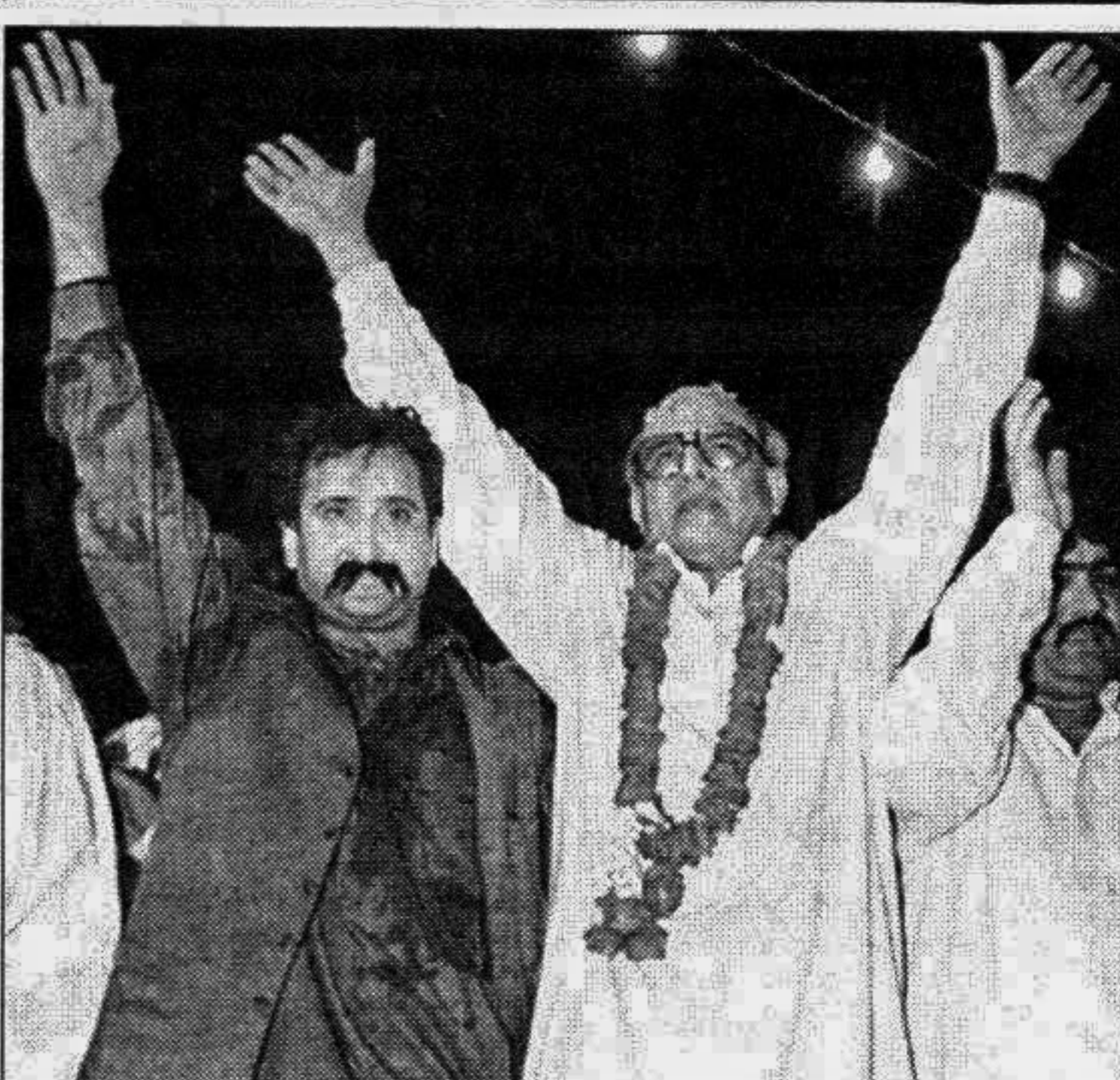
## BRIEFLY

**Azeri leader detained in US:** A leading opposition figure from Azerbaijan has been detained by US immigration authorities, Russia's Itar-Tass news agency reported on Sunday, citing officials in the former Soviet republic. Reuters says from Moscow.

Rasul Guliyev, Azerbaijan's Parliament Speaker from 1993, became a sharp critic of President Heydar Aliyev after stepping down in 1996. He is wanted in Azerbaijan on corruption charges, which he has said are politically motivated. Tass said he had been detained by US immigration officials on Friday. Azeri officials could not immediately be reached for comment.

**Thai, Filipinos clash in Taiwan:** About 200 Thai and Filipino labourers fought each other with pipes, rocks and gasoline bombs at a construction site in central Taiwan early Monday, injuring 18 people, police said, AP reports from Taipei.

A dispute over the use of telephones shared by the workers sparked the violence at the Formosa Plastics industrial complex in Yunlin county, about 200 kilometers (125 miles) south of Taipei, local television reported. The fighting followed two minor clashes between the Thai and Filipino workers at the site last month. Two workers, whose nationalities were not immediately known, were hospitalised Monday with severe head injuries and 16 others suffered light injuries, police said.



Former Pakistani president Farooq Leghari (R), along with his party organiser Shoaib Adil, waves to supporters during an anti-government rally in nearby Rawalpindi, some 25 km from Islamabad Sunday. Leghari strongly criticised Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's Kashmir policy, asked the government to resign and to announce fresh polls in the country. —AFP photo

## DPRK urges US to abide by promise on nuclear reactors

SEOUL, Sept 6: North Korea on Monday urged the United States to keep its promise to build two nuclear reactors for the communist state in return for the mothballing of its suspect atomic programme, reports AP.

The pointed call came a day before the United States sits down with North Korea in Berlin for talks focussing on a possible easing of US sanctions if Pyongyang agrees to freeze its missile programme.

"If the construction of the light water reactor (LWR) project is delayed, the United States will be held wholly responsible for it," the North's Rodong Sinmun warned, according to the Korean Central News Agency.

Under a landmark accord signed in 1994, the North promised to freeze its nuclear

programs in return for the reactors from the Korean Energy Development Organizations (KEDO), an international consortium consisting of the United States, South Korea, Japan and the European Union.

"The LWR construction is an unavoidable commitment of the United States under the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK)-US Agreed Framework," the Rodong Sinmun said.

The paper also accused Washington of taking an irresponsible stance on implementing the terms of the 1994 agreement.

"However, the United States is assuming such an attitude as insisting that it is not to be held responsible for the delay of the construction as other KEDO nations procrastinate on the project," it said.

## Russian forces kill 3 Serbs in Kosovo

PRISTINA, Sept 6: Russian peacekeeping forces in Kosovo killed three Serbs Monday morning in Korminjane in eastern Kosovo during clashes between Serbs and ethnic Albanians in which one Kosovo Serb died, KFOR officials said, reports AFP.

## Albright in Vietnam to push for full normalisation of relations

HANOI, Sept 6: On the heels of a successful diplomatic mission in the Middle East, US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright arrived here Monday for talks aimed at fully normalising US-Vietnamese relations 24 years after the end of their bitter war, reports AFP.

Albright, who just three days ago salvaged the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, was to concentrate her talks in Hanoi on economic and commercial issues as well as raise Washington's perennial concern over Vietnam's human rights record.

## Di may be a direct descendant of Shakespeare

BERLIN, Sept 6: Princess Diana may have been a direct descendant of William Shakespeare, a German academic has suggested in a book to be published Friday, reports AFP.

The German weekly Focus on Monday outlined the theory, put forward by Hildegard Hamerschmidt-Hummel, a professor of English literature in Mainz.

The link dates back to 1617, when the princess' direct ancestor, Lord William Spencer, married a certain Penelope Wrothlesley, who was the illegitimate daughter of Penelope Wrothlesley.

Her mother, Elizabeth Vernon, a member of the court of Queen Elizabeth I, married Henry Wrothlesley when her out-of-wedlock pregnancy became apparent and scandalized society.

## Arafat happiest of husbands!

DUBAI, Sept 6: Suha Arafat, the wife of the Palestinian president, has rejected reports that her marriage is on the rocks and said Yasser Arafat was "the happiest of husbands," reports AFP.

"The rumours that try to harm me and my relationship with my husband are without foundation," she said in an interview published Monday in the Al-Wasat weekly magazine.

"Abu Ammar (Yasser Arafat's alias) is the happiest of husbands," the 35-year-old blonde said.

Suha gave the interview on her return to Gaza after a long absence, which she said was due to "my state of health which needed treatment."

"I also had to take care of activities related to the association (charity) I run and make contacts about preparations for the celebrations in Bethlehem in 2000."

## 220 feared dead in China as flood toll passes 1,000

BEIJING, Sept 6: More than 220 people are feared dead after their homes were swept away in mudslides caused by torrential rain in southeast China, local officials said Monday, as the death toll in this summer's flooding passed 1,000, reports AFP.

The rainfall led to landslides which accounted for most of the victims, Wenzhou City Communist Party spokesman Jin Shigang told AFP.

He said 118 people had been killed and another 104 were still missing near the town of Wenzhou in Zhejiang province.

More than 600 people were injured by Tropical Storm Wendy and associated storms. Jin said, with 500,000 people forced to evacuate flooded areas.

The region was hit by 400 mm (16 inches) of rain in the

course of four hours early Saturday.

The deaths bring to more than one thousand the number of people killed in floods and rainstorms since the beginning of the summer flood season.

The official flood death toll of 750 did not include a further 200 deaths in central Hunan province, which were widely reported in the official media last month.

Last year more than 4,000 people died in devastating flooding along China's major rivers, according to official statistics.

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies recently received an appeal for funding following relief efforts for the 3.5 million people made homeless in this year's floods.

## Israeli HC rules Shin Beth "torture" illegal

JERUSALEM, Sept 6: Israel's high court on Monday outlawed interrogation methods used by country's secret service Shin Beth that human rights groups charged amounted to torture, reports AFP.

"All these acts are illegal," the nine-judge High Court of Justice panel said in its unanimous ruling.

The decision was welcomed by human rights groups who said Shin Beth's techniques against Palestinian suspects include violent shaking, hanging prisoners by their wrists, binding them to small chairs and sleep deprivation.

"It's a landmark decision," said Tomer Feffer, spokesman for Israeli human rights group B'tselem.

"But there are hundreds or even thousands of Palestinians who were tortured and we have to see how this decision will be implemented in the field," he told AFP.

Government lawyers had said the methods only involved "moderate physical pressure."

Deputy Defence Minister Ephraim Sneh said the decision would only "complicate" the fight against terror, recalling the double car bombings in northern Israel on Sunday.

But Justice Minister Yossi Beilin hailed the ruling, and said he did not consider it would hamper the anti-terrorism campaign as interrogators could still justify their actions in cases of extreme necessity.

The high court has heard several individual cases accusing Shin Beth of torturing Palestinian prisoners but it was the first time it met to make judgement on the legality of their methods.

Israel's Supreme Court sits as the high court when dealing with matters it considers need redressing for the sake of justice.

## PA uncovers Hamas plots

GAZA CITY, Sept 6: The Palestinian Authority learnt of plots by Hamas to carry out anti-Israeli attacks after arresting dozens of members of the militant Islamic group over the past few weeks, a senior Palestinian official said on Monday, reports AFP.

Hamas was planning attacks in a bid to derail the latest peace accord signed between Israel and the Palestinians in Egypt on Sunday, said Yasser Arafat, a top aide to Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat.

Israel was rocked by two car bomb blasts in the north of the country on Sunday which killed the three suspected bombers and injured four other people less than a day after the signing of the agreement.

Abdel Rahim said Palestinian security forces confiscated a large quantity of weapons and explosives and money discovered when they

arrested members of Hamas cells in the West Bank towns of Ramallah, Hebron, Bethlehem and other areas.

"They had instructions from Hamas leaders abroad asking them to do everything possible to start military operations before, during and after the signing," he told AFP.

**Palestinian leadership to review accord**

Yasser Arafat called a meeting of the Palestinian leadership on Monday to approve the revised peace accord with Israel, Palestinian officials said.

The Palestinian cabinet and the PLO executive committee will meet here from 6 p.m. (1500 GMT) to debate the deal signed by Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak in Egypt.

Arafat will also host a ceremony with Barak next Monday to mark the resumption of talks on the final status of the Pales-

tinian territories, as called for under the so-called Sharm el-Sheikh Memorandum, International Co-operation Minister Nabil Shaath told reporters.

**Car bombers identified as Israeli Arabs**

Meanwhile, three car bombers who were killed in botched attacks in Israel on Sunday were Israeli Arabs from villages in the north of the country, Palestinian sources said Monday.

The three were identified as Mohannad Azayzeh and Jed al-Zaydi from the village of Daburiyah near the town of Nazareth, and Amir Massalha, whose home village is not known.

Residents of Daburiyah told AFP that Azayzeh and al-Zaydi, both in their mid-20s, were known as religious people from conservative families.



Israeli police inspect the remains of a car that exploded in Haifa Sunday. Three people were blown up when two car bombs exploded in northern Israel. —AFP photo

## Myanmar junta tightens security ahead of unrest

YANGON, Sept 6: Myanmar has imposed new security measures ahead of a threatened uprising this week by dissidents intent on loosening the junta's iron grip on power, witnesses said Monday, reports AFP.

Extra military personnel and police were deployed at official buildings, temples and other important sites in the capital Yangon, and tea-shops and restaurants where hundreds congregated after work had been asked to close, residents said.

Dissidents hope to foment civil unrest on Thursday, the 9/9/99, or Four Nines Day, to replicate a bloody uprising on August 8, 1988, the 8/8/88.

The junta and state media, meanwhile, have stepped up attacks on "destructive elements" and the opposition National League for Democracy (NLD) led

by Nobel peace laureate Aung San Suu Kyi, who has refused to condemn the planned uprising.

"Authorities appear anxious not to unduly unsettle the general public and are trying to maintain the 'business as usual' atmosphere," an observer in the capital told AFP.

"At the same time, they feel it necessary to take precautionary measures," he said.

Officials are touring neighbourhoods reminding households to register all overnight guests, a decades-old regulation rarely enforced except on occasions regarded as significant, residents said.

Despite allegations by exiled dissidents, government schools appeared to be staying open, but officials said teaching staff had been told not to keep a close eye on students.

## Russian war in Dagestan heats up

NOVOLAKSKOYE, Russia, Sept 6: Russian forces waged fierce battles against Chechen rebels in Dagestan Monday and bombed villages in Chechnya as the war against Islamists in the northern Caucasus heated up with dozens of casualties reported, says AFP.

Russian helicopter gunships and artillery attacked the rebels in this village as an armoured column of troops advanced towards the latest battlefield in the month-long war in the southern republic of Dagestan.

In the Chechen capital of Grozny meanwhile, Deputy Prime Minister Kazbek Makhashev said Russian warplanes had struck five villages in eastern Chechnya, killing 43 people including at least 12 children.

The air assault on Chechnya, however, could not be immediately confirmed by the Russian

Defence Ministry.

While Moscow beefed up its military presence in western Dagestan, the ranks of the insurgents were also swelling with an estimated 5,000 militants now massed along the border, the interior ministry said.

Some 2,000 rebels who crossed into the southern republic early Sunday were in control of at least eight villages in western Dagestan, the press centre of the defence ministry said.

The press centre of rebel command in Grozny said its fighters had entered Khasavyurt, Dagestan's second city, taken some 30 prisoners among the special forces of the interior ministry and captured four armoured vehicles.

Fighting was heavy near Novolakskeye and Dudy between the Russian forces and the

rebels led by Chechen warlord Shamil Basayev who led an assault on Dagestan last month.

Ten police died in fighting over the past 24 hours against the rebels who laid siege to a police station in Novolakskeye, Interfax reported quoting the interior ministry.

Among the ten was one member of the crack troops of the interior ministry, while seven others were injured, the interior ministry said.

Some 40 police and special forces had been trapped in the station in Novolakskeye, one of four villages seized Sunday in the cross-border raid.

Dagestan declared a general mobilisation Sunday in the wake of the incursion that also coincided with a deadly explosion in the city of Buinaksk that demolished an apartment building that housed Russian servicemen.