

## International

More aftershocks rock Taiwan

TAIPEI, Oct 24: Big aftershocks, including two stronger than 5.0 on the Richter scale, jolted Taiwan Sunday after an earthquake two days ago left hundreds hurt, but no further injuries were reported, reports AFP.

The aftershocks have continued since last month's massive earthquake in central Taiwan which killed more than 2,400 people.

"As of 10:00 a.m. (0800 BST), 270 aftershocks have been recorded over the past two days," a Seismology Center official told AFP.

"More are expected before they subside in two weeks," he said.

The biggest one, with a Richter magnitude of 5.2 struck at 1:08 a.m. (2308 BST Saturday). Its epicentre was located 6.5 kilometres (4.1 miles) east of the southern city of Chiayi.

"No fatalities or injuries were reported in the wake of the aftershocks," a rescue official said.

Aftershocks continued to hit the central Nantou county, the epicentre of the September 21 quake which killed 2,405 people and injured 11,306.

## 9 killed in violence in Kashmir

JAMMU, India, Oct 24: Nine people were killed and ten wounded in separate incidents of violence in the restive north Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir, police said today, reports Reuters.

Six militants, mostly foreign mercenaries, and a soldier were killed late on Saturday in a shootout near Salonia in the border district of Poonch, 256 km (160 miles) north of Jammu, a police spokesman said.

A civilian was also injured in the crossfire which lasted for several hours, he added.

In separate incidents on Saturday, militants killed a civilian after entering his house near Kalakote in Rajouri district while police killed a militant near Kishtwar in Doda district.

Rajouri is 176 km (110 miles) north and Doda is 173 km (105 miles) east of Jammu.

Seven people were injured in an explosion near Raghunath Bazar market in Jammu city on Saturday evening, police said.

## Food poisoning kills 26 children in Peru

LIMA, Oct 24: Twenty-six children aged three to 12 years died in a small Andean village in southeastern Peru after drinking apparently contaminated milk, senior officials said Saturday, reports AFP.

Peruvian Health Minister Alejandro Aguinaga and presidential envoy Edgardo Moscovich, as well as a number of lawmakers, flew to the small village of Taucamara in Cusco province Saturday to investigate the incident and bring medical supplies.

They said 26 others survived after drinking the contaminated milk, thanks to what they called the quick response by officials Friday.

Survivors were taken to a provincial hospital in Cusco, and some were still in critical or serious condition, doctors said Saturday.

A hospital official who asked not to be named said the death toll could rise. The original toll rose from 24 to 26 after two children in serious condition died despite medical intervention.

The cause of the fatal contamination has yet to be determined, Aguinaga and Moscovich said, adding that tests on the milk were underway to confirm the presence of phosphorus -- which is used in insecticides.

Clinical examiners believe "the milk was mixed with a very lethal phosphoric ingredient," Aguinaga said.

## Robin Cook in Israel for talks on ME peace

JERUSALEM, Oct 24: British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook arrived in Israel on Sunday at the start of a three-day visit to the Jewish state and the Palestinian territories, reports AFP.

Cook, whose last trip early last year sparked a diplomatic furore, is to hold a working lunch with Foreign Minister David Levy before an evening meeting with Prime Minister Ehud Barak.

"During his meetings with Israeli officials, Secretary Cook will discuss the peace process, bilateral ties and Israel-EU relations," an Israeli foreign ministry spokesman said.

Cook is expected to avoid any contentious areas following his ill-fated visit in March 1998, when he was snubbed by Israel's then right-wing premier Benjamin Netanyahu in a row over Jewish settlements.

He infuriated Netanyahu after he met with a senior Palestinian official at a controversial settlement known as Har Homa in disputed east Jerusalem, which was behind the collapse in peace talks between Israel and the Palestinians.

But relations have improved since the election of Barak, who stopped over in London soon after taking office in July for talks with British officials, including Prime Minister Tony Blair.

At the time, Blair hailed Barak's election as a "tremendous opportunity" for progress in Middle East peace efforts.

# US to upgrade air bases in Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 24: The United States and Kuwait will jointly upgrade the capacity of air bases in the emirate which neighbours Iraq to react quicker in any crisis, US Defence Secretary William Cohen confirmed Sunday, reports AFP.

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