

12 killed in violence in Ambon city

AFP, Jakarta

At least 12 people were reported killed Sunday after a gang raided two Christian villages south of Indonesia's strife-torn Ambon city in a pre-dawn attack.

One dead and nine injured were taken to the Bakti Rahayu private hospital in Ambon, a doctor there said.

"We have difficulties taking the injured and the dead from Soiwa, but reports we have received said that there have been at least 12 people killed there," the doctor, who gave his name as Ginting, told AFP.

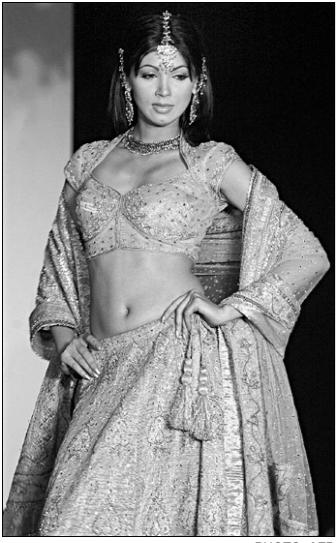


PHOTO: AFP

A model displays a bridal outfit from Ritu Kumar's "Summer '02" collection during a fashion show in Mumbai on Saturday. Kumar, a Delhi based designer, introduced her collection under the new brand "LABEL".

46 Maoists surrender in Andhra

AFP, Hyderabad

Forty-six Maoist guerrillas fighting in the southern Indian state of Andhra Pradesh surrendered Sunday, amid hopes of peace talks between the rebels and the local government, officials said.

"They surrendered before the Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu with large quantities of arms and ammunition," a state government spokesman said.

He said the rebels belonged to Jana Shakti, one of the most established Maoist outfits in the state, where three decades of caste-linked insurgency has left more than 10,000 people dead.

18 Maoists killed in Nepal

AFP, Kathmandu

At least 18 Maoist insurgents were killed in a clash in Khotang district, 150 km east of Nepal's capital, police said Sunday.

The deaths, which occurred Saturday afternoon, raise to 35 the total killed since Friday, according to official count.

"At least 18 Maoist terrorists were killed in a clash with security forces at Dorpa-dobela village in Khotang district, on Saturday afternoon," police said.

30 killed in road accident in S India

AFP, New Delhi

At least 30 people, including a newly-wed woman, were killed and 60 others injured in a road accident in the southern Indian state of Andhra Pradesh, it was reported Sunday.

The accident occurred when a truck carrying people from a wedding collided head-on with another truck in Andhra Pradesh's Adilabad district late Saturday, the Press Trust of India reported, quoting police sources.

The bride was killed and the groom sustained serious injuries, it said.

10 executed in China

AFP, Beijing

Ten criminals convicted of violent crimes have been executed in eastern China's Shandong province, including two men convicted of the slaughter of a family, state press said Sunday.

Li Jianguo and Zhang Chisen were executed for the axe-and-dagger murder of a family of five on November 11, 2000 in Shiliqian village near Zaozhuang city, the China News Service reported.

The two also stole from the home and raped one of the victims, the report said.

Eight other criminals, convicted of armed robbery and murder, were also executed following a sentencing rally in Zaozhuang, it said.

# Israel refuses to give nod to UN's Jenin mission

Al chief arrives in Jenin

AFP, Jerusalem

Israel will refuse to allow the UN mission investigating events in Jenin refugee camp to choose who it wants to interview as witnesses, Foreign Minister Shimon Peres announced Sunday.

"Israel cannot accept the demand by the United Nations mission to decide which military people it will question," Peres told Israeli military radio.

The foreign minister said this matter was currently the "main point of divergence" on the fact-finding mission, waiting in Geneva for the go-ahead Sunday from the weekly meeting of the Israeli cabinet.

He let it be understood that if this objection were overcome, Israel would not block the mission.

He said Israel had obtained the UN's agreement that members of the military would give evidence under cover of anonymity with a guarantee that they would not be pursued for "war crimes."

"Israel is not in the dock, but in the witness stand and should not give the impression of having anything to hide," he emphasised.

He confirmed that seven unarmed Palestinians and 45 armed Palestinians died in fighting in the Jenin refugee camp on the West Bank.

The Palestinians have accused Israel of committing "massacres" in

Jenin and spoken of "hundreds" of dead, while the Israelis have rejected the allegations and said there were at most "dozens" of dead Palestinians, pointing out that they themselves lost 23 soldiers.

Up to now some 50 bodies have been found in the rubble of the ruined camp.

Meanwhile, the secretary general of rights group Amnesty International arrived in Jenin on Sunday to visit the neighbouring refugee camp which was largely destroyed in an Israeli assault this month, a spokeswoman said.

Irene Kahn arrived in Israel late Saturday and headed for the camp with legal and military advisers on Sunday, a spokeswoman at the group's offices in Tel Aviv said.

Amnesty last week called for an international inquiry into possible "war crimes" in the battle for the camp, and urged Israel to drop its reservations and allow a UN fact-finding mission into the camp.

Israel rejects Palestinian accusations that it carried out a "massacre" of hundreds of civilians in Jenin, saying its troops killed dozens of die-hard Palestinian fighters in heavy combat.



PHOTO: AFP

A Muslim family stay in a relief camp in Ahmedabad on Saturday as nine more persons were killed and 25 others injured on Sunday in sectarian violence that has already claimed more than 900 lives and continued to rage in India's western state of Gujarat. Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee said rioters of the western state of Gujarat would not be spared and warned opposition parties against tarnishing the country's image abroad over the continuing bloodbath.

## Fresh rioting in Gujarat: 9 killed

AFP, Ahmedabad

In Surendranagar district, 100 km east of Ahmedabad, mobs torched more than 20 shops, houses and wayside stalls after a Hindu priest was run over and killed by a Muslim driver, police said.

Another man was stabbed to death and one was shot by police in Baroda district, 150 kilometres (93 miles) from Ahmedabad.

Police fired live rounds and lobbed more than 30 tear-gas shells in Baroda to disperse mobs that went on the rampage. About 25 people were injured.

Arson and stone-throwing were reported from Bharuch district, some 200 km south of Ahmedabad, the police spokesman added.

Hindu-Muslim violence in Gujarat erupted after an alleged Muslim mob on February 27 torched a train carrying Hindu activists, killing 58 people.

Police said Friday the death toll had reached 900. But Western diplomats and international human rights groups have put the toll much higher, at between 2,000 and 3,000.

Defence Minister George Fernandes, accompanied by Law Minister Arun Jaitley and Gujarat's Chief Minister Narendra Modi, began a peace march through Ahmedabad Sunday.

## Vajpayee govt braces for censure motion

AFP, New Delhi

allies might vote against it.

But, after the opposition stalled parliament for six days over the issue, deputy speaker P.M. Surya Deva ruled last week that the vote would take place.

The government will not be brought down if it loses the vote in parliament's lower house, but a loss will prove embarrassing and could expose fissures in the ruling coalition of two dozen parties.

Vajpayee's BJP also rules in Gujarat state, where the Hindu-Muslim riots have claimed 900 lives since February 27.

## 10 killed in Kashmir amid Indo-Pak exchange of fire

AFP, Srinagar

security forces were searching for three more militants believed to be part of the group.

An Indian army officer and two soldiers were injured in the fighting that raged in heavy rain.

Police said seven AK-56 rifles, five explosive devices, three boxes of AK ammunition and a set of "incriminating" documents were recovered from the scene of the encounter.

Security forces shot dead two more militants overnight in the southern district of Anantnag, after police sealed off the village of Khiram on a tip-off and launched house-to-house searches, police said.

The Indian army, backed by counter-insurgency troops, shot dead six separatist militants in two encounters overnight near the Line of Control (LoC), the de facto border that divides Kashmir between nuclear-armed enemies India and Pakistan, police said.

"The militants had entered into Poonch area from across the LoC," a police spokesman said, adding

## Russian politician Lebed killed in helicopter crash

AFP, Moscow

line near the region's Lake Olskoye in conditions of poor visibility.

Five other people were killed, while the remaining 10 on board sustained serious injuries and were being treated in a hospital at the nearby town of Abakan, ITAR-TASS reported.

Russian President Vladimir Putin and Prime Minister Mikhail Kasyanov immediately sent their condolences to Lebed's family and the relatives of the other victims, the NTV television channel said.

Putin also dispatched Russian Emergencies Minister Sergei Shoigu to the scene of the crash, near Abakan in Krasnoyarsk's Yermakovskoye district, to head a commission investigating the causes of the accident.

Early reports blamed bad weather for the crash of the helicopter, in which the head of the Yermakovskoye district administration Vasily Rogovoy was also travelling.

Lebed and his colleagues were flying to attend the opening ceremony of a new ski centre in Yermakovskoye at the time of the crash.

## Millions of landmines plague Kashmir

AFP, Srinagar

Pakistan or remain independent.

Security officials say the situation is not as bad as in Afghanistan where an estimated 10 million landmines are buried, but add the ordnance buried in Kashmir remains a heavy burden on Indian troops.

Security forces have recovered 5,175 anti-personnel mines, 500 anti-tank mines and 4,625 Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) from various hideouts since 1989.

A spokesman said Indian troops had recovered more than 1.3 million explosive devices since 1989.

According to police, Kashmir's dominant indigenous group, Hizbul Mujahideen, has been using landmines to target security convoys on the 300-kilometre (186 mile) main Kashmir highway that runs through the Himalayas and connects Kashmir to the outside world.

## US forces try to halt fierce fighting in E Afghanistan

AFP, Bagram Air Base

20 civilians. Karzai blamed the fighting on Khan and appointed Wardak, from northern Badakhshan province, as the new governor but Khan has never accepted the decision and has been mustering his forces ever since.

AIP said Sunday that Wardak had accused Khan of committing a major crime by launching an attack against forces of the local tribal council, giving him a 10-day ultimatum to begin negotiations or face a full counter-attack.

US sources told AFP that the reported casualty figures were roughly in line with its own intelligence reports.

The United States has a forward operating base in Gardez which is understood to include special forces and regular troops.

One US source told AFP that talks had taken place separately with Padsha Khan and Wardak.

Spokesman Major Bryan Hilferty confirmed that "we are in conversation with some of the leaders", without giving details.

"We are a little bit involved with the people there to try to calm down

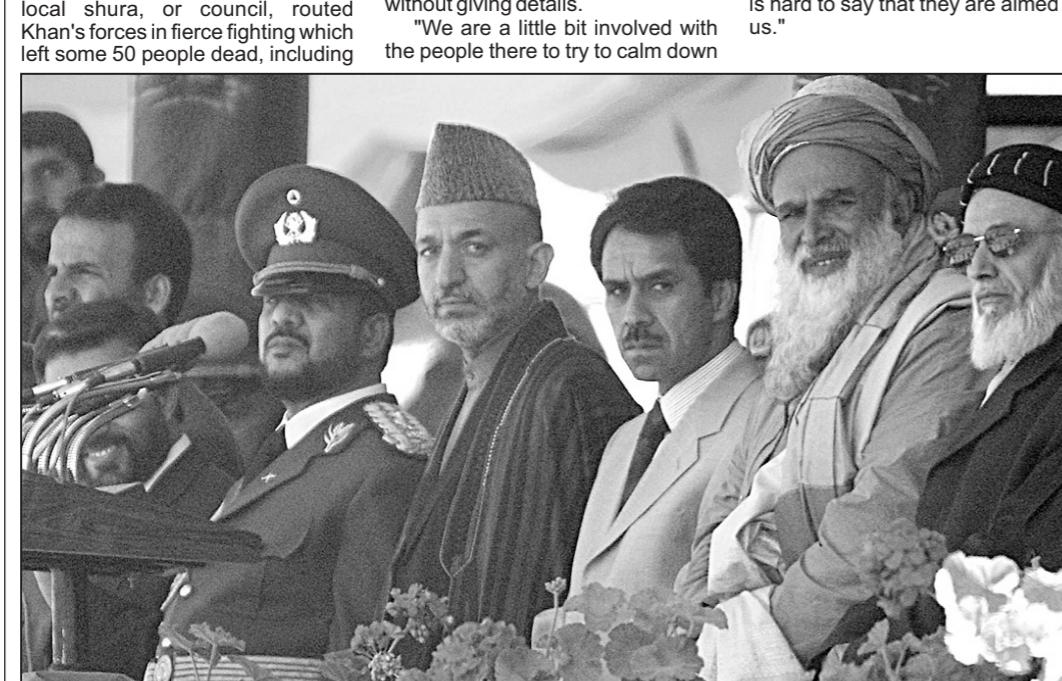


PHOTO: AFP

From left to right: Afghan Defence Minister Fahim Khan, Afghan interim leader Hamid Karzai, Wali Masood, brother of slain northern alliance leader Ahmed Shah Masood, Afghan warlord Abdulrab Rasul Sayaf, and former Afghan President Burhanuddin Rabbani, review Afghan troops during Mujahedin Victory Day in Kabul on Sunday. The military parade celebrated the Mujahedin's taking of Kabul in 1992, spelling the end of Najibullah's Communist-backed regime.