INTERNÂTIONAL

15 hurt in **Gujarat as** Hindus, Muslims clash

AFP. Ahmedabad

Police yesterday opened fire to break up Hindu-Muslim clashes that injured at least 15 people in the riot-torn Gujarat, officials said.

A police spokesman said Hindu and Muslim crowds came to blows after a dispute "over a small matter" in Bhavnagar district, some 300 kilometres north of the state's commercial capital Ahmedabad.

Between 15 and 20 people were injured in the clashes that broke out around 2:00pm, the spokesman

Police fired more than 25 rounds and several tear-gas shells to control the crowd, the spokesman said. It was not immediately clear how many more people were injured in the police action.

Police said they had brought the situation under control and did not impose a curfew.

The clashes came on the 133rd birthday of the Gujarat-born apostle of peace and communal harmony Mahatma Gandhi, who led the nonviolent movement that ended British colonial rule in 1947.

More than 1,000 people have died in Gandhi's home state since February 27, when riots erupted after a Muslim mob torched a train carrying Hindu activists, killing 58. Most victims of the riots have been

Fears of more bloodshed were sparked by a September 24 attack on a sprawling Hindu temple in the state capital Gandhinagar, in which 31 people, mostly devotees were killed by gunmen.

However, there was little immediate backlash after appeals for peace from state and nationa

Vatican paves wayfor sainthood of Mother Teresa

AFP, Vatican City

Vatican cardinals and bishops Tuesday formally recognised as authentic a miracle attributed to Mother Teresa of Calcutta, Vatican sources said, making it a formality that Pope John Paul II will grant her sainthood status.

The pontiff is expected to sign the decree recognising the miracle -- in which nuns from Mother Teresa's order were said to have cured a woman of abdominal pain by placing a medal on her stomach -- at a meeting of the Congregation for the Causes of the Saints in December, and announce a date for the beatification of the Albanian-born "Saint of the Gutters"

The beatification is likely to take place at the Vatican in the spring next year, making Mother Teresa's journey from death to sainthood the shortest in history.

She died in September 1997 aged 87 after a life of service to the poor and dving earned her global recognition, as well as the Nobel Peace

The miracle healing of an Indian woman's abdominal tumour which the influential Vatican Congregation recognised at a meeting on Tuesday is one of a number attributed to the intercession of Mother Teresa, who was born Agnes Gonxha Bojaxhiu in Skopje, now Macedonia, in 1910.

US envoy in Seoul talks ahead of North Korean mission

A top US envoy yesterday embarked on closed-door consultations with South Korean officials ahead of the resumption of high-level US-North Korean talks frozen for nearly two

James Kelly, the US assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific affairs, was ushered into consultations with South Korean Foreign Minister Choi Sung-Hong and other top officials following his arrival from Tokyo earlier

Wednesday. Kelly's three-day visit to the communist North from Thursday represents the highest level of sustained talks between Pyongyang and Washington since former secretary of state Madeleine Albright visited Pyongyang two years ago.



A woman stands before a fallen tree in Pinar Del Rio, 150 kilometres west of Havana, as Hurricane Lili dumped heavy rain on saturated ground, cutting across western Cuba on Tuesday.

Hurricane Lili sweeps across western Cuba

Launch of space shuttle Atlantis postponed

Dumping heavy rain on saturated ground, Hurricane Lili cut across land - with winds of up to 182 kilowestern Cuba Tuesday and gaining strength and sending oil companies scrambling to clear platforms as it whirled closer to the US Gulf Coast.

Upgraded to a Category Two storm on the Saffir-Simpson scale. Lili packed winds of more than 160 kilometres, as it left a narrow swath of destruction across Cuba's westernmost tip on a forward westnorthwesterly track at 30 kilometres an hour, the Cuban Weather Service said.

The service reported that Lili made landfall on Cabo Frances, in western Cuba, at 1540GMT. Cuban officials evacuated thousands of residents and farm animals in the area - swamped by Hurricane Isidore just last week - to higher ground

"Additional strengthening is forecast as the centre moves into the Gulf of Mexico," the US National Weather service warned from

"Rainfall accumulations of 20-30 centimetres (8-12 inches) with isolated higher amounts are likely near the path of Lili. These rains could cause life-threatening flash flooding and mud slides in mountainous areas," such as those in western Cuba and Mexico, the US

Earlier Lili ripped across the Isle of Youth - an island in the Cuban archipelago southwest of the mainmetres (113 miles) an hour, accord-Rubiera

Some 6,000 people were evacuated from the Isle of Youth, which has a population of around 80,000

Whole neighborhoods of the island city of Nueva Gerona were flooded: roofs were torn off homes. sent flying by violent wind austs: power and phone lines were toppled

'This hurricane had the strongest winds we have felt on the Isle of Youth in 40 years." said town civil defence chief Ricardo Garcia, who said damage was "considerable" but that there were no known inju-

In Havana, home to 2.2 million Cubans and located 200 kilometres east of Cabo Frances, intermittent heavy showers and winds of up to 50 kilometres rattled the old housing stock, much of it in disrepair.

In Santiago, Cuba's second city on its eastern tip hit hard Monday by Lili, civil defence officials said 130 homes were damaged and 20 were total losses. They also reported damage to coffee crops in the area.

Hurricane Isidore ripped through the Caribbean just ten days ago, flooding coastal towns and seriously damaging citrus crops.

At 2100GMT, a hurricane watch was put in effect along the northern

US Gulf Coast from San Luis Pass, Texas, to the mouth of the Mississippi River. A hurricane watch means hurricane conditions are possible in the watch area within 36

Meanwhile the threat posed by Hurricane Lili prompted NASA to postpone until Thursday at the earliest the launch of the space shuttle Atlantis.

Atlantis' launch would have been the first since space shuttle flights were suspended in July after cracks were discovered in the propulsion

systems of all four shuttles. And Brent crude ticked higher in midday trading in London as investors continued to watch for progress in talks between Iraqi officials and UN arms inspectors in Vienna, and the progress of Hurricane Lili,

dealers said "I think people are watching the weather in the US closely. We'll have to see if the disruption caused by Isidore last week will show up in the APIs," he said, referring to weekly data due for release late Tuesday by the American Petroleum Institute

The figures are expected to show a drop of 6 million to 10 million barrels after Isidore caused disruption to facilities in the Gulf of Mexico last week, analysts said.

The Mexican government meanwhile ordered all ports in the south eastern Mexican state of Yucatan to close in an attempt to minimise hurricane damage

Weapons inspectors may go back to Iraq by mid-Oct

UN may lose authority if it fails to rein Saddam in, Blair warns

The United Nations and Iraqi officials struck a deal Tuesday on new weapons inspections, but the United States said no inspectors should go to Iraq until the UN sets out new conditions.

The United States and Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein also stepped up their sparring. The White House said it would not object if Saddam was shot or driven out of power by his own people. Saddam said US leaders should consider why they are so hated around the world.

Meanwhile, British Prime Minister Tony Blair warned that the authority of the United Nations could be destroyed if it proves incapable of forcing Iraqi President Saddam Hussein to abandon weapons of mass destruction.

Chief UN inspector Hans Blix said after two days of talks in Vienna that the inspectors would have access to all sites in Iraq, but there were restric-

tions on entering eight "presidential sites". Iraqi delegation chief Amir El-Sadi said he expected UN weapons inspectors in Baghdad within two weeks.

Blix is to report on the talks to the UN Security Council Thursday in New York and said he hoped inspectors would arrive "about the middle of

International inspectors were withdrawn from Iraq in 1998 just ahead of US and British air strikes on suspected Iraqi weapons targets And the United States reacted to the accord by again calling for a tough UN resolution against Iraq. Washington said it would oppose visits by

inspectors until a resolution set out the conditions. A US State Department official in Washington said "we will move into thwart mode" if inspectors moved to return without a new resolution

US Secretary of State Colin Powell said Washington would continue to press the UN Security Council to pass a new text.

Powell said the security council should give Blix's team "the most rigid procedures, the highest standards for Iraq to meet in order to satisfy the nternational community that they do not have, are not developing weapons

of mass destruction and that which they do have can be destroyed.

The five permanent members of the UN Security Council - Britain, China France, Russia and the United States - held private talks on a new resolution New York. But Russian diplomats said no agreement was reached.

France and Russia have rejected the idea that the council should decide on the automatic use of military might if Iraq fails to comply with UN condi-

tions. China has said a strike would have "incalculable consequences." An Iraqi government spokesman in Baghdad reaffirmed that his govern

ment would reject any conditions in a new resolution. But US President George W. Bush insisted: "The final bottom line has got to be a very strong resolution so that we don't fall into the same trap we have

done for the last 11 years, which is nothing happens." British Prime Minister Tony Blair said the authority of the United Nations would be at stake if Saddam does not comply with UN orders. "Sometimes

and in particular when dealing with a dictator, the only chance of peace is a readiness for war," Blair told the conference of his Labour Party. Iraq, meanwhile, stepped up warnings to its neighbours. On a visit to Ankara, Deputy Prime Minister Tareq Aziz warned that Iraq

would no longer consider Turkey a friendly neighbour if US warplanes were allowed to use its air bases for anti-Iraq operations. Turkey, a very reluctant ally for Washington, fears that a war in Iraq could

exacerbate its own economic woes and destabilize the Turkish-Iraqi border populated on both sides by Kurds. Irag is also making life difficult for the Ukrainian authorities

US experts were invited to Kiev to investigate alleged Ukrainian radar sales to Iraq, the Ukrainian defence ministry said after US assistant secre tary of state for European and Eurasian affairs Elizabeth Jones met Defence Minister Volodymyr Shkidchenko.

The US State Department has said it has evidence that President Leonid Kuchma had approved the sale of a Kolchuga early warning radar system to Irag in violation of UN sanctions

War with Pakistan, if all options fail to contain militant flow: Indian FM

India would wage a war with rival Pakistan if it exhausts all other options to stem "cross-border terrorism" from Islamabad, Foreign Minister Yashwant Sinha said

"War is the last option after we exercise and exhaust all other diplomatic options" to stem militant flow from Pakistan into India, Sinha said in Ranchi, capital of the eastern Indian state of Jharkhand. "Diplomatically, we have man-

aged to corner Pakistan in the international arena and further steps are proposed to expose the latter for fanning cross-border terrorism in India," the foreign minister told reporters.

Sinha said there was no need for India to provide any further proof to the international community on the alleged existence of militant training camps in the Pakistan zone of divided Kashmir.

Israeli jets

"Undoubtedly the terrorist camps are there and it is good that the world community has (already) realised it. We have convinced the world players and even people here have now realised that," Sinha said.

Five soldiers were killed Wednesday in a landmine blast in Kashmir and a bus was blown up on Wednesday, a day after a third round of voting for the state's "We will beat terrorism with the

support of the people like we did in Punjab," he said in reference to a bloody drive for a Sikh homeland that left 25,000 people dead from 1983 to 1992 in the northern state adjoining Indian Kashmir

India has accused Pakistan of sponsoring militants in Kashmir, but Pakistan says it provides only moral and diplomatic support to the "indigenous struggle" in Muslim-majority armed neighbours and claimed in

but also from the whole of the city.

Sinha called the voter turnout in the ongoing elections in Kashmii was a "very positive sign."

"People are against terrorism Even Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee has said that terrorism is in its last stage," the foreign minister India's Election Commission has

placed the turnout in the third round of voting at 41 percent. Around 600 people have died in poll-related violence in Kashmir since the ballot ing was announced on August 2. Pakistan has declared the

Kashmir elections a "sham" and no substitute for a plebiscite in which Kashmiris would decide the disputed territory's fate. Sinha's warning came a day after

India's Deputy Prime Minister Lal Krishna Advani launched a scathing attack on rival Pakistan, saying the country was "the epicentre of terror-

Extremists kill 13 in Algeria

AFP, Algiers

a group of armed Islamic extremists in Algeria's Ain Defla province, 160 kilometres west of the capital Algiers, security forces said yester-They said the attack took place

Thirteen people have been killed by

Tuesday evening in the town of Oeud Chorfa. In a separate attack in the town of

Douar Djebailia, allegedly carried out by the same group, a child was wounded and a woman kidnapped the security forces said. A search has been mounted to

find the assailants, they said.

Members of the hardline Armed Islamic Group (GIA) have been regularly accused by the government of carrying out killings in provinces to the west of the capital.

Seven people were killed last week in an attack, also blamed on the GIA, in the town of Ammi Moussa, in Relizane province. 300 kilometres west of Algiers, according to officials.

Court adjourns Benazir case against polls restrictions

AFP. Karachi

A Pakistani court yesterday postponed until after next week's elections the hearing of a petition against a law that bars former premier Benazir Bhutto from contesting the polls Bhutto's lawyers told a five-

member bench of Sindh provincia high court at the request of the former premier that certain matters relevant to the case were pending before the Supreme Court and they needed time to study them. "We sought adjournment as

other matters related to elections are pending before the Supreme Court. The government lawyers raised no objection. It has been put off till November 12," Bhutto's lawyer Farooq Naik said. Naik conceded that Bhutto was

now effectively out of the electoral "She is practically out of the

election process, but she can always come back.'

Bhutto, who has been living in self-exile in London and Dubai since

1998, was disqualified under a law which President Pervez Musharraf enacted in August this year as part of his controversial constitutiona amendments

It bars "absconders" -- people who fail to appear in court cases from standing.

In the last hearing Bhutto's lawyers had argued that the law was biased and politically motivated and that Musharraf, who seized control of the country in an October 1999 coup, had no power to introduce it.

rejected Bhutto's application to contest three seats because she had been convicted of absconding twice this year. The two-time former premier who is facing several corruption

Election authorities last month

charges, left the country shortly before her conviction in a graft case

Russia to mop up Chechen rebels by weekend

Russian military commanders hope to complete an operation to round up Chechen rebels who crossed from Georgia into the southern republic of Ingushetia by the end of the week, military officials said vesterday.

"We have divided the area where rebels are located into sectors and are combing and shelling this area," a military spokesman at Russia's 58th army headquarters in Vladikavkaz, North Ossetia, was quoted as saying by the nterfax news agency. Russian troops have been battling Chechen rebels in the border region

between Ingushetia and Chechnya since last Thursday. Moscow says the rebels, numbering around 200, crossed into Russian erritory from northern Georgia and that survivors of the fighting had broken up into small groups and were now trying to break through Russian lines into

Chechen-Ingush border, and was believed to be wounded. They dismissed a report that Gelayev had crossed into the Komsomolsk

Officials quoted by the ITAR-TASS news agency said the rebel leader

Ruslan Gelayev was pinned down near the village of Galashki, on the

Milosevic, Mesic cross swords at war crime tribunal

AFP, The Hague

Slobodan Milosevic and Croatian President Stipe Mesic crossed swords in court yesterday as the former Yugoslav leader crossexamined his bitter adversary at his war crimes trial.

On several occasions, presiding Judge Richard May had to intervene to bring Milosevic back to the point as he read out statements designed, on his own admission, to undermine Mesic's credibility as a

A discussion over who was responsible for the break-up of the former Yugoslavia became heated and both men raised their voices. both agreeing that the perpetrators of crimes committed in the republics should be brought to justice.

Arafat calls for full violate Beirut Israeli pullback airspace again

Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat yesterday called for a full withdrawal of the

Israeli army not only from the vicinity of his battered compound in Ramallah

Pointing at Israeli army posts set up after the end of the 10-day siege

lifted by Israel on Sunday, which overlook his base from a distance of several

decorating one side of Arafat's offices with a large painting of a phoenix

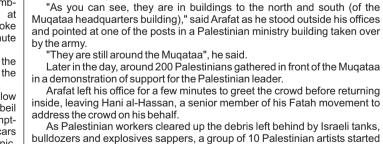
hundred metres, he said: "Israel must withdraw from all of Ramallah."

Israeli warplanes broke the sound barrier Tuesday over Beirut and other major cities in Lebanon, causing panic among citizens, police and AFP correspondents said.

In the largest such show of force for several months, the fighter bombers made supersonic booms at 2:25pm over the capital and broke the sound barrier again one minute later, they said.

Similar booms were heard in the northern port city of Tripoli and the eastern city of Baalbek, they said.

The warplanes zoomed at low altitude over villages in the Bint Jbeil area of southern Lebanon, prompting worried drivers to stop their cars and pull them off roadsides in panic, said AFP correspondents.





A fire burns a shack at Sao Paulo's largest slum "Vila Prudente" on Tuesday. Authorities have not released any information on victims or the cause of the fire, saying only some residents were injured.