

Violence kills 15 as home minister visits Kashmir

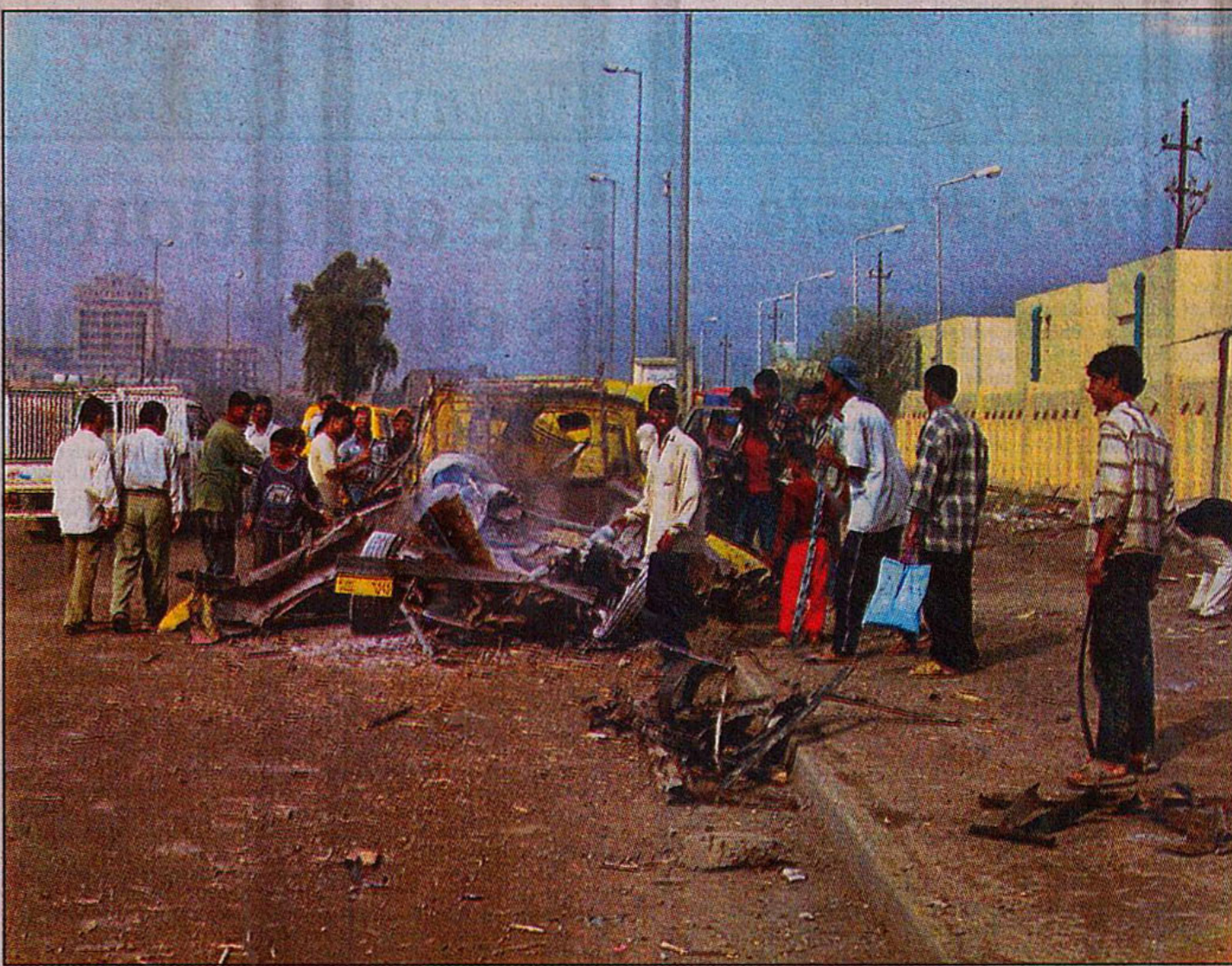
India's home minister made his first visit to insurgency-hit Indian Kashmir yesterday as 15 people died in the latest violence. Shivraj Patil, installed after the Congress-led alliance's victory in April-May national elections, insisted security had improved in the region where tens of thousands have died in a 15-year rebellion against Indian rule.

"If they (separatists) inquire... through proper methods, we will look into it. There should not be any problem." The head of the moderate faction of region's main separatist alliance, Mirwaiz Omar Farooq has ruled out talks until separatists are allowed to visit Pakistan. Farooq's faction held two rounds of talks with former Indian deputy prime minister Lal Krishna Advani earlier this year.

wounded, one of whom died later, the official said. Indian troops, meanwhile, shot dead five militants in the Mendhar sector of southern Poonch district after they sneaked into Indian Kashmir from the Pakistani zone of the divided state, a defence spokesman said. Three more rebels were shot dead in northern Uri sector after they infiltrated into Indian Kashmir, police said, adding that two other militants died in a fierce firefight in neighbouring Baramulla district early Saturday.

US State Dept counter-terrorism chief resigns

President Bush's point man for international terrorism policy has quit several months after botching a major report, the most well-known figure known to have resigned since Bush's re-election. Cofer Black, the State Department's coordinator for counter-terrorism, caused an embarrassment this year when the administration had to revise a faulty report he oversaw that had been used to argue Bush was winning the war on terrorism. The report grossly underestimated the number of people who died from international terrorism last year and more than doubled its count of those killed and injured after members of Congress and academics complained of the mistakes.



Iraqis look at a destroyed truck which was used as a launching pad for several mortar attacks that hit the building of the Interior ministry in Baghdad on Thursday. A man and a woman, both employees at the ministry, were wounded when one round hit the ministry and the other exploded in the street in front of the building.



Two anti-Zionist Orthodox rabbis, Moishe Beck (L) and David Weis, pay respect in front of portraits of Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat in front of Percy military hospital in the Paris southwestern suburb of Clamart Friday. Both came from New York Friday to support 75-year-old Palestinian leader who is "between life and death" and in a "reversible coma" according to Palestinian delegate to France Leila Shahid.

Vigil for Arafat goes on

Some 20 pro-Palestinians continued a vigil early yesterday outside a hospital here after doctors tending Yasser Arafat said his condition had not changed but refused to respond to unconfirmed reports that the 75-year-old leader was brain dead and on life support. Several dozen pro-Palestinian sympathisers had gathered outside the military clinic in the south Paris suburbs Friday, hanging a Palestinian flag on a wall, lighting candles around portraits of Arafat and placing bouquets of flowers by a picture of the Jerusalem Mosque, the third most holy shrine of Islam.

PREPARATION FOR POST-ARAFAT ERA Qorei meets factions to prevent chaos

Prime minister Ahmed Qorei met in Gaza City yesterday with leaders of the main Palestinian armed factions and security officials in a bid to prevent any outbreak of violence after the death of Yasser Arafat. The meeting brought together Qorei, Hamas, Islamic Jihad, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and Fatah, as well as foreign minister Nabil Shaath and parliament speaker Rawhi Fattuh. While Arafat fights for his life at a French military hospital, officials from his Palestinian Authority and rival factions have appealed for unity and calm.

"This joint meeting is very important. It is a very sensitive time... We will ask the leaders of the security services to do everything to protect the Palestinian people and the Palestinian areas," said Hamas spokesman Sarihi Abu Zuhri. Khalid el-Batsh, a leader of Islamic Jihad, also called on Qorei and the security services to "protect security and put an end to all differences." "We will ask Qorei and brother Abu Mazen (Mahmud Abbas) to face this crisis by ensuring that the Palestinian leadership is united," he said. On Friday, representatives of the armed factions agreed on the need to prevent political rivalries giving way to violence.

Bush calls for unity at home and abroad

US President George W. Bush called yesterday for joint efforts at home and abroad to achieve his second term goals and continue the war on terror. "Now the election is behind us, and our country is ready to move forward," Bush said in his weekly radio address, the first since he won a second term in office after a bitterly fought and divisive campaign. "I am honored by the support of my fellow citizens. I commend Senator John Kerry for a spirited campaign," he said of his defeated rival, the Democratic senator from Massachusetts. "Bush broadly outlined goals for his second term including reform of the US tax code, education and retirement benefits.

Cop swindles \$2000 from Jyoti Basu's account

A policeman guarding veteran Indian communist leader Jyoti Basu stole more than 2,000 dollars from his account after discovering his ATM pin number, police said yesterday. The police guard, working with two state employees, withdrew about 100,000 rupees (2,100 dollars) before being caught, West Bengal inspector general of police Chanayan Mukherjee said. Basu, 91, who was West Bengal's chief minister for 22 years before fragile health forced him to step down in 2000, was shocked to find during a recent visit to the bank he had only 57 rupees left in his account. The discovery sparked a police investigation, which tracked down the culprits by running through bank security camera recordings.

UN body asks US to spell out legal status of Afghan, Iraqi inmates

A United Nations human rights body said on Friday it had asked the United States to spell out the legal status and treatment of people it is detaining in Afghanistan, Guantanamo Bay and Iraq by the end of the year. The UN Committee on Civil and Political Rights, which monitors compliance with a 1976 treaty guaranteeing basic freedoms, said Washington was already six years late in filing a regular report on its adherence. "If a full report can't be done by the end of the year at least they should address... problems of legal status and treatment of persons detained in Afghanistan, Guantanamo Bay, Iraq and other places of detention outside the United States," Sir Nigel Rodley, a British expert on the committee, told a news briefing. "US forces are holding hundreds of terror suspects in Afghanistan, the US naval base in Guantanamo, Cuba and Iraq, most without charge or legal representation, activists say. Photographs of US soldiers abusing Iraqi detainees at Abu Ghraib prison near Baghdad sparked world outrage in May. Pentagon investigations have led to three convictions so far. The committee, which has no powers of sanction, received the last US report in 1994. Reports are generally due every four years on the right to life, self-determination and due process, and freedom of movement, expression and religion in a country.

RIGHTS GROUP SAYS US Guantanamo tribunal lacks basic law

A human rights group said Friday a military tribunal at a US base in Guantanamo lack legal training and said "real judges" should hear detainees' cases. "It's astonishing that the United States would try a case of historic importance with officials who are struggling to grasp basic legal concepts," said James Ross, senior legal advisor for Human Rights Watch, who observed the hearings. "Real courts with real judges should be trying these complex cases, not tribunals started from scratch." About 540 detainees have been held for two and a half years at a US navy base in Guantanamo, Cuba.

China opposes sending Iran's nuke case to UN

Li refused to speculate on whether China would use its veto in the Security Council in the event of Iran's case being sent there. He did say he had told US Secretary of State Colin Powell and British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw "that China supports a solution in framework of the IAEA". The United States accuses Iran of secretly trying to develop nuclear weapons under cover of its civilian atomic energy program and wants the UN watchdog International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to take Iran before the UN Security Council when the IAEA meets in Vienna on November 25. Tehran denies that charge, insisting it only wants to generate electricity. Russia, another permanent and veto-wielding Security Council member, has also voiced its strong opposition to Iran's case being referred there by the IAEA. The country is helping Iran build its first nuclear power plant in a deal worth some 800 million dollars. Li's comments add yet another layer of diplomatic difficulty for the European Union, which is trying avert the matter being sent to the Security Council by getting Iran to suspend uranium enrichment. The sensitive part of the fuel cycle makes fuel for civilian reactors but which can also be used to manufacture the material for the explosive core of atomic weapons. Tehran has until now resisted Europe's demand for an indefinite suspension, arguing that it would infringe its right to maintain a civilian nuclear power programme.

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President of India's ruling Congress Party Sonia Gandhi (C) walks along with local party leaders as Indian security men surround them, upon her arrival in Kolkata yesterday. Sonia Gandhi arrived in the West Bengal capital for a day-long private visit.

Ref. No. 22.02/HSFO-1/2004 Dated: 03-11-2004 International Re-Tender Notice for Supply of High Sulphur Furnace Oil. 1. a) Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC) hereby invites offers from reputed suppliers for supply of High Sulphur Furnace Oil in accordance with the terms & conditions set out hereinafter. Product: HSFO 180 CST, Quantity in MT: 20,000 +/- 5%, C&F delivery at Ctg. 25-26 December, 2004. b) The supply of product is to be made in one shipment. 2. Intending bidders and/or their local agents may collect tender documents on payment of Taka 600 or US\$ 10 per set on all working days during office hours from (a) the Commercial & Operations Division of the Corporation at its Head Office, BSC Bhaban, 1st Floor, Saltgola Road, Chittagong, (b) BPC, Dhaka Liaison Office, 1 Pioneer Road, Kakrail, Dhaka and (c) Bangladesh Missions in India, Pakistan, Singapore, Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, South Korea, Iran, Abu Dhabi, Kuwait, Qatar, KSA, UK and USA. No tender document will be available on the tender opening date. 3. Offers will be received up to 1200 hours (BST) on 24 November, 2004 and opened at 1205 hours BST on the same day at the Corporation's Head Office at Chittagong in presence of the bidders or their authorised agents who would wish to be present. 4. Offers must be valid up to 1800 hrs BST on 13 December, 2004. 5. All offers must be accompanied by a bid bond in the form set out in the tender document for Taka 10 lac or equivalent US dollar and must have validity of 30 days from the date of opening of tender. Offers without bid bond or with a bid bond in a format not consistent with tender document shall not be accepted. 6. Other terms and conditions will be as per BPC's tender document for supply of High Sulphur Furnace Oil (Ref. No: 22.02/HSFO/2004 dated 03/11/04). Successful bidder shall submit within 7 days of issuance of letter of acceptance, a performance guarantee in the form set out in the tender document for an amount as mentioned in the tender document with validity up to 31 March, 2005. 7. No right of any kind shall be created in favour of any person or persons by virtue of having obtained the tender document nor shall any right be created in favour of any person by virtue of submitting an offer. The corporation reserves the right to accept or reject any or all offers in part or in full without assigning any reason. Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation BSC Bhaban, Saltgola Road, Chittagong GD-681