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.

"Here the (security) situation seems to be improving," said Patil, who was helicoptered to the gover-nor's house while troops flooded the streets of the state's summer

capital.
"We will have to work towards creating harmony and improve economic conditions," he added.

The home minister, accompanied by Parliamentary Affairs Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad -himself a Kashmiri -- said there was nothing to stop separatists travelling to Pakistan, and also that India was willing to talk to all separatists opposed to Indian rule.

There are no restrictions of any kind on anyone wanting to travel (to Pakistan)," Patil said.

through proper methods, we will look into it. There should not be any

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

"We have decided not to hold any further talks with the centre," Farooq told reporters late Friday.

"We should be allowed to visit Pakistan first to hold talks with the Pakistani leadership," he said.

Only Farooq has a passport; other separatists have either been denied travel documents or have had them impounded by the Indian

Ahead of Patil's arrival, militants attacked a paramilitary camp in the northern town of Sopore, 50km north of Srinagar, hurling grenades and firing at random, a Border Security Force (BSF) official said.

Border guards returned fire, killing one of the militants. Five border security guards were also counter-terrorism chief resigns REUTERS, Washington

US State Dept

wounded, one of whom died later,

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 spokes-

dead in northern Uri sector after

they infiltrated into Indian Kashmir,

police said, adding that two other

militants died in a fierce gunfight in

neighbouring Baramulla district

killed and a civilian injured in a

grenade attack by rebels as the

minister was in a meeting with state legislators just eight kilometers (five

rebels shot dead a police informer.

In northern Kupwara suspected

Security for Patil's visit was

On Sunday the minister will visit

Thousands of people have

died in Kashmir since the erup-

tion of insurgency against Indian

tightened further after the Sopore

miles) away, police said.

Jammu, the winter capital.

attack, policesaid.

In Srinagar, two soldiers were

Three more rebels were shot

Indian troops, meanwhile, shot

the official said.

man said.

early Saturday.

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 counterterrorism, 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 terror-

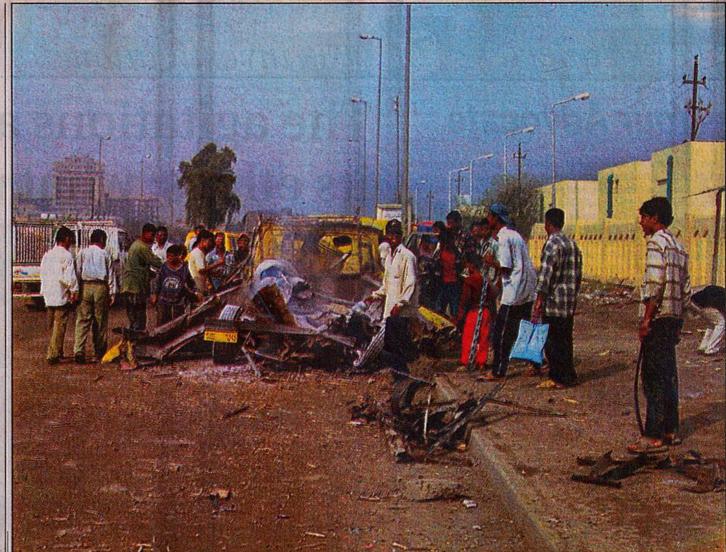
The report grossly underesti-mated the number of people who died from international terrorism last year and more than doubled its count of those killed and injured after members of Congress and academics complained of the mistakes.

Black, a former CIA career official and covert operative, told his bosses of his decision well before the election, which Bush won campaigning as a strong leader in the war on terror, State Department spokes-man Adam Ereli said on Friday.

"He informed the State Department a few weeks ago that the transition period after the election would be the right time for him to explore new professional opportunities," said Ereli.

The resignation was part of an expected flurry of changes for senior officials as Bush's war team could be overhauled for his second term.

Black, who held the counterterrorism post for two years, helped carry out Bush's hard-line policy and was a public face of the war the president declared on terrorism after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks.



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

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 Preparation for Post-Arafat Era

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 75year-old leader was brain dead and

onlife 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. Just a few remained in the wee

small hours, after a group of French pro-Palestinian associations issued a call of sympathy and solidarity for a rally outside the hospital on Saturday.

Arafat's state of health "has not deteriorated," said General Christian Estripeau, spokesman for France's military medical service. Estripeau told journalists

Arafat's condition "is considered stable since the last health update" given 24 hours earlier on

Thursday. Faruq Qaddumi, political chief of

the Palestine Liberaton Organ: isation (PLO), issued a statement · saying only the medical team would be authorised to issue medical

He told journalists at the hospital it had been agreed that the supervising medical team "would be the only entity authorized to issue such

"No other entity whatsoever has been authorized to give any infor-mation regarding President Arafat's health condition," he stressed, noting "contradictory declarations issued by various individuals and bodies whether close or far in regard : after the death of Yasser Arafat. to President Yasser Arafat's health condition."

The guideline followed more than 24 hours of contradiction and :

French medical sources told AFP Thursday Arafat was brain dead but being kept alive on life support machines.

Palestinian officials on Friday acknowledged -- after initially denying -- that Arafat was in a coma, but denied that he was being kept in

up" or "not wake up".

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

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.

Under the Palestinian Basic Law, Fattuh would replace Arafat for 60 Shahid, told French radio he was in a . Authority president die or become coma from which "he could wake : incapacitated, at which time elecitions would have to be held.

"This joint meeting is very nportant. 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 Sami Abu Zuhrim Khalid el-Batsh, a leader of Islamic Jihad, also called on Oore and the security services to "protect security and put an end to all differ-

"We will ask Qorei and brother Abu Mazen (Mahmud Abbas) to face this crisis by ensuring that the Palestinian leadership is united," he

On Friday, representatives of the armed factions agreed on the need to prevent political rivalries giving way to violence.

Fears of unrest in Gaza are particularly acute as clashes between armed factions and the security

of occasions in recent months. "All parties are determined to live

in peace during the period following president Arafat's expected death, a high-level Palestinian security official told AFP, noting the "high degree of cooperation" between security services and the factions.

In Lebanon, Shiite militant group Hezbollah called on Palestinians to unite ahead of Arafat's looming death, saying Israel is counting on discord in their ranks.

"Palestinians in general and Palestinian groups in particular are called upon to unite and cooperate with each other to get through this tough and crucial period," its leader, Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah, was quoted as saying by the local

While there has been no official word, Qorei's talks in Gaza are also likely to touch on the issue of where forces have broken out on a number Arafat should be buried.

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

"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.

to the United Nations Security

Cop swindles \$2000 from Jyoti Basu's account "Reaching these goals will require the broad support of AFP, Kolkata

Americans. To make this nation A policeman guarding veteran Indian communist leader Jyoti Basu stole more than 2,000 dollars from his stronger and better, I will need the support of Republicans and Democrats and independents, and I account after discovering his ATM will work to earn it," he said. pin number, police said yesterday. "Our nation is fighting a continu-

The police guard, working with ing war on terror, and every two state employees, withdrew American has a stake in the outabout 100,000 rupees (2,100 dollars) come. Republicans and Democrats before being caught, West Bengal and independents love our country, inspector general of police Chanayan Mukherjeesaid. and together, we will protect the American people. We will persevere

Basu, 91, who was West Bengal's until the enemy is defeated and our chief minister for 22 years before nation is safe from danger," he said. fragile health forced him to step "Every civilized country also has down in 2000, was shocked to find a stake in the outcome of this war. during a recent visit to the bank he Whatever our past disagreements, had only 57 rupees left in his account. we share a common enemy and

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

REUTERS, Geneva

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

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

"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.

'JS 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

AFP, Washington

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, Ref. No. 22.02/HSFO-1/2004

Dated: 03-11-2004

International Re-Tender Notice for Supply of High Sulphur Furnace Oil

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

C&F delivery at Ctg. Quantity in MT at 25-26 December, HSF0 180 CS buyer's option

b) The supply of product is to be made in one shipment. 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

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.

Offers must be valid up to 1800 hrs BST on 13 December,

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

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.

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.



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-



Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation

BSC Bhaban, Saltgola Road, Chittagong

China opposes sending Iran's nuke case to U Li refused to speculate on member, has also voiced its strong whether China would use its veto in opposition to Iran's case being opposition to Iran's case being the Security Council in the event of Iran was given crucial backing from China yesterday in its stand-off with Iran's case being sent there. He did country is helping Iran build its first the UN's nuclear watchdog, with say he had told US Secretary of State Beijing saying it opposed US efforts to have the Islamic republic referred Colin Powell and British Foreign

Secretary Jack Straw "that China

supports a solution in framework of

common duties to confront disease

and hunger and poverty in troubled regions of our world," he added.

The United States accuses Iran of "There is no reason to send the issue to the Security Council," Chinese Foreign Minister Li 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 Zhaoxing said in a press conference with his Iranian counterpart, Kamal "It would only make the issue Council when the IAEA meets in

more complicated and difficult to work out," Li said, contradicting Washington by saying "the Iranian Tehran denies that charge, insistgovernment is having a very positive ing it only wants to generate elecattitude in its cooperation" with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

Russia, another permanent and veto-wielding Security Council

referred there by the IAEA. The 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 manu-

facture 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.