

Nine arrested over Shanwei riots

Alleged instigators of protest that was crushed by police among those held

Minnie Chan

At least nine villagers from Dongzhou village, Shanwei (汕尾), are believed to have been arrested for their part in riots last Tuesday in which police opened fire and killed at least three protesters, according to local television reports and villagers.

The arrested villagers were all in their 30s and 40s and included the three alleged instigators – Huang Xijun (黃希俊), Huang Xirang (黃希讓) and Lin Hanru (林漢儒) – who were described as “wanted criminals” by police.

Five others were identified as Huang Xiping (黃希平), Huang Xiran (黃希然), Chen Jinsong (陳金松), Zhang Jinwang (張金旺) and Zhuo Nianfu. Villagers were yesterday unable to confirm the identity of the ninth person arrested.

Villagers said the announcement was broadcast on television, but did not show the faces of the nine.

“In the past, they would show the faces of arrested suspects to show what a good job the police were doing in arresting criminals,” one villager said. “This time, they did not.”

Other villagers said police had stepped up their search for demonstrators who joined last Tuesday’s riots by posting photographs of protesters on the street. They claimed more than 100 photographs had been posted by police.

“We have lived in fear since the bloody crackdown,” one villager said. “Tension has increased every day since the People’s Armed Police came.

“Local government officials and police are looking for suspected protesters door-to-door. But I am not sure if they have arrested anyone because all those who took part in the protests have fled or are hiding elsewhere.”

A report by Guangdong provincial newspapers on Sunday said a commanding officer had been detained for mishandling the riots, re-



Clockwise from left: Relatives of victim Wei Jin join his grieving wife (on the ground at right) on the streets of Dongzhou; victims’ family members burn offerings; a banner erected at the Dongzhou Village Committee building reads ‘Stirring up trouble can never be supported by the people’; police check the identities of people going towards Dongzhou. Photos: Minnie Chan, AP



sulting in “deaths and injuries by accident”.

The Hong Kong-based pro-Beijing *Ta Kung Pao* confirmed a report by the *South China Morning Post* that the commanding officer was a vice-director of the Shanwei Public Security Bureau and identified him by his family name, Wu.

Yesterday marked the seventh day since the shooting of the villagers. Following Chinese tradition, family members prayed for the spirits of the dead, expecting them to return home to visit the family for the last time.

Near the clash site yesterday, family members continued to gath-

er to mourn for the dead. They burned incense sticks and prayed.

Relatives of one of the victims, Wei Jin (魏錦), said they would not agree to the compensation offered by the government, and could not accept the terms offered for the return of his body.

They said Shanwei deputy party

secretary Wu Gongqiang had told them on Sunday that they would be paid 50,000 yuan compensation and be given Wei’s body on the condition that they buried him immediately under the supervision of the authorities.

“They must have tampered with the body,” one relative said. “How

would we know for sure that it was Wei Jin? If the body had been tampered with and the evidence [of shooting] destroyed, what’s the point of having the body?”

The family said Mr Wu was “very angry” when his offer was rejected. “He was shouting and banging his fist on the wall,” the relative said.

Intellectuals register their opposition in open letter

Josephine Ma in Beijing

More than 50 mainland scholars, writers and activists have signed an open letter condemning the deadly attacks on farmers in Dongzhou village.

The signatories included many prominent scholars, internet writers and dissidents such as Bao Zunxin (包遵信), Liu Xiaobo (劉曉波), Yu Jie (余杰), Wang Yi (王怡), Zhao Dagong (趙達功) and Zhang Zuhua (張祖桦).

Ding Zilin (丁子霖), leader of the Tiananmen Mothers group who lost her son in the 1989 military crackdown, and Aids activist Wan Yanhai (萬延海) were also among the signatories who registered their anger about the violence in the Guangdong village.

“We express our strongest indignation and condemnation against the Guangdong authorities which made this bloody incident happen. We also strongly protest against the vicious attitude of the Chinese authorities for not making any public explanation, clarification or investigation,” the open letter says.

“We protest against the crude censorship by the mainland media of any reporting of the Dongzhou incident.”

The signatories called for severe punishment of the officials involved in the crackdown to send a clear message to other local officers.

They demanded a thorough investigation by the provincial and the national people’s congress, and journalists to be given a free hand to cover the incident.

They also called for an independent judicial system and political reforms, saying the “crippled” political changes of the past two decades had led to social polarisation and confrontations between the rich and poor.

Wang Yi, a prominent internet writer, said the intellectual community was shocked by the violent crackdown.

“It is just like backtracking to the situation 15 years ago [during the Tiananmen Square crackdown] and it is intolerable,” he said yesterday.

AROUND THE NATION

BEIJING

First professional guidelines for treatment of hepatitis B

The mainland has published its first professional guidelines on how to prevent and treat hepatitis B, Xinhua reports. The guidelines detail the effects major anti-viral drugs have on the disease and contain recommendations for the most appropriate treatments. The guidelines are designed to help doctors make the most of recently introduced anti-viral drugs.

Down jackets flying off shelves as winter sets in

One down jacket has been sold every two seconds during shopping hours in Beijing stores since the sudden onset of winter weather, the *Beijing Evening News* reports. The China Down Industry Association reports that takings soared to about 10 times the usual level last week, with more than 20,000 down jackets sold each day.

Rare gold bowls snapped up at auction

Two limited-edition gold bowls, each made from 1kg of gold and featuring 10 precious stones, were auctioned at a Beijing hotel on Sunday, attracting a top price of 380,000 yuan, the *Beijing Evening News* reports. A gold marriage seal named after the fortuitous number 9,999 sold for 900,000 yuan at the same auction. The objects were commissioned by the National Museum’s Gold Artworks Centre.

Titanic proves a textbook hit with secondary students

Excerpts from several films, including *Titanic*, have been included in national junior secondary school textbooks, the *Life News* reports. Students applauded the new version of the textbooks, saying the photographs made it easier for them to study.

NORTH/NORTHEAST

Businessman executed for fleeing investors

LIAONING (遼寧省) – A Shenyang (沈陽) businessman has been executed for illegally raising 68 million yuan and cheating investors out of 30 million yuan, the *Liaoshen Evening News* reports. Meng Fanhui (孟凡輝) raised the money from small investors in Benxi (本溪), Jinan (濟南), Yantai (煙台) and Qingdao (青島) by promising to pay nearly 2,000 yuan in interest for every 100 yuan handed over. Meng and an associate began raising the money in 1998 and were arrested in 2000.

Liaoning reins in spending by clamping down on building

LIAONING – No government buildings will be built in Liaoning next year in an effort to tighten up on official spending, the *Hua Shang Morning Post* reports. The provincial government has also ordered its departments to cut spending on meetings, travel and overseas training, and has banned the construction of image-building projects.

EAST/SOUTHEAST

Shanghai students express admiration for hackers

SHANGHAI – More than 42 per cent of students in the city polled about their internet usage said they admired computer hackers, the *Shanghai Daily* reports. A third of the 5,000 respondents to the survey by the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences’ youth research institute also said they dreamed of being hackers themselves.

Girl smothered to death as parents watch TV

ZHEJIANG (浙江省) – An eight-year-old Taizhou (台州) girl was

smothered to death by a mattress as her parents watched television in another room, the *Today Morning Post* reports. The mattress fell on top of the girl but the parents only discovered that she had died when the television programme finished.

CENTRAL/SOUTH

Last batch of volunteers get trial Aids vaccine

GUANGXI (廣西自治區) – Human trials of the mainland’s first Aids vaccine are progressing smoothly in Nanning (南寧), Xinhua reports. The final 15 of 49 volunteers involved in the first phase of the trials were injected with the vaccine over the weekend and reported no side effects in the crucial first 24 hours. All of the mainland volunteers were in a stable condition.

WEST

Technology guards ancient tomb from would-be raiders

SHAANXI (陝西省) – An 800,000 yuan electronic alarm system has been installed in Xianyang’s (咸陽) 2,000-year-old Ping Tomb, replacing patrols by guards, Xinhua reports. The system can alert security officers when it detects movement in the ground caused by digging or explosives.

Luxury sightseeing trains to service new link to Tibet

TIBET (西藏自治區) – An American company is teaming up with the administrators of the 1,110km Qinghai-Tibet railway, which will be completed soon, to introduce upmarket sightseeing trains no later than 2007, the *China Youth Daily* reports. The trains will be equipped with showers and will stop at scenic spots along the route across the roof of the world. Regular train services from Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Chengdu (成都), Xining (西寧) and Lanzhou (蘭州) will feed into the line when it opens by July. The Qinghai-Tibet Plateau is home to many rare plants and animals.

10 builders believed dead as cold weather takes toll

CHONGQING (重慶) – Up to 10 employees are believed to have died when cold, slippery conditions resulted in nearly 50 construction workers falling from building sites in Chongqing between Friday and Sunday night, the *Chongqing Business News* reports. Doctors said the cold weather affected the builders’ coordination.

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One of a pair of gold bowls sold for 380,000 yuan at the weekend

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