

Germany ready to send experts to help dismantle chemical weapons

UN lifts embargo on frozen Iraqi assets for food, medicines

UNITED NATIONS, May 10: The UN official in charge of overseeing the embargo on Iraq says nations were free to release Iraqi assets of the battered nation's use to buy food and humanitarian supplies, reports AP.

Peter Hohenfeller, chairman of the UN Sanctions Committee and the Australian ambassador, said Thursday he planned to advise member nations they are free to release some Iraqi funds under the permanent cease-fire resolution passed by the UN Security Council on April 3.

and occupied neighbouring Kuwait on Aug 2.

The Sanctions Committee has not allowed Iraq to resume oil exports. Hohenfeller said he was seeking information from Iraq about its gold reserves, currency and other resources at home before allowing the sale of oil as a last resort.

Iraq has asked to be allowed to sell 942.5 million dollars in oil to buy food and relief materials.

Diplomats also said Thursday that Western officials were preparing a draft resolution to reject Iraq's request for a five-year moratorium on reparations for damage resulting from the invasion of Kuwait and the Gulf War.

His announcement was a partial response to Iraq's request that UN members holding its assets free 1 billion dollars so Saddam Hussein's government can buy food and emergency aid. Hohenfeller's committee has refused to issue a blanket order unfreezing assets.

The April 3 cease-fire resolution permitted food and humanitarian supplies to pass through the UN economic embargo which has been enforced since shortly after Iraq invaded

Iraqi arsenal, was quoted Tuesday as saying the UN programme was "absolutely unrealistic."

But the commission chairman, Swedish disarmament expert Rolf Ekeus, told a news conference the Security Council plan "is a sound plan and we have no reason to think it will not work." His commission has been meeting this week in technical groups to draw up by May 18 a blueprint for locating and destroying the weapons, as well as for future monitoring.

He said he was seeking in-

elligence from other nations to double-check the amounts and locations of Iraqi arms stocks.

Xinhua adds: Germany is ready to send experts to help dismantle Iraq's chemical, biological and other weapons. German Defense Minister Gerhard Stoltenberg said in Bahrain Thursday.

We have good experts in this field, and if it is desired, German experts can participate under the auspices of the United Nations, reports from Manama quoted Stoltenberg as saying.

Iraq must fulfil all conditions of the United Nations without hesitation," Stoltenberg said at the conclusion of a three-day visit to Bahrain.

He said the UN trade embargo on Iraqi oil exports, trade and arms import, imposed after Iraq invaded Kuwait last August, must remain in force as long as these assurances are not fulfilled.

Stoltenberg, who later flew to Turkey, said he hoped Iraq will also cooperate on the Kurdish refugee issue.

Cholera breaks out in Iraq

BAGHDAD, May 10: Iraq reported 52 cases of cholera Thursday in towns close to the Iranian and Turkish borders and appealed for international assistance to control the spread of the deadly disease, reports AP.

An announcement by the Health Ministry said there have been no deaths from the cholera and that the government was providing the necessary treatment for the victims.

The disease has hit towns where refugees are staying after fleeing their homes amid a failed rebellion, said the announcement carried by the official Iraqi News Agency.

Indonesian plane with 13 aboard missing

JAKARTA, May 10: An Indonesian aircraft carrying 13 people has disappeared on a flight from Ternate to Manado in north Sulawesi, a rescue official said today, reports Reuter.

The domestic airline Merpati Nusantara flight went missing on Thursday, losing contact with air traffic controllers minutes before it was to land at Manado Airport.

The Fokker 27 plane, carrying eight passengers and five crew, may have crashed into Klabat mountain, the official said.

Kashmiri team off to London

ISLAMABAD, May 10: A five-member Kashmiri delegation left here Thursday for London to mobilize opinion against what it called the "genocide" in India-administered Kashmir, reports AP.

The team, which comprises political figures from the Pakistani zone of the divided Kashmir territory, plans to hold rallies and meet British MPs and government officials.

A statement issued here by the delegation said it would seek British support for its demand that India stop the "massacre" in the Muslim majority state

Off the Record

No more a tycoon

NEW YORK: Ivana Trump says she thinks she got Donald Trump's last 10 million dollars cash for her divorce settlement and vows she will not marry another tycoon, reports Reuter.

In a US television interview to be aired, the former Mrs Trump says when she began divorce proceedings against the financially troubled American developer he was worth billions. But times change.

Trump, once estimated to be worth several billion dollars, has been selling off assets from his real estate, hotel, airline and casino empire to cut his debts.

"I don't know (if he's broke) ... no body really knows," she said, adding that while her husband still had many assets, she probably got the last of his cash. "I do believe that Donald really gave me the last of it," she told Barbara Walters.

The couple divorced in December after a stormy, page-one row over his relationship with model Marla Maples.

It's like being raped again

WEST PALM BEACH (Florida): The woman who accused William Kennedy Smith of raping her at the Kennedy estate in Palm Beach said that when she saw her name in print, "my reaction was of being raped again," reports AP.

"When you're a rape victim, you have to go through a process of recovery, and that process just completely stopped when I saw my name," the woman said in an interview published Friday in The Palm Beach Post.

It was the first time the 29-year-old woman from Jupiter, Florida, has commented publicly since the March 30 incident.

State Attorney David Bludworth on Thursday brought rape and other charges against Smith, 30, a Georgetown University medical student and nephew of Sen. Edward M. Kennedy.

Smith's accuser said she was extremely pleased that Bludworth also filed misdemeanor charges against the publishers of The Globe, a Boca Raton-based supermarket tabloid that was the first US news organization to identify her. The paper also published her picture. A London tabloid had identified her first.

Bludworth charged The Globe with violating a 1911 Florida statute that bars identifying rape victims. He said he is looking into possible charges against NBC News.

The woman declined to discuss the alleged attack, but said the publicity has been devastating.

A high-profile immigrant

TORONTO: An embarrassed Canadian government questioned immigration and external affairs employees Thursday to try to determine how the former Iraqi ambassador to the United States wound up here as an immigrant, reports AP.

"A priority review is under way," said Gerry Maffre, spokesman for Employment and Immigration Canada. "The minister has asked why the ministers of the day were not apprised while a high-profile case was being handled."

Mohammed Al-Mashat, 60, the man frequently seen on US television defending Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in the days before the outbreak of war, was awarded permanent resident status in Canada on March 27 as a financially independent retiree.

The immigration procedure was carried out in a perfectly legal manner, but without the knowledge of senior officials.

As a landed immigrant, Mashat is eligible for Canadian citizenship after three years.

Mashat's whereabouts were unknown. The ministry said it could not reveal them under the Canadian privacy act. In any case, the former ambassador was not required to remain in contact with government officials.

"I find it incredible, unacceptable that this could happen," Immigration Minister Bernard Valcourt told reporters Wednesday, acknowledging he had only learned of the case the day before.

Curfew on pet cats

SYDNEY: A curfew will be slapped on pet cats living in the rustic Shire of Sherbrooke in Australia's southern state of Victoria, local officials said, reports Reuter.

Local authorities decided on Wednesday to impose the country's first curfew on thousands of cats preying on the endangered Lyre bird and other dwindling species of native wildlife living in Sherbrooke forest.

Any cat found roaming the streets or woods between 8 pm and 6 am is likely to be impounded and its owner will face a fine of 100 dollars (78 US).

The new law will come into effect later this year, Sherbrooke Shire Council Conservation Manager David Young said.

Cat owners present boomed and hissed the Council when it made its decision, but there was ample proof from rangers and field officers that cats had been killing and taking home their prey, Young said.

Bangladesh cyclone linked to global warming: Greenpeace

AMSTERDAM, May 10: The cyclones that killed at least 125,000 people in Bangladesh may be linked to global warming, the environmental group Greenpeace said yesterday, reports Reuter.



She represents a nation in distress

Warning that climatic upheavals similar to those which devastated Bangladesh could become more common as global temperatures rise, Greenpeace urged industrialised nations to make an immediate commitment to curb emissions of carbon dioxide and other destructive gases.

The recent loss of life and devastation in Bangladesh due to cyclones provide a stark reminder on the type of severe climatic events which are predicted to occur more commonly in a Greenhouse world", Greenpeace's Chairman David McTaggart said in a letter to leaders of the world's seven leading industrialised countries, known as the G-7.

"Low-lying developing nations,

such as Bangladesh, are expected to suffer most from global warming and associated sea level rises, despite the fact that they have contributed least to creating

the problem," McTaggart said.

Since 1960, India and Bangladesh have been struck by at least eight tropical cyclones, each of which killed more than 10,000 people. In late 1970, storms reaching about 150 km (100 miles) inland killed an estimated 300,000 people in Bangladesh, Greenpeace said in a statement released by its head office in Amsterdam.

Greenpeace urged G-7 leaders, scheduled to hold a summit in London in July, to make a firm commitment to halting global warming by stemming emissions of harmful gases.

G-7 countries account for more than 40 per cent of world emissions of carbon dioxide — regarded as a leading cause of global warming — and are then main producers of other climate-altering gases such as chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), found in such household items as aerosol sprays and refrigerators.

Bush grills White House Chief of Staff, bans political trips

WASHINGTON, May 10: President George Bush on Thursday stripped White House Chief of Staff John Sununu of the authority to use military aircraft for political and personal travel without special permission.

The president also said that all requests by Sununu for a government plane would have to be reviewed by the counsel's office.

Overhauling a policy adopted in 1987 during President Ronald Reagan's administration, Bush banned use of military aircraft on political trips unless they are for predominantly official purposes or the president approves an exception.

The White House said the new policy was intended "to avoid the appearance that taxpayer dollars are being used to

subsidize political travel."

Bush ordered the changes after a spate of embarrassing publicity about Sununu's extensive use of government planes for travel to political events and several weekend ski excursions.

Previously, Sununu himself decided whether he could use an Air Force plane for his travel, and he also was entrusted with deciding whether his travel was for political, personal or official business.

A White House statement announcing the changes said that "to ensure that military aircraft are used only when necessary, the new policy will require the White House counsel's office to review on a case-by-case basis all requests for travel on military aircraft."

Bush banned the use of government planes for personal travel unless there is an immediate and compelling need, such as a family illness, and the counsel's office determines that security, communications or scheduling considerations require use of military aircraft.

Zardari challenges \$29.4m loan case

KARACHI, May 10: The Sindh High Court Thursday agreed to hear a petition from Asif Ali Zardari, the jailed husband of former Premier Benazir Bhutto, challenging his prosecution by a special court in a bank loan case, reports AP.

Zardari was acquitted by a special court this week in another case in which he was accused of manipulating an unsecured loan of 150 million rupees (6.52 million dollars) to a friend for setting up a chain of stores.

He faces trial in about nine cases involving charges of kidnapping for ransom as well as murder conspiracy and bank frauds.

The superior court will start hearing the petition Tuesday, court officials said.

Zardari is accused of abetting the misappropriation of a loan of 17.1 million pounds sterling (29.44 million dollars) advanced to Haider Lodhi by the Pakistani Habib Bank's London branch to build a hotel.

In his petition, Zardari, who is an MP, said the bank gave the loan to a "credit-worthy" client in the normal course of

business and regularly received repayments to the tune of millions of pound sterling.

The prosecution of an elected member of the national assembly "is an abuse of the process of law," he said, adding that the charges levelled against him were false.



CIVITAVECCHIA (Italy): Italian movie star Laura Antonelli (c) is surrounded by photographers and police as she leaves the tribunal after her trial for possession of 36 grams of cocaine. She has been sentenced to three years and six months. — AFP/UNB photo.

Flying Sununu—a flashback

WASHINGTON, May 10: White House chief of staff John Sununu has released details of his personal and political trips using government aircraft — but a storm of controversy they generated appeared unlikely to go away, reports Reuter.

President George Bush ordered the release of the information in hopes of averting the perception of a scandal within his administration — something Bush has been highly sensitive to following the ethical problems that arose in Ronald Reagan's days.

According to documents released on Tuesday, since joining the Bush administration in January 1989 Sununu made 49 trips listed as official business, 24 described as political in nature and four that were listed

as purely personal — including two for visits to a dentist in Boston.

Critics complain that even when reimbursements were made, the amount falls well below the 3,945 dollars an hour it cost to operate a C-20, the 12-passenger military version of a corporate jet that Sununu often used.

The four personal trips cost Sununu a total of 1,267 dollars, while political organizations were responsible for paying the government more than 53,400 dollars for 24 trips to help Republican causes.

The remaining trips were paid for by the government, including a December business trip last year to a Colorado ski resort. Sununu, an avid skier,

spoke with members of a ski magazine and a private ski foundation as well as members of the Times Mirror publishing company during the trip.

He made a similar trip to Colorado the year before. Sununu's wife, Nancy, joined him on both business trips.

There has been ill-disguised glee over the adverse publicity the pugnacious former New Hampshire governor has generated for using military aircraft.

"When John Sununu isn't breaking up negotiations on the civil rights bill, apparently he's flying out to Vail to ski at the taxpayers' expense," said Vic Fazio, a Democratic member of the House of Representatives.

John Conyers, a Michigan Democrat who heads the House Government Operations Committee, has asked the General Accounting Office — Congress's investigative arm — to check whether Sununu broke any laws or administrative rules.

Pakistan capable of crushing any aggression: Gen Beg

ISLAMABAD, May 10: Pakistan's army chief, General Mirza Aslam Beg, told military officers Thursday that the country's armed forces were full capable of crushing any aggression, reports AP.

Referring to the situation in Indian-administered Kashmir, he said "unprovoked shelling" by Indian forces across the dividing line of control and "brutalities" against Kashmiris had strained bilateral relations.

Unarmed civilians had been targets of the shelling, he said.

"The armed forces of Pakistan are fully equipped and ready to face the dangers

looming on the eastern borders of the country," he said, according to state-run television.

Gen. Beg's remarks came as Pakistan warned India again Thursday that "unprovoked" firing in Kashmir was heightening tension along the line of control between the two countries.

According to an official statement, the foreign office summoned Indian High Commissioner J. N. Dixit on Thursday and conveyed Pakistan's concern at "recent in-

cidents of unprovoked and prolonged Indian artillery and other weapons firing across the line of control in Kashmir."

These incidents have "resulted in civilians' casualties and have caused severe damage to houses, shops and public utility buildings in a number of villages," the statement said.

Pakistani officials urged the Indian government to "exercise restraint since such incidents heighten tension between the two countries."

BRIEFLY

Iranians to demonstrate in Mecca:

Iranians will demonstrate against pagans when they attend the annual Hajj pilgrimage in Mecca in mid-June, the deputy chief of Iran's pilgrimage organization said Thursday.

Mohammad Hussein Rezaei told the official IRNA news agency that it was not yet known where exactly the "antipathy towards pagans" meeting would be held.

But he said Iran had demanded that Saudi Arabia allow the Iranians lodgings in Mecca to be the assembly point for the demonstration so that other Muslims could get there easily.

An Iranian demonstration at the Hajj in Mecca in July 1987 left 402 people dead, 275 of them Iranians, in clashes with Saudi security forces, reports AP from Tehran.

45 arrested in Pakistan:

Police arrested 45 veterinarians in Islamabad for violating a ban on demonstrations in the capital, the official Pakistan Times newspaper said.

About 300 state-employed vets from the four provinces of Pakistan tried to stage a rally in front of the parliament building Wednesday to press their demands for a better service structure, the report said.

The local administration has prohibited public gatherings and demonstrations for two months.

Russian convicted in Italy:

A court convicted a Soviet and an Italian Thursday of attempted espionage in a case involving secret NATO documents and sentenced them to four years' confinement at home, the Italian news agency ANSA reported, reports AP from Turin in Italy.

Convicted and sentenced were Victor Dimitriev, an employee of the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Commercial Affairs, and Maria Antonietta Valente, who formerly worked for Olivetti computer company in Moscow. Each was convicted of attempted espionage and corruption.

A second Italian, Roberto Mariotti, was convicted of the same charges in absentia. The fugitive was sentenced to six years in prison.

Tunis bans Islamic student union:

University departments remained closed Thursday and police tightly patrolled campuses, a day after two Islamic fundamentalist students died in clashes with security forces, reports AP from Tunis.

The official TAP news agency reported that the students were killed in rioting Wednesday at scattered campuses. At least three students and seven police officers were hurt.

The students were protesting the banning of an Islamic fundamentalist student union, TAP reported. Several people were arrested.

Sources among the students said that at least 27 students were injured and more than 100 arrested.

Pope to venerate his 'saviour':

Pope John Paul II prepared to leave for Portugal Friday to venerate the Virgin Mary of Fatima, who he believes saved his life after he was shot a decade ago, reports AP from Rome.

It is the Pope's second trip to Portugal to mark the 1981 shooting that occurred on May 13, the same day in 1917 when the first apparition of the Virgin is said to have taken place. John Paul's aides say the coincidence holds special meaning for the pontiff.

While he recovered in a Rome hospital, according to Vatican sources, John Paul thumbed through documentation on what the church calls the miracle of Fatima. That is the Portuguese hill where three shepherds claimed to see six successive apparitions of the mother of Jesus Christ starting on May 13, 1917.

Red Army member convicted:

A fugitive Japanese terrorist was convicted in Rome Thursday of the 1987 attacks against the US and British embassies in Rome, the Italian news agency ANSA reported, says AP from Rome.

Junzo Okudaira, a leader of the Japanese Red Army terrorist group, was sentenced in absentia to 17 years in prison.

A second fugitive defendant, Tsutomu S'Irnsaki was acquitted, ANSA said.

Attacks with homemade rockets, less than an hour apart, occurred on June 9, 1987, while an international summit was being held in Venice. No one was injured in the attacks.

About the same time, a car bomb went off on a street which flanks the US compound.

One executed for smuggling arms:

A Hong Kong salesman has been executed in the southern Chinese city of Canton for smuggling arms, the Beijing-funded China news service said, reports Reuter from Hong Kong.

In a report monitored in Hong Kong Friday the agency said Tse Chi-Kiang, described as a salesman for a Hong Kong trading company, was sentenced to death along with a resident of the Chinese city of Nanjing, Hung Runkui, for illegally smuggling and selling firearms and ammunition.

* The sentences, handed down on Thursday, were carried out immediately, CNS said.