

BRIEFLY

Gunmen kill 6 in Azeri village: Gunmen killed six people on Friday in an attack on an Azeri village in troubled Nagorno-Karabakh, disputed between Armenia and Azerbaijan, the Soviet News Agency Tass said. Reuter reports from Moscow.

The attackers first bombarded Karadagly with rockets and grenades for more than an hour from near an Armenian village 600 metres (yards) away demolishing six houses and a farm.

Security forces arriving hours later found the bodies of three men and three women, badly burned and riddled with bullets from automatic weapons, Tass said.

Another woman was taken to hospital with severe burns and 130 cattle were missing. The attackers escaped Tass did not identify them.

UN chief to send mission to S Africa: U.N. Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar announced Friday that he will send a fact-finding mission to South Africa in early August to look at the rapidly developing political reforms there, AP from United Nations says.

Perez de Cuellar made the announcement in a letter to the General Assembly, which was expecting a report from him on South Africa's progress toward abolishing apartheid. He postponed issuing the report until September, citing the "ongoing developments in South Africa." Perez de Cuellar said he would send envoys to South Africa in the first half of August.

The decision to send the U.N. mission was made earlier this week, before South African President F.W. de Klerk announced on Thursday that Pretoria will sign the 1970 international nuclear non-proliferation treaty.

Militia shells Sidon, 2 killed: Israel-backed Christian militiamen traded tank fire with a leftist Sunni Muslim militia in this southern port city Friday, killing two women and wounding nine civilians, a police report said, AP from Sidon (Lebanon) reports.

The terse report said the 29-minute artillery exchange between the South Lebanon Army and Mustafa Saad's Nasserite Popular Liberation Army along the Kfar Falous hills east of Sidon dwindled into sporadic machine-gun fire.

The police report did not say what triggered the sudden escalation that came three days before the Lebanese government plans to deploy about 3,500 regular army soldiers in the volatile region.

A communiqué from Saad's militia said, "Israel and its surrogates are out to sabotage the deployment plan." The South Lebanon Army is a mainly-Christian militia trained and armed by Israel to police a narrow strip along its northern border with Lebanon.

5,000 Soviet Jews to reach Israel: Israel's international airport was a flurry of activity Friday as plane after plane brought in hundreds of Soviet Jewish immigrants before a new Soviet emigration law takes effect, AP says from Jerusalem.

Meir Shitreet, treasurer of the quasi-governmental Jewish Agency that helps transport immigrants told Israel television that 20 planes would bring in 5,000 Soviets by Sunday.

The new law allowing most Soviets to get passports takes effect Monday. While it is meant to allow freer emigration, Israeli officials fear it could slow down Jewish emigres as many other Soviets seek to leave.

This month, a peak immigration month for this year, 21,500 Soviets will arrive by the end of June," said Shitreet. He predicted a significant slowdown in July as a result of the new law.

41 prisoners reach Kuwait: A group of 41 people held in Iraqi jails arrived in Kuwait on Friday via Saudi Arabia, the Kuwait news agency reported, Reuter from Kuwait says.

The agency said 11 were Kuwaiti citizens and one was Syrian. It did not specify who the others were but hundreds of long-term residents of Kuwait do not have citizenship fourteen women were in the group.

Kuwait has repeatedly complained to the United Nations that thousands of its residents are still detained in Iraq.

Opposition groups banned in Cameroon: The government banned opposition groups from working together Friday, accusing them of employing terrorist methods that provoked attacks in which security forces killed two pro-democracy protesters, AP from Yaounde (Cameroon) says.

An umbrella group for several opposition parties, professional associations and trade unions has called a strike dubbed "operation dead city and deserted country" to force President Paul Biya to hold a national conference to organize democratic elections.

Interior Minister Gilbert Andre Tsoungui, in a statement broadcast on state radio Friday, said the group, the Coordination of Opposition Political Parties and Associations, was banned from organizing demonstrations, or holding meetings because it "pursues an end manifestly against the constitution."

Iraq ordered to show hidden object: The Security Council ordered Iraq on Friday to grant U.N. nuclear inspectors immediate access to object hurriedly removed from a military base from which the team had been barred earlier in the day, Reuter from United Nations says.

It warned that "any recurrence of non-compliance would have serious consequences" and called for the immediate dispatch to Baghdad of a high-level U.N. mission to demand assurances probably from President Saddam Hussein—of future cooperation.

Stapleton made US envoy to China: The Senate Friday confirmed J. Stapleton Roy, a career diplomat, as the next U.S. ambassador to China, according to AFP from Washington.

The Senate approved Mr. Roy's nomination to the post in a voice vote just before it adjourned for the Fourth of July recess.

Mr. Roy, 56, was born in China and served as Deputy Director of the State Department's office of Chinese affairs while President George Bush directed the U.S. Liaison's Office in Beijing in 1974-1975. The new Ambassador later served as U.S. Counselor in Beijing.

The diplomat has been a Special Assistant to Secretary of State James Baker since 1989. He earlier was U.S. Ambassador to Singapore from 1984-86, and directed the department's Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs from 1986-89.

Bid to block sale of US arms to UAE: WASHINGTON, June 29: A resolution to block the proposed US sale of 20 Apache attack helicopters and 620 anti-tank missiles to the United Arab Emirates has been introduced by 25 Senators its sponsor said on Thursday, reports Reuter.

Coming just days after the administration called on major arms suppliers to restrain arms traffic this proposed sale makes a mockery of the administration's alleged efforts to restrain the flow of arms into the always volatile Middle East, Senator Alan Cranston said in a statement.

Paying lip service to arms control is not enough the arms bazaar is open and the customers are lining up if we can't

UN session on Y'slav 'aggression' demanded

Charred bodies, burnt-out tanks litter Slovenia: 4 army carriers trapped

TRZN (Yugoslavia), June 29: Four federal armored personnel carriers were trapped by slovenian militia, unable to break through barricades of heavy trucks, reports AP.



LJUBLJANA, Yugoslavia: Local youngsters examine the wreckage of a Yugoslav Army tank destroyed early June 28 by Slovenian forces near the local airport. — AFP photo

The Slovenes gave them until 5:00 pm (1500 GMT) to surrender. The federal soldiers seemed unconcerned. Their vehicles were open and some were half leaning out of them.

When the deadline passed, the Slovene guards opened fire. One of the vehicle burst into flame. Neither of its occupants emerged.

Slovenian Interior Minister Igor Bavcar said four federal soldiers and one Slovene were killed. Twenty were reported injured.

Fuel seeped out of the burning vehicle and exploded in an inferno that engulfed everything within 50 meters (yards). Even the barricades caught fire.

After the sudden explosion, I came to, face down on the ground, covered with blood. The explosion had scattered debris everywhere.

Some locals picked me up and took me to a clinic in this town some 10 kilometers (six miles) northeast of Slovenia's capital of Ljubljana.

My forehead was bandaged quickly, and I got in the car and drove back to Ljubljana, blood pouring down my face and fearing I could again lose consciousness.

I filed my pictures, and then Belgrade-based newsman Dusan Stojanovic took me to the hospital where I got five stitches above my left eye.

Another driver said the army had assured the trucks they would be safe, we never even asked whether they would shoot at us, he said.

At Brnik Airport, near Ljubljana, two small aircraft smashed and a hanger and two other buildings were badly damaged after an air-raid, men from Slovene defence units crouched nearby in camouflage uniform with automatic rifles.

Everybody ducked and took cover. They were on us in an instant a Slovene policeman said.

Another message says: Yugoslavia and its breakaway republic of Slovenia agreed to a ceasefire after two days of fierce fighting but media reports said sporadic clashes were still continuing.

The guns began falling silent after nine pm (1900 GMT) on Friday after an abortive earlier truce unilaterally declared by Yugoslavia's federal authorities.

A European community peace mission which flew in for talks with both sides welcomed the ceasefire and said the bring it about.

"I think it was directly linked," said a senior Italian official with the mission, consisting of the foreign ministers of Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands.

The truce was agreed after a day of intensified fighting in which the Yugoslav Air Force was thrown into the battle against Slovenia for the first time and tank columns blasted their way to seize controls of the frontiers of the Rebel Republic.

The three community ministers, known as the Troika, were due to report back on Saturday to an EC summit in Brussels.

They said the community would freeze all credits and bilateral aid to Yugoslavia if the mission failed.

The Troika — Luxembourg Jacques Poos, Italy's Gianni de Michelis and Hans Van Den Broek of the Netherlands — had talks in Belgrade with Federal Prime Minister Ante Markovic and Serbian leader Slobodan Milosevic.

They then flew to Zagreb, capital of the breakaway Republic of Croatia, which showed its alarm at the federal Government's military onslaught against Slovenia by putting its own security forces on partial alert.

In Zagreb, the EC team had talks with Croatian President Franjo Tudjman and Slovenian President Milan Kucan.

Slovenia's Prime Minister Alojze Peterle expressed skepticism before the mission reached Zagreb, saying he hoped it would respect "the right of states to decide for themselves."

Rao faces confidence vote, hopes Opposition will back him

NEW DELHI, June 29: Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao's minority government will face a confidence vote when India's newly-elected parliament convenes on July 9, and believes it will obtain the opposition support needed to win, reports Reuter.



"We are absolutely confident of getting help from our opposition friends," said Welfare Minister Sitaram Kesari, a senior cabinet figure.

Kesari said differences between the government and opposition over India's quest for a two billion dollar IMF loan, a major issue when parliament meets, would be sorted out through discussions.

The right-wing Hindu Bharatiya Janata Party, the largest opposition party, has said it will vote against the government in the confidence motion.

Kesari said the government was looking to help from a Marxist-led left front and centrist Janata Dal to win the vote, whose exact date has yet to be set.

An official announcement said the Lok Sabha (lower house) would meet to discuss the annual budget from July 9. Congress party sources said the session was expected to continue until September 13.

Rao's Congress party and its allies, claiming a strength of 240, will be 15 short of a majority in the House which will be 508 strong when four pending results are announced.

Kennedy's version of rape incident disputed

PALM BEACH (Florida), June 29: An undercover police officer who met William Kennedy Smith while checking out a bar hours before the alleged rape of a Florida woman on March 30 contradicts accounts given by Senator Edward M. Kennedy and his son, according to a sworn statement, reports AP.

Mariellen Norton, a Palm Beach police officer, said in a May 7 statement that Smith and his cousin Patrick Kennedy were still at the nightspot Lulu's when she left at 1:15 am March 30.

The statement was released Friday after repeated requests from the Associated Press.

Smith, the senator's 30-year-old nephew, was charged last month with raping a 29-year-old Jupiter, Florida, woman in the early morning hours of March 30. He met her at another nightspot, Au Bar, near Lulu's.

He has pleaded innocent. The trial is set for Aug 5.

In a sworn statement May 1, Patrick Kennedy said he and Smith returned to the estate from Lulu's before midnight March 29. They had gone to bed when the senator invited them to go to Au Bar, said Patrick Kennedy, a Rhode Island state legislator and the senator's son.

In his own sworn statement, also given May 1, the senator said that Smith and Patrick left the estate with him "around midnight."

'Pakistan unfit for human beings' Sind CM tenders apology to Edhi for mounting terrorism

KARACHI, June 29: The head of Pakistan's leading charitable organisation has threatened to quit the country unless the government checks growing terrorism and lawlessness, reports AFP.

This country is becoming unfit for human beings," Maulana Abdul Sattar Edhi said under unidentified terrorists and political activists snatched donations from his volunteers in the southern province of Sind this week.

He said he would quit Pakistan as "there is no room for social work" in this country.

Edhi, 61, runs more than 70 orphanages, psychiatric hospitals and homes for widows as well as a number of other welfare organisations across the country.

"I will go back to India," said the soft-spoken, bearded social worker who came to Pakistan in 1947 after the partition of the sub-continent at the end of British rule.

Nawaz Sharif expressed outrage at the thefts and have vowed to do everything possible to restore order in Sind.

Provincial Chief Minister Jam Sadiq Ali Thursday went to Edhi's modest home in a southern slum district to "tender his personal apology," over the incidents, officials said.

"I have known Edhi since 1976 when a building here collapsed leaving hundreds of people dead and injured. I saw in him an unforgettable love for mankind," the Chief Minister told reporters.

Edhi told Agence France-Presse that more than 4,000 hides were looted by terrorists. "I don't mind the loss of hides but I am really fed up with the humiliating treatment metted out to my workers' who are sometimes aged people, he said.

Rescue workers said the fumes that killed the victims—mostly old and handicapped people —, at Barbotan-Les-Therms, 150 km (90 miles) south of Bordeaux, were set off when workmen accidentally poured a cauldron of boiling tar on to a roof of the spa building they were repairing.

20 choked to death in French spa

BARBOTAN-LES THERMES (France), June 29: Stranded in hot water and thick mud, 20 people choked to death on Thursday when deadly fumes turned a French spa where they were taking the waters into a gas chamber, reports Reuter.

The statement came as hides and skins of cows, goats, sheep and camels traditionally sacrificed on the Muslim festival Eid-ul-Azha were snatched from his volunteers at gunpoint.

The Edhi trust, which depends on donations, also finances its projects from the proceeds of the hides of the more than half a million animals slaughtered. The hides fetch between three and 12 dollars each.

Off the Record

Giant condom over Menem's head!

BUENOS AIRES, June 29: The Argentine Government has filed suit against a humour magazine which in a recent issue depicted President Carlos Menem placing a giant condom over his head, reports AFP.

The caption under the cartoon in humour magazine read "to save us from contagious ideas: put it on."

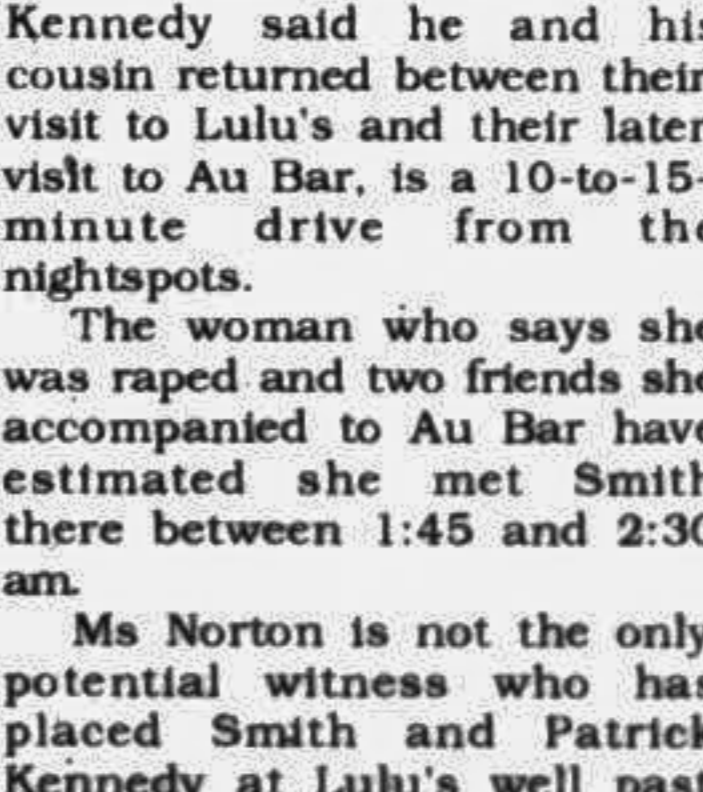
Under Secretary of Justice Hugo Rodriguez Sanudo brought the case before Federal Judge Nestor Blondi, complaining the magazine cartoon was an "offense to the office of the Presidency."

Humour, a regular target of lawsuits during the 1976-1983 military regime and during the term of former President Raul Alfonsin, has made a habit of sparking controversy with its joking jabs at Argentine politics and society.

"Put it on" is the official slogan of Argentina's AIDS education campaign.

Mr Menem also had filed suit recently against filmmaker Fernando Solanas and Hebe de Bonafini, President of a humanitarian group, both of whom have been critical of the President.

Both Mr Solanas and Mrs de Bonafini received death threats six weeks ago after those suits were filed. Police have not identified any suspects in those incidents to date.



BEIRUT: Gisele, a 23 year-old Lebanese belly dancer, performs every night until dawn in 'Jimmy's', a well known night club in West Beirut, in front of admirers. Since the Lebanese army took over Beirut and its suburbs, Lebanese cross from one sector to the other after 16 years of civil war. — AFP photo

Hungry Y'slav troops want to go home

SENTILJ (Yugoslavia): Tired, hungry and homesick, the crew of Yugoslav People's Army tank no. 19627 have had enough of fighting and would like to get out of Slovenia, reports AP.

"If they let us, we would go home now," said one member of the four-man crew, an ethnic Albanian from the troubled Kosovo province. "I would be at Ljubljana airport in a flash and on the first plane to Pristina, Kosovo's capital."

The crew — which also includes a Bosnian, a Serb from Vojvodina and a Macedonian — parked their Soviet-designed T-72 tank sideways to block the main road just south of Sentilj, Slovenia's biggest border post, just before 9 p m (1900 GMT) Friday.