

Iraq secretly produced 3 grams plutonium

NEW YORK (United Nations), Aug 6: In a fresh admission involving this nuclear programme Iraq has told UN inspectors that it had secretly produced three grams (one ounce) of plutonium, sources said Monday, reports AFP.

The information was disclosed at UN Security Council meeting called to review the sanctions against Iraq, but no decision was reached on whether to extend them, the 15-member council will resume consideration, Wednesday.

The vast majority of the council (has) taken the view that there is no justification for changes in the sanctions said British Ambassador Sir David Hannay following the plutonium disclosure.

The UN Security Council resolution 687 that laid out the cease fire terms for the Gulf War required Iraq to disclose all its facilities for producing weapons of mass destruction to UN inspectors.

UN experts believe at least six kilos (13 pounds) of plutonium is needed to produce a bomb.

20,000 PPP activists detained: Benazir Shi'ites storm govt offices in Islamabad: 300 arrested

ISLAMABAD, Aug 6: Pakistan police arrested more than 300 Shia Muslim militants who attacked government offices in Islamabad on Monday with sticks, catapults, and stones, police officials said, reports Reuter.

They said the detainees, all members of the militant Tehrik Nifaz Figh-1-Jafra (TNFJ) organisation, were accused of rioting and damaging public property.

The militants had earlier assembled outside Parliament for a demonstration to mark the third anniversary of the assassination of their religious leader Arif Al-Hussaini.

The demonstrators accused the government of failing to punish Hussaini's killers.

Later they attacked nearby government secretariat blocks with stones and damaged windows and cars before police broke up the demonstration with baton-charges and rounded up most of the participants, eye-witnesses said.

Shias are a minority in Pakistan whose population of more than 113 million is dominated by Sunni Muslims. Tension has run high be-

tween the militants of the two sects in recent years after a series of murders of their scholars which they blamed on each other.

AFP says: Former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto Monday charged the government with arresting some 20,000 of her party workers and supporters.

Bhutto, who was sacked on August 6, 1990 by President Ghulam Ishaq Khan alleged massive corruption and incompetence, said the government was victimising its opponents in her home province Sind.

Since her ouster she said

20,000 workers and supporters of her Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) have been arrested nationwide, adding the authorities had problem finding jail space for them all.

No official comment was immediately available.

"The tyrants will do what they desire, but we will also fulfil our obligations," she said referring to a stepped-up opposition campaign to replace the nine-month old government of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif.

Bhutto, who Sunday led a 12-hour hunger strike sponsored by her four-party Peoples Democratic Alliance

(PDA) against "repression," rejected claims by several ministers that the opposition protest failed to gain public interest.

The strike was called against last Month's constitutional amendment that gave extraordinary powers to the government to deal with a surge in crime, particularly in southern Sind.

"Bhutto, calling the new rules 'black laws,' has said the amassing of extraordinary judicial powers by the federal government was tantamount to imposing 'civil martial law' on the country."

'A gruesome, heart-rending tragedy'

India deploys over four lakh troops in Kashmir: Pindi

ISTANBUL, Turkey, Aug 6: Pakistan accused India on Monday of causing a "gruesome and heart-rending tragedy" in the disputed territory of Kashmir, reports Reuter.

Pakistani delegate Akram Zaki told an Islamic Conference in Istanbul that Pakistan would not be daunted by the presence of what he said were more than 400,000 Indian troops in Kashmir.

Most of the people in the two-thirds of Kashmir controlled by India are Muslims. Tensions in the area have grown in recent months after violent clashes between the Indian army and Muslim militants, some of whom want to join Pakistan.

Two of three wars between India and Pakistan since independence from Britain in 1947 have been fought over Kashmir.

"While we remain committed to the preservation of peace in South Asia, we will not be intimidated by Indian threats and the concentration of its troops on our borders," Zaki said in a speech to Foreign Ministers of the 45-nation Organisation of the

Islamic Conference (OIC). He said that since January 1990 more than 4,000 civilians had been killed in the territory by Indian forces.

"A gruesome and heart-rending tragedy is being perpetrated across that state," he said.

Zaki asked the conference to condemn India's policies and to send a fact-finding mission to the area.

He regretted that India had refused to allow an OIC delegation to visit Kashmir last year and said:

"Four rounds of Indo-Pakistan talks at the level of foreign secretaries have resulted in some agreements, but due to India's refusal to address the core issue of Kashmir real progress has not been possible."

Another report adds: Kashmiri militants holding an oil executive threatened on Monday to chop off his right hand unless the government freed seven jailed colleagues by Tuesday, the United News of India (UNI) said.

The news agency quoted a

government official as saying "the government only hopes that such an inhuman act will not be carried out."

On Friday, a spokesman for the militant Ikhwan-ul-Muslimeen (Muslim Brotherhood) said the fate of hostage K. Doraiswamy had been decided after an earlier deadline it set had expired.

Asked if Doraiswamy was dead or alive, the spokesman refused to elaborate.

Authorities bargaining over the release of Doraiswamy, who was kidnapped on June 28, have released three militants belonging to the group.

But the militants said the government backed out of a deal under which it agreed to release five people, including Javed Ahmed Shalla who is accused of killing three Indian officials after kidnapping them last year.

The Ikhwan is among several militant groups fighting to end Indian rule in Kashmir. More than 3,200 people have been killed since the militants stepped up their campaign in January 1990.

BRIEFLY

Brazil honours Mandela: Brazil bestowed a medal on Nelson Mandela on Monday and promised to maintain sanctions on the white-led government in South Africa, reports AP from Brasilia.

The announcement came at a news conference given by Mandela, president of the African National Congress, at which he reported on his meeting Monday with President Fernando Collor de Mello.

Mandela said Collor pledged Brazil would keep commercial, diplomatic, cultural and sports sanctions decreed in 1985.

Brazil bars the sale to the Pretoria government of btl, weapons and other major items.

A low-level representative handles diplomatic relations, but Brazil recently said it would consider naming an ambassador in Pretoria. Mandela supports the initiative, explaining that a "friendly countries that aren't represented by ambassadors are at a disadvantage in relation to those that don't support us."

Nigeria's population doubles in 13 yrs: The population of Nigeria, already Africa's most populous country, will double to 220 million people by the year 2014, and there is "nothing anybody can do to hold back that tide," a US foreign aid official said Monday, AP reports from Washington.

Nigerian Health Minister Olikoye Ransome-Kuti concurred, and said "if we are unable to provide the resources, there will be a lot of devastation."

Ransome-Kuti and Duff G. Gillespie, director of population for the US Agency for International Development, were among officials addressing a three-day population and health conference funded by AID.

Gillespie said nearly all African governments, including Nigeria's, realize the dangers of rapid population growth and are acting accordingly. But in Nigeria, where women now bear an average of 6.1 children each, "There's nothing we can do, nothing he can do, nothing anybody can do" to keep the current population of 110 million from at least doubling in 14 years.

New Israeli settlement in W Bank: Israel established a new settlement in the West Bank Monday, three days after Secretary of State James A. Baker III left Jerusalem with Israel's agreement to attend Mideast peace talks, state-run TV said, AP reports from Jerusalem.

The left-wing Civil Rights Movement assailed the move, calling it "the Israeli government's negative answer to the American peace initiative. ... With its mouth it says yes and with its arm it says no."

The TV said about 15 Jewish families moved Sunday into what was formerly an army outpost called Eshkolot, south of the Arab West Bank city of Hebron.

The United States has repeatedly asked Israel to stop building Jewish settlements in the occupied lands. Arab nations say Israel must renounce part or all of the occupied territories if it hopes to make peace with its neighbors and the Palestinians.

Japanese Finance Minister to quit: Finance Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto has decided resign after moving to prevent future scandals like the one that has rocked Japan's stock market in recent months, a newspaper reported Tuesday, reports AP from Tokyo.

Hashimoto, who had often been mentioned as a likely candidate for prime minister, has been under pressure to resign over a far-reaching scandal involving major stock brokerages.

The mass-circulation Yomiuri Shimbun reported Hashimoto could step down later this month.

The front-page story quoted unidentified government sources as saying Hashimoto's decision was accelerated by the resignation of a top aide over the weekend.

The aide resigned after acknowledging he arranged dir 9.3 million in questionable loans from a scandal-plagued bank.

The Finance Ministry declined to comment on the report.

89 killed in Zimbabwe bus crash: Eighty-three schoolchildren, five teachers and the driver were killed at the weekend in Zimbabwe's worst bus crash and a national disaster was declared by President Robert Mugabe, Reuter from Harare says.

The entire roof of the bus, carrying teenagers home after a sports meeting, was flattened when the vehicle careers off the road at a hairpin bend in mountainous eastern Zimbabwe late on Saturday.

Palestinian shot dead in Gaza: Israeli troops shot dead a Palestinian youth in the Shati refugee camp in the occupied Gaza Strip Monday, Palestinian hospital sources said correcting earlier reports that two Arabs had been killed, AFP from Jerusalem reports.

The sources identified the victim as Usama al-Abouki, 17, shot in the head during skirmishes between troops and Palestinian protestors. Twenty Palestinians were wounded, five of whom were in critical condition, they said.

5 killed in Kabul rocket fire: Afghan guerrillas killed five people in Kabul on Monday when they fired eight rockets into the capital, Kabul radio reported, Reuter from Islamabad says.

The State radio station, monitored in Islamabad, said eight people were injured in the barrage of rockets fired from hills west of the city.

Guerrillas fighting to overthrow the Soviet-backed government in Kabul often launch rocket attacks on the city from nearby mountains.

Cuba lifts ban on travel abroad

HAVANA, Aug 6: Cuba announced on Monday it was lifting restriction on travel abroad to allow anyone aged 20 and over to leave and visit other countries, provided the host nation gave them a visa, reports Reuter.

The announcement, made shortly after the start of the Pan-American Games in Havana was a major relaxation by the communist government of existing travel restrictions under which it had been limited to women aged 30 and over and men aged 35 and over.

The move, which was announced on Cuba's official news agency Prensa Latina, followed earlier lowerings of the age limit over the last 12 months.

A Cuban official told Reuters the measure was effective immediately and would be open to all those who could have their air fares paid for in foreign currency by family members living abroad or who were invited by foreign governments or organisations.

He denied the move was related to an announcement by the US State Department late last month that it was temporarily suspending acceptance of new applications for visitor's visas from Cubans to clear a backlog of 28,000 temporary visa applications from Cuba.

Manila sues Imelda on graft charges

MANILA, Aug 6: The Philippines filed graft charges against former first lady Imelda Marcos today, accusing her of coercing a businessman to sell prime land to her late husband, Ferdinand Marcos, in 1968 at a "scandalously low price," reports Reuter.

Government lawyers also accused Mrs Marcos, who lives in exile in the United States, of forcing the businessman, Francisco Ortigas Jr, to donate a second piece of land to the Marcoses in 1974 as a gift.

Ortigas, in a sworn statement accompanying the charges, said he learned later that Marcos had wanted to excavate the land because the former president believed a trove of World War Two treasure was buried in the area.

The charges, filed with the government ombudsman, were part of a series of criminal suits which the government has lined up against the former first lady in a bid to bring her to trial in her homeland for alleged corruption.

KGB involvement in shooting of Pope Paul denied

ROEM, Aug 6: President Mikhail Gorbachev has denied any involvement of the Soviet KGB Security Service in the 1981 shooting of Pope John Paul Italian news agencies reported on Monday, reports Reuter.

The denial was said to have come in a letter to Italian Prime Minister Giulio Andreotti.

The agencies said Andreotti had asked Gorbachev to enquire into alleged links between the KGB and the assassination attempt in St Peter's Square by Mehmet Ali Agca.

No details of the letter were published and there was no immediate official comment.

Even since the shooting, there has been speculation the KGB was linked to the attempt to kill the anti-communist Pope.

Agca a Turk, who is serving a life sentence for the shooting, said at the time of his trial that Bulgaria's former communist regime under Todor Zhivkov was behind the plot.

Three Bulgarians arrested with him were released on grounds of insufficient evidence.

Off the Record



WASHINGTON: US President George Bush pulls his T-shirt over his head after finishing jogging Aug 5 at Ft MeNair, home of US Army War college.

First US woman to bear her own grandchildren

NEW YORK: A 42-year-old South Dakota woman who is six months pregnant with twins will become the first American to bear her own grandchildren, medical experts said, reports AP.

Arlette Schweitzer agreed to in-vitro fertilization for her daughter who cannot bear children because she was born without a uterus.

Schweitzer was implanted early this year with eggs that had been removed from her daughter and fertilized with her son-in-law's sperm. The twins are due in November.

She will be the first American to bear her own grandchildren, according to medical ethicists. A South African woman delivered her daughter's triplets in 1987.

Some medical ethicists are not comfortable with the plan. "When you start splitting up the components of motherhood which are usually tightly bound-social gestational genetic- then we get confused," said James Nellison of the Hastings Center, a medical ethics research center in New York.

Deng to live another 10 years, says son

HONG KONG: The son of China's supreme leader, Deng Xiaoping, said his 86-year-old father, who has not been seen in public since February, is healthy enough to live another 10 years, reports AP.

Deng Pufang spoke to reporters in the Chinese city of Shenzhen a day before his arrival Monday in the British colony.

The younger Deng said his father's health was "very good" and that he was planning on swimming at the Chinese resort town of Beidaihe this summer. Deng also said his father remains very concerned about China's economic "reforms" and "vigorous national development."

Deng's 47-year-old son cited a statement by his father's doctor who said the Chinese leader was healthy enough to live "at least another 10 years."

Deng, who has retired from all party and state posts but is still believed to be China's most powerful man, will turn 87 on Aug. 20.

He was last seen in public in February and skipped the Chinese Communist Party's 70th anniversary ceremonies in July.

Deng Pufang said the father was eager to journey to Hong Kong after 1997, when the Communist government takes control of the British colony.

Beatrix back home with a broken leg

THE HAGUE (Netherlands): Queen Beatrix returned from her summer home in northern Italy on Monday with a broken leg, the government said, reports AP.

The 53-year-old queen tripped while walking and fractured her fibula during the latter part of a one-month visit to the Italian alps, said Henk Bax, spokesman for the Government Information Service.

Beatrix received immediate medical attention, he said. No other details of the accident were disclosed. She is resting at her palace but will have follow-up treatment from a Dutch physician, Bax said.

The estate is near the village of Tavarnelle, about 80 kilometers (50 miles) west of Venice. Beatrix had gone there with her sons Johan Friso, Willem-Alexander and Constantijn.

The royal family often goes on sightseeing trips and visits friends elsewhere in southern Europe during the summer vacation, Bax said.

Pol Pot, killer of 10 lakh Cambodians, attended peace talks?

BANGKOK, Aug 6: The Khmer Rouge denied Tuesday that Pol Pot, its infamous leader during the killing field years when it ran Cambodia, secretly attended peace talks in Thailand in June, reports Reuter.

The report is groundless, a Khmer Rouge spokesman said.

The Asian Wall Street Journal weekly said Pol Pot secretly checked into the Royal Cliff Hotel in the Thai sex-and-sand resort of Pattaya where talks were held from June 24 to 26.

Widely blamed for the deaths of more than one million Cambodians during his ultra-revolutionary rule from 1975 to 1978, Pol Pot is officially said to have given up political power in December, 1979, a year

after Vietnam ousted his government. Citing intelligence reports from Thailand, the Asian

Wall Street Journal weekly said Pol Pot apparently went to Pattaya to oversee the Khmer Rouge bargain-

ing position during a critical phase of all-party negotiations. Pol Pot, in his mid-60s, is said

to live in Trat, 150 km (100 miles) southeast of Pattaya near the Cambodian border. The town is located in a Martial Law area controlled by the Thai army.

Thailand, once fearful of Vietnamese invasion itself, has offered the Khmer Rouge and other Cambodian factions sanctuary since they were driven from their country.

There were many rumours of Pol Pot's presence at the Pattaya talks which recognised Prince Norodom Sihanouk as head of the Reconciliatory Supreme National Council, named Phnom Penh as headquarters of the SNC and agreed to a ceasefire.

Journalists often went in search of the mysterious figure, who has not been photographed in over a

decade, and Phnom Penh government representatives joked that Khmer Rouge delays were caused by the need to consult him.

"In the past, the Khmer Rouge negotiators - lacking full authority - have been inflexible, invariably sticking to their instructions, said the article by Nayan Chanda the Asian

Wall Street Journal weekly's Editor and author of "Brother Enemy," a history of Indochina after the fall of Saigon.

The lack of a secure communication link with their boss in the Thai-Cambodian border area is believed to have been an important reason for this sterile negotiating approach, he wrote.



A FLASHBACK: Prince Norodom Sihanouk (centre), leader of the Cambodian rebel group, announcing the historic truce between the Phnom Penh government and the guerillas in Bangkok last month. Also seen are Khieu Samphan of the Khmer Rouge (extreme left) and the Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen (extreme right).