

'US should apologise for World War II'

TOKYO, Aug 16: The United States should apologise for World War II, a senior Japanese government spokesman was quoted as saying on Thursday, reports Reuter. "The entire world is responsible for the war," Kyodo news agency quoted Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Nobuo Ishihara as telling reporters on Thursday when asked whether Tokyo should apologise to Washington on the 50th anniversary in December this year of Japan's attack on Hawaii's Pearl Harbour.

Asked if he meant that the United States should apologise, Ishihara was quoted by Kyodo as saying yes.

Because war could not be avoided, all those involved should reflect. It will take tens of hundreds of years before the correct judgment is delivered on who is responsible for the war, Ishihara was quoted as saying.

Officials at the Prime Minister's office were not immediately available to comment on the report, issued on the anniversary of Japan's 1945 surrender in World War II.

N-arms with 20 kilotons TNT tested

MERCURY (Nevada), Aug 16: The Department of Energy successfully tested a nuclear weapon with a yield of nearly 20 kilotons of TNT in the Nevada desert Thursday, officials said, reports AFP.

Spokesman Jim Boyer said there were no problems in the test, which caused a blast measuring 4.4 on the Richter scale.

Thursday's explosion just under the maximum yield allowed under the limited test ban treaty. The test was carried out 1,600 feet (5,300 meters) underground 80 miles (125 kilometers) northwest of Las Vegas and was the fourth announced test at the Nevada site this year.



UNITED NATIONS: United Kingdom Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations Thomas L Richardson (L) and US Ambassador to the UN Thomas Pickering, vote August 15 during a UN Security Council meeting. The Council voted on a resolution allowing Iraq to export 1.6 billion USD of oil to finance medicine and food. Thirty per cent of the sales will go the pay for war reparations. — AFP/UNB photo

UN allows Iraq to sell \$1.6b oil

UNITED NATIONS, Aug 16: The Security Council authorised Iraq on Thursday to sell up to 1.6 billion dollars' worth of oil to enable it to import food and humanitarian supplies, pay Gulf War reparations and meet other debts arising from its invasion of Kuwait, reports Reuter. But no Iraqi oil can flow for at least another few weeks, pending council approval of a report to be submitted within 20 days by Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar on arrangements for such sales. The vote on the resolution, sponsored by Belgium, Britain, France, the Soviet Union and the United States, was 13 in favour, with Cuba casting the sole negative vote and Yemen abstaining. The council voted unanimously at the same meeting to set a 30 per cent limit on the proportion of Iraqi oil export revenues to be channelled until further notice into the reparations fund. The United States had originally pressed for a figure of 50 per cent. The council brushed aside an appeal by Iraqi UN Ambassador Abdul Amir Al-Anbari for a deferment of reparations payments until at least 1993 because of war damage suffered by Baghdad's oil industry, and for the ceiling to be set no higher than 10 per cent of oil revenues. A third resolution also approved unanimously condemned Iraq for concealing information and materials from UN inspectors hunting down and destroying its nuclear potential and weapons of mass destruction. That resolution demanded full final and complete disclosure by Iraq and full access by UN teams including the right to fly their own planes and helicopters anywhere in the country.

Iraqi army officers receive pay hikes

BAGHDAD, Aug 16: The government announced it has increased salaries and benefits for army officers, at least the third such increase since Iraq invaded Kuwait for some of the strongest supporters of Saddam Hussein's regime, reports AP. Meanwhile, the United Nations began a food distribution programme among Baghdad's poor on Thursday. Hundreds of black-shawled widows and elderly and disabled people flooded a welfare centre to get their share. The food distribution took place as the U.N. Security Council voted Thursday in New York to allow Iraq to sell 1.6 billion dollar worth of oil to buy food and medicine. Even before the latest pay raises were announced Thursday, army officers were among the highest paid employees in Iraq, which remains broken and battered as a result of its attempted takeover of Kuwait a year ago and the ensuing Gulf War to force it out.

West trying to bring down govt: Burmese Gen

BANGKOK, Aug 16: Major General Khin Nyunt, head of Burma's military intelligence, has accused powerful Western nations of trying to bring down the country's ruling junta by creating economic instability, reports AFP. He also hit out at claims that human rights abuses were rife in the country and that the government was involved in heroin smuggling. Khin Nyunt's attack on the West, carried in Friday's edition of the state-run Working People's Daily, is the first high-level official public response to severe criticism against Burma at last month's Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) meeting in Kuala Lumpur. At the ASEAN meeting the US Undersecretary of State Robert Zoellick savaged Burma's State Law and Order Restoring Council (SLORC). Zoellick said, "Underdeveloped and undemocratic, Burma will poison the region with narcotics and remain a cancer of instability." Other Western government officials, including Australian Foreign Minister Gareth Evans, also publicly condemned the SLORC during the ASEAN meeting. Khin Nyunt, one of the most powerful figures in the junta, dismissed the attacks, claiming that the government had seen to it that the people enjoyed full human rights. "False allegations are being made that our government is encouraging the spread of narcotic drugs. These attempts are designed to topple the SLORC government and to install the people they favour," Khin Nyunt said. And he praised the stand taken by ASEAN, made up of

Indian to die in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD, Aug 16: A Pakistani court sentenced an Indian national to death on Thursday for a bomb attack that killed nine people and wounded 59, the official APP news agency said, reports Reuter.

It said the special court in Lahore found Manjeet Singh guilty of setting off the bomb in May last year in a pickup truck near the town's Bhatti Gate area. APP quoted police as saying Singh had crossed into Pakistan 14 times for espionage and that he was trained in bomb attacks by an official of India's intelligence network, called Reference and Analysis Wing (RAW). Pakistani authorities have often accused RAW of sending its agents into Pakistan for sabotage. India denies the charge.

Self-determination demanded for Muslims in Srinagar

TEHRAN, Aug 16: Several hundred partisans of an independent state of Kashmir staged a demonstration here Thursday demanding self-determination for Muslims in Kashmir, reports AFP. The demonstrators were mostly refugees from Kashmir or long-time residents of Iran, well-informed sources said. The protestors handed a memorandum to officials at the United Nations office in Tehran in which they denounced renewed violence in the northern Indian state of Kashmir between Muslim militants and paramilitary forces. Officials in Srinagar, India, earlier said that 22 people, including 17 militants, were killed Thursday and 15 injured in a gunfight between partisans of an independent Kashmir and security forces. The demonstrators in Iran, shouting "Kashmir has become hell", urged the international committee of the Red Cross to send a relief team to the state of Kashmir.

Philippines refuses return of Marcos' body

MANILA, Aug 16: The government has refused to allow the return of Ferdinand Marcos' body for burial because of fears that extremists could exploit his funeral to embarrass President Corason Aquino, her chief aide said Friday, reports AP. Executive Secretary Franklin Drilon said in a radio interview the government believes Marcos' widow, Imelda, wants to return to quietly bury her husband but that rightist and leftist extremists could use the funeral to create trouble. "We are trying to prevent people from getting hurt because the situation might get beyond our control, beyond the control of Imelda's camp," Drilon said. Drilon said the resulting chaos would most likely be reported in newspapers abroad and scare prospective investors. The government filed 29

tax fraud cases against Mrs. Marcos and her three children on August 1, one day after lifting a ban on their return to the Philippines. Marcos and his wife fled into exile in the United States after he was overthrown in a popular revolt that installed Mrs. Aquino as President in 1986. Mrs. Aquino's term ends next June. Swiss officials have for the first time turned over bank records identifying Ferdinand Marcos as the owner of secret accounts used to hide embezzled funds, the government's chief lawyer said Thursday. Filipino officials had been urging the Swiss to turn over the documents so the government can file criminal charges against the late President's widow, Imelda, in hopes of recovering the money. "We can establish a very clear case," Solicitor General Francisco Chavez said during a telephone interview with GMA

Television from Switzerland, where he received the documents. "These are papers bearing on the creation, eventual collapse and transfers of foundations which were created by the Marcoses and their financial wizards precisely to hide the money that belongs to the Filipino people," he added. "These foundations identify the Marcoses as the 'beneficial owners' and these documents... also show the transactions... also show the transactions that were carried on in the different cantons here for over 20 years." The documents reportedly pertain to secret accounts containing about 350 million Dollars which the Swiss Federal Court has declared in principle belong to the Philippines. But the court has refused to allow the money to be repatriated unless the government files criminal charges against Mrs. Marcos by December

BRIEFLY

Water leaks out of Chernobyl reactor: Radioactive water has leaked out of the lone functioning reactor at the Chernobyl nuclear plant in the Soviet republic of the Ukraine, the news agency Interfax reported Thursday, reports AFP from Moscow. Plant officials quoted by the agency said the incident was "minor," and attributed it to a breakdown in protective equipment. One of the three reactors at the Chernobyl plant has continued to function since the nuclear catastrophe there five years ago.

New US envoy to Philippines: A new US Ambassador arrived in Manila late Thursday as a proposed 10-year military base treaty between the two allies remained under threat of rejection by the Philippine Senate, reports AFP from Manila. Frank Wisner, who served as Ambassador to Egypt for the last five years, vowed in an arrival statement to push for approval of the treaty, which he said was "in the best interest of the United States and the Philippines." "The overall ties between our two people are broader and deeper than ever before," Wisner said, citing the "importance of a stable and democratic Philippines for peace" in Southeast Asia. The treaty calls for a new 10-year US lease on Subic naval base, the main repair and supply facility of the US 7th Fleet based in Japan, with a total compensation package of 2.1 billion dollars.

Turkish troops kill 14 Kurdish rebels

ANKARA, Aug 16: Turkish security forces killed 14 Kurdish rebels and lost two dead on the seventh anniversary of the start of a separatist Kurdish campaign in southeast Turkey, an official said today, reports Reuter. The official, quoted by the semi-official Anatolian news agency, said security forces attacked guerrillas of the Kurdish Workers Party (PKK) near Sirvan town on Thursday afternoon. At least 14 PKK rebels, one soldier and one policeman were killed in several hours of fighting which ensued. One soldier and three policemen were wounded in the clashes. A reporter in the region said seven of the 14 PKK dead were women, but security officials in the southeastern provincial capital Diyarbakir could not confirm this. The security operation was launched a few hours after a clash on Wednesday night in which about 90 PKK rebels killed three soldiers on the main Bismis-Diyarbakir road. The PKK launched a violent campaign for an independent state in southeast Turkey on August 15, 1984. More than 3,200 rebels, security forces and civilians have been killed since then. Thursday's battle near Sirvan, 1,100 km (687 miles) southeast of Ankara, erupted while Turkish troops were still engaged in mopping up operations against PKK bases in northern Iraq after a series of cross-border raids in early August.

8 more Soviets taken hostage in Azerbaijan

MOSCOW, Aug 16: Eight more Soviet Interior Ministry servicemen have been taken hostage by Armenian residents of a disputed region of Azerbaijan, bringing the total number of captives to 41, Tass said Thursday, reports AP. The captors demand the release of 16 Armenians detained in the last 3 1/2 months of civil unrest in the Caucasus mountain region of the Soviet Union, the state news agency said. Talks over the soldiers' release ended Thursday without agreement and the negotiators decided to resume the meetings Friday, Tass said later. The Independent news agency Interfax said four hostages were released but said the Interior Ministry could not confirm the reports. Meanwhile, the parliament in neighbouring Armenia voted Thursday to lift a state of emergency imposed across the republic a year ago after a flareup of ethnic violence. Tass reported. The lawmakers took the decision "to ensure democratic conditions" when Armenians vote Sept 21 on whether to sign a Union Treaty to hold the Soviet Union together, Tass said. On Tuesday, 12 Soviet Interior Ministry servicemen were taken hostage after an armored personnel carrier was blocked and set off at midday in the village of Aterk, located in the disputed territory of Nagorno-Karabakh. The captors initially demanded only the release of Petrosyan in exchange for the servicemen.

Off the Record

Laser light to detect breast cancer
WASHINGTON: Breast cancer may eventually be detected at its earliest stages with the help of an advance in the use of laser light to spot tiny tumours, a study has found, reports Reuter. The study outlines how a camera-like instrument can take snapshots of objects embedded in human breast tissue without interference from scattered light. A laser technique introduced several decades ago creates shadow images of hidden objects, but locating objects buried deeply or those smaller than a pinhead has been impossible because the tissue surrounding them diffuses light, obscuring the tumours, the study said. So far the team's experiment can only detect objects in tissue that measure three to five millimeters in thickness, about a tenth as thick as a human breast.

Jesse picks up TV over politics, for now
WASHINGTON: The set is ready, the producer lined up, even a time slot chosen for a September debut. But the star of the show has yet to sign on the dotted line, reports AP. Jesse Jackson, a man who loves the spotlight, has to pick a stage: a new television show on the Cable News Network or a third campaign for the Democratic presidential nomination. All signs point to Jackson picking television over politics, for now. Advisers and party leaders are urging Jackson to skip the 1992 contest and he is widely expected to accept their advice. Indeed, Jackson has told a few associates he will not run, according to a longtime Jackson adviser, but left open the possibility he could change his mind before making a formal announcement of his plans in early September. Until then, all Jackson will say publicly about his 1992 contest is that he's the favourite among Democrats, by virtue of the 7 million votes he received in 1988, when he was runner-up for the nomination.

Garcia's immunity from prosecution goes

LIMA, Aug 16: Lawmakers voted Thursday night to lift former President Alan Garcia's immunity from prosecution, clearing the way for a possible trial on charges he stole nearly 50 million Dollars in public funds, reports AP. Analysts said the vote was unprecedented in Peru's 170-year Republican history. The House voted 88-76 to lift Garcia's immunity, after a seven-hour debate. An uproar broke out among Garcia's Aprista Party congressional members immediately after the vote was announced. Several dozen young party activists in the gallery shouted, "The APR (Alliance of American Revolutionary Parties) will never die" and punched the air with clenched fists for ten minutes. Garcia has denied all charges of wrongdoing, accusing his political enemies of staging a witch hunt against him and vowing to defend himself in court personally if he is brought to trial. The Senate had yet to make a decision. A vote on whether to lift immunity required approval of both houses. The charismatic Garcia, 42, gained international attention early in his 1985-90 term when he halted payments on Peru's foreign debts and encouraged other Latin American nations to follow his lead. He has said he will not run again for President in 1995. Independent Congressman Fernando Olivera, who heads a House Committee investigating Garcia's finances, accused him of having taken 50 million Dollars

Bakhtiar's murder Hunt for killers shifts to Switzerland

PARIS, Aug 16: A hunt for two of the suspects in the Paris murder of former Iranian Prime Minister Shahpur Bakhtiar shifted to Switzerland Thursday, with police confirming that one of the men spent two nights in Geneva this week, reports AFP. Ali Rad Vakili, Travelling on a false Turkish passport under the name of Musa Kocer, checked into Geneva's Windsor Hotel on Monday and left Wednesday, Geneva police said. He filled out a hotel registration form using the name and number on his false passport, they said. In Geneva, police collect the registration forms from hotels at 7 pm every night, but had already done their rounds when, Rad Vakili checked in late Monday. They did picked up his form Tuesday, but by the time they had finished checking the information early Wednesday, he had left the hotel near Geneva's central station. Photos of the three suspects in Bakhtiar's murder are to be displayed in all buses in the Geneva area. A Geneva police spokesman confessed to being perplexed by the suspect's apparent movement's saying it was "bizarre" that a wanted man would make so many border crossings. Witnesses had reported seeing both suspects in Ancey on Tuesday.

Media watchdog criticises tabloid

LONDON: A British media watchdog criticised a tabloid today for suggesting Queen Elizabeth made nearly two million pounds (three million dollars) a day, reports Reuter. It was the second ruling in a week by the press complaints commission against the popular press over its royal coverage. A headline in the Daily Mail saying "The Queen is earning 1.8 million pounds everyday" was misleading and broke the rules of good journalism by presenting an estimate as fact, it said. The commission upheld a reader's complaint against the Daily Mail headline, although the accompanying story made clear the figure was merely an estimate of the Queen's investment income. In another ruling last Friday, the commission upheld a complaint from Britain's Prince Andrew over a naked photograph in a tabloid newspaper of his 16-month old daughter Eugenie.

US VII Corps disappears into history books
WASHINGTON: From D-Day at Normandy to G-Day in the Gulf, the Army's VII Corps compiled a celebrated war record. On Thursday, it lost the battle of time, reports AP. The VII Corps is pulling up stakes in the sector of Germany it defended for more than 40 years, folding its flag and disappearing into the history books. The Army announced that as part of a plan to reduce by half the size of the US force in Europe by 1995, the VII Corps will disband next year, leaving its sister unit, V Corps, as the central fighting outfit on the continent. The VII Corps, commanded in the Gulf War by Lt. Gen. Frederick Franks, delivered the knockout blow to the Iraqi Republican Guard forces in a 100-hour ground offensive.

Chinese students retrace Long March

BEIJING, Aug 16: More than 3,000 Chinese students have set off to retrace the 1934-35 Long March, made by China's communist forefathers, as part of a renewed campaign to boost ideological awareness on the nation's campuses, reports Reuter. The march lasted for more than 12 months and preserved the core of communist military power, eventually enabling Mao Zedong to defeat his nationalist rival Chiang Kai-Shek in 1949. Beijing brutally crushed student-led pro-democracy protests in 1989 and now emphasises the primacy of ideological training in the nation's universities. Students have been sent to the countryside and various historical sites in an effort to imbue them with revolutionary fervour. The ideological battle is also being waged among the people at large. In a front-page commentary today, the People's Daily urged people to sharpen their guard against "peaceful evolution," Beijing's phrase for what it says are Western attempts to subvert its communist system. "The chaos in the spring and summer of 1989 and the counter-revolutionary rebellion that occurred in Beijing has taught the party and the entire people a lesson it will be impossible to forget," the paper said. "It was the inevitable result of the long-standing campaign to promote peaceful evolution being waged by hostile forces, both at home and abroad," it said. "That political storm made us realise that the core of the struggle is political power. If they gain the upper hand, then it will be a roll-back of history and a disaster for the people."

75 Serb, Croat prisoners exchanged

Seventy-five Serb and Croat prisoners were exchanged late Thursday at Osijek in Slavonia, eastern Croatia, the Yugoslav news agency Tanjug reported, says AFP from Belgrade. The exchange, originally to have taken place on Monday or Tuesday, was carried out after several hours of negotiations between the federal ceasefire commission, Croatian representatives and Serb autonomists.

Lanka probes Mossad activities: A presidential commission Thursday concluded an 8-month inquiry into allegations that Israel's intelligence agency trained Sri Lanka army officers and Sri Lankan rebels at the same time, reports AP from Colombo. No findings were disclosed. Supreme Court Judge Srinimal Wadugodapitaya, the lone member of the commission, will submit a report soon to President Ranasinghe Premadasa, officials said. The commission also was assigned to probe allegations that Sri Lankan government officials used World Bank funds for development projects to buy arms from Israel. The allegations were published by a former Mossad officer, Victor Ostrovsky, in his book "By Way of Deception: The Making and Unmaking of a Mossad Officer." **Medieval gold crown stolen from church:** Robbers stole a medieval gold crown laden with precious stones from a church south of Managua, where it has served as a symbol of the Virgin of the Rosary for 450 years, police said Thursday, reports AFP. The crown, a present to Nicaragua from the king of Spain in the 16th century, was stolen from the San Francisco de Granada church, some 40 kilometres (25 miles) south of the capital. Police said other precious religious items were also stolen from the church.