

BRIEFLY

Perez due in Teheran Sept 10: UN Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar said on Tuesday there was some light at the end of the tunnel in the Lebanese hostage crisis but he indicated he no longer expected a resolution in the very near future, reports Reuter from Geneva.

He confirmed he had accepted an invitation to go to Teheran on September 10 to discuss other issues and said he would talk about the hostages if needed.

He had said on Monday he hoped the crisis would be settled before his visit to Iran.

Asked by reporters if this was still the case, he replied: "Well, I wouldn't say settled but I hope that something positive will happen in between."

He also said, "There is nothing at this moment which I could consider as detrimental to my efforts. I continue my efforts with dedication, with patience, with perseverance because I think at the end of the tunnel there is some light."

Pak troops kill 3 bandits: Pakistani paramilitary troops killed three bandits who attacked them with rockets and machineguns at Mora near Nawabshah, police said on Tuesday, reports Reuter from Karachi.

At least 20 bandits locally known as dacotas attacked the rangers and retreated into forests along the Indus river after leaving three dead on Monday, police said.

In five other incidents in rural Sindh, bandits attacked villages and killed four people before kidnapping 16 for ransom on Monday.

At least 56 people have been killed by bandits in the past 17 days in violence plagued Sindh.

Suspected killer of Bakhtiar held: A man suspected of involvement in the slaying of former Iranian Prime Minister Shapur Bakhtiar earlier this month was charged in Paris late Tuesday with murder and criminal association in connection with terrorism, reports AFP from Paris.

Ali Rad Vakili, an Iranian, was extradited to France Tuesday from Switzerland where he was arrested last week police reported.

Vakili arrived in Paris with a scheduled flight and was charged in connection with the killing of Bakhtiar and his secretary, Fourosh Katibeh, on August 6 at his residence at Suresnes, a Western suburb of Paris.

Vakili was arrested in Geneva last Wednesday by Swiss Gendarmes.

Two other Iranians known to have been with Vakili at the time of the killings, Mohamad Azadi and Farydoun Boyerahmadi, are still being sought.

Special amnesty for General Aoun: The Lebanese government approved a special amnesty for rebel Christian General Michel Aoun on Tuesday, clearing the way for him to leave for exile in France, official sources said, reports Reuter from Beirut.

The Syrian-backed cabinet acted one day after parliament ratified a general amnesty law regarding war crimes committed during 15 years of civil war.

The official sources said the amnesty for Aoun, 55, only needed President Elias Hrawi's signature to take effect. He would then be given 48 hours to leave the country, they said.

Aoun fled to French Embassy in East Beirut and was granted political asylum last October 13 when Syrian war planes bombed his headquarters and Syrian and Lebanese troops seized his territory in the former Christian enclave.

Aoun's mutiny against Syria's military presence and influence in Lebanon led to three bouts of bitter fighting which killed a total of about 3,000 people and wounded some 7,200.

USSR to pullout from East Germany: The new Soviet Defence Minister has said Moscow will withdraw its troops stationed in former East Germany ahead of a 1994 deadline, German television reported on Tuesday, reports Reuter from Bonn.

The ARD television network said Defence Minister Colonel General Yevgeni Shaposhnikov made the statement in an interview to be broadcast later on Tuesday evening.

Some 257,000 Soviet troops remain in the formerly communist east of Germany down from about 360,000 when the nation reunited in October 1990. All must leave by the end of 1994 under a bilateral treaty.

12 killed in UP house collapse: At least 12 people were killed in house collapses and drowning in Uttar Pradesh's incessant rains paralysing normal life in several parts of northern India for the second day on Tuesday, reports PTI from New Delhi.

While seven people were killed and over a dozen others injured in house collapses in Bulandshahr district, five others were killed in Aligarh, reports said.

Two persons were killed in house collapses in Delhi Monday taking the toll to 14 in the torrential rains lashing several parts of the northern region.

Delhi experienced yet another day of continuous rainfall with a steady drizzle and periodic heavy showers disrupting normal life in the capital.

Meteorological Department sources said 6 cm of rainfall had been recorded in the capital in the last 24 hours.

ME peace confce may be delayed

GENEVA, Aug 28: A Middle East peace conference proposed for October could be delayed because of changes underway in the Soviet Union, the United Nations' special envoy for the region said on Tuesday, reports Reuter.

The envoy, Swiss diplomat Edouard Brunner, said after a meeting with UN Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar: "With the changes in the Soviet Union, there could be a certain delay."

Asked if the Arab-Israeli conference, co-sponsored by the Soviet Union and the United States, could still take place during October, Brunner replied: "It could be a little later. It must be well prepared."

Brunner, who is Perez de Cuellar's special representative to the Middle East, said he discussed with the UN Chief international developments affecting the situation in the region.

Recent events in the Soviet Union affected directly or indirectly the planned conference since Moscow was a co-sponsor of the gathering, he said.

UN officials have said the world body would participate in the conference as a "silent observer", but Brunner said details of its role still had to be defined.

He said no venue had yet been fixed for the conference. "There are different candidates. For the moment nothing has been decided," he said.

US expects ratification of Subic base treaty

WASHINGTON, Aug 28: The United States hopes that the Philippine Senate will ratify a new bases treaty signed Tuesday, or else US officials will have to look at withdrawal procedures, the State Department said, reports AFP.

It is "likely" that the US Congress will appropriate about 223 million dollars in security assistance grants for the Philippines next year in exchange for the use of Subic Bay naval base for the next 10 years, said spokesman Richard Boucher.

Turkey-Singapore military cooperation accord signed

SINGAPORE, Aug 28: Singapore and Turkey have signed an agreement on military training and cooperation, Singapore's Ministry of Defence said today, reports Reuter.

The pact covers exchanges of military trainees, instructors and other personnel, the ministry said in a brief statement.

Gorbachev says he's independent of Yeltsin

MOSCOW, Aug 28: Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev told the Soviet Parliament on Tuesday that he remained independent of Russian leader Boris Yeltsin and denied Russia was seeking to impose its will on the other republics, reports Reuter.

Gorbachev also dismissed the Ukraine's declaration of independence, issued at the weekend, saying it was just a reaction to last week's attempted coup.

"We must not suspect that today the realisation of the Russian empire is underway, that the Russian leadership has

shoved away the President of the country, that it doesn't take into account the republics", Gorbachev said.

"Comrades the Yeltsin leadership has no such schemes. Every day I speak to them. We discuss different things."

Yeltsin has moved quickly to intrude on a range of powers once clearly under the Kremlin's control after directing the resistance which undermined the three-day coup.

But Gorbachev said the independence decision by the Ukrainian parliament was not a serious long term political move. "I think in the Ukraine it was simply a reaction to

what had happened", he said. AP from Washington adds: NASA may try to shake, rattle and roll its Jupiter-bound Galileo spacecraft in an effort to free a stuck antenna that threatens the \$1.3 billion mission.

But first, engineers will try once more to chill the umbrella-like antenna to shrink its metal mast in the deep freeze of space. Two such attempts in July and this month have failed, but experts think Galileo was getting too much heat from the sun when it was only 190 million miles (304 million kilometres) away.

The antenna temperature in

this month's try dropped only to 220 degrees below zero Fahrenheit. By December, Galileo will be 15 million miles (24 million kilometres) farther away from the sun, and the temperature will be 50 degrees lower.

Galileo, which won't get to Jupiter until 1995, has two antennas. The low-gain antenna, which is working fine, dribbles data to earth. The high-gain antenna is intended to send information from Jupiter in a flood of computer data.

Engineers may retract the low-gain antenna and swing it out again, hoping the shock

might jiggle the other antenna enough to dislodge three stuck restraining pins.

If that doesn't work, engineers may spin the spacecraft 10 revolutions a second to see if the umbrella opens by centrifugal force. Or, they may fire on board jets to shake the antenna free.

"I think there's very little holding it," Ketterer said. "It's just a matter of a little jog."

Some engineers think the dry lubricant on the pins may have been knocked out in 1986 while the Galileo was being trucked from Cape Canaveral, Fla, to the National Aeronautics and Space

Administration's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, Calif.

Wesley Huntress, director of NASA's Solar System Exploration Division, said loss of lubricant may have been a contributing factor but not the only culprit.

"Whatever the cause, engineers are sure that three of 18 'ribs' failed to release from the antenna's central column because of the pins, which are an inch (2.54 centimetres) long and the diameter of a pencil. The ribs are made of a carbon fiber that doesn't shrink in cold; the mast is made of metallic aluminum, which does.

USSR littered with nuclear arms: misuse in republics feared

MOSCOW, Aug 28: The question of who will control nuclear weapons in independent Soviet republics is worrying Soviet Deputies, with the influential Mayor of Leningrad warning Tuesday that the country was "riddled with nuclear weapons," reports AFP.

Anatoly Sobchak condemned Ukraine's demand to have its own army, saying many nuclear weapons were deployed in Ukraine.

"All these statements about taking control of arsenals, especially nuclear arsenals, are very dangerous," he told a special session of the Soviet Parliament.

"We are living in a country riddled with nuclear weapons and demands of this type are inadmissible," he added.

Russia and Byelorussia have also said they will set up their own armies and concern has been growing here over whose

finger will be on the nuclear button, with some deputies going so far as to warn of possible nuclear conflict between rival republics.

Byelorussian Deputy and writer Alexander Adamovitch said that work should start immediately to negotiate a deal with Washington for the destruction of the nuclear weapons in the republics.

The risk is effectively that Soviet atomic weapons (in other republics) currently aimed at New York could suddenly be turned on Moscow," he told journalists.

Concern is all the greater because of the question mark over who controlled the Soviet Union's nuclear arsenal during last week's failed coup attempt.

New Soviet Defence Minister Alexander Shaposhnikov said in an interview published today in the French

newspaper Le Figaro that responsibility for the nuclear arsenal could not be shared out between republics.

"Some forces are impossible to divide. Why increase the number of republics with nuclear weapons?" he said.

He stressed that "there is no threat of the uncontrolled use of these forces. I would add that this danger was set aside from the beginning of the putsch."

Shaposhnikov said the authorities would have to draw up regulations on stationing Soviet troops in the republics.

He said he favoured military regions covering individual republics, and "if we have to, we could accept the permanent division of land forces and their transfer to almost exclusive control by the republics."

But Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev has strongly defended the need to maintain

a united armed forces and said outside the parliamentary chamber on Tuesday that an agreement on this had already been reached among three republics, Russia, Kazakhstan and Kirghizia.

Kazakhstan is the site of major nuclear installations.

The idea of a parallel system with a national guard in each republic and a federal army is gaining ground here, with its supporters including Colonel Viktor Podziruk, a parliamentary deputy.

"It is not possible for the small republics to have their own air force, for example, it would not be financially viable," the Colonel told AFP.

Nuclear weapons "must absolutely remain under UN command. If not there would be the danger of nuclear war between republics and even (given the extent of damage caused by the use of such weapons) with foreign neighbours such as Iran and Turkey."

He also warned that the Soviet Union would "lose an enormous amount of our weight on the international stage if we share our atomic weapons out between the republics."

Yevgeny Velikhov, a close associate of Gorbachev, said Tuesday he was firmly "against the control of atomic weapons by all the republics, including Russia."

Russia has proposed joint control, Soviet and Russian, of the nuclear weapons on its territory.

The President of Kirghizia, Askar Akayev, is more concerned in the short term to insure that in the case of an event such as last week's failed coup the wrong people do not have access to the controls of nuclear arms.



BONN : The three Baltic Foreign Ministers (L-R) Algirdas Saudargas of Lithuania, Lennart Meri of Estonia and Janis Jurkians of Latvia make V-signs after signing an agreement to establish diplomatic ties between Germany and the Baltic states. — AFP/UNB photo

Soviet upheaval to affect communist movement in India: Jyoti Basu

CALCUTTA, Aug 28: The West Bengal Chief Minister, Jyoti Basu, yesterday said the upheaval in the Soviet Union, leading to virtual disintegration of communism in that country, would certainly have an adverse impact on the communist movement in India, reports PTI.

Basu, who was leaving for Delhi to attend the CPI(M) central committee meeting beginning there today, told reporters that the post-coup situation in the USSR would be discussed in detail during the four-day meeting.

Commenting on the momentous developments in the Soviet Union, Basu said that for the last 70 years "we thought it (communist policy) was working well, but now it seems it is breaking up."

When a reporter suggested that the people in the Soviet

Union wanted the change, the Chief Minister retorted: "I do not know who these people are. How can I say people have the support for the change? However, the Soviet people have the right to choose their own path."

Asked further if the Soviet federating units declaring independence one after the other would have any influence on "our federal structure", Basu said "I am not sure if the forces behind the happenings in the Soviet Union would be interested to do the same thing in India. But my feeling is that they would not succeed in breaking our federal structure."

Basu also observed that the sweeping political changes in the Soviet Union in quick succession were likely to weaken the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). But we must stick

NAM.

Asked if the events in the Soviet Union would bring the CPI(M) closer to China, Basu said "we always had close ties with China. We too had good relations with the Soviet Union, but the USSR is now breaking up and I am not sure what kind of future relationship would emerge. A delegation of our party is visiting China soon," he added.

Asked to clarify his observation about a few days ago that whatever might happen anywhere in the world, the CPI(M) would apply the principles of Marxism-Leninism, Basu reiterated "we are never guided by others. We have been closely watching the developments in the Soviet Union and would decide our course of action keeping in tune with existing conditions in the country."



VIENNA : Jordan's King Hussein (front left) is welcomed by Austrian Federal President Kurt Waldheim upon arrival here August 27. The two leaders will hold talks on the possibilities for a Middle East peace conference. — AFP/UNB photo

Chavan assures solution to Babri Masjid issue

NEW DELHI, Aug 28: The Home Minister, SB Chavan, yesterday said the centre was in touch with the Uttar Pradesh government on the Ayodhya issue and would take all possible steps to discharge its responsibilities in this regard, reports PTI.

The Minister told this to a delegation of the Babri Masjid Movement Coordination Committee (BMMCC) which called on him here yesterday, a BMMCC release said.

The delegation apprised the Home Minister about the "apprehensions of the Muslim community" that the state government was intending "to take over" the disputed shrine and the land attached to it "by legislative or executive action and hand it over to the Vishwa Hindu Parishad" the release said.

Urging the government to ensure that the status quo of the disputed shrine was "not unilaterally disturbed or altered in any way", the BMMCC delegation asked the Minister not to withdraw central paramilitary forces from Ayodhya to protect the shrine, the release said.

The delegation also called for expediting the judicial process and expressed willingness to reach an amicable settlement on the issue. The delegation, led by Syed Shahabuddin, included Saifuddin Soz, Ebrahim Sulaiman Saif, the release said.

Foreign tourist bus crashes: 37 killed in Turkey

ANKARA, Aug 28: A foreign tourist bus crashed into a ravine in Eastern Turkey and 37 people were killed, the semi-official Anatolian news agency reported today, says Reuter.

The agency said the accident happened near Sonkaya village in Agri province.

It said the bus had foreign registration plates but did not identify which country it came from. Anatolian did not say when the crash took place.

Off the Record



NEW YORK : Tennis stars Jennifer Capriati, Monica Seles, and Gabriela Sabatini pose Monday before the start of the Women's Tennis Association 15th annual awards dinner. — AFP/UNB photo

Young princess holding biggest fortune in trouble

BERLIN : The young prince who holds one of Europe's biggest fortunes in trust for her 8-year-old son has fired three managers and accused them of financial irregularities, reports AP.

Prosecutors in the Bavarian city of Regensburg, home of the billionaire Thurn und Taxis family also announced that investigation had begun, based on a suspicion of embezzlement.

The two developments, made public late Monday, revealed new troubles in the 500-year-old Thurn und Taxis fortune, which is in a difficult situation following the death last December of Prince Johannes at age 64.

His sole heir is his son, 8-year-old Prince Albert, but until the boy reaches age 18, his mother, Princess Gloria, 31, who never finished high school, is in charge.

The family announced the immediate dismissal of one of the late prince's closest advisers, Manfred Heiler, head of general administration of the family's far-flung assets. Also fired were Rolf Rinne, head of financial administration, and financial aide Klaus Fuchs.

"The reason for the extraordinary dismissal is the pressing suspicion of irregularities, which now are to be established," the family said in a statement.

Legal authorities in Switzerland had sequestered over 4 million marks (\$1.3 million) from accounts of Rinne and Fuchs that stemmed from Thurn und Taxis real estate assets, the family said.

Why commandos refused to storm Russian Parliament

MOSCOW : A leader of a team of KGB commandos order to storm the Russian parliament during the coup said they could have taken it "in 20-30 minutes," but refused because they considered the command to be unlawful, Tass reported Tuesday, says AP.

Sergei Goncharov, the deputy commander of the KGB's elite, anti-terrorist Alpha Group, told the news agency that the unit was told to make preparations to attack the Russian parliament building, known as the "White House," by Viktor Karpukhin, former head of the unit.

Tass quoted Alpha Group's new leaders as saying their refusal to obey the order saved the country from civil war.

They were first told of the coup on Sunday, when Mikhail S Gorbachev was put under virtual house arrest by the plotters. The next day they were ordered to scout the 19-story building in preparation for the attack, scheduled for 3 a.m. Tuesday, Tass said.

During the coup, the parliament building was the focus of the opposition, led by Russian Federation President Boris Yeltsin, and was surrounded by ten of thousands of Muscovites for three days to stave off an attack that never came.

US mapmakers in trouble

WASHINGTON : With the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia on the brink of breaking up, US mapmakers are delaying publication of new atlases until the dust settles, reports Reuter.

Redrawing the Soviet Union and its 15 far-flung republics would be the biggest change to the world map since African colonies achieved independence in large numbers in the 1960s.

Rand McNally, which calls itself the World's largest commercial mapmaker, is holding off publication of some maps from day to day, as fallout from the failed coup against President Mikhail Gorbachev threatens the central government.

"This is a difficult situation because it is difficult to know what is the right thing to do," said Conroy Erickson, a spokesman for the Skokie, Illinois, publisher.

While the company wants to avoid rushing into print with designations that could turn out misleading, it also wants to make sure that its 14 world atlases — with their indexes, charts, tables and flags of the world — are up to date.

As a result of the current upheaval, "We have gone into smaller printing that might otherwise have been the case" for some items," Erickson said.

Scientists use livestock to produce human drugs

WASHINGTON : Researchers from the United States and two other countries have developed genetically modified goats, sheep and cows that are able to secrete human pharmaceuticals in their milk, a breakthrough that could lead to lower manufacturing and production costs for certain rare drugs, says a USIS press release.

Research teams from the United States, Britain and the Netherlands, in three papers to be published in the September 1 issue of the journal "Biotechnology," report the development of new techniques that could one day transform livestock into "living factories" of biopharmaceutical products that are currently very difficult or expensive to manufacture.

Scientists at Tufts School of Veterinary Medicine in North Grafton, Massachusetts, reported the use of genetically altered, or "transgenic," goats to produce tissue plasminogen activator (TPA), a key human protein that dissolves blood clots and is used in the treatment of heart attacks.