

BRIEFLY

UN copters begin flying over Iraq :

Inspectors seeking details of Iraq's nuclear weapons programme began flying UN helicopters Thursday for the first time since Baghdad backed down and allowed use of the aircraft, an official said, reports AP from Amman.

A 20-member team of ballistic missile inspectors took off early Thursday morning from Baghdad's Rasheed Military Base, said Alastair chief of the UN Special Commission's regional office in Bahrain.

UN inspectors had demanded permission to land their own helicopters to unrestricted surveillance flights in remote areas and to stage surprise visits at sites suspected of holding weapons. Iraq has long opposed the use of UN helicopters, saying the inspectors should continue using Iraqi aircraft. Baghdad gave into demands by the UN Security Council last week after warnings from the United States that the lack of cooperation could bring renewed military action.

The inspection teams work for the UN Special Commission, which was formed for to identify the elimination of Iraq's long-range missiles and nuclear, chemical and biological weapon programmes under terms of the Gulf War cease-fire.

Egypt, Israel to work for ME peace :

The Egyptian and Israeli foreign ministers pledged Thursday to work for a Mideast peace conference, but remained divided on the issue of freezing Israeli settlements in occupied Arab territories, AP from United Nations reports.

Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Moussa and Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy met for 45 minutes Thursday at UN Headquarters.

They declined to divulge details of their talks, but it was clear from their comments and from briefings that deep differences remain.

Haitian President seeks UN help :

Haitian President Jean-Bertrand Aristide asked the UN Security Council on Thursday for its support against the mutinous army officers who toppled his government and are out "to murder democracy" in Haiti, reports AP from United Nations.

Diplomats and observers in the gallery rose silently to show their respect as Aristide was escorted to his seat by the chief of protocol, an honour reserved for heads of state.

"This threat to democracy in Haiti also constitutes a threat to democracy everywhere, throughout the world," Aristide said, speaking without notes.

Kim Il-Sung in China :

North Korean President Kim Il-Sung arrived in Beijing Friday, his train slipping into the city's main railway station amid strict secrecy, reports Reuter from Beijing.

A foreign ministry spokesman said the 79-year-old leader would spend 12 days in China, an unusually long period, and the visit would include one week outside Beijing.

He is scheduled to meet Chinese Communist Party General Secretary Jiang Zemin Friday and attend a welcoming banquet.

On Saturday he meets Prime Minister Li Peng and will view a cultural performance, the spokesman said without giving any further details of the programme.

Foreign journalists in Beijing have been refused permission to cover the visit, a decision taken after consultation between China and North Korea, spokesman said.

EC aid proposals for USSR :

Prime Minister John Major on Thursday announced proposals for a European Community package of food and medical aid for the Soviet Union worth several billion dollars, reports AP from London.

The announcement followed two and half hours of talks in London by Major, Prime Minister Ruud Lubbers of the Netherlands and Jacques Delors, President of the EC's Executive Commission.

The Financial Times said that estimates of the overall G7 package had been put at between dollars 4 billion and 5 billion.

Major told reporters possible, perhaps even probable, that there will be food shortages this winter in the Soviet Union. But we don't yet have accurate information to tell us what food will be short, where it will be short or in what scale food assistance may be needed.

US responsible for violence : Sharon :

Israeli Housing Minister Ariel Sharon said late on Thursday the United States was indirectly responsible for continuing violence inside Israel, reports Reuter from Jerusalem.

Sharon said Israel refrained from acting against leaders of a Palestinian uprising out of deference to the United States.

The war against terror is not being waged today because there is a suspicion that it would threaten the system of relations with an administration that is dragging us into an international (Kangaroo) court", he said in a speech marking the centenary of the Israeli town of Hadera.

Washington has accused Sharon of hampering Middle East peace efforts by building Jewish settlements in Israeli-occupied territories.

He opposed the Israeli government's ascent in August to US proposals for a peace conference Washington hopes to convene later in October.

Kaifu abandons plan to seek another term

TOKYO, Oct 4: Prime Minister Toshiki Kaifu will not seek another term in office after his current term finishes at the end of his month, a political source and news reports said Friday, reports AP.

A source within the prime minister's office, who spoke on condition of anonymity, confirmed news reports that Kaifu had abandoned his plan to seek another term.

No reason was immediately given for the decision, but it seemed likely to be linked to his failure to win support for his plan to reform Japan's political system.

Kyodo News Service and major national television stations also reported that Kaifu had decided not to seek a second two-year term. There was no immediate comment from Kaifu, who planned a news conference for Saturday.

With elections for the next prime minister less than a month away, reports said opposition to the first-term Kaifu was growing within the governing Liberal Democratic

Security Council condemns coup in Haiti

NEW YORK, United Nations, Oct 4 : The UN Security Council late Thursday strongly condemned Monday's military coup in Haiti after hearing an impassioned plea for help from deposed president Jean-Bertrand Aristide, reports AP.

Chinmaye Gharekhan of India, the Council President for this month, said on behalf of his 14 colleagues. "We urge the immediate reversal of the situation and the restoration of the legitimate government of Haiti."

Nobel winners in literature

STOCKHOLM, Sweden, Oct 4 : Here is a list of winners of the Nobel Prize in literature for the past 40 years, reports AP.

1991 : Nadine Gordimer, South African, 1990 : Octavio Paz, Mexican, 1989 : Camilo Jose Cela Spanish, 1988 : Naguib Mahfouz Egyptian, 1987 : Joseph Brodsky, Soviet-born American, 1986 : Wole Soyinka, Nigerian, 1985 : Claude Simon, French, 1984 : Jaroslav Seifert, Czechoslovakian, 1983 : William Golding, British, 1982 : Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Bulgarian-born Briton, 1980 : Czeslaw Milosz, Polish-born American, 1979 :

Indian to be hanged in Pakistan

LAHORE, Oct 4: An Indian national was sentenced to hang by a Pakistani court on Thursday for setting of three bombs in Pakistan's Punjab province last year, a court statement said, reports Reuter.

The court said on Thursday, Manjeet Singh had confessed to setting off two bombs in the provincial capital of Lahore and another at the industrial town of Faisalabad. Nine people were killed and 60 were injured in the attacks.

Sikh kill 6 of a policeman's family

NEW DELHI, Oct 4 : Sikh militants killed on Friday six members of an Indian policeman's family including his young son, in their latest strike against police relatives, the United News of India (UNI) reported, reports Reuter.

More than 90 relatives of policemen have been killed in the past month by militants seeking an independent homeland, which they call Khalistan, or land of the pure, in the rich agricultural northern state of Punjab.

UNI said a group of militants went into the Punjab village of Thikriwal early on today and killed the wife, mother, a brother, two sisters and the five-year-old son of policeman Bani Singh.

North Korea develops mobile Scuds, says South

SEOUL, Oct 4 : North Korea has recently developed mobile Scud missiles and has been exporting older-model Scuds to the Middle East since 1989, South Korea's top intelligence official said today, reports AP.

Suh Dong-Kwon, Director of the National Security Planning Agency, reported to the National Assembly that North Korea successfully test-fired Scud missiles from mobile launchers in July, state radio said.

Pankin tells Mujahideen leaders Soviet Union now keen to dump Najibullah

ISLAMABAD, Oct 4 : Afghan rebel sources said on Thursday the Soviet Union has offered to dump Afghan President Najibullah to help bring peace to Afghanistan, reports Reuter.

The sources said Soviet Foreign Minister Boris Pankin made the offer in talks with some Mujahideen guerrilla leaders at the United Nations General Assembly in New York on Wednesday.

In return for allowing Afghan Prime Minister Fazal Haq Khalilqyar to stay in a transitional government in Kabul, Pankin said the Mujahideen could take over the presidency or former King Zahir Shah would return from exile in Rome.

"Quite honestly it was a surprise," said one senior Afghan political source. "They are going too fast and we do not know how to respond."

The Soviet offer, if confirmed, would be a major departure from Moscow's previous insistence that its Afghan protegee Najibullah must have a role in any transitional government that would take power in Kabul and organise elections.

In Kabul the government remained silent about the New York talks and referred questions to Soviet diplomats who continue to have a strong say in the country more than two years after the last Soviet

troops left.

Across the border in the Pakistani city of Peshawar, radical Islamic guerrilla leaders who refused to join their nationalist partners in New York rejected any idea of a coalition in Kabul.



Najibullah

They continue to back military efforts to topple Najibullah and reported big gains on Thursday by a 3,000-strong Mujahideen force besieging the eastern Afghan city of Gardea.

"The Marxist regime has to be replaced with an Islamic government. It is a matter of setting up an Islamic government, not changing the heads

of the government," said a spokesman for the Beg-I-Islami guerrilla group led by Gulbuddin Hekmatyar.

Other fundamentalist leaders also condemned outside interference in Afghan affairs and any suggestion that Zahir Shah, who has lived in Rome since being overthrown in 1973, would return to head a UN-brokered interim government.

After 13 years of war in Afghanistan, the pace of movement towards a political settlement has accelerated in recent weeks.

The failed coup in Moscow in August swept away many of the hardliners who had sustained Najibullah with almost unlimited amounts of fuel, food and weapons.

Then last month Moscow and Washington agreed to cut off all weapons supplies to the two warring sides by January 1, injecting new urgency into the peace process.

But whether Moscow could force Najibullah to step down if he did not want to remained in question, diplomats said in Kabul.

"Although the Soviets can undermine the President, there is not way they can simply get rid of him like previous Afghan leaders. If the President goes it will be through negotiation," an Asian diplomat said.

China executes 16 car thieves

BEIJING, Oct 4 : China executed 16 car thieves in the subtropical island province of Hainan last week, a newspaper reported, reports Reuter.

The men stole imported cars and motorcycles, particularly those owned by overseas Chinese investors in the island's special economic zone, Thursday's edition of the Legal Daily said.

The men were sentenced at a public trial on September 25 in the provincial capital Haikou and immediately executed, it said.

Executions are carried out almost weekly somewhere in China as a part of a crackdown on crime, the death penalty is usually administered with a single bullet to the back of the head.

LTTE positions bombed

COLOMBO, Oct 4 : The Sri Lankan Air Force bombed Tamil rebel positions in eastern Ampara district, the Defence Ministry said today, reports Reuter.

A ministry statement said the attack was effective but gave no casualty figures.

Ground troops began a search and destroy operation against the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam in Ampara on Thursday, three days after the rebels killed 11 soldiers in an attack on a patrol in the district.

The Tigers are fighting for an independent homeland in the north and east.

Ukraine wants to wipe out N-weapons

PARIS, Oct 4 : Ukrainian President Leonid Kravchuk on Thursday said his republic will take part in any meeting discussing a reduction of nuclear arms and their total destruction, reports AP.

"We want to wipe out nuclear weapons," he said at a news conference here, adding that he was opposed to any transfers of nuclear arms from one nation to another, except for scrapping purposes.

Kravchuk arrived earlier Thursday for a one-day visit at the invitation of French President Francois Mitterrand.

Ukraine, now a republic of the Soviet Union, could become a member of a European Confederation "as an independent state, and not as a republic in a state," Kravchuk said.

A future European Confederation of independent states has been proposed by the French President.

Mitterrand listened "very carefully" to his analysis of the situation in the Soviet Union and of the future of Ukraine, he said.

Ukraine would pursue its "democratic route" but needed western aid to be rapidly able to introduce "internationally-recognised standards," he added.

76 Iraqi officers executed after abortive coup

NICOSIA, Cyprus, Oct 4 : Seventy-six Iraqi officers were executed in the wake of an abortive attempt to topple Saddam Hussein's regime last month, Iran's official Islamic Republic News Agency reported Thursday, reports AP.

The agency, monitored in Nicosia, said the executions were reported by Free Iraq, a clandestine radio station that broadcasts from Gulf and is picked up in Iran.

IRNA said the radio attributed its information to Iraqi military sources but did not name them. It reported "a state of anxiety and revolt" in the army in the wake of a failed coup.

Some of Free Iraq's reports on Saddam's purges have been accurate in the past. There was no way to verify its latest allegation that he had survived an abortive coup and that 76 officers were executed as a result.

Neo-Nazis invade village to celebrate German unity

WERBEN (Germany), Oct 4: Club in leather and jackboots, some one thousand Neo-Nazi youths invaded a village in eastern Germany to celebrate German unity at a heavy-metal rock concert, reports Reuter.

As the German group "disturbing force" whipped the mostly-male crowd into a frenzy, the youths jumped with their right arms raised in the Hitler salute, shouting "sieg heil."

The audience launched into repeated chants of "Germany for the Germans," and "foreigners out," their young faces twisted in hate.

Some wore World War two vintage German uniforms or helmets. The concert, on the first anniversary of German unification, came after a two-week orgy of right-wing attacks against foreigners.

It has been the biggest outbreak of xenophobic violence since World War two.

This week the government said there had been 370 attacks on foreigners or hostels for foreign workers in Germany this year.

One African died in an arson attack last month and early on Thursday, two Lebanese children were badly burned by a petrol bomb lobbed into their hostel while they slept.

Two heavy-metal bands played at the concert in the tiny village of Werben, near the eastern town of Cottbus.

Police and units of Germany's crack border patrol sealed off the village; but kept a low profile as the skinheads, mostly working-class youths in their teens and early 20s, arrived. There were some French, British and other foreign skinheads.

A single helicopter hovered overhead as the youths drank beer and ate sausages before the concert started in the back room of a local inn.

Police in Cottbus said they detained 40 youths before-hand, mostly for possession of starting pistols or other weapons.

The room had been booked in August and the inn owners did not realise it was for a major right-wing gathering. When they found out, they could not cancel because of the lease. Police could not ban it because it was on private property.

The village cancelled its planned unity day street parade because of the rightist invasion.

Television crews were chased off before the concert began by a hail of bottles thrown by the skinheads that smashed on the cobbled streets.

Once inside, the concert began with an apology. "I'm afraid the band you've all been waiting for from Britain, the 'screwdrivers' were arrested on Monday," an announcer said from the stage with its backdrop of the German imperial flag.

India originally lay in the southern hemisphere, where it fragmented from a vast southern landmass, said Harris, a professor of earth science at Britain's open university.

Oceans shrink as well as expand, due to a process called subduction. In the contraction of ocean basins the continents on their opposing sides converge.

The giant Indian continent drifted north at about 20 centimetres (eight inches) a year, when it hit something and moved sideways.

A sea, known as Tethys, which had separated India from Asia, disappeared. But India's northward push continued at about five centimetres (two inches) a year, eventually giving birth to the 3,000 km (1,864 miles) long Himalayas, the world's youngest and fastest rising mountain range.

They now set sights on Nanga Parbat

LONDON: Mountaineers planning to tackle the world's highest peak will have to set their sights on a new summit — in about 150,000 years time, reports Reuter.

That is when Pakistan's Nanga Parbat, at 26,660 feet (8,126 metres) now merely the ninth-highest mountain on earth, will overtake 29,028-foot (8,845 metre) Everest in Nepal.

The race began about 30 million years ago, when the Himalaya was first formed, said geologist Nigel Harris. That was some 20 million years after India collided with the rest of Asia.

Windfall indeed

BELLINZONA (Switzerland) : Passersby received an unexpected windfall Thursday after a bag containing one million Swiss francs (dfrs 700,000) fell from a postal train, reports AP.

The sack of money, destined for various banks in this southern Swiss town, was apparently sucked out of an open door as the train left a tunnel, officials said.

Sardar Qayyum fears a big clash over Kashmir

ISLAMABAD, Oct 4 : The Prime Minister of Pakistan-ruled Kashmir said Thursday he feared border violations in his disputed state would lead to a big military clash between India and Pakistan, reports Reuter.

Sardar Abdul Qayyum, quoted by the official AFP news agency, said in the state capital Muzaffarabad that Indian soldiers were firing across a United Nations — monitored military control line.

"Border tension between Pakistan and India is constantly increasing and Indian firing on areas adjacent to the line of control can lead to a big clash," he told refugees from the border.

Qayyum also told a visiting team from Britain's Royal Defence College on Wednesday that India and Pakistan were heading towards a military clash in the Himalayan region, over which they have fought two of their wars since independence from Britain in 1947.

India controls two-third of Kashmir where more than 3,600 people have died in a Muslim rebellion since early

Off the Record

Chief Prosecutor off the track

LONDON : Britain's Chief State Prosecutor resigned on Thursday because police saw him talking to a London prostitute, reports Reuter.

I bitterly regret what has happened, director of public prosecutions Allan Green said in a note to his boss, Attorney General Sir Patrick Mayhew.

This is a tragic event, Mayhew said. "In resigning immediately he has behaved in a most honourable way."

The resignation of Green, 56 a pillar of the British establishment and regarded as a brilliant barrister, renewed calls for Britain's laws on prostitution to be reformed and for brothels to be licenced.

In Britain prostitutes may play their trade but not solicit — and men can get into trouble with the police for prowling the streets in their cars looking for them.

Opposition Labour Party Legislator Tony Banks said that the punishment for this is out of all proportion to the offence.

A wedding gift!

TEMPLE (Texas) : A woman gave birth to quadruplets on her 10th wedding anniversary. The two boys and two girls, eight weeks premature, were delivered to Billy Wilson of Lorena, about 75 miles (125 kilometers) south of Dallas, also have two daughters, ages 4 and 6, reports AP.

All four infants were in fair condition in the neonatal intensive care unit of Scott and white Memorial Hospital in Temple. They were born Thursday and would be hospitalized six to eight weeks, nurses said.

Quadruplets occur once in every 729,000 births in the United States, said hospital spokeswoman Charlene E. Lee.

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