

BRIEFLY

Mubarak criticises Shamir : President Hosni Mubarak criticised Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir on Wednesday for waging a war of statements before a Middle East peace conference, reports Reuter from Cairo.

Shamir's statements set preconditions state television quoted Mubarak as saying after a meeting with Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi.

We should keep silent until the time comes for the conference to convene and then place all our cards on the table, Mubarak said.

We don't want to be involved in a war of statements.

On Monday Shamir insisted that Israel must approve Palestinian delegates to the proposed talks and assured the Israeli Parliament that Jerusalem would not be a topic.

Iraq, Kurds sign truce accord : A ceasefire has been agreed between Kurdish rebels and Iraqi soldiers in northern Iraq, the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) said on Wednesday, reports Reuter from Geneva.

A UNHCR spokesman said Iraqi and Kurdish representatives and the governor of Sulaimaniya province signed a truce accord at 4 pm on Tuesday and it came into force an hour later in the region.

Apparently the dissemination of the news of the ceasefire took some time, which is why shelling was still heard after 5 pm, spokesman Manoel de Almeida said. "Our reports are that it was quiet this morning".

3 killed in Nagorno-Karabakh clash : Three people have been killed and five wounded in renewed ethnic violence in Nagorno-Karabakh, a disputed mainly Armenian enclave in the republic of Azerbaijan, Tass news agency said Wednesday.

Soviet troops intervened in the fighting Tuesday between Armenians and Azeris, and a Soviet soldier was among those wounded.

A ceasefire agreement was signed late last month by Presidents Levon Ter-Petrosian and Ayaz Mutalibov of Armenia and Azerbaijan respectively in the Russian town of Jeleznovodsk, but failed to hold.

EC may recognise Slovenia, Croatia : The European Parliament may call on the 12 member states of the European Community Thursday to recognise the independence of the breakaway Yugoslav republics of Slovenia and Croatia, parliamentary sources said Wednesday, reports AFP from Strasbourg.

Seven parliamentary groups have put forward motions calling for recognition of the two republics, together with any other Yugoslav republics that democratically proclaim their wish to become sovereign states, the sources said.

The groups, which include the Christian Democrats, Socialists, Liberals and Greens, represent 444 of the 518 deputies in the European Parliament.

Honecker wants to return to Germany : Erich Honecker, former East Germany's exiled leader, has said he would return to Germany only if an arrest warrant against him was lifted, reports AFP from Bonn.

Honecker, 79, who was overthrown in October 1989, has been living in the Soviet Union since he left a Soviet military hospital south of Berlin for Moscow last March.

"Of course I want to return to Germany", Honecker told the ARD television network in an interview to be aired Thursday. But an "illegal arrest warrant must be lifted because I have no intention of turning myself in to avenging angels," he added.

The warrant was issued last November following charges that Honecker ordered East German would-be refugees intercepted on the border with former West Germany and West Berlin to be shot.

Sandinista worries Contra rebels : The threat of renewed war loomed Wednesday as the Sandinista Army launched an operation to disarm former Contra rebels who have been making sporadic attacks on soldiers and police, reports AP from Managua.

"We are going to restore order at any cost," Lt. Col Ricardo Wheelock, spokesman for the Sandinista People's Army, told the Sandinista newspaper Barricada.

Several hundred former Contra rebels have rearmcd, angry at the continued influence of their former Sandinista foes despite their defeat in last year's elections and at what the former rebels say is the government's failure to give them promised aid.

They were promised land, farming implements and other aid in hopes Nicaragua could then begin its journey to peace and recovery after nine years of civil war.

New Romanian govt soon : President Ion Iliescu said Wednesday that Premier-designate Theodor Stolojan will announce the new government next week, reports AP from Bucharest.

In a meeting with Stolojan and representatives of main opposition parties at the presidential palace, Iliescu said he hoped the new government team will be announced "in the first half of next week."

Iliescu appointed Stolojan, an economist, as Prime Minister to replace Petre Roman last week, after a three-day rampage by miners in the capital. Thousands of miners came to the capital in commandeered trains and forced Roman to step down. The violence ended with three dead and over 300 injured.

Stolojan was Finance Minister under Roman from June 1990 until April, when he quit protesting what he saw as excessively mild reforms. Since he is not a member of the ruling National Salvation Front, he is expected to have broader political backing than Roman, a former Communist who remains leader of the Front.

Kuwait to take Hornets delivery in Jan : Kuwait will take delivery of a first batch of US-made F-18 Hornet fighter-bombers in January 1992, the chief of staff of the Kuwaiti Armed Forces said on Wednesday, reports AFP from Kuwait City.

General Khaled Jaber al-Sabah said the planes are among 40 Hornets which the Emirate had placed an order in 1988 as part of a 1.9-billion-dollar agreement signed with the United States.

Washington was also to provide Kuwait with surface-to-surface missiles under the terms of the deal.

General Sabah said the other Hornets would be delivered in batches over several months.

13 more killed in S. Africa : Thirteen more people have died in South Africa's political unrest, pushing this week's toll to 31 in what Nobel Peace laureate Desmond Tutu condemned Thursday as a "Frankenstein" spectre of black township violence, reports Reuter from Cape Town.

The anti-apartheid churchman led a peace conference in Cape Town, declaring: "Enough is enough."

Delegates asked Tutu and city mayor Frank Van der Velde to lead a peace committee to end a year-long local taxi feud and a frenzy of violence which has killed 3,000 people in a year.

Ban on Marcos' body lifted : President Corason Aquino Thursday lifted a ban on the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos being buried in the Philippines but said his corpse should be flown directly to his hometown and buried from the capital, reports Reuter from Manila.

Marcos' body could be flown from Hawaii to his northern hometown of Laoag, Aquino said after meeting a group of 29 Congressmen from the northern Philippines who made the proposal.

"What they were recommending was that the body be flown to Laoag. We are in conformity with that," Aquino told reporters.

'SAARC moving ahead with plan for disaster management'

KATHIMANDU, Oct 10: Officials and experts from seven South Asian nations began a three-day meeting here Wednesday to explore ways to protect the environment and guard against natural disasters, reports AFP.

"We should work hard to resolve serious problems which are common to all member-states of SAARC, including the extensive destruction of forests and other natural resources," Nepal's Forestry, Environment and Agriculture Minister Shalaja Acharya said in an inaugural speech.

SAARC, or the South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation, groups Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. It is headquartered in Kathmandu.

"The final outcome of the current SAARC meeting will prove to be a valuable instrument in the development of a sound regional plan of action for strengthening disaster management capabilities, and for protection of the environment," Acharya said.

"Natural disasters such as floods, droughts, landslides, cyclones, storms and earthquakes are not only re-

sponsible for damaging the quality of life and property, but they also aggravate the hardship of poverty through further environmental deterioration," she said.

She stressed that issues concerning the causes and consequences of natural disasters and environmental degradation must be looked at from a broader, regional perspective.

The Minister recalled that soil erosion, floods and landslides were among the most

frequent natural disasters of Nepal." Other member countries also face similar and many other forms of natural disasters," she added.

SAARC Secretary General Kant Kishore Bhargava said: "catastrophes result in severe economic setbacks — so much so that in some instances, in terms of percentage of gross national product, the losses more than cancel out any real economic growth."

Observers from several Western countries and the United Nations are also attending the conference.

C' Wealth goes to Zimbabwe : it is tough keeping at the top

LONDON, Oct 10 : Just how shifting are the sands of politics is illustrated by the fact that just about one-third of the 50 Commonwealth countries have changed leaders since the last summit in Kuala Lumpur exactly two years ago, according to Gemini News.

Many of the bigger countries have new faces at the top. The unlikely figure of NARASIMHA RAO, at 70 the leader of a minority Congress Party government, leads India to 1989 Rajiv

after an election by 41-year-old industrialist NAWAZ SHARIF.

In Bangladesh, President Hussain Ershad was forced out of office and replaced by an interim government under the chief justice. After elections BEGUM KHALEDA ZIA, 47, widow of a former president, emerged as Prime Minister and under constitutional changes she, not the president, has become the effective head of government.

These changes meant that for the first time for many

Major-General Lekhanya gave way as head of the military regime in Lesotho to MAJOR-GENERAL E.P. RAMAEMA. Lesotho used to be represented at these summits by King Moshoeshoe II, but last year he was dethroned and his son sworn in as King Letsie III. This year Lesotho is sending the Major-General. The longest serving Commonwealth leader in the Pacific, father Walter Lini of Vanuatu, was topped a few weeks ago by his party and replaced as Prime

New faces at the summit



New faces at the summit



Gandhi was absent from Kuala Lumpur because he had just called the general election he was to lose. In the two years between India has seen three prime ministers, the assassination of Gandhi and another election.

A year ago Margaret Thatcher was suddenly turned out of office and replaced by JOHN MAJOR, 47, as Prime Minister of Britain. In 1989 he was in Kuala Lumpur during his brief period as Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary.

Within a few months of being welcomed in Kuala Lumpur as prime minister of a Pakistan newly returned to Commonwealth membership, Bhutto was toppled, replaced by an interim government and then

years the entire India sub-continent had come under democratic government. In New Zealand Geoffrey Palmer was replaced as prime minister for a few weeks by Mike Moore, who then lost a general election to the opposition National Party. JIM BOLGER became Prime Minister.

In Singapore Lee Kuan Yew, who had attended more Commonwealth summits than anyone else, retired as prime minister, though not from the government, and was replaced by GOH CHOK TONG, aged 50.

Herbert Blaize, who had taken over as prime minister of Grenada following the upheaval of coup d'etat and American invasion, died at 71, and was replaced by NICHOLAS BRATHWAITE.

Minister by DONALD KALPOKAS pending an election.

In Kiribati, TEATAO TEANAKI replaced Jeremiah Tabai as President after an election. And in Tonga BARON VAEA OHUMA took over as Prime Minister on the retirement of Prince Fatafahi Tu'ipehake.

In a continent which has seen huge changes in the last two years with many leaders toppled, all but one of the 16 Commonwealth leaders holding office in 1989 remains in place. And now they are joined by one more — SAM NUJOMA, President of Namibia, which became the Commonwealth's 50th member on its day of independence, March 21 1990.

Malaysia rules out compromise with Indonesia on disputed islands

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 10: Malaysia and Indonesia will sort out "unfinished business" over ownership of two disputed islands off Borneo in talks this week, Indonesian Foreign Minister Ali Alatas said on Wednesday, reports Reuter.

"There has been some unfinished business like agreeing to draw the line in the exclusive economic zone which is a narrow channel of water. The two islands issue is essentially the same thing," Alatas told reporters on his arrival in Malaysia.

Indonesia complained earlier this year after a Malaysian company began developing Sipadan island, rated as one of the world's top diving spots, as a tourist resort. The two have been locked in a dispute over ownership of Sipadan, and Ligitan island, since 1969.

"When we started discussions on the two islands in 1969 there was a difference of opinion so we let it go because we were so friendly," Alatas said. "Other nations would probably have gone to war."

He said he hoped the dispute would be resolved soon. Alatas is to meet Malaysian Foreign Minister Abdullah

Ahmad Badawi on Thursday and Friday in Kuala Lumpur.

"Compromise is not what we are seeking. The issue before us is ownership and our approach is on that," Abdullah said.

The two ministers said they would try to resolve the problem of Indonesians fleeing reported fighting in Aceh province on Sumatra island to do so.

Abdullah said Malaysia would continue to deport Acehese, though some were reluctant to go back.

Rebels slay 22 Burmese troops

BANKOK, Oct 10 : A total of 22 Burmese security personnel were killed by guerrillas in fighting earlier this month, the official Radio Rangoon said yesterday, reports AFP.

The 17 policemen and five soldiers were killed in the southern areas of Burma's Irrawaddy Delta during an eight-day operation against Karen insurgents, the radio said in a broadcast monitored here.

Only nine Karen rebels, belonging to the ethnic Karen

National Union (KNU), were reported killed in the operation launched October 1, the radio reported.

Burmese forces captured five insurgents and seized a large number of assorted weapons, shells, grenades and explosives, the radio added.

KNU is one of about a dozen ethnic insurgency groups which has been fighting the central government in Rangoon for autonomy since Burma gained independence from Britain in 1948.

Rao to run for Parliament in byelection

NEW DELHI, Oct 10: Indian Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao is to run for Parliament in a byelection in his home state of Andhra Pradesh next month, ruling party officials said Tuesday, reports AFP.

The Central Parliamentary Board of the Congress (I) Party, in a meeting Tuesday, cleared Rao's bid to run in Nandyal constituency for a seat in the Lok Sabha, or Lower House of Parliament.

Nandyal is one of 16 constituencies in India where Lok Sabha by-elections are to be held November 15.

Rao, 70, who is also President of Congress (I), became Prime Minister June 20 after a national election in which then party leader, former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, was assassinated.

In India, anyone without a parliamentary seat who becomes a Prime Minister or Cabinet Minister has six months from date of appointment to secure one.

Kabul uses Napalm bombs

ISLAMABAD, Oct 10: Afghan resistance said yesterday that Kabul government planes were using Napalm bombs in raids on Mujahideen besieging the strategic garrison city of Gardez, reports AFP.

"Some Mujahideen embraced martyrdom while some others sustained injuries," as a result of the attacks, the resistance media news agency said.

The Mujahideen agencies based in Pakistan continue to report fighting around the city but have dropped earlier hints of impending Mujahideen entry into Gardez, target of a nine-day old offensive.

Media said Mujahideen artillery pounded the city Wednesday inflicting "heavy losses".

Crackdown on Jordanian militants

AMMAN, Oct 10: Jordan today cracked down on militants opposed to Arab-Israeli peace talks banning a rally and seizing two weekly newspapers, reports Reuter.

The action followed three days of political tension sparked by a call from more than half of the 80-seat Lower House of Parliament for Prime Minister Taher al-Masri to resign after charges he was unfit for the job.

Masri, in an unusually tough statement on Wednesday, warned against attempts to destabilise Amman ahead of the proposed US-sponsored peace talks and said the Lower House call was unconstitutional because parliament was in recess.

Jordanian officials said a rally planned for Friday by the Muslim Brotherhood and the militant Islamic Resistance Movement (IIR) to mark the killing of 18 Palestinians in Jerusalem last year would be cancelled as a precautionary measure.

The two groups oppose the Jordan's backing for peace talks with Israel and advocate Islamic Jihad (holy war) as the only way to liberate all of Palestine.

The government fears the rally could turn violent.

Plea to remove communist symbols in Hungary

BUDAPEST, Oct 10: Hungarian Minister of the Interior Peter Boross, appealed to some 3,200 mayors in Hungary Wednesday to remove communist symbols and monuments before the 35th anniversary of the 1956 uprising on October 23, reports AFP.

In separate letters to Hungary's local governments he also asked mayors to rename streets which still bear the names of communist heroes and recall past dictatorship.

Off the Record

Women rips sister's tongue out

CHESTER (S.C.) : A woman ripped out her sister's tongue piece by piece with her fingernails while the two were in jail, a Sheriff said, report AP.

Donna Doxie, 24, told police she was removing a demon from her sister, Melody Shelton, 28, said Sheriff Bobby Orr.

"They all indicated they were involved in some sort of witchcraft," Orr said.

He said Shelton apparently offered no resistance and never called for help.

The two women were taken to a hospital for a psychiatric evaluation, the Sheriff said. No immediate charges were filed.

Doxie, Shelton and two other sisters were being held on disorderly conduct and assault charges at the time Sunday, Orr said.

Brave Princess

LONDON : The Princess of Wales has been praised for the "brave and good" way in which she supported her friend, Mr Adrian Ward-Jackson, 41, a governor of the Royal Ballet, who died from AIDS.

Dr Caroline Bradbeer, a consultant at St Thomas's Hospital, London, said less of a stigma was attached to the disease because of the work of the Princess, who is patron of the National Aids Trust.

The Princess spent more than six hours at St Mary's Hospital in Paddington, west London, comforting relatives of Mr Ward-Jackson arriving shortly after his death at 1 am, having earlier spent eight hours at his bedside. She broke off her holiday at Balmoral to be with her friend in the final stages of his illness and looked distressed as she drove from the hospital after his death.

Praising her work, Dr Bradbeer said the Princess's caring role in her friend's suffering would help the cause of AIDS victims. "It is without question very brave and good of her."

"The fact that she knows people personally with AIDS has to be very helpful. Our patients often mention her and they are delighted."

The Princess first met Mr Ward-Jackson, a former chairman of the Ballet Rambert, in 1987.



AIDS less of a stigma because of Diana

UN to host summit of First Ladies

ROME : The United Nations will hold an international "First Ladies" summit in Brussels next Feb. 25 to alert world opinion to the worsening plight of poor rural women, report AP.

As men leave the countryside to find city jobs, the number of poor rural women has increased from 400 million to 600 million in the past 20 years in "what we would call the feminization of poverty," said Idriss Jazairy, president of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD).

The "invisible rural woman," Jazairy told a news conference Wednesday, usually spends 14-16 hours working in the fields, walking as much as 22 kilometers (13 miles) daily in some countries to find fuel for cooking, thus jeopardizing her children and her own health.

The summit would give backing to efforts to give women a greater role in rural planning, establish legal rights to land and access to rural credit and new technology.

The summit's idea was initiated by the wives of chief executives of Colombia, Egypt, Turkey, Nigeria, Senegal and Malaysia and will be hosted by Belgium's Green Fabelia. About 40 first ladies are expected to attend.

IFAD is a financial institution which makes small loans directly to the poor in an effort to ease rural poverty in the Third World, funding 300 projects in 95 countries since its birth in 1977.

US Congress corrupt!

NEW YORK : A growing number of Americans consider members of Congress to be corrupt, pampered and arrogant, according to a new poll, reports AP.

A New York Times-CBS News poll published Thursday said the proportion of people who believe most senators and representatives are "financially corrupt" rose to 29 per cent, compared with 17 per cent in a poll taken in August 1990.

Twenty-eight per cent said they thought "about half" the lawmakers were corrupt, compared with 25 per cent in the last poll.

New Sikh group claims to have kidnapped Romanian envoy

AMRITSAR (India), Oct 10: A newly-formed Sikh militant group today claimed responsibility for Wednesday's kidnapping of Romania's Charge d'Affaires Ltviu Radu in New Delhi, reports AFP.

A caller who said he was Kulwant Singh Gumti, Commander-in-Chief of the Liberation Tigers Force of Khalistan (LTFK), told reporters by telephone in this Sikh holy city: "We take responsibility for the abduction of the diplomat."

The caller, who spoke in Punjab, said "no" and hung up when asked if he had anything further to say.

The LTFK announced its formation about a week ago, and police sources have said that Gumti might be a fictitious name. None of the wanted Sikh separatists in the Indian state of Punjab has such a name.

Two gunmen, including a Sikh seized Radu near his home in New Delhi early Wednesday. Police in the Indian capital immediately said they suspected Sikh militants who are fighting to make Punjab an independent state called Khalistan (Land of the Pure).

Police linked Radu's abduction to the death of a Sikh at the hands of Romania's anti-terrorist police in Bucharest on August 20 during an attempted assassination of India's Ambassador Julio Riberio.

In that attack, two other

Talks with Pindi sought on Indian terms

WASHINGTON, Oct 10: Indian Ambassador to the United States Abid Hussain said here Wednesday that Pakistan and India should continue talks on confidence-building measures to resolve the nuclear proliferation issue, reports AFP.

Commenting on New Delhi's apparent rejection of Islamabad's recent proposal for five-way talks on nuclear non-proliferation in south Asia, the envoy said talks between India and Pakistan could continue on the basis of measures proposed by New Delhi, including exchanging lists of nuclear facilities.

"We're awaiting a list from Pakistan, Hussain told a press briefing at the National Press Club.

An Indian Embassy spokeswoman said the Pakistanis had a nuclear facility at Kahuta near Islamabad