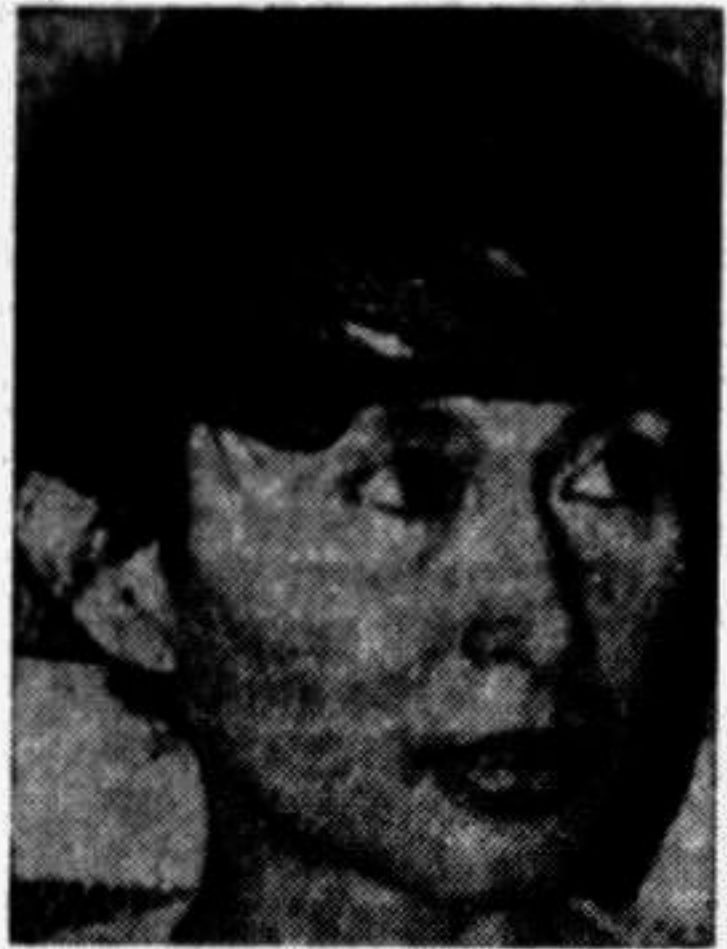


Whereabouts of Suu Kyi unknown

PARIS, Oct 19: A team of French doctors back from a visit to Burma said on Friday the whereabouts of detained opposition leader Aung San



Suu Kyi, who won the Nobel Peace Prize this week, were unknown, reports Reuter. The foreign diplomatic community in Rangoon is extremely sceptical about press reports which assume she is

still under house arrest at her home in Rangoon, said Professor Alain Deloche of the International aid group Medicines Du Monde (MDM). "We believe there are grounds for deep concern because the fact is that her whereabouts are unknown. No foreign diplomat knows of anyone of any nationality, including Burmese, who has seen her for the past nine months, including her husband, said Deloche, who led an MDM health mission to Burma several weeks ago.

Aung San Suu Kyi, 46, was ordered confined to her home more than two years ago. Deloche said although Aung San Suu Kyi's house near Rangoon's Inya Lake was guarded there was no proof she was inside. "Both the French and Japanese ambassadors have sought to meet her, as we did, but we were all rebuffed by the authorities, Deloche said.

Cambodian CP chief fired, party name changed

BANGKOK, Oct 19: Cambodia's Communist Party removed its longtime chief, Head Samrin, and changed its name to expunge allusions to communism, reports monitored Saturday said, reports AP.

The move appeared aimed at garnering popular support in advance of a peace pact and general elections in the war-ravaged nation. The official news agency SPK said Heng Samrin, who had headed the party since 1981, was replaced by veteran revolutionary Chea Sim. The name of the People's Revolutionary Party of Kampuchea was changed to the Cambodian People's Party. The move came during an extraordinary, two-day party congress which ended Friday in the Cambodian capital of Phnom Penh. Heng Samrin has been figure-head and decisions in recent years were increasingly made by Prime Minister Hun Sen, Chea Sim and a small number of other party and state leaders. Regarded as a pragmatist, Hun Sen was elected vice

president of the central committee, according to a partial transcript of the congress communiqué. The congress precedes the signing in Paris next week of a peace agreement among Cambodia's warring factions and the return to Phnom Penh next month of onetime head of state Prince Norodom Sihanouk. If elections are held as the peace pact outlines, the Cambodian People's Party will be vying for votes with other political groupings. And it will be severely handicapped. Heng Samrin, Hung Sen and Chea Sim all fought with the widely detested Khmer Rouge and then were regarded by some as "puppets" of Cambodia's traditional enemy - Vietnam. After the brutal rule of the communist Khmer Rouge in the mid-1970s, most Cambodians instinctively detest anything smacking of communism. The communiqué called on Cambodian political parties as well as foreign countries to help build a durable peace.

BRIEFLY

50 weavers die of starvation in India: Some 50 weavers employed in the crisis-hit handloom textile industry in the southern state of Andhra Pradesh have died of starvation in recent weeks, reports AFP from Hyderabad. "The situation is very pitiable," G V Anjaneyulu, an Andhra Pradesh state legislator from the ruling Congress (I) party said in the state capital. Anjaneyulu, who recently returned from a tour of Andhra Pradesh's coastal districts of Guntur and Prakasam, the principal centres of the Cottage Textile Industry, said 50 people, mostly weavers, had died there in the past six weeks.

French train mishap casualties lowered: French authorities said on Friday 16 people had died in a train crash near Paris, revising an earlier count of 24 dead, reports Reuter from Paris. A spokeswoman for the prefect, or government representative, in Melun said 30 people were still in hospital, six of them seriously injured. The nice-Paris Sleeper Express smashed into a goods train which had jumped a red stop signal at Melun station, 50 km (30 miles) south of Paris, at dawn on Thursday. The spokeswoman said the earlier toll of 24 resulted from confusion.

714th nuclear blast in Nevada: A nuclear weapons test was exploded deep beneath the Nevada desert Friday, the seventh such test of the year and 714th since testing began at the Nevada test site in 1951, reports AFP from Las Vegas. "From all appearances we had a very successful test," said Energy Department spokesman Jim Boyer. "There were no problems at all with the test." The weapon, classified as having a yield between 20 and 150 kilotons, was exploded at a depth of 457 meters (1,500 feet) below Yucca flat on the test ground about 120 kilometers (75 miles) from Las Vegas.

Three Turks killed in blast: A policeman and a security guard were killed on Friday when explosives were thrown at Adidistrict office of Turkey's ruling Motherland Party in Istanbul, Turkish radio said, reports Reuter from London. The radio, monitored by the British Broadcasting Corporation, also said another person was injured in a bomb blast at a tax office in the city. Earlier on Friday separatist Kurds and left-wing guerrillas claimed responsibility for a series of shootings and bombings ahead of Turkey's general election on Sunday.

Mubarak ready for talks with Shamir: Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak said on Friday he was ready for talks with Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir about a Middle East peace conference, reports Reuter from Vienna. Mubarak spoke after meeting Austrian leaders in Vienna and shortly before US Secretary of State James Baker announced in Israel that Washington and Moscow were issuing invitations to an October 30 peace conference, to be held in Madrid.

15 Mujahideen killed in Kabul: Afghan Mujahideen killed three civilians and wounded seven in a rocket attack on the eastern town of Mehtar Lam on Friday, Kabul radio said, reports Reuter from Islamabad. The broadcast, monitored in the Pakistani capital of Islamabad, said the missiles hit houses, shops and public buildings in the town, capital of Laghman province. Government forces killed 15 Mujahideen and wounded 22 in a counter-attack, the radio said.

The rocket barrage was the second on Mehtar Lam in three days. Five people were killed and 16 wounded in a similar attack on Wednesday.



WASHINGTON: Newly sworn US Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas (C) kisses his wife Virginia (R) after taking his oath as the 10th justice to the High Court seat. Bush (behind Mrs Thomas) and Barbara Bush look on during the White House ceremony. — AFP/UNB photo

Hindus gather at Ayodhya to build Ram Temple

AYODHYA, Oct 19: Thousands of Hindus gathered on Friday in this remote temple town for a ritual during which they plan to build a shrine in an area Muslims claim to be their own sacred land, reports Reuter. The religious dispute has led to at least 2,000 deaths over the past two years in street battles between Hindus and Muslims. The 40-day ritual is being held by the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) or World Hindu Organisation and is just two km (one mile) from the white domed mosque both Muslims and Hindus claim. Hindus say the mosque was built by Muslim emperors after razing a temple at the birthplace of the warrior King Rama, one of their most venerated gods. Muslims say it is difficult to pinpoint where Rama was born, and that they oppose

the 450-year-old mosque being pulled down. The air at the site of the Hindu ritual is, thick with the scent of marigolds as Hindu volunteers, half-naked ascetics with white ash smeared on their bodies, chant 'Jai Sri Ram' or 'victory to Lord Rama.' On one day during the ritual, the volunteers will move to the disputed shrine and begin building the temple, said VHP General Secretary Ashok Singhal. "When we start, it will be with a bang," said Singhal. "Holy saints have decreed that the construction of the Rama temple begin unannounced, and so will it be." Other VHP sources say a likely date could be October 30, the first anniversary of a bid to destroy the mosque. At least 16 people died between October 30 and November 2 last year when Hindu militants tried to storm the mosque.

the dispute is the subject of a petition in the High Court of Uttar Pradesh state, where Ayodhya falls. But the VHP says it will begin the temple construction at a spot not disputed. A group of Muslims opposing the VHP say this spot falls within the boundaries of the shrine and speak of "an emergency plan" to deal with the situation. The Muslim group says its volunteers will stage a protest rally in Lucknow, the capital of Uttar Pradesh, today. The protest is also aimed at the state government, headed by the right-wing Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), an ally of the VHP. During the state elections, the BJP campaigned on a plank of Hindu resurgence and promised to build the Rama temple.

C'wealth leaders agree to ease sanctions on South Africa

HARARE, Oct 19: Commonwealth leaders agreed to ease sanctions on South Africa, signalling an improved atmosphere on a divisive issue that sparked friction at past summits, reports Reuter. They resume their discussions against the spectacular backdrop of the Victoria Falls today in a mood markedly more relaxed for the absence of Margaret Thatcher. Officials in some of the 50 delegations said the summit was notable for a lack of animosity engendered at previous conferences by the former British Minister's fierce opposition to sanctions against South Africa. Her successor John Major has charmed fellow Commonwealth leaders and

although he differs with them on sanctions, he has done so in a way that has preserved the peace. Indian Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao announced on Friday the summit had agreed to begin a phased lifting of sanctions to encourage South Africa in its transition to non-racial democracy. British officials said they backed more dramatic help for Pretoria's reeling economy but one added: "sanctions" is not really a big issue. Sanctions imposed by the Commonwealth have had little economic impact on South Africa, which is more concerned with restoring its access to credit from rich nations. The Commonwealth deci-

sions on sanctions pleased the African National Congress (ANC), whose President Nelson Mandela went to Harare to argue for similar action. He persuaded summit delegates not to invite a South African government representative to Harare, but President F W De Klerk managed to put his point of view across anyway. He argued his case on transitional arrangements for South Africa in a lengthy interview with the Editor of Zimbabwe's Herald newspaper, published on Friday. The summit leaders will use the weekend at the Victoria Falls resort for informal talks on a conference declaration.

Choonhavan replaced from Thai Nation Party

BANGKOK, Oct 19: Air Chief Marshal Sombon Rahong was formally confirmed as head of the Thai Nation (Chart Thai, TNP) Party today replacing deposed Prime Minister Chatchai Choonhavan as leader, a party spokesman said, reports AFP. Sombon, currently Governor of the Airports Authority of Thailand, was unanimously elected party leader because of his close association with the Thai military and the military-supported Justice Unity Party (Samakkhi Tham, JUP), the spokesman said. "The JUP is expected to be the core party after elections next year, the spokesman said. The confirmation of Sombon reinforces relations between the two parties and increases the probability of straight tussle for Prime Minister between the current



Choonhavan

top military leader, General Suchinda Kraprayn, and his predecessor, General Chaowalit Yongchayudh, analysts said. The TNP and the JUP have already reached an agreement not to compete against each other in the forthcoming election, expected by April next year. The JUP, former earlier this year, is seen by analysts as a vehicle for Suchinda to gain the prime ministership if he so decides. Suchinda, Army Chief and Supreme Commander as well as the number two man in the National Peace Keeping Council (NPCK), the official name of the junta which toppled Chatchai in a February coup, has neither confirmed nor denied an intention to seek the prime ministership. "I will not turn down an opportunity to serve the country, he said recently after having earlier denied that he harboured such ambitions.

Kashmir seeks British help to save Dal Lake

SRINAGAR, India, Oct 19: Kashmir is urgently seeking assistance from Britain to save its biggest tourist attraction, the picturesque, sweet-water Dal Lake, from possible death in the next 10 to 20 years, reports AFP. The first clear sign of the threatened extinction of the lake, which is surrounded by forested hills and terraced Mughal gardens, came in mid-August this year when a sticking film of red algae spread over the surface. The colour changed from blue to green and blood red in

clear sunlight. Experts here say the disturbing phenomenon could spell disaster for the lake, home to Kashmir's famous tourist houseboats. The lake has already shrunk in size from 32 square kilometers (13 square miles) to just 12 square kilometers (five square miles) because of human encroachment and pollution. According to well-known Madras ecologist J J Pai, who was invited by the state government to examine the red algae threatening the lake, the critical sector has been grow-

ing acidity and a falling pH level in the water. Dal Lake used to be slightly alkaline most of the time, with a pH factor of 7.5, but after acid rains and snows in the catchment areas contaminated by smoke from oil well fires in the Gulf last winter, the pH factor has dropped to 5.5. Since the dividing line between acidic and alkaline is considered to be a pH level of seven, and red algae thrives in an acidic medium, it is feared the whole lake will turn into a vast marsh in the next 20 years. A government statement circulated here in the state capital this week said the assistance sought from Britain would be for partial funding of a 229 million pound sterling (392 million dollar) project for the integrated development of Srinagar city and Dal Lake. The statement pointed out that British aid, both technical and financial, would be sought to help solve the city's sewage and the lake's houseboat sanitation problem. A high-level committee of engineers which met in Srinagar recently called for ef-

Havel supplies arms to Burmese junta: US official

WASHINGTON, Oct 19: Czechoslovakia, whose president nominated Burmese dissident Aung San Suu Kyi for her 1991 Nobel Peace Prize, is selling arms to the ruling junta that holds the laureate under-house arrest, a US official said Friday, reports AP.

The Czechoslovak president, Vaclav Havel, is due here Monday on a state visit that will include talks with President Bush and a White House state dinner. The Norwegian Noble Committee named Mrs Suu Kyi last Monday for the \$1 million prize, citing her for "one of the most extraordinary examples of civil courage in Asia in recent decades." It was also announced in Oslo that Havel had nominated her.

Abducted former Kashmir minister rescued

SRINAGAR, Oct 19: In a dramatic rescue operation, armymen today rescued the former Jammu and Kashmir Tourism Minister, Mrs Khemlata Wakhloo and her husband from a small village between Tangmarg and Baramulla district in northern Kashmir and also flushed out four Hizbullah militants who were guarding them, reports PTI.

Elsewhere in the trouble torn valley, nine persons in a killing five militants were killed in separate incidents since last night. Tassaduk Ahmad Dev, brother-in-law of the union Parliamentary Affairs Minister, GN Azad and Puran Anand Sharma, a Deputy Superintendent of J and K police who were kidnapped on September 22 and 24, spent yet another day in captivity.

Soviet CP official commits suicide

MOSCOW, Oct 19: A senior Communist Party official has committed suicide by jumping from the balcony of his flat — the third to plunge to his death since the failed August coup against President Mikhail Gorbachev, reports Reuter. Dmitry Lisovolk, 54, a former official of the International Department of the party's Central Committee, died after jumping from the balcony of his 12th-floor apartment, Tass news agency said on Friday. An investigation has been launched into the motives for his suicide on Thursday night, Tass said.

Cuellar's plea to free abducted Romanian envoy

NEW YORK, Oct 19: UN Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar called Friday for the immediate release of a Romanian diplomat abducted by Sikh militants in New Delhi last week, reports AFP. Perez de Cuellar expressed his "deep concern" about threats on the life of Romanian Charge d'Affaires Liviu Radu, on the eve of a deadline set by his Sikh captors for the government to concede to their demands. Radu was grabbed by militants while driving to work from his home in south New Delhi on October 9.

Yeltsin vetoes Parliament decision to hold local poll

MOSCOW, Oct 19: Russian President Boris Yeltsin on Friday vetoed a Russian Parliament decision to hold local elections in December, the Russian news agency RIA announced, reports AFP. The Russian Congress of People's Deputies set the date for the election of local administrators and municipal councilors for December 8 earlier this year. But on Thursday the Russian Parliament refused to yield to Yeltsin's request that the poll be put off until next year.

Off the Record

'Bush promotes racism and sexism in US'

WASHINGTON: Two candidates for the Democratic nomination — one black, both from the south — on Thursday accused President George Bush of intentionally dividing the United States by promoting racism and sexism, reports Reuter. "I think we've had, for the first time since I've been adult, a President who has put a key in the lock on the progress of civil rights," said Virginia Governor Douglas Wilder, the first black elected Governor of a US state. "The President is presiding over the disuniting of our country," Wilder said in a joint appearance with Arkansas Governor Bill Clinton on the NBC-TV Today show.

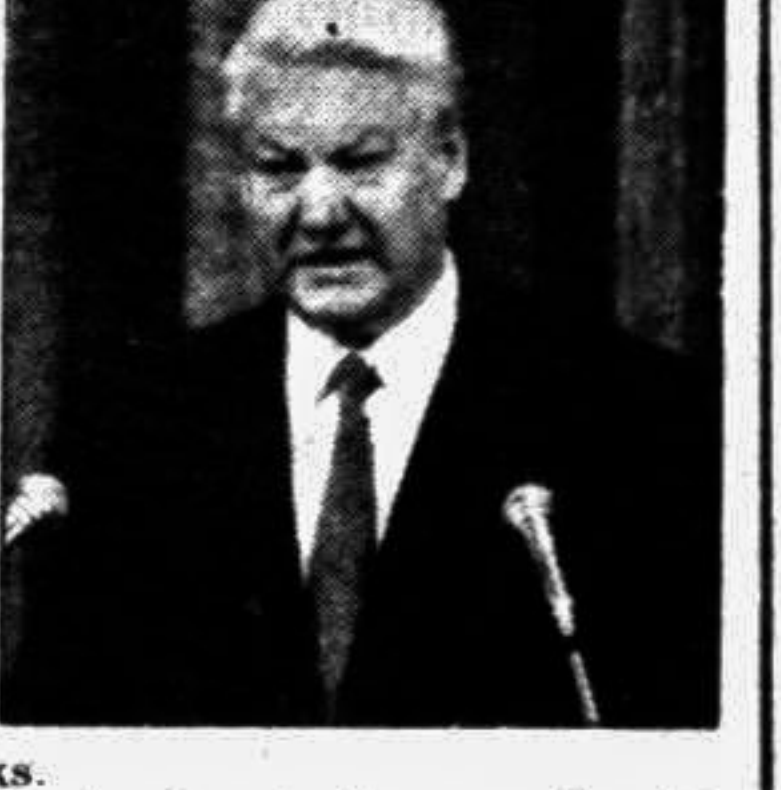


Wilder and Clinton are both seeking the nomination of the Democratic party — the candidate will be chosen at a convention in New York next summer — to run against the highly popular Bush in the November 1992 election. The two spoke in the aftermath of the bitter confirmation hearings on Clarence Thomas to be a Supreme Court justice. Clinton accused Bush of being anti-women in his references to Law Professor Anita Hill, who accused Thomas of sexual harassment. "George Bush certainly bears no glory for his personal attack on Anita Hill, which is consistent with a lot of his anti-women positions," Clinton said. Wilder also said, and Clinton agreed, that Hill was treated "like a piece of trash" by Republicans and other supporters of Thomas, a conservative black judge. In the closest-ever Senate vote, he was confirmed on Tuesday to succeed liberal black justice Thurgood Marshall.

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Yeltsin to star in Soviet movie

MOSCOW: Tanks rolled through Moscow on Friday and a man who looked remarkably like Boris Yeltsin raced to the Russian parliament to rally the masses. Shooting broke out, but only with cameras, reports AP. The Soviet coup may be coming to a theater near you. More than a few Muscovites got a jolt on the startling first day of shooting of a \$14 million movie. "We're redoing the coup," grinned Danish director Jan Jung, standing on Moscow's Kutuzovskiy Prospect as 11 Soviet T-72 tanks on flatbed trucks and 10 armoured personnel carriers wrecked havoc with midday traffic. The trucks unloaded the tanks on the busy downtown street in preparation for a scene depicting the start of the Aug 18-21 coup by hard-liners in the military and the Communist Party. Harried police tried to direct traffic around the armoured column and gawkers lined the sidewalks. The tanks were parked just a few hundred meters (yards) from the Moscow River bridge that was barricaded with buses to prevent troops from reaching the Russian parliament, where Yeltsin had marshalled the opposition. Jung said buses will be used to again barricade the bridge and 4,000 extras will be hired for the resistance scenes in front of the parliament building. "It took a long time to get government approval," he said. Jung said he wants Yeltsin himself to play the gripping, heart-stopping scene in which the Russian federation president mounts a tank outside the parliament to declare his opposition to the coup. "We're negotiating," the director said.



Jakarta: A senior Indonesian Minister suggested on Friday that a woman run for Vice President in the next Presidential election in 1993, reports Reuter. "There is no ban (on women candidates). People or parties from now on can nominate women to run for the Vice-Presidency," Interior Minister Rudini was quoted by Antara news agency as saying. "There are Indonesian women that I think would be a candidate... The important thing is that the Vice President can cooperate with the President," said Rudini, himself often named as a possible candidate for the number two job. He did not suggest any names for the job, which in 46 years of independence has always been given to a man. No woman has ever held a senior Ministerial post in Indonesia which has the world's largest Muslim population. Indonesians are due to elect a President and Vice President in 1993. President Soeharto, who has led the country since crushing an abortive coup in 1965, is widely expected to stand again.

A woman next to Soeharto?

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13,000 Iraqi POWs refuse to go home

GENEVA, Oct 19: Some 13,000 Iraqi prisoners of war held in Saudi Arabia since the end of the Gulf war have refused to go home and are now considered to be refugees, an International Committee for the Red Cross (ICRC) official said here Friday, reports AFP. Angelo Gnaedinger, who is in charge of the ICRC's Middle East department, said that 71,000 Iraqi POWs had already been sent home from Saudi Arabia, while Iraq had repatriated a total of 6,700

POWs and civilians. The ICRC has also handed over to their respective countries the bodies of 23 Iraqis and 16 allied coalition soldiers. Kuwait has called for an investigation into the cases of 2,700 missing people, while Saudi Arabia has asked for details concerning some of its soldiers who it says were buried alive by coalition tanks when the first assault waves overran their defensive positions in occupied Kuwait.

US to move Clark Air Base headquarters

WASHINGTON, Oct 19: The United States will begin moving the headquarters of its 13th Air Force at Clark Air Base in the Philippines to a base in Guam later this year, the Air Force said Friday, reports AFP. Clark Air Base headquarters will relocate to Andersen Air Force Base in Guam, bringing with it selected military airlift command and communications units now in the Philippines, the US military said in a release Thursday.