

Bush to play active role in Madrid

WASHINGTON, Oct 26: President Bush will broaden his role at the Mideast peace talks by meeting in Madrid with Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir and the heads of Arab delegations, reports AP.

The president said Friday the United States would be an active partner in the search for peace. His meetings with Shamir and the Arab foreign ministers would give him a chance to establish the U.S. goals at the very outset.

Bush was unwilling to discuss them in detail at a White House news conference. He cautioned that only the Israelis and Arabs could reconcile their "enormous differences."

Bush disclosed to reporters his meeting with Shamir, and then Secretary of State James A. Baker said in an interview with the U.S.-based Cable News Network that Bush "will find ways" to meet with the heads of the Arab delegations as well.

Cambodia faces 'humanitarian disaster'

WASHINGTON, Oct 26: Cambodia is facing a "humanitarian disaster" and the international community must do more to cope with the repatriation of hundreds of thousands of Cambodian refugees, a US refugee group says, reports AFP.

In a report released here this week, the refugee policy group said that despite several United Nations plans to address the problem, few concrete actions have yet been taken to solve the human needs of Cambodia.



TORONTO: An unidentified woman leaves our Diana while posing for a group photo with minority women of Toronto. Diana was visiting the Qutario Coalition of Visible Minority Women. —AFP/UNB photo

Arafat to stay out of talks, UN to act as silent observer

Palestinian team off to Madrid: Israeli pullout to be demanded

AMMAN, Oct 26: Palestinian negotiators set out on the first leg of their journey to peace talks with Israel, carrying their people's dreams of a homeland and leaving behind the threat of increased violence, reports Reuters.

A cheering, ululating crowd sang the banned Palestinian national anthem as a bus carrying the 14 delegates and their advisers pulled away from an east Jerusalem hotel on Friday. They crossed the Israeli border checkpoint into Jordan from where they will leave on Monday for the Madrid peace talks, seen as their best chance to end the festering four-decades-old Palestinian problem.

"We are going to the peace conference with open hearts and open minds to demand an Israeli withdrawal..." Haider Abdel-Shafi, the dignified 72-year-old head of the delegation, said after crossing the bridge.

"As we left there were people in tears—we were in tears," said Iman Ashrawi, the Palestinian spokeswoman banned by Israel from appearing at the negotiating table because she is from the disputed city of Jerusalem.

The Journey is of tremendous significance and tremendous importance and it is tinged with a great deal of pain as well," Ashrawi, an English literature professor, said in

Amman. Ashrawi and Faisal Al-Husseini, head of their steering committee, are among several advisers whom Israel will not deal with at the table — fearing they would raise taboo issues because they come from Jerusalem or have clear link with the Palestine Liberation Organisation.

Palestinians consider those and other conditions set on their participation humiliating but have overcome hardline opposition to attending the talks they hope will result in an Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories.

The team, part of a joint delegation with Jordan, meets up with its Jordanian counterparts today.

Ashrawi said she believed the Palestinians' rainfall uprising against Israeli rule would intensify once the peace talks opened on Wednesday.

"There is a tremendous spirit of determination among the Palestinians. ... I think (the uprising) will intensify. I think it will be more developed and consolidated," she said.

The 1.75 million Palestinian of the West Bank and Gaza, armed almost exclusively with stones, have waged a nearly four-year-old campaign against Israeli rule.

More than 830 Palestinians have been killed by Israelis in the revolt, most of them stone-throwers shot dead by police. About 60 Jews have also been killed in Arab-Israeli violence since the uprising began in

December, 1987.

AP adds: PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat Friday said the Palestinian delegation to the Mideast talks would negotiate without his help. He also promised to abide by the con-

ference's outcome.

"Anything these Palestinian leaders in this conference will accept, I will accept," he said in a television interview by satellite from Tunis, Tunisia. The Palestinians are going

to the conference in a joint delegation with Jordan, and will be advised by a 14-member committee. The talks are scheduled to start Wednesday in Madrid, Spain.

A major issue of conflict in convening the talks was the background of Palestinian negotiators. Israel ruled out anyone from outside the territories it has occupied or anyone with strong PLO ties.

Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir spokesman said Israel would consider pulling out of the talks if the delegation included Saeb Erekat, who said in an interview Thursday that his delegation "was chosen by the PLO."

In response to a question from interviewer Phil Donahue whether the Palestinian delegates represented the PLO, Arafat said yes, but only because "any Palestinian represents the PLO."

"They have declared many times because they are Palestinians, they are leaders in our occupied territories — they will represent the PLO," he said.

The response indicated how Arafat is seeking to maintain a PLO profile in the talks yet not provoke the Israelis enough for them to back out.

"They are not in need of me now," Arafat said "They have all the probabilities and capabilities and everything."

In explaining why the Palestinians chose to attend the conference, Arafat said it was to "avoid a split in the peace process"



Issues and players in ME talks

Here are some key facts about the Middle East peace conference, which is scheduled to open Oct. 30 in Madrid, reports AP.

ORIGIN — The conference is the outcome of diplomacy begun by President Bush in March 1991 after the Gulf War, with U.S. prestige high after Iraq's defeat. Secretary of State James A. Baker III made eight trips to the Middle East in as many months to negotiate the terms for the peace conference, the first since an abortive December 1973 parley in Geneva.

FORMAT — All the delegations will attend a ceremonial opening session of the conference, co-sponsored by the United States and to Soviet Union. The conference is then expected to break up into separate bilateral negotiations between Israel and the Syrian,

Lebanese and Jordanian-Palestinian teams.

Later, the delegations are to discuss regional issues such as compensation for Palestinian refugees, arms control, economic development and sharing water resources.

PARTICIPANTS — Direct participants will be Israel and its Arab neighbours: Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and Egypt. Egypt signed a separate peace treaty with the Jewish state in 1979. The Palestinians will attend in a joint delegation with Jordan. The United Nations and the European Community will observe.

The Palestinian representatives were the subject of dispute. Israel refused to negotiate with anyone having ties to the Palestine Liberation Organization, or with any Palestinian from Jerusalem or

from outside the Israeli-occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Most Arabs consider the PLO to be the sole legitimate representative of the world's 5 million Palestinians, but Israel considers it a terrorist group.

In the end the Palestinians, in consultation with the PLO, named a 14-member delegation, all from the occupied territories along with a 14-strong "advisory committee" representing Jerusalem and the Palestinian diaspora.

ISSUES — Peace, Israel wants Arab states to recognize and make peace with the Jewish state proclaimed May 14, 1948. The Arabs have tacitly accepted if their conditions concerning Palestinians, Israeli-occupied Arab territories and Jerusalem are met.

Most Arabs and the PLO have already accepted Israel's existence within its borders

before the 1967 war, although only Egypt and the PLO have publicly stated such.

West Bank and Gaza Strip: These former Jordanian and Egyptian territories, populated by Palestinians, were captured by Israel in the 1967 Middle-East war. The lands are considered key to any settlement.

The Palestinians want to create an independent state on the territories. They are willing to accept a transition period of autonomy under international control and confederation of their state with Jordan, whose population is more than half Palestinian, under King Hussein.

Israel has said repeatedly it will not trade land for peace despite U.N. Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 ordering this. The Jewish state is offering only limited autonomy under Israeli control.

Burma refuses to pass on Major's greetings to Suu Kyi

LONDON, Oct 26: Britain said on Friday Burma had refused to pass of Prime Minister John Major's congratulations to detained Opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi for winning the Nobel peace prize, reports Reuters.

Burma's Foreign Ministry refused to accept Major's message from Britain's Ambassador in Rangoon Julian Hartland-Swann on Friday, a spokeswoman at Major's office said.

"We are disappointed at this response. We would have wished to see the Prime Minister's message passed on

to this lady," the spokeswoman said.

Aung San Suu Kyi, 46, is believed held incommunicado in her compound near Rangoon, where she was put under house arrest in July 1989 for leading broad-based opposition to what the Nobel Prize Committee called "a regime characterised by brutality."

Despite her detention and restrictions on campaigning, her National League for Democracy won a landslide victory in the May 1990 general election, taking 392 of 485 contested seats.

The military government

refused to honour the result and has silenced the party through arrests and intimidation.

Aung San Suu Kyi is the most prominent of several thousands political prisoners believed held in Burma. Dissidents and human rights groups like Amnesty International say torture is common.

AP adds from Rangoon: United Nations investigators hoping to gain a clearer picture of Burma's widely criticized human rights situation met Friday with a member of the country's ruling military

junta.

Special investigator Yozo Yokota, a professor of international law at International Christian University in Tokyo, and Jacob Moller, a senior official of the Geneva-based U.N. Human Rights Center, met for an hour with Maj. Gen. Khin Nyunt, Burmese officials said.

Khin Nyunt is the secretary of the junta, which calls itself the State Law and Order Restoration Council.

The officials, who requested anonymity, gave no information about the contents of the discussion, and said details of the visit would be released only after Yokota departs on Saturday.

Yokota's visit follows one last December by another U.N. human rights investigator, Sadako Ogata. She was not allowed to meet with opposition leaders, including leading dissident Aung San Suu Kyi, or visit Rangoon's notorious Insein Prison.

Mrs. Ogata filed a strong report that led the U.N. center to denounce the Burmese government for human rights abuses. The center planned to send Yokota to Rangoon six months ago, but the junta delayed the visit by suggesting another investigator be named.

Ed Kennedy pledges to reform his lifestyle

WASHINGTON, Oct 26: Sen. Edward M. Kennedy took responsibility Friday for "faults in the conduct of my private life" and pledged to reform his lifestyle so it would not interfere with his work, reports AP.

In an extraordinary speech, Kennedy sought to set aside lingering questions about whether his flamboyant social life was affecting his Senate performance.

"Individual faults and frailties are no excuse to give in," Kennedy said. "Unlike my brothers, I have been given length of years and time. And as I approach my 60th birthday, I am determined to give all that I have to advance the causes for which I have stood for almost a third of a century."

For Kennedy, it was a confession of sorts, although he gave no specifics when acknowledging faults. It also was a dramatic effort to restore his tattered standing at home and as a liberal leader of the Democratic Party.

Democrat said in the text of a speech he was delivering at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University in Cambridge, Mass.

"It also involves the disappointment of friends and many others who count on me to fight the good fight. To them I say: I recognize my own shortcomings — the faults in the conduct of my private life. I realize that I alone am responsible for them, and I am the

one who must confront them. Today, more than ever before, I believe that each of us as individuals must not only struggle to make a better world, but to make ourselves better too."

The speech marked another crossroads in a remarkable but checkered political career. Kennedy's social activities are the stuff of Washington legend, but so, too, is his tireless legislative work.



WASHINGTON: Senate Judiciary Committee member Strom Thurmond pointing a finger at Senator Edward Kennedy during recent testimony of Black judge Thomas here recently.

Off the Record

Garlic a miracle cure for allergies

TOKYO: A Japan researcher claim to have found a new virtue of garlic to add to the long list of beneficial qualities already attributed to it by Asian gourmets — as a miracle cure for allergies, a report Friday said, reports AFP.

The daily Yomiuri quoted Yukio Tanaka, a researcher from Osaka's national health service, as saying that garlic and, to a lesser degree, onions and leeks could save off allergic reactions.

Tanaka, who recently presented the results of his research to a meeting of the association of dietary hygiene, studied the anti-allergic effects of 44 kinds of vegetables to laboratory mice.

The results showed that garlic's effectiveness in combating allergies was eight times as great as that of onions and of our times that of leeks.

Garlic enjoys great popularity in China and, even more so, in Korea, where it has been best known for improving the circulation and preventing hypertension and arteriosclerosis.

In Europe, garlic is widely thought to get rid of intestinal worms.

Saudi playboy arrested

LONDON: Sheikh Mohammed al-Fassi of Saudi Arabia, a millionaire playboy turned political dissident, has been arrested in a move which signals a crackdown by King Fahd on wayward members of the Kingdom's nobility.

The Sheikh, 38, was arrested at the international Hotel in Amman, the Jordanian capital, and summarily deported to Saudi Arabia, according to family and friends.

The family says it has been told by contacts in the security services that he is being held naked at a secret location in the Saudi capital, Riyadh, though there has been no official news of his fate.

The arrest is highly unusual as Sheikh Mohammed is brother-in-law of one of the country's most senior Princes, Turki bin Abdul Aziz, a former Deputy Defence Minister.

There is now speculation that the arrest is evidence of a power struggle between leading princes trying to discredit Prince Turki through his brother-in-law.

Prince Turki's reported high living in American hotels during the Gulf crisis led the US State Department to ask the Saudi royal family to keep its members in order.

Sheikh Mohammed, whose close ties with the royal family protected him in the past, was once known in the American media as "the Sheikh of Sunset Strip".

He is well known in the West for his immense fortune and his £52 million divorce settlement from his Italian-born wife Dena in 1983.

He angered his Beverly Hills neighbours by painting his garden statuary in full anatomical detail. Residents of Fulmer, Buckinghamshire, where his father has an estate, were dismayed by a 2 am fireworks party.

During the Gulf war, however, he moved from playboy to open opponent of the royal family, calling for political reforms and broadcasting on Saddam's propaganda radio station, the "Voice of the People of Nejd and Hijaz".

Egypt refused to extradite him when the Saudis asked. But King Hussein, who had sided with Saddam during the war, obliged the Saudis when the Sheikh went to Amman to set up an opposition party. His arrest appears to be the first fruit of a post-crisis rapprochement between Jordan and Saudi Arabia.

Friends portray Sheikh Mohammed as immature or unbalanced. "He really never grew up and he is not a threat to security, more of a silly boy," said a family friend.

Saudi Arabia no doubt recognises that he is no Oliver Cromwell, but is apparently using him as an example to the dozens of Western-educated princes who want more democracy in the kingdom.

In November last year King Fahd, with one eye on American public opinion, promised to set up a consultative council to dilute his absolute monarchy, but nothing has come of it.

German doctors deceived

BONN: Seven doctors accepted a bogus invitation by a German magazine to test a dangerous drug on elderly patients in return for cash and a trip to Hawaii, reports Reuters.

The Munich-based journal Wiener said on Friday it gave nine doctors age guidelines and background information about testing the drug on old people suffering brain disorders. It specifically warned them the drug could induce strokes and dangerously low blood pressure.

Seven of the nine doctors based throughout Germany promised to administer the drug after a reporter posing as a drug firm representative offered them 200 marks (118 dollars) per patient and the paid holiday. However, the Hoax was revealed before the tests were carried out.

"They are no more stupid or unscrupulous than many other doctors," said Wiener, which did not name the doctors. They were just unlucky.

Liz faces fans in star role as honeymooner

LOS ANGELES: There was a gleam in the fable violet eyes as Elizabeth Taylor, Mrs Larry Fortensky, flounced into the public eye for the first time since her most recent, top-security mar-quee wedding.

She was, she reminded us, on honeymoon, and it was a pastime that clearly suited her well. She swung a trim hip, twirled the skirt of her summery frock, white leaves on cerise, and giggled girlishly.

"My honeymoon will go on, I hope for the rest of my life," she said.

It was her eighth honeymoon and follows wedding to Mr Fortensky, a former lorry driver.

Miss Taylor had broken it for an afternoon to keep a date promoting her perfume, White Diamonds, at a huge shopping mall in a suburb south of Los Angeles, 20 miles or so from the hillside where the Hollywood sign was lost in the smog.

Those not invited to the wedding were invited to the mall, and could take tea with Miss Taylor in return for purchasing a \$300 (£177) "special edition" flask of White Diamonds.

She had failed to keep the date earlier, as she had been overcome by illness in the run-up to her wedding. But Miss Taylor has retained the art of warming her audience.

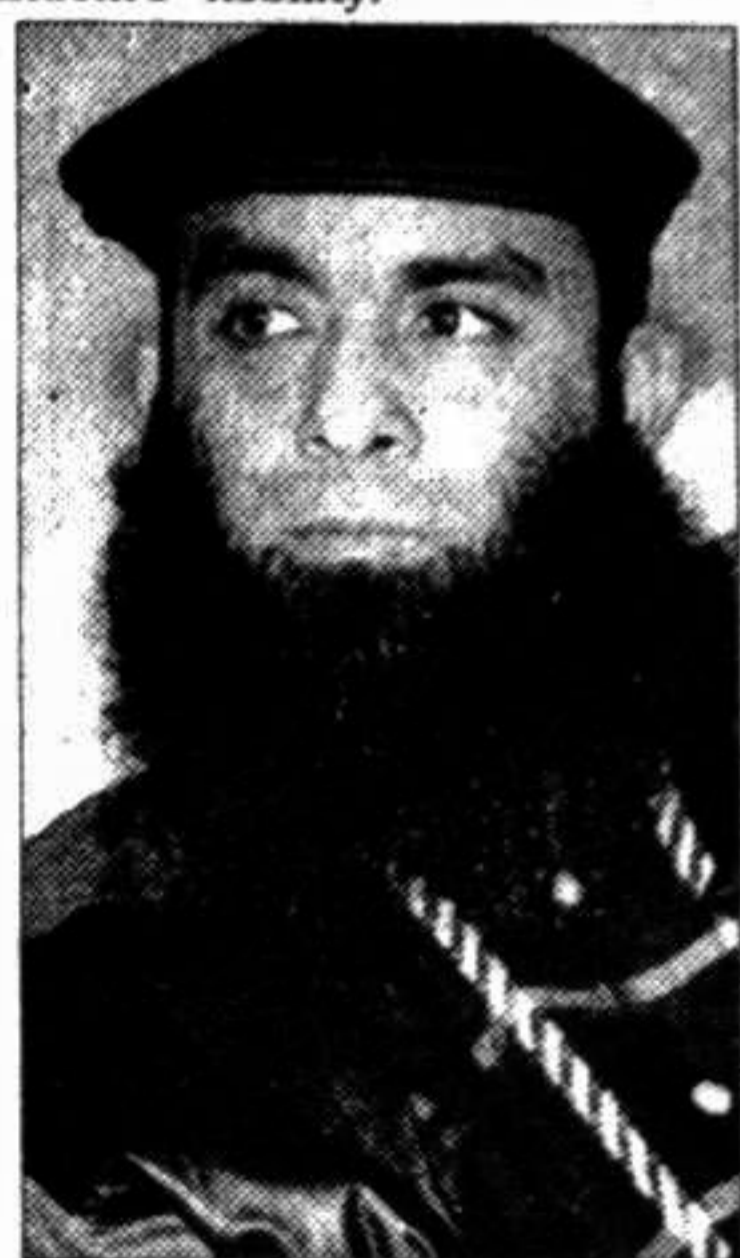
"I had a commitment, and I wanted to say 'Hi' to you, even on my honeymoon," she said.

"We love you Liz," cried the fans, popping flashbulbs in a Kodak frenzy.

Mr Fortensky was unavailable for public display. He had chosen the day to answer outstanding charges of driving while under the influence.

Miss Taylor has become known, unflatteringly, as the Hollywood Bride. But she is still given the star treatment.

This included the Chauffeur Shuffle. It involved the parking of two large, black stretch-limousines outside the front entrance of the venue. They attracted a large crowd, with attendant television crews and security men sweating in the sun.



BRIEFLY

Violence erupts in Zaire: Sict and looting erupted again in Zaire Friday, this time in lower Zaire province between 200 and 300 kilometres (135 to 190 miles) west of the capital Kinshasa, reliable sources said, reports AFP from Kinshasa.

There was unrest in the towns of Mbanza-Ngungu (formerly Thysville), Lukla, Boma and Muanda. At Lukula, a cement works employing 600 people was attacked by soldiers who looted its warehouses of foodstuffs, the sources said.

Federal troops leave Slovenia: Exactly four months after Slovenia declared its independence the last batch of Federal soldiers Friday left the breakaway republic. Streets were sounded to celebrate the event, reports AP from Yugoslavia.

Croatia also proclaimed independence on June 25. But unlike neighboring Slovenia, that republic is still embroiled in a bloody war with the army and Serb insurgents.

Hostilities in Slovenia lasted only 11 days. At the time of the fighting in June and July, some 20,000 Yugoslav People's Army soldiers were on Slovenian territory.

38 Maoist rebels killed in Peru: Army troops have killed 38 Maoist Shining Path guerrillas in several clashes in a remote jungle valley in south-eastern Peru this week, the military said on Friday, reports Reuters from Peru.

Soldiers killed 29 guerrillas in attacks on seven Shining Path camps in the valley of the river Ene, about 350 km (220 miles) southeast of Lima on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, the military said in a statement.

It added that a 55-year-old unidentified teacher described as an ideologist was captured during the clashes. Another nine guerrillas were killed in another clash farther up the river Ene, the statement said.

UN gets blueprints of Iraqi N-arms: UN weapons inspectors have obtained Baghdad's complete blueprints for a working nuclear weapon, UN weapons experts confirmed Friday, reports AP from United Nations.

Before the Gulf War disrupted Iraq's nuclear programme, Baghdad could have produced a "working" nuclear bomb in about a year or 15 months, UN nuclear expert Michel St Michel has said.

Only inadequate supplies of fissionable uranium and plutonium prevented Baghdad from building the bomb, the French nuclear expert said Thursday.