

**BRIEFLY**

**US army official in Pakistan :** A senior US military official arrived in Pakistan on Sunday for the first of two visits that will focus on Washington's efforts to pressure Islamabad into scaling back its nuclear programme, reports Reuter from Islamabad.

General Joseph Hoar, commander of the US army's Central Command, arrived for a three-day trip. He will be followed into Islamabad today by a top expert on nuclear and security matters.

He will be the most senior US official to visit Pakistan since relations were frozen a year ago over worries Islamabad had stepped up efforts to become a nuclear power.

All military aid and new economic assistance was halted when President George Bush refused to certify that Pakistan was not making a nuclear device.

**NASA to launch Atlantis today :** The US space agency NASA has begun final preparations for launching space shuttle Atlantis and its cargo of military surveillance tools on a 10-day mission, reports Reuter from Florida.

Atlantis will carry six astronauts, including a US army intelligence officer, on the sixth and last shuttle mission of 1991. Liftoff was set for 6:51 pm EST (2351 GMT) on Tuesday.

The crew will place a 300 million dollar missile warning satellite in orbit, test two kinds of SP cameras and conduct medical research to aid future shuttle flyers.

**Kohl may seek Honecker's extradition :** Chancellor Helmut Kohl may intervene personally to press Moscow to extradite ousted East German leader Erich Honecker, who faces manslaughter charges at home, Germany's Justice Minister was quoted as saying on Sunday, reports Reuter from Bonn.

Klaus Kinkel told the newspaper Die Welt he foresaw a few more problems in getting Honecker back after Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev spoke out against deporting the former Communist leader.

Asked if Kohl would have to intervene, Kinkel said it could be that another initiative is necessary.

Gorbachev was quoted in a German magazine interview as saying Honecker's case is first of all a humanitarian question.

**Two IRA members blown up :** The IRA said on Sunday two of its members were blown up when they planted a bomb in an attack aimed at an army band in the southeastern England town of St Albans, reports Reuter from Belfast.

In a statement released to Belfast's downtown radio commercial station, the Irish Republic Army said: "The two people who died in the bomb explosion in St Albans were volunteers in the IRA."

"Both were on active service at the time of the explosion," the statement said.

**NZ restores ties with S Africa :** The New Zealand government is ending restrictions on travel and scholarly ties to South Africa, but is maintaining trade and investment sanctions, Prime Minister Jim Bolger said Monday, reports AP from Wellington.

He said the move was prompted by the decision of the 51-nation Commonwealth group of Britain and its former colonies to end the sanctions imposed in protest of Pretoria's apartheid policy of racial discrimination.

The decision ends restrictions on consulates and visas, cultural and scientific links, tourism promotion, and direct air services between New Zealand and South Africa.

**Baker gets response to inquiries on 800 prisoners**  
**Beijing links controlling missile technology to lifting of US embargo**

BEIJING, Nov 18 : China has responded to inquiries on some 800 political prisoners and committed to international norms on the export of missiles and nuclear technology, US Secretary of State James Baker announced here Sunday, reports AFP.

China pledged to observe Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) guidelines in exchange for the lifting of US sanctions preventing the sale of high-speed computers and satellites to two Chinese firms, Baker told a news conference after 18 hours of talks with Chinese leaders.

Beijing also proposed to complete ratification of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) by year-end and to complete formalities for acceding to the treaty three months later, he said.

The MTCR involves 18 countries committed to restricting sales of missiles to sensitive parts of the world.

and China's conditional commitment to it would affect sales of M9 missiles to Syria and M11 missiles to Pakistan.

The secretary of state described his talks as "difficult" and said "by far the greatest amount of time was devoted to human rights."

He announced that China had responded to a US list of about 800 political prisoners by putting them into four categories: Those convicted, those under investigation, those released and those whom the authorities could not identify.

Chinese leaders also pledged to grant exit permits to any intellectual or family member of a Chinese dissident abroad not subject to criminal proceedings, Baker said.

"I made clear that progress on human rights is essential to progress in the overall relationship," Baker said. "I told my Chinese counterparts that my country will not turn a

blind eye toward the plight of human suffering or political repression."

In other areas, Baker said, the two countries had reached agreement in principle on the text of a memorandum of understanding to prevent exports of Chinese goods made by prison labour.

The accord provides for prompt investigation of suspected violations of laws and regulations, the exchange of information and meetings between experts, the Secretary of State said.

He welcomed "positive intellectual property rights proposals," by the Chinese side that he said involved copyrights, sound recordings, computer software and patent protection.

Chinese officials are due to travel to Washington November 21-22 for talks aimed at resolving a section 301 investigation that may result in sanc-

tions against China unless the trade issue is resolved by November 26.

Both sides "shared the international concern about the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula and we will work on this issue," Baker said.

"All this represents gains," the Secretary of State said. "I didn't come here expecting a dramatic breakthrough," he said calling on China to sustain the process of addressing problems in the relationship.

"If this progress falters it will not be for lack of our effort," said Baker, the highest US official to visit China since the violent military suppression of the 1989 Tiananmen Square democracy movement.

"This visit to China, without preconditions, I think is proof of the United States' commitment to an improvement in the climate between our nations and in the well-being of the Chinese people," he said.



RAMALLAH (West Bank) : Palestinian spokeswoman Hanan Ashrawi (C) sings liberty songs with Israeli peace activist women who visited her. The peace activist women were supporting Ashrawi, as she is accused by the Israeli authorities of breaking the law against meeting with PLO officials. —AFP photo

**Croatia starts talks on evacuations**

ZAGREB, Yugoslavia, Nov 18: Resigned to its most damaging military loss in nearly five months of war, Croatia has begun negotiations on evacuating the sick and wounded from Vukovar, reports AP.

Besieged for over three months, a constant reminder of the Croatian desire to leave Yugoslavia, Vukovar's resistance had been a source of pride for Croatia and an embarrassment for the army. Capturing the city places a swatch of eastern Croatia firmly under the control of the federal army and Serb insurgents.

Late Sunday, Croatian radio quoted a Croatian government statement as saying negotia-

tions would begin immediately with the army on evacuating thirty sick and wounded.

The once-pretty river city is now largely in ruins, and hundreds of badly wounded people are said to be trapped in the basement of its destroyed hospital.

Alekmka Mirkovic, a Croatian journalist reached by telephone Sunday in Vukovar, said the city's remaining civilians were "sitting and waiting for death."

The Croatian government earlier had warned the army that if it permitted harm to civilians, "no one will be able to guarantee the security" of Yugoslav army soldiers in Croatia.

**War to go on if Najib kept out of interim govt : Kabul**

KABUL, Nov 18: With a cut-off of its Soviet weapons supply only weeks away, the government called Sunday for wide-ranging peace talks to bring about a political solution to the nearly 12-year civil war.

The appeal came in response to a joint statement issued Saturday in Moscow following talks between Soviet officials and a delegation from the US-backed Afghan resistance.

The Moscow statement supported a UN peace plan in which an interim government would oversee elections in Afghanistan.

A comprehensive solution is only possible through an intra-Afghan dialogue. Only in this way can the issue be discussed comprehensively for arriving at nationwide peace, a ceasefire and an end to the war," the Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

But Foreign Ministry spokesman Abdul Wahid Qayoumi said that "the war will go on" if an Islamic interim government excludes President Najibullah and his Homeland Party.

Diplomats in Kabul said the Moscow statement appeared to be a face-saving device for the guerrilla delegation, which was criticized by fundamentalist groups that boycotted the Moscow talks.

The chief rebel delegate at the talks, Burhanuddin Rabbani, said Friday the guerrillas control 85 per cent of Afghanistan and could establish control over the rest of the country if Moscow stops sending arms to Kabul.

Soviet Union to remove Najibullah from power and cancel all treaties made with his regime.

AFP adds: Kabul heaved a sigh of relief Sunday that its worst fears did not come true at talks between its Soviet mentors and Mujahedeen rebels fighting to topple it.

The Najibullah regime had stayed silent for two days refusing comment on the outcome of the talks on grounds that it was studying the implications of the joint statement released Friday after the talks in Moscow.

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Sharon, locked in a dispute with the Finance Ministry over state sponsored construction, said the step might be taken after Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir returns from a trip to the United States towards the end of the month.

There is no alternative but to halt all phases of Housing Ministry construction as soon as the Prime Minister returns to Israel unless a solution is found and all (financial) commitments are honoured, he told reporters.

**Son Sen seeks permission to meet media**  
**Mass anger against Khmer Rouge leaders runs high**

PHNOM PENH, Nov 18 : Son Sen, facing a wave of anger over mass killings when his Khmer Rouge communists ran Cambodia, has asked his government enemies for permission to hold a news conference now he is back in Phnom Penh, reports Reuter.

"I am very happy to come here," the former schoolteacher said nervously on his return to the city his ultra-Maoist fighters emptied at gunpoint when they seized power on April 17, 1975.

"We are not afraid," an aide, who identified himself only as Vanna, said in the government

guesthouse where Son Sen has been housed. "We just feel normal."

After receiving numerous requests for interviews from foreign reporters milling outside Sakol 1 guesthouse, Son Sen sent a message to Phnom Penh Prime Minister Hun Sen through a Foreign Ministry official asking for authorisation to meet the media, an official said.

"We have to have permission to go out," Vanna said. "We have a busy schedule."

He said before Son Sen began his first full day in the capital on Monday.

Son Sen arrived in Cambodia on Sunday to take up a seat on the Supreme National Council (SNC), which will set policy for the country until the United Nations can organise a general election in 1993.

Hun Sen, the Khmer Rouge's arch-foe, said he was afraid to visit Son Sen in his hotel in case he was stoned by residents angry at the Khmer Rouge army chief's presence.

Cambodians demanding the return of "fathers, mothers and children who perished" when the Khmer Rouge ruled the country from 1975 to 1979.



MOSCOW : Soviet Foreign Minister Boris Pankin leads the Emir of Kuwait, Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmed Al-Sabah, to a reception line after his arrival in Moscow. The Emir is visiting the USSR to express his thanks for the Soviet's support of the Gulf war. —AFP photo

**Rajiv aide wins Amethi seat**

NEW DELHI, Nov 18 : Satish Sharma, a close friend of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, won a parliamentary by-election Monday, filling the seat that Gandhi had won the day before he was killed by a suicide bomber, reports AP.

Sharma, a former Indian Airlines pilot and a colleague of Gandhi, won a seat from the Amethi parliamentary constituency in Uttar Pradesh state.

Sharma, a candidate for the governing Congress Party, outpolled his closest rival by nearly 100,000 more votes, Press Trust of India said. The second-place finisher was from the main opposition group, the Hindu revivalist Bharatiya Janata Party.

Nationwide, Congress won six of the nine parliament seats where results had been declared by Monday. Fifteen seats were at stake in Saturday's by-elections.

**Yeltsin decrees may not change economic scenario**

MOSCOW, Nov 18: Russian President Boris Yeltsin's latest decrees wresting control over the economy from central Soviet leaders could become paper tigers unless they bring quick improvements.

The decrees show a take-charge approach to the crumbling Soviet economy just ahead of crucial talks beginning Monday with the Group of Seven major industrialized democracies closely monitoring economic reform.

By assuming responsibility for the Soviet Union's economic crisis, Yeltsin faces a challenge at least as great as the assault on democracy he successfully resisted during the hard-line coup attempt in August.

**US to maintain commitments in Asia : Powell**

TOKYO, Nov 18 : General Colin Powell, Chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, pledged today to maintain the US security commitment in Asia, a Japanese defence agency official said, reports AFP.

The United States will maintain its commitment in Asia," the official quoted Powell as telling Sohei Miyashita, the Agency Chief.

"The United States should avoid exuding the impression that its presence is eroding in the region," Powell reportedly said.

He added, however, that Washington would carry on with its so-called East Asian strategic initiative, which forecasts a US troop cut in Japan, South Korea and the Philippines.

November 24, a Shamir aide said on Sunday. She was checking a report that the visit might be extended by two days.

The Housing Ministry plans to build more than one third of its new housing on Arab land next year, leftist parliament members said last week.

Out of a total of 15,000 housing units planned for 1992, 5,400 will be in the occupied territories with 4,650 in the West Bank alone, they said.

**Off the Record**

**Touch of class: Jacqueline to appear at Smith's trial**

PALM BEACH(Florida): In a surprise move, Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis will appear at the rape trial of William Kennedy Smith next month, a source close to the case said on Sunday, reports Reuter.

The former First Lady, who a second source said decided to attend the trial only after family infighting, will sit with several other members of the Kennedy clan to show her support for Smith, 31. He is charged with raping a 30-year-old Florida woman on March 30.

Defence lawyers believe Onassis's presence in the west Palm Beach courtroom will bolster the credibility of Smith's claim that he had consensual sex with the woman and did not rape her. Onassis is Smith's aunt by marriage.

The lawyers believe that Onassis will evoke feelings of sympathy and the memory of her husband, assassinated President John Kennedy, among jurors.

"Jackie's appearance will add a lot of class. It will show the jury that a woman of every strong character supports will," said the source.

Onassis will appear at least once—and perhaps for several days—next to Smith's mother, Jean Smith, Smith's sister Amanda Smith and several Kennedy cousins when testimony begins December 2.

But Onassis's decision to support Smith comes after several months of vicious family infighting, said another source close to the Kennedy family.

Onassis initially distanced herself from Smith and his uncle, senator Edward Kennedy, and told her son, John Kennedy Jr, a Manhattan assistant district attorney, to do the same.



**Coffee has no role to push pressure up?**

LONDON : Doctors who tell patients with high blood-pressure not to take coffee are depriving them of the beverage pointlessly, according to a Scottish doctor who has studied the matter, reports AFP.

Dr Tom MacDonald of Dundee University said in an article in the British medical journal that caffeine, a drug contained in coffee, has no effect on blood pressure.

Working with some 50 people suffering from high blood-pressure, he has half of them live for a fortnight on a strict no-caffeine diet, while the others drank their cups of coffee as usual.

He found that those who drank coffee indeed had a higher caffeine level in their blood, but that this did not affect their blood-pressure at all.

**Fortune bothers pizza emperor**

DETROIT: The billionaire owner of a US pizza chain and professional baseball team says his wealth bothers his spirituality and he may sell his businesses and possessions to prepare himself for heaven, reports Reuter.

Tom Monaghan, a devout Roman Catholic, has amassed a fortune in art works, rare automobiles and real estate in addition to his Domino's pizza empire and the Detroit Tigers Ball Club.

However, I've always understood the (Bible) verse about the rich man getting into heaven, Monaghan, 54, said in an interview with the Detroit news published on Sunday.

None of the things I've bought, and I mean none of them, have ever really made me happy, he said. Most of the time I was buying things to get attention to have people notice me. That's the sin of pride, the worst sin of all, and I'm the guiltiest person.

I'm the biggest hypocrite there is. So anything I've got that gives me pleasure only for selfish reasons I'm selling."

Monaghan went from being nearly broke to being a billionaire as estimated by Fortune magazine by developing a network of pizza stores that promise home delivery in 30 minutes or less. He paid \$53 million dollars for the tigers, 25 million dollars for a wooded retreat and gold course, eight million dollars for a Bugatti automobile and millions more for homes and furniture designed by Frank Lloyd Wright.

**Suchinda vows to quit after election**

BANGKOK, Nov 18 : Thailand's military government told Monday that elections to restore democracy would be held in early March, and vowed the ruling junta would give up power after the votes are counted. The date was the earliest offered so far for elections, reports AP.

"You will never see the NPKC after the general election," military commander General Suchinda Kraprayoon told a news conference.

Suchinda appeared Monday to back away slightly from full military support for the draft, which was widely seen as heading for quick approval by the NPKC-approved National Legislative Assembly.

would let military members hold Cabinet posts and be prime minister and expand the military-appointed Senate's powers to rival those of the elected House. It also would forbid debate on candidates for prime minister.

The document has drawn heavy criticism from politicians, academics, students and the press, who call it undemocratic and a throwback to days of dictatorial rule.

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**Rains kill 40 in India**

NEW DELHI, Nov 18: Torrential rains and flash floods have killed at least 40 people, washed away hundreds of houses and rendered thousands homeless across southern India, reports AFP.

The deaths were reported from the three coastal states of Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, and the weather office predicted more rains, domestic news agencies and state-run television said.

At least 20 people were killed in Andhra Pradesh, where flash floods marooned hundreds of villages and caused widespread destruction to crops, roads and irrigation channels, the television said.

Seven of the victims were washed away by rain waters following a cyclonic storm, the television report said but did not say how or when the others died.

Neighbouring Karnataka and Tamil Nadu accounted for six and 14 deaths respectively, the Press Trust of India (PTI) reported.

**Cash crisis may force Israel to halt settlements**

JERUSALEM, Nov 18 : Hardline Housing Minister Ariel Sharon, principal architect of extensive Jewish settlements in Arab territories occupied by Israel, has said all such building work might be suspended because of a cash crisis, reports Reuter.

Sharon, locked in a dispute with the Finance Ministry over state sponsored construction, said the step might be taken after Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir returns from a trip to the United States towards the end of the month.

to halt all phases of Housing Ministry construction as soon as the Prime Minister returns to Israel unless a solution is found and all (financial) commitments are honoured, he told reporters.

Sharon has long spear-headed an aggressive campaign of building in territories captured by Israel in 1967. This has infuriated US officials who view the settlements as an obstacle to peace.

He said a total of 29,000 housing units would be affected by any housing freeze. This would include construc-

tion in Arab East Jerusalem, the West Bank Gaza strip and the Golan Heights. Construction in Israel and in the occupied territories has been spurred since 1989 by the arrival of over 350,000 Soviet Jewish immigrants.

Immigration absorption and settlement costs have forced the Finance Ministry to delay payments to a wide variety of ministries. A 120-day delay of 10 billion dollars in US loan guarantees for immigrant housing has further complicated allocation of

funds. The delay, at the initiative of President George Bush, sparked a war of wills between Washington and Shamir before Middle East peace talks which began in Madrid on October 30.

The United States has specified that its foreign aid must not be used to build settlements in the occupied territories, forcing the Finance Ministry to juggle its funding.

Shamir is on a 10-day visit to the United States and is expected to return to Israel on

million Palestinians who began an uprising against Israeli rule in 1987. Some 112,000 Jews already live among them in settlements and emerging towns.

The Golan, a strategic plateau captured from Syria, is home to 15,000 Jews and 18,000 Druze Arabs. Earlier this year Sharon unveiled long-range plans to settle a million Jews in a greater Jerusalem settlement belt extending from the Jerusalem's eastern suburbs westward to a West Bank city overlooking the Jordan river.