

BRIEFLY

Japan ready to recognise 3 Baltic states: Japan is ready to extend diplomatic recognition to the three Baltic states once Moscow has approved their bid for independence, government spokesman Misoji Sakamoto said on Monday, reports Reuter from Tokyo.

Sakamoto told Japanese reporters Tokyo supported moves towards peaceful independence for Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, with reflected the strong desire of their peoples, and hoped it would be implemented at an early date.

According to an official in the Prime Minister's office, Sakamoto told a questioner: "Japan is planning to recognise the three nations' independence once the Moscow central government does so."

Gaddafi to open man-made river: Muammar Gaddafi opens the taps this week on his great man-made river—1,900 km (1,200 miles) of pipeline carrying water from deep beneath the sands to make the Libyan desert bloom, reports Reuter from Tripoli.

Gaddafi says the water from natural lakes below the desert will transform it into a garden of Eden, recalling the days when North Africa was an agricultural centre for the ancient city of Carthage.

The project carries with it his dream of keeping his country well-watered long after its oil runs dry, and of turning Libya into a land of agricultural plenty able to export food and water to Arab allies.

His neighbours, their won water resources stretched close to the limit, are watching with interest to see if his ambitious scheme to just a costly mirage.

Iraq slates UN resolution: Iraq on Sunday denounced a U.N. resolution that imposes controls on the sale of Iraqi oil and said it was "not applicable under the rules of international law," reports AFP from Baghdad.

Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Mohammad Said al-Sahhaf, quoted by the Iraqi News Agency described Resolution 706 as "immoral" and "iniquitous" and seeks to "hide dubious political intentions behind a false humanitarian facade."

The Security Council on August 15 approved Resolution 706, which authorises Iraq to sell 1.6 billion dollars worth of oil to acquire food and medical supplies that will be distributed under United Nations supervision.

Sahhaf dismissed the measure as "not applicable under rules of international law and the charter of the United Nations."

20 killed in Punjab: Eight policemen, eight Sikh militants and a poll candidate were among 20 people killed in violence in the northern state of Punjab late Saturday and Sunday, the Press Trust of India (PTI) said, reports AFP from New Delhi.

In another incident, militants kidnapped the father of a senior police official in Punjab, PTI said.

About 12 gunmen struck around midnight Saturday at a post near the town of Tarn Taran, killed five policemen and escaped with their weapons including two self loading rifle and a sten gun, PTI said.

In Punjab's Sangur district, security forces shot dead four hard-core militants in a gunfire exchange late Saturday, state government officials were quoted as saying.

Militants late Saturday shot dead Bikar Singh, an independent candidate running for the state legislature in elections to be held next month, officials reportedly stated.

Typhoon kills 79 in ROK: Typhoon Gladys, which dumped a record rainfall on southern South Korea last week, left 79 people dead, 24 others missing and caused at least \$2.3 billion of property damage, officials said Monday, reports AP from Seoul.

No further casualties were expected, according to officials at the National Anti-disaster Relief Center. However, they said property damages were certain to rise as full surveys on flooded industrial areas had yet to begin.

The damages estimate included \$194 million in damage and production losses at industrial plants and \$130 million in damage to residential areas, farmland, roads, railways and other public facilities, according to the center and the Trade and Industry Ministry.

Ministry officials reported that more than 1,600 businesses—most of them in Pusan, Ulsan and Pohang—sustained damage.

They said a good number of flood-damaged plants remained closed Monday because flood water had yet to recede.

They said the government would extend loans to help businesses to recover from flood-caused damage.

25 crew missing in Indian Ocean: Twenty-five crew members of a Greek-registered bulk carrier are missing after the vessel sank in rough seas in the Indian Ocean south of the Island of Reunion, Australian rescue authorities said on Monday, reports Reuter from Sydney.

Two crewmen had been rescued and the French navy was coordinating a search for the remaining crew, a spokesman for Australia's Maritime Safety Centre said.

The 72,063-tonne vessel went down on Saturday after leaving the Western Australian port of Dampier on August 11 bound for port Talbot, Wales with a cargo of iron ore.

Singapore polls to test political style

SINGAPORE, Aug 26: With his government already returned to power, Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong wants his personal style of leadership to be the key issue in Saturday's election. It seems to be the only issue, reports AP.

There are no divisive political issues in this affluent country, which has a booming economy and full employment.

Goh's People's Action Party kept control by default when it was unopposed for 41 of the 81 seats in Parliament as nominations closed on Aug. 21. The other 40 seats are at stake Saturday.

"I called this election and I remain the issue in the con-

situencies to be contested," Goh told reporters after the week opposition was unable to field enough qualified candidates.

Five opposition parties nominated 38 people and there are seven independents. In the Sept. 1988 election the opposition vied for 70 of the 81 seats and won one.

By implication, Goh is asking the voters to endorse his style—which is considerably less authoritarian than the hard-nosed methods of his predecessor, Lee Kuan Yew.

A Western diplomat described Lee's 31 years in power as carrots and sticks—and not too many carrots.

Everything that I devoted my life to building collapsing : Akhromeyev

MOSCOW, Aug 26: Marshal Sergei Akhromeyev, Military Adviser to President Mikhail Gorbachev, who committed suicide, left a note saying everything he had devoted his life to building was collapsing, an independent radio station said on Sunday, reports Reuter.

Radio Russia said Akhromeyev, former Soviet Armed Forces Chief of Staff, had left a suicide note suggesting he was dependent at developments in the country following the failed attempt to depose Gorbachev.

Investigators have discovered a note written before his death in which the Marshal wrote that everything he had devoted his life to building is collapsing in the country now," the radio said.

Presidential spokesman Vitaly Ignatenko told Russian Federation television that Akhromeyev had killed himself at his office in the Kremlin. He gave no other details.

Igor Malashenko, another Presidential spokesman, told the US television network ABC that Akhromeyev had shot himself on Saturday night.

"He did it yesterday late evening in his Kremlin office," Malashenko said.

Akhromeyev, appointed Presidential Adviser in December 1989, has not been named publicly as a participant in last week's abortive coup attempt.

The 68-year-old Marshal, who played an important part in superpower arms negotiations in the 1980s, was the second leading Soviet figure to commit suicide since the coup's collapse.

Interior Minister Boris Pugo, a member of the Emergency Committee that announced Gorbachev's overthrow, shot himself on Thursday to avoid arrest after the takeover failed.

Russian Republican television painted a sympathetic portrait of Akhromeyev, describing him as "a tough conservative in politics though cultured and intelligent."

It suggested that his death was a result "of the destruction of his ideals."

Although an active voice of conservatism, four months ago Akhromeyev gave a ringing rebuff, in a video symposium linking Moscow and Paris, to suggestions the army would consider overthrowing Gorbachev.

"Please don't worry about the Marshals of the Soviet Army overthrowing President Gorbachev or presenting some sort of danger.... this just does not apply."

Defence Minister Marshal Dmitry Yazov, now sacked and under arrest, was among the eight members of the Emergency Committee which tried to seize power.

Gorbachev has named General Valentin Varennikov, Hea Def Land Forces, as one of the key plotters and sacked Akhromeyev's successor as Chief of Staff, General Mikhail Moiseyev.

Akhromeyev used his influential post and his seat in the Soviet Parliament to denounce what he saw as a coming "democratic" coup led by Russian President Boris Yeltsin.

The democrats have now set the aim of preparing and staging a second Nuremberg trial of the Communist Party," he told an interviewer recently.

The plotters, who included the KGB Chief, sent tanks onto the streets of Moscow and imposed a state of emergency in areas of the country.

Three people died in a clash with tank troop who tried to burst through a barricade near Yeltsin's parliament early on Wednesday morning. But the military made no attempt to take the building by force.

The Marshal was born in the village of Vindret, in central Russia, and educated at the Frunze Higher Naval School. He later studied at the Forces Academy and the General Staff Academy.

Akhromeyev, still a cadet, fought Nazi Forces outside Leningrad in 1941.



RIGA (Latvia) : A barricade near the Latvian parliament is covered with anti-Soviet graffiti August 25. Latvia declared its independence from the Soviet Union August 21 as the hard-line Communist coup in Moscow failed.

Baltic states await foreign envoys

France urges Gorbachev, Yeltsin to work together to stop chaos

PARIS, Aug 26: France's Foreign Minister Roland Dumas said on Sunday Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev and Russian President Boris Yeltsin must stop squabbling and work together to prevent chaos in the Soviet Union, reports Reuter.

These two men need to get on with each other. If you add a quarrel to the chaos and dismantling that could lead to the brutal removal of one of them, then that would be a complicating factor," Dumas said on French television.

In a clear indication that France wanted the Soviet President to retain his power, Dumas said Gorbachev was responsible for introducing the reforms that had led to "a revolution in the true sense of the word" in the Soviet Union.

"If I had to put it crudely, I'd say that if there wasn't a Gorbachev there wouldn't be a Yeltsin," he said.

Yeltsin said on Sunday that Gorbachev had to share the blame for last week's failed coup because it was the Kremlin leader's handpicked allies who organised the plot.

for recognition by the West as independent states once again, reports AP.

Argentina announced Sunday and Japan on Monday that they recognized the independence of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia.

Lithuanian President Vytautas Landsbergis said a French envoy was expected in Vilnius, the capital, on Monday to re-establish diplomatic relations, and Latvian officials said a Danish ambassador was to arrive.

Lithuanian officials also said that they would begin taking control of border points beginning Monday. A crucial session of the Soviet Union's national parliament, the Supreme Soviet, was scheduled in Moscow and Baltic officials expected their independence to come up.



MOSCOW : Undated file picture of Yevgeny Shaposhnikov, who was appointed new Soviet Defence Minister August 23 following the arrest of his predecessor Dmitri Yazov for his part in the attempted coup to oust President Gorbachev.

US may block Cambodian settlement, says Sihanouk

PATTAYA, Thailand, Aug 26: Prince Norodom Sihanouk, the head of Cambodia's Supreme National Council (SNC), said here today that his chief concern in Cambodia's peace process was that the United States might block a possible compromise settlement among rival factions of the southeast Asian nation, reports AFP.

"We are capable of achieving a consensus, but the difficulty will be to get the approval of our American friends," he said.

The 68-year-old prince was talking to reporters shortly before a crucial three-day meeting of the SNC to discuss a United Nations Peace Plan on Cambodia. The SNC is an interim body formed with representatives of the factions, Phnom Penh's Vietnam-allied government and a guerrilla alliance dominated by the Chinese-backed Khmer Rouge.

The United States has said it would accept only limited modifications to the UN blue print.

Phnom Penh and the Khmer Rouge, a radical Marxist group driven from power in Cambodia following a

Vietnamese invasion almost 13 years ago, have strongly disagreed over clauses in the plan on military arrangements and the role of the UN during a transitional period.

But recently there have been signs that a possible compromise might emerge, particularly on at least partial demobilisation of the contending armies.

Prince Sihanouk said he believed the factions could work out "counter-proposals" to the UN blueprint, drafted by Security Council permanent members—the United States, China, Soviet Union, France and Britain—both on military issues and the future role of the world organisation in Cambodia.

Both, Prince Sihanouk said, "Are more flexible... because their (respective) allies, China and Vietnam, have come to a mutual understanding and rapprochement."

The Khmer Rouge and Phnom Penh Prime Minister Hun Sen are like the Chinese and the Vietnamese. They are more or less OK now" he said.

But, he continued, "The United States and Britain might say they don't appreciate our counter proposals."

The "perm-five" are holding meetings on Cambodia, also in this Thai beach resort, on Thursday and Friday.



Indonesia may head NAM

JAKARTA, Aug 26: Indonesia is the clear favourite to become the next Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement when its foreign ministers meet in Accra next week, senior diplomats from non-aligned nations said.

Foreign Minister Ali Alatas, who will represent Indonesia in Accra, said he expected Nicaragua, the only other candidate for chairman, to withdraw.

Off the Record

Pastor embarrasses Bush, Barbara

KENNEBUNKPORT (Maine): President George Bush's pastor said in a sermon on Sunday that the United States had been preoccupied with communism and ignored many of its own problems, reports Reuter.

As Bush listened intently from a front pew at Saint Ann's Episcopal Church, the Reverend John Allin said the political changes in the Soviet Union should trigger self-examination by Americans.

Allin said the United States had long been "seized with a desperate fear" on communism. "Thank God we are being delivered from that right now," he said.

Allin, a retired presiding US Episcopal Bishop, added, "while we have been preoccupied with the evils of communism, we have frequently failed to examine the problems in our own systems."

"What would it be like if we bent our total efforts to feed and to heal as we have often bent our total efforts to defend" against a perceived Soviet military threat, he asked.

The President, who has often been accused by critics of neglecting domestic problems, was not asked about the sermon by reporters who accompanied him to church, and did not comment on it.

Bush and his wife Barbara, who also attended the service, shook hands with Allin afterwards.

Allin, a soft-spoken man who delivered his sermon with touches of humour, cited some examples of how the United States could improve itself. And he said the American people were as responsible for reforming the system as their leaders.



UFO messenger in Colombia!

BOGOTA (Colombia): About 3,000 Colombians flocked to a village to hear a farmer tell how he was whisked away by a spacecraft and sent to earth with a message from extra-terrestrials for US President George Bush, a Colombian news agency reported on Sunday, reports Reuter.

Luis Rodriguez claims he was carried away by space aliens who implanted an object in his shoulder which kept him permanent contact with them, Colprensa News Agency said.

Thousands of UFO enthusiasts from all over Colombia gathered in the village of Tablo, near Bogota, to hear Rodriguez recount his close encounter with the aliens.

Rodriguez, 37, said he would not rest until he had given the urgent message to Bush and to Colombia's Catholic Cardinal Mario Revollo.

Fierce fighting in Croatia: 11 killed

BELGRADE, Aug 26: At least 11 people were killed Sunday in Croatia in clashes pitting Croatian forces against Serbian nationalists and Yugoslav Army units Serbian, Croatian and Yugoslav military sources said, reports AP.

The Croatian news agency HINA said there had been particularly heavy fighting Sunday in the city of Vukovar, near Borovo Naselje in eastern Slavonia, a disputed area of eastern Croatia which has a large Serbian population.

It said that Croatian forces had been attacked by Serbian terrorists and infantry, armoured vehicles and federal army aircraft.

Three people were burned to death when their vehicle was strafed at Vukovar by military planes, HINA said.

A soldier was killed and seven others were injured near Borovo Naselje when their truck was hit by mortar fire from Croatian forces, the Yugoslav military said in a statement.

Belgrade television said that two civilians were killed in Borovo Selo, which is separated from Borovo Naselje by a no-man's land.

Numerous fires were burning Sunday in Vukovar and Borovo Naselje and trucks and buses had been destroyed, HINA said that a Federal Army tank and truck had been destroyed.

Eleven people wounded Sunday had been hospitalized in Vukovar.

In the area of Knin, a Serbian civilian and a member of the local Serbian Territorial Defense Forces were killed by Croatian National Guards, according to Serbian official in Knin.



PAKRAC (Yugoslavia) : A member of the Croatian National Guard takes cover from machine gun fire behind the wall of a house August 25. Serbian forces attacked Pkrac in an effort to take control of the town.

—AFP / UNB photo