

BRIEFLY

Baker may meet with Palestinians : Secretary of State James Baker said Tuesday he might meet with Palestinian leaders from the Israeli-occupied territories next week in Washington, reports AFP from New York.

"I've seen some Palestinians from the territories in Jerusalem, I've seen them in Washington. It's possible, I suppose, that I might see them in Washington, although there's nothing definitive on that," Baker said. "There's been no time arranged for any such meeting."

Baker spoke at the start of a meeting with Yugoslav Foreign Minister Budimir Loncar on the sidelines of the 46th U.N. General Assembly.

Baker said, "There is no Palestinian delegation," as if to stress that he would not receive Palestinian leaders as envoys of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO).

Guatemalan govt, rebels end talks :

The Guatemalan government and rebels Tuesday ended talks on human rights abuses with no definitive accords, but they made some headway, an advisor to the talks said, reports AFP from Mexico City.

"This has been without doubt the most important meeting yet" where "the most work" has been accomplished, said Monsenor Rodolfo Quezada Touno.

He said the five-day meeting cannot be considered a failure because representatives from the rebel National Guatemalan Revolutionary Union and the government of President Jorge Serrano at least have determined their differences.

Father Quezada, who heads the National Reconciliation Commission, and United Nations representative Fransesc Vendrell oversaw the negotiations which are to resume at the end of October at an undetermined location.

UK won't export nuclear materials' :

The Foreign Office announced Tuesday that Britain is to strengthen controls on the export of nuclear materials, reports AP from London.

In a statement issued in London on behalf of Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd, the Foreign Office said Britain would not export nuclear supplies or materials to countries which had "un safeguarded" nuclear installations.

A Foreign Office spokesman, speaking on condition of anonymity, said these were installations not subject to checks by the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Up to now, Britain has allowed the export of nuclear materials to countries which have such un safeguarded installations, on condition that the installation for which the material is intended is itself safeguarded.

The Foreign Office statement said the policy had been changed "as part of our policy of seeking further to strengthen the barriers against nuclear proliferation."

He added that the move had not been prompted by the revelations about Iraq's development of nuclear weapons, but said the situation in Iraq gave "added impetus" to the new policy.

Leftists kill police major in Lima :

Suspected Maoist guerrillas killed a police major and a student on Tuesday, police said, as the army reported that the Shining Path had killed 14 peasants in the southeastern region of Ayacucho, reports Reuter from Lima.

Three suspected Shining Path militants killed Antero Landuro Suarez, 38, a major in Peru's anti-terrorist police division, as he was leaving his home in the San Miguel section of Lima, a police spokesman said.

He had just returned from serving in Ayacucho, birthplace of the Shining Path's 11-year-old insurgency, police sources said.

In Ayacucho, 570 kms (330 miles) southeast of Lima, police said they found the body of an unidentified student early on Tuesday and that the Shining Path was likely responsible.

Leak occurs at Czech power plant :

Officials at a nuclear power plant reported a small leak of radioactive material, but said the situation was under control, the CTX news agency said Tuesday, reports AP from Prague.

The official news agency said the leak occurred late last week at the Jaslovské Bohunice power plant and represented only 0.25 per cent of the plant's allowable yearly limit.

The accident probably was caused by a leakage of water from a fire safety system that washed contaminated soil into the sewerage system of the plant, CTX reported.

Plant officials have taken necessary steps and have the situation under control, it said. The report provided no other details.

The plant's two reactors are located in the Slovak republic 120 kilometers (75 miles) from the Austrian capital, Vienna, and about half that distance from the Slovak capital of Bratislava.

They are based on a Soviet design and built with Czechoslovak hardware. The plants have been in operation since 1985. Austria has expressed concern about the safety of the reactors and would like Czechoslovakia to shut them down.

US rejects Iraqi allegation :

The United States on Tuesday rejected as ludicrous a charge by Iraq that US leader of UN inspection team in Baghdad was a spy for the Central Intelligence Agency, reports Reuter from Washington.

"They (UN inspectors) are certainly not spies," Defence Department spokesman Pete Williams told Pentagon reporters. "That's a ludicrous allegation."

"Obviously, that's a ridiculous charge," said State Department spokesman Richar Boucher at the department's daily briefing.

In Baghdad, Deputy Prime Minister Tareq Aziz told reporters earlier on Tuesday that David Kay, whose 45-strong nuclear weapons inspection team was being held by 60 Iraqi soldiers in the centre of Baghdad, was not working for the United Nations but for the CIA. "Our information is that this man is a CIA officer," he said.

Sikh leader killed in Punjab :

Police shot dead a wanted Sikh rebel commander in Punjab as overnight violence linked to a bloody separatist drive left another 23 people dead in the northern Indian state bordering Pakistan, reports AFP from New Delhi.

The Press Trust of India (PTI) said among the 24 killed in Sikh separatist violence were five members of a Hindu farmer's family slain in an overnight attack by the rebels in a Faridkot District village.

Indian security troops shot dead Gur Arshan Singh Jodh, a senior leader of the separatist Khalistan Commando Force (KCF) in a Tuesday morning gunbattle in Sangrur, PTI said.

Jodh was wanted for the alleged murder of 50 people including Punjab police officers.

'Khmer Rouge won't dominate new govt' :

Prince Norodom Sihanouk assured President Bush on Tuesday that the Khmer Rouge would not dominate the new government Cambodians will elect under UN supervision, reports AP from New York.

"He indicated that the political sentiment is such that he thinks (Premier) Hun Sen would be the dominant political force," Assistant Secretary of State Richard Solomon said afterward.

Sihanouk was deposed as Cambodia's ruler in 1970 by a US-backed coup. The Khmer Rouge, supported by China, took over in 1975 and killed more than 1 million Cambodians before Vietnamese troops invaded in late 1978 to force out Pol Pot's regime.

Sihanouk allied himself with the Khmer Rouge and the non-Communist forces of Son Sann to try to overthrow the Vietnam-backed government, but after years of US support the Bush administration withdrew its recognition of the insurgent coalition in 1989.

The shift reflected concern the Khmer Rouge would take over if the rebels won. Solomon called that "an ongoing concern."

But Sihanouk assured Bush that after a fair election he would emerge as the president and Hun Sen would share power with him, Solomon said.



HARARE : Unidentified Italian and Lebanese mothers with their children are among a group of 50 foreigners who were airlifted from Zaire to Zimbabwe following riots in Zaire. — UNB/AFP photo

2 US Patriot battalions leaving for Riyadh

NEW YORK, Sept 25 : Two US Patriot missile battalions were expected to leave for Saudi Arabia "within a few hours," an administration official said on Tuesday, in an escalation of a dispute with Iraq over inspection of Baghdad's weapon sites, reports Reuter.

President George Bush had approved dispatching the units following a request from Saudi King Fahd last week.

"We expect them to leave within a few hours," said the official, who requested anonymity, he was travelling

with Bush on a campaign swing.

The decision by Bush to send the Patriot missile air defence forces to Saudi Arabia means he is getting key forces in place if he chooses to take military action against Iraq.

Last week White House officials said Iraq still had several hundred Scud missiles which were one of their main weapons in the war earlier this year Baghdad's invasion of Kuwait.

As administration officials were outlining Bush's moves, UN diplomats said Iraq had apparently given unconditional

consent for flights by UN helicopters carrying inspectors searching for weapons of mass destruction.

British UN Representative Sir David Hannay told reporters a letter had now been received from Iraq "and appears to be unconditional acceptance for the UN inspection teams to fly their helicopters."

US television networks said the Patriot missile force involved 1,300 men and 60 warplanes had also been put on alert in the United States to move to the Gulf at short notice if necessary.

7 injured in grenade attack in Rangoon

RANGOON, Sept 25: Security units were out in force here today following a grenade attack in which seven people were injured, reports AFP.

The attack came when a grenade was hurled from a passing pick-up truck outside a cinema in down town Rangoon late Monday evening, the official working People's Daily said.

The official newspaper of Burma's ruling junta gave no reason for the attack, which was the first this year in the capital and left seven people injured.

Security forces, including soldiers in full combat gear, were making spot checks and searching vehicles today, witnesses said.

The official newspaper said the grenade was believed to be a US made device

Indian troops kill 5 Kashmiris along border with Pakistan

ISLAMABAD, Sept 25: Four civilians died and five were seriously injured when Indian troops fired on villages along the common frontier in Kashmir, the official Associated Press of Pakistan (APP) said Tuesday, reports AFP.

The report alleged that the Indians targeted villages at Athmuqam late Monday destroying four houses and a shop and raising the casualty toll this month to 11 killed and 25 injured.

Seven people were killed and 20 wounded in similar "unprovoked" cross-border firing by the Indian forces four days ago, the agency said.

The incidents followed a ceasefire that went into effect along the dividing line of con-

trol in Kashmir at the start of September after week-long clashes that left an estimated 60 Pakistani and Indian soldiers dead.

APP on Tuesday quoted at top foreign ministry officials saying that Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif was making "sincere efforts to engage India in a serious dialogue to settle the Kashmir dispute."

"India should stop pretending that there is no Kashmir issue," said Foreign Ministry Secretary General Akram Zaki in an interview with APP in New York.

Zaki said Pakistan would make every effort at the UN General Assembly to arouse the conscience of the international community about "human

rights violations" in Indian-administered Kashmir.

Pakistan, which controls the northern one third of the divided Himalayan state, wants the dispute to be settled through a plebiscite mandated by the UN after the first Kashmir war between the two countries in 1948. In vows moral and political support to what it calls the Kashmiris right to self-determination, but India accuses Islamabad of aiding the militants fighting for independence in its only Muslim majority state.

Several thousand people have died in the Indian-controlled part of the state since early last year in violence linked to the separatist campaign.

Lankan opposition wants probe into arms supply to Tigers

COLOBO, Sept 25 : Opposition lawmakers on Wednesday requested a parliament committee be appointed to inquire into the allegation that the government gave arms to Tamil Tiger rebels, reports AP.

The request was made by opposition Sri Lanka Freedom Party member, Lakshman Kirielle.

CSCE meet treated as a tribute to Soviet democracy

MOSCOW, Sept 25 : The four-week meeting on the Human Dimension of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) that opened in Moscow on September can certainly be viewed as the West's tribute to the progress of democracy in the Soviet Union. Two previous CSCE human rights meetings were held in Paris and Copenhagen, reports IAN.

Yet, it was not without some hesitation that Soviet leaders went ahead with the planned meeting less than two weeks after the abortive rightist coup had threatened to reverse Soviet democratic reforms.

Arguments in favour of postponing the conference included political instability in this country caused by a spate of independence declarations by Soviet republics, the uncertain political future of the Soviet Union and its overriding preoccupation with internal problems.

However, these apprehensions were outweighed by possible benefits of hosting the human rights conference in Moscow at his juncture. President Mikhail Gorbachev seized on this golden opportunity to address the foreign ministers of 33 European nations plus the United States and Canada in order to call for urgent economic aid to the Soviet Union to avoid chaos and anarchy in a country sprawled on one-sixth of world land.

Apart from economic considerations Gorbachev has a special stake in injecting new dynamism into the Helsinki process at a time when the upsurge of nationalism in the Soviet Union threatens to provoke inter-republican border disputes and jeopardize the democratic process in many republics.

For a weakened Soviet centre under President Gorbachev the present conference gives a chance to involve the former Soviet republics into the Helsinki process to encourage their compliance with fundamental international principles of democracy.

The abrupt disintegration of the old Soviet Union poses many dangers to the fledgling Soviet democracy. Some republican leaders have been ex-

Off the Record

No more spouses on foreign trips

NEW DELHI : India barred government Ministers on Tuesday from taking their spouses on foreign trips, the Press Trust of India (PTI) reported, says Reuter.

Cash-strapped India is committed to cutting expenditure and opposition leaders and newspapers have criticised ministerial tours as wasteful.

PTI said the decision was taken at a cabinet meeting.

All about bodyguards

ALGIERS : Yasser Arafat told Palestinian leaders on Tuesday that their personal bodyguards would no longer be allowed to accompany them when they address the Palestine National Council (PNC, Parliament-in Exile), reports Reuter.

"What are you afraid of ? I'm the only one armed among you," the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman, dressed in his traditional green fatigues and gunbelt, told delegates in Algiers.

He interrupted the Marxist leader of the Palestine Popular Struggle Front, Samir Ghoushi, and said angrily : "Everyone rises to the podium with a guard, guarding him from what ? I reject this. Bodyguards inside our council ? This is not possible." But George Habash, leader of the radical Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, was a special case. "He can rise to the podium with two or three," Arafat said.

Panda cub born

BEIJING, Sept 24: A giant panda at a Chinese zoo has given birth to a cub after being artificially inseminated, an official report said Tuesday, reports AP.

Chengcheng, who herself was artificially bred, gave birth last Friday, and both mother and cub were in good condition at the zoo in the capital of Sichuan province, the official Xinhua News Agency reported.

The Chengdu zoo has an active programme of inseminating captive pandas, but many foreign wildlife experts argue that it would be better to reproduce conditions in the wild to encourage mating and natural pregnancies.

Most giant pandas born in captivity, especially those conceived through artificial insemination, die in their first weeks, but scientists are not sure why.

A Xinhua report a year ago said only 24 of the 1,155 pandas born worldwide as a result of artificial insemination. They said the cub born in Chengdu was the 27th artificially bred panda.

China has the world's only wild panda population, but its numbers have plummeted in recent decades to an estimated 1,100-1,500 due to poaching and human encroachment on the pandas' habitat. About 100 pandas live in Chinese zoos.

Warrior's body found in the Alps

INNSBRUCK (Austria): Scientists Tuesday are beginning their study of a frozen body discovered by tourists in the Austrian Alps that may be of a centuries-old warrior, reports AP.

The amazing well-preserved corpse could be up to 500 years old, scientists said after making an initial examination Monday.

Hikers stumbled across it Thursday at an altitude of 3,000 meters (9,900 feet) in Austria's Tyrol region.

However, Konrad Spindler of the Institute for Early History at the University of Innsbruck, noting a metal axe and lathe scraps from what seems to have been spats found near the body, said it could also be from the late 1800s.

The body, which has been flown to Innsbruck for study, shows injuries on the back and head. But there was no indication of exactly how the person died.

The skin is intact, and the corpse still has its front teeth. Aside from deterioration of the nose, the face is also remarkably well-preserved.

Scientists said they will first have to preserve the body to protect it from deterioration and hit as it been removed from its glacial preserve, before they can begin their medical and archaeological examination.

They do not expect to have results for several days.

Filipino rebels threaten to attack US targets

Arrest of Imelda ordered

MANILA, Sept 25 : A Philippine judge today ordered the arrest of exiled former First Lady Imelda Marcos after the government formally charged her with failing to pay 5.7 billion pesos (205 million dollars) in taxes, reports Reuter.

Judge Tomas Tadeo said by telephone he signed the arrest warrant after receiving copies of the formal charges but that police would have to wait for the return of Marcos from the United States to serve it.

The former First Lady will be arrested upon her return unless her lawyers post bail amounting to 175,000 pesos (6,250 dollars), Tadeo said.

AFP adds : Philippine communist guerrillas Tuesday threatened to mount new attacks on US targets after Washington refused to pull out of bases in the country despite the absence of a treaty extending their stay.

The New People's Army (NPA) command said in a statement sent to news agencies that after scrapping a unilateral ceasefire that it was ordering its guerrillas to again launch military offensives across the country.

The NPA must aimed the most severe blows and punishment at US imperialism the armed forces of the Philippines, the Aquino regime, and all its accomplices, it said.

Eight US servicemen and civilian have been assassinated

by the NPA, armed wing of the banned Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) since 1987. The NPA, has an estimated 10,000 to 15,000 guerrillas nationwide.

The NPA accused president Corason Aquino government of betraying the decision of the Philippine Senate and the country to put an end to the existence of US military bases in our country.

The Senate threw out a 10-year base treaty last week but Aquino provisionally extended the US lease on Subic Naval Base and Clark Air Base, which expired on September 16, and called for a referendum to challenge the Senate decision.



GELEZNOVODSK : Russian Kazakhstan President Nazirebaev (L) and Russian President Boris Yeltsin sign the ceasefire accord between Armenia and Azerbaijan over the disputed upper Kerbedh region Monday. — UNB/AFP photo

4 shot dead in Georgian battle

TBILISI (Soviet Union), Sept 25 : Four people were shot dead early today in a gun-fight outside a power station between pro-opposition guardsmen and police loyal to President Zviad Gamsakhurdia, the Georgian leader said, reports Reuter.

The deaths, a day after Gamsakhurdia imposed a state of emergency in Tbilisi, heightened tension in one of the Soviet Union's most volatile areas and raised the possibility of weeks of confrontation spilling over into a bloodbath.

The nationalist president, under intense pressure to step down, said rebels within the badly divided National Guard had come to the power station outside Tbilisi at 2.30 am with the aim of cutting off the republic capital's power supply.

"They wanted to cut off the electricity supply," Gamsakhurdia told reporters summoned to his office.

There was no independent confirmation of the deaths, but foreign correspondents were being taken to the power station.

Flashpoints persisted in other widely separated parts of the Soviet Union.

There was no sign of a let-up in the country's most protracted conflict — the mainly Armenian enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh inside Azerbaijan — despite the unexpected signing of an accord to resolve differences between Azerbaijan and Armenia.

In Dushanbe, capital of the central Asian republic of Tajikistan, demonstrators packed a central square for the second day running to demand the reinstatement of a moderate leader ousted by Communist Deputies.

But the conflict pitting Gamsakhurdia against an increasingly broad range of opponents had the greatest potential for turmoil and violence.

"We also expect some massive cooperation in the economic area," he added.

He said help would be needed from the group of seven industrialised countries — the United States, Britain, France, Italy, Canada, Japan and Germany — as well as from the European Community.