

Tallest Bangladeshi too weak to stand

LONDON, Oct 2: A Bangladeshi man, soon to be recorded as the tallest person in the world, is too weak to stand, a British doctor said on Tuesday, reports Reuter.

He suffers from a tumour on the pituitary gland at the base of the brain which secretes various hormones including the one controlling growth.

Fiji deports 13 Lankan Tamils

SUVA, Oct 2: Fiji's authorities deported 13 Sri Lankan Tamils after they were found to be holding forced Canadian visas, Immigration officials said today, reports AFP.

Police are now searching for a 14th suspect holding a German passport, who they believe could be the mastermind of the scheme for Sri Lankan illegal immigrants to use Fiji's Nadi airport as a transit to enter Canada.

Joe Nalewabau, the chief immigration officer at the airport, said Canadian authorities had earlier tipped off the Fijian authorities about illegal immigrants using the airport as a transit into Vancouver in Canada and into the United States.

In his case the gland was producing excessive amounts of growth hormone, said John Wass, a consultant endocrinologist at St Bartholomew's hospital.

Mr Barman is in very poor physical condition. He is malnourished and he cannot support his own weight, Wass said.

He said Barman would be treated with drugs to control the hormone excess, with the possibility of surgery later. "It is a slow process and Barman is likely to be here for some weeks or months," Wass added.

The Guinness Book of records says Barman will be listed as the tallest living man in next year's edition, replacing 7-foot 8-inch (2.34-metre) Pakistani Hajji Mohammad Alam Channa, 38.

The tallest person in history was American Robert Wadlow (1918-40) who was 8 foot 11 inches (2.72 metres).

BRIEFLY

Arafat receives message from USSR: PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat has received an "important" message from the Soviet leadership, the Palestinian news agency Wafa said Wednesday, reports Reuter from Tunis.

The contents of the message handed to Arafat by the Soviet ambassador in Tunis, were not revealed.

The Soviet Union is co-sponsoring the Middle East peace conference which the United States is trying to organise for later this month.

Wafa said the Palestine Liberation Organisation leader and the Soviet diplomat discussed latest developments regarding Palestinian and Middle East problems.

Iran executes 20 bandits: Iran on Tuesday executed 20 bandits for drug trafficking and killing soldiers, reports Reuter from Nicosia.

The Iranian news agency IRNA said the men, captured after fierce clashes in the rugged Nosratabad Mountains near the Pakistani border last month were executed in public in the southeastern city of Zahedan.

They were charged with "terrorising the local people, shooting government fuel tanker trucks with rocket-propelled grenades and killing a number of local state troopers," it said.

Interior Minister Abdullah Nori Sai in Zahedan last week that a large number of smugglers were killed in the Nosratabad clashes.

Iran executed more than 1,000 drug traffickers in 1989, when tough anti-drug laws came into effect. Hundreds more have been executed since then.

Kim starts visit to China Friday: North Korean President Kim Il Sung will make an unusual 10-day visit to China starting Friday, a newspaper reported Wednesday, reports AP from Seoul.

The newspaper quoted unnamed government officials as saying the extended visit was highly unusual. Kim visited China several times in the 1980 but never longer than four days. He reportedly paid a secret visit last year.

The extended trip suggests that North Korea, one of the world's most reclusive communist countries, is trying to improve its relations with its communist neighbour and emulate its economic policies.

In recent months, North Korea's state-controlled news media have heaped praise on what they called China's pragmatic economic development policies based on socialist principles.

A Japanese newspaper, the Asahi Shimbun, reported from Pyongyang Wednesday that North Korea also is moving to establish a special economic zone in the north to attract foreign investment and boost its sagging economy.

British Parliament opens Oct 31: The official Queen's speech will open Britain's Parliament on October 31 for what is expected to be a busy legislative session, notably dealing with a replacement for the unpopular local "poll tax," reports AFP from London.

Last year's speech by Queen Elizabeth II outlining the government's programme for the session was made a week later, on November 7.

The Energy Secretary in Prime Minister John Major's conservative government, John Wakeham, confided to selected newspapers Monday that the government had decided not to hold elections this November but to wait until next year.

Wakeham's announcement had come as opposition Labour Party leader Neil Kinnock was due to make a key policy speech to his party conference in southern England. Major must hold on election by next July.

US-Soviet talks on arms cut Oct 9: Washington has set the date for talks with the Soviets on Bush's proposals for slashing nuclear weapons stockpiles, the State Department announced Wednesday, reports AFP from Washington.

Spokeswoman Margaret Tutwiler said a team of arms specialists would leave for Moscow in the next few days to do the ground work for the talks scheduled for October 9 between under Secretary of State Reginald Bartholomew and Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Alexei Obukhov.

These talks could be followed in November by a meeting between Secretary of State James Baker and his Soviet, French, and British counterparts or possibly a summit between the two nations' presidents, according to officials speaking on condition of anonymity.

Gorbachev writes book on coup: The Soviet news agency Novosti will publish Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev's account of the mid-August hardline coup d'etat, his spokesman Andrei Grachev said Tuesday, reports AFP from Moscow.

The President has submitted a 74-page manuscript to Novosti, and the book, to be titled "The August Putsch: reasons and consequences," will also be published abroad, he said.

Grachev did not give the name of the foreign publishing houses which will be offered the work.

Release of Kuwaitis demanded: President George Bush and the Emir of Kuwait demanded the immediate release of Kuwaiti citizens held by Iraq and said sanctions should remain in effect against Iraq as long as Saddam Hussein is in power, reports AFP from Washington.

"The Emir and I strongly condemn Iraq's refusal to free the many Kuwaitis that are still being held in Iraq," Bush said after meeting with Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmed al-Sabah.

"We call again for their immediate and unconditional release."

"We reaffirm our view that United Nations sanctions must remain in place against Iraq until a new leadership emerges in Baghdad, a leadership willing to live in peace with its neighbours and its own people," Bush said.

New immigration act takes effect

21 lakh immigrants to be allowed to enter US in 3 yrs

NEW YORK, Oct 2: A new US Immigration Act, emphasising alien contributions to the US economy takes effect on Tuesday, the first major overhaul of these laws in 25 years, reports Reuter.

Provisions in the sweeping legislation make it easier for highly skilled immigrants who possess "extraordinary ability" in the arts, sciences, education or sport and wealthy investors to settle in the United States.

"It's pro-business act," said Ronald Storoette of New York's prominent labour law firm Proskauer Rose Goetz and Mendelsohn. It says "give us your best and your brightest."

Under the new law, up to 700,000 immigrants for each of the next three years will be allowed to enter the United States. This is an increase of 35 per cent over current levels.

The total number of visas issued annually for permanent residents with special skills, for example, will rise to 140,000 from 54,000.

Included in the new figures is a category providing 10,000 visas for foreign investors who plan to spend at least one million Dollar in the United States to provide capital and jobs for US citizens or permanent residents.

A major purpose of the Act is to allow entry of managers and professionals. Their skills are expeditious.

Storoette said the new Act is expected to cut down on delays that often stretched into several years in getting much-needed professionals permanent status in the United States.

The new Act creates five categories for permanent visas. The first category provides 40,000 visas for "priority workers."

There are three types of these immigrants: those who have demonstrated "extraordinary ability" in the arts, sciences, education, business or athletics those who are "outstanding" professors or researchers, or those who are multinational executives and managers.

Bomb hurled at a Y'slav mosque

BELGRADE, Oct 2: A bomb was thrown at a mosque in Titograd, in the southern Yugoslav Republic of Montenegro, causing damage but no injuries, the Tanjug news agency said Tuesday, reports AFP.

The attack on Monday night was not immediately claimed.

A large Muslim Albanian community lives in Montenegro, which borders the troubled Serbian province of Kosovo, where the Albanian majority objects to Serbian country over their region.

An earlier bomb attack was made against a mosque in neighboring Bosnia-Herzegovina on September 17, though no suspects were ever identified.

Nearly five million Muslims live in Yugoslavia, which has a total population of 23 million.

The second, third and fourth categories provide 40,000 visas each for professionals holding advanced degrees, skilled workers, and clergy and religious workers.

The last category, which immigration lawyers have dubbed "the millionaires club" allows wealthy foreigners to settle here if they plan to spend at least one million dollars in capital for a commercial

enterprise and hire at least 10 US citizens or aliens admitted for permanent residence.

AFP adds: The Senate Tuesday approved a 6.4 billion dollar extended unemployment benefits for those who have used up their regular six-months of payments, a measure that President George Bush had threatened to veto.

The Senators approved the

democratic-sponsored measure by a 65-35 vote and the House of Representatives was expected to send the legislation to the White House later Tuesday.

"I hope the President has been listening to US, and to the million of Americans who need our help no," said Senator Lloyd Bentsen, a Texas Democrat and one of the measure's chief sponsors.

The Senate vote was two votes shy of the 67 that would be needed to override a presidential veto. A two-thirds vote in both chambers is needed to override a presidential veto.

"We ought to stop the game of chicken and recognize that this bill is not going to become law," said Senator Pete Domenici, a new Mexico Republican.

The bill would provide up to 20 extra weeks of benefits for people who have exhausted the regular 26 weeks of payments.

The measure could become a political issue in the upcoming presidential election year, since some 300,000 persons are coming to the end of their unemployment benefits each month.



NEW YORK: Members of New York's Haitian community who support ousted President Jean-Bertrand Aristide demonstrate outside the United Nations building. Aristide was deposed in a coup September 30 and arrived in Venezuela October 1.

Aristide an apprentice dictator: Haitian junta

PORT-AU-PRINCE, (Haiti), Oct 2: The military clamped down on the Haitian capital Tuesday and claimed its coup against President Jean Bertrand Aristide was necessary to stop an "apprentice dictator." The deposed leader sent appeals from exile to his countrymen, warning of an impending bloodbath, reports AP.

He pleaded for an armed UN force to restore democracy in his homeland, saying from Caracas, Venezuela.

The military imposed a 6 pm to 6 am curfew in the capital.

Port-au-Prince's normally bustling downtown area was nearly deserted.

There were unconfirmed reports the National

Penitentiary had been emptied of all 1,000 prisoners including Roger LaFont, a former head of outlawed Tonton Macoutes.

LaFontant — jailed after leading a coup before Aristide's February inauguration — had been killed during Monday's coup.

Haitians reported that several former Tonton Macoutes who had been imprisoned at the Penitentiary were seen walking city streets Tuesday.

Coup leader Brig. Gen. Raoul Cedras, who had been Aristide's interim army commander, went on state television Tuesday night and claimed the coup was justified to halt human rights abuses and violations of the constitution by Aristide, whom he called an "apprentice dictator."

The fierce fighting erupted when 250 rebels of the Democratic Alliance of Burma fired on a government military convoy, he said. Only one rebel was killed.

Independent confirmation of the rebel figures was not immediately available.

The Democratic Alliance is composed of a dozen groups of minority insurgent who have been fighting Rangoon for four decades. They joined forces with dissident students and politicians who fled the government's brutal suppression of pro democracy demonstrations in September 1988.

Allied troops start pullout from Turkey

ANKARA, Oct 2: Some 300 US British and Dutch soldiers flew out of Turkey's Incirlik Air base to go home on Tuesday, as part of the winding-up of the Allied "operation provide comfort" which followed the Gulf war earlier this year US officials said, reports AFP.

They said Tuesday's departures comprised 88 US soldiers, 90 Britons and 120 Dutch troops.

'India sabotaging SAARC'

COLOMBO, Oct 2: Government newspapers have Tuesday accused India of trying to sabotage a seven-nation South Asian heads of state summit scheduled to be held here in November, reports AFP.

The evening Daily Observer said New Delhi bureaucrats and the Indian press were somewhat keen on sabotaging the three-day South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) summit from November 7 to 9.

Rebels kill 12 Burmese troops

MAESOT, Thailand, Oct 2: Ethnic rebels killed 12 Burmese soldiers and wounded 19 in ambush and heavy fighting at the weekend, rebel sources said today, reports Reuter.

After the ambush on Sunday, about 250 government troops fought for two hours with the rebels at Tabekhong, about 20 miles (30 km) south-east of the southern Burmese city of Moulmein, a rebel student source said.

The fierce fighting erupted when 250 rebels of the Democratic Alliance of Burma fired on a government military convoy, he said. Only one rebel was killed.

Independent confirmation of the rebel figures was not immediately available.

The Democratic Alliance is composed of a dozen groups of minority insurgent who have been fighting Rangoon for four decades. They joined forces with dissident students and politicians who fled the government's brutal suppression of pro democracy demonstrations in September 1988.

Off the Record

Where marriages breed domestic violence

SYDNEY, Australia: Faced with poverty at home, many Filipino women seek better lives by marrying foreigners and emigrating. In Australia, a disturbing number are finding domestic violence, reports AP.

At least a dozen have been killed in the past four years, a disproportionate number for an ethnic group that numbers about 50,000 nationwide.

"This shows there is something very wrong. It has to stop," says Annamarie Antonio, an aid worker with the Philippine-Australian Council in Support of Filipino Women. "We feel if this situation is not addressed now, there will be problems for other migrant women as well."

Officials first started noticing significant numbers of Filipino women coming to Australia as wives and fiancées in the late 1970s. They are increasingly being joined by Thais, Vietnamese, Malaysians, Indonesians and Sri Lankans all seeking better lives.

"What we are seeing is cross-cultural marriage on a large scale," said Ann Smith, head of the women's unit at the Department of Immigration. "Filipinos are the largest group, but we hear through the grapevine that Thai women also are becoming unhappy with being spouses of Australian men."

The Filipino deaths and attacks have prompted calls for changes in the immigration law, including background checks for men bringing foreign fiancées into the country.

In most of the cases, a husband or lover has been involved: Joseph Sokol, 40, was convicted in 1987 of murder for fatally shooting his 17-year-old estranged wife, Rowena, five times. Sokol tried to kill himself twice after his arrest.

Charles Schembri, 41, an unemployed trucker with a criminal record, was convicted last year of manslaughter for strangling Genecosa Bongcodin, 25. They married a month after they met in the Philippines and had a 6-year-old daughter.

AIDS can be detected thru' human saliva

MEXICO CITY: Mexican health officials said on Tuesday that researchers had discovered a low-cost method of detecting the AIDS virus through human saliva which was nearly 100 per cent effective, reports Reuter.

A statement from the state-run Mexican Social Security Institute said tests using the method had been conducted on 1,000 AIDS-infected people in Mexico, the United States and Malaysia and that it had proven 99.8 per cent accurate so far.

In addition, the saliva method of detecting the acquired immune deficiency virus is faster and less expensive than traditional blood tests, the statement said.

Results of the saliva test are available within 30 minutes, it said.

It added that the chemical agent used in the tests, dubbed immuno-punto, was "totally Mexican and its discovery puts our country in the forefront of the search for new methods of diagnosing AIDS (infection)."

Mexico, which has reported over 7,500 AIDS cases nationwide, has the third largest number of people with AIDS in the western hemisphere after the United States and Brazil.

The virus kills by destroying the body's immune system and eliminating its ability to fight infection and disease.

immediately available for comment.

Officials here said Colombo was going ahead with preparations for the summit and had also asked India and Pakistan to loan six passenger helicopters for the use of heads of state expected here.

SAARC groups — Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

PNC accused of selling out Palestinians

NICOSIA, Oct 2: Iran's supreme leader on Tuesday accused the Palestinian Parliament in exile of selling out the Palestinian people by welcoming US-Soviet efforts for a Middle East peace conference, reports Reuter.

The recent decision made in the name of the Palestinian National Council (PNC) was aimed at selling and humiliating the Palestinians, Hechran radio quoted Ayatollah Ali Khamenei as saying.

Six killed during mutiny in Togo

LOME, Oct 2: Six people were killed when renegade soldiers in Togo seized broadcasting stations, but the civilian government remained in control officials and diplomats said, reports Reuter.

The country's transitional legislature, the high council of the republic met in emergency session late on Tuesday after the mutiny but did not immediately issue a statement.

The rebellion by some 80 soldiers posed the most serious challenge since a new civilian government took power in August, ending almost three decades of military rule, the sources said.

But military President Gnassingbe Eyadema, who was stripped of most powers by a national Democratic Conference, broadcast a message ordering the renegades back to barracks after they seized the radio on Tuesday morning.

The army chief of staff interceded a second time when another group of soldiers occupied the television and radio on Tuesday afternoon.

"Eyadema was completely behind the Prime Minister," a diplomat said, referring to Prime Minister Kokou Koffignon, appointed in August by the National Conference. "But it should not be treated lightly," the diplomat

added. It was symptomatic of deep-seated discontent in the army. At least six civilians were killed in confrontations with the military and 30 people were wounded, the sources said.

Suu Kyi on Nobel Peace Prize list

OSLO Oct 2: Burmese opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi, for months confined to house arrest in her home country, is among the hottest names for this year's Nobel Peace Prize, according to media speculation in Oslo.

Czechoslovakia's President Vaclav Havel and Chinese student leader Chai Ling also rank high on the highly unofficial list, as they did last year.

With the announcement of the winner only two weeks off, Nobel Director Geir Lundestad told AFP that the Nobel Committee is about to enter the final round of discussions.

Without confirming any names Lundestad said there are some 80 candidates this year, among them 20 organizations and institutions. In 1990, when Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev won the Peace Prize a hundred candidates were considered.



BERLIN: Two young Berliners unfurl a flag produced on the occasion of the two Germanies unification on October 3, 1990, in front of the city's famous Brandenburg Gate landmark. The first anniversary of the day of German Unity will be celebrated today (Thursday).