

# Afghan army retakes Najib's hometown

ISLAMABAD, Oct 11: President Najibullah said on Thursday the Afghan army had defeated the two-week Mujahideen siege of the eastern city of Gardez, his hometown, reports Reuter.

Mujahideen sources acknowledged the reverse and said at least 100 dead Mujahideen and 20 wounded were recovered from bunkers and caves near Gardez. Some were taken to Pakistan.

The sources said the fight for the capital of Pakista province, which borders Pakistan, included one of the fiercest bombardments of the 12-year Afghan conflict.

Afghan state radio, monitored in the Pakistani capital Islamabad, said Najibullah visited injured troops in a Kabul hospital and told them: "The extremists and their supporters have met with a bad fate in Gardez."

He promoted seven Colonels to Brigadier-Generals for their roles in defending Gardez.

Mujahideen sources said more than 20 bodies and some wounded had arrived in the Pakistani frontier town of Miranshah, the base for many of the Mujahideen sent to attack Gardez.

Mujahideen groups said government forces used napalm, missiles and explosives to break the siege of Gardez, 100 km (60 miles) south of Kabul.

Despite a Soviet and US pledge to halt all arms shipments to both sides by January 1, radical Mujahideen groups say they are determined to carry on a "holy war" against Najibullah.

They said they fought a gov-

ernment convoy to a standstill in Logar province after it was sent from Kabul to resupply and reinforce the Gardez Garrison.

The Kabul government claimed that Pakistan was helping Mujahideen to attack towns in eastern Afghanistan despite international efforts for peace.

A Foreign Ministry spokesman, quoted by Kabul Radio, said Islamabad must "stop its intervention in Afghanistan's internal affairs or it will be responsible for serious consequences."

## PLO team meets Soviet Foreign Minister

MOSCOW, Oct 11: A delegation from the Palestine Liberation Organisation met here Thursday with Soviet Foreign Minister Boris Pankin, the Tass news agency said, reports AFP.

Tass said Pankin informed the three-man delegation of the "state of preparation" of a Middle East peace conference, to be jointly sponsored by the United States and the Soviet Union, which has been proposed for the end of the month.

The PLO team of Mohammad Abbas, Yasser Abed Rabbo and Soleiman Najab in turn briefed Pankin on a meeting of the PLO's parliament-in-exile, held in Algiers last month. They also told the Soviet official of their "concern over the situation in the Occupied Territories," Tass said.

# Turkish planes bomb Kurdish rebel base

ANKARA, Oct 11: Turkish warplanes staged a bombing raid on a Kurdish rebel group in northern Iraq today, Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz announced here, reports AFP.

He said eight Turkish warplanes bombed positions of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), a separatist group which has been fighting the Ankara regime.

Yilmaz told reporters the aircraft crossed the Iraqi border south of Cukurca, in the Hakkari region. The results of the operation "will be examined this afternoon after reconnaissance flights are made over the region," he said.

The Prime Minister said he will be the go-ahead for the raid late Thursday.

The raid comes in the build-up to early legislative elections planned for October 20.

Turkish forces launched an operation against Kurdish rebels on the Turkish side of the borders with Iraq, Iran and Syria on Monday, after the PKK attacked a police station in Ilakkari, killing 11 policemen.

A military spokesman on Thursday said the operations, which kept up all week, included ground troops, police forces, warplanes and helicopters.

But the spokesman denied reports that the Turkish forces had pursued the rebels into Iraq, as they did in August.

Turkey has repeatedly urged Iraqi Kurds to expel Turkish Kurd units working from Iraq.

The Iraqi Kurdistan Front, which recently opened two western liaison offices in Turkey in the aftermath of the Gulf War, has said it would not accept that Turkish Kurds use Iraqi bases to stage operations into Turkey.

## 2 Iraqi nuclear sites survive Gulf war

Reuters from Washington adds: Two Iraqi nuclear sites survived the Gulf war, and one of them was never attacked by allied forces because it was thought to be a general industrial plant the US Defense Department said on Thursday. One of the sites, the Al

Atheer Nuclear Research Facility 40 miles (65 km) south of Baghdad was attacked and neutralised during the war, Pentagon spokesman Pete Williams said at a briefing.

Williams noted that the US wartime goal was to stop Iraq making and deploying more nuclear weapons.

It may well now be that Al Atheer was a place where there was research going on, but research during a war doesn't give you any ability to apply combat power, he said.

Williams said the other nuclear facility Eurat, was not attacked because it was thought during the war to be a general industrial facility.

The New York Times reported that Eurat, closer to Baghdad, was producing centrifuges for enriching uranium to weapons grade.

The newspaper said senior Pentagon officials blamed the failure to close the two nuclear sites during the war on allied intelligence failures and bad weather.

Williams had no further details.

# US advising Americans to leave Haiti

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Oct 11: The United States may freeze the foreign assets of Haitian businessmen involved in blocking the return of deposed President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, US Ambassador Alvin Adams said Thursday, reports AP.

Meanwhile, the US State Department urged the estimated 15,000 Americans living in Haiti to leave the country and said it was authorising the departure of embassy dependents and non-essential personnel.

In Washington, State Department spokeswoman Margaret Tutwiler said the recommendation would apply to 90 to 100 of the 170 official personnel.

Adams, speaking to a small group of reporters, said he wanted to "draw attention to the precedent of the embargo of Panama."

"That embargo included the seizure of assets of individuals who were part of the problem," he said. "People who need to hear that message should listen carefully."

The Organisation of American States on Tuesday approved a stiffening of sanctions against Haiti, including a hemispheric trade embargo and the freezing of foreign assets, to try and persuade Haitian authorities to let Aristide return to office.

Diplomatic sources said the OAS was still discussing the parameters of the economic embargo. Haiti imports all its oil and is heavily dependent on imported food.

## Israeli flights over Iraq not helpful for peace: Cheney

NEW YORK, Oct 11: US Defence Secretary Dick Cheney on Thursday called Israeli military flights over Iraq "not helpful" to the peace process in the Middle East, reports Reuter.

"The overflights are not helpful," Cheney said at a news conference at a hotel where he was receiving an award along with German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher.

"We're trying to put together an international peace conference," Cheney said. "This was inappropriate."

"We have been involved in extensive sharing of information with our Israeli friends," Cheney said. "Problems that might arise from these overflights we can do without."

## Parliamentary polls tomorrow in Bulgaria

SOFIA, Oct 11: Bulgarians vote Sunday in parliamentary elections which the non-communist opposition hopes will put the final seal on more than 45 years of totalitarian rule, reports AFP.

Though the Socialist Party (ex-communists) won the country's first free election in June 1989, earning an outright parliamentary majority, recent opinion polls show its popularity has slumped to under 30 per cent.

Since its victory, the party has been forced to accept an opposition figure as President, and political life in Bulgaria has been reduced to a stalemate between the opposition and the former communists as the economy continues its slide.

Though the Socialist Party is expected to lose its majority, no opposition group appears in a position to wrest an overall majority, raising concern here that Bulgaria may be in for more months of weak leadership and instability.

## Kuwait expels 41,203

BAGHDAD, Oct 11: Kuwait has expelled 41,203 people since early July, most of them Arabs and including 11,203 Iraqis, the official Iraqi news agency INA reported Thursday, says AFP.

The agency said that dozens of Sri Lankas, Pakistanis and Indians were among the people expelled from Kuwait.

# Off the Record

## Saddam's fireside chat

BAGHDAD: Saddam Hussein's worries about the Gulf war and Iraq's virtual isolation seemed years away when he reminisced to his nation about the day more than 30 years ago he tried to kill the then Prime Minister Abdel-Karim Qassem, reports Reuter.

In avuncular and jovial form, the Iraqi President talked wistfully about his youth in a two-part television film on Tuesday and Wednesday showing him relaxed, confident and in charge.

The occasion was the anniversary of the day in October 1959 when he and six young army officers tried to assassinate Qassem, the military leader who came to power after the overthrow of the monarchy the previous year.

"We had no option but to save the people from Qassem's rule" recalled Saddam, filmed in his office with three survivors of the failed assassination attempt, all talking of the good old days as veterans might at an army reunion.

"We wanted to serve our people and help them get rid of a vicious dictator," said Saddam, who is said by Western intelligence to have survived several assassination attempts himself.

It was fireside stuff as Saddam, in combat fatigues but in father-of-the-nation mood, talked openly about his first taste of Baghdad after a youth in the farming area of Takrit, north of Baghdad.

## Queen's cousin listed as dead

LONDON: A US television crew which shot film of the mentally handicapped 64-year-old cousin of Queen Elizabeth II at her hospital was criticised Thursday for an "invasion" of the patient's privacy, reports AFP.

Martin Barclay, general manager of the Royal Earlswood Hospital in Surrey, southern England, said the television company had filmed a "subversive" item about Katherine Bowles Lyon, the Queen's first cousin, without permission.

Until 1963 Bowles Lyon was listed as dead in Burke's peerage, the journal of record of the British aristocracy.

Four years ago it emerged that she, her elder sister Nerissa and three of their cousins were patients at Royal Earlswood.

Bowles Lyon, said to have a mental age of six, has been a patient at the hospital for 50 years.

The filming, carried out for a US television programme "Now it can be told", was an invasion of Miss Bowles Lyon's privacy — her rights of confidentiality are no different than any of the residents," Barclay said.

## Vegetarian diet helps arthritis victims

LONDON: A vegetarian diet can help ease suffering for rheumatoid arthritis victims, doctors said on Friday, reports Reuter.

In a Norwegian study, patients were admitted to a health farm and subjected first to a diet of herbal tea, garlic and vegetable broths and juices.

After a week they were put on a meat-free and gluten-free diet. They also cut out dairy products, fish, citrus fruit, salt, refined sugar, strong spices, tea, coffee and alcohol.

After three and a half months, the patients were allowed milk and other dairy products and food containing gluten.

In an article in the authoritative medical journal The Lancet, the researchers said the patients showed signs of improvement and were in less pain.

They concluded: "Dietary treatment can be a useful adjunct to conventional therapy of rheumatoid arthritis."

## Pesticide tablet becomes suicide pill

NEW DELHI: An alarming number of Indians are committing suicide by eating a pesticide tablet that spews lethal gas inside the stomach. Doctors worry that the tablet has made death easy in India, reports AP.

"Instead of being used, it is unfortunately being misused by humans," said Avinash Rajvanshi, a leading toxicologist.

Social workers blame the easy availability of the aluminium phosphide pesticide, or ALP, which is meant to be sprinkled over sacks of grain. It is supposed to be sold only to government granaries, agriculture departments and approved pest controllers.

But the chemical has regularly found its way into the hands of people who misuse it, usually unauthorized retailers, said Rajvanshi, who is with the National Institute of Criminology and Forensic Science.

He said 10 to 15 per cent of all suicides in villages are believed caused by ALP poisoning. There have been no studies of the suicides or figures kept of total deaths by the poison.

Social and medical workers say only stricter controls on the sale of the pesticide can prevent more deaths because the government has refused to ban it.

The government says halting its use would deprive its warehouses of one of the best available pesticides — two pills can protect up to a ton of stored grain from ravenous insects.

According to government estimates, 664 people died of pesticide poisoning in a 12-month period in 1989-90, the latest for which figures are available, compared to 192 deaths the previous 12 months. The real toll is believed much higher.

## A little of their money

NEW YORK: Vice President Dan Quayle says he's stung by jokes about him, but wishes "Tonight" show hosts Jay Leno and Johnny Carson would pay him a percentage for their comedy, reports AP.

"I'd like to have a little of the money that they've made off of me. I think they ought to share," Quayle told Barbara Walters in an interview for ABC-TV's "20-20". The interview is scheduled to air Friday.

When he toured Latin America, one joke made it his expense was that he supposedly said he wished that he spoke Latin.

"That started out as a joke on the Johnny Carson show, according to my information. It started out a joke and all of a sudden, people said, 'Oh, this is true,'" Quayle said.

"But, you know what, Barbara, I have no doubt whatsoever in my mind I have been strengthened by what I've gone through."



ZAGREB: Two Croatian soldiers eat lunch on top of their tank in central Zagreb. Tank movement within the city suggests the Croats may move against the Yugoslav Army barracks here. —AFP/UNB photo

## Neo-Nazi attacks continue in Germany

BONN, Oct 11: As Germany's political parties agreed on Thursday to measures aimed at coping with the growing number of asylum-seekers, police reported further attacks against foreigners lodged in hostels, reports AFP.

The dramatic rise in the number of xenophobic attacks in Germany continued Thursday as, in the Western town of Ilberth, near Cologne, masked men fired eight shots at two hostels, breaking windows but causing no casualties.

At Leipzig, in the southeast, a group of about 20 neo-Nazis launched an attack described by police as "extremely brutal" on a centre for asylum-seekers, leaving one person, whose nationality was not specified, with an arm broken in several places.

And at Soest, in the northwest, a fire-bomb device destroyed a reception centre overnight Wednesday, but there were no casualties.

Federal police at Wiesbaden said there had been 177 attacks on hostels for asylum-seekers since the start of the year.

## Nagpur Editor shot dead

NAGPUR, Oct 11: Ram Narayan Dube, Resident Editor of the local English daily 'Nagpur Times', and his brother were shot dead here this morning, allegedly by a police inspector suspended from Chandrapur district, police said, reports PTI.

One more person was injured in the firing at Dube's residence in the crowded Wardha Road area.

Police said Manohar Pendhure barged into the editor's house and shot him and his brother PN Dube with his service revolver and fled the scene.

Old enmity was stated to be the cause of the shooting.

## Gorbachev intervenes in Y'slav crisis

MOSCOW, Oct 11: Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev, intervening directly in the Yugoslav crisis, on Thursday invited the Presidents of Serbia and Croatia to Moscow for peace talks, reports Reuter.

"President Gorbachev has already invited the two to come to Moscow in the nearest future," spokesman Vladimir Tumarkin said.

Croatian President Franjo Tudjman and Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic met Dutch Foreign Minister Hans van den Broek in the Hague on Thursday to discuss a political settlement.

More fighting erupted in Croatia on Thursday, jeopardising the European community's eight attempted ceasefire which went into force on Wednesday.

But EC ceasefire monitors said late in the day that blockades of Croatian ports and federal army barracks in the rebel republic were being lifted and Vandenberg said the Yugoslav army had agreed to pull out of Croatia within a month.

Tumarkin said Gorbachev would probably meet the two leaders individually rather than in joint talks.

"It is more likely the talks will be separate," he said, without giving any indications whether either Tudjman or Milosevic had accepted the invitations.

A Foreign Ministry spokesman said Thursday that the Soviet Union was deeply concerned about fighting despite an agreement on a ceasefire.

"After conclusion of yet another agreement on a ceasefire, when it seemed we could breathe a sigh of relief, again reports are coming in of clashes," said spokesman Vitaly Churkin. Most likely it will happen next week," he said.

On Monday, Gorbachev appealed to Yugoslavia's political and military leaders to avoid escalating the civil war and called on them to "display maximum responsibility and restraint."

## Hunt for kidnapped Romanian envoy

NEW DELHI, Oct 11: Indian police hunting for a kidnapped Romanian diplomat made house-to-house searches in New Delhi, overnight but failed to uncover fresh leads, officials said on Thursday, reports Reuter.

Romanian Acting Ambassador Liviu Radu was abducted by army men soon after he left his home in an elite New Delhi suburb for his Embassy on Wednesday.

Police suspect he was kidnapped by Sikh militants fighting for independence in Punjab and say his abduction may be linked to an attack on

the Indian Ambassador in Bucharest in August.

At least one of the kidnappers was a Sikh, police said. Orthodox Sikh men are easily recognisable by their turbans and flowing beards.

An official in the Home Ministry, which is coordinating operations, said police searched houses in New Delhi Suburbs on Wednesday night but did not come up with any leads.

They were looking for the diplomat's Romanian-made car and the Indian car used by the kidnappers, said the officials who declined to be named.

# BRIEFLY

**Assad postpones visit to Egypt:** Syrian President Hafez Al-Assad has postponed a visit he was due to begin in Egypt on Thursday until Saturday for unspecified reasons, well-informed sources said, reports AFP from Cairo.

Assad is expected to discuss current efforts to convene a Middle East peace conference with President Hosni Mubarak ahead of a visit to the region by US Secretary of State James Baker to finalise plans for the gathering.

Baker is due Sunday in Egypt, before visits to Jordan, Syria and Israel.

**French legal experts off to China:** Five French legal experts leave for China on Saturday to investigate claims of human rights violations and the plight of activist involved in pro-democracy protests in June 1989, reports Reuter from Paris.

The International Federation for Human Rights said the independent mission of lawyers and judges would study procedures used to try activists involved in the Tiananmen Square protests and the conditions of their imprisonment.

They will question the proper authorities and will also visit several prisons, the federation said in a statement.

**Mongolia approves ownership:** Mongolia has approved legislation to allow citizens businesses and organisations to own their own land, China's official Xinhua news agency reported.

The law would also let foreigners rent land in the central Asian nation, which last year ended one party communist rule Xinhua said in a dispatch from Ulan Bator.

Mongolia's vast pasture lands will however remain in state hands due to the nomadic nature of its livestock industry, Xinhua said quoting from the Ulan Bator newspaper People's Right.

**Arafat calls for Arab summit:** PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat on Thursday called for a summit of Arab leaders to establish a unified position on a proposed Middle East peace conference, reports AP from Tunis.

In a statement carried by the Palestinian news agency Wafa, Arafat expressed hope the Arab leaders would respond swiftly to his request "because of the increasing dangers which threaten the existence of the Arab nation."

Arafat said there should be closer coordination of the positions of various Arab countries in advance of the peace conference, which the United States and Soviet Union hope to convene by the end of this month.

**Iraq denies UN allegation:** Iraq on Thursday denied it was trying to manufacture a hydrogen bomb and said any components of thermonuclear devices it possessed were purely for scientific research, reports AP from Nicosia.

The official Iraqi news agency, monitored in Nicosia, quoted the unnamed deputy chairman of Iraq's Atomic Energy Organisation as saying "United Nations officials were grossly exaggerating" Iraq's nuclear potential.

UN officials and experts at the Vienna-based International Atomic Energy Agency said Wednesday Iraq has manufactured some lithium-6, a material used only in hydrogen bombs, and that the supply was kept at the Al-Atheer weapons facility, 40 miles (65 kms) south of Baghdad.

**Yugoslav Army to withdraw from Croatia:** Rival Yugoslav leaders and the European Community on Thursday agreed that the Yugoslav Federal Army should withdraw completely from Croatia within one month, Dutch Foreign Minister Hans van den Broek said.

**Caribbeans condemn Haiti coup:** The 13-nation Caribbean Community on Thursday condemned the recent military coup in Haiti and said it backs an Organisation of American States decision to impose economic sanctions, reports AP from Georgetown.

A statement issued Thursday said ousted President Jean Bertrand Aristide should be returned to power in keeping with the will of the electorate.

"The Caribbean Community welcomes the unanimous decision of the OAS on October 8 to impose economic sanctions on Haiti and urges the members of the Inter American System and indeed the international community as a whole to be unwavering in their commitment to the restoration of the constitutional Government of Haiti," the statement said.

**4 killed in boiler blast in Perm:** A steam boiler exploded in a bakery in the Ural Mountains city of Perm, killing four people and forcing bread rationing in the area, the Soviet news agency Tass said, reports AP from Moscow.

The explosion damaged equipment at the Kungur Bakery factory and completely destroyed a wall separating the boiler room from the shop, the Soviet news agency said.

Tass did not say whether the victims were factory employees or customers. However, it said bakers "remained alive by sheer chance" because they had left the area on their lunch break just before the explosion.

# Only God can keep me from going home, says Imelda

WASHINGTON, Oct 11: Imelda Marcos, little changed physically or philosophically from her fairy-tale life in the Philippines first lady, says only God can keep her from going home next month for the first time in nearly six years, reports AP.

Mrs Marcos said in an interview Thursday that she still might travel with the body of her husband, Ferdinand E. Marcos, but would not agree to a government plan to have him buried in the far northern province of his birth.

Still strongly pro-American, still glamorous, still immaculately dressed and coiffured, still espousing the pursuit of truth and beauty, a trim Mrs Marcos conversed for two hours in an elegant Washington hotel suite.

She talked of politics, her wealth, her beauty and the shoes she left behind.

Mrs Marcos said she wants to go back "to mother the poor, the sick and the young" and would not hesitate to seek alliances with people who opposed her husband, including

President Corason Aquino, if they have the people's support.

But she had biting words for the woman who replaced her husband in February 1986 after a popular uprising backed a military revolt and forced the Marcoses to flee to the United States.

She accused Mrs Aquino of intentionally arranging the ouster of U.S. bases from the country, despite the fact that the Philippine President supported a 10-year extension rejected by the Philippine Senate.

"The Marcoses are still probas," she said.

Asked if anything could prevent her from returning, she said, "Only God."

She plans to return to Manila on Nov 4.

Mrs Marcos denied any plan to seek the presidency, but she made it clear that, in her mind, the Marcoses are ascending while Aquinos are on the decline.

Mrs Marcos admitted to a comfortable lifestyle in New York apartment but said she is supported by friends, not her own wealth. She displayed her 11-carat diamond engagement ring as evidence that Marcos was wealthy before he ever became president.

"Marcos had more money before he was president in the Swiss banks than after," she said, acknowledging accounts that Marcos denied owning when he was alive. She said he dealt in precious metals, including gold, because of the markets' confidentiality.

Marcos hid the wealth he accumulated during a brilliant law career, she said, so others would not envy him and he could use the money to become president and help put his country of 7,100 islands on the map.

The Philippine government accuses the Marcoses of ferrying billions of dollars out of the country during their rule.

Asked if she could ever have another man in her life, she said, "The problem with President Marcos is the longer he's dead the more perfect he becomes."