

Iran to get Indian N-reactor

NEW DELHI, Nov 10: India may sell a small nuclear reactor to Iran but negotiations have not yet been finalised, the Bombay-based Independent newspaper said Saturday, reports AFP.

Indian Foreign office officials were not immediately available to verify or comment on the report which came on the eve of a scheduled visit to Tehran by Indian Foreign Minister Madhav Singh Solanki.

The Independent, which cited "information available" in India, said that should the sale of the five megawatt reactor go ahead, it was likely to be under the safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

The safeguards would preclude Iran from secretly storing plutonium for any nuclear weapons programme, the Independent said adding that the reactor which India had agreed to sell could produce plutonium.

The newspaper said the Iranian government had wanted to buy a larger 10 megawatt reactor, but that the Indian government was "keen on" the smaller five MW one, which would cost some 50 million US Dollars.

Palestinians await tussle with Israel in Washington: Ashrawi

PLO to play crucial role this time

AMMAN, Nov 10: The next stage of the Middle East peace conference will be 'very difficult' and marked by political confrontation with Israel, the spokeswoman of the Palestinian delegation to the forum said here Saturday, reports AFP.

The Palestinians have international legality, justice and determination on their side, Hanan Ashrawi told a news conference in Amman.

But Israel has military might and is exercising its hegemony over the occupied territories, she added.

This, Ashrawi said, will mean that the next stage of the conference will be very difficult and the start of a long path marked by political confrontation with Israel.

Ashrawi said that Palestinian delegates to the peace conference as well as their advisors would return home to the occupied territories today (Sunday).

The Palestinian team at-

tended the peace conference which opened October 30 in Madrid as part of a joint delegation with Jordan and last Sunday took part in face to face talks with Israeli officials.

But the bilateral negotiations were suspended as the Arab and Israeli parties disagreed over the venue for later meetings.

In reply to a question on whether the Palestinians would agree to hold talks with Israel in Washington, Ashrawi said that the United States capital was not per cent neutral because of the presence of the Jewish lobby and the unlimited support of the US Congress to Israel.

A reliable source in Jordan on Friday said the next round of bilateral talks would resume in Washington on November 22 but the US State Department has failed to confirm the report.

Israel has demanded that the talks resume in the Middle East, preferably at locations in Israel and in the Arab countries involved in the negotiations.



Hanan Ashrawi

The Arab delegations have however sought a neutral venue outside the Middle East.

Reuter adds: PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat met Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak on Saturday as part of intensive preparations for a second round of peace talks between the Arabs and Israel.

has toured Jordan, Syria and Yemen to plan strategy for the second round.

"The PLO want to show they're still in control, that's very important at this stage," a senior Arab diplomat said.

Arafat was in Amman at the same time as members of the Palestinian delegation returning from Madrid but it is not known whether he met them. The Israelis have threatened to walk out of the talks if the PLO is officially involved.

There was no immediate word on the substance of Arafat talks with Mubarak. Relations between Egypt and the PLO were badly strained by Arafat's support for Iraq in the Gulf War but the two sides have been working together closely since the run-up to the Madrid conference.

The need for coordination was clear as Arab parties to the peace process took different tracks on its complex procedure.

The plan is for three sets of bilateral talks between Israel and each of Syria, Lebanon and a Palestinian-Jordanian team, and separate multinational talks on regional issues such as water and arms control.

BRIEFLY

PLO resuming ties with Syria

Foreign Minister Farouk Kaddoumi said Sunday the PLO was resuming full normal ties with Syria following years of animosity, reports Reuter from Damascus.

Kaddoumi, Head of the Palestine Liberation Organisation's Political (Foreign Affairs) Department, told reporters the two sides were now working to strengthen their relations.

Palestinian sources said there was agreement in principle to reopen the offices of Fatah, Yasser Arafat's mainstream guerrilla faction in the PLO, which have been closed since 1983.

US varsity in Beirut still open

The American University of Beirut will continue to operate in Lebanon despite the destruction of its administration building in a powerful car bomb explosion Friday, the US government said in a statement released Sunday, reports AFP from Beirut.

The Arabic language press release issued by the US embassy in Beirut said the attack against the university was an absurd aggression.

Describing The American University of Beirut as a beacon of education since 1866 it said the college would pursue its mission of teaching and culture.

Solanki in Iran for improving ties

Indian Foreign Minister Madhav Rao Solanki arrived in Tehran Sunday for four days of talks aimed at improving relations, the Iranian news agency IRNA reported, says Reuter from Nicosia.

Relations between the two states have been soured by Tehran's support for militants in India's predominantly Muslim Kashmir region who want to merge with the one third of the Himalayan region under Pakistani control.

IRNA monitored in Nicosia, said Solanki would meet President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani and Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati.

Mujahideen kill 50 soldiers

Alghan resistance killed 50 Kabul government soldiers in the western heart province, the rebel Midia news agency said Sunday, reports AFP from Islamabad.

Quoting a wireless message from Mujahideen Commander Imafi Khan the agency said in operations conducted two days ago the resistance fighters also arrested 15 soldiers besides capturing five tanks.

The report put Mujahideen losses at two dead and six injured as a result of aerial bombing and artillery fire by the government forces.

Sikh militants kill 10 Hindus

At least 10 people were killed when Sikh militants opened fire at a group of Hindus in the northern state of Haryana Sunday, the Press Trust of India (PTI) reported, says AFP from New Delhi.

An unknown number of gunmen opened indiscriminate fire when the Hindus were coming out of a temple near a Haryana town bordering Punjab, where Sikh militants are fighting for a homeland.

Several others were injured in the attack, the news agency said. No further details were available.

Non-Communist govt in Sofia

Bulgaria's Parliament has approved its first non-Communist government in 47 years, newspapers announced Sunday, reports AP from Sofia.

In a secret ballot late Friday, the 240-seat National Assembly approved the Cabinet proposed by Premier Filip Dimitrov. The vote was 128-90.

"A team of action replaced the Cabinet of hope," said the daily Demokratiya in its headlines, alluding to the fact that most of the newly elected ministers are professionals.

The new government is headed by Filip Dimitrov, the 36-year-old leader of the anti-Communist Union of Democratic Forces.

Americans thought they could destroy me: Sihanouk

BANGKOK, Nov 10: "The Americans thought they could destroy Sihanouk," the former Cambodian monarch said recently to a friend during a visit to New York, gesturing towards a group of US secret service agents gathered around him for his protection, reports AFP.

Prince Norodom Sihanouk's voice then rose to a high pitch as he almost screamed: "Sihanouk is indestructible."

The Prince was completing months of tireless efforts to broker peace in Cambodia when he recalled the US backed coup which overthrew him in 1970.

At 69, Prince Sihanouk, now the leader of the Supreme National Council (SNC) of his country's rival factions, can look back on a career which spans half a century of wars, revolutions and tragedies, both national and personal.

To his admirers, he is the man who won Cambodia's in-

dependence from France, the last surviving founding father of the Non-Aligned Movement and a leader affectionately known to his people as "samdech" or "honorable papa."

To his critics, he is a mercurial prince who flies by the seat of his pants - he is unpredictable and reacts to events as they unfold without following any particular strategy.

His years in power as an autocratic playboy, critics charge, led to political suppression and economic regression and were largely responsible for the dramatic succession of tragedies that has befallen Cambodia since 1970.

That year Cambodians found themselves engulfed in the Vietnam War, five years later they were under the yoke of the murderous Khmer Rouge government led by Pol Pot, and finally they were caught in Cambodia's just-ended 13-year civil war.

Which ever the case, the

Prince has remained Cambodia's most respected leader internationally, also retaining a strong following among his some eight million countrymen.

Prince Sihanouk's political weight and flare were clearly in evidence when, with no military force to speak of, he became in June the Chairman of the Council, which will represent Cambodia's sovereignty while the United Nations administers the country ahead of elections.

In so doing he dropped a fractious and controversial alliance with the Khmer Rouge, Cambodia's deposed marxist ruling group, which had become the strongest guerrilla group fighting the Phnom Penh government.

He also cast himself as the face - saving solution to end the rivalry between China, which backed the Khmer Rouge, and Vietnam, whose forces installed the Phnom Penh government in 1979.

Once again, he took centre stage to become the architect of peace in his country.

Prince Sihanouk's career began in 1941, when the French made him king because they thought he would be docile.

After having secured Cambodia's independence he abdicated, but retained effective power as either Head of

State or Prime Minister. He also took time off to direct melodramatic films, compose romantic songs in French or Cambodian, or play the saxophone.

All of this came to an end in March 1970, when Prince Sihanouk was overthrown while on a trip to France and the Soviet Union in a coup supported by the United States.

US forces invaded Cambodia shortly afterward in a vain bid to stop Hanoi's communist troops from using the country to invade south Vietnam.

The Prince then went to Beijing where he accepted to become the nominal leader of a front entirely dominated by his former Khmer Rouge foes.

And when the Khmer Rouge, then backed by both Beijing and Hanoi seized power in 1975, he returned to Cambodia - renamed Democratic Kampuchea - to assume leadership again.

Not for long, real power was

Protests against xenophobia were also held in Saarbruecken, Munich, Cologne, Kiel Stuttgart, Mannheim and Frankfurt.

The protests were held to coincide with the second anniversary of the fall of the Berlin wall, which divided Communist East Berlin from the west, and 53 years after the infamous crystal night, in 1938 when Nazis attacked Jews.

The scale of right wing attacks on foreigners seeking asylum in Germany has fallen off in the past two weeks although around 20 people were injured, three seriously in clashes between German youths and foreign students in Wismar in former East Germany early Saturday.

110 arrested in Germany

Thousands hold marches to support asylum-seekers



Food poisoning: 125 Lankan soldiers hospitalised

COLOMBO, Nov 10: Some 125 soldiers were hospitalised today in north-central Sri Lanka after being struck by serious food poisoning, doctors and officials said, reports AFP.

The soldiers from the Tissaweva camp in Anuradhapura district were admitted to the main medical facility there after serious food poisoning, doctors said by telephone.

"It is certainly acute food poisoning but right now we cannot say what caused it. We are conducting investigations," a doctor said adding that the men took ill after breakfast. No further details were immediately available.

Officials said the troops were stationed in Anuradhapura to protect the area from attacks by the dominant Tamil separatist group, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE).

Tiger guerrillas are known to have hideouts in thick jungles in neighbouring districts and have raided dozens of villages.

Baker to visit China

WASHINGTON, Nov 10: Secretary of State James Baker's visit to China will give a symbolic boost to its communist government, but it isn't likely to produce any dramatic return gesture from Beijing, reports AP.

Before his stop in the Chinese capital, Baker is visiting Japan and Korea, two nations disappointed by the abrupt cancellation of President Bush's Asian trip.

Trade also is a major issue confronting Baker in Asia.

Japan and China rank first and second among nations running huge trade surpluses with the United States. Combined, the two account for 85 per cent of the \$140 billion US trade deficit for the first eight months of this year.

The visit, eagerly sought by the Chinese, will draw sharp congressional criticism if Baker fails - as is likely to get any substantive concessions from the Chinese on trade, human rights or arms trade.

Off the Record

No second thoughts on Gulf war: Powell

BLOOMINGTON (Minn.): Gen. Colin Powell, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, says he has no regrets about ending the Gulf War before Saddam Hussein was forced from power in Iraq, reports AP.

"I have had not the slightest second thought," Powell told a Minnesota Meeting dinner audience of about 1,200.

He said if US forces had been in Baghdad, trying to sort out 2 to 3 thousand years of history in that region as to who's in charge of what.

In response to a question on deaths from so-called "friendly fire," Powell said the military needs to improve its ability to identify vehicles at night.

"We have to do more work," he said. "But I would say you should never expect a war to be error-free."

Powell said the end of the Cold War means the United States can cut back on its military.



Storm in a tea-cup

COLOMBO: A foreman working for the Mercedes-Benz dealership here was among nearly 2,000 peggars rounded up by police ahead of Aborted South Asian summit, press reports said, reports AFP.

The Sinhala-Language Lankadeena newspaper said the dealer petitioned court saying the foreman had been picked up by police last week during a roundup of beggars from the streets of Colombo as part of efforts to spruce up the city for the summit.

The man had stepped out of his workshop for a cup of tea when he was bundled into a vehicle and taken to a rehabilitation camp in southern Sri Lanka where he is still being detained, the newspaper said.

It said 120 similar complaints of mistaken identity had been received by the authorities during the police swoop on



PARIS: French actor-singer Yves Montand is flanked by his wife and US actress Marilyn Monroe in Hollywood on January 24, 1960. Montand died Saturday of a heart attack in hospital at Senlis in northern France aged 70.

- AFP photo

Maxwell couldn't buy wedding ring for wife

LONDON: Robert Maxwell's widow, on the eve of his funeral Sunday, said dramatic scenarios flashed through her mind when the publishing magnate was reported missing from his yacht off the Canary Islands, reports AP.

Elisabeth Maxwell said she had wondered if her husband had fallen accidentally, was murdered, or had a heart attack. But she told the Sunday Mirror, one of her husband's newspapers, that suicide was out of the question.

"I could never believe that he would take his own life - it was absolutely not in the man's makeup," said Mrs. Maxwell, who was married to the flamboyant billionaire for 46 of her 70 years.

"He was a tremendous fighter. Suicide would have been totally out of character," she said in an interview in Jerusalem, where Maxwell was to be buried Sunday.

It was the first time she spoke at length for publication since her 68-year-old husband's body was found Tuesday evening in the sea off Grand Canary Island, hours after being reported missing from the yacht, Lady Ghislaine.

She said Maxwell could not afford to buy her an engagement ring on his soldier's pay, giving her a diamond ring much later in life. She also recalled when Maxwell was told he had lung cancer and only six weeks to live at age 32.

"I would hide under his bed at the clinic each night because he wanted me to hold his hand so death would not take him without my knowing," she told the Sunday Mirror.

And now Barbara Bush tulip

THE HAGUE (Netherlands): With a sprinkle of champagne, a beaming US first lady Barbara Bush on Saturday gave her name to the newest variety of Dutch tulip that will be exported to the United States, reports AP.

The bright pink "Barbara Bush Tulip" was christened at the official residence of Dutch Prime Minister Ruud Lubbers as President Bush met with European Community leaders.

Mrs Bush, standing next to Ria Lubbers, the wife of the Dutch Prime Minister, doused one of the new hybrid tulips in champagne and was then given a bunch by 7-year-old Nicky Westerhof.

"Beautiful, really," the First Lady said.

And what about the color? "Just my favorite," she added.

She then whispered something to Nicky, a bashful blonde dressed in traditional Dutch dress and wooden clogs. Like many other youngsters in this country, Nicky is just beginning to learn English at school.

She later boasted, in her native tongue, about her short conversation with the wife of the US President.

"She said, 'Hello' - and that I can understand. I can also say it back," said Nicky whose father heads the Dutch Bulb Growers Association.



The late-blooming Barbara Bush tulip is one of 2,400 varieties of tulips that, along with windmills and wooden shoes, has become a symbol of the Netherlands which produces 8.5 billion tulip bulbs per year.