

Atlas rocket blasts into space

CAPE CANAVERAL, Florida. Mar 14: An unmanned Atlas rocket blasted into space Friday carrying a 1,400-kilo-gram (3,100-pound) cable television satellite, reports AFP.

US offers Delhi to compromise on N-issues

NEW DELHI, Mar 14: Indian MPs expressed anger Friday at US attempts to force New Delhi to compromise on crucial trade and nuclear issues, and protested against a proposal for joint naval exercises in the Indian ocean, reports AFP.

Washington was attempting to twist India's arm on trade and other issues. His demand was backed by other MPs including some from the ruling Congress (I) Party, whose anger was provoked by press reports on foreign secretary JN Dixit's talks on trade and nuclear issues with US officials in Washington.

Carla Hills told Dixit Thursday she would be forced to take punitive action under the special 301 provision of the 1988 trade act unless India quickly compromised on such matters as patents.

senior US defence officials, also mentioned the possibility of joint naval exercises in the Indian ocean. The United States wants New Delhi to sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), which India has so far resisted on grounds that it discriminated between nuclear haves and have-nots.

India into signing the NPT. The proposal for joint naval exercises was seen by MPs as another reversal of India's policy holding the Indian ocean to be a zone of peace, and Chitta Basu of the leftist forward bloc said joint exercises would jeopardise India's defence.

Koreas near accord on N-facilities

SEOUL, Mar 14: Rivals North and South Korea were near agreement Saturday on forming a commission to set up procedures for inspections of nuclear facilities, reports AP. "Prospects are very bright," said an official at the Unification Ministry who requested anonymity.

The proposal to form the commission by March 19 was discussed at talks between the two sides at the border village of Panmunjom. News reports said South Korea dropped its demand for a specific timetable for nuclear inspections after the North agreed that inter-Korean inspections would be held before inspections by the Vienna-based International Atomic Energy Agency.

Sharif sticks to NPT summit

The Pakistan Prime Minister, Nawaz Sharif has said that Islamabad would "stick" to its stand on holding a five-nation summit for nuclear non-proliferation in South Asia, PTI reports from Islamabad. "We have already floated the suggestion of five-nation meet in this regard and we are sticking to this stance of ours," Sharif told newsmen in Lahore airport after his arrival from Islamabad on Thursday.

Rebels kill 4 soldiers in Peru

Four Peruvian Maoist Shining Path guerrillas on Friday killed four soldiers guarding the National Engineering University and seized their machine-guns before fleeing, police said, Reuter reports from Lima.

Vance ends Y'slav mission

Cyrus Vance has ended his UN mission to Yugoslavia and has accepted a new posting to Nagorno-Karabakh, his spokesman Francois Guilianti said here Friday, AFP reports from New York.

Armed men attack Pak train

Armed men attacked a Pakistani express train on Friday, injuring three people and abducting three passengers, the official news agency APP said, Reuter reports from Karachi.

Bush may visit Poland

President Bush is considering a brief visit to Poland in July after attending the annual economic summit of industrialised nations in Munich, Germany, officials said Friday, AP reports from Washington.

Thatcher starts campaign

Former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, back in the role which won her three successive elections, hit the campaigning trail on Friday to rally support for the ruling Conservatives, Reuter reports from England.

Fresh fighting in S Africa: 24 killed

JOHANNESBURG, Mar 14: Savage fighting killed 24 blacks Friday, one more was killed by police and two bombs damaged government offices in the turbulent final days before a whites only referendum on reform, reports AP.

CIS agrees to joint responsibility of former Soviet debt

MOSCOW, Mar 14: The Commonwealth of Independent States moved towards healing a breach between its two most powerful members, Russia and Ukraine, with a new deal on how to repay the former Soviet Union's foreign debt, reports Reuter.



JERUSALEM: Palestinian Muslim women dressed in the typical white 'hijab' pass Israeli border policemen while leaving the mosques compound after the Friday noon prayer of the holy month of Ramadan. —AFP/UNB photo

Americans press Bush to stop brain drain of former Soviet Union

WASHINGTON, Mar 14: Leading American scientists on Friday urged President George Bush to send millions of dollars to stop the brain drain of scientists and engineers from the former Soviet Union who are looking for jobs beyond their borders, reports Reuter. "Time is of the essence," the scientists and engineers said in a letter to Bush's science adviser, Alan Bromley.

from their international colleagues owing to the virtual absence of hard currency necessary for western journals and for travel," they said. Already research groups are disintegrating and some of the best scientists have left for temporary or permanent positions abroad, they noted.

Ukraine suspends transfer of N-arms to Russia

WASHINGTON, Mar 14: The United States on Friday asked Ukraine to explain its decision to suspend the transfer of nuclear weapons to Russia for destruction but an official told Reuter it did not seem a serious problem at this time.

African summit on drought soon

LUSAKA, Mar 14: The frontline heads of state will soon meet again to seek collective efforts in tackling the severe drought in Southern Africa, Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe announced here Thursday, reports Xinhua.

BBC plans to slash jobs

LONDON, Mar 14: Ten thousand of the 23,000 jobs at the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) could be eliminated by 1996, under proposals outlined in an internal memorandum not yet published, a spokesman said Friday, reports AFP.

Khmers refuse UN request

PHNOM PENH, Mar 14: Khmer Rouge military leaders refused a United Nations demand for a cease-fire during an emergency meeting Saturday, UN officials said, reports AP.

Off the Record

Nothing is impossible

PEORIA: A 5-year-old girl said she was sexually assaulted on a school bus by about eight boys, police said Friday, reports AP. The kindergarten student was riding in the front of the bus Tuesday when the boys forced her to the rear, police said.

\$13,320 tip

VANCOUVER: A waitress is being praised for her honesty in refusing to accept a huge tip from an elderly customer, reports AP. Maria Ling said the 81-year-old man tried to give her two rolls of money as a tip after she had served him at a Denny's restaurant.

Thriller about killer lesbians

NEW YORK: US homosexual activists vowed on Friday to stop traffic in Angeles and disrupt the Academy Awards to protest "basic instinct", a new Michael Douglas thriller about killer lesbians, reports Reuter. Rick Wilson, a spokesman for Queer Nation, a homosexual rights group with 30 chapters said the film's "astounding and sickening" depiction of lesbians could provoke a violent backlash.

French speleologist sealed in cave

SAINT BRES: French speleologist Pascal Barrier (R) resurfaces after he was sealed inside the Cocaliere cave near southern France, 113 days ago, for an experiment in sensory deprivation. —AFP/UNB photo

Talks with Iraqi experts on UN demands conclude

NEW YORK, United Nations, Mar 14: The special UN commission responsible for overseeing the destruction of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction Friday concluded talks with Iraqi experts on UN demand, the UN group's spokesman said, reports AFP.

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