

BRIEFLY

3 Lankan Muslims shot dead:

Tamil Tiger rebels shot dead three members of a Muslim family, including a woman, in eastern Sri Lanka, military officials said Sunday. AP reports from Colombo.

They said rebels shot the three farm hands when they were harvesting rice Saturday in Ampara district's Central Camp area, 126 miles (200 kilometers) east of Colombo, said officials at the Joint Operations Command.

Rebels also fired at the funeral procession but no one was hurt, said the officials, who cannot be identified under briefing rules.

Tamil rebels, who are fighting to set up a separate Tamil homeland in the north and east, have also been trying to drive out Tamil and Sinhalese Muslims and Buddhist Sinhalese from the east.

Lebanese start voting:

Lebanese in the north and east of the country started voting in the first parliamentary elections in 20 years, Reuter reports from Beirut.

The country is deeply divided between Muslims who favour the elections and Christians who refuse to vote while Syrian troops still control Beirut and the surrounding area.

More than 265 candidates are standing for 23 Christian and Muslim seats in eastern Lebanon and 28 seats in the north.

Voting in other parts of Lebanon is due on the next two Sunday, August 30 and September.

2 killed as Greek ship sinks:

At least two people were killed and 477 people were rescued Sunday after a Greek passenger ship collided with a fishing boat and sank, authorities said, reports AP from Kuala Lumpur.

Police in Port Dickson, 80 kilometres (48 miles) south of Kuala Lumpur said by telephone that rescue vessels reported two people were killed and four injured after the 13, 176-ton Royal Pacific collided with a Taiwanese fishing boat early Sunday morning.

The injured included two Indonesians and two Greeks, but the nationalities of the dead were not known. Police said three of the injured had arrived in Port Dickson and were being treated at a hospital there.

Borghild Eldoen of the Norwegian Rescue Centre at Sola, Norway, said at least 20 ships had responded to the distress call and had rescued 477 people.

Gabid to attend Y'slav talks:

The secretary general of the Organisation of Islamic Conference, Hamid al-Gabid, will attend the Yugoslavia peace talks in London, it was announced in Jiddah Saturday, reports AP from Jiddah.

The negotiations are to begin Wednesday. The invitation was issued by British Prime Minister John Major.

The OIC, the umbrella group for the world's Islamic nations, held a June conference in Istanbul on the crisis in the former Yugoslavia. Since then, it has been mustering support for the Muslim majority under attacked by Serbs in the breakaway republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Temple collapse claims 10:

Ten raiders digging for valuables in an historic temple in northwest Cambodia were killed when the walls fell in and villagers claiming it was God's will refused to save them, a UN spokesman said, AFP says from Phnom Penh.

The collapse, which occurred August 12 in Banteay Chhmar, killed 10 guerrillas belonging to the Khmer Rouge and Khmer People's Liberation Front (KPNLF), said spokesman Erik Palt.

"They dug about three metres (10 feet) and suddenly the walls collapsed and killed them," he said.

A freelance journalist returning from the area said many of the raiders were buried alive, but villagers refused to help, saying they deserved their fate for trying to steal from a temple.

Plawluk recognises new govt:

The US-based Ukrainian government-in-exile formally recognized the leadership of independent Ukraine on Saturday and gave up its 72-year-old claim to be the country's rightful ruling body, AP reports from Kiev.

At a Ukrainian World Forum of 2,000 delegates in Kiev, the president of the government-in-exile, Mykola Kravchuk, handed Ukrainian President Leonid M. Kravchuk a certificate endorsing the new state.

The ceremony took place just two days before the first anniversary of Ukraine's proclamation of independence from the Soviet Union on Aug. 24, 1991.

The government-in-exile had existed since 1919-1920, when Russia crushed the short-lived independent Ukraine that was established after the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution.

Guatemalan peace talks begin

MEXICO CITY, Aug 23: Guatemalan government and rebel leaders Saturday convened an eighth round of talks here seeking an agreement on human rights as part of an overall accord to end 31 years of civil war, officials said, reports AP.

Government delegation head Manuel Code said the foundation had been laid for a definitive peace agreement to be signed this year and that "the points of controversy have already been resolved."

The current session, scheduled to continue through Monday, is expected to complete negotiations in the area for 'democracy and human rights', one of 11 on the agenda for the talks.

In earlier talks in Mexico, the two sides reached agreement on democratic reforms and another that ends the requirement for civilians to serve in paramilitary civil defence patrols.

Negotiators were expected to iron out details on creation of a commission to determine responsibility for crimes during the war and to accept an international human rights charter as a framework for resolving a conflict that has claimed more than 100,000 lives.

Chinese allege human rights abuse in Australia

SYDNEY, Aug 23: Members of Australia's Chinese community staged a protest rally here today alleging human rights abuses by the government and immigration authorities, reports AP.

Organiser Kenneth Xu said the rally, attended by some 2,000 people was in protest against the use of violence against a Chinese student by an Immigration Department officer and the deportation of students.

Xu alleged that on August 14 a Shanghai student, identified as Xing Jian Dong, was beaten by an immigration officer after refusing to acknowledge a deportation order served on him at the Villawood detention centre.

"The Chinese government says it is not going to punish students in the pro-democracy movement overseas."

Sino-ROK diplomatic accord today

BEIJING, Aug 23: South Korean Foreign Minister Lee Sang-Ok arrived here today on a three day official visit during which an accord establishing diplomatic relations between Seoul and Beijing is to be signed, Xinhua news agency said, reports AP.

Lee and his Chinese counterpart Qian Qichen are to sign the historic accord on Monday, officially closing decades of enmity between the cold war rivals.

An earlier report from Seoul said: Lee Sang-Ok left Seoul for Beijing today to conclude an agreement establishing diplomatic relations between China and South Korea.

He is expected to call on Chinese Premier Li Peng and President Yang Shangkun before returning home on Tuesday.

Meanwhile, officials in Seoul said that during the normalization negotiations with South Korean officials, the Chinese expressed regret that China took part in the 1950-53 Korean war on the North Korean side.

The Chinese officials described their war participation as an "unfortunate and regrettable", incident involving the two countries.

China sent a million troops to fight South Korea and UN forces led by US troops, saying its territory bordering on North Korea was threatened.

Chinese officials have assured Seoul that China will henceforth maintain equally friendly ties with both South and North Korea. Until now, North Korea has been China's close political ally.

An official also said that with the Seoul-Beijing normalization, China's mutual assistance treaty with North Korea, concluded in 1961, became "a dead letter", it stipulates automatic Chinese military intervention in case of an attack on North Korea.

On the other hand, officials in Seoul expressed hope of

maintaining what they called "unofficial" ties with Taipei, although Taiwan severed formal relations with South Korea on Saturday.

Meanwhile Reuter adds: China will invite South Korean President Roh Tae-Woo and North Korean President Kim Il-Sung and his son and heir-apparent Kim Jong-Il to Beijing for separate visits this year, a major Japanese newspaper said today.

Yomiuri Shimibun quoted informed sources in Beijing as saying the invitation to the North Korean leader was to show China's intention of maintaining close relations with Pyongyang despite the establishment of diplomatic ties with Seoul.

China sent troops to help North Korea in the 1950-53 Korean War and remains isolated Pyongyang's closest ally. North Korea has not yet reached in public to Beijing's agreement with Seoul.



TAIPEI: An unidentified man, wearing a placard condemning South Korea's move to establish formal diplomatic ties with China, hurls eggs at the South Korean embassy in Taipei on Saturday. He also supplied eggs for passers-by to throw at the embassy building. South Korea's move to sever relations with Taiwan could leave the island with close to no allies in Asia. —AFP/UNB photo

Sweeping political reform in Canada

OTTAWA, Aug 23: Provincial premiers and other leaders agreed to a sweeping political reform package designed to head off a secession referendum in French-speaking Quebec, reports AP.

The pact — reached Saturday night after five days of negotiations — would overhaul Parliament, grant self-government to natives, give provinces a veto over future changes in federal institutions, and lower inter-provincial trade barriers.

"This is a good agreement for Canada. This is a good day for Canada," Prime Minister Brian Mulroney at the close of talks involving provincial premiers and native and territorial leaders.

"We do not have perfection tonight, but we do have fair and honourable compromise that will benefit Canada," Mulroney emphasized.

Quebec's Premier, Robert Bourassa, said he was "very glad" over the results of the talks, which he said showed Canada's willingness to address his province's needs.

"Canada is attached to this province and to this Franco-phonous society," Bourassa said.

But Bernard Landry, vice president of Quebec's separatist Parti Quebecois, blasted Bourassa for "surrendering" to the English-speaking provinces.

The package must be ratified by the federal parliament and provincial legislatures, and be approved by voters in referendums in Quebec, Alberta and British Columbia.

Canada has been in constitutional limbo since 1990, when the provinces failed to unanimously ratify a previous reform package, the Meech Lake accord. The 1986 agreement foundered after some provinces objected to recognizing Quebec as a "distinct society."

Mulroney said he expects the agreement, which has unanimous support, will be ratified. But he has not yet decided whether to call a national referendum.

"The degree of unanimity we achieved is quite overwhelming," said Frank McKenna, premier of the eastern province of New Brunswick.

Mulroney and the premiers will meet later this week in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, to review legal details of the agreement.

Bourassa said that while he had hoped for a greater transfer of power from Ottawa to the provinces, Quebec had gained enough to justify compromises.

Quebec has about one-quarter of Canada's 27 million people.

France opposed to isolating Cuba internationally

HAVANA, Cuba, Aug 23: France is opposed to isolating Cuba internationally, even though Paris does not agree with the island's communist government on some issues, French Budget Minister Michel Charasse said on Saturday, reports Reuter.

Charasse, speaking to reporters at the end of a three-day visit to Cuba, said the French government had set aside 30 million francs (6 million dollar) for Cuba in its overseas aid budget, the Cuban domestic news agency AIn said.

It said this money would be spent on small projects over a three-year period.

The French minister had brought a personal message from President Francois Mitterrand to Cuban President Fidel Castro. Its contents were not revealed.

Asked about Cuba's unpaid commercial debts to France, which is one of the island's main western creditors, Charasse said Paris was not pressing the issue. Cuba owes more than 7 (seven) billion dollar to western creditors and negotiations on the debt have been deadlocked for several years.

"We're not going to declare war on Cuba, not harass it just for a few cents. France's general policy is against the isolation of Havana," the French minister said, quoted by AIn.

The United States, Cuba's

Peruvians go to polls Nov 22

LIMA, Aug 23: Peruvians will elect a one-chamber, 80-member Congress on November 22 that will write a new constitution as well as exercise legislative and watchdog powers, an electoral law published on Saturday said, reports Reuter.

It said the Congress, which will re-establish the balance of powers in Peru after President Alberto Fujimori dissolved Congress and reorganized the judiciary in April, would last until the end of Fujimori's term in July 1995.

The state guarantees that the constituent Democratic Congress will act with sovereignty and complete autonomy in its constituent, legislative and watchdog functions," the law in the official Gazette said.

The minister said that in his talks with Cuban officials he discussed a nuclear power plant being built on the island and the subject of Cuba's oil and fuel supplies. He declined to give details.

Off the Record

Because it will lead to capitalism

MEXICO CITY: Cuba's revolutionary hero Ernesto "Che" Guevara predicted the fall of communism in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, a former collaborator was quoted as saying in a Saturday news reports, says AP.

Guevara, who fought alongside Fidel Castro in Cuba's revolution, was critical of Soviet-style Communism because he believed it would lead inevitably to capitalism, Angel Gomez Trueba told the official Communist Party organ Granma.

Gomez Trueba was Guevara's deputy when he headed Cuba's industry ministry. In the interview reported by Prensa Latina, Cuba's official news agency, he said Guevara thought many economic measures adopted in the Soviet Union were wrong. The report was monitored in Mexico City.

The Argentine-born Guevara left Castro's government and went to Bolivia to try to foment a guerrilla war. He is a national hero in Cuba after being killed by the Bolivian government in 1967.

Cuba's economy has been devastated by the fall of communism in the former East bloc, once the Caribbean island's biggest sponsors and trading partners.

Gomez Trueba's interview comes as Cuba's harsh economic situation has forced President Castro to backtrack ideologically.

One of the world's few remaining hardline Communist states has recently begun to allow joint ventures with foreign capitalists.



'Go home niggers'

CUMMING: Marchers singing civil rights anthems paraded through driving rain and past a torrent of jeers Saturday to repeat their 1987 walk through Forsyth County, where blacks have been unwelcome for 80 years, reports AP.

Ku Klux Klansmen and others shouted, "Go home, niggers" from behind police barricades as the Rev Hosea Williams led about 40 people to the Forsyth County Courthouse. The march started Wednesday in Atlanta, 50 miles (80 kms) away.

Earlier Saturday, about 50 white supremacists chanting "white power" had demonstrated at the courthouse to protest the march.

"We don't take second billion to no niggers," Jerry Lord, a Klansman and county organizer for the white supremacist Nationalist Movement, said at the rally.

Nationalist Movement first officer Richard Barrett later called reporters to say Lord had been suspended from the group for 30 days because of his language and his behavior at the rally.

Assistant Police Chief Buck Jones estimated that about 350 white supremacists jammed the streets, along with several hundred onlookers.

A garrulous mother

LONDON: "Wild Swans," an engrossing family history of China, was the book Jung Chang didn't want to write. Her mother talked and talked and talked her into it, reports AP.

"I came to England in 1978. For 10 years I didn't want to write this book because, I mean, it was too painful — my past. I simply wanted to forget about China," Chang said.

But the 40-year-old scholar and adviser to the British Foreign Office was convinced that the story of her grandmother and her mother, and of her own 26 years in China, had to be told when her mother came to visit.

"Once she started she really couldn't stop. It was quite incredible because we talked every day for hours.

"We traveled around in Britain and then we went to Switzerland, and my mother was almost obsessed with just talking. In the evenings in the hotel, she would talk into a tape recorder and then she had 60 hours of recordings for me by the end of it. And that sort of made up my mind and I felt it was a story worth telling."

The vivid family saga — supplemented by Chang's sound reporting and historical research in China and her own experiences exiled in the Himalayas, joining the Red Guards and doing peasant labour — makes a lively journey through 70 years of Chinese history.

Hollywood has cut off its own flow of talent

LOS ANGELES, Aug 23: What's the quickest way to find the cinematographer on a movie set? Just listen for a foreign accent.

"We American cinematographers are lost in fog," said Woody Omens, whose film credits include "Coming to America" and "Boomerang." "Hollywood has cut off its own flow of talent."

Many in the film and television industry believe a trend of hiring immigrants is pushing skilled American designers and technicians out of work, reports AP.

Some, including Omens, see the hiring of mostly nonunion cinematographers, costume designers, art directors and makeup artists as an attack on organized labour and a break with the tradition of promoting from within. Others see it as big business cutting costs, like Ford building cars in Mexico.

The studios say film production has become an international business, and producers shouldn't be denied access to an expanding and skilled talent pool.

"Cinematographers are developing throughout the world," said Michel Rosenfeld, director of labour relations and immigration for the Walt Disney Co. "There's even production in Africa now."

New visa rules give the local unions a small say in who can — and can't — come in.

"We're trying to keep American jobs for Americans," said Carole Frasier, executive director of the costume designers' guild, where unemployment runs 50 per cent. "I was just able to stop a British designer from working at Sony Pictures. In this day and age when jobs are so scarce, we have to fight for everything."

The entire crew — including the caterers — were foreigners on the recent production of "Noble House," according to the International Photographers Guild.

"We are not being xenophobic," said Bruce Doering, director of employee relations at the guild. "We have hundreds of [cinematographers] who are foreign-born."

While no exact figures are available, various estimates suggest as many as half of all films employ at least one foreign worker. Some independent films use foreigners in almost every job.

Cinematographer John Toll (the upcoming "Wind" and television's "The Young Riders") said he's toyed with the idea of changing his name to Jon Van Toll.

"There is a tendency among some people who are relatively new to the business to say they want "an exotic name." It's a joke but it's

dead - on true," Toll said.

The Screen Actors Guild, a union not especially open to foreigners because of the premium placed on language skills, receives at least one application a day seeking approval to hire immigrant performers.

"American actors are being replaced," said Leonard Chassman, SAG's Hollywood executive director. "The volume has picked up dramatically."

Although foreign investment in Hollywood has never been so great, overseas ownership is not pushing these new hiring practices. Some say it's simply part of industry wide cost-cutting aimed at non-star talent.

Salaries for key positions (actors, directors and some screenwriters) have fallen as well. But the three unions covering these jobs are relatively strong.

The production companies argue they hire foreign workers to stretch the creative canvas, not to undercut the domestic job market. The producers often see nonunion workers — some of whom will work for much less money — as more determined and productive than their unionized counterparts.

Some foreign directors demand using their

Florida put under hurricane watch

MIAMI, Aug 23: The heavily-populated southeast coast of Florida was put under a hurricane watch on Saturday as hurricane Andrew roared towards the Bahamas and the US mainland with 100-mile-per-hour (100 km) winds, reports Reuter.

The northwestern Bahamas islands were put under a hurricane warning. Forecasters in Nassau expected hurricane-force winds on Sunday.

The storm could make US landfall as early as Monday.

Emergency managers along Florida's east coast were warning residents to begin hurricane preparations and officials of the US space agency NASA

Atlas rocket blown up

CAPE CANAVERAL, Florida Aug 23: An unmanned Atlas rocket carrying a cable television satellite was blown up Saturday over the Atlantic after its booster failed, sending it swerving out of control shortly after lift-off, reports AP.

Launch officials sent the rocket self-destruct commands by remote control less than eight minutes after blast-off. Air Force officials said there was no danger to anyone on land or at sea and that nothing on the ground had been damaged.

The costly satellite, however, was lost. It was the second launch failure in year-and-a-half for Atlas Manufacturer General Dynamics, Corp. In April 1991 an Atlas carrying a Japanese broadcasting satellite had to be destroyed shortly after lift-off.

The 14-story rocket and roared away from its seaside launch pad on schedule at 18:40 pm (2240 GMT) in the third launch attempt in as many days. Stormy weather forced the cancellation of the first two tries.