

Arabs concerned at new western military plan

WASHINGTON, Aug 25: Despite some Arab concern that a new western military plan could slice up Iraq and destabilise the Middle East, President George Bush is expected to announce soon the enforcement of a ban on military flights over southern Iraq, reports Reuters.

Gulf-based officials and diplomats said on Monday there was regional support for attempts to halt Iraqi attacks on the Shi'ites, but widespread Arab concern that it could lead to dismemberment of Iraq.

Kuwait is the only Arab state to openly declare its support for western plans to protect Iraq's rebellious Shi'ites. Syria, Jordan, Yemen and Algeria have joined Iraq in denouncing the move.

Moderate Arab states Saudi Arabia and Egypt have been of-

cially silent on the plan, although US air force jets could be launched from Saudi Arabia to enforce the new no-fly zone.

An administration official accompanying Bush on a campaign on Monday, said an announcement on the plan to protect dissident Shi'ite Muslims from Iraqi air attacks was expected "on either Tuesday or Wednesday."

US Defence Officials said on Monday that American forces were ready to enforce the no-fly order and shoot down any Iraqi warplanes that take to the air.

The announcement that US, British and French planes would begin enforcing the no-fly zone south of the 32nd parallel had been planned for Tuesday, but that may not be the case now, said the official without further comment.

Significant information on Iraqi arms plan found

UNITED NATIONS, Aug 25: UN weapons inspectors have found "significant" information on Iraqi ballistic weapons programmes, the Special Commission on the destruction of Iraq's weapons said August 17, reports AP.

A spokesman for the commission, Tim Trevan, said that the 22-member UN team "visited all the sites it was instructed to... It conducted successful inspections at all those sites and was not denied access at any of them" by Iraqi officials. He added that no ministries were on the list examined in the past week.

Trevan said the commission will discuss what the team found after the data collected is analyzed more carefully. However, he confirmed that the team, led by Russian missile expert Nikita Smidovich, "found significant additional information concerning the

ballistic missiles programme". The inspections were the first since the end of the three-week standoff at the Ministry of Agriculture building in Baghdad. Iraq, asserting inspections in its ministries would violate its sovereignty, refused to admit a UN team into the facility last month — and in recent days Iraqi officials have reasserted their opposition to inspections at its ministries.

Meanwhile, members of the Gulf coalition have threatened to use force if Iraq again attempts to bar inspectors from sites the commission feels might have information about the chemical, biological, nuclear, and ballistic weapons programmes that must be destroyed under the UN-brokered cease-fire which ended hostilities in the Persian Gulf war.

And Trevan, who noted that

commission policy prevents the listing of sites either before or after an inspection, insisted that UN inspectors will target ministry buildings if they feel weapons information is located there.

"We have the right to go anywhere in Iraq at any time when we have reason to believe that a site may have information relating to our mandate," Trevan said. "And we will exercise that right wherever we need to."

"It's not the Iraqi government that decides where we go or what our rights are. We have been given our rights by the Security Council," he said. "Neither we (the commission members) nor the Iraqi government can change those rights. It's only the Security Council that can."

The commission "clearly... established our rights" to enter ministry buildings on two dif-

ferent occasions: the Ministry of Industry and Minerals in February and the Ministry of Agriculture in August. Trevan added.

Asked if the United States had asked the team to visit certain sites, Trevan said that the commission receives "information and advice from a variety of sources — individuals, organizations, and governments — and a lot of that relates to sites where we might do inspections."

"We make no secret of the fact that the US government is one of our main supporters in our operations," he added. "But that said, it is the commission that analyzes the information that comes in; it is the commission that decides whether, when, and where to inspect. And the basis on which we do that... is purely our mandate and whether that is an effective way of filling the mandate."

No progress in Guatemalan talks

MEXICO CITY, Aug 25: Guatemalan government and rebel representatives suspended peace talks here Monday without agreeing on how to address Human Rights abuses committed in the country's 31-year-old civil war, reports AFP.

The guerrillas want a commission due to determine responsibility for crimes during the war to start its investigation immediately.

But the government wants the panel to delay its work until after a comprehensive peace agreement is reached, according to a statement released by Archbishop Alfonso Quetzada Toruno, who mediated the talks.

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

Before the eighth round of talks began Saturday, govern-

ment delegation head Manuel Conde had said the foundation had been laid for a definite peace agreement to be signed this year and end a war that has claimed 100,000 lives.

Conde said Monday that the talks had hit roadblocks, but that authorities were ready to keep negotiating.

Rebel commanders Pablo Monsanto, Rolando Moran and Gaspar Irom accused the government team of having "hardened its position" and becoming "intransigent" on human rights.

Rebel spokesmen said authorities refused to discuss other points on the agenda because of the dispute over human rights and the investigative commission.

Government sources said the rebels had rejected their proposals.

Peace talks will continue with mediator Quetzada Toruno meeting separately with the two sides between now and September 11.

Gen Qin in Moscow

Chinese Defense Minister Colonel-General Qin Jiwei arrived in Moscow Monday to discuss prospects for Sino-Russian military cooperation, ITAR-TASS news agency reported, AFP says from Moscow.

The report gave no further details on the subjects to be discussed during his talks with Russian Defence Minister General Pavel Grachev and other senior Russian military officials.

Qin was greeted at Moscow's Sheremetyevo Airport by Grachev, Beijing's Ambassador to Moscow, Wang Jinqin, and Russian military commanders, the report said.

He was due to remain in Russia until August 31.

Sabah to thank NZ PM

The Emir of Kuwait will visit New Zealand next month to thank the country for its part in the Gulf war, Prime Minister Jim Bolger said Tuesday, reports Reuters from Wellington.

Bolger said in a statement Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmed Al-Sabah would visit New Zealand from September 3-5.

New Zealand's contribution to the coalition that forced Iraq from Kuwait in 1991 included air transport teams and medical teams.

"I am advised that the Emir wishes to express personally the appreciation of Kuwait for New Zealand's support during the Gulf war," Bolger said.

Professor kills 2 in Canada

A professor opened fire at Concordia University on Monday, killing at least two people and wounding three before being captured, police and witnesses said, reports AP.

Canadian press identified the assailant as a professor of mechanical engineering who was apparently angry he might lose his job.

Police spokesman constable Claude Forget said the gunman was arrested about an hour after he began shooting at the downtown campus.

Vojislav Latnovic, a professor of mechanical engineering, said he saw his colleague carrying a pistol.

"He had a blank look on his face. I was afraid. I went back into my office and slammed the door," Latnovic said.

Rafic Chehour, who was at the university seeking information about graduate courses, said the gunman was wearing a suit and seemed very calm.

Akihito to visit China in Oct

Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko will visit China later this year, the Japanese government said Tuesday, reports Reuters from Tokyo.

The announcement followed a cabinet meeting at which ministers gave final approval to the trip, expected to take place between October 23 and 28.

Talks of such a visit, the first by a Japanese monarch to China, has caused controversy at home. Right-wing nationalists fear Akihito will face pressure to apologise for Japan's brutal military occupation of much of China earlier this century.

A foreign ministry official told reporters that the Emperor was not going to China to apologise.

"The purpose of the visit is to further friendship and goodwill, that is how the Chinese see it," the official said.

Hossein leaves clinic soon

Jordan's King Hussein should be able to leave the Mayo Clinic by the end of the week, his doctor says, reports AP from Rochester.

Dr. Samir Farraj said Monday that the king, who had cancerous cells removed from his urinary tract last week, should be released by Friday or Saturday and would return to Jordan immediately.

Farraj said the 56-year-old king will need checkups every three to six months, but most of those can be performed in Jordan.

The king was diagnosed as having cancer of the lining of the ureter, a tube that connects the kidney to the bladder, Farraj said. He said the entire malignancy was removed, along with Hussein's left kidney.

"It was very localized and hasn't even spread to the wall of the ureter," he said.

Tigers kill 11 in Lanka

Tamil Tiger rebels attacked a military patrol in northern Sri Lanka and 11 people were killed in the fighting, the military said Tuesday, reports AP from Colombo.

The rebels fired small arms, grenades and mortars, killing seven soldiers in the attack Monday in Alampiti town in Mullaitivu district, said a spokesman at the military headquarters in Colombo.



BEIJING: Chinese Premier Li Peng (R) shakes hands with South Korean Foreign Minister Lee Sang Ock on Monday at Zhongnanhai, the communist party headquarters. A joint communique establishing diplomatic relations was signed earlier in the day.

— AFP/UNB photo

NAM may form back-up unit

JAKARTA, Aug 25: The 10th summit of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) is expected to agree on the formation of a back-up unit to run the organization's daily affairs, a press report said here today, reports AP.

Indonesian Foreign Minister Ali Alatas told the Jakarta Post daily that NAM ministers had already agreed on the proposition to set up the unit, which will assist the chairman in implementing decisions agreed on by the summit as well as the ministerial meeting which preceded it.

"This back-up system should also be able eventually to become a kind of research unit preparing position papers on issues of common interest," Alatas said in an interview published by the Daily Tuesday.

Alatas said the system was an alternative to a strengthened secretariat for the movement, which has been opposed by many who feel it would convert NAM into a formal organization and threaten its dynamism.

The foreign minister said that while the general outline of such a body had been agreed by NAM ministers, discussions were still underway as to its form and composition as well as the location of its headquarters.

Alatas also said he was confident the summit, to open here Tuesday, would adopt a decision to set up a joint co-ordinating committee between the movement and the G-77, a loose grouping of 77 developing countries cooperating in the economic field.

Opposition wants impeachment of President Collor

BRASILIA (Brazil), Aug 25: The opposition stepped up a campaign of street protests demanding the impeachment of President Fernando Collor de Mello after a congressional report charged him with flagrant corruption, reports AP.

The 200-page report, which was read Monday by Sen Amir Lando in a lengthy televised broadcast from Congress, said Collor had received at least 6.5 million dollars from his 1989 campaign treasurer Paulo Cesar Frias who is accused of graft influence peddling and tax evasion.

"It is evident that the president received undue economic benefits," the report said, calling Collor's conduct "incompatible with the dignity, honor and decorum of the post of chief of state."

The 22-member panel that produced the report will vote on its conclusions Wednesday. It is expected to pass by 12-9, with committee chairman Congressman Benito Gama abstaining.

The Brazilian Bar Association has said it will request impeachment based on the panel's findings.

Collor, Brazil's first directly elected leader in 29 years, came to office on a platform calling for a war on corruption. His administration has been mired in scandal since shortly after he took office in early

1990.

The latest scandal erupted in May, when the president's brother, Pedro, alleged that Farias was making millions of dollars in illegal activities and turning 70 per cent over to the president.

Collor, who denies any wrong doing and says he will not step down before his term ends in 1995, is to respond to the corruption charges in a televised speech later this week.

His spokesman, Etevaldo Dias, called the report a "political work."

A request for impeachment must be approved by two-thirds of the 503-seat lower house of Congress. In that case, Collor would be suspended for 180 days while the Senate decides whether to remove him permanently.

His replacement would be the little-regarded vice president, Itamar Franco.

Ernest T. Patrikis, general counsel for the New York Federal Reserve Bank, said that while the Fed's probe into BCCI would have continued, Morgenthau was crucial to cracking the scandal.

"I don't think we would be where we are today without him," said Patrikis. "He has been in this business so long, he just has incredible contacts that go around the world."

Grenade attack on UNICEF HQs in Iraq

CAIRO, Aug 25: The headquarters of the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) in Sulaymaniyah, northern Iraq, was attacked by rocket-propelled grenades today, according to reports from Iraq, says Xinhua.

The UNICEF building was not hit and nobody was injured. One of the attackers was caught after a gunfight with the Kurdish guerrillas guarding the building, a UNICEF official was quoted as saying.

"After one of the grenades flew over our building, the Kurdish guards rushed in the direction it was fired and were engaged by three other gunmen covering the man who fired the grenade," said the unnamed official.

One of the gunmen was caught before fleeing the attackers fired another grenade at the building. The grenade missed the target, the official added, without identifying the man who was caught, and his comrades.

Today's was the latest of a series of attacks on UN personnel and relief workers in the Kurdish area of northern Iraq.

UN officials said that these attacks aimed at scaring them off Iraq. Kurdish officials blamed Iraq's secret police for the attacks, but Iraq has denied having any involvement in these incidents.

Since last Friday, four UN personnel in northern Iraq have been injured in three separate attacks.

22 murdered in LA violence

LOS ANGELES, Aug 25: Twenty-two people were murdered in Los Angeles at the weekend, the worst period of violence experienced by the city since it was ravaged by riots in the spring, police said on Monday, reports Reuters.

In addition to the dead, another 24 people were wounded by gunfire or stab-wounds, including a 19-year-old woman in a wheelchair who was shot in the back when she failed to respond to a motorist who asked for directions in south Los Angeles.

"The guy stuck a gun out of the window and just fired at her," said police spokesman Lieutenant David Rook. The woman was later described as being in stable condition.

Among those who died was an off-duty police officer, shot while investigating reports of a prowler in a neighbour's yard, and a youth baseball coach who had argued with the father of one of the boys he was coaching.

Fifty-one people were killed during three days of bloody rioting that started April 29 after the acquittal of four white police officers in the beating of a black motorist.

Off the Record

They have chance to talk about future

WASHINGTON: Hillary Clinton and Tipper Gore fired back Monday at Republican assaults on Mrs Clinton and painted the GOP as a party that wants to bash "other people's families" rather than solve family problems, reports AP.

"They had their chance to talk about the future and instead they chose to make up stories and launch verbal grenades," Mrs Clinton said in her first detailed reply to last week's attacks on her at the Republican National Convention.

She and Mrs Gore gave a double-barrelled response on Monday morning's talk shows, appearing on NBC's "Today" and "CBS This Morning" in interviews taped during the Clinton-Gore campaign's weekend bus tour of the Rust Belt. Also Monday, the two women were featured in a Cable News Network spot.

It was their first national exposure since last week's GOP Convention in Houston, where President Bush's supporters focused on values and aimed much of their fire at Mrs Clinton, a Yale-educated lawyer.

Conservative Patrick Buchanan cast Mrs Clinton as a radical feminist who likens marriage to slavery; Marilyn Quayle got in a more subtle dig, saying liberals are disappointed "because most women do not wish to be liberated from their essential natures as women."

Mrs Clinton told CBS that Mrs Quayle's remark was "a bit of an insult to today's modern women, most of whom are working mothers and struggling very hard to balance their family's needs with the family's economic needs."

Mass wedding

SEOUL: Controversial South Korean unification church leader Moon Sun-Myung married 20,000 couples from 131 countries today in a mass wedding ceremony at Seoul's Olympic Stadium, reports AP.

A further 10,000 couples from six countries — including Brazil, Kenya, the Philippines, Zaire, Japan and Nigeria — who were unable to come to Seoul, were simultaneously married in their countries via a live satellite hookup, church organizers said.

Among the newly wed couples, popular Japanese television actress Junko Sakurada, 34, told newsmen she was "very happy" to marry a man picked by her church.

Some 800 large buses and 2,000 limousines were mobilized to take the newly weds and their hotels to the stadium, producing a big traffic snarl.

The organizers said it cost some five million dollars to prepare a 15-gram (0.53 ounce) gold wedding ring for everyone.

Under a strict church rule, the newly weds may not consummate their marriage until 40 days after their wedding.

Goat deserves a human burial

DURBAN, South Africa: A medicine man whose beloved pet goat was beaten to death has blamed political violence and is trying to win permission to bury the animal in a human cemetery, reports AP.

An elaborate burial was planned Saturday but was canceled after township residents objected to sharing their cemetery with Dennis, a friendly goat who was known for his diet of beer, tea, and curry.

Dennis' owner, Xolani Sabelo, said the animal survived seven years in the troubled township of Umlazi in Natal province, and deserved a human burial.

Township youth beat Dennis to death because they resented his ability to sense trouble, Sabelo told the Sunday Times. "He could hear if people spoke about riots and would run away. He hated mass action and riots," the Times quoted Sabelo as saying.

Sabelo had a special casket built for Dennis, who is waiting in the Umlazi mortuary while Sabelo and his family search for a burial site.

But tomorrow comes

CHARLESTON, SC: It may be days before power is restored, months before debris is carted off and years before the emotional scars heal. But tomorrow comes, even after a devastating storm such as Hurricane Andrew, reports AP.

Residents of South Carolina know that, because the destruction caused by Andrew was last matched in this country almost three years ago when Hurricane Hugo smashed ashore in Charleston with 135 mph (217 kph) winds.

Editor, wife shot dead in Baku

MOSCOW, Aug 25: A newspaper editor and his wife were shot dead overnight by unknown assassins at their home in the Azerbaijani capital of Baku, the Interfax News Agency reported today, reports AP.

The gunmen burst into the home of Salim Haggi, editor of the newspaper January 20, and opened fire with automatic weapons, the agency added.

Interfax said the reasons for the murder were unclear, adding that a police investigation was under way.

January 20 is published by association bearing the same name, in reference to the events of January 20, 1990 in Baku, when Soviet troops moved into the Azerbaijani capital to end anti-communist demonstrations and killed more than 80 people, according to an official toll.

Popularity of Bush increases while Clinton's falls

WASHINGTON, Aug 25: President George Bush's "bounce" from the Republican national convention brought him to within six points of Democratic challenger Bill Clinton, according to an ABC news opinion poll released on Monday, reports Reuters.

Voter support for Bush, who is seeking reelection on November 3, rose by seven percentage points from a poll taken in early August, while support for Clinton fell by 13 points, the ABC poll said.

Some 42 per cent of likely voters polled said they favour Bush compared with 48 per cent who said they support Clinton.

The poll early in August showed Bush with only 35 per cent support while Clinton was favoured by 61 per cent.

The latest poll shows Bush scoring strongly on leadership and experience. He was able to reassure some voters about his qualifications while raising doubts about Clinton's it said. Bush scored points with his criticism of congress.

Before the convention, some 61 per cent of voters had little or no idea of where Bush wanted to lead the country. That has been re-

duced to 33 per cent, the poll said.

The poll showed 69 per cent believe Bush is the best candidate on foreign affairs with only 24 per cent rating Clinton as the best. Bush scores well on the issue of family values with 49 per cent, compared to Clinton's 38 per cent.

But Clinton leads Bush 53 per cent to 35 per cent as the candidate best able to bring needed changes to government.

A Connecticut report adds: President Bush, offering a multibillion-dollar jobs training programme, said on Monday he was better suited to make America an economic superpower than his rival.

Lashing out at the experience and background of Democrat Bill Clinton, Bush sought to cast himself as better qualified to meet the economic challenges facing America.

"Our challenge, quite simply is to win the global economic challenge, to win the peace, to be a military superpower, an economic superpower and an export superpower," he said at a Chamber of Commerce meeting.

"In this election you are going to hear two very different versions of how to do this," Bush

said. "Their is to turn inward and protect and ours to look outward and open new markets and prepare our people to compete."

He dismissed Clinton as someone who "has spent most of his adult life in government and that's pretty much...all he knows about."

"His idea of creating jobs is to have government jobs, public payroll jobs," he said.

"The world economy is changing, and we've got to be in the lead of that change," Bush said. Countering charges he has ignored America's economic woes, Bush earlier proposed a jobs training programme that would provide dollar 2 billion annually over five years for retraining adults, and nearly dollar 1 billion annually for youth programmes.

The proposal, which would be paid for by cuts in other domestic programmes, would be submitted to congress next year if Bush wins the November 3 election, officials said.

Bush hailed it as "a programme that is bold, it is innovative, and it is loyal only to the future and to the needs of the American worker."

"If our nation is to succeed in this world economy, we cannot afford to waste the talents of one single worker," he told several hundred

people at vocational training centre in unton, New Jersey.

Bush's announcement appeared aimed at countering democratic critics who accuse the president of ignoring the problems caused by the lengthy recession.

According to administration officials who were with Bush, the plan also is aimed at winning support for the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) with Canada and Mexico.

The pact, recently following intense negotiations among the three countries, has been sharply criticised by American Labour Unions which insist it will cost US jobs.

"This is an answer to those concerned about NAFTA," said one official. "It has strong job training provisions."

Union leaders have claimed that hundreds of thousands of US jobs could be lost and demanded that programmes be provided to retrain workers.

Although Bush insists their direct predictions are wrong, his plan would respond to those fears in a bid to ease potential opposition to the accord.

US welcomes Sino-ROK ties

WASHINGTON, Aug 25: The United States welcomes China and South Korea's decision to establish diplomatic relations, the State Department said Monday, reports AP.

"The United States welcomes developments like this which can help ease the tensions that have long plagued the Korean peninsula and which can facilitate mutual understanding and communication in northeast Asia," said Joe Snyder, acting state department spokesman.

Asked whether the move by Beijing and Seoul was likely to have any impact on US-North Korean relations, Snyder said there had been no change in US conditions for diplomatic relations to be established between Washington and Pyongyang.