

BRIEFLY

Gorbachev to visit Germany :

Former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev will make a week-long trip to Germany from September 18, in his second trip to the country this year, government sources said Tuesday, reports AFP from Bonn.

He will meet President Richard Von Weizsaecker, Chancellor Helmut Kohl and the Foreign Minister during Gorbachev's years in office, Hans-Dietrich Genscher, they said.

Gorbachev will also take part in a conference on the progress of market reforms in the former Soviet Union that will be attended by industrialists and politicians, including the President of the Fiat Group, Umberto Agnelli.

Gorbachev is highly popular in Germany, where he is considered a catalyst for the East German revolution in 1989 and Germany's unification a year later.

China expels American sinologist :

China has expelled American sinologist Ross Terrill, accusing him of activities incompatible with his status, a Foreign Ministry spokesman said Tuesday, reports AFP from Beijing.

"Ross Terrill came to China as a tourist and he conducted actions which were incompatible with his status," the spokesman said. "The Beijing Public Security Bureau decided to let him leave China immediately."

Slovakia adopts new constitution:

The nationalist-dominated parliament in Slovakia on Tuesday adopted a new constitution aimed at steering the republic out of the Czechoslovak Federation, the CSTK news agency said, reports AFP from Prague.

The motion, passed by more than the required three-fifths majority by supporters of Prime Minister Vladimir Meciar's government, came after two days of debate in the Slovak capital Bratislava.

Earlier, representatives of Slovakia's large ethnic Hungarian minority population had walked out of the parliament in protest at the way the vote was organised.

Storm death toll rises to 113 in China:

The death toll from Tropical Storm Polly rose to 113 with 65 more deaths reported Wednesday in China's coastal Zhejiang provinces on Friday, Huang Endo at the Zhejiang province Foreign Affairs Office said the rains had stopped by Monday.

The Liberation Daily (Jiefang Ribao) newspaper of Shanghai put the death toll in Zhejiang at 109. News reports Tuesday had said only 44 were dead in Zhejiang.

The China Daily said four others died in Fujian, and seven people were missing there.

Thousands of homes were destroyed and wide areas of cropland were flooded, the newspapers said.

Discord rends NAM despite call for consensus

JAKARTA, Sept 2: The Non-Aligned Summit got underway here today with clear signs of deep underlying divisions in the movement despite urgent calls for consensus, reports AFP.

Iran resurrected the Yugoslav issue, which had threatened a rift during earlier talks, while Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif raised the Kashmir dispute in open session, sparking a strong protest from outside the meeting hall from India.

The renewed differences came after Indonesian President Suharto opened the

summit saying one area of common concern were the "continuing instances of disputes and conflicts among ourselves."

While these should be addressed seriously, what NAM should "at all costs prevent is that these disputes affect the unity of purpose and the solidarity of action of our movement as a whole," he said.

But Iranian President Ali Akbar Rafsanjani, speaking from the floor, resurrected the contentious Yugoslav question saying NAM foreign ministers should not wait until after the UN general assembly meeting

in New York later this month to settle the issue.

Foreign minister from the member countries meeting here ahead of the summit spent two days in heated debate over whether the Yugoslav federation should be expelled from NAM.

The foreign ministers had reached a compromise on the issue, which had threatened to cause a serious rift, when late Sunday they agreed to leave the problem until after the UN meeting, which is expected to debate the federation's seat in the world body.

Shortly afterwards in his of-

ficial speech Pakistan's Sharif ignored a warning from India not to raise the Kashmir issue in the forum by calling on his Indian counterpart Rao to work with us in seeking an equitable solution to this potentially explosive issue.

The Kashmir dispute has been a serious source of tension and a threat to peace and stability in South Asia for the past four and a half decades, he told the assembled heads of state or government.

The long festering dispute continued to drain badly needed resources from both countries, he said, adding India and Pakistan would continue to suffer from tensions until an honourable solution to the dispute based on Kashmir's right to self determination was found.

Ironically his speech came almost immediately after Rao had taken the floor to present a report from The Africa fund, one of the NAM organisations meeting on the sidelines of the summit.

As Suharto, who is chairing the summit, adjourned the meeting, a member of the India delegation rose and lodged a complaint over Sharif's speech.

The Indian official said these references to the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir are an unwarranted interference into the internal affairs of India.

"We are obliged to set the record straight following the unfortunate references by the distinguished Prime Minister of Pakistan to an internal matter of India or what is at most a bilateral issue between India and Pakistan," he added.



UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali addressing the opening session of the 10th NAM summit in Jakarta Tuesday. — Star TV photo

Militant group asks foreigners to quit Kashmir by Friday

NEW DELHI, Sept 2 : A Muslim militant group in Kashmir has issued an ultimatum ordering foreigners to leave the troubled valley by Friday, a newspaper reported today, reports AFP.

The Jamait-ul-Mujahideen charged Tuesday that foreigners disguised as tourists or journalists were working for Indian agencies and the Israeli intelligence service Mossad to "subvert the ongoing movement in Kashmir", the Hindustan Times said.

A spokesman for the Jamait, which the daily described as a front-ranking mili-

tant group, was quoted as saying it was "quite intriguing" that foreigners continued to visit Kashmir despite their government's advising them to avoid the valley.

After the Friday deadline expires, no foreigners should be seen "either at the holy shrines or public places", the spokesman reportedly said in Srinagar, Kashmir's summer capital.

There was no estimate of how many foreigners were in Kashmir where several Muslim militant groups are fighting against Indian rule.

Off the Record

Boy Monk prepares to teach next Dalai Lama

NEW DELHI : In the Himalayan foothills, a 6-year-old boy is learning the mysteries of Buddhism so he can become the teacher of a man, yet unborn, who will be revered by Tibetans as a living god, reports AP.

Ling Rinpoche, who sits on a golden throne in Dharmasala, often tires of his five hours of lessons daily and the constant attention of a dozen instructors, aides and cooks.

But the little monk has no option. Tibetan scholars, after a laborious and complicated search, found him to be the reincarnation of the Dalai Lama's senior tutor, who died in 1983.

At the end of the day, the little Lama walks to the main temple to worship. Along his way, Tibetans fold their hands and bow their heads in respect.

He is being groomed to be the teacher of the infant into whom the spirit of the current Dalai Lama passes after death. Dalai Lamas are believed to be reincarnations of a Buddhist god.

The Dalai Lama led many followers into exile in 1959, eight years after the Chinese army occupied his country. About 110,000 Tibetans now live in India, where they have preserved their religion and culture.

'She reveals all like a true journalist'

ROME : Every night Lilli Gruber delivers a sober news report on Italian state television. Saturday she became the subject of the news -- or at least her body did, reports AP.

A free-lance photographer caught her sunbathing in the nude on a reef off the coast of Sardinia two weeks ago. The Italian weekly "Novella 2000" published the photos in Saturday's edition, even putting her on the cover.

One caption read: "Like a true journalist, she reveals all the news, even while on vacation."

Ms Gruber, one of Italy's most popular anchors, is well-known to millions who watch her read the news on RAI-1, one of Italy's three main national networks. RAI-1 is controlled by the Christian Democrats, Italy's dominant party.

Newspapers received excerpts of the magazine before publication and ran stories about the pictures. La Stampa, the Turin daily, even offered a sample. It showed Ms Gruber reclining, reading a newspaper.

Italy's newsmagazines frequently include pictures of bare-breasted women. It was the third year in a row that an Italian television personality has been caught in revealing photographs.

Troops holding elephants for ransom

MAE SOT, Thailand : Burmese troops are holding 12 Thai elephants for ransom. Thai border sources said today, reports Reuter.

The elephants, along with 18 Thai villagers, were seized by the soldiers for logging on the Burmese side of the border opposite Thailand's tax district.

The soldiers have demanded 700,000 baht (US dollar 28,000) for the release of the men and beasts, the sources said.

Villagers say they paid protection money to the previous Burmese army unit which has just been replaced.

Quake triggers tidal surge in Nicaraguan coast: 30 die

MANAGUA, Nicaragua, Sept 2: A strong earthquake in the Pacific triggered tidal waves up to 10 metres (30 feet) that inundated Nicaragua's western coast, killing at least 30 people, injuring hundreds and leaving dozens missing, reports AP.

The quake measured 7.0 on the Richter scale, according to the National Earthquake Information Centre in Golden, Colo. It hit at 6:16 PM Tuesday (0016 GMT Wednesday) and had its epicentre 120 kilometres (75 miles) southwest of Managua near the main port of Corinto.

A survivor said two small islands off the coast of Corinto, about 80 kilometres (50 miles) northwest of Managua, were swept by an undetermined number of people missing.

"I managed to get out in my boat. But one of my sons drowned," Pablo Alfonso Pineda told radio reporters.

The Red Cross said it counted at least 30 dead in several coastal communities, hundreds injured and at least 25 missing, including 12 fishermen lost at sea. The toll was expected to rise.

A series of waves ranging from 1 1/2 metres (five feet)

along some parts of the coast to 10 metres (30 feet) in others lashed the coast shortly in tidal surge spawned by the quake, the Red Cross said.

Authorities said they were evacuating thousands of coastal dwellers for fear of further aftershocks. They said they feared finding more bodies in the debris of homes destroyed by the tidal surge.

President Violeta Chamorro called for calm in the face of the disaster.

"I ask for unity and faith in God," she said in a radio address to the nation early Wednesday. She said she would travel to the coast at first light.

In Puerto Sandino, about 64 kilometres (40 miles) from the capital, a five-foot tidal surge threw ship-containers and vehicles and damaged a dock.

Alejandro Morales, an earthquake specialist at the Institute of Earth Studies, said the temblor was one of the strongest in the country in 20 years.

The quake and two aftershocks apparently set off huge waves that washed over dozens of communities along the coast from San Juan del Sur, a city on the border with Costa Rica, to Corinto.

Palestinians table framework for talks on self-rule

WASHINGTON, Sept 2: Palestinian peace negotiators proposed to Israel on Tuesday a 10-point framework for talks on self-rule for the nearly two million Arabs in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip, reports Reuter.

Spokeswoman Hanan Ashrawi said the proposal, and a draft agenda presented with it could help to bridge a gap between Israelis and Palestinians over how to structure their negotiations.

"From this, I think we can anticipate an injection of dynamism, of energy and of progress in the negotiations," Ashrawi told a news conference.

She said the 10 points included the nature and jurisdiction of the interim self-government, withdrawal of Israeli occupation forces, Jerusalem, Israeli settlements in occupied territories and security.

Chief Israeli negotiator Elyakim Rubinstein told reporters after the meeting his team was willing to discuss issues raised by Palestinians in a series of working groups which would also tackle the details of self-rule arrangements.

"If we go into this with a balanced approach dealing with issues everyone wants to discuss... that is the way to do it," Rubinstein said.

Under terms brokered by former US Secretary of State James Baker, Palestinians and Israelis are to discuss a two-phase peace agreement: a five-year-period of self-rule and then a final settlement.

Election of a more flexible Labour Party government in Israel has transformed the outlook for the talks, which began last October.

But the two sides are deeply divided over how to organise the talks. The Israelis want to concentrate on the powers of the self-rule body but the Palestinians insist on defining overall concepts before getting into details.

"This is a proposal that would facilitate negotiations and enable us to reach general concepts with the Israelis which we would use when we start discussing smaller issues," a Palestinian source said of Tuesday's ideas.

He said the proposal was "an attempt to define all the points that would represent the basic elements of the in-

terim stage."

Another Palestinian source said agreement on a framework would be a breakthrough in the talks, which began last week and are due to last a month.

Tuesday's talks appeared to have been more productive than Monday's. Ashrawi said on Monday the two sides were nearly deadlocked after Israel gave negative answers to some 35 questions on issues such as Jewish settlement building in East Jerusalem.

Parallel negotiations between Israel and Syria, which focus on an Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights in return for a peace agreement, inched forward.

Israeli negotiator Itamar Rabinovich said a Syrian document presented on Monday was "an enticing mixture of the general and the specific" and contained some acceptable elements.

Syrian spokeswoman Bushra Kanafani said: "The areas of agreement are very limited and do not touch on the basics. The areas of disagreement are numerous and touch on the basics of the peace process."

Mortar attack leaves 5 UN troops hurt in Sarajevo

SARAJEVO, Sept 2: Five members of the United Nations force in Sarajevo were wounded, three seriously, in a mortar attack on Tuesday evening, UN officials said, reports Reuter.

Camp Beaver, the base of Egyptian troops serving with the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in the former Yugoslav republic of Bosnia, came under mortar fire about 10 pm (2000 GMT) which set alight a fuel depot.

An Egyptian colonel and two French officers were seriously injured, though their lives were not in danger, and two other French soldiers were slightly wounded, UN officials said.

Floods, landslide kill 7 in Java

JAKARTA, Sept 2: Torrential rains across Indonesia's main island of Java have unleashed landslides and floods that have killed at least seven people and forced about 6,000 to flee their homes, an official said today, reports Reuter.

Ban on US F-16s sale to Taiwan may go

WASHINGTON, Sept 2 : President George Bush is likely to announce the sale of F-16 jets to Taiwan, turning around a 10-year-old policy banning the sale of fighters to China's rival, Senator Lloyd Bentsen said Tuesday, reports AFP.

Bush is to make the announcement today on a campaign stop in Fort Worth, Texas, where he will address employees of General Dynamics which makes the F-16 fighter jets, according to administration sources.

Bentsen, a Texas Senator, said he had been "reliably in-

formed that President Bush is going to announce approval of the sale of the F-16s to Taiwan.

"It's in the bag," said one US official speaking on condition of anonymity, adding that China had been notified of the pending sale.

A Bentsen aide was unable to say how many aircraft Taiwan would purchase but said the Senator hoped as many as 180 planes would be sold, pushing the price tag up to between six billion to 10 billion dollars depending on the number purchased.

Bentsen has lobbied to reverse the arms sales ban imposed to avoid displeasing China. He predicted Beijing would initially protest the sale but added Chinese officials may be placated by the fact that F-16s are less attack oriented than later models of the fighter.

France has been hoping to sell its Mirage 2000 fighters to Taiwan, which would like to buy up to 180 aircraft but prefers the F-16 because it is cheaper and more compatible with its current systems.

Bush said a month ago that he was reconsidering Washington's position on arms sales to Taiwan.

Observers have suggested that the sale is motivated by political concerns, coming just two months before the elections.

Texas is Bush's adopted home and predominantly Republican but the Democrats have been campaigning heavily there believing they have a chance to carry Texas where General Dynamics is based.

Di-damaging campaign starts

LONDON, Sept 2: Buckingham Palace says a letter on palace notepaper denigrating Princess Diana is a fake. But as the saga of Britain's royal woes rolls on, others wonder: Is Prince Charles getting back at his wife? reports AP.

A tape of an intimate telephone conversation allegedly between Diana and a male friend, James Gilbey, 34, has cast a cloud over her current starring role as the beautiful princess trapped in a loveless marriage to a cold man.

The timing of the release of the 2 1/2-year old tape has fuelled speculation that Charles' courtiers in the royal household have launched a smear-Diana campaign prior to Britain's separation, or even divorce, of the century.

Unidentified friends of Charles are quoted in Newspapers as saying the 43-year-old heir to the British throne would never sanction anything like that.

But some tabloids, and others, see official guns trained on Diana.

"The Plot — Princess Diana and the bitter Palace campaign to discredit her," declared Britain's Mail on Sunday.

"Now it is Charles's turn," said Lynn Barber, commentator in the serious Independent on Sunday. "I predict an absolute avalanche of Di-damaging material over the next few weeks, followed by an announcement of divorce."

In addition, a spate of reports since the tape have hinted at a romantic link between Diana, 31, and another dashing bachelor, Guards officer Maj, James Hewitt, 35.

Hewitt, who is 1989 taught horse riding to Diana and her sons, Prince William and Prince Harry, has gone into hiding.

Amid all this, newspapers published a letter on what appeared to be Buckingham Palace notepaper in which an official is alleged to have described Diana as "relishing the martyr role."

"It is a fake," said a Buckingham Palace spokesman, requesting the customary anonymity. "Anybody can get hold of a Buckingham Palace letterhead."

On Monday, Diana left Balmoral Castle, where Queen Elizabeth II and her family traditionally gather in August and September for a six-week Scottish holiday, to return to London. The palace said the return was on schedule.

The Sun, Britain's top-selling newspaper, which was scooped by the rival Daily Mirror with the topless pictures of the former Sarah Ferguson, said it had the "Dianagate" tape for years since it was recorded by an amateur radio scanner. The man on the tape was speaking from a mobile telephone.

Bush makes life difficult for aging Americans: Clinton

WASHINGTON, Sept 2 : Democratic presidential contender Bill Clinton attacked the administration's policies on the elderly Tuesday, saying President George Bush made life difficult for aging Americans, reports AFP.

"Four more years of George Bush means more millionaires with vacation homes and more older Americans having trouble paying their gas and electric bills in their own homes," Clinton told a group of senior citizens in Georgia.

The Arkansas governor said that Bush's promised tax cuts paid for by budget cuts would benefit the richest Americans while taking a bite out of social programmes, particularly medical care for the elderly.

"Before he asks the wealthy to pay a penny more... he's going to make life a lot less kind and a lot less gentle on the rest of us," said Clinton, playing on Bush's 1988 campaign promise for a "kinder, gentler nation."

Bush's Deputy Campaign Chairman Clayton Yeutter responded to the charge, saying Clinton should "stop scaring seniors" with his "fearmongering and pandering."

Vice President Dan Quayle was also campaigning in Georgia, borrowing Clinton's favoured bus tour mode and warning voters that a Democratic victory in November would mean fewer jobs for Americans.

Meanwhile, the President was getting a first-hand look at the devastation caused by Hurricane Andrew in Florida and Louisiana, where voters have criticized the federal re-

sponse to their pleas for assistance.

While Bush said he would not talk politics during his second trip to the region, he did promise economic aid and lauded federal efforts to date.

"It's amazing the progress that has been made out of the rubble," Bush said as he stood in the courtyard of Homestead Middle School after touring the area, "you can see ten cities springing up."

Australian vessel with toxic chemical waste arrives in Belgian port

BRUSSELS, Sept 2 : An Australian vessel carrying 18 tonnes of toxic chemical waste arrived in the port of Antwerp Tuesday but the cargo was put under official lock and key after being off loaded, reports AFP.

The material arrived despite opposition from Belgian authorities and environmental organisations.

According to Greenpeace-Belgium, the chemicals, known as PCBs, were originally destined for the French port of Le Havre, but the threat of hostile trade union and ecologist demonstrations there caused them to be diverted.

