

Pakistan seeks new arms suppliers to update air force

ISLAMABAD, Sept 7: Pakistan is seeking new suppliers to update its air force because of a cut-off in U.S military aid, a Pakistani minister said on Sunday, reports Reuter.

The United States cut-off all military and new economic aid to Pakistan in 1990 because of suspicions it was developing nuclear weapons. Islamabad denies the charge.

Defence production minister Mir Haq Khan Bijrani told reporters that a 1989 contract with the United States for the supply of an additional 60 F-16 fighters was still valid, in spite of delays in the delivery of the aircraft.

He spoke before leaving to attend Britain's Farnborough air Show which opened on Sunday, where he said he would be looking at Air de-

fence systems, the official APP news agency said.

"Owing to delay in the delivery of the F-16s, Pakistan has to look for other options which will be on display in the exhibition," Bijrani said.

These would include the Russian Su-27 and Mig-29 and the French Mirage 2000 and Rafale, he added.

Islamabad still hopes the United States, which supplied 40 F-16s to Pakistan in the early 1980s, would fulfil its 1989 contract, he said.

Pakistan has always kept an eye on its regional rival India when seeking weapons for its armed forces.

"We cannot match India in the number of aircraft, neither have we the resources," Bijrani said.

Amnesty assails UN response to human rights abuse

AMSTERDAM, Sept 7: Amnesty International on Sunday assailed the United Nations' slow response to human rights abuses and urged it to appoint a senior official with the power to remedy state-sanctioned violence against ordinary citizens, reports Reuter.

"We are far from satisfied with the United Nations' efforts on human rights," Ian Martin, Secretary-General of the International Human Rights group, told reporters.

"We believe there needs to be someone with human rights responsibility mandated to act urgently where human rights

violations occur, without having to wait for United Nations approval," he said.

"The office should be led by a single individual with sufficient authority, resources and personnel to become a focal point for U.N. action and information on human rights," the group said in a declaration after a three-day international conference on political killings and disappearances.

Martin said at present the United Nations could only act on specific mandates from its commission for human rights.

The United Nations has from time to time appointed

envoys in certain countries to report on government repression or sanctioned by governments.

It said more than a million people worldwide had been tortured or murdered by their governments.

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Off the Record

They felt Virgin Mary's presence

MARLBORO TOWNSHIP, N.J.: About 6,000 people who braved a steady rain hoping for a glimpse of the Virgin Mary in a man's back yard Sunday said they saw no sign of the mother of Christ. But some insisted they felt her presence, reports AP.

"I know she's here, I can feel that much," said Marie Fabio of Marlboro. Some others said they could smell a strong scent of roses.

Joseph Januszkiewicz, who has said the Virgin Mary appears in his back yard on the first Sunday of every month, attended a 90-minute Rosary service in the yard Sunday before walking back inside his house. He didn't disclose if the Virgin Mary had appeared to him.

Januszkiewicz, 54, has said the Virgin Mary began appearing daily in his back yard after he made a religious pilgrimage to Yugoslavia in late 1988. After 18 months, he said she told him she would appear only on the first Sunday of each month, after nightfall.

Last month about 7,000 people visited his home. Police had anticipated a crowd as large as 10,000 before the rain came Sunday.

They had urged people to stay home, worried that traffic and crowd-control problems would overwhelm the city of 28,000.

By late afternoon Sunday, a well-mannered crowd of about 1,500 people had already filled Januszkiewicz's front and back yards. Many people placed bouquets by a statue of Mary and a 3-foot (one-metre) crucifix in the back yard.

Condoms in disguise

WASHINGTON: Peek into one of Georgetown's newest boutiques and you'll quickly recognize the lollipops and roses, next to the earrings and keychains, reports AP.

Now look again.

They're all condoms in disguise.

The owners of CondomRageous hope you're laughing and will stick around a while.

Debra Hauser, 31, holder of a master's degree in international health, hopes she can add a little humor to the fight against sexually transmitted disease.

"The whole health education thing is that if it's fun and funny, you can begin to deal with it," she says. "This is a way to get condoms normalized."

The three owners have labored to take the trauma out of buying prophylactics.

Hauser's brother, David, 25, of Margate, N.J., has created colourful wall murals, wood carvings and window displays for the shop. Hauser's business partner, Glenn McKinney, 28, of Brigantine, N.J. stands ready to answer questions about any of the more than 200 latex condom varieties he stocks.

Customers can choose from glow-in-the-dark condoms, Stealth condoms tucked into a gray package shaped like the sleek plane, or the red, white and blue Patriot three-pack.

While novelty condoms are the draw, CondomRageous focuses on assuring customers walk away knowledgeable about condoms.

Safe-sex pamphlets in Spanish and English disappear quickly from a table inside the front door.

Ms. Hauser spends weekdays running a support centre for school-based health clinics at the Centre for Population Options, a Washington educational advocacy group that targets teen health care and sexuality.

On weekends, she joins McKinney and her brother at the store.

Bombay Atomic Plant leaking radioactivity

NEW DELHI, Sept 7: A Bombay atomic energy plant has been leaking radioactivity, possibly for several years, a New Delhi newspaper reported Sunday, says AFP.

Traces of radioactive isotope caesium-137 were detected in soil and seawater samples near the BARC, the paper said.

The leak was first noticed December 13, 1991 when a fountain of water erupted from the lawn separating the complex from the sea.

A subsequent test of the water by experts from the radiation health inspectorate showed traces of radioactivity, the report said.



ISLAMABAD: Iranian President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani (2nd from L) is welcomed by his Pakistani counterpart Ghulam Ishaq Khan (2nd from R) and Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif (L) on Sunday at Islamabad airport, Iranian ambassador Jawad Mansuri (R) is also seen in the picture. —AFP/UNB photo

300 Mujahideen peace-keepers arrive in Kabul

ISLAMABAD, Sept 7: Some 300 Mujahideen peace keepers arrived in Kabul on Sunday, the Afghan Islamic Press (AIP) reported, says Xinhua.

The report said the men were part of the 1,000 buffer force proposed in the ceasefire agreement between Afghan President Burhanuddin Rabbani and Hezb-I-Islami chief Gulbuddin Hekmatyar.

The 300 men, led by Noor Aga of the Hezb-I-Islami (Khalis group), have been stationed in military academy in the vicinity of Kabul, the report quoted reliable sources as saying.

Meanwhile, the Afghan news agency run by Hekmatyar's faction reported that the militia aircraft bombed the Hezb-I-Islami positions four times on Sunday but missed their target.

7 more killed in Kashmir violence

SRINAGAR, Sept 7: Seven persons including two security personnel were killed and security forces arrested 22 subversives, including 19 militants, in the continued anti-militant campaign in Kashmir valley since Saturday night, reports PTI.

Meanwhile, a general strike, jointly sponsored by the political organisations and the militant groups, paralysed normal life in the valley yesterday.

Militants hijacked a vehicle and twelve persons were injured in violence during the period, an official spokesman told reporters yesterday.

The spokesman said, twelve persons were injured in an inter-gang clash at Mungam Keri-Patan in Baramulla district last evening. All the injured were rushed to the S M H S Hospital, Srinagar. Of the injured, four succumbed to their injuries in the hospital yesterday.

A security personnel was injured when militants fired upon security patrol at Nagam Duroo in Manajind district on Saturday. He later died, the spokesman said.

The spokesman said, a bullet-ridden body of a person identified as Habib Ullah Wagay of Zainakote was recovered from Gratabal in Srinagar Saturday.

A security personnel was killed and three others including a security personnel were injured when militants attacked security patrol and pickets at Amirakadal, Ghantaghar and Lal Chowk Saturday, the spokesman said.



GERMANY: Models present leather dresses and underwear of the spring-summer collection 1993 during the pro-fashion show at the IGEDO fashion fair. —AFP/UNB photo

Briefly

Blast in London hotel : A bomb exploded on Sunday in the Hilton Hotel opposite London's Hyde Park after a telephone warning from a man claiming to speak for the Irish Republican Army (IRA), police said, reports Reuter from London.

The blast caused no injuries and was relatively small, a police spokesman said. It occurred in a men's toilet off the lobby of the five-star hotel on Park Lane.

There was a bomb threat relating to hotels in Park Lanes. There was no specific warning about a particular hotel, the spokesman said. He said the bomb was "believed to have been an explosive device" rather than a firebomb.

Hilton Duty Manager George Ashou said: "It went off with a bang but not a big bang. Fortunately nobody was in the toilet. Nobody was injured and there is no real damage at all."

Rains claim 64 in UP so far : The death toll caused by monsoon rains has risen to 64 in the north Indian state of Uttar Pradesh, the Press Trust of India (PTI) said Sunday, reports AFP from Delhi.

A woman and her two children were killed when their mud-built house collapsed in rain in Saraiya village in Uttar Pradesh's Jaunpur area on Saturday, state government officials were quoted as saying.

Four more people died in Kheeri area, elsewhere in the state, the same day, the news agency said without giving details.

Fifty-seven deaths were reported earlier from Uttar Pradesh's 18 districts which have been pounded by heavy rains in the past few weeks.

Palestinian cameraman assaulted: Israeli soldiers attacked a Palestinian television cameraman filming a demonstration in the occupied Gaza Strip on Sunday, his producer said, reports Reuter from Jerusalem.

Soldiers struck Marwan El-Ghoul, a cameraman for the international television news agency Visnews, in the stomach with rifle butts, Visnews producer Gil Omer said.

Omer said the soldiers told Ghoul, 30, that they had warned him before against causing trouble by filming stonethrowing Palestinians. The soldiers destroyed his camera.

Visnews filed a complaint with the Israeli army shortly after the incident.

ROK President to visit China : China announced Monday that South Korean President Roh Tae-woo will make a four-day visit later this month to cement ties between the two former ideological foes, reports Reuter from Beijing.

The official Xinhua news agency quoted a Foreign Ministry spokesman as saying Roh would visit from September 27 to 30 at the invitation of President Yang Shangkun.

Beijing, longtime ally of communist North Korea, established diplomatic ties with South Korea last month.

Bus mishaps leave 67 dead in Nepal

KATHMANDU, Sept 7: Two separate bus accidents in Nepal have left 67 people dead and 35 injured, a police source said today, reports AFP.

A private bus carrying at least 68 people plunged into a river late Saturday, killing 57 passengers and leaving 11 others injured, the source said.

The accident occurred when a big boulder hit the bus, 150 kilometres (92 miles) west of Kathmandu, at a blind corner above the Trisuli river.

The bus was heading towards the industrial township of Hictaunda.

Twelve people managed to jump out of the bus as it rolled down into the river, police quoted witnesses as saying, adding that one of them died while being transported to hospital in Bharatpur, 160 kilometres (100 miles) south of Kathmandu.

Police were searching for bodies and the wreckage of the bus at the crash site.

It was the second major accident this year on the same road, following an incident August 2 when 49 people were killed after a bus fell into the Trisuli river near Jogimara, 140 kilometres (87 miles) south of the capital.

Meanwhile, a second bus carrying 34 passengers crashed this morning 40 kilometres (25 miles) west of Kathmandu, killing eight people instantly. Two more died on the way to hospital, the police source said.

Of the 24 other passengers "eleven were released after first aid treatment at the Bir Hospital in Kathmandu, while thirteen others, including two in a serious condition, are undergoing treatment," he said.

Jakarta Message at a glance

JAKARTA, Sept 7: Non-Aligned leaders ended a key summit today with a "Jakarta message" urging their movement to play a major role in shaping the new world order, including helping to reform the United Nations, reports Reuter.

These are the main points of the seven-page message, issued in the Indonesian capital where leaders of the 108-member movement met for their 10th summit since its formation in 1961.

The movement has helped improve the international political climate at the end of the cold war, vindicating "the validity and relevance" of Non-Alignment. Through dialogue and cooperation, we will project our movement as a vibrant, constructive and genuinely interdependent component of the mainstream of international relations.

The world still faces dangerous obstacles to harmony such as violent conflicts, aggression and foreign occupation, ethnic strife, religious intolerance, new forms of racism, religious intolerance and narrowly-conceived nationalism.

The movement will form a working group to play a leading role in the "revitalisation, restructuring and democratisation" of the United Nations. (Member had urged that the five permanent members of the Security Council lose their veto power and said the council memberships would be redefined to reflect changes after the end of the cold war.

The message calls for war on underdevelopment, poverty and illiteracy, saying the

crushing debt burden, protectionism, low commodity prices and constricted financial flows plague poor nations.

It expresses dismay at the failure to conclude the multilateral trade talks and calls on developed states to ensure a satisfactory conclusion of the Uruguay round.

To boost south-south cooperation, it urges concrete and practical cooperation in food production and population, trade and investment to realise "collective self-reliance."

Towards this end, we consider the coordination of our efforts and strategies with the Group of 77 (an economic forum for developing nations) of crucial importance through the establishment of a joint coordinating committee.

The Jakarta message calls for a "new global partnership" in balancing concerns on the environment and development and urges new financial resources for poor nations and access to environmentally sound technology.

It expresses "unflinching" support for Palestinians in their support for self-determination and for an end to racial discrimination in South Africa.

It says no country should use its powers to dictate its concept of democracy and human rights on others or impose conditionalities (on aid).

It pledges commitment to ensuring a nuclear-weapon-free world and expresses deep concern over global arms spending, when the money could be rechannelled for development.

Iran, Iraq exchange remains of 43 soldiers

TEHRAN, Sept 7: Iran and Iraq on Sunday exchanged the remains of 43 soldiers killed during the 1980-88 war and found recently in the border zone between them, Iranian television reported, says AFP.

Representatives from the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the United Nations witnessed the handover by Iran of 30 bodies and 13 by Iraq at the Khosravi border crossing in western Iran.

The two countries began regular exchanges at the beginning of the year and formed a committee comprising members of their armies and of the ICRC.

But exchanges of Prisoners of War have ground to a virtual halt, despite and agreement signed in February.

Iraq claims Iran still holds 20,000 POWs and Iran says Iraq holds 5,000.

Palestinians want a child without pregnancy: Peres

LONDON, Sept 7: Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres has called Palestinian demands for sovereignty in the West Bank and Gaza Strip "wanting a child without pregnancy" and defended Israel's own formula for interim limited self-rule, reports Reuter.

In an interview with the Financial Times, Peres dismissed Palestinian fears that Israel's proposal for an interim agreement in the Israeli-occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip would form the basis for a final settlement.

"It doesn't have a permanent nature. This should be a sort of trial period which will give all of us time to reach a permanent solution," Peres was quoted as saying in the interview published today.

Peres spoke after Middle East Peace Talks in Washington adjourned for 10 days last Thursday.

"We are doing things which are tangible and real. They (the Palestinians) can see by the criticism and opposition that

exists in Israel that we are serious."

"They want a child without pregnancy," Peres said. "That is a little hard to achieve."

Palestinians and Israelis are negotiating a five-year period of limited self-rule for nearly two million Arabs in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Talks on a permanent settlement are to begin three years from the start of Palestinian self-rule.

Israel has proposed Palestinians elect an administrative council to run 15 areas of life such as health and education under existing laws. Palestinians want an assembly with law-making powers of a sovereign parliament.

Peres, a former prime minister and ex-leader of the governing Labour Party, is in charge of multilateral talks between the various parties to the Middle East peace-process.

Those talks cover arms control, economic cooperation, water resources, the environment and refugees.

Peres said regional arrangements for open trade among the Arab states and Israel would benefit all sides.

"The whole region of the Middle East is not such a big market, not for the Arabs, not for us," he said.

Iraq declares amnesty for army deserters

BAGHDAD, Sept 7: Baghdad has declared an amnesty for army deserters hiding in the vast southern marshlands who hand themselves over to the authorities, Iraqi television reported Sunday, says AFP.

It said the country's highest decision-making body, the Revolutionary Command Council, had decreed amnesty Friday.

It applies to deserters in Basra, Missan and Zi Kar provinces, which are under the allied "No-fly" zone, and expires on September 24.

Deserters "will be pardoned for any act deemed reprehensible by law if they hand themselves over to state bodies or the armed forces," the decree states.

France, the United States and Britain banned the Iraqi air force from flying over the zone on August 27 in order to protect the Shiite population from attacks by the Iraqi armed forces.

President Saddam Hussein declared Wednesday that "saboteurs" led by Iran might be granted amnesty.

South Korea cracks DPRK spy ring

SEOUL, Sept 7: The national intelligence agency said Monday it had cracked a major ring of North Korean spies in South Korea including an agent who worked for the North for 36 years, reports AP.

The case, the largest in recent memory, involves dozens of dissidents who received \$2.1 million from communist agents for propaganda activities, the Agency for National Security Planning said.

South Korea considers any activity on behalf of North Korea to be espionage, for which the maximum punishment is death.

The agency said that for the first time, North Korean agents entered the South directly via water routes instead of through third nations.

The border between the rival Koreas remains tightly sealed and guarded by 1.5 million armed troops on either side. It is a violation of South Korea's national security law for citizens to have contact with the North without government permission.

Chung Hyung-Keun, a spokesman for the intelligence agency, said four people were arrested on charges of espionage or assisting espionage and 41 others are being questioned.

He said the key operative was Kim Nak-jong, a leading dissident who he said had worked for North Korea for 36 years and was "praised as the most efficient spy ever by (North Korean leader) Kim Il Sung."

Chung said Kim Nak-jong had received several medals from North Korea's leader and had been given special herbal medicine as awards for his skills.

Others under arrest include Shim Kum-sop, 63, president of Chonghae Ship, a life jacket company he runs with Kim; Kwon Tu-young, 63, a political advisor to Kim, and Noh Chung-sun, 52, secretary general for the Peaceful Unification Research Society founded by Kim.

Georgia, Abkhazia sign protocol for ceasefire

TBILISI, Sept 7: Abkhazian and Georgian military, chiefs Sunday signed a protocol implementing a ceasefire agreement, as fresh clashes killed 15 people less than 24 hours after it came into effect, officials here said, reports AFP.

Abkhazian colonel Boris Kakalia and Georgian colonel Georgy Karkarachivly met in the Abkhazia capital Sukhumi to sign the protocol for the ceasefire.

Which was to go into effect at midday Saturday.

The agreement also provided for the separation of Georgian national guards and Abkhazian soldiers to the two sides of the Gumista river, north of Sukhumi.

Six observers were named to watch over the peace agreement. Fifteen people were killed and eight wounded early Sunday as fresh clashes broke out between Georgian and Abkhazian forces despite the ceasefire, officials said.

The press center of Georgia's ruling state council announced that there had been "intensive" exchanges of fire early Sunday in the districts of Gudauta.