

Young Mujahideen urged to join Afghan army

ISLAMABAD, Sept 28: Afghanistan's Islamic government issued a call on Sunday to all young former guerrillas to volunteer for its new army, reports Reuters.

Those joining must not remain members of a political party and must abide by military discipline, the Defence Ministry said in a statement broadcast by official Kabul Radio monitored in Islamabad.

Most Mujahideen guerrillas fought during the 14 years of civil war as members of the various parties that took power last April when the former Soviet-backed communist government collapsed.

Men with guerrilla past and aged from 20 to 35 could volunteer to be recruited as soldier for a salary of 15,000 Afghani (about 17 dollar on the open market) and 54 kg (118 lbs) of wheat a month, the Defence Ministry said.

US army opposes military action in Bosnia

NEW YORK, Sept 28: America's top military officer strongly opposes even the most limited forms of US military involvement in the conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the New York Times said today, reports Reuters.

In an interview General Colin Powell, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, angrily rejected calls for limited US military intervention to protect the Bosnians.

He also questioned the need to create an air exclusion zone over Bosnia to ensure that Serbian aircraft cannot support Serbian ground troops.

Acting US Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger said on Friday that plans to establish the no-fly zone, like the one the United States imposed over parts of Iraq, was still under consideration.

Powell's remarks, coming in what the newspaper described as a lengthy and sometimes emotional interview, mark the first time he has publicly explained his reluctance to intervene in Bosnia.

They also shed light on a behind-the-scenes debate in the administration of President George Bush over the use of force.

No-fly zone plan still under consideration

He rejected out of hand suggestions by former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and others calling for limited air strikes by western countries to deter the Serbs from shelling Sarajevo.

"I do not know how limited bombing will stop the Serbs from doing what they are doing," he is quoted as saying.

Powell was described in the interview as the most prominent defender in the US military of the all-or-nothing philosophy that says that force is best used to achieve a decisive victory.

"As soon as they tell me it is limited, it means they do not care whether you achieve a result or not. As soon as they tell me surgical, I head for the bunker," he was quoted as saying.

Meanwhile, Rival sides in Bosnia's civil war on Sunday reported heavy attacks on towns in the north and west of the former Yugoslav republic, indicating an intensified drive to gain territory before winter closes in.

Zeljko Grubisic, spokesman for the Bosnian

defence forces, said Serb artillery and aircraft had bombed the western town of Jajce for seven days. Yesterday they finished their demolition work, he told Reuters.

He could not confirm a Croatian radio report that the town's hospital was destroyed and its inmates evacuated on Saturday night. Telephone links with Jajce, a town of 50,000 people, were cut and no estimate of casualties there was possible.

Serbian television said 50 Bosnian Serb fighters were killed and 100 wounded in what it said was a successful assault leading to the capture of the town of Milici and surrounding villages 70 km (45 miles) northeast of Sarajevo. It gave no casualties for the other side.

Sarajevo's medical crisis centre said 34 people had been killed and 199 wounded in Bosnia in the past 24 hours, but the incomplete figures did not cover some of the worst-hit areas.

Tanjug news agency, quoting a Bosnian Serb military statement, said Bosnian Muslim forces had suffered heavy losses and three Serb fight-

ers were killed in week-long battles for the central town of Maglaj.

Serb sources, quoted by the agency, reported fierce battles near Bosanski Brod on Bosnia's northern frontier with Croatia. They said Croatia's regular army units were firing long-range artillery at Serb forces advancing slowly towards Bosanski Brod.

Tanjug said Bosnian Serb authorities would press war crimes charges against two members of Bosnia's presidency in connection with what it called the massacre of officers and troops of the Yugoslav federal army when they pulled out of Sarajevo last May in a UN-escorted convoy.

It said a Serbian government commission had charged Ejup Ganic, who is a Muslim, and Stjepan Kijac, a Bosnian Croat with being in charge of operations in which it said 14 officers and troops were killed and dozens wounded.

In Sarajevo, Serb heavy artillery opened up on Sunday on the suburb of Dobrinja and around Vogosca to the northwest of the city, Bosnia Radio reported.

Kennedy killing was a foreign conspiracy?

WASHINGTON, Sept 28: The CIA has always believed that President John F. Kennedy was killed as a result of a foreign conspiracy and forecast immediately after the assassination that Lee Harvey Oswald, who ruled the trigger, would be killed to cover up the conspiracy, reports PTI.

This was stated in an article in the Washington Post on Sunday by James Johnston, a Washington lawyer who was counsel to the Senate intelligence committee's 1976 investigation of the assassination.

The CIA has promised to open its secret files but has not done so yet.

Johnston writes: Congress at long last is poised to open the so-called 'secret' files on the Kennedy assassination.

BRIEFLY

Tamils kill 9 Lankan soldiers:

Sri Lankan Tamil rebels attacked the army's forward defence positions in the north-east Monday killing nine soldiers and wounding 10, a military spokesman said, reports Reuters from Colombo.

He said the rebels fired mortars and small arms at the bunkers in the Mullaitivu district.

Troops fired back and bodies of two rebels, weapons and two dinghies were recovered.

"The terrorists may have used the dinghies to bring them to the area," the spokesman said.

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam are fighting government troops for their own homeland in the north and east.

Quake shakes Alaska:

An earthquake registering 5.7 on the Richter scale occurred in the North Pacific ocean on Sunday, the US geological survey said, says Reuters from Colorado.

It said the tremor, which was felt lightly in parts of Alaska, was centred 150 miles (240 km) south-east of Sand Point, Alaska and about 570 miles (920 km) south-southeast of Anchorage.

It occurred at 9:48 AM (17:48 GMT).

The tremor was felt lightly at Sand Point and King Cove.

There were no reports of damage or injuries.

15 killed in UN copter crash:

Four Russian crew and 11 Angolan passengers died on Sunday when a UN helicopter used by observers of Angola's first free elections crashed in northern Uige province, UN officials said, Reuters reports from Luanda.

They said only one person aboard, an Angolan, survived the accident. No more details were immediately available. Angola holds multi-party elections on September 29-30.

Catholic teenager shot dead:

Masked gunmen shot dead a Roman Catholic teenager in front of his screaming mother at their home in northern Ireland on Sunday, reports Reuters from Belfast.

Bride "O" Hara begged the gunmen who burst into her house in a predominantly Catholic area of Belfast to shoot her instead of her 19-year-old son Gerard.

"Mummy begged them to shoot her instead. But they shot my brother. It's awful," the victim's sister, Sandra, told reporters.

The killers were believed to have waited in a car for "O" Hara to return to the house.

Senator's wife shot:

A state senator's wife was wounded by gunfire at their home Sunday in what police believe was a politically motivated attack, says AP from Matland.

Judith Starks, the wife of Sen. Robert Starks, was hit in the calf by a bullet fired into the couple's bedroom at about 4 am, said Sheriff's spokesman George Proechel. She was treated at a hospital and released.

"We do not think this was just a random act of violence," said Proechel. "Our assumptions are at this point that it was some sort of politically motivated crime."

No one had been arrested Sunday. Starks, who was out of town at the time of the shooting, said he did not know who would want to threaten his family.

Iraq rebuilds milk factories:

Iraq said on Sunday it had rebuilt most of the baby milk factories, which allied planes bombed as a suspected chemical weapons facility during the Gulf War, says Reuters from Nicosia.

The official Iraqi news agency INA, monitored in Nicosia said reconstruction of 85 per cent of the plant located on the outskirts of Baghdad was completed on Saturday.

After the factory was bombed, western military spokesmen said it was used to produce chemical weapons. Iraq maintained the factory was making baby milk and allowed western reporters to visit the site.

Sikhs kill five bus passengers:

Sikh militants set off a time bomb in a crowded passenger bus in Punjab state Monday, killing five people and injuring 55, police said, reports AP from Amritsar.

The blast ripped the bus in two, set it on fire, and hurled the passengers out onto the road near Pathankot, 106 kilometers (65 miles) north of Amritsar, the holy city of the Sikhs, said Sumant Kumar Goel, a senior police officer.

Goel said the bomb, hidden in a suitcase, went off when the bus pulled out of the Pathankot bus station. Goel said 55 passengers were hospitalized, 15 of them with serious burns.

Algiers release 1200 from detention camps

ALGIER, Sept 28: Some 1,200 detainees have been released from detention camps following a decision by the military-backed collegial presidency to close its "security centres," a human rights organisation said here Sunday, reports AFP.

The authorities had opted for "legal procedures in dealing with public disorder cases," Kamal Barra, President of the human rights observatory told the national news agency APS.

He said the high state council — the collegial presidency had promised to close all camps and release their 2,800 detainees, although a precise date for has yet to be announced.

2 Pak editors face sedition charge

ISLAMABAD, Sept 28: A special court summoned two Pakistani newspaper editors on Sunday to answer charges of sedition for publishing a poem to which the government objected, one of them said, reports Reuters.

Maleeha Lodhi, editor of the Islamabad edition of the News, said the capital's special court for speedy trial had called her and Mir Shakfur Rahman, editor-in-chief of the English-language daily, to appear before it next Saturday.

"Coming against a background of threats, intimidation, personal harassment and constant pressure, I think this speaks for itself," Lodhi said. "We are going to fight in all the way."

Also summoned were one of the newspaper's reporters and the author of the poem, which urged army chief general Asif Nawaz to save Pakistan from what it called looting by political rulers.

All four were accused of sedition, punishable by up to 25 years in jail, said the court summons, a copy of which was made available to Reuters.

The court for speedy trial, one of several set up by the government last year to fight

rising crime, has yet to lay formal charges.

The court must give its judgment within 30 days of a case being referred to it. A sentence by such a court can be challenged before an appeal court, which must also reach a decision within 30 days.

The Islamabad edition of the News, also published from Karachi and Lahore, printed the Urdu poem on September 7 with a report about investors hit by two financial scandals.

One affair, which rocked Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's 22-month-old government last year, related to collapsed financial cooperatives, many run by ruling party members.

The other involved the failure of a publishing company to pay investors to whom it had promised big profits.

The poem asked victims of the scandals to "take up bows and arrows, make them (looters) bleed so these satans should not run away."

The newspaper printed a front-page apology two days later and suspended the reporter who wrote the story.

It said publishing the poem was "an inadvertent error and had no mala fide intention."

Pretoria begins to free prisoners

JOHANNESBURG, Sept 28: The government began releasing scores of political activists Monday, including a notorious white supremacist who gunned down seven blacks in a sidewalk shooting spree, reports AP.

The first prisoners were released overnight when seven African National Congress

members walked out of East London prison on the South-east coast to the cheers of supporters. The ANC said up to 150 activists would be released Monday, with some 300 prisoners to be released by November 15.

Government leaders, meanwhile, were trying Monday to mend ties with the

country's second most powerful black leader, Mongosuthu Buthelezi. The leader of the Zulu-dominated Inkatha freedom party pulled out of political negotiations to protest a weekend meeting between rival ANC leader and President FW de Klerk.

Buthelezi's boycott threatened to deepen the political

crisis and unleash new violence. De Klerk and Mandela are struggling to revive multi-party negotiations and stem violence that threatens South Africa's political and economic stability.

Much of the violence involves ANC and Inkatha supporters in a bloody power struggle.

Monday's releases were to include two men sentenced to death for murder. Barend Strydom, of the extreme right-wing White Wolves, went on a shooting spree in downtown Pretoria in 1988, killing six blacks and an Indian.

Also to be released was ANC activist Rober McBride, who parked a car bomb at a popular bar in Durban in 1986, killing three white women and injuring 69 people. Both men were sentenced to death, but the sentences were later changed to life imprisonment.

McBride was attacked and wounded by white prisoners Sunday in an apparent assassination attempt at Westville Prison in Durban, police said. He was wounded with a pair of scissors, but was well enough to be released, they said.

De Klerk and Mandela restored Saturday after a three-month deadlock, and said they were making progress towards resuming full-scale political negotiations.



PORTLAND, Maine: Democratic presidential candidate holds a baby as he reaches to shake hands during a campaign rally at Portland's airport September 26. Clinton told the rally, "I was raised to believe this is a can-do country, and I think we ought to throw the can't-do crowd out of Washington."

If Perot's supporters believe the candidates are serious about deficit reduction, they'll want Perot back in, confounding the campaign in its final five weeks.

Since withdrawing from active campaigning July 16, the Dallas billionaire has repeatedly said he was disappointed that Clinton and Bush haven't paid more attention to the \$350 billion federal deficit.

He says he would re-enter the race if supporters ask him to, but insists he doesn't want the job and suggests he is most interested in qualifying for equal TV time and favourable rates to air issues-oriented campaign ads.

Bush won over one of Perot's state coordinators even before Monday's meeting. Cliff Arnebeck, the head of Perot's Ohio group, said Sunday he had decided to back the president.

"The most important job of the president is the competent conduct of foreign policy," Arnebeck said. "On that score, President Bush has done very, very well."

Since the meeting was announced

Thursday, Perot has kept quiet about it. While many of his invited supporters say they will urge him to run, close associates to Perot say he prefers the role of political broker to candidate.

The campaign delegations were composed of experts on different parts of the candidate's political agenda.

Arriving with Bush campaign chairman Robert Teeter was Housing Secretary Jack Kemp, an outspoken conservative; national security adviser Brent Scowcroft, a symbol of Bush's foreign policy experience, and Texas Sen. Phil Gramm, who will try to keep the state both Bush and Perot call home in the GDP column.

With Clinton campaign chairman Mickey Kantor were Texas Sen. Lloyd Bentsen; Sen. David Boren of Oklahoma, a proponent of political reform; economist Felix Rohatyn, economics adviser Gene Sperling; civil rights leader Vernon Jordan, Rep. Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif.; and Adm William Crowe, the retired chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff who endorsed Clinton during the latest heat over Clinton's draft history.

Off the Record

They are happily married and unemployed

TULSA: Two photographers at the Tulsa Tribune were married in a place that won't exist in three days the newspaper's newroom, reports AP.

"This is the way I want to remember the Tribune, instead of the sadness that will be here over the next three days," Executive Editor Windsor Ridenour said as Mary Barton and Gary Lawson were wed Sunday evening.

The ceremony took place between the sports department and photo editor's desk. The aisle ran between video display terminals and the publisher's desk.

"We've been nothing but happy here and we wanted to share this with you," Mrs. Lawson, 26, told about 100 co-workers, family and friends.

The Tribune ends 73 years of publication Wednesday when its joint operating agreement with the Tulsa World is dissolved.

The newly-weds met in 1967 at a football game, which they were covering for different newspapers. Lawson, 33, joined the Tribune in October and Barton was hired in February. Five months later, the Tribune announced it was shutting down.

"We played hopscotch all over the state to find a place where we could live and work together," Lawson said. "This isn't the place where we met and fell in love, but it's the place where we were happy."

The invitation described the bride and groom as unemployed photo-journalists.

The reception will be held immediately following the ceremony in the newroom before the newroom is no longer there," the invitation read. "The happy couple will honeymoon in the unemployment line in beautiful downtown Tulsa."

A Black president for America?

NEW YORK: Most Americans expect to see a black president and cures for AIDS and cancer in the 21st century, a poll found. But they doubt medicine will conquer the common cold, and they foresee more environmental disasters, reports AP.

Fifty-three per cent of the 800 Americans questioned in the Time magazine-CNN poll said they believe the second coming of Jesus Christ will occur within the next 1,000 years. The poll, conducted in July is on news stands Monday.

Given a check-list of possible events in the 21st century, 75 per cent said they expect a cure for AIDS; 80 per cent a cure for cancer and 39 per cent a cure for the common cold. The margin of error is plus or minus 3.5 percentage points.

A majority of Americans also foresee more poverty (61 per cent), disease (53 per cent) and environmental disasters (59 per cent).

In politics, the next century will bring both a black president and a woman president, 76 per cent said.

Thirty-two per cent said they will meet beings from other planets.

Asked to choose between pairs of famous people for their impact on history, those questioned picked Christopher Columbus over Neil Armstrong, Thomas Edison over Albert Einstein, Beethoven over the Beatles and Mikhail Gorbachev over Karl Marx.

He was mauled by a playful ...

RENO, Nev: A magician was mauled by a 250-pound (115-kilogram) Bengal tiger after making the cat reappear during a casino stage show, reports AP.

Jonathan Pendragon, 37, took the blame for the mauling that came during the Spellbound show Saturday night at the Reno Hilton, according to casino-show spokesman Brian Lawson.

"The first thing he said today is that the tiger didn't make the mistake," Lawson said Sunday. "He said the tiger was playing and it was his own mistake."

After jumping on top of the cage at the end of the tiger reappearance act, Pendragon's leg either slipped or was tugged between the bars.

"In any event, the cat bit his lower right leg," Lawson said. Jonathan then reached down to get his leg free and the cat launched into his left arm.

"At first it looked like it was part of the act," he said. "But then there were gasps from the audience when they realized (Pendragon) wasn't playing."

A trainer freed Pendragon's arm from the cat's mouth.

Pendragon underwent surgery to repair puncture wounds that went to the bone and did not appear to suffer any permanent damage, Lawson said.

Bush, Clinton trying to obtain support of Perotmen

DALLAS, Sept 28: In their hunt for votes, President Bush and his opponent Bill Clinton are flying top aides to meet with aides of once and possibly future challenger Ross Perot to defend their proposals, reports AP.

After that, Perot's people will meet with their man, then he will go on national television and, presumably, give some indication whether or not he will get back into the presidential race.

"He represents a lot of voters and they're voters we want," White House spokesman Marlin Fitzwater said as Bush continued his campaign by train in Ohio and Michigan. "We're not going to miss an opportunity to get the message across."

Bush and Clinton sought to bring Perot supporters into their fold not only by selling Perot's 50 state coordinators on their respective economic plans, but also by attempting to smooth feelings ruffled after Perot abandoned his independent bid in July.

"Mine is the only agenda that includes cutting the growth of mandatory government spending, cutting the size of government and reducing the federal deficit because that is the

way to give the kids here today a better America tomorrow," Bush said while campaigning in Michigan. "Clinton offers more of the old big taxes, big government, no serious plan to control the deficit."

Campaigning in Iowa, Clinton said Bush practiced "election-year farm politics" by waiting until right before the election to expand export incentives for wheat farmers. He also said that Bush, for all his talk about expanded trade, "hems and haws" when he has opportunities. For instance, Clinton said, Bush has failed to prod European countries to accept American pork and other farm products.

Bush told reporters he felt no pressure — "none at all" despite being behind in the polls. "We've got good proposals and I feel we are on the right track," said Bush. "I think the American people sense it ... they like this concept of making a difference between Clinton and Bush, Clinton spending and taxing and me holding the line and reducing taxes. That's the message I carry."

Neither candidate planned to attend in person.

Hardcore Filipino communists still underground

MANILA, Sept 28: Hardcore Filipino communists are staying underground despite the lifting of a 35-year ban on their party, waiting for a formal peace settlement with the government before ending a lifetime of armed struggle, reports AFP.

President Fidel Ramos last week legalized the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) urging members to join the mainstream and shift to peaceful struggle with legislative and local polls only three years away.

But the rebels are extremely wary of the ex-general, who directed counter-insurgency for his predecessors Ferdinand Marcos and Corason Aquino before being elected President in May.