

India may produce enriched uranium

NEW DELHI, Oct 2: India will produce its own enriched uranium and keep the Tarapur atomic power station operating for another 15 years if France refuses to supply the nuclear fuel, an Indian nuclear expert said Thursday, reports AP.

India has developed the technology to make the uranium "but no decision has yet been taken about using this fuel in taps," the Press Trust of India (PTI) quoted P K Yengar, Chairman of India's Atomic Energy Commission, as saying.

He did not say where the nuclear fuel could be produced, "but it is known that the department of atomic energy had in operation a secret pilot centrifuge enrichment facility at Ratanbhauli," in southern India, the news agency said.

Asked when a final decision would be taken, Yengar told in a brief interview: "We still have time."

Yengar's comments came soon after premier P V Narasimha Rao said that his government hoped to "somehow find ways to tide over the situation" arising from French reluctance to continue supplying enriched uranium to Tarapur.

French insistence that India sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty caused Rao to return home without an expected extension of a two-year contract, expiring October 1993, for supplies of the uranium.

India said it will not sign the NPT because it discriminates against nuclear have-nots and is tilted in favour of the nuclear powers.

Yengar said Indian scientists had the option of using indigenous enriched uranium or home-made molten fuel, that consists of a mixture of oxides of depleted uranium and plutonium, in the event of France halting supplies.

G-77 expels Belgrade

NEW YORK, Oct 2: The Group of 77 developing countries has virtually expelled the Belgrade regime, which holds the Yugoslav seat, less than 24 hours after it suffered the same fate in the Non-Aligned Movement, reports PTI.

The G-77 yesterday followed the same procedure as was done by the non-aligned ministerial level meeting on Wednesday.

The Chairman of G-77 and Pakistani Ambassador, Jamsheer Marker read out a statement to the effect that because of its preoccupation with the London and Geneva conferences, Belgrade cannot meaningfully participate in the discussions.

The two conferences are trying to bring peace to the troubled former Yugoslavia.

Diplomats attending the closed door meeting said immediately after reading the statement, Marker hurriedly moved on the next item on the agenda to avoid any discussion on the issue.

Belgrade, according to diplomats had warned that it would reply if any member made a statement.

Both in the NAM and G-77 there was a division on the question of expelling Belgrade with several members especially from Africa against it.

AP from Sarajevo adds: The Red Cross has evacuated hundreds of former prisoners of war to safety in Croatia, and one of the freed POWs described brutal beatings meted out by Serbs in a detention camp.

Meanwhile, United States and UN officials said the airlift to besieged Sarajevo will resume soon.

In northern Bosnia, the International Committee of the Red Cross mounted a convoy of 35 buses and ambulances to evacuate more than 1,500 prisoners released from a Serb-run detention camp and escort them to safety in Croatia.

The convoy on Thursday was reported to be moving

without incident toward Karlovac, Croatia, and some vehicles crossed the border after nightfall, UN officials said.

One former detainee, Emir Alic, in his mid-20s, said he had seen guards beating numerous prisoners at the Trnopolje camp where he had been held since May 24.

"It's hard to kill someone by beating them, so you can imagine what animals they are," Alic said before police removed an Associated Press reporter from the bus.

The warring factions in Bosnia-Herzegovina agreed at a London peace conference in August to close down detention camps. Pictures of starving inmates and tales of atrocities in some camps shocked the world.

Fighting broke out in Bosnia after Muslims and Croats voted on Feb. 29 to secede from Serbia-led Yugoslavia. Serbs rejected a break with Belgrade, and their militia forces have captured two-thirds of the re-

public. International efforts to stop the fighting have so far failed, and attempts to alleviate suffering also have stalled.

In Washington on Thursday, acting US Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger said the airlift to besieged Sarajevo will resume after a months' hiatus. He said the warring parties gave "general assurances of free flight, no attack," but there was still concern about forces "who may not be under anyone's control."

Relief flights were suspended on Sept. 3 after an Italian military cargo plane was shot down.

Rally demands resignation of Serbian President

Meanwhile, a hundred thousand people massed outside the Belgrade television station late Thursday, demanding the resignation of Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic.



DOHA, QATAR: Soldiers carry their comrades' body during the funeral procession on Thursday following bloody clashes on Wednesday at the Saudi-Qatar border in which two Qatari soldiers were killed. Following the incidents the Qatari government decided to sever the 1965 border agreement with Saudi Arabia. Saudis rejected the decision. — AFP/UNB photo

Parliament rules out Czech breakup without referendum

PRAGUE, Oct 2: Parliament struck a surprise blow against the breakup of Czechoslovakia on Thursday by narrowly defeating a bill that would have let Czechs and Slovaks split without first holding a referendum on the question, reports AP.

Polls say less than 40 per cent of Czechoslovakia's voters want the country divided into independent Slovakian and Czech states. Political leaders plan the breakup anyway.

But in a dramatic showdown in the federal parliament, legislation to allow a quick split fell seven votes short of passing. The vote was 173-92, with 21 abstentions. A three-fifths majority, or 180 votes, was

needed for approval. Then, in a further challenge to supporters of quick dissolution, parliament passed a resolution calling on a commission to prepare legislation for a future "Czecho-Slovak Union" in which the two republics would coordinate economic and defence policies.

According to the resolution, the proposed union would have a president, legislature and governing council, but most power would be passed to separate Czech and Slovak parliaments.

The resolution needed only a simple majority of those present to pass 143-47, with 61 abstentions and 23 deputies

not voting. The result was a bitter and unexpected defeat for Czech Premier Vaclav Klaus and Slovak Premier Vladimir Meciar, who agreed after winning June elections that their republics would become fully separate states in 1993.

It was not immediately clear what happens now. But one possibility is that the Czech or Slovakian parliaments would pass their own bills breaking up the country - ignoring the federal parliament.

Another possibility would be a peaceful secession of one republic from the federation.

Allies lobbying for key cabinet posts

Franco takes over from Collor

BRASILIA, Oct 2: Vice President Itamar Franco takes over from Brazil's impeached president Friday, but the transition hit an early snag when Franco's allies began squabbling over a key cabinet position, reports AP.

Fernando Collor de Mello was ordered to step down and face corruption charges Tuesday by the Chamber of Deputies.

Chief Justice Sidney Sanchez of the Supreme Court told reporters outside the Senate building Thursday that the transfer of power would occur without ceremony at 10 am (1300 GMT) Friday at the presidential palace.

Franco will lead the nation

of 150 million people for at least 180 days, while the Senate decides whether to remove Collor permanently.

In his first comment since the impeachment vote, Collor, who says he is innocent of corruption, released a one-paragraph statement that consisted of a few lines of a poem by Sully Prud'homme, translated from French.

It read: "Let us be like a bird sitting on a branch for an instant, on the most fragile branch; and feeling the branch tremble the bird sings, for he knows that he has wings."

The Senate had said Franco would be inaugurated on Monday, but it moved up the date after congressmen said the de-

lay would anger millions of Brazilians who have been demanding Collor's ouster.

The faster member of Franco's Cabinet to be confirmed was economist Paulo Haddad, who was chosen as Planning Minister.

At a news conference, Haddad said Franco would continue with Collor's economic modernization projects and "improve them". These projects include the privatization of state-run companies and opening the economy to free market forces.

The 53-year-old Haddad said the current Economy Ministry will be broken up into a two separate ministries - planning and finance.

Sihanouk needs three week's treatment in Beijing

BELJING, Oct 2: Cambodian leader Prince Norodom Sihanouk requires two or three week's medical treatment in Beijing, a senior member of his staff said here today, but denied that the Prince had undergone an operation, reports AP.

Diplomatic sources in Phnom Penh said late Thursday that the Prince, a former ruler of Cambodia who now chairs the four-party Supreme National Council, had been operated on for a throat condition called papillitis.

Prince Sihanouk has had to cancel planned visits to France and to New York, where he was to have addressed the United Nations General Assembly, because of his treatment. "His highness will stay two or three weeks in Beijing," the official said. "He cannot go to Paris because he must have medical treatment and rest. But it is not serious."

Tamils kill 10 Lankan soldiers

COLOMBO, Oct 2: Tamil tiger guerrillas today stormed another army bunker line in northern Sri Lanka, killing at least 10 soldiers and wounding 15, military sources here said, reports AP.

Dozens of gunmen from the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) overran the forward defence lines of the Kaddaikadu army camp, near the main Elephant Pass military garrison, the sources said.

"The army lost at least 10 soldiers killed in action and 15 wounded. Troops retaliated, but tiger losses are not immediately clear," a military official here said.

US to resume airlift to Bosnia

WASHINGTON, Oct 2: The United States Thursday said it would resume its humanitarian airlift to Bosnia-Herzegovina, having received assurances from warring factions there that the flights would not be attacked, reports AP.

Acting Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger said the missions, which were suspended last month, could resume today. But Pentagon officials said another day might be needed for preparations.

Eagleburger told a news conference that the warring parties had given "general assurances of free flight, no attacks" conditions sought after the shooting down of an Italian relief plane September 3.

Off the Record

'Dangerous' thrills 70,000

BUCHAREST: More than 20,000 police officers turned out Thursday night to keep the peace as pop superstar Michael Jackson rocked Bucharest's National Stadium, once the site of Communist military parade, reports AP.

Jackson, dressed in black leather pants, a golden satin body suit and his trademark single glove, opened a 2 1/2 hour tour-de-force with a spirited performance of "Jam" the opening cut from his "Dangerous" album.

He also treated more than 70,000 fans to a medley from his Jackson Five days as well as hits from "Thriller", "Bad" and other albums.

Authorities treated the concert like a military operation, mobilizing one quarter of the capital's police force to provide security, according to police spokesman Nicolae Bucur. Streets around the sold-out stadium were closed to private traffic in a manner reminiscent of the era of late Communist dictator Nicolae Ceausescu, who was toppled in December 1989.

Younger members of the crowd showed their appreciation with stadium-wide "wave", lit cigarette lighters and shrieked with ecstasy. But many older Romanians, used to more sedate state-sanctioned entertainment, seemed confounded by the bedlam.

"After so many years [of Communism], we just can't express how we feel," said Victoria Kiltuch, 34. "We are still a bit shy. For us it's incredible that he's here."

The ear-thumping concert, with its dizzying pyrotechnics and elaborate choreography, was a spectacle far beyond any pop show ever in Bucharest.



Sex in sands

ARLINGTON: Two-thirds of US troops who served in coed units during the Gulf war say men and women were having sex, and more than half said it hurt morale, according to a study for a government panel, reports AP.

Results of the Roper Organization poll were presented Thursday to the Presidential Commission on the Assignment of Women to the Armed Forces.

There was no data to indicate how many men and women were involved. About one-fourth of the 4,442 members of the armed forces interviewed served in the Gulf.

Those who served in mixed units were asked whether there was sexual activity between men and women in their unit, and 64 per cent said 'yes'. The other 34 per cent said they didn't believe there had been sexual contact.

The highest incidents of reported sexual activity was in the Army and Marines, at 74 per cent and 73 per cent respectively. It was 64 per cent in the Air Force and 41 per cent in the Navy.

Sixty-two per cent of those who reported sexual goings-on said it did little or no harm to the unit's readiness, while 55 per cent said it hurt morale. No questions were asked to explain how the activity might have hurt morale.

A unit was not defined. It could be a company, a battalion or a headquarters squadron, pollsters said.

Job quota for addicts

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia is planning to establish a job quota system for former drug addicts, Human Resource Minister Lim Ah Lek said Friday, reports AP.

Under the system, private companies employing foreign workers would be allowed to do so only if they also allot a portion of their jobs to reformed addicts, Lim told reporters. Lim said the quota plan could be enforced if the private sector continues to ignore government appeals to voluntarily hire reformed addicts. The government has been making such appeals since early this year.

Deputy Home Affairs Minister Megat Junid Megat Ayub said there were 160,000 drug addicts in Malaysia, which has a population of 18 million.

Other officials in the government-run programme to curb drug addiction said addicts often return to drugs because they are refused jobs, even though a labour shortage has prompted many companies to seek labourers overseas.

Immigration Department officials said more than 500,000 people — mainly Indonesians, Thais and Filipinos — have been given work permits this year.

Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad and others have repeatedly described the drug problem as Malaysia's number one enemy. Since 1975 Malaysia has allowed the death penalty for drug trafficking and nearly 200 people have been executed.

Whimpy is an unfaithful wife

SALT LAKE CITY: A defence attorney Thursday portrayed the state's key witness against twin dentists as an adulteress who drew the brothers into her sexual net, then sued and demanded a big payment to drop her complaint, reports AP.

Keyna Whimpy is the star witness in the state's hearing to revoke the dental licences of Ken and Brent Hansen. The brothers are accused of trading drugs for sex, overprescribing drugs, performing shoddy dentistry and committing fraud.

Whimpy settled her lawsuit against the Hansens two years ago for \$45,000 dollar. The dentists' defence attorney, Jackson Howard, likened the deal to extortion.

Whimpy maintains the brothers got her addicted to narcotic painkillers and, in an unstated but implicit agreement, traded drug prescriptions for sexual favours.

Under questioning Thursday from Howard, she acknowledged she was pregnant when she married at 15, was unfaithful to her husband and had various men photograph her in the nude.

Whimpy said she and her husband sent photos of her in suggestive poses to Hustler, a men's magazine, but never received a response. Howard also reeled off the names of more than two dozen doctors, psychologists and dentists he said Whimpy had visited, asking with each name whether that doctor had given her narcotic drugs.

She said several had, but later said the painkillers were from one-time prescriptions relating to an estimated 18 major surgeries.

Sullen doubts replace the cheers of German reunification

BERLIN, Oct 2: Germans rushed into reunification full of hope two years ago, but the cheers have been replaced by sullen doubts. Chancellor Helmut Kohl says he underestimated the difficulties and admits meshing eastern and western Germany will take longer than expected, reports AP.

A new poll says only 36 per cent of eastern Germans are more satisfied now than they were before reunification, with 26 per cent saying they are less satisfied. Rightist violence against refugees is hurting the country's image abroad, and is probably scaring away potential investors.

Looming over the reunited country's second birthday on Saturday are persistent warnings of a downturn for Europe's economic powerhouse.

The second anniversary comes in the federal republic's most critical postwar phase, says German Jewish leader Michel Friedman. "Germany is not in good shape." The fall of communism unleashed many of the neo-Nazis who now give Hitler salutes to TV news cameras.

"Hatred of foreigners, racism and anti-Semitism all have the same roots," adds Friedman, a member of the executive board of the Central Council of Jews in Germany. An arson

attack on the Jewish barracks of the former Sachsenhausen concentration camp outside Berlin has stunned mainstream Germans, but may also embolden rightist criminals.

"The old wounds still aren't healed. Yet, new burning acid is being poured into them," says Alisa Fuchs, president of the Berlin-based International League for Human Rights.

In fact, the reunited country is still haunted by the Holocaust that claimed the lives of 6 million Jews, and by the Nazis' slaughter of a half-million Gypsies.

Today's troubles have given rise to what the Frankfurter Rundschau newspaper calls the "new ugly German." Matthias Kleinert, Chief Spokesman for Daimler-Benz, says the recent unrest is one factor cutting into sales of Mercedes-Benz cars outside Germany.

"Germany's new image abroad is disastrous," the spokesman for Germany's largest industrial conglomerate said Monday in Berlin. The German government just got through an international flap over now-cancelled plans to mark the 50th anniversary of the Nazis' V-2 rocket.

A German-British dispute over the European currency system is giving London's conservatives

a field day, with allusions to the Third Reich. "The Germans are getting too big for their jackboots," says Conservative Party lawmaker Sir Teddy Taylor.

Despite the troubles, most Germans are convinced that reunification will work, because they had no other choice after the Berlin Wall fell on Nov 9, 1989.

A look at the troubled east shows that while decades of work still need to be done, much progress has been made. The telephone system has gone from the Stone Age to the modern era. Rail service is improving. The German carmaker Opel, a subsidiary of General Motors Corp, has just opened Europe's most up-to-date factory in Eisenach.

New buildings are sprouting — the latest sign of progress for eastern Germans already accustomed to Western clothes, cigarettes and other consumer goods.

The Munich-based Ifo research institute said investments in eastern Germany will total 76 billion dollar this year, and jump to 93 billion dollar next year.

Yet other numbers tell a more troubling picture. Unemployment in the east is 14.4 per

cent, and some estimates say as many as half the workers lack full employment.

Kohl, who will lead Saturday's second anniversary celebrations in the eastern German city of Schwerin, once raised hopes of a turnaround in the East within three to five years. Not now.

"It is indeed harder and more expensive — and it will take longer — than we believed at the start," Kohl told business and labor leaders Monday.

Casual glances at the forlorn brown houses and the Communist-era blocks of apartments show how far eastern Germany has to go. Says Otto Lambsdorff, the sharp-tongued leader of Kohl's junior coalition partner: "German unification has just begun."

"The government must now prove that it has the needed strength and imagination for the daily work of German unification, after the euphoria of the early days," the Free Democratic Party leader says.

Other issues include the expected trials of former Communist bosses, especially ousted leader Erich Honecker and ex-East German spy-master Markus Wolf.

'Black box' of crashed PLA plane found

KATHMANDU, Oct 2: Searchers today found the "black box" flight recorder of the crashed Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) Airbus five days after the aircraft slammed into a mountain near here killing all 167 on board, reports AP.

A Nepalese military helicopter brought back the Flight Digital Data Recorder (FDDR) from Bhakti Danda, the mountain where flight PK 268 crashed Monday just before it was due to land here a flight from Karachi.

Rescuers have already retrieved the plane's cockpit voice recorder and 146 bodies

from the 8,250-foot (2,514 metre) high mountain 16 kilometres (10 miles) south of Kathmandu.

The black box will be taken by a Nepalese official to a Canadian facility which is decoding the retrieved FDDR of a Thai international Airbus which crashed here on July 31 killing all 113 people on board, officials said.

"The recovery of the black box has come as a relief to us," a senior Civil Aviation Ministry official said, adding that the Nepalese government would soon order an independent investigation into Monday's PIA crash.