

## Shri Lanka no longer suspicious of India, says Premadasa

COLOMBO, Oct 13: President Ranasinghe Premadasa has said that Sri Lanka was no longer suspicious of neighbouring India, which once sent troops to the island republic, a press report today quoted him as saying reports AFP.

The island newspaper said Premadasa told a public rally in northwest Sri Lanka Monday that there had been "no problems after P V Narasimha Rao took over as India's Prime Minister."

Premadasa said that during his visit to New Delhi earlier this month he had told Indian leaders that the "era of suspicion" was over and relations between the two neighbours

was friendly and cordial, the newspaper reported.

Premadasa was an ardent critic of the July 1987 Indo-Sri Lanka peace accord signed between his predecessor Junius Jayewardene and slain Indian Premier Rajiv Gandhi.

Under the accord, New Delhi deployed more than 55,000 troops in the island's embattled northeast in a bid to disarm Tamil separatists. They withdrew when Premadasa ordered them out after taking office.

"When I was in India, I was asked the question whether Sri Lanka had suspicions about India."

## PPP demands trial of 'midnight jackals'

ISLAMABAD, Oct 13: Pakistani opposition leader Benazir Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party (PPP) on Monday demanded a trial of intelligence officials who it said had conspired against the PPP government before it was ousted in 1990, reports Reuter.

A resolution passed by the party's Central Executive Committee (CEC) said the so-called 'midnight jackals' conspiracy of 1989 should be investigated in court and those involved be tried and punished.

The CEC demands the arrest and trial of the conspirators so that the will of the people of Pakistan is never again thwarted by a clique of fascists who have time and

again made a mockery of democratic institutions and democracy in Pakistan.

The PPP says it has 'midnight jackals' video-tapes showing two senior military intelligence officers trying to buy over its deputies before an opposition move to topple Bhutto as Prime Minister through a parliamentary no-confidence move.

The September 1989 no-confidence move in the National Assembly (Lower House) failed but President Ghulam Ishaq Khan later dismissed Bhutto's 20-month old government on disputed charges of misuse.

The two intelligence officers were sacked by the army when Bhutto was still in office but were not tried.

# US, Pakistan against united Afghanistan: Hekmatyar

ISLAMABAD, Oct 13: Dissident Mujahideen leader Gulbuddin Hekmatyar has accused Pakistan and the United States of backing one of his main rivals to destabilise Afghanistan, a new agency reported Monday, reports AFP.

The Afghan News Agency (ANA), which is run by Hekmatyar's Hezb-i-Islami faction, quoted the Mujahideen leader as saying Washington could not tolerate a strong and united Afghanistan and was bent upon disintegrating the country into small units.

Hekmatyar, a fundamentalist ethnic Pashtun, accused Pakistan of supporting his main rival, former Communist Officer General Abdul Rashid Dostam, whose forces the

Hezb tried to oust from Kabul during intense fighting in August.

During a meeting with Afghan leader Nabi Mohammadi outside Kabul on Sunday, Hekmatyar expressed "concern" that Afghanistan's neighbours Iran and Pakistan were also "toeing the US line."

In an obvious attack on Pakistan, he said "had it not been so then why a neighbouring country invite Dostam to visit."

While criticising Pakistan for "projecting" the ethnic Uzbek general, he also attacked Iran for trying to impose Shiite rule in Afghanistan, ANA said.

Dostam led a mutiny of

forces once loyal to the former communist regime that helped bring the Mujahideen government to power in April and is now allied with Afghan defence Minister Ahmed Shah Masood.

Hekmatyar, whose forces killed more than 2,000 people in a three-week attack on the Afghan capital in August, said Pakistan had invited him to peace talks with interim president Burhanuddin Rabbani and Dostam.

"But Hekmatyar turned down the offer because he would not compromise with the communists," ANA said.

Pakistan was a staunch supporter of the Mujahideen's 14-year struggle against communist rule in Afghanistan, which

ended with the collapse of the Soviet-backed regime in April. Several Mujahideen-factions have claimed that Hekmatyar's Hezb got the lion's share of arms supplied by the United States and other countries to the guerrillas through Pakistan's military intelligence.

Since the transfer of power in Kabul, Islamabad insists that it supports no particular group and has urged an end to the factional fighting in Afghanistan.

Reuter adds from Kabul: Government officials said today their forces had seized an air base in western Afghanistan from the Maverick Hezb-i-Islami party after a week of heavy fighting.



KOMAKI, Japan: Japanese UN peacekeepers spend the last moment with their children before boarding a chartered jumbo jet October 13 at Komaki Air Base. 376 Japanese troops departed for Cambodia to participate in UN peacekeeping operations. —AFP/UNB photo

## Protests greet dispatch of Japanese troops to Cambodia

TOKYO, Oct 13: Police arrested 20 demonstrators and reported more than 10 cases of arson Tuesday as protests greeted the second main dispatch of Japanese troops to Cambodia, reports AP.

About 2,000 people rallied near the Komaki Base about 270 kilometers (170 miles) west of Tokyo before 376 ground troops boarded a chartered jet to Cambodia, where they will join the United Nations peacekeeping mission.

A local police official said the 20 arrested were among about 200 radicals wearing white and black helmets who pushed against police guarding the front gate of the base. A total of 3,000 riot police were mobilized.

## De Klerk reassures nervous Whites

# Blacks will never have 'blank cheque' to implement change

CAPE TOWN, Oct 13: President FW de Klerk, trying to reassure South Africa's nervous Whites, has promised to curb Black protest and said democratically-elected legislators would never have a "blank cheque" to implement change, reports Reuter.

The reformist leader's remarks in a speech opening a special 10-day session of parliament were bitterly attacked by the anti-apartheid African National Congress (ANC) as a sign his White minority administration was clinging to power.

The Black opposition group, its relations with Pretoria showing little sign of thaw despite a recent agreement to resume democracy talks, said it would never compromise its

right to stage peaceful protests against White rule.

De Klerk promised the White-dominated assembly "intensified control of (anti-apartheid) mass actions" and added private armies of the Black left and White right had to disband.

He said political violence was sapping the sanctions-bled economy, which is in its longest recession for 80 years.

"Investor confidence has been shaken to its foundations," he said.

All-race elections expected in the next 18 months for a parliament with the task of writing a new constitution would be impossible until the unrest had ended, he said.

Reiterating plans to block Black domination of minorities

like Whites, he called for strong future regional government and multi-party power-sharing in central government.

A parliament writing a constitution should not be able to take decisions by simple majority.

"There is no question of a blank cheque... special increased majorities will be required," he said.

The ANC, the largest Black opposition group, said: "The national party's 11th hour conversion to the politics of federalism is a device to conceal their intention of clinging to power despite the verdict of a democratic election."

On de Klerk's demand its armed wing be disbanded,

something it has refused to do until White rule is over, the ANC added: "The need for either underground activities or armed struggle would never have arisen if the present government had not systematically whittled away the rights of the people."

About 5,000 ANC supporters gathered outside de Klerk's Cape Town office a few hours before the parliament session, which is due to discuss bills to amend remaining aspects of race segregation.

Soldiers with rifles and police with shotguns, pistols and batons watched over the demonstration against the parliament, which excluded South Africa's five-to-one Black majority.

## BRIEFLY

**Iliescu retains power:** President Ion Iliescu has retained power as head of state in Romania's general elections, but stable government will be difficult because of a hung parliament, reports Reuter from Bucharest.

Iliescu, 62, emerged as winner of the presidential vote on Monday with 61.27 per cent compared with 38.73 per cent for Emil Constantinescu of the opposition Democratic Convention (DC).

The results of the run-off vote added to an already complicated picture in which Iliescu's leftwing Democratic National Salvation Front (DNSF) party gained a position of strength but failed to win a majority in parallel elections held on September 27.

**Two killed in Georgian plane crash:** A small plane crashed and burned on the main street running through Georgia town while trying to land Monday at Hartsfield Atlanta International Airport, killing two people on the plane, authorities said, reports AP from East Point.

Three others aboard were critically injured. There were no reports of injuries on the ground.

The twin-engine Cessna 310 was flying to Fulton County Airport west of Atlanta when it developed problems and asked to land at Hartsfield, said Kathleen Bergen of the Federal Aviation Administration.

**Polls uncertain in Serbia:** In a blow to reformist Prime Minister Milan Panic, a referendum on whether hard-line President Slobodan Milosevic should move up general elections failed to attract enough voters, preliminary results showed Monday, reports AP from Belgrade.

Only 46.1 per cent of about 7 million voters took part in Sunday's plebiscite called by Milosevic and his governing Socialist party, the renamed Communists, according to electoral commission figures. A simple majority was needed for the referendum to be valid.

**Malaysia plants secret agents:** Malaysia's anti-corruption agency has planted undercover agents throughout the private sector, including in massage parlours, its director-general said, reports Reuter from Kuala Lumpur.

"We have agents even in massage parlours. And that's how we have been getting our information," newspapers yesterday quoted Zulkifli Mahmood as saying.

He said the agency had placed "moles" in banks, offices shopping complexes and other areas following the success of a similar scheme involving agents in the public sector.

**Strike against amnesty plan:** Journalists for news agencies and newspapers stayed away from work Monday in support of the four-hour general strike labour unions called Tuesday to protest government austerity measures, reports AP from Rome.

Tuesday's general strike threatens to disrupt travel nationwide. Workers for the state-run railroad will strike from 9 am (0800 GMT) until 1 pm (1200 GMT) and air traffic controllers will strike from 1:30 pm (1230 GMT) until 5:30 pm (1630 GMT).

The general strike also will close shops, factories and disrupt city bus traffic for four hours.

The national walkout called by the main national labour confederations follows a rash of regional strikes and sometimes violent demonstrations that have paralyzed parts of the country since the 1993 budget was proposed less than two weeks ago.

## 9 more killed in Punjab

CHADIGARH, Oct 13: Six militants were among nine persons killed while seven militants were arrested and three surrendered in Punjab since last night, police said, reports PTI.

Reports from Amritsar said Lakhwinder Singh, Lt Gen of the Khalistan National Army (KNA), who was wanted in about 200 cases of killings, was killed in an encounter near Mander village in Taran police district.

An unidentified militant committed suicide by consuming cyanide on being cornered by the security forces in Dhulka Village under Jandiala police station.

# China to tighten grip over army, upgrade weapons

BEIJING, Oct 13: The Chinese Communist Party, fearful of a Soviet-style collapse, has decided to boost central command over the People's Liberation Army (PLA) and speed up efforts to upgrade its weaponry, reports AP.

The PLA will emerge from this week's party congress with more political clout and more funding, with one general set to enter the Politburo Standing Committee, the country's highest decision-making body, analysts say.

With market forces playing an increasing role in the Chinese economy, the party has lost much of its leverage over provincial governments

and the erosion of its power can only worsen.

In a country with a long tradition of warlords, this prospect has the top leadership fearful that economic in-lard could lead to attempts to break away from central control, especially in the wealthier coastal regions.

Under the guidance of paramount leader Deng Xiaoping, the party is moving to prevent its collapse by tightening its grip over the PLA.

"It is essential always to hold the party's absolute leadership over the army," party General Secretary Jiang Zemin said Monday. Jiang is also the head of the party's powerful

central military commission.

The commission has decided to do away gradually with its system of seven military regions and implement a new system intended to prevent local power bases from becoming too strong, military analysts say. The process is expected to take five years, with three large new zones replacing the seven regions, the analysts added.

Top regional leaders will also be regularly transferred.

"The armies in eastern Europe, failed to respond at a time of crisis because party control had been eroded," a mid-ranking Chinese officer said. "China has learned this lesson."

## Bush's insufficient efforts alleged AIDS activists vow to vote for Clinton

WASHINGTON, Oct 13: Several thousand AIDS activists ringed the White House Monday to protest what they called insufficient efforts by President George Bush to fight the deadly disease, reports AFP.

The estimated 5,000 demonstrators shouted "three more weeks, Bush will go", with some vowing to vote for Democratic presidential candidate Bill Clinton in the November 3 election.

The demonstrators encircled Bush's official residence, forming a human chain with the help of 6,000 feet (1,800 meters) of red ribbon symbolizing AIDS deaths.

Some carried simulated U.S. flags with skulls and

## Wild elephants kill 51 in West Bengal

NEW DELHI, Oct 13: Wild elephants have killed 51 people so far this year in India's West Bengal, triggering panic in the region's tea estates where the pachyderms are on a rampage, the Press Trust of India (PTI) said today, reports AFP.

The year's toll included nine people trampled to death by rogue elephants last week in the eastern state tea-rich Jalpaiguri district, PTI quoted the district's chief forest officer S S Bisht as saying.

The Bengal administration has installed electric fences around some tea estates and evacuated one Jalpaiguri village following the attacks, Bisht said, adding that his wildlife department has also formed squads to catch the rogue elephants.

## Off the Record

### Sorry, Jesus didn't return within the deadline

SEOUL: A religious group that had been making feverish preparations for the world's end apologized Tuesday for stirring controversy after the predicted doomsday passed uneventfully, reports AP.

The Davera Mission church, which had predicted a doomsday of October 10 and preached that only true believers would be saved, placed an advertisement in a Seoul newspaper saying it was sorry "now that Jesus did not return within the deadline."

"We sincerely apologize to society and Korea's religious circles for triggering controversy," church leader Ha Jae-ho said in the advertisement.

About 500 believers at Davera prayed intensely, some screaming and weeping, toward midnight of the predicted day at their church in southern Seoul, but returned home disappointed.

Davera is one of about 250 doomsday churches in South Korea that have preached the second coming of Christ in October and the collapse of the world over the next seven years.

Different churches predict different dates for what they call the rapture. The largest number, led by the Mission for the Coming Days church, predicts October 28.

### 'I pray for Cuba every day'

HIGUEY, Dominican Republic: Pope John Paul assured Cubans on Monday they are in his daily prayers, although their country remains the only Latin American nation he has yet to visit, reports Reuter.

Towards the end of a Columbus Day mass in this eastern provincial town, the Pope acknowledged a number of people waving Cuban flags in the smaller-than-expected crowd.

"To the Cubans I want to say that I pray for Cuba. I want to assure Cubans that I pray for Cuba every day as well as for all the countries of the Caribbean and Central America and all the nations of Latin America," the Pope said.

The Pope has, on several occasions, said he wants to visit Cuba, where a majority of the population is Catholic. He has been invited by the Catholic Bishops of Cuba but not by the communist government of Fidel Castro, despite intense lobbying from the Vatican to make such a trip possible.

Church-state relations in Cuba, which were once tense, have improved recently.

But some churchmen say the Castro regime may fear that a visit by the Pope would inspire opposition to the government, as happened after visits to Haiti and the Philippines.

### Couple accused of abandoning adopted children

Social service authorities call it abandonment, but Alma and Gary Knight say they had no choice but to return their adopted children to the state after Hurricane Andrew demolished their home, reports AP.

The state has requested a court to order the 11-year-old boy and his 7-year-old sister returned to the Knights. A hearing was set for Tuesday.

"We know the hurricane has placed a enormous stress on parenting," said Jim Towey, district director of the Health and Rehabilitative Services Department. "But the law is very clear: it asks us to try to reunify the family."

Only eight of 379 disputed adoptions in Florida have been recognized as legitimate failures over the last four years, Towey said.



WEIMER, Germany: Reproduction of the painting "Princess Sybille Von Cleve" by Lucas Cranach the older (1472-1553) which is one of the most famous and valuable paintings (about 15 million DM) of this German artist. It is one of the overall eight paintings of an estimate value of 63 million DM that were stolen from the Cranach Gallery in the Weimar castle early October 12. — AFP/UNB photo

## Grenade blast claims 4 in Philippines

COTABATO, (Philippines), Oct 13: Four children were killed and 33 wounded when unidentified gunmen exploded a grenade and opened fire at a village cinema near this southern city, police said today, reports AFP.

Police had no immediate suspects but blamed "terrorists" for the attack on the farming village of New Panay, about 850 kilometers (530 miles) south of Manila, before midnight Monday, the eve of the local fiesta.

The children were watching a movie on videotape in the makeshift cinema when three armed men set off the grenade.