

# Beijing deports democracy activist

BEIJING, Oct 24: A Chinese democracy activist who was arrested last month after returning home from American exile has been deported, his mother said Saturday, reports AP.

Police, who had Shen Tong in custody since September, put him on a US-bound plane Saturday at Beijing International Airport, said the mother Li Yixian. She said she was taken to the airport to say goodbye.

It was not clear why authorities suddenly decided to release Shen, whose arrest had added to friction between the United States and China. Seventy-four US senators, including vice presidential candidate Al Gore, had sent a letter to Chinese Premier Li Peng urging the release of Shen and two colleagues.

There was no word of the fate of the other two, Qi Dafang and Qian Liyun, who were arrested with Shen. Both are Beijing residents.

Shen, 24, was the first prominent participant in the 1989 Tianmen Square democracy movement to return from exile, following Chinese government assurances that he would not be prosecuted.

Authorities apparently did not have any outstanding warrants for his arrest, as they do for several other student protesters.

However, after entering China in early August he began making contacts with underground dissidents and preparing to establish a branch of the US-based human rights group, the Democracy for China Fund.

He was arrested September 1 hours before he was scheduled to give a news conference to foreign journalists announcing the branch. He planned to try to register the group officially with the Chinese government, as required by law.

Shen, then a Beijing University student, was a leader in the early stages of the 1989 protests. He fled to the United States shortly after the Chinese army opened fire on the demonstrators. From exile, he frequently spoke out against Chinese human rights abuses.

# Siddhartha new envoy to Washington US, India moving closer

NEW DELHI, Oct 24: If there is any doubt about which way India's foreign policy is headed, consider a rally in Calcutta for replacing a statue of Lenin with Lincoln, reports AP.

Siddhartha Shankar Ray, who led the demonstration last year, is going to Washington this month as India's new ambassador, although he has never seen the United States.

After years of ignoring each other, the two countries are moving closer in trade and other relations, and are even beginning military cooperation.

The growing importance of India in the American scheme of the world could be read in the State Department's choice of its senior career diplomat, Thomas Pickering, as envoy to New Delhi. He arrived in August.

Pickering, 60, and Ray could hardly be less alike.

Ray, 72, a lawyer trained in London, is a political appointee. A veteran of the governing Congress Party, he was close to the late Prime Ministers Indira Gandhi and Rajiv, her son.

He also is a former chief executive of the West Bengal state government and a former federal minister.

From 1986 to 1989, he was the federally appointed governor of Punjab, the northern state where Sikh militants are fighting a brutal war for independence from India.

His unsuccessful effort to erect a tribute to President Abraham Lincoln came in his role as opposition leader in West Bengal state, where the communist party governs.

Counter balancing Ray's diplomatic inexperience is his inside track to Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao, a signal to Washington that policy will come from the top, not from bureaucrats. To bolster his standing, Ray has been given the rank of Cabinet Minister.

Pickering was the US ambassador to the United Nations

who guided tough anti-Iraq resolutions through the Security Council during the Gulf crisis. He was reported to have angered superiors, however, by claiming too much credit for U.S. policy successes.

Previously, he served as ambassador to Israel, Jordan, Nigeria and El Salvador.

India was of little urgency to Washington in the past, but that is changing.

After decades of advocating Third World nonalignment, relying heavily on political and military support from Moscow, India was set adrift by the Soviet Union's collapse.

Now, it is making a cautious transition from a planned, isolationist economy to a free-market programme fashioned with loans and advice from the World Bank and International Monetary Fund.

Because it looks to U.S.-based multinationals for investment, the corn flakes, soap powders and soft drinks familiar to Americans are appearing in Indian homes. U.S. investments this year were a still-modest 250 million dollar but amounted to 10 times the 1991 total.

The westward turn coincided with a U.S. reassessment of its own relations with Pakistan, India's traditional enemy, which had been used as a conduit for aid to anti-Communist rebels in Afghanistan.

In the post-Soviet world of declining nuclear tension, Washington is focusing on the nuclear volatility in South Asia.

Its main policy objective in the region is to bring India and Pakistan to some kind of disarmament accord or at least to a safeguard agreement on the nuclear weapons U.S. experts believe both countries have.

India's main point of friction with the United States is its refusal to sign the nuclear non-proliferation treaty and open its nuclear sites to international inspection.

# Off the Record

## 'We are here to plough Clinton'

Texas: Bill Clinton's name wasn't quite mud this week, but it was dirt, reports AP.

Area farmers upset with the Democratic candidate's agricultural policies ploughed Clinton's name in 750-foot (230-metre) letters into a Nueces County field Friday, then cut a slash mark through it.

"We might not have much money or power or influence, but we sure know how to write big," said Jimmy Dodson, who grows cotton and grain.

"We're here to make our mark. We're here to make some trials and we're here to plough Bill Clinton," Dodson told a rally of about 150 farmers and members of local agribusinesses.

Several farmers said they were afraid Clinton would cut subsidies to mid-level producers and force them to provide expensive health insurance for their employees.

"Big government is my problem right now and he's only going to make it bigger," James Adams said.



## I as much a person as you are

NEW DELHI: Bus loads of spastic children in wheelchairs protested outside a department store in Bombay after its owner asked a handicapped girl to leave, a newspaper reported Saturday, says AP.

Friday's action by the Spastic Society of India was over the ejection of a shopper the previous day because another patron complained that she had been hit by the girl's wheelchair, the Pioneer newspaper reported.

Handicapped students stood outside the store, crowded with shoppers on the eve of a Hindu festival, and shouted: "Our money is as good as yours," and "I am as much a person as you are." They then went into store, browsed for an hour and left empty handed, the paper reported.

## Only religion can provide better life

MOSCOW: Tens of thousands of people braved a frozen evening drizzle Friday to gather at Moscow's Olympic stadium and hear Billy Graham, the wealthy US evangelist, soothe them with promises of a better life through religions faith, reports AP.

"Why?" Graham bellowed through a powerful amplification system before the hushed crowd, as he opened his sermon with a reference to the key-word used in an unprecedented campaign used in recent weeks to advertise his three-day mission here.

"Why is there so much suffering?... why do you have so many problems in your life?... why are so many wars taking place? we thought the changes of the past few years would eliminate war," he said.

## Liz gets AFI award

LOS ANGELES: The American Film Institute says Elizabeth Taylor will be the 21st recipient of its lifetime achievement award, reports AP.

The Academy Award-winning actress will receive the honour March 11.

"As the 21st recipient of this prestigious award, Elizabeth Taylor joins a distinguished group of individuals who have made enormous contributions to America's film heritage," institute chairman Frederick Pierce said Friday.

Past winners include Henry Fonda, Bette Davis, Orson Welles, Lillian Gish, Billy Wilder, Barbara Stanwyck, Gregory Peck and Kirk Douglas. Sidney Pottier took the prize this year.



# UN suspends airlift to southern Somalia

NAIROBI, Oct 24: The United Nations suspended plans to resume regular food airlifts to Bardera, southern Somalia, where clan fighting has cut the lifeline of thousands of starving people, after gunfire in the town Friday.

"A German C-130 transport plane took in nine tonnes of supplementary children's food and two tonnes of vegetable oil, but plans for another flight today were postponed because of shooting on the ground," Francis Mwanza, a spokesman for the UN World Food Programme (WFP) told AFP.

Friday's flight was the first since relief workers pulled out of Bardera after the forces of ousted dictator Mohamed Siad Barre captured the town 10 days ago from a rival faction led by a powerful warlord, Mohamed Farah Aidid, leaving 15,000 to 20,000 people cut off from food supplies.

Up to 250 people are dying daily in Bardera, and thousands of skeletal women and children are "crying and begging for food," said aid workers who visited the town this week.

Mwanza said Friday's shooting was attributed to "general insecurity" in the town.

## Myanmar frees 100 more prisoners

YANGON, Oct 24: Over one hundred political prisoners were released Friday as part of a continuing effort by the ruling military junta at reconciliation with its opponents, state radio reported, says AP.

The 107 prisoners were released from Hinthada jail, 90 miles northwest of Yangon.

A total of 756 political prisoners, including 85-year-old former civilian Prime Minister Nu have been released since this April, when Gen. Than Shwe began a programme of releasing prisoners and taking other steps toward reform like meeting with opposition members on drafting a new constitution.

1991 Nobel Peace Prize laureate Aung San Suu Kyi remains behind bars, a fact that a number of nations continue to protest.

## Iran sets up 8 missile launch sites

RIYADH, Oct 24: Iran has set up eight launch sites for Scud and Silkworm missiles on the Gulf island located along the world's oil shipping routes, a Saudi newspaper reported Friday, says AP.

Ashtarq Al-Awsat quoted sources in Iran and in the west as saying that Tehran also planned to place more than 800 Scud-B missiles, modified from the Soviet Scud, and 200 Chinese-built Silkworm missiles on Abu Musa island by 1993.

Saudi Arabia has backed the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in its dispute over Abu Musa, which flared in August when Tehran turned away a UAE boat heading to the island that both have run jointly since 1971.

Abu Dhabi informed the United Nations earlier this month about the dispute after the failure of two days of negotiations with Tehran in September.

Iran recently ruled out recourse to international arbitration to resolve the dispute, which centers not only on Abu Musa but on two other strategic Gulf islands — Lesser and Greater Tunb.

Diplomatic sources in the Gulf said Iran insists on discussing only the Abu Musa question, while the UAE wants to talk about the two other islands as well.

A military expert in the region said Iran could pose a major threat to stability if it placed missiles on Abu Musa island and operated submarines at the mouth of the Gulf.



BEIJING: Visiting Japanese Emperor Akihito (L) toasts with Chinese President Yang Shangkun during a state banquet in honour of the Japanese sovereign at the Great Hall of the People on Friday. — AFP/UNB photo

# Bid to enhance Sino-Indian ties

BEIJING, Oct 24: Chinese and Indian officials expressed the hope here yesterday that more efforts would be made to further enhance the bilateral relations between China and India, reports Xinhua.

Qian Zhengying, a newly-elected President of China-India friendship Association (CIFA), said that her association would actively promote the further development of friendship between the two countries.

CIFA was first set up in 1952, but its work was interrupted during China's cultural revolution (1966-1976).

To mark the official resumption of CIFA's work, a cocktail party was given yesterday at the seat of the Chinese People's Association of Friendship with Foreign Countries (CPAFF). Han Xu, CPAFF President and Indian Ambassador to China Salman Haider attended the party.

Qian, also vice-chairwoman of the Chinese people's political consultative conference, noted that China and India had all suffered from colonialism and they had cooperated with and helped each other in their struggle for a long time.

She said that in the 1950s, the friendly and cooperative ties between the two countries entered a new stage and the five-principles of peaceful-coexistence initiated by the prime ministers of the two countries has become a principle accepted throughout the world.

"Further development of Sino-Indian ties is not only in the interests of the two coun-

tries but also conducive to peace and stability in Asia and the world as a whole," she said.

To this, Haider expressed his agreement. He said that the relations between the two most populous countries has improved greatly in the past few years, adding that the bilateral cooperation in agriculture and other fields have been going on smoothly.

He revealed that a working group of the two countries would begin their discussion here next week on solutions to the border issue between the two countries and that a Chinese cultural festival would be held in India at the end of this year.

"All these would add to the understanding and friendship between the two countries," he said.

## Angolan elections: Both urges UN to send more observers

JOHANNESBURG, Oct 24: South African foreign minister Pik Botha Friday urged the United Nations to send more observers to Angola to oversee a second round of presidential election, reports AP.

The first round of elections on September 29-30 has pushed the country back to the brink of civil war after Jonas Savimbi, leader of National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA), alleged the polls were rigged.

Dos Santos won just short of the absolute majority needed to avoid a second round, which the UN is poised to organise.

# US will send military equipment to Lebanon

WASHINGTON, Oct 24: The United States will send military equipment to Lebanon for the first time since 1984 in a gesture of support for the Lebanese armed forces, a State Department source said Friday, reports AP.

The source, speaking on condition of anonymity, also said the fiscal 1994 budget would include two million dollar in military aid to Lebanon. The equipment includes trucks, jeeps, heavy lifting equipment and spare parts drawn from US military stocks in Europe.

The second-hand materials

is worth about 11 million dollar, the source said, nothing that its shipment to Lebanon was a symbolic gesture.

Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs Edward Djerejian recently said the shipment, which requires legislative approval, would "enhance the Lebanese army's mobility and range of operation, and the ability of the Lebanese government to project its authority throughout the country."

Earlier Friday, the State Department welcomed the naming of Rafik Hariri as Prime Minister of Lebanon.

# BRIEFLY

**Yeltsin relieves health minister:** Russian Health Minister A Vorobyov, who reportedly suffered a heart attack, has been relieved of his functions on the orders of President Boris Yeltsin. Itar-Tass said Friday, reports AFP from Moscow.

The agency quoted the President's press office.

Vorobyov collapsed at a cabinet meeting on Thursday during discussion of his proposals for new health service funds and the introduction of obligatory medical insurance.

The government had just decided to review the proposals.

**Woman held with heroin in Bogota:** Police have detained a woman who had eight plastic bags of heroin surgically implanted in her buttocks. The woman reportedly said she did not know she was carrying the drug, AP says from Bogota.

Police said Denis Aguilar was en route to Miami, Florida, on Friday when she was stopped in the airport and ordered to have her 'disproportionately large' buttocks x-rayed.

The bags were surgically removed at Bogota's San Juan de Dios hospital and 730 grams (25 ounces) of heroin was found. Bogota's television News at Seven said Aguilar denied knowing that she was carrying heroin.

Drug smugglers, known as mules, often swallow plastic bags full of cocaine or heroin. But the bags frequently break, unleashing the drug into the bloodstream and killing the carrier.

**Major arrives in Cairo:** British Prime Minister John Major arrived Friday to take part in festivities marking 50 years since the Battle of El Alamein, a turning point of World War II, AP reports from Cairo.

He is scheduled to meet President Hosni Mubarak on Saturday on the need to achieve stability in the Middle East and halt the flow of Western arms into the region.

Major did not talk to reporters at Cairo airport.

During his visit, Major will tour the Egyptian Antiquities Museum in Cairo and meet El Alamein veterans at a reception in the Mediterranean city of Alexandria.

**Quake hits Papua New Guinea:** A powerful earthquake hit the western Pacific Ocean, northeast of Papua New Guinea on Friday, the US geological survey said, AFP reports from Washington.

No casualties, or damage were immediately reported, the agency said.

The quake had a magnitude of 6.7 on the Richter scale and struck at 11:05 pm (1105 GMT), earthquakes scientists in Golden, Colorado said.

The epicentre was located in a highly seismic area about 750 kilometres (470 miles) northeast of Port Moresby, the capital on Papua New Guinea, in the new British island region, the agency said.

**UFO confce begins in Budapest:** A UFO Conference on Unidentified Flying Objects (UFO) opened in Bangladesh Friday with a warning that there would be "immense panic" if UFOs were suddenly to appear on earth, AFP reports from Budapest.

Specialists due to speak at the four-day conference include world-famous UFO-ologist Erich Von Daniken, author of "Chariot of the Gods," and Frenchman Jean-Pierre Petit.

They will address scientists and UFO-researchers from "all corners of the world", Hungarian-born UFO-ologist Colman S Von Keviczky, honorary president of the meeting, said.

Keviczky said that the problem of UFOs had to be handled "according to its weight, because there would be immense panic if UFOs appeared on earth, say, tomorrow."

**US welcomes naming of Hariri as PM:** The State Department Friday welcomed the naming of Rafik Hariri as Prime Minister of Lebanon, AFP reports from Washington.

State Department spokesman Richard Boucher said that in the view of the United States "the economic reconstruction of Lebanon and national reconciliation are the top priorities for the new government in Lebanon."

"The Lebanese armed forces constitute an important institution of the central government, and they have a key role in providing stability as the Lebanese people assume greater control of their own affairs," Boucher said.

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"The stability and prosperity of Hong Kong will be affected then", Hong Kong city polytechnic political science lecturer Joseph Cheng said.

Both sides have engaged in a public mudslinging match since Governor Chris Patten unleashed a set of political reforms in his maiden key policy address October 7, just two months after taking over from predecessor David Wilson.

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