

BRIEFLY

3 tons of cocaine seized in Canada: Cocaine with a street value of about \$100 million was seized Wednesday when a small airplane from South America landed on a remote Quebec airstrip after being chased by Canadian jet fighters and helicopters, police said, reports AP from Montreal.

Four people were arrested and about three tons of cocaine was seized at a small landing strip in Casey, Quebec, about 270 miles (435 Kilometers) north of Montreal, said Cpl. Yvon Paquet of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

Paquet said the RCMP was alerted Wednesday morning by the U.S. Coast Guard about the twin-engine airplane.

Pursued by two Canadian jet fighters planes over Fredericton, New Brunswick, the plane defied a military order to land and continued northward to Casey. After it landed, army troops and police seized it.

CIS to set up special force: Commonwealth Commanders-in-Chief agreed Wednesday to establish a special force to defend CIS borders, said General Viktor Samsonov, Commander-in-Chief of CIS armed forces, reports AFP from Moscow.

The special force was expected to prevent external conflicts from spilling into CIS territory.

Samsonov, quoted by Itar-Tass news agency, said the troops would be made up of units from member-states and would take orders from the council of leaders of the Commonwealth of Independent States, CIS.

The proposal must receive the approval of CIS leaders during a December summit in the Belarusian capital Minsk before the joint-border troops can be set up.

Tigers kill 6 Lankan troops: Tamil Tiger guerrillas attacked an army camp in the north shortly after midnight Wednesday, killing six soldiers and wounding three, the military said, reports AP from Colombo.

Details were sketchy. The attack was in the village of Chedduliam in Vavunya district, 195 kilometers (120 miles) northeast of Colombo, said officials at the military headquarters in Colombo.

In another incident Wednesday night, Tiger rebels blasted a bridge in the northeastern Trincomalee district, forcing people to use boats to cross a lagoon from the town of Mutur to Thorup, said the officials who cannot be quoted under briefing rules.

Tajik official shot dead: Gunmen have shot and killed a Tajik official regarded as a linchpin of the Central Asian republic's centrist coalition. The head of Tajikistan's security service on Thursday called the assassination a terrorist act, reports AP from Dushanbe.

The assailants fired a grenade launcher and submachine-gun at Deputy Security Minister Dzhrabek Aminov's car in central Dushanbe late Wednesday night, said Solibayev said at a news conference. The gunman escaped, said Solibayev, head of Tajikistan's National Security Committee, the former KGB. Aminov was his first deputy chairman.

"A terrorist act was committed in the center of Dushanbe," Solibayev said in a statement.

Aminov was a widely respected figure, active in the centrist coalition struggling to end civil war in Tajikistan. His death is expected to make it more difficult to bring the conflict to a peaceful conclusion.



WASHINGTON: US President George Bush(R) meets President-elect Bill Clinton(L) November 18 as he arrives at the White House. The two are scheduled to talk in the Oval Office while three aides from each camp meet to discuss the transition. — AFP/UNB photo

Iran won't resume ties with US

TEHRAN, Nov 19: Iranian parliamentary Speaker Ali Akbar Nategh-Nuri has excluded the resumption of diplomatic ties with the United States in statements published Wednesday by Kayhan newspaper, reports AFP.

Those thinking that if Iran softened its stance towards the United States, its problems would be resolved, are naive and simplistic, he told the daily.

Nategh-Nuri said parliamentary policies on the United States were in conformity with the wishes of Iran's spiritual guide, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who said this month that Iran considered Washington "hostile" towards his country.

Diplomatic ties between the two countries have been broken since 1979.

Elsewhere, Nategh-Nuri acknowledged for the first time that two conflicting policies existed in Iran.

Shevardnadze tells parliament Fate of Georgia rests on peace in Abkhazia

TBILISI, Nov 19: Georgian Leader Eduard Shevardnadze told the country's parliament of Wednesday that the fate of his embattled republic was linked to restoring peace in Abkhazia, ravaged by three months of fighting, reports AFP.

The fate of Georgia is being played out in Abkhazia, Shevardnadze told a closed-door session of the legislature, the parliamentary press service said.

"But it is not just Georgia that is at stake here," he said, adding that stability in the Caucasus region was important because it was at "the crossroads" between Europe and Asia.

Shevardnadze made a two-day special address to parliament during which he presented a report on the situation in Abkhazia.

The document was later to be presented to international organizations including the United Nations and the conference on security and cooperation in Europe, the parliamentary press center said.

But while Shevardnadze told parliament the situation in Abkhazia was at the top of his list of concerns, fighting intensified in Sukhumi, the main city in Abkhazia.

Sources in Sukhumi, reached by telephone from Tbilisi, said two Russian planes bombed the center of the city, injuring two people, one military and one civil. It was the second attack by Russian fighter planes this week.

Muslim states react to sanctions UN ignores call for lifting arms embargo on Bosnia

DUBAI, Nov 19: Muslim States reacted angrily today to the tightening of UN sanctions against Yugoslavia which ignored Muslim demands for the right to send arms to their beleaguered co-religionists in Bosnia, reports Reuters.

Iranian Members of Parliament said the UN decision was irresponsible and Saudi Arabian newspapers called on Muslim Governments to take urgent measures to support Bosnian Muslims.

The Saudi newspaper Okaz, in an editorial carried by the Saudi news agency, said "effective Islamic action" by the 47-nation Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) "has become an urgent necessity."

A statement by the Foreign Policy Commission of the Iranian Parliament said the Security Council "only tightened economic sanctions against Serbia by issuing resolution 787, while Muslim States were calling for lifting the arms embargo against Bosnia."

The statement, quoted by the Iranian news agency Irna, said the United Nations was adopting "a dubious policy and irresponsible position towards the world crisis."

The West's silence and indifference towards Serbian crimes and the inactivity of Islamic states towards the issue are the major factors allowing the Serbs to continue

their systematic genocide of Muslims," it said.

The Security Council called on Monday on Governments to stop and search ships in the Adriatic and along the Danube river to prevent contraband reaching Yugoslavia in violation of UN sanctions.

Islamic states, concerned at the plight of fellow Muslims outgunned by Serb forces in Bosnia-Herzegovina, had asked the United Nations to lift the arms embargo on Yugoslavia.

The OIC urged members on Tuesday to exert more pressure on the UN to lift the embargo and end the sufferings of Bosnian Muslims.

OIC Foreign Ministers are due to meet in Saudi Arabia on December 1 to coordinate

more aid to Bosnian Muslims. Muslim states have been pouring in relief and financial aid to Bosnian Muslims but none have officially responded to Bosnian appeals for weapons, ammunition and military support.

Saudi Arabian newspapers called the UN decision worthless and said it fell short of the aspirations of Muslim States.

"In practice, this resolution is worthless," Okaz newspaper said in an editorial carried by the Saudi press agency.

"This resolution is below the aspirations of the Muslim nation which is concerned by the slowness of United Nations action," Al-Madina newspaper said.

DPRK shipped \$ 100m arms to Iran in '91: ROK

SEOUL, Nov 19: Communist North Korea shipped 100 million dollar worth of arms including 100 Scud missiles to Iran last year in barter for crude oil, a South Korean government-run body said Thursday, reports AP.

The Korea Trade Promotion Corp said in a report that nearly 1 million tons of Iranian crude oil was sent to North Korea last year as part of a 300 million dollar barter trade arrangement between the two countries.

South Korean officials say North Korea can produce re-molded Scuds capable of carrying nuclear warheads to Japan. South Korea has responded by accelerating its own development of missiles using French technology.

"North Korea is struggling to sell Scud missiles and all other weapons to earn hard currency," said Cho Un-ho, an official at the corporation.

He said arms exports have been a major source for foreign currency used by North Korea to buy food.

North Korea's oil demand was estimated at 3.4 million tons last year, but it imported only 2.4 million tons, he added.

Cho said Iran was North Korea's fourth-largest trading partner last year after China, Japan and the Commonwealth of Independent States.

He said, however, that Iran reduced imports of North Korean arms this year.

Cho said the North appears to be in a dire economic situation and now depends more on oil and other resources from China, a close ally since the Korean peninsula was divided in 1945.

In 1991, North Korean imports from China soared to 524.7 million dollar from 358 million dollar he said.

He predicted that North Korea's economic difficulties would escalate because of its isolation from international trade and lack of hard currency.

The South Korean report said North Korea imported more than 1 million tons of wheat last year from Canada, Australia, China and India, reflecting a food shortage.

In 1991, North Korean exports plunged 24.8 per cent from a year earlier to 950 million dollar while imports fell 9.9 per cent to 1.26 billion dollar... it said.

Army to follow Clinton's orders about gays: Powell

ARLINGTON, Virginia, Nov 19: General Colin Powell, The Pentagon's top officer, said on Wednesday the US military, though reluctant, is ready to follow any order by President-elect Bill Clinton to admit homosexuals to the armed forces, reports Reuters.

"In the final analysis, it's a judgment that will have to be made, and appropriately so in our system, by our civilian political leaders — the President of the United States and Congress," said the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Clinton has suggested that removal of the ban might be accompanied by strict codes of sexual conduct in the military.

"There's also no question that he has expressed a desire to move in this direction to change the policy, I look forward to working with him on it," Powell said.

But he said he was pleased with Clinton's recent promise to move carefully and to consult military leaders, who strongly oppose the step.

PLO blasts Israeli proposal for jt control of Gaza, WB

TUNIS, Nov 19: A senior PLO official on Thursday criticized an Israeli proposal for joint control of around one quarter of the occupied territories, saying Palestinian lands were "indivisible," reports AFP.

The division and classification of these territories... reduce them to real estate or municipal property regulated by the laws of a military government," Yasser Abed Rabbo said.

The executive committee member of the Tunis-based Palestine Liberation Organisation, charged Israel was working to "legitimize" its occupation and the Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Palestinian lands are "indivisible," Abed Rabbo insisted.

Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres on Tuesday proposed joint control with the Palestinians of some of the occupied lands, an offer which a key Palestinian figure described as worth examining.

"State lands not being used or between Israeli settlements and Arab communities will be jointly administered" under plans for interim Palestinian self-rule, Peres told parliament's foreign affairs and defence committee.

"This proposal concerns about 60 per cent of state land in the West Bank" He later told

journalists.

Faysal Hussein, a Palestinian nationalist leader, told reporters: "This proposal is worth examining and this is what the Palestinian delegation is doing at the bilateral talks" underway in Washington.

Israel has in 25 years of occupation taken over more than half of the 5,900 square kilometers (2,400 square miles) of the West Bank and 40 per cent of the Gaza Strip's 380 square kilometers (150 square miles).

"The Jewish settlements must remain under Israeli jurisdiction and the Arab communities will be administered by the autonomy institutions," at the centre of peace negotiations with the Palestinians, said Peres.

Ex-Japanese FM chosen for Indira Peace Prize

NEW DELHI, Nov 19: Japan's former Foreign Minister Saburo Okita was chosen for the 1992 Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace, Disarmament and Development, news reports said Thursday, according to AP.

Okita, who is chairman of the Institute for Domestic and International Policy Studies in Japan, was picked for the worldwide prize Wednesday by a four-member jury



WASHINGTON: Hillary Clinton(R), wife of US President-elect Bill Clinton, stands alongside actress Glenn Close(L) during November 18 annual benefit for the Children's Defence Fund. Hillary Clinton has been involved with the advocacy group since she graduated from law school. — AFP/UNB photo

China to set up 'socialist' night Club

HONG KONG, Nov 19: China is to set up its own "socialist" night clubs as the country moves ahead to lure more investors and tourists, it was reported today, said AFP.

Liu Yi, director of the National Tourism Bureau, was quoted by the semi-official China news service that authorities planned to open night clubs in the beach resort of Beihai city in southern coastal Guangxi region and in Shanghai's development area of Pudong.

"As long as there is no prostitution, no gambling or drugs, everything else can be considered and can be tried out," Liu told the agency.

He said the country must adapt to international demands under the ongoing socialist market reform and development of tourism.

Hillary will be forceful advocate for children

WASHINGTON, Nov 19: Hillary Clinton made clear on Wednesday that she would be a forceful advocate for children after her husband, the president-elect, takes office in January, reports Reuters.

In her first post-election speech in Washington, Mrs Clinton said caring for the next generation is the most fundamental obligation of all.

She made her remarks to the annual dinner of the Children's Defence Fund

Rising carbon dioxide levels may open hole in ozone layer over Arctic

LONDON, Nov 19: Rising carbon dioxide levels may open a "hole" in the earth's protective ozone layer over the Arctic within the next 50 years, UK scientists said today, reports Reuters.

The Arctic ozone hole would be similar to that which has been forming over the southern hemisphere.

Carbon dioxide has long been recognised as a greenhouse gas, contributing to global warming, but this is first study to find it may have a major effect on ozone depletion as well.

Although lower ozone levels have been noted over the Arctic a "hole", or area of very thin ozone, has not so far appeared. This is because weather patterns cause more active circulation of the atmo-

sphere compared to the Antarctic.

But an expected doubling of carbon dioxide levels over the next 50 years may produce in some northern hemisphere winters with more prolonged, stable periods of extreme cold.

These combined with sunlight, ice clouds, and man-made chemicals have already created ideal conditions for the destruction of ozone over the Antarctic.

Scientists agree the main cause of ozone destruction is the chemicals released from Chloro Fluoro Carbons or CFCs, widely used in refrigerators, air-conditioners and aerosol sprays.

The decline of ozone has been blamed for more cancer among humans and reducing farm crop yields. A report just

out from the United Nations says ozone has dropped to its lowest levels in decades during 1992.

Negotiations started this week in Copenhagen to strengthen the 1987 international treaty to protect the ozone layer. Top of the agenda is how to speed up the phasing out of CFCs by 1995 instead of the original deadline of 2000.

The new UK study, is by John Austin and Neal Butchart of the meteorological office in Bracknell, England, in collaboration with Keith Shine at the University of reading.

It concluded that the appearance of an Arctic ozone hole would require a major change in the winter stratospheric circulation in the northern hemisphere. The

stratosphere is the portion of the atmosphere that begins about 8-16 km (5-10 miles) about the earth's surface.

Using three-dimensional computer modelling, the team found this change occurred in very cold Arctic winters with current levels of chlorine, but only if carbon dioxide levels doubled. At current carbon dioxide levels, a hole was unlikely.

"From our necessarily limited number of (computer) simulations, it was not possible to establish the threshold concentration of carbon dioxide at which the probability of an ozone hole increases," the researchers said.

"During the next few decades carbon dioxide is expected to increase continuously.

Off the Record



GENEVA: Italian actress Sophia Loren(R) is seen with United Nation High Commissioner for Refugees Sadako Ogata November 18 during a ceremony where Loren was nominated as a UNHCR goodwill ambassador. — AFP/UNB photo

Clinton mad as press photographs daughter's cat

LITTLE ROCK, Arkansas, Nov 19: President-elect Bill Clinton is furious at news photographers for luring his daughter's cat into camera range after he gave orders that "socks" was to be left alone, his aides said on Wednesday, reports Reuters.

Photos of the black-and-white cat belonging to 12-year-old Chelsea Clinton appeared in many newspapers as the incoming President headed to Washington for talks with President George Bush. They angered Chelsea and her father, aides reported.

"The cat is the flash point for the invasion of privacy" which the Clintons are enduring, one staffer said. "The photographers don't have the common decency to leave a little girl's pet alone."

The staffer said the offenders used catnip to lure the cat outside the gates of the Arkansas governor's mansion.

Last Saturday, the daily schedule for the journalists in Little Rock to cover the President-elect contained this warning: "Special note to all Press from the highest authority — Don't Touch The Cat Again."

Clinton's warning was prompted by a photograph of the new first feline being held aloft by a television cameraman that appeared in many newspapers last Friday.

Madonna's 'Sex' goes off shelves

AUSTIN, Texas: Madonna's book 'sex' has been taken off the shelves of two libraries due to wear and tear at the hands of avoid readers, who have also managed to keep the book away from the Vice Squad, reports AFP.

"The books were absolutely falling apart," City Library Director Brenda Branch said Tuesday. "Spirals don't usually hold up. But when you have 40 people a day looking at it, that's pretty heavy use."

The book that sells 50 dollars a copy shows Madonna hitchhiking in nothing but heels, pumping gas in the nude and acting out fantasies of bondage, sadomasochism, bisexuality and lesbianism.

Hammer seeker digs out 10m pound treasure

LONDON, Nov 19: A 70-year-old man with a metal detector who says he was looking for a lost hammer has unearthed a hoard of buried gold and silver that one news report said could be worth 10 million pounds, reports AP.

Archaeologist Judith Plouviez said of the hoard found by retired gardener Eric Lawes in a field near the village of Hoxne in the county of Suffolk about 130 km northeast of London: "It is an incredibly exciting and amazing find."

She said it was impossible to say how much the hoard unearthed on Monday is worth until it's examined by experts.

But the London tabloid The Sun, which made the find its main front-page report on Thursday, said it could be worth 10 million pounds.

Plouviez said it as believed to have been hidden by a rich family about 1,600 years ago during the ancient Roman occupation of Britain, which began in AD 43 and lasted about 400 years.

It includes a solid silver model of panther, gold chains, hundreds of gold and silver coins, spoons, ornaments, gem-studded jewellery and a gold pendant encrusted with rubies weighing more than 45 kg.

The hoard was unearthed on land owned by the council and will be the subject of an inquest conducted by a coroner to decide legal ownership.

But the finder normally receives a large reward, while the items are put on permanent exhibition. The British national news agency Press Association said and experts have told Lawes he can expect to receive more than 1 million pounds.

Lawes, an amateur treasure hunter whose wife Getha, 68, bought him the 300 pounds metal detector to keep him busy when he retired five years ago, lives in the village of Eye, 4.8 km from Hoxne.

Until now he has found only horseshoes, buttons and a few coins.

He was quoted by The Sun as saying in an interview that he was using the detector to look for a hammer and other tools lost by a friend, farmer Peter Watling, when he found the hoard.