

Libya threatens to quit United Nations

TUNIS, Nov 30: Libya's official press, responding to a warning from the West of harsher sanctions, said on Sunday Tripoli would stop co-operating over the Lockerbie bombing and might quit the United Nations, reports Reuters.

"If the Security Council does not lift the sanctions imposed on Libya, the Libyan people will decide to withdraw from the United Nations," said the newspaper Azzaf Al-Akhdhar, believed to reflect the thoughts of Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi.

The newspaper said Libya would cooperate no further in the investigation of bombings that destroyed a Pan Am air-

liner over Lockerbie, Scotland in December 1988 and a French UTA jet over Niger in 1989.

The two bombings killed 441 people. The Security Council last March imposed a ban on flights to or from Libya and an arms embargo to support western demands that two Libyans suspected of involvement in the Pan Am bombing be handed over for trial in the United States or Britain.

The west has also demanded Libyan cooperation in the UTA investigation. On Friday, the French Foreign Ministry said Washington, Paris and London will take new steps to enforce

sanctions against Libya. The Security Council will consider on December 15 whether existing measures should be tightened.

Azzaf Al-Akhdhar, quoted by the official Libyan news agency Jana, rejected what it called the western threat.

The newspaper said Libya's former Foreign Affairs Minister "committed an error when he accepted to cooperate to solve the issue for the sake of world peace," the newspaper said.

The meetings have been held because the UN sanctions resolutions ordered Libya to prove it had broken all links with international terrorism.



MOSCOW: A woman, holding a portrait of Lenin, shouts pro-communist slogans on Red Square during an anti-government demonstration in Moscow on Sunday. Demonstrators demand Boris Yeltsin's resignation, two days before the Congress of Russian People's Deputies starts in Moscow. —AFP/UNB photo

Carlos refuses to resign

CARACAS, Nov 30: Venezuelan President Carlos Andres Perez defiantly refused to resign on Sunday after the second coup attempt in nine months and branded as assassins the rebels whose coup attempt cost at least 170 lives, reports Reuters.

As the country struggled to return to normal life, the Supreme Electoral Council pledged that voting would go ahead normally next Sunday to elect Mayors, Councilors and State Governors and extended campaigning to make up for lost time.

An uneasy calm returned to the streets of the capital Caracas, punctuated only by the detonation of unexploded rebel bombs near the Presidential palace. Banks and financial markets said they would open normally today (Monday) and the state oil company said crude production had not been affected.

In a speech televised nationwide, Perez acknowledged his government had made mistakes, particularly in the presentation of his economic austerity policies, but said the errors did not in any way justify

the violence of Friday's uprising.

He said he would consider neither shortening his term nor resigning because that "would only precipitate chaos and tragedy in Venezuela."

Perez said the insurgents had "in the most vile and cowardly fashion" murdered "Humble Venezuelans."

The President assured Venezuelans they would have the chance next Sunday to cast their vote in a secret ballot in the gubernatorial and municipal elections and allow the democratic process to make the changes they wanted in society.

Isidro Morales Paul, President of the Supreme Electoral Council, announced extension to campaigning to make up for time lost in the coup attempt.

At least 170 people died in the coup. Morgue officials said at least 140 civilians had been killed, including about 40 prisoners at the Catia jail, where inmates took advantage of Friday's confusion to mutiny and attempt escape.

2 more Russian sub for Iran soon

TEHRAN, Nov 30: Iran will soon receive two more Russian submarines and is prepared to use "all its means" to defend three strategic Gulf islands, Iran's navy chief Rear Admiral Abbas Mohtaj said Sunday, reports AFP.

It was the first time Iran has disclosed buying three submarines from Russia. Western military sources have previously said it has purchased two vessels with an option on a third.

Mohtaj, quoted in Tehran newspapers, gave no date for the arrival of two more submarines after the delivery last week of its first vessel, but said it would be "in the near future."

Although Mohtaj said Tehran had no plans to dominate the region, he vowed that Iran would stand firm in its dispute with the United Arab Emirates (UAE) on who has sovereignty over Abu Musa, Greater Tunb and Little Tunb.

He described the islands as

the entrance to the Gulf, through which much of the world's oil passes, as "an integral part of Iran which will defend them with all its means."

His remarks came as the UAE announced it would take its dispute to the United Nations, a move Iran had previously warned against.

Iran militarily occupies the three islands but jointly administers Abu Musa with the UAE Emirate of Sharjah under the terms of an accord signed in 1971 under British auspices.

Last Monday, Iran showed off its first submarine in a ceremony at the southern Gulf port of Bandar Abbas, brushing aside western charges that the Islamic republic was sparking a regional arms race.

Officials took delivery of the submarine a Russian kilo-class vessel it baptized Tareq-901, valued at an estimated 200-250 million dollar.

The purchase of the vessel,

one of the largest conventionally powered submarines built by the former Soviet Union, has triggered criticism from Arab states and the west and accusations that Iran was seeking military superiority.

In ceremonies marking the arrival at Bandar Abbas, Mohtaj stressed the submarine's "defensive" mission and said the navy would "continue to bolster its surface and underwater potential."

Iran reserves the right to rearm after the 1980-1988 war against Iraq, the admiral said.

The United States deployed its nuclear-powered submarine Topeka in the Gulf ahead of the Tareq-901's delivery. Both Washington and Moscow also closely monitored the submarine's movements on its voyage to Iran.

Mohtaj said Iran's defence budget for 1989-1994 does not exceed eight billion dollars, including a 60 per cent operating budget.

This figure is below previously official indications which mentioned two billion dollars a year over five years. Most foreign military experts said, however, that these figures are lower than the reality.

The commander meanwhile accused Arab Gulf states of having "made 200 billion dollars in deals with the west to purchase weapons."

Japan's deputy foreign minister Kunihiko Saito, on a three-day visit to Tehran, raised the concern of the international community over Iran's armaments drive, informed sources said Sunday.

Saito said his country was worried over the consequences of Iran's arms purchases on the stability of the Gulf, on which Japan relies for two-thirds of its oil imports.

The Foreign Ministry, while not confirming that the issue of arms had been raised during the visit, played down Iran's purchases and stressed they were strictly for defence.

ICRC to help run hospital in Kabul

KABUL, Nov 30: The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has signed a protocol with the Afghan Ministry of Public Health to assist in the running of a second public hospital in Kabul, reports AFP.

Armin Kobel, the ICRC's head delegate here, said the government and the ICRC signed an agreement last week for the Red Cross to provide special assistance to the surgical ward of the Wazir Akbar Khan Hospital.

The Red Cross will supply drugs and surgical materials for war wounded, two ambulances, diesel for generators, food for meals for in-patients and personnel on duty, and an allowance in addition to the salaries paid by the Public Health Ministry to 235 personnel.

In September the Red Cross handed over its own hospital in Karte Seh district to the Ministry of Public Health, while maintaining essential support for a period of six months.

Kobel said the Red Cross pulled its expatriate personnel out of Karte Seh Hospital for security reasons.

He said that in the clashes between rival Mujahideen factions in Kabul that followed the April collapse of the Moscow-backed Communist regime in Afghanistan, combatants did not respect the neutrality of the Red Cross.

Spaniards protest xenophobia

BRACHELONA, Nov 30: Some 30,000 anti-racism demonstrators marched through central Barcelona Sunday to protest against rising xenophobia in Spain, organisers said, reports AFP.

The march, put at 16,000 by police, was organised by SOS-racism, most political parties and Catalan Trades Unions following the racist murder of a young Dominican woman on November 13.

Lucrécia Perez was shot dead by four men who barged into a disused nightclub in Aravaca, near Madrid, where she lived with other immigrants from the Dominican Republic.

The killing, thought to be Spain's first post-Franco racist murder shocked the country. Last Friday a member of the

civil guard and three teenagers under 18 were detained in connection with her death.

Many Latin American and North African immigrants associations took part in Sunday's march, chanting slogans like "All workers are called Lucrécia Perez."

Other chants included "Fascism never again" and "Equality of rights and diversity" for Spanish and foreign workers.

Meanwhile four "skinheads" aged between 17 and 20 were arrested Saturday evening by police in Pozuelo De Laron, near Madrid, in connection with the murder of Hassan El Yahaoui, a 25-year-old Moroccan on November 14.

Police said the four had admitted attacking the Moroccan "because he crossed

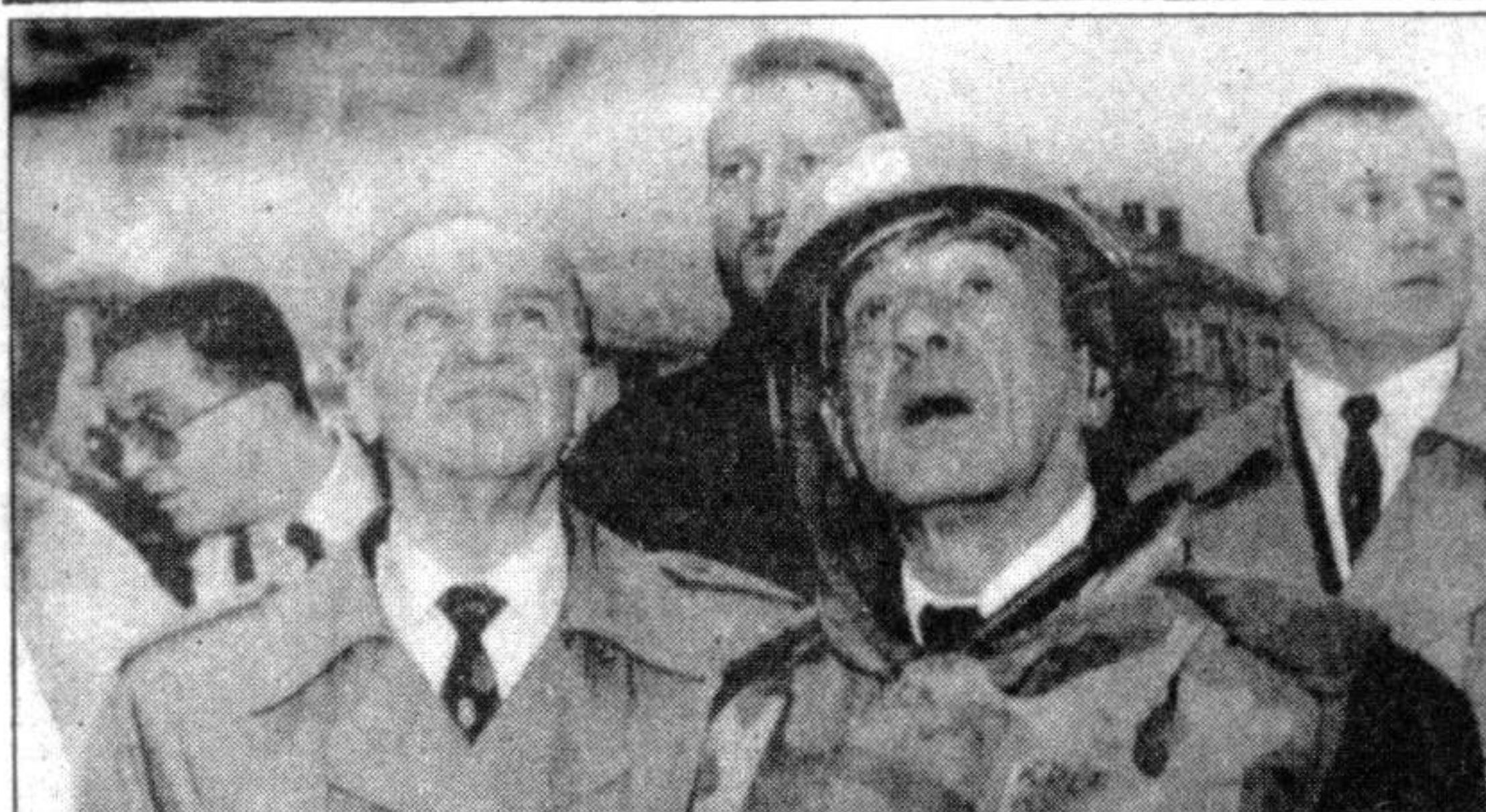
our path... Yahaoui died from brain injuries suffered when his head struck a pavement heavily during the attack.

In the Netherlands, up to 3,000 people demonstrated in Amsterdam and the eastern town of Venlo against the rise of racism and the extreme-right in Germany.

Protestors in Amsterdam, the largest of the two gatherings, held placards saying "Racism — quite simply stupid."

However, the protest came as national television reported an Islamic centre in the southern town of Tilburg had been severely damaged in a possible arson attack.

No-one was hurt in the blaze but the ground and first floors were gutted.



SARAJEVO: Nobel Peace Prize winner Elie Wiesel (front R) is flanked by President of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Alija Izetbegovic (front L) while visiting Sarajevo on Sunday. —AFP/UNB photo

Plan to end land dispute pits Indians against non-Indians

PHOENIX, Nov 30: A plan to end a century-old territorial dispute between the Navajo and Hopi tribes now pits the Indians against another foe: non-Indians who hunt, fish, ski and log vast tracts of prized land in northern Arizona, reports AP.

The Hopi tribe, whose reservation is surrounded by Navajo land, would get about 500,000 acres (202,500 hectares) in public and private land plus 15 million dollar from the federal government under the settlement announced last week.

In return, the Hopis would drop efforts to evict 150 Navajo families living as squatters with their sheep of herds on the Hopi reservation in northeastern Arizona.

The land to be ceded consists of two chunks in the high country south of the Grand

Canyon near Flagstaff, an area prized for its natural resources and as a recreational preserve.

About 200,000 acres (81,000 hectares) are in the Coconino and Kaibab national forests. The remainder includes grazing land, mining claims, hunting and cross-country ski areas and private land developed into subdivisions.

Some environmentalists argued the agreement sacrifices valuable public lands to settle Indian disputes.

Gov Fife Symington has denounced the proposed settlement as a "land grab". People who live and operate businesses on or near the new Hopi territory fear they might be hurt, despite assurances from federal officials.

"It's a tremendous loss to the recreation of northern Arizona," said Bob Alexander,

who operates a cross-country skiing and mountain-biking centre on land he leases in the Coconino National Forest in Flagstaff.

Alexander says his lease requires removal of all improvements if the Forest Service loses control of the site, even if he wants to strike a deal with the Hopis.

The agreement, worked out with a federal mediator and approved Wednesday by the Bush administration, still needs congressional approval.

Interior Secretary Manuel Lujan and Agriculture Secretary Ed Madigan said legislation that will be drafted for Congress would include protection for private property owners who do not wish to sell their land and will assure access to the new Indian land for recreational purposes.

Vernon Masayesva, the Hopi

tribal chairman, also has tried to ease the worries.

"We accommodate businesses on our reservation and there is no reason why businesses that are currently established (on the new land) cannot continue," he said.

But in Flagstaff, a mountain town that caters to tourists and the outdoors crowd, opposition is intense.

Last Monday, the same day the tribal councils separately approved the tentative settlement, more than 100 people jammed the City Council conference room to criticize the plan and demand more information.

The dispute between the tribes dates to 1882, when President Chester A. Arthur approved a 2.5 million-acre square as a reservation for the Hopis, who live in a series of tiny cliff-top villages.

Sino-HK highway plan approved

HONG KONG, Nov 30: China has approved a plan to build a superhighway between Beijing and Hong Kong with South Korean help, it was reported today, says AFP.

Zhang Baifa, Beijing's vice mayor who is visiting Hong Kong with a trade mission, told reporters Sunday the government had approved the plan for the highway and expressed that construction could start soon.

Press reports in Seoul said Sunday that South Korea's Pohang Iron and Steel Co. (POSCO) was to spearhead an eight billion dollar highway linking Beijing and Hong Kong in the largest joint venture yet between the two countries.

Reports said POSCO, the world's third largest steel

maker, was asked by China's Shougang corp to form a consortium to build the 2,400 kilometre (1,500 mile) expressway.

China has also asked South Korea's Dong-Ah construction co to take part in the road project, the reports said. Dong-Ah is the lead contractor in the massive great man-made river project in Libya.

POSCO's construction arm, Geoyang, will form a consortium with Dong-Ah and other South Korean and Chinese firms to build the road, the reports said.

Japanese and Taiwan firms may also be the first major joint venture between China and South Korea, which established diplomatic relations in August after decades of cold war rivalry.

Jews urged not to leave Germany

BERLIN, Nov 30: The Speaker of Germany's Parliament, Rita Suessmuth, on Sunday called on Jews not to leave Germany, despite mounting racism and anti-semitism, reports AFP.

Speaking at a ceremony here in honour of Heinz Galinski, former Chairman of the central council of German Jews who died in July, Suessmuth said the far right minority should not be underestimated.

However, if Jews started leaving Germany that would be a victory for the far right, she declared.

Meanwhile, the cornerstone for the first Jewish school to be built in Berlin since the Holocaust was laid on Sunday.

Representatives of the Jewish community here said the school would be attended by 500 children, Jewish and Gentiles, starting in 1994.

Earlier Sunday, Israel delivered a stern public appeal to Germany to halt "neo-Nazi, racist and anti-semitic" bloodshed after further violence

over the weekend.

Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin said: Israel as a Jewish state has a moral obligation to demand that the German government do everything to stop the racist and anti-semitic violence.

Khmer Rouge to contest elections

PHNOM PENH, Nov 30: The radical Khmer Rouge announced today that they had established a political party to contest UN-run elections next year, but only if their demands are met, reports AFP.

The "National Unity of Cambodia" party listed Khieu Samphan as president and Son Sen as Vice-President. Both were high-ranking cadres in Pol Pot's radical 1975-1979 rule which resulted in the deaths of perhaps a million Cambodians.

The National Unity of Cambodia party listed 10 members on its founding committee.

The Khmer Rouge also announced the party's creation over its clandestine radio broadcast from its base in western Cambodia.

Off the Record

American women are fairly intolerant

WASHINGTON: Sexual harassment pervades the workplaces of the industrialized world, but few countries have laws that deal specifically with the problem, according to an International Labour Organisation study, reports AP.

The ILO's 300-page report, issued today, said awareness of the issue has come a long way in a relatively short time. And the United States, it said, has been in the legal and judicial forefront.

"In general, American women are fairly intolerant and perhaps more strenuous in their perseverance" in pursuing harassment charges, said ILO civil rights lawyer Constance Thomas.

The ILO's findings in 23 industrialized countries around the globe "demonstrate that sexual harassment is a pervasive problem affecting a considerable proportion of working women," said Michel Hansenne, director-general of the Geneva-based organization.

He is the last to leave

PASADENA, California: President-elect Bill Clinton lived up to his reputation as a man who loves to talk by spending ours at a surprise party Saturday for Clinton friend Harry Thomason, a television producer.

"I think he was the last to leave," said Clinton's mother, Virginia Keeley, after an evening surprise birthday party Saturday for Clinton friend Harry Thomason, a television producer.

The president-elect ordered a late-night room-service pizza at the Rita-Carlton Hotel after the party broke up.

Clinton is spending the four-day Thanksgiving holiday at an oceanfront estate in southern California. He planned a barbecue Sunday for some 80 Arkansas friends who made the trek to California.

Clinton is expected to return to Little Rock, Arkansas on Monday.



March for a girl

NEW DELHI: Upset over increasing prostitution, villagers burned down brothels and chased away hookers and pimps in a southern state, a newspaper reported Monday, says AP.

About 10,000 students, housewives and shopkeepers marched to the office of a village administrator and demanded he end the growing menace of prostitution, the Indian Express said.

The incident occurred last Wednesday in the village of Nandipet in Andhra Pradesh state.

The villagers were angered by a report in another newspaper about the failure of police to trace a 14-year-old girl even one week after she escaped from a brothel and hid in fields nearby.

It said the teenager was forced into prostitution. The protesters alleged police and politicians were conniving with prostitutes, and decided to try and end the problem on their own.

BRIEFLY

Li begins Vietnam visit:

Chinese premier Li Peng arrived in Hanoi at noon Monday to begin his four-day official goodwill visit to the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, reports Xinhua from Hanoi.

He is the first Chinese premier to set foot on this country since 1971 when premier Zhou Enlai paid a visit here.

A Reuters report from Beijing said, Premier Li Peng left Beijing for Hanoi saying he was optimistic about his visit. The first by a Chinese Prime Minister to Vietnam for 21 years.

27 Thais infected with AIDS:

At least 27 people in Bangkok have been infected with the virus that causes AIDS through blood transfusions, a report said Monday, according to AFP from Bangkok.

Despite screening measures, the HIV virus is very difficult to detect in people who have had it only six to eight weeks, the nation newspaper quoted Pattaraporn Issrangkoon Na Ayuthaya as telling a recent symposium on immunology in Bangkok.

The doctor estimated that one in every 10,000 blood donors have the HIV virus in its early stage, and said that "one bottle of infected blood can transmit AIDS to four people."

Five die in plane collision:

Two commuter planes collided head-on and crashed into fields near a farm town, killing at least five people, police said, reports AFP from California.

One body was found in the wreckage of a Cessna 180 and four other bodies in the Cessna 210, said spokesman Mike Esau of the San Joaquin Sheriff's department.

One witness saw the crash happen from a kilometre (nearly a mile) away. "He heard two planes, he saw them collide head-on," said Esau.

But police said it was possible there were more bodies in the second plane.

Shamir hospitalised:

Former Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir was admitted to hospital on Sunday, doctors said, reports Reuters from Jerusalem.

Shamir, 76, was not suffering from any serious illness but would undergo tests for two days, the director of Tel Hashomer hospital in Tel Aviv said.

He was in good condition and told jokes, he added. Shamir, head of the leading opposition Likud Party, cancelled a scheduled meeting with visiting French President Francois Mitterrand last Thursday because of illness.

20 rebels killed in Peru:

At least 20 Shining Path rebels were killed in an attack on an army counter-insurgency post in Peru, a military source said Sunday, reports AFP from Lima.

Three government soldiers were also killed in the fight Friday some 500 kilometres (310 miles) from Lima, an army commander told a Peruvian daily.

Before reaching the military base, 200 Shining Path guerrillas armed with rifles attacked guards who had stopped a group of civilians without proper papers on the road between Tocache in Sanmartin state and Tingo Maria in neighbouring Huanuco state.

Army troops backed by helicopter gunships counterattacked and killed at least 20 rebels in several hours of fighting.

Gorbachev in Latin America:

Former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev arrived Sunday on a four-day visit to Latin America to raise money for his research foundation, the Gorbachev Fund, reports AP from Buenos Aires.

Gorbachev, accompanied by his wife Raisa and daughter Irina, were at the airport by a top presidential aide, and President Carlos Menem loaned them an airplane to fly around the country.

Gorbachev founded his think tank, formally known as the International Centre for Social and Political Research, shortly before resigning as Soviet leader in December 1991.

The Russian government has accused the foundation of concealing profits and withholding taxes.