

BRIEFLY

Kuwaitis welcome Bush: Schoolgirls with flowers and sword dancers welcomed former President Bush on Wednesday as the man Kuwaitis credit with saving them from Iraqi occupation more than two years ago. AP reports from Kuwait.

Bush's special blue and white Kuwait Airways jet touched down about 4 pm (1300 GMT) at Kuwait International Airport, and the festivities began. It was his first visit to Kuwait since the Gulf war.

Bush, in a navy suit, emerged smiling and shook hands with Kuwait's Emir, Sheikh Jaber al-Ahmed al-Sabah, then hugged and kissed two young flower girls.

Drums sounded the beat for whirling sword dancers, and hundreds cheered as Bush was escorted along a red carpet to the airport VIP lounge for official photos with Kuwait's ruler.

Libya commemorates US air strike: Libyans commemorated the 1986 US air strike against their country by marching from Moammar Gadhafi's destroyed house to Revolution Square, where a flame was lit for victims of the attack, AP says from Cairo.

The official JANA news agency, monitored in Cairo, said Tuesday night's march was part of a "festival of victory and defiance" on the strike's seventh anniversary.

JANA said marches also will be mounted to graves of the air raid's victims, where marchers will place flowers and say prayers. At midnight Wednesday marchers head to Gadhafi's house for the opening of an exhibition of children's paintings depicting the attacks.

Gadhafi, the Libyan leader, invited Tripoli-based diplomats for that ceremony.

Arafat returns to Tunis: PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat returned to his Tunis headquarters Wednesday after talks in Cairo with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, PLO sources said, Reuter reports from Tunis.

Arafat's talks with Mubarak on Tuesday preceded the Egyptian leader's summit Wednesday in Ismailia with Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin.

The summit is focused on bringing Palestinians back to Arab-Israeli peace talks in Washington on April 20. The negotiations have been stalled since Israel expelled 415 Palestinians to south Lebanon in December.

Naga militants kill 6 villagers: Tribal militants killed six people as clashes between rival ethnic groups left five dead in the northeast Indian state of Manipur, the Press Trust of India (PTI) reported Wednesday, AFP reports from New Delhi.

The outlawed National Socialist Council of Nagaland, which is fighting for a separate Naga tribal nation in the states of Nagaland and parts of Manipur, was blamed for the shooting death of six villagers Tuesday and Wednesday.

Ethnic violence involving members of two tribes, the Kukis and the Meiteis, meanwhile claimed five lives, PTI said in a report from the Manipur capital of Imphal.

The tribes are aboriginal inhabitants of the subcontinent who live outside the region's rigid caste system.

ROK to send soldiers to Somalia: The South Korean government on Thursday approved a UN request to dispatch 250 Korean soldiers to Somalia for peacekeeping operations, AP reports from Seoul.

The approval came in a Cabinet meeting. It will be South Korea's second military dispatch overseas since about 300,000 South Korean troops fought alongside US soldiers in Vietnam. A unit of South Korean soldiers was sent to help US soldiers during the Gulf war.

A 250-member army construction unit will join UN peacekeeping operations in Somalia for a year, officials said.

13 killed in Mongolia snowstorm: The worst snowstorms to hit Mongolia in 30 years have killed at least 13 people in three provinces, the official Chinese news agency reported Thursday from the Mongolian capital of Ulan Bator, AP reports from Beijing.

The Xinhua News Agency said a special government committee reported that the death toll could be higher but communications have yet to be restored to much of the area.

11 more killed in S Africa

Klerk announces new security measures

DURBAN (South Africa), Apr 15: At least 11 people were killed after a commemorative march for slain black leader Chris Hani near the Natal provincial capital Pietermaritzburg, the ANC said today, reports Reuter.

The killings bring to 17 the death toll linked to Wednesday's protests called by the African National Congress (ANC) to mark Hani's murder.

ANC spokeswoman Cassaundra Gabriel said the people were killed shortly after nightfall at Mpopment district near the town of Howick, 30 km (19 miles) northwest of Pietermaritzburg, after a march and memorial service for Hani.

Police spokesman Henry Bhudram could only confirm seven deaths, saying the

killings took place at four different sites in the area.

Gabriel said they were the work of a group of criminals.

AFP adds from Cape Town: South African President Frederik De Klerk announced new security measures Wednesday after ANC demonstrators ran amok in some areas earlier in the day.

De Klerk said more regions would be declared "unrest areas" — giving police special powers — and another 3,000 security force members would join the 26,000 extra police and soldiers drafted into potential troublespots ahead of African National Congress protests Wednesday.

"What went on today can not be tolerated in any civilised land," De Klerk said.

Rearming of Bosnian Muslims may be allowed

Accept peace plan or become 'pariah state', US warns Serbia

ZAGREB, Apr 15: The United States will allow the rearming of Bosnia's Muslim-led government forces if their Serb enemies do not accept a UN peace plan, President Clinton's special envoy said Wednesday, reports AP.

The UN Security Council has given Bosnian Serbs until April 26 to agree to the plan, already accepted by Bosnian Muslims and Croats.

If they refuse, the council plans to drastically tighten trade sanctions on Serbia, accused of arming and resupplying Bosnian Serbs.

"If they (Serbs) persist in their actions, the international community will make of Serbia a 'pariah state' for as far ahead as we can see", US envoy

Reginald Bartholomew told reporters in the Croatian capital.

He also said the United States and its allies would push for Bosnian government forces to be exempted from an international arms embargo on the warring factions if Bosnian Serbs continue to reject the plan.

The Serbs, who have seized 70 per cent of Bosnia, say they would not be given enough territory under the plan.

Bartholomew has met with Croatian and Bosnian leaders, and was to talk with Serbian and Yugoslav leaders later Wednesday.

Russia's envoy, Vitaly Churkin, met in Belgrade with Bosnian Serb leader Radovan

Karadzic on Wednesday in an attempt to nudge him toward accepting the UN plan.

World pressure is growing on the Serbs to accept peace. On Tuesday, UN officials denounced the Serbs' fighters in exceptionally harsh terms a day after more than 50 civilians were killed in the relentless pounding of Srebrenica, a besieged enclave in eastern Bosnia.

About 650 elderly men, women and children, the latest group to flee Srebrenica, recuperated Wednesday in Tuzla, some 35 miles (56 kilometers) to the northwest.

The Sarajevo aid airlift, suspended Saturday after Serbs moved anti-aircraft weapons near the capital's airport, re-

sumed one day ahead of plan on Wednesday, said Alekma Lisinski, a UN official.

But aid came too late for 10 others evacuated last week.

They were buried in Tuzla Wednesday after succumbing to various wounds and illnesses sustained while in Srebrenica. Seven were children, including a 2-month old.

UN monitors observed light shelling in Srebrenica on Wednesday, with two shells landing just north of the city at daybreak. No casualties were reported.

Srebrenica, packed with tens of thousands of refugees, is one of only three areas held by the Muslim-led Bosnian government in eastern Bosnia.



Homeless children wistfully watch from a barred glassless window of a disused school in the besieged capital of Bosnia-Herzegovina Tuesday. War refugees are gathered in the school and sheltered from snipers and shellfire behind its thick stone wall. Many children are on their own here, and do not know if their parents are alive or dead. — AFP/UNB photo

Yeltsin stakes his future on referendum

MOSCOW, Apr 15: President Boris Yeltsin said Wednesday he will resign if he loses a confidence vote in the April 25 referendum and the electorate votes against having early parliamentary elections, reports AP.

However, Yeltsin expressed confidence he would win the referendum and vowed to continue his market reforms and fight corruption.

Yeltsin's statements, in a two-hour Kremlin news conference, were the clearest of his intentions regarding the referendum, approved by the Soviet-era Congress of People's Deputies to end the power struggle between the executive and legislative branches.

The Congress, trying to rest power from Yeltsin, included four questions on the referendum: confidence in the president, approval of his economic policies, early presidential elections and early parliamentary elections.

Yeltsin said that if he won the referendum, he would expect elections.

"I think that early elections will be held in the autumn of 1993, not 1994," he said.

Parliamentary elections currently are scheduled in 1995, and voting for president is slated for 1996.

Yeltsin said that if voters expressed no confidence in him and rejected early parliamentary elections, "The president will resign."

Yeltsin said that he had prepared a "packet of decrees" that he expected to issue the day after the vote that would accelerate his market reforms, tighten customs controls, curtail economic corruption and stop the flight of capital out of the country.

He said he also would ask the leaders of Russia's 88 republics and regions to adopt a new constitution that would replace the Congress with a smaller bicameral legislature.

New York Times, Newsday get Pulitzer Prize

NEW YORK, Apr 15: The New York Times and Newsday on Tuesday were named co-winners of the 1993 Pulitzer Prize, the top US journalistic award, for international coverage of the devastation of Sarajevo and the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina, reports Reuter.

The Los Angeles Times won the local news division for its coverage of the Los Angeles riots after the Rodney King verdict.

Tony Kushner's "Angels in America: Millennium approaches," which opens on Broadway in a few weeks, won the prize for best drama.

Robert Olen Butler won the Pulitzer in fiction for his novel "A good scent from a strange mountain."

Israel may pull out of Gaza

JERUSALEM, Apr 15: Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres said Wednesday that Israel may pull out of the Gaza Strip as the Palestinian side remained reserved over next week's peace talks in Washington, reports AFP.

The option of a unilateral withdrawal from the Gaza Strip is a possibility that I do not reject and that could be used, but we prefer to do this within the framework of a comprehensive agreement with the Palestinians regarding all the territories," Peres said on Israeli television.

Peres's remarks went slightly further than those of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, who after meeting with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak on Wednesday said Israel did not aim to annex the West Bank and Gaza Strip but could not agree to a total pull-out.

UN Security Council resolutions 242 and 338 are "the

basis of negotiations when it comes to deciding on the permanent status of the territories with the Palestinians, after the interim period," Rabin said.

The Palestinians have long demanded a clear Israeli acceptance of the resolutions — calling for a land-for-peace settlement between Israel and the Arabs — as the basis of a deal on the occupied territories.

The Arab and Palestinian delegations are expected to announce at the end of this week whether they will attend the ninth session of bilateral peace talks due to begin in Washington on Tuesday. Israel has already said it would come.

Peres said he hoped to reach an agreement on Palestinian autonomy "this year." The Palestinians "have nothing to gain by not coming to the negotiations April 20 in Washington," he added.

The United States and

Russia, co-sponsors of the peace talks, set this date to resume the negotiations that were suspended last December after Israel deported about 400 Palestinians to a no man's land in southern Lebanon.

Peres said he favoured elections in the occupied territories "as soon as possible, even during the negotiations."

"It is necessary to distinguish the Palestinians in the occupied territories and those in the diaspora who have (Palestine Liberation Organization chief) Yasser Arafat as their head," Peres said. "Elections would help strengthen representation of the Palestinians in the territories," he added.

The Israeli Foreign Minister rejected the possibility that Israel would make any "gestures before the resumption of negotiations."

"During the discussions there can be gestures from both sides," Peres said.

Morphine can be given at less addictive doses

WASHINGTON, Apr 15: Morphine, the most widely prescribed painkiller, could be given at a lower, less addictive dose if combined with a compound called Substance P, US researchers reported, reports Reuter.

Writing in the April 15 issue of proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, scientists at Tufts University said the combination had been tested successfully in laboratory rats.

The rats experienced greater pain reduction with the combination of Substance P and diluted morphine than they would with diluted morphine alone.

Kream speculated that the tiny amount of Substance P included with the morphine stimulated the body's own response to release natural pain-killing compounds called Opioids.

Trial of 12 coup plotters of former Soviet Union begins

MOSCOW, Apr 15: The 12 hard-line Communists accused of plotting the August 1991 coup that led to the breakup of the Soviet Union opened their trial on treason charges Wednesday by declaring the case should be dismissed, reports AP.

Lawyers for the former Kremlin leaders, some of the most powerful men in the former Soviet Union, said the court was not legally authorized to decide their fate.

They argued that Russia's Supreme Court was not the legal inheritor of the authority of the Supreme Court of the former Soviet Union, which dissolved in 1991 after the coup failed.

"We have today to decide who can judge an alleged crime against a state that may no longer exist," said Genrikh Pavda, an attorney for former Soviet parliament leader Anatoly Lukyanov.

All the other defendants — including the former heads of the KGB and the Soviet armed forces — rose and concurred. Major General Anatoly

Ukolov recessed the trial until 3 pm (1100 GMT) to consider the motion to dismiss.

During a break, the defendants emerged to the cheers of dozens of pro-Communist demonstrators, who waved red flags and chanted "Soviet Union."

"The Russian court does not have the right to judge us," Lukyanov told the crowd.

If convicted of treason, the defendants could receive the

death penalty — a bullet to the back of the head.

Abdullah Khamzayev, the lawyer for former Soviet Vice President Oennady Yanayev, argued that the judges did not have the authority to consider the case.

Lukyanov, accused of betraying his old law school comrade, former leader Mikhail Gorbachev, by helping launch the coup, then stood and made a similar argument.

"I support the previous plea for the dismissal of the judges and I want to press for the dismissal of the state prosecutors as well," said Lukyanov.

Security was tight as the trial began in the small, simply furnished courtroom, with police and metal barricades keeping about 50 pro-Communist demonstrators away from the door.

The 12 defendants were arrested 20 months ago as the

hard-line coup against Gorbachev collapsed.

The trial is being held in a military court because several of the defendants are former generals. More than 120 witnesses are scheduled to testify, including Gorbachev, who has agreed to appear sometime after April 25, when he returns from a trip to the United States and Japan.

Russian President Boris Yeltsin has not been sum-

moned.

All 12 accused were released from jail over the past year to prepare for their collective, non-jury trial.

Most have used their freedom, temporary though it may be, to re-enter politics. They have been marching in pro-Communist rallies, denouncing Yeltsin's economic reforms and calling for the resurrection of the Soviet Union.

Lukyanov addressed several thousand anti-Yeltsin demonstrators from the balcony of the Russian parliament building on March 21.

"Yeltsin resign! Yeltsin resign!" the crowd chanted in the same square where thousands of Yeltsin supporters had mounted a round-the-clock vigil against the coup on August 19-21, 1991.

Such demonstrations seem to have buoyed the spirits of the men and given them hope of acquittal in the trial.

If the defendants are found innocent, they will be free to continue their political activity.

Off the Record



Iraqi citizens step Tuesday on a large tile portrait of former US President George Bush at the entrance of Al Rashid Hotel in Baghdad, hit several months ago by an American cruise missile. — AFP/UNB photo

Bush's visit to Kuwait ridiculed

NICOSIA: Iraq's state-run news media poked fun at former President Bush on Thursday for visiting Kuwait, and derided Kuwaitis for giving him a lavish welcome, reports AP.

Bush is revered in Kuwait and reviled in Iraq for leading the coalition that drove Iraqi occupation troops from the emirate. He was greeted in Kuwait Wednesday by sword dancers, flower-bearing girls and thousands of cheering children.

Kuwait's ruler, Sheikh Jaber al-Ahmed Al-Sabah, presented Bush with the Mubarak al-Kabec (Mubarak the great) medal, Kuwait's highest civilian award.

The officials Iraqi News Agency, monitored in Cyprus, said Baghdad newspapers quipped that because of the medal's value, Bush would have to pay customs duty on his return to the United States.

Comments of irony and ridicule suffused the Iraqi public and media yesterday concerning the scene of Jaber al-Ahmed Al-Sabah clinging to the criminal Bush's neck," the agency said.

Mother fights lioness, saves son

NEW DELHI: A woman fought a lioness barehanded and saved her five-year-old son who was attacked by the feline near a forest in a western state, newspapers reported Wednesday, says AP.

Lilavathi (27) pounced on the feline when it grabbed the boy in Hadmatiyana village in Gujarat state, about 1,130 kilometers (700 miles) west of New Delhi, papers said quoting a United News of India report.

Villagers alerted by Lilavathi's alarm joined her in chasing the lioness back into the Gir forest, the report said.

Lilavathi was hospitalized with 70 stitches on her body, UNI said. It did not say when the incident occurred or mention the condition of the boy.

Satellite dish breaks her fall

BUCHAREST: A satellite dish saved the life of a two-year-old Romanian girl who plunged from the fourth floor of an apartment block, the state news agency Rompress said, reports Reuter.

Cristina Valkait tripped over the edge of the balcony of her fourth-floor home in Oradea, northwest Romania, but the television dish, erected three storeys below, broke her fall, the agency said.

It said Cristina was in hospital following the accident this week but was not in danger.

Cubans advised to eat fig leaves, weeds

HAVANA: Faced with acute shortages of meat, eggs and butter, Cubans are being advised to turn to fig leaves, snails and weeds to avert hunger and malnutrition, reports AFP.

The food situation on the Caribbean island nation has become critical in recent months as a result of the end of aid from former communist countries in eastern Europe. A major storm in March caused crop damage, aggravating the situation.

Government figures indicate 50 per cent of Cuban children and 35 per cent pregnant women suffer from anaemia, and other illnesses linked to vitamin deficiencies have been on the upsurge.

Earlier this week, the government's National Information Agency launched a campaign urging Cubans to seek new food sources in the country's flora, and the officials media has pitched in with recipes for preparing some of the unconventional foods.

The Labour Federation weekly Trabajadores suggested white beets, "considered a weed even recently" as an item Cubans can turn to for their "high nutritional value."

The newspaper published a half-dozen recipes for using the plant in salads or main dishes, as well as ways to prepare fig leaves and another little-known food plant, purslane.

The weekly Bohemia said Cubans should try to rediscover snails, a delicacy in some other cuisines as "a succulent dish" that could become a new staple.

Peacekeepers robbed of pants

PHNOM PENH, Apr 15: Armed men literally stole the pants off Jordanian police officers working with the UN peacekeeping mission near the Angkor temple complex in northwest Cambodia, a UN spokesman said today, reports AFP.

"They did not come back naked," UN spokesman Eric Berman said. "They had other parts of their uniform."

The robbery happened mid-morning Wednesday near Angkor Thom, a spot just north of Angkor Wat which draws thousands of tourists each year.

The gunmen pointed B-40 rockets and AK-47s at the necks and heads of five Jordanians, who were forced onto their knees and told to take off parts of their uniforms.

Two had their pants stolen, while others lost their UN peacekeeping blue berets and one lost his boots, Berman said.

The Jordanians were all robbed of their watches, wallets and two-way radios by the armed men who shot out the rear tire of their UN vehicle before escaping, Berman said.



Gennadi Yanayev



Dimitri Yazov



Vladimir Krychkov



Valentin Pavlov Plotters