

France stops N-fuel supply to India

PARIS, July 8: France confirmed on Wednesday it had stopped supplying nuclear fuel to India and said it would wait a full inspection of installations by the International Atomic Energy Agency before deciding whether to resume, reports Reuter.

"Our contract to supply uranium to India, which expires at the end of October 1993, has been entirely honoured," Foreign Ministry spokesman Richard Duque told reporters. "There will, therefore, be no new deliveries since France's external nuclear policy is conditional on a complete inspection by the IAEA."

India has so far refused to submit to a thorough IAEA inspection. The French position, first reported in an Indian newspaper on Tuesday, conformed to policy by all supplier countries of nuclear fuels, Duque added. The Hindu Daily, quoted by the Press Trust of India news agency, said the decision would primarily affect the Tarapur Nuclear Power Station. However there would be no immediate problem with supply as Tarapur had fuel stock piled, it said.

Pak bunker on border protested

NEW DELHI, July 8: India has objected to Pakistan digging bunkers on the India-Pakistan border and has expressed concern that Pakistan is training and helping armed terrorists cross into India, the Press Trust of India (PTI) said Wednesday, reports AFP.

130 Georgian soldiers killed in Abkhazia

LONDON, July 8: Georgian Prime Minister Tengiz Sigua said on Wednesday about 130 Georgian soldiers had been killed in fighting with separatist forces in the Black Sea region of Abkhazia during the last five days, Interfax news agency reported, says Reuter. The report, monitored by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) quoted Sigua as saying the situation remained serious on the front-line and both sides had suffered heavy losses.

Sigua, speaking from Tbilisi, said more than 280 wounded Georgian soldiers had been taken to hospitals in the Georgian capital. Hundreds of people have been killed since Georgia sent troops to the Black Sea region last August to suppress nationalist demands for more autonomy.

Abkhazian separatists hold most of the territory except for the capital Sukhumi and the town of Ochamchira. The Georgian Health Ministry said earlier on Wednesday that 58 Georgian soldiers had been killed in the fighting since last Friday alone. Nearly 400 were wounded.

Inter-Tass news agency quoted Georgian sources on Wednesday as saying fighting was intensifying along the Gumista river near Sukhumi, where Abkhazian forces were building up. Sigua said he no longer believed it was possible for Russia and Georgia to conduct a 'civilised dialogue' on a settlement in Abkhazia. Georgia has repeatedly accused Russia of supporting the separatists.

Russian-mediated peace talks resumed in Moscow on Wednesday. Last week UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali proposed that 50 UN military observers be deployed in Georgia in the Sukhumi and Ochamchira districts.

Militants invited to participate in elections Delhi rejects tripartite talks to solve Kashmir crisis

NEW DELHI, July 8: The chief administrator of Kashmir has invited militants to participate in elections to be held "as early as possible in the northern state," the Press Trust of India (PTI) reported Wednesday, says AFP. The invitation of KV Rishna Rao, a former Indian army chief and the federally-appointed Kashmir Governor, coincided with the overnight deaths of three people and separate clashes which left 59 people injured, PTI said. Rao ruled out suggestions of a tripartite talks between the two South Asian rivals and the militants to resolve the

Kashmir issue. Troops also rescued three state administration officials who had been kidnapped from the northern Bramulla district by Muslims rebels spearheading a campaign for Kashmir's separation from India, it added. The Kashmir governor said the provincial elections would be "absolutely free and fair and whichever party was returned to power would be allowed to function its full term." The militants are free to join any of the old political parties or form a new party if they so wish, the retired general added.

"If they think they have popular support why do they not dare to face people at the ballot instead of trying to stall or disrupt the political process at the best of Pakistan," he said. India has accused Pakistan of arming and training the militants. The charges were denied by Islamabad. The last elections in Kashmir in 1987 were marred by allegations of widespread irregularities. The state has been under Federal Rule since 1990. Rao, who took over as governor on March 12, said the objective of his administration

was to restore normalcy and revive democracy as early as possible. To achieve this the security forces have been directed to put down militancy at the earliest. He said in a late Tuesday state-wide broadcast. The governor asked the militants to lay down their arms since it would be futile for them to carry on with their present activities. Nearly 100 people, a majority of them suspected militants, have died since July 1 in a stepped up Indian offensive to crush secessionism in troubled Kashmir, Indian's only Muslim majority state.



BAGHDAD: Deputies raise their hands in Iraqi parliament Wednesday to support a motion calling on the United Nations to stop committing "unfair action to Iraq". Parliament Speaker Saadi Mahdi Saleh said, "We shall do whatever we can to respond to aggression and UN justice". — AFP/UNB photo

2,000 US troops in Somalia for exercise

TOKYO, July 8: About 2,000 American troops have landed in Somalia as part of a military training exercise and humanitarian relief effort under the United Nations, a senior US official said on Thursday, reports Reuter.

The officials, who accompanied President Bill Clinton to Tokyo for the Group of Seven economic summit of top industrial nations, stressed that the unannounced operation was only a training exercise and not a move aimed at countering the renewed violence in Somalia. "It was connected to both a training exercise and a humanitarian effort," the official said.

He said the amphibious force landed north of Mogadishu, the capital of the African nation where UN forces have been trying to restore order and provide humanitarian relief.

160 fundamentalists arrested in Egypt

CAIRO, July 8: One hundred and sixty five suspected Muslim extremists were rounded up in upper Egypt on Wednesday, a day after the arrest of two suspected terrorists in Cairo, police said, reports AFP.

A total of 134 Muslim fundamentalists were arrested in Minya province, while 14 wanted in connection with attacks against police were picked up in Abu Tig and 17 more in villages around Dairut, in Asyut province, police said.

This followed the arrest on Tuesday in Cairo of two alleged leaders of the military wing of the fundamentalist Al-Jihad clandestine organisation. The men, identified as Antar El-Zayat and Yasser Shabbun, were alleged to have received guerrilla training in Iran and to have been involved in the killing of three policemen in Cairo in January, along with several petrol bomb attacks against police vehicles which injured four.

Drascovic to continue hunger strike

BELGRADE, July 8: Serbian opposition leader Vuk Drascovic pledged in a letter published today to continue his hunger strike in protest at his and his wife's incarceration, despite appeals for him to resume eating, reports AFP.

"I will not stop my hunger strike so long as my wife Danica is still being held," Drascovic said in the letter, which was dated Wednesday, the seventh day of his strike.

The letter was written at the Belgrade Clinic where the writer and his wife are undergoing treatment under armed police guard. "I am not suicidal," said the leader of the Serbian Renewal Movement. "But I know that a hand is in the process of tightening the knot around my neck and that of Danica."

"I know whose hand it is. The whole world knows," he said. Reuter from Abuja reports:

Fresh US sanctions on Nigeria likely

WASHINGTON, July 8: The United States warned Wednesday of new sanctions against Nigeria if the African country's military leadership continues to refuse to allow the transition to civilian rule, reports AFP.

State Department spokesman Joe Snyder said Washington was following the situation closely in Nigeria to determine if tougher sanctions were appropriate. He declined to elaborate.

Washington already has suspended aid to Nigeria except humanitarian assistance. Unrest has been widespread in Nigeria since General Ibrahim Babangida annulled the June 12 Presidential elections, refusing to allow the results to be published. The regime has called for new elections July 31.

Reuter from Abuja reports:

Nigeria's two army-created political parties agreed on Wednesday to the formation of an interim national government to help defuse a political crisis, their chairmen said.

The agreement was announced in Abuja, the federal capital, after a meeting with military President Ibrahim Babangida.

Both parties have agreed on the formation of an interim national government which, on August 27, will take over from the present military government, Tony Anenih, chairman of the Social Democratic Party (SDP), told a news conference.

The SDP is the party of Moshood Abiola, a millionaire Muslim businessman who claimed victory in last month's presidential election before it was scrapped by the government following alleged malpractices.

Majority of Israeli ministers favour direct talks with PLO

JERUSALEM, July 8: An Israeli MP said Wednesday that a majority of cabinet ministers were in favour of direct negotiations with the PLO to break the deadlock in Middle East peace talks, reports AFP.

Hagai Meron of the Labour Party which leads the ruling coalition, said in parliament that Foreign Minister Shimon Peres was among those who wanted talks with the Palestine Liberation Organisation.

Tourism Minister Uzi Baram, Health Minister Haim Ramon, Justice Minister David Libai, Finance Minister Avraham Shohbat, Police Minister Moshe Shahal and Labour Minister Ora Namir were also in favour. Meron said the seven labour

ministers had told him "in private on several occasions that they favour a direct dialogue with the PLO."

Four ministers of the left-wing Meretz Party, also in the 18-member coalition cabinet, called Sunday for Israel to open talks with the PLO to break the stalemate in the peace negotiations.

But Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, as well as Peres, promptly turned down their proposals.

Reuter says from Moscow: Russia and the United States reported progress in multilateral Middle East peace talks on Wednesday but said there could be no breakthrough without the political will of Israel and the

Arab. Assistant US Secretary of State Edward Djerejian said there were limits to how much Washington could achieve unless Israelis and Arabs showed a genuine desire for peace.

"There's only so much we can do as the honest broker. They have to want peace as well," he told a news conference.

Palestinians and Israelis have held 10 rounds of peace talks over 20 months, but the latest ended last week with still no agreement on principles to guide future Palestinian self-rule in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Djerejian was speaking after the latest meeting of a multilateral steering committee that reviewed the progress of five working groups, all including representatives of Israel and diaspora Palestinians.

Djerejian said the groups, dealing with economic development, water resources, refugees, arms control and environmental issues, were making good progress.

But he said: "All parties recognise that only at bilateral negotiations and through resolution of political issues that divide them can real peace be achieved between Arabs, Israelis and Palestinians."

He added: "The conditions are right for peace making and the opportunity is here."

Wedding in prison

JERUSALEM: A Lebanese guerrilla jailed for life for a fatal attack in 1979, married an Arab Israeli woman on Wednesday and then returned to his jail cell alone, a Prison Service spokesman said, reports Reuter.

He said Sami Kuntar, 32, married a woman from the northern Israel town Acre, ten km (six miles) from the coastal town of Nahariya where he came ashore 14 years ago and killed three members of a Jewish Israeli family in their house.

A fourth family member, an infant, suffocated while hiding. Last month an Israeli life prisoner who shot dead seven Palestinians in May, 1990, married his Canadian girl friend and was allowed to consummate the wedding in a special prison room.

The spokesman said if Kuntar, who is serving four consecutive life terms in a remote desert Prison, wants a similar privilege, he can apply for it, and the request will be weighed on its merits.

BRIEFLY

King Hussein hospitalised: King Hussein of Jordan was admitted to hospital on Wednesday with an irregular heart-beat but his doctors said he was in very good and satisfactory condition. Reuter reports from Amman.

The state-run news agency Petra gave no further details. The king, who had a successful cancer operation in a US hospital last August, was treated for arterial fibrillation — irregular heart beat — in June 1991.

Andorra may get UN membership: The Security Council on Wednesday considered tiny Andorra, wedged in the Pyrenees mountains between France and Spain, for UN membership. Reuter reports from United Nations.

The Council in a formal meeting began the procedure to accept Andorra into the United Nations, which is expected to proceed without difficulties. The general assembly must then approve the application.

16 killed in Kashmir violence: At least 16 people were killed in incidents involving separatist militants and security forces in India's northern Jammu and Kashmir state, police said on Wednesday. Reuter reports from Srinagar.

An Indian army Major was killed by a landmine, thought to have been planted by militants, in Larkpora village in the southern Anantnag district. A soldier was also injured. In another incident, soldiers opened fired on a bus in the same district, killing a passenger and injuring 18 others, witnesses said.

Gunbattles were reported from other areas of the Kashmir valley for the second day running, police said.

Somali gunmen kill 6 UN men: Gunmen shot dead six United Nations employees in Mogadishu on Wednesday, according to Radio Mogadishu, monitored by the British Broadcasting Corporation, Reuter says from London.

The radio, quoting the Somali National News Agency Sonna, said two UN employees were ambushed and killed near the Bannadir Hospital in the Somali capital and the other four were killed elsewhere in Mogadishu.

Earlier, a UN spokesman told reporters in Mogadishu that gunmen shot dead two Somalis working for the UN.

He said there were reports that the two had been shot in cold blood. Three of their colleagues have been abducted and a fourth was missing, he said.

Landslides claim 22 in Nepal: At least 22 people were killed when torrential rains triggered landslides in mountainous eastern Nepal, police said Thursday. Reuter reports from Kathmandu.

They said rescue workers had retrieved 22 bodies after much of a hill village in Okhaldhunga district, about 120 km (75 miles) east of Kathmandu, was swept away on Tuesday.

7 fundamentalists shot dead in Algeria

ALGIERS, July 8: Seven Islamic fundamentalists were shot dead Wednesday in a hostage-taking incident in western Algeria, bringing the number killed here in violent incidents to 38 in less than a week, reports AFP.

In a day of violence five civilians were also shot dead by armed groups at Bida, south of Algiers. The seven fundamentalists had taken members of the same family hostage in Tiemcen when they burst into their ground-floor apartment, the Algerian agency AP's announced without giving the number of hostages.

Scientists map quake in California

LONDON, July 8: French scientists said today they had been able to map an earthquake using a new technique that provides a clearer picture than ever before, reports Reuter.

Scientists say the technique could be used to predict volcanic eruptions and together natural disasters.

The method, known as 'synthetic aperture radar interferometry,' requires no ground measurements, using satellite observations instead. In an article in the science journal Nature, the researchers, working at the National Centre of Spatial Studies and The Mid-Pyrenees Observatory in Toulouse, said they had used satellite data to

there is no need to install ground stations before the earthquake. The method is safer and more accurate than any used before, one top geologist said.

"No other technique has been able to map the actual displacement filed with any thing like this kind of detail," William President of the US geological survey commented in an accompanying article.

"The image contain information about the earthquake-produced motion of some 300 million points."

President said the technique could be used to predict volcanic eruptions, watch for ground subsidence due to oil or water wells and to detect landslides safely.



A Bosnian Muslim girl (C) cries as she reunites with her parents after arriving in Travnik Wednesday together with some 250 other refugees from the Serb-controlled town of Banja Luka and surrounding villages. — AFP/UNB photo

Azerbaijan may not join CIS

ISTANBUL, July 8: Azerbaijan has no intention of joining the Commonwealth of Independent States formed by other republics of the former Soviet Union, visiting deputy premier Resul Guliyev said here Wednesday, reports AFP.

Some degree of economic contact would be maintained, Guliyev said, but he dismissed the CIS as having no existence in reality, only in rhetoric.

Rafa Guliyev, state adviser for Azerbaijan's oil industry, said the policy of rapprochement with the west pioneered under ousted President Abulfaz Elchibey would remain unaltered.