

Powell reassures Kuwait's security

KUWAIT, July 12: US Armed Forces Chief of Staff General Colin Powell arrived in Kuwait on Sunday for his first visit to the country he helped liberate from Iraqi occupation in the 1991 Gulf War, reports Reuter.

One lakh Liberians face starvation

GENEVA, July 12: An aid convoy to help 100,000 Liberians facing starvation could soon be on its way to the war-torn west African state if talks here are successful, a UN spokeswoman said Sunday, reports AFP.

Relief organisations in Liberia launched an urgent appeal on Saturday to help thousands of displaced people chased from their homes by three-and-a-half years of fighting.

UN spokeswoman Therese Gastaut said the United Nations was not linking aid to a successful conclusion of the peace talks, which opened here Saturday and are expected to last a week.

She stressed the problem was one of access and successful talks could open the way for aid to reach starving people cut off in central Liberia.

Until now the 16,000 strong west African peacekeeping force in Liberia, ECOMOG, has banned humanitarian organisations from the area which is under the control of Charles Taylor's National Patriotic Front

UN troops kill a Somali

A Somali was killed on Monday by Tunisian UN troops as he tried to infiltrate the former university campus where US soldiers are based, a UN spokesman said, AFP reports from Mogadishu.

The victim was part of a group of five who tried to enter the campus, the spokesman said. It was the third such incident since July 5 involving Tunisian forces, the clashes have left three Somalis dead.

The United Nations also disclosed yesterday that since June 5, when 24 Pakistani peacekeepers died in an attack blamed on militiamen loyal to fugitive Somali warlord Mohamed Farah Aideed, 11 more UN troops have been killed and 137 injured.

Flood takes 60 lives in China

More than 60 people have been killed in floods in central, southern and eastern China while drought grips parts of the northwest, the China daily said Monday, Reuter reports from Beijing.

Torrential rains killed 26 people in the central province of Hunan, stranding 391,000 people and ruining more than 646,600 hectares (1.6 million acres) of crops.

In the southern province of Guangxi, rains killed three people. In Zhejiang in the east, the death toll from flooding as risen to 38, with 31 missing and thousands homeless.

But crops in northwest China's Ningxia region are suffering because of serious drought.

Mishap claims 19 in S Africa

Nineteen people were killed on Sunday in a crash involving a minibus in the town of Standerton on the borders of South Africa's Transvaal province and the Orange Free State, police said, Reuter reports from Johannesburg.

UK newsmen dies in Sarajevo

The body of British journalist Ibrahim Goksel, was found Sunday night by French UN troops on the tarmac of Sarajevo airport, a UN spokesman said yesterday, AFP reports from Sarajevo.

Goksel had been shot dead by a sniper, UN Protection Force (UNPROFOR) spokesman Barry Frewer said.

13 killed in Peru violence

Shining Path guerrillas attacked a remote hamlet in southeastern Peru, killing 13 people and wounding several others in the biggest guerrilla attack in the region this year, officials and witnesses said on Sunday, Reuter reports from Peru.

Amnesty accuses US of human rights violation

WASHINGTON, July 12: The Amnesty International has accused the United States of many serious human rights violations, including execution of the mentally ill, reports PTI.

Thatcher tries to derail Major's plans to ratify Maastricht

LONDON, July 12: Margaret Thatcher returns to haunt Prime Minister John Major this week when the un-elected House of Lords votes on whether Britain should hold a referendum on closer ties with Europe, reports Reuter.

Many prisoners being shifted to other states Muslims overflow Kashmir jails

NEW DELHI, July 12: Kashmir's prisons are overflowing with Muslims arrested in connection with a bloody separatist campaign and separate officials are shifting inmates outside the state, a newspaper said today, says AFP.

All 12 prisons in the state are housing more than their capacity and the authorities have converted several interrogation centres into mint jails, The Times of India reported.

The overcrowding, with new prisoners brought in every day, has put severe strain in jail facilities, with water and medi-

strain for the last year, an official of the Federal Border Security Force (BSF), thousands of whom men are battling Muslim guerrillas in the Kashmir valley, was quoted as saying.

The official said some prisoners remained in the interrogation centres for months "because there is no place to shift them. New barracks have been constructed but the shortage of accommodation is still acute."

The Times said several hundred prisoners had been lodged in jails outside Kashmir, India's only Muslim-majority state

where the four-year-old campaign for session has left thousands dead.

Delhi starts N-plants inspection

NEW DELHI, July 12: Indian nuclear experts are performing a detailed inspection of the country's seven atomic power stations, zeroing in on five of the ageing plants as they look for signs of fatigue or neglect, reports AFP.

The comprehensive inspection follows a March 31 fire at the 440-megawatt plant at Narora in the northern state of Uttar Pradesh found that the blaze was caused by fatigue failure of two steam turbine blades and deficiencies in the cabling system.

Two plant workers were exposed to slight doses of radiation but the fire was quickly extinguished and there was no major leak of radioactive material.

The AERB Chairman said the inspectors would pay particular attention to the plant turbines.

"We are shutting down the seven plants and first tackling the five which have the same turbines," Gopalakrishnan told AFP by telephone from Bombay, where the AERB has its headquarters.

The AERB has ordered one of the two 220-megawatt units at the Madras Power Station (MAFIS-1), India's oldest, to shut down on July 31 for an inspection of its turbines, which are similar to those installed at Narora.



Tokyo: Japanese Crown Prince Naruhito (L) and Crown Princess Masako (R) arrive at a concert on Sunday in Gakushuin University, from which he is an alumnus. The crown prince played the viola at the concert.

West backs Yeltsin to face challenge

MOSCOW, July 12: Russian President Boris Yeltsin encouraged by support from the West, returns to the political fray in Moscow on Monday to face a major challenge from his country's restless regions, reports Reuter.

Yeltsin goes into a resumed session of the Constitutional Assembly (starts 1000 GMT) looking for approval of a final draft of a new presidential constitution.

The 62-year-old leader hopes this will seal his victory against a conservative parliament which he sees as the main obstacle to his plans to reform the economy along market lines and democratise the country.

The 700-member assembly, bringing together regional leaders and social organisations, has twice failed to meet dead-

lines for agreement on a new basic law.

In spite of this, before Yeltsin went to Tokyo for last week's meeting of top industrial leaders, his camp predicted a decisive break through on the road to winning a new constitution.

In Tokyo he won support for his reforms in the shape of agreement by Group of Seven (G-7) leaders to a dollar 3 billion programme aimed at helping Russia privatise its communist-era industry.

But in the past week his plans to secure quick approval for the law he wants appear to have stumbled over economic rivalry between two administrative tiers of the vast Russian Federation -- the regions and the republics.

Rich regions, angry that heavy taxes they pay go towards subsidising 20 ethnically-based republics inside the Russian Federation, say they will not sign the draft for a new constitution unless their status is upgraded.

Yeltsin's own home territory of Sverdlovsk in the Urals spearheaded the revolt at the beginning of July when it unilaterally raised its status to that of a republic.

The president told Sverdlovsk last week that its proclamation of a Urals republic was "inopportune" and called on the regions to rein in their demands for the time being.

But since then at least three other territories have taken the same tack. And the remote republic of Tuva was reported by Russian television last Friday to be planning to boycott today's meeting.

If the assembly does not agree on a full text of the new constitution the president might postpone the project and press for early parliamentary elections in October.

But the parliament, chaired by Yeltsin's chief rival Russian Khasbulatov, is likely to resist even this.

Japan intends to arm itself with N-arms, says DPRK

TOKYO, July 12: North Korea said today Japan was using Pyongyang's suspected nuclear arms programme as a pretext for arming itself with atomic weapons, reports Reuter.

A North Korean Foreign Ministry spokesman, quoted by the Korean Agency, said Prime Minister Kichii Miyazawa revealed Japan's intention to arm itself with nuclear weapons by bringing forth a fictitious nuclear threat of the DPRK (North Korea).

North Korea is said by its foes to be near completing a nuclear warhead and missile that could reach Japan.

North Korea denies developing nuclear weapons but has halted inspections by the Vienna-based International Atomic Energy Agency of two military sites.

Pyeongyang said in March it planned to leave the nuclear

Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Last month it agreed under US pressure to suspend the pullout but has given no sign it will yield on inspections.

Delegates from North Korea and the United States are due to meet in Geneva on Tuesday to try to settle the issue.

President Bill Clinton, visiting US troops in the demilitarised zone between North and

South Korea on Sunday, warned the North that if it ever used nuclear weapons it would be the end of their country.

At the Tokyo Summit of Group of Seven industrialised countries last week, Japan cited the possible nuclear threat from North Korea and said it would object to an indefinite extension of the NPT.

Before the G-7 Summit, Japanese government sources said that if the North Korean nuclear menace were not removed, Tokyo would reserve the right to acquire a similar capability, although it had no immediate plans to do so.

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Off the Record

She's great

SEOUL: South Koreans gave First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton have review on Sunday, says Reuter.



Some made the point that a woman's place generally should be in the home. "But Hillary is great, she may not be what we think a first lady should be, but she's great," said one woman.

She was among more than 100 South Koreans who braved driving rain at the US army base in Seoul to catch a glimpse of MRS Clinton on Sunday, the second and final day of the US Presidential visit to South Korea.

"Now, I met her, and look I have her signature" a delighted young girl said as she jumped up and down with excitement.

MRS Clinton, dressed in a white and blue suit, smiled and shook hands with the crowd as she made her way to a restaurant for a quick brunch with families of American soldiers and South Korean employees at the Yongsan army base.

"It's exciting to meet her. She gives US women hope and courage in this world where sex discrimination still exists," said Jennifer Kim, a guest at the brunch.

"I don't think it's bad for first lady to be strong and clever likes her," said Kim, who was accompanied by her husband and two sons.

"I wish our First Lady was more like her," said a young South Korean woman.

It is not upto Shakespeare's standard

NEW YORK: A New York document expert said he found William Shakespeare's lost play, 'Cardenio,' in the British museum library, Newswest magazine reported, says Reuter on Monday.

It said in its July 19 edition that the play Shakespeare wrote in 1612, which was never produced and presumed lost, was identified using handwriting analysis.

Charles Hamilton compared the penmanship in Shakespeare's will with that in the manuscript of an untitled, unsigned 1612 play in the British museum library.

The magazine said that literary scholars have insisted that the dram is not up to Shakespeare's standards but Hamilton said the lettering was the same as his other works.

"I wouldn't have any trouble proving in court that this is Shakespeare's handwriting," he was quoted as saying by the magazine.

They smuggle God's message

HONG KONG: Hundreds of Filipinos are involved in smuggling Bibles into China despite bans by Chinese authorities, a local report said on Monday, according to AFP.

Hundreds of Filipinos in Hong Kong are involved in smuggling the Bibles across the border with about 500,000 copies entering the mainland every year, the English-language South China Morning Post quoted a pastor as saying.

He said more than 20 churches in Hong Kong with mainland links were involved because of the heavy demand.

However, a spokesman for the Philippine consulate here denied any knowledge that Filipinos were involved in the alleged smuggling. Under Chinese law, no printed material of religious nature should be taken into the country.

A former gangster in the Philippines -- a predominantly catholic nation -- identified by the daily as Alan was quoted as saying that he came to the territory last year after church officials in the Philippines told him he could take God's message to China through the territory.

Alan reportedly said he visited China two or three times a week, taking 30 to 60 Bibles through Chinese customs.



Kuala Lumpur: A woman resplendently dressed as a daisy waves on July 1 during a floral parade, the highlight of the Malaysian Flora Fest 1993. The festival is aimed at increasing public awareness of Malaysia's wealth of flora and fauna.

Miyazawa calls off election campaign

TOKYO, July 12: Prime Minister Kichii Miyazawa, his popularity at rock-bottom, called off an election campaign trip because of doubts he would win any votes, a campaign official said today, reports Reuter.

Guinea Bissau goes to polls next year

LONDON, July 12: Guinea Bissau's President Joao Bernardo Vieira announced on Sunday that his country's first multi-party elections will be held on March 27 next year, Portuguese catholic radio Renaissance reported, says Reuter.

Mubarak's third term confirmed

CAIRO, July 12: President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt was virtually guaranteed a third six-year term in office on Sunday after 441 of the 545 members of the lower house of parliament signed a petition supporting him, reports Reuter.

The People's Assembly is due to meet on July 21 to nominate a single candidate for president, who will then be put to the people for approval in a referendum in October.

Mubarak needs the votes of two thirds of the total -- 303 deputies -- to win nominations, and simple majority of votes cast in the referendum to be elected.