

BRIEFLY

Nemai Baral dead: Eminent singer, Nemai Chand Baral, died of a heart attack at Sant N Ketan on Friday night. He was 64, PTI reports from Calcutta.

He was associated with Akashvani since 1946 and had been with the Vishva Bharat Music Department since 1961. He was also the head of the department Rabindra Bharat University vocal section since 1982.

He later became the dean of Rabindra Bharat University.

Heavy rain in ROK: At least 11 people were killed or reported missing Saturday in landslides and floods set off by heavy rains, AP says from Seoul.

Up to 28 centimetres (11 inches) of rain fell overnight in southern provinces, inundating vast tracts of farmland and leaving thousands of people homeless.

News reports said a dozen houses were washed away or crushed by landslides in rural areas. Railway officials said landslides caused a train to derail near the southern city of Kwangju, injuring six people.

Odai to lead journalists union: Saddam Hussein's eldest son, Odai, was unanimously reelected leader of the Iraqi Journalists Association on Friday, the Iraqi News Agency reported, says AP from Nicosia.

Odai Hussein, received all 1,122 votes at an association meeting which he had summoned, INA said in a dispatch monitored in Nicosia.

Odai Hussein, 29, runs the Babel newspaper, which has been unparalleled in its criticism of his father's government. The father-son relationship has been rocky at times, although Odai's star has been rising lately.

11 held for Yangon explosion: Authorities have arrested an anti-government rebel and 10 accomplices in connection with a bomb explosion in front of the Chinese Embassy earlier this year, an official newspaper reported Saturday, says AP from Yangon.

The New Light of Myanmar said the 11 were seized August 6 while planning another bombing attack in the Myanmar capital.

The leader of the group was identified as Taik Yin, 44, who joined the All Myanmar Students Democratic Front in 1991 after escaping from prison, where he was serving time for murder, robbery and drug offences.

21 crew rescued: All 21 crew members of a sinking Malaysian freighter were rescued Saturday after they abandoned their vessel in the storm-churned South China Sea, the Marine Department reported, according to AP from Hong Kong.

A department statement said the 18 Filipinos and three Malaysians aboard the Interhill King were rescued by two passing ships about 624 kilometers (390 miles) southeast of Hong Kong.

It said 17 of the seamen were picked by the Maltese ship Mima A, which was heading for Singapore. The remaining four were rescued by the Cyprus-registered Ratana, which was en route to Tokyo, the department said.

5 killed in S African violence: Street clashes in black townships killed five people overnight, police said Wednesday, and the government was considering sending in more troops to try to halt the fighting, AP reports from Johannesburg.

More than 100 people have died since Saturday, mostly in townships near Johannesburg, in the latest outburst of political violence.

Scores of people have taken refuge at a hospital in the Katshego township to escape the fighting, which police said killed five people late Tuesday and early Wednesday.

Birendra to visit China in Sept: King Birendra of Nepal will visit China in late September, the Royal Palace announced Friday, Reuter reports from Kathmandu.

It will be Birendra's second foreign visit since he ceded his absolute powers to a pro-democracy campaign in 1990.

He visited India in May. Nepal has traditionally tried to balance relations between its two giant neighbours.

Pakistani beheaded in S Arabia: A Pakistani man was publicly beheaded Friday for smuggling heroin into Saudi Arabia, AP reports from Riyadh.

The Interior Ministry identified the man as Mohammed Azam Rashid Ahmed Khan and warned that the same fate awaited other drug dealers.

According to official Saudi statistics, more than 80 men have been beheaded since the mid-1980s.

Amnesty International, the London-based human rights group, said 260 people have been executed since 1989 for various crimes. There was no immediate explanation for the wide discrepancy.

Saudi Arabia is governed by Sharia, or Islamic law, which prescribes decapitation for convicted murderers.

Mother Teresa in stable condition

NEW DELHI, India, Aug 21: Nobel laureate Mother Teresa, suffering from fever and a lung infection, was in stable condition but complaining of nausea Saturday, doctors said, reports AP.

The Roman Catholic nun was admitted to the intensive care unit of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences Friday after she came to New Delhi to receive an award.

Her "general condition is satisfactory and stable. Her vital functions are normal. However, she continues to have mild fever and nausea," a hospital statement said.

She slept well overnight but vomited once in the morning before eating a breakfast of bread, jam, porridge and fruit, said Sister Joann, an aide.

It was not clear how long she will remain in the hospital, considered the best in the country.

Mother Teresa, who will turn 83 on August 27, was taken to the hospital after she complained of restlessness during the day.

Despite her frail health, she has continued to travel frequently in her work for the poor.



Nobel laureate Mother Teresa plants a sapling at the cremation grounds of slain former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi on Friday during the 50th birthday celebrations in honour of the late Indian leader. Mother Teresa, an 82-year-old Catholic missionary was hospitalized later in the day with a high fever. Doctors had yet to determine the cause of the fever. —AFP photo

Mogadishu Airport closed to civilian traffic

MOGADISHU, Aug 21: This seaside capital's airport was closed to civilian traffic for a week starting Saturday because of what the United Nations said was a threat of shelling by fugitive war lord Mohamed Farrah Aided, reports AP.

The closure came after a night of grenade, machine-gun and small-arms attacks on two UN military posts and some random firing at surveillance helicopters, Capt Tim McDavitt, a UN spokesman, said.

No casualties were reported. McDavitt said the airport closure was ordered after the United Nations received information "indicating that the Aided faction may have access to weapons that can threaten

our aircraft and is willing to use them."

He called the barring of civilian aircraft "a prudent measure." The closure does not affect military flights.

McDavitt said the airport was closed until next Saturday "to conduct a more detailed assessment of the situations." He said it could be reopened before then.

Aided's faction is known to have mortars and rifle-propelled grenades which could be used to strike the airport from a distance. McDavitt would not say what other weapons the warlord might employ.

Mortars have been used to shell the UN headquarters compound in southern Mogadishu

and other military sites, but no mortar shells are known to have fallen on the airport.

McDavitt declined to say how the United Nations learned of the threat.

Aided, who controls southern Mogadishu, has been blamed by the United Nations for a June 5 series of ambushes that killed 24 Pakistani UN peacekeepers and an August 8 attack in which four American soldiers died.

It ordered his arrest and put a 25,000 dollars reward on his head.

The UN believes Aided is in hiding in Mogadishu and military and other sources say UN peacekeepers have come close to capturing him on at least

three occasions.

The former civilian international airport was taken over by the US military when it intervened in Somalia in December as part of a multinational operation to protect aid deliveries to starving Somalis.

It was turned over in May to the United Nations, along with control of the aid operation. There are now about 24,000 UN troops from more than two dozen countries in Somalia, including about 4,000 Americans.

Dozens of military and civilian airplanes use the single runway daily. Civilian flights are operated mostly by charitable organizations and contractors serving the United Nations.

Moscow halts pullout from Lithuania

MOSCOW, Aug 21: Russia's Foreign Ministry said Friday that it has halted the withdrawal of former Soviet troops from Lithuania, reports AP.

The ministry said Russia and Lithuania failed to sign a comprehensive accord to the pullout and Russia was no longer bound by an earlier pledge to finish the withdrawal by August 31.

Talks between the two former Soviet republics foundered after Lithuania reportedly demanded 140 million dollars in compensation for the presence of Soviet troops on its soil since 1940.

PLO, Palestinian delegates resolve differences

BEIRUT, Aug 21: Yasser Arafat said Saturday that the PLO leadership and Palestinian negotiators have resolved differences about how to approach the Middle East peace talks, reports AP.

Arafat, chief of the Palestine Liberation Organization, last week had a dispute with three key Palestinian negotiators who threatened to resign over tactics in the peace process with Israel.

"It was a summer cloud that passed," said Arafat, speaking from his headquarters in Tunis, Tunisia, to the Beirut-based Voice of Lebanon radio station.

"What happened was part of the democratic process that's one of the PLO's main shields," he added. "I'm proud to lead revolutionaries and not a herd of sheep."

The three negotiators, Faisal Hussein, Hanan Ashrawi and Saeb Erekat, agreed to stay on the job after the 15-member PLO executive committee unanimously rejected their resignations.

The three negotiators reportedly wanted to see Palestinians push forward with tough issues such as the status of Jerusalem.

The PLO reportedly suggested delaying such controversial topics in a draft document presented to US Secretary of State Warren Christopher during his Middle East visit this month.

Arafat said Jerusalem's status need not be negotiated immediately. But, he added, "Jerusalem is the Palestinian capital and irrespective of how long it's going to take, the Palestinian flag will flutter over the city."

The Middle East peace talks are scheduled to resume August 31 in Washington.

New B-2 Stealth to be faster than B-52

WASHINGTON, Aug 21: The new B-2 Stealth bomber will be able to drop more tonnes of bombs faster in future wars than B-52s did in the Gulf War — but not until after 1998, UAID a US Congressional reports released on Friday, reports Reuter.

The General Accounting Office (GAO) report supported US Air Force statements that the bomber will be able to fly anywhere in the world to bomb and stall an enemy invasion force in hours, long before other US Forces can arrive.

But it said the costly radar-evading bomber will not begin to be that effective until 1998 and will not have all its sophisticated weapons until the next century.

If the B-2 passes its current flight testing programme and goes into production, precision bombs and other weapons are to be installed in the first eight B-2s in 1998 and in the remaining 12 B-2Q by the year 2000.

After years of controversy, Congress agreed last year to build 20 of the bombers at an estimated cost of 45.3 billion dollars, 2.26 billion US dollars per plane.

The GAO study estimated that when the 20 B-2 bombers are properly equipped near the turn of the century, they could drop 160 tonnes (144 metric tonnes) MF bombs a day in a war area, compared to the 146 tonnes (131.4 metric tonnes) a day dropped by 20 B-52 bombers in the Gulf War.

Four extremists sentenced to death in Egypt

CAIRO, Aug 21: A military court on Saturday sentenced four men to death for murder and robbing Christian-owned jewellery stores to finance the radical Islamic campaign to overthrow Egypt's secular government, reports AP.

The court acquitted eight other defendants and sentenced two to life in prison after the trial of 28 men accused of belonging to the Al-Shawkeen extremist movement dedicated to installing strict Islamic rule in Egypt.

When their trial opened in June, the defendants charged, "we have a cause — to bring down the secular leader."

Children are guardians of India's vanishing forests

NEW DELHI, Aug 21: India has begun recruiting children to serve as guardians of its vanishing forests in a drive aimed at staunching decades of destruction threatening to turn its green into a wasteland, reports AP.

The project to hire children as "green ambassadors" banks on the young rangers to report on pollution and illegal logging and to spread awareness of the need to preserve forests in a country where millions of trees are felled.

"Ecological clubs" in 200 of India's 413 districts, where forests have virtually vanished, have begun recruiting school children on a monthly

allowance of six dollars each to boost India's greening projects.

We will raise 1,000 clubs this year," a Forest and Environment Ministry spokesman said of the project, which was launched June 5 on World Environment Day.

Each club will have up to 50 middle or senior grade "rangers," who will report back on damage from urbanisation, industrial growth and illegal felling in forests near their homes, he said.

The clubs came a year after India raised civilian "environment brigade" to garner support for the government's fledgling afforestation and conservation programmes.

These clubs will act as a catalyst and the children will be our new ambassadors of the greens," said Anupam Mukherjee, he Inspector-General of Forests.

A recent satellite survey estimated 6.3 million hectares (15.75 million acres) of India's 32 million hectares (78.8 million acres) of green areas as forest. It categorised the rest as shrubs, tea gardens and unmapped zones.

India's green cover had by 1987 shrunk from a 33 per cent of its area to 19 per cent after decades of wanton destruction. Mukherjee said a tenth of 10 billion dollars worth of trees felled annually reach India's

tiny lumber industry, while forest resources worth another 1.3 billion dollars are used up in traditional medicines despite policing efforts.

Today's annual consumption of timber is 250 million tonnes, while another 220 million tonnes are burned as free fuel wood," said Mukherjee.

It is impossible to prevent people from burning trees because the sheer economics of providing cooking fuel to 80 per cent of India's 850 million people would upset global oil prices, he said.

India would go bankrupt if it tried to substitute wood fuel with petroleum products, he added.

Forests have shrunk up to 19 per cent in 217 Indian districts, while 39 others lost all their green areas.

The trend is reversing. We added 58,000 hectares (143,260 acres) of forests between 1987 and 1989. Now is the time for the clubs and the brigades to help us to regain our lost forests, Mukherjee said.

The Environment Ministry, allotted one per cent of India's annual budget, has resource shortages, but says it would try to overcome the constraints of money to try to preserve the forest wealth.

It increased the number of the environmental brigades from last year's 40 in 12 districts

Off the Record

\$10m for a topless photo
HAMBURG, Germany: How much is a topless photo of Claudia Schiffer worth? Eight to 10 million dollars, her agency says, reports AP.

A spokesperson for New York-based Metropolitan Model Agency was quoted Friday as telling Bild newspaper it would seek that much in damages from an Italian magazine whose camera lenses intruded on the yacht where Schiffer was sunbathing off Mallorca, Spain.

Schiffer, 22, who is said to earn about 12 million dollar a year, told Bild her contract forbids naked photographs.

"I was on the boat with Mamma, my sister Carolin and singer Peter Gabriel," she said. "We anchored off the coast and, wanted to get some sun."

The paparazzo was following on a small boat. He got 80,000 marks (48,000 dollar) from NOI magazine, and the same amounts from a French and a German magazine that ran the shots this week, Bild said.

Trade without condoms to please customers

RIO DE JANEIRO: There are almost two million child prostitutes in Brazil, a congressional commission said Friday, reports AFP.

In the state of Rio de Janeiro alone there are 300,000 child prostitutes, said the six deputies, who were in Rio on a fact-finding mission.

About five per cent of the estimated two million prostitutes aged between nine and 17 years old have the AIDS virus and many ply their trade without condoms to please customers and raise their fees, the deputies said.

The congressional commission aims to set up a telephone line for informants.

"The witnesses are afraid to talk because in many cases they are still involved with prostitution," said Marliu Guimaraes, commission chairman.

In San Paulo, there are more male prostitutes than female. The sex industry has particularly taken off in northeastern Brazil, where US, German and other European tourists go to Fortaleza or Recife for organized packages that include a young prostitute.

Charles a devoted family man

LONDON: Britain's heir-to-the-throne Prince Charles made front-page news as a devoted family man on Saturday after a playful romp for the cameras with his two young sons, reports Reuter.

The 44-year-old Prince, dressed in a red sweater and kilt, was pictured tickling his elder son William and teaching his other son Harry fly-fishing on a family holiday in Scotland without Princess Diana.

Some tabloids declared the Prince would be livid to find that her estranged husband had learned some of her public relations tricks and let the cameras record happy family moments with the children.

The Prince has been accused of being a half-hearted father who bores his sons with his old-fashioned ways.

His public image was more seriously damaged, however, by press reports that he had a steamy relationship with a brigadier's wife, Camilla Parker Bowles, before separating from his wife of 12 years last December.

The outing to a Scottish loch was recorded for a television documentary being made about the Prince.

Prince Charles was pictured cuddling Prince William, 11, while another shot showed a royal aide holding eight-year-old Harry upside down and threatening to dunk him in the lake.

Meanwhile, Princess Diana has been holidaying with friends on the Indonesian island of Bali.

Welfare check for a dead

MAPLE HEIGHTS, Ohio: A man was charged with failing to report a death after authorities discovered his mother's mummified remains in her suburban Cleveland home, reports AP.

The body of 83-year-old Lillian Lozier was found wrapped tightly in a blanket Friday morning.

Cuyahoga County workers had been trying to give the woman her welfare check, but 58-year-old Herbert Lozier repeatedly told them she could not come to the door or be disturbed, Patrolman Douglas Stolarski.

The Welfare Department alerted police. Mrs Lozier appeared to have been dead about two years, Stolarski said.

China's 'Lech Walesa' expelled

HONG KONG, Aug 21: Chinese labour dissident Han Dongfang was rendered effectively stateless Saturday when Chinese officials revoked his passport for alleged anti-China activities abroad, reports AP.

"I have become someone, existing alone on this world," he said, wiping back tears after a 20-minute meeting with officials at the Xinhua News Agency, China's de facto embassy in Hong Kong.

The labour organizer, known as "China's Lech Walesa," said officials told him he broke Chinese law by engaging in subversive activities abroad. They refused to say which laws he broke, how he broke them, or who took the decision to revoke his passport, he said.

Han, who met President

Clinton in April, has spent the last 11 months in the United States getting treatment for tuberculosis. He met US labor leaders and lobbied Clinton to consider Beijing's labor record when reviewing trade policy with china.

Last Saturday, 30-year-old Han was on his way home to Beijing, but only got as far as Canton before a dozen police dragged him from his hotel and dumped him in neighboring British-ruled Hong Kong.

The US government said the expulsion violated Han's human rights.

The decision to revoke Han's passport comes about one month before the International Olympic Committee meets September 23 to select a host for the 2,000 Olympics.

1.28m registered foreigners in Japan

TOKYO, Aug 21: Registered foreign residents in Japan numbered a record 1.28 million at the end of 1992, up 45 per cent from five years earlier and exceeding 1 per cent of Japan's total population for the first time, the Justice Ministry said Saturday, reports AP.

Japan's population totalled 123.96 million as of March 31. Of the foreign residents, Asians accounted for 1 million, or 78.1 per cent, while those from Latin American countries numbered 187,140, or 14.6 per cent, according to a report by the ministry's immigration Bureau.



LIMA: Authorities and relatives line up to try to identify the bodies on Friday of some of the 64 Indians reportedly killed by Shining Path guerillas. Of the 64 Ashaninka Indians killed 14 were children. —AFP photo