

China calls Washington 'hegemonic bully'

BEIJING, Sept 7: China criticised the United States for a third straight day Tuesday, calling Washington a "hegemonic bully" for forcing the search of a Chinese freighter suspected of carrying chemical weapons ingredients, reports AP.

A 10-day search of the freighter Yin He failed to turn up the chemicals, which the United States said were bound for Iran.

A commentary in *The People's Daily*, the Communist Party newspaper, said "the United States has once again put up an inglorious show of a 'world cop' and revealed its true look of a hegemonic bully."

The Chinese media have carried out an all-out attack on

UN peacekeeper from Cameroon killed in Cambodia

PHNOM PENH, Sept 7: A United Nations peacekeeper from Cameroon was killed Tuesday when his vehicle ran over a mine near the Angkor temples in northwestern Cambodia, a UN spokesman said, reports AP.

The soldier was on patrol with two other UN military observers. The mine exploded as they were driving around a small bridge a few kilometres (miles) north of the temples in Siem Reap province, said spokesman Eric Falt.

"As this incident is the sole making of the US it is therefore logical that the US shall bear all the consequences," the commentary said.

Both the commentary and the legislature reiterated China's demand that the United States compensate for the losses suffered by the Yin He.

"The People's Daily commentary said the US claims that the Yin He was carrying at least 24 containers of thiodiglycol and thionyl chloride, which can be used to make mustard gas and nerve toxins, "is nothing but groundless and deliberate slander."

It said the United States was acting out of "ulterior motives ... designed to undercut our good international credibility (and) undermine our friendly relations with other countries."

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NATO's next leadership summit Jan 10

BRUSSELS, Sept 7: The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) has pencilled in January 10 next year as the date for its next leadership summit to be held at NATO headquarters here, officials said today, reports AFP.

They said that the date would be formally announced after all 16 NATO countries had endorsed it.

US Secretary of State Warren Christopher said last month that the summit would concentrate on the alliance's changed role in the Post-Cold War era, and on how to project security into Central and Eastern Europe.

He called for better coordination with such international organisations as the United Nations. The two bodies have been criticised for their inability to stop the conflict in ex-Yugoslavia.

BRIEFLY

Policeman shot dead in Egypt:

Suspected Muslim extremists Tuesday shot dead a plainclothes policeman as he left his home in southern Egypt, police said, reports AP from Egypt.

Mohamed Younis died instantly, said a police official, speaking anonymously under departmental guidelines. The gunmen got away, and a search was mounted in Neketla village south of Assiut, 200 miles (320 km) south of Cairo.

Police have been among the main targets of Muslim extremists seeking to turn Egypt into an Islamic theocracy. The radicals also have targeted foreign tourists and government officials. Also, scores of uninvolved bystanders are among more than 200 people killed in the violence over the past 20 months.

Attack on Russian border guards:

Russian border guards patrolling the Turkish-Armenian border were fired upon late Monday from Turkey, the Itar-Tass news agency reported Tuesday quoting Russian border officials in Yerevan, AFP reports from Moscow.

Turkish forces had fired across the border into Armenia with small-arms fire for the first time late Sunday but Ankara had said only that shots had been fired in the air for a marriage.

Muslim Azeris are fighting with ethnic Armenians in Azerbaijan.

Three Israelis hurt in blasts:

Three firebombs were thrown into the courtyard of a Jerusalem hotel during a wedding on Monday, injuring three Israelis, police said, Reuter reports from Jerusalem.

The victims, two women and a child, were only slightly hurt and were being treated by medics at the site.

Radical Palestinian groups opposed to an Israeli-Palestinian settlement have vowed to attack Israelis.

Road mishap kills 41 in Vietnam:

Forty-one people died when their inter-city bus was caught in a flash flood as it forded a stream in Quang Ninh province, northern Vietnam, the Vietnam News Agency (VNA) reported yesterday, AFP says from Hanoi.

The driver was among those killed in the August 30 disaster.

"As the accident occurred at 2 am, rescue was very difficult," the agency said.

Filipino policeman killed:

Suspected Muslim separatist rebels ambushed a military jeep in the southern Philippines, killing a policeman and wounding five others, police said yesterday. Reuter reports from Philippines.

The policemen were attacked while driving along a mountain road in Dinaig, Maguindanao province, 900 km (560 miles) south of Manila, on Monday.

Police sources said the attack was probably launched in response to a military operation being conducted against rebels in the area.

Two shot in Belfast:

Two men were shot and injured on Monday in separate attacks in Belfast, police said, Reuter reports from Belfast.

Three hooded men shot a man believed to be in his early 30s in the west of the city as he sat in front of his home. Neighbours said they heard 12 shots.

On the eastern outskirts of the city a 43-year-old man was wounded when he was gunned down in the doorway of his house.

International



PLO chairman Yasser Arafat (R) hugs Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak (L) upon arrival to Arouba Palace in Cairo Tuesday. Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Mussa voiced optimism after talks with Arafat Monday that the accord of autonomy starting in the Gaza Strip and West Bank town of Jericho would be signed around the target date. — AFP photo

Maldives to hold national referendum October 1

COLOMBO, Sept 7: Maldives will hold a national referendum on October 1 to confirm President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom's election by the country's Parliament for another five-year term, officials said today, reports AFP.

Some 100,000 men and women over the age of 21 years will be eligible to vote either in favour or against Gayoom who has been President since coming to power in 1978, officials said by telephone.

"The referendum will be on Friday the first of October which is a public holiday. We expect the results to be known in three to four days because ballot boxes must be transported from remote atolls," an official said.

Gayoom needs at least 51 per cent of the popular vote to remain President in the tiny Indian ocean atoll nation, which has a population of 2,05,000 Sunni Muslims inhabiting 202 of the 1,192 coral islands across the equator.

At previous referendums, Gayoom had polled over 90 per cent of the "yes" vote in support of his elections.

He was chosen as the sole candidate for the job at a secret ballot in the 48-member Parliament last month. He garnered 28 votes, three more than the required minimum.

Off the Record

Kidnapped girl flees to safety

NEW SALEM (Pennsylvania): An 11-year-old girl who was kidnapped from a school bus-stop and tied to a tree for two days, managed to wriggle herself loose and flee to safety, authorities said, reports AFP.

Cassie Pennington escaped Sunday afternoon and after hiding overnight among some weeds a few kilometres from where she had been tied up, she called home Monday morning, her mother Michaelene Pennington said.

"She seems like she's holding up a lot better than the rest of us. We're amazed, just amazed at the strength she has," Pennington said.

Police have made no arrests.

Pennington said her daughter was kidnapped at knife-point by a man who was waiting in a car by her school bus-stop Friday morning.

She said her daughter told her that she was driven to some woods and left tied up to a tree. The man returned on Saturday to say there were people searching for her, Pennington added.

The girl told her mother that at one point she could hear helicopters apparently from the search parties that were scouring the area.

4,802 centenarians to celebrate longevity

TOKYO: A record 4,802 Japanese 100 years or older will celebrate their long life this month, the government said Tuesday, reports AP.

The number of centenarians, which rose by 650 as of September 1 from last September, was the highest in 23 years, the Health and Welfare Ministry said.

Women centenarians accounted for 3,859, or 80.4 per cent of the total, and the top 12 centenarians were women, according to a ministry report released in advance of the Respect for the Aged national holiday on September 15.

Japan's oldest living resident, Tane Imai, is 114 years old. She lives at a home for the aged in Nagoya, central Japan.

Japanese of both sexes have the world's longest average life expectancies. A Japanese female born in 1992 can expect to live 82.22 years, while men in Japan are likely to live 76.11 years, experts say.

According to the Population Research Institute of Nihon University, Japanese 65 or older are expected to total 21.6 million or 17 per cent of the nation's population in the year 2000.

Chinese gets \$1,750 in noise-pollution suit

BEIJING: A man who fell sick due to incessant industrial noise has been paid 10,000 yuan (1,750 dollar) in compensation in what is being called China's first noise pollution suit, reports Reuter.

Zhang Chaoliang of the northern city of Harbin lived in a rented apartment above a company pump house, and first fell sick in 1988 after the company brought new, noisier machines.

"At times he suffered chest pains and light fever, with weakness in his legs. Sometimes, he was unable to walk," the official China Daily said on Monday.

The Court's verdict attributed Zhang's illness to "the pressure of long-term noise" and ordered he be compensated, the newspaper said.

Judge acts like crazy lover

MANHASSET, N.Y.: The former chief judge of the state's high court, his career in ruins and a jail term pending, said Wednesday his bizarre threats against his former lover were a sick attempt to win her back, reports AP.

Sol Wachtler was considered a brilliant jurist and a possible GOP challenger to Democratic Gov. Mario Cuomo when his world came crashing down with his arrest Nov. 7, 1992.

He was charged with extortion and other crimes for waging a harassment campaign against Joy Silverman, a Manhattan socialite, and her 14-year-old daughter.

Wachtler, 63, began the campaign after Silverman ended their four-year affair.

He has pleaded guilty to a felony count of sending a letter containing a threat to kidnap Silverman's daughter.

Italy to delay pullout from Mogadishu

Indian troops kill 9 Kashmir militants

SRINAGAR, India, Sept 7: Indian border guards shot and killed nine Muslim militants as they attempted to cross the India-Pakistan frontier, police said on Monday, reports Reuter.

A police spokesman in Srinagar, the centre of a Kashmiri revolt against Indian rule, said a group of Muslim rebels who tried to sneak across the ceasefire line from neighbouring Pakistan were asked to surrender by the border guards.

The wounded rebels were not identified, but McDavitt said one was treated and released from a military hospital and the other was expected to be released later in the day.

The rebels instead opened fire on the Indian troops and in the exchange of fire at least nine Muslim rebels were killed, he said.

Defense Minister Fabio Fabbri rejected charges his troops failed to help the Nigerians, members of a more

Jackson in Japan on 'Dangerous' concert tour

FUKUOKA (Japan), Sept 7: Michael Jackson arrived in Japan Tuesday for the fourth leg of his worldwide "Dangerous" concert tour, and a convoy of shrieking fans tailed him straight from the airport to an amusement park, reports AP.

Jackson, surrounded by several bodyguards, was rushed from the airport exit into a bus that whisked him away.

"That was terrible," cried a hysterical young woman, one of about 150 fans, many of whom had waited at the airport for about eight hours. "I could barely see him. He left so quickly."

But some 25 taxis filled with reporters and fans followed Jackson's bus on a two-hour trip to the theme park.

When the bus stopped for highway toll booths, women put their heads out of tax windows, screaming "Michael, Michael!"

The 35-year-old pop music icon was scheduled to perform concerts Friday and Saturday in Fukuoka, 900 kilometres (560 miles) southwest of Tokyo on Japan's southern main island of Kyushu.

Jackson cancelled at the last minute plans to make a short stopover in Tokyo.

Aideed's stronghold stormed

MOGADISHU, Sept 7: Two US army rangers were slightly wounded Tuesday in a pre-dawn airborne assault on a suspected command and control center of fugitive warlord Mohammed Farrah Aideed, reports AP.

About 50 of the elite American troops stormed a dozen buildings within a walled compound the size of a city block at 2:30 am (2330 GMT), engaging in several brief exchanges of gunfire with armed Somalis.

Two Somalis escaped after being wounded and 17 others were captured and detained for questioning, said Capt. Tim McDavitt, a UN military spokesman. He described them as militiamen.

A dozen helicopters were used in the raid, including Cobra gunships and small spotter craft.

The compound is near and old military parade ground used by Aideed's faction to stage almost weekly anti-American and anti-United Nations demonstrations. UN troops have come under small arms fire in the area on several occasions.

McDavitt said a number of small arms were confiscated in the raid, but declined to say whether any communications gear, documents or other evidence was found to support the suspicion the compound was a command center.

The wounded rangers were not identified, but McDavitt said one was treated and released from a military hospital and the other was expected to be released later in the day.

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another speaker, Baroness Lynda Chalker, Britain's minister of state for foreign and Commonwealth affairs and overseas development.

Several speakers from developing African and Asian states

said the association should strive to eliminate what they called "double-standards" frequently adopted by the United Nations in dealing with international problems and the implementation of Security Council resolutions. These issues will be discussed separately during the four-day conference.

Cypriot parliament deputy Alecos Markides cited the occupation of north Cyprus by Turkey which began in 1974 as "an example of double-standards."

While the UN liberated Kuwait from Iraqi occupation it has yet to ensure implementation of Security Council resolutions calling for the withdrawal of the Turkish occupation troops from Cyprus, he said.

"Any nation invading another nation should be more than roundly condemned. There should be United Nations action against it, as the UN proved it could do in the case of Kuwait," said Elias Chitimo, the leader of the Zambian delegation.

Chitimo said he went to the house and found the walls covered with blood.

Police released few details about the killings, and the motive was unclear.

"It is not enough to meet and talk about these issues, we must use our influence to put things right," Chitimo added.



Children listed to the teacher in their first day of class after the summer break Monday in a classroom still decorated with a portrait of former President of Yugoslavia, Marshal Josip Broz "Tito", in a school in Sarajevo. — AFP photo