

# Habash condemns Arafat as 'traitor'

LONDON, Oct 9: George Habash, the veteran leader of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), today condemned Yasser Arafat, leader of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) as a traitor to the Palestinian cause, reports AP.

"We throw him (Arafat) on the garbage," Habash said in an interview with the independent newspaper, calling for an escalation of the Intifada or uprising in the occupied territories.

He was speaking in Damascus, where Palestinian groups were meeting to plan a boycott of next year's Palestinian elections, the paper said.

Of the September 13 accord between Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, giving limited autonomy to Palestinians in the Israeli-occupied Gaza Strip and the West Bank town of Jericho, he said: "Our Palestinian programme,

that of the PLO, includes the right of return (of refugees outside the occupied territories), self-determination and an independent state.

"The agreement makes no rule on these subjects. On the contrary, it doesn't include anything," he said.

Israeli withdrawal, Jerusalem and the Jewish settlements, which will remain where they are.

He said that Abu Amar, as Habash calls Arafat — his old PLO comrade — had requested a meeting about a week ago in Sanaa, Yemen. "But I asked, what benefit can be gained from a meeting in Yemen."

"I received an invitation from the president of Yemen as well, asking why we would not meet. So we and the (Marxist) democratic front drafted him a letter, thinking him for his invitation, telling him that we were ready to be a united Palestinian front.



Princess Diana looks up at Commander Tim Lawrence and Princess Anne after they attended Friday in London the wedding of the nephew of Britain's Queen Elizabeth, Lord Linley and his bride, Serena Stanhope. — AFP photo

# 'Royal carpenter' weds

LONDON: Charles said he couldn't get off work, and Fergie said they aren't her relatives anymore, reports AP.

The bride didn't show up for the rehearsal, but then, who has much faith in royal marriages these days?

Regardless, Viscount Linley, nephew of Queen Elizabeth II and one of the few royals who actually brings home a paycheck, married the beautiful heiress Serena Stanhope on Thursday in the society wedding of the year.

More than 600 guests attended the service at St. Margaret's Church, adjacent to Westminster Abbey, including the queen, Princess Diana, and the creme de la creme of British society.

Miss Stanhope, who left Linley waiting at the altar for Thursday's wedding rehearsal, arrived at the church Friday a fashionable two minutes late.

She looked stunning in a fairy princess-style wedding gown, with a tight-fitting satin

bodice that flowed onto a skirt made of 10 layers of tulle. She carried a plain bouquet of lily-of-the-valley.

The 31-year-old Linley, known as the "royal carpenter," is the son of the queen's only sister, Princess Margaret, and the photographer Lord Snowdon.

His 23-year-old bride is the only daughter of Viscount Petersham — said to have a personal fortune of 200 million pounds (dhs 300 million) — and the former Irish equestrienne Virginia Freeman-Jackson.

The couple are distant cousins and both claim a direct descent from King James I, according to Debrett's Peerage, the bluebloods' bible.

They met when Miss Stanhope's father commissioned Linley to make some furniture.

Linley, 12th in line to the British throne, has a fashionable shop, David Linley Furniture, whose clients include Elton John and Mick Jagger.

# UNICEF to remain in New York

NEW YORK, Oct 9: UNICEF on Friday announced that it will remain headquartered in New York City, reports AP.

UNICEF began contemplating a move three years ago. New Rochelle, in suburban Westchester County, launched an aggressive campaign to attract the United Nations agency, including a reported annual rent offer of just dhs 530,000.

But UNICEF said in a press release that the real estate deal worked out with New York City is ultimately more cost-effective than New Rochelle's offer and will save the agency dhs 5.3 million a year.

More important, Executive Director James Grant concluded that relocating part or all of UNICEF's headquarters to New Rochelle would seriously weaken the cohesiveness and efficiency that UNICEF has achieved, according to a statement from the agency.

Mayor David Dinkins, whose administration had lobbied hard to keep UNICEF here, was thrilled with the outcome.

# BRIEFLY

**Students protest army attack:** Some 500 students marched at a university to protest a recent clash between soldiers and farmers that left four villagers dead, a report said Friday, AP says from Jakarta.

The protesters at Gajah Mada university in the ancient city of Yogyakarta, central Java, urged the government to form a national commission to investigate the incident, the independent daily Merdeka reported.

The students carried banners deploring the clash with slogans like "how could you fire on innocent people?"

**Flood death toll 65 in Vietnam:** The death toll in floods in central Vietnam rose to 65 on Saturday and losses were estimated at tens of millions of dollars, Reuter reports from Hanoi.

A disaster relief official said the floods in Phu Yen province, where 52 people died, were the worst since 1902. Thirteen people were killed in Binh Dinh, Khanh Hoa and Lam Long provinces.

**Mafia boss gets life term:** The Sicilian Mafia's "boss of bosses" was sentenced to life in prison Friday in what some observers said was a departure from a pattern of light sentences in past organised crime cases, AP reports from Rome.

Salvatore Riina remained in his bunker-like cell in Palermo's Ucciardone Prison as the judge read the conviction and sentence, the harshest punishment possible in Italy.

Some Sicilian courts have been accused of giving light sentences in earlier Mafia cases for fear of a violent backlash. Riina's capture in January in Palermo was one of the highlights of Italy's anti-Mafia crackdown.

# Crackdown on Sunnis, Tikritis in Iraq

NICOSIA, Cyprus, Oct 9: Saddam Hussein's security forces have rounded up hundreds of prominent members of the Tikriti clan and other Sunni Muslims who have long supported him, Iraqi rebels and other sources say, reports AP.

The crackdown against Saddam's own minority sect indicates that after three years of UN sanctions and Iraq's isolation, even those who have traditionally been a pillar of the Baghdad regime may be turning against it.

Secret police are everywhere in Baghdad, and it is difficult to assess whether Sunni disenchantment with Saddam has reached a point where it will affect his rule. Saddam is clearly still in control.

But by all accounts, the purge is Saddam's most extensive since he crushed rebellions by Shi'ite Muslims and Kurdish separatists right after the 1991 Gulf War.

Sunni Muslims from 15 per cent of Iraq's 18 million people, but they have dominated the country for decades.

Travelers from Iraq — mainly Arabs who move in knowledgeable Baghdad circles — report deepening disenchantment among the Sunnis, who fear that Saddam's confrontation with the United Nations is driving Iraq to ruin.

There have been reports of several abortive coup plots or assassination attempts against Saddam over the last few weeks, some apparently implicating Sunnis. None of these upheavals has been independently confirmed.

But the current witch-hunt involves Sunnis of considerable

standing, a stratum of Iraqi society not before targeted in Saddam's periodic purges against people he perceives to be a threat.

Iraqi dissidents and the travellers say that the people rounded up since July include retired army officers, former government ministers and other influential civilians. Some sources say many have been executed.

Amnesty International, the London-based human rights organisation, reported last month that six prominent Tikritis have been executed in recent weeks.

Some reports say Sunnis were implicated in a plot to mount a military coup in Baghdad July 17, as Saddam attended a parade marking the anniversary of his Ba'ath Party's 1968 seizure of power.

Diplomats who monitor Iraq from Amman, Jordan, said that 10 army officers tried to kill Saddam near his presidential palace in Baghdad August 3 or 4. They said up to two dozen army officers and civilians were later executed.

Kubba and other usually reliable sources could not confirm the reported executions and Baghdad's state-run media has not mentioned any. But he and others said the families of prominent Tikritis have confirmed many arrests.

Among the targeted Sunni clans are the Al-Jabouri, from northern and central Iraq; the Duleimi, from the western province of Ramadi, who have links to Saudi Arabia; and the Shamir, from Mosul, who have links with Syria, Iraqi dissidents reported.

# Off the Record

**Remarried divorcees must give up sex**

ROME: Divorcees who have remarried must give up sex and repent their action if they wish to take communion in a Roman Catholic church, Italian bishops said Friday, reports AP.

In a new publication on family life, the bishops said the couple must turn their relationship into one of friendship only. If they wish to receive communion they should do so "in a church where they are not known to avoid scandal."

The Catholic church frowns on divorce, and in Italy those who have remarried can neither teach the catechism or be godparents at Baptisms. They may be witnesses at weddings. "But it would be better if they were not," the bishops said.

**For 'Young Love, Sweet Love'**

MANILA: Police say they suspect a seven-year-old boy of shooting his maid after she switched channels while he was watching the movie "Robocop" on television, reports AP.

Chief Inspector Manolo Martinez, head of the homicide division, said the incident happened Thursday night in the home of Vicente Dec, whose gun was apparently used by his son, Andrew, to shoot his maid, Elizabeth Edozor.

Edozor wanted to watch "Young Love, Sweet Love," which features a popular teen-age star, according to Gina Reyes, another maid of the family.

He said the boy admitted he took the .22 cal. Magnum pistol from his father's closet, pointed it at the head of Edozor and pulled the trigger. She died in the hospital.

"I was angry because she changed the channel," the boy, a first grader at a Chinese Catholic school, told Martinez.

**Hands worth \$398,500**

NEW YORK: A photograph of Alfred Stieglitz of the hands of his wife, artist Georgia O'Keeffe, taken in 1920 sold for 398,500 dollars at auction on Friday, setting a world record price for a photograph, Christie's auction house said, reports Reuters.

The previous record for a photograph sold at auction was set last May when Man Ray's "Glass Tears" sold at Sotheby's in London for 193,895 dollar.

An anonymous buyer bought the Stieglitz portrait of O'Keeffe's hands holding a thimble and needle.

# India plans to build 30,000 quake-proof houses

NEW DELHI, Oct 9: The Indian government will build 30,000 quake-proof houses in western India as part of a massive construction plan for the thousands of victims of last month's killer temblor, officials said Friday, reports AP.

The announcement coincided with the World Bank's offer to grant 300 million dollars in soft credit to the Maharashtra state administration for its rehabilitation drive in the disaster-hit districts of Latur and Osmanabad.

An estimated 30,000 people died and thousands of others were injured when a pre-dawn earthquake tore through villages and towns on September 30 in the two southern districts of the coastal state, flattening thousands of homes.

A majority of the houses

which crumbled were made of large rocks and lime. Brick-and-mortar modern homes with stood the temblor that measured up to 6.5 on the open-ended Richter Scale.

National Television said Indian engineers would devise quake-proof homes and would launch a project to construct 30,000 houses on October 24. "The project will be completed by January 26, 1994," the network added.

The World Bank said it would give 300 million dollars in soft credit spread over three years to the Maharashtra government to boost its rehabilitation projects for the thousands of homeless people of Osmanabad and Latur.

The World Bank funds are to be used to build quake-resistant homes and help with the restoration on roads, communication and power links, the supply of drinking water and dams hit by the earthquake, the lending agency said in a statement.

"A one-time exception because of the nature of emergency, the World Bank has agreed for retroactive financing from the day the earthquake struck the town of Khillari and other areas.

This agreement would enable the Maharashtra government to incur all expenses hereinafter after the credit," the World Bank statement added.

The World Bank has also separately sanctioned 1.5 million dollars for the preparation of a feasibility report on the design and implementation of the construction programme in the affected zone, agency officials here said.

# Two Lockerbie suspects' lawyers hold fruitful meeting

TRIPOLI, Oct 9: The first meeting of all the lawyers of the two Lockerbie suspects, which took place here Friday, was "fruitful," the Libyan head of the defence team said here, reports AP.

Speaking after the meeting, Ibrahim Legwell told the press that "the discussions centred on the guarantees (given by the West) permitting the two suspects to appear before the Scottish courts."

Western responses under these guarantees were, for a large part, positive and will, after negotiations, allow a satisfactory conclusion for everyone," he said.

Apart from Legwell, 12 lawyers from the United States, Britain, Germany, Switzerland and Malta, plus a number of legal advisers, attended the meeting, aimed at deciding whether to advise the two Lockerbie suspects to stand trial in Scotland in connection with the 1988 bombing that killed 270.

The Libyan lawyer said Thursday that the defence team would "assess the possibility of a fair trial in the United States or Britain" of Abdel Basset Al-Megrahi and Al-Amin Khalifa Fhima, after assurances given earlier this month by these two countries to the UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali.

Legwell said Thursday that Edinburgh Solicitor Alistair Duff, 39, hired to represent the men, and Lord Macaulay, a leading Scottish Barrister, were expected to attend the meeting, as well as English lawyer Stephen Mitchell and American Frank Rubino.

Libya expressed recently its readiness to let the two suspects stand trial in Scotland if they agreed to the move.

Britain, France and the United States want tighter UN sanctions imposed against Libya next week if Tripoli fails to give a firm pledge to hand over the Lockerbie suspects.

# 500m are mentally ill

At least 500 million people worldwide are mentally ill, and more should be done to help them, the World Health Organisation said Friday, reports from Geneva.

Some 155 million people worldwide suffer from neurosis, the UN agency said. The symptoms includes anxiety and compulsions. About 120 million people are mentally retarded.

At least 52 million people worldwide have severe mental diseases including schizophrenia and another 100 million have major emotional problems such as severe depression.

# WFP begins airlift to Georgia

The World Food Programme (WFP) of the United Nations said on Friday it had begun an airlift to help feed refugees in the former Soviet republic of Georgia, Reuter reports from Rome.

Tens of thousands of Georgians were forced to leave their homes in Sukhumi, on the Black Sea, after Abkhazian rebels took the city on September 27.

WFP said a first plane carrying 50 tonnes of food aid left from Luxembourg for Tbilisi on Friday night, and that the rest of the 220 tonnes would be sent over the next five days.

# Fighting on in Sierra Leone

Fighting between Sierra Leone government troops and rebels from that country is drawing close to the Liberian village of Vahun, where the United Nations is caring for refugees, AP reports from Liberia.

The sound of submachine guns and the boom of rocket-propelled grenades echoed Friday among forested hills surrounding the northwestern town, where 175,000 Sierra Leone refugees and displaced Liberians are sheltered at a base camp of the UN High Commission for Refugees.

Sierra Leone guerillas launched a rebellion in concert with Charles Taylor's 1989 Liberian rebellion aimed at toppling Liberian dictator Samuel Doe.

# Floods hit 17 Filipino villages

Unable to hold the floods brought by Storm Flo early this week, three rivers in central Luzon have overflowed, forcing a new round of evacuations, a government official said Saturday, AP reports from Manila.

Jose Andres, director of the Office of Civil Defence, said disaster relief authorities had to request two amphibious Navy boats and other military equipment to evacuate nearly 50,000 people in 17 villages in the town of Calumpit in Bulacan province, about 40 kilometers (25 miles) north of Manila.

Thirty-six other villages in the nearby towns of Hagonoy, Pullilan and Paombong were also flooded.

# 3 Chinese children burnt to death

Three sleeping children, in south China burnt to death because their mother forgot to wake them when their hut caught fire, a China-run news agency said Friday, AP reports from Hong Kong.

The family's home made shack in Shenzhen next to British-ruled Hong Kong was full of bric-a-brac that burnt quickly in the fire early Thursday, the China News Service said.

The father worked nights and the mother, "in the confusion, forgot to save the three children who were sound asleep," it said. The two boys and a girl died of smoke inhalation and burns, it said.



A Muslim woman settles flowers on the grave of her 14-year-old son in a football field which is being used as cemetery in Sarajevo Friday. — AFP photo

# China to observe Mao's 100th birthday

BEIJING, Oct 9: Chinese are preparing all sorts of projects to mark the 100th birthday of revolutionary leader Mao Tsetung. One couple has sculpted 1,300 clay figurines of the Great Helmsman, the official Xinhua news agency reported Friday, reports AP.

In a separate report, the news agency said the former headquarters of the Communist Party under Mao were being renovated for the December 26 centenary.

The Chinese media has reported that a new, larger-than-life Mao statue is being carved, a television series on Mao's life in the works and compact discs of Mao's speeches are being marketed.

Xinhua said Wang Wenhai and his wife spent more than three years making the 1,300 clay figurines. They symbolize

the 13 years Mao spent in Yan'an, the cave dwellings in north China's Shaanxi province that were the headquarters of Mao's guerilla fighters.

The couple, from Shaanxi's provincial capital of Xian, visited local residents who had contact with Mao and collected nearly 1,000 pictures of the Great Helmsman. They based their figurines on the pictures, and used clay from the mountain behind the caves in which Mao once lived.

In Hebei province, the party's last rural headquarters before it entered Beijing in 1949 and took power are being renovated, Xinhua said.

Statues of Mao and other leaders and stone tablets bearing inscriptions from more than 300 celebrities and current leaders are to be erected, the report said.

# 2 bombs explode in London

LONDON, Oct 9: Two explosions hit northwest London shortly before midnight Friday, police said. No casualties were reported, and there was no immediate claim of responsibility, reports AP.

A week ago three IRA bombs exploded in north London, injuring six people.

An unidentified police spokesman said Friday that an "imprecise and garbled" warning had been phoned to a cab company about half an hour before the first blast.

She said, "the warning was particularly obscure and unclear."

Residents said a large area around the West Hendon neighbourhood had been sealed off by police.

# Turmoil in Russia worries East European countries

WARSAW, Oct 9: When turmoil exploded in Moscow, the rest of the former East bloc watched with a combination of fear, dread and fascination, reports AP.

East Europeans worried that the violence could spill over Russia's borders and create a nightmare: hard-liners oust President Boris Yeltsin, restore authoritarian rule and try to reel in the former Communist satellite countries.

Concern eased after the arrests of lawmakers and their supporters, who had holed up in Moscow's parliament building, or White House.

But some east European officials speculate hard-won democratic and free-market reforms across the region won't be safe as long as Russia teeters on the edge of authoritarian rule.

"This was not the last such event," Hungarian Finance Minister Ivan Szabo told reporters Friday. "We anticipate disturbances to occur again before things finally get settled."

Not long ago, all of eastern Europe was subject to Soviet dictates. The countries have since embraced democracy to varying degrees — even when it meant voting into power parties with Communist roots, as in Poland last month.

Many people have turned their focus inward, toward their own fledgling political systems and dealing with day-to-day hardships that have accompanied capitalism: inflation, unemployment and the loss of the socialist security blanket.

But past Soviet interventions in their countries have left the region sensitive to Russian events. "When it rains in Moscow, Romania gets out the umbrella," one local adage says.

So after Yeltsin dissolved Parliament last month, people from Bucharest to Budapest and Belgrade to Warsaw began gleaming news of the Russian crisis from whatever sources they could.

Some could pick up Russian television. Others monitored Cable News Network and Britain's Sky News. The rest relied on the bulletins and special programmes from networks in their own countries, along with newspapers that devoted pages to the unrest each day.

Hungarian teacher Laszlo Bekkes wondered whether his country, dependent on Russia for some of its energy and a possible refugee destination could still get hurt.

"They are going to each other what they were doing to us for 40 years," said Bekkes, 52. "My only worry is that the political rivalry may turn into a civil war, which will involve us inevitably."

But politicians, analysts and average people alike say new found freedoms and economic reforms have carved a new present and future, even if the going is rough and uncertain at times.

"Those events (in Russia) are not a threat to eastern Europe," renowned Bulgarian author Jordan Radichkov said of Moscow. "Though difficult and slow, the changes in Russia are irreversible."

Andrez Drazwicz, a Polish expert on Russian affairs, believes Poles who saw the last Russian troops leave last month after a 54-year presence should get over their fear.

The Russian situation is different from other "post-Communist countries," said Drazwicz, a journalist and writer. "Each of them has its own internal problems, some of them pretty sharp like Yugoslavia ... (But) I do not think that the Russian example may spread."

Romanian political commentator Silviu Brucan said that because of nuclear warheads, the United States and western

Europe have more cause for concern than eastern Europe.

"Washington, Paris and London thought that they had got rid of the nuclear hazard in the past years, but (the recent events) means the threat of the restoration of Communism still persists," Brucan said.

Gen Wojciech Jaruzelski, Poland's former Communist leader said the Russian army was strengthened by the conflict. "The Army tried to stay neutral for a long time, but in the critical moment it supported Yeltsin and thus swung the balance. It strengthens its political position and makes it an important instrument ensuring the stability of the state," Jaruzelski told the Zycie Warszawy daily.

ROK confirms anti-nuclear policy

SEOUL, Oct 9: South Korea on Saturday confirmed its policy banning nuclear reprocessing facilities, despite worries about a possible nuclear proliferation race in Asia, reports AP.

"Neither North Korea nor South Korea should have nuclear weapons," President Kim Young-sam told a Cabinet session.

China's recent underground nuclear test was a major topic at Saturday's meeting, along with North Korea's nuclear programme, Kim's aides told reporters.

South Korean officials believe China's resumption of nuclear testing poses a threat to peace in the region.