

International

Clinton, Mubarak talk ME peace process

Call to bridge differences between Syria, Israel

WASHINGTON, Oct 26: President Bill Clinton and Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak called Monday for a resumption of bilateral talks between Israel and Syria to keep the Middle East peace talks moving, reports AFP.

The two leaders emphasized the need for a resumption of bilateral Arab-Israeli talks after meeting for more than an hour at the White House.

"We have to keep going in this process until all the pieces

are in place, Clinton, said at a news conference with Mubarak, whom the U.S. President praised for helping bring about an autonomy agreement between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO).

Mubarak said the Israeli-PLO agreement signed September 13 in Washington had boosted dramatically the prospects for peace in the Middle East.

"On the other hand, negotiations on the other tracks must

be resumed with full determination to reach agreement soon. Particularly important is the achievement of meaningful progress on the Syrian track promptly, he said.

"I believe the differences between the two parties can be bridged within a short period of time, he said.

Clinton said it was very important to the peace process that talks between Israel and Syria resume, but he also stressed the importance of

maintaining a climate conducive to progress toward peace.

"There can't be a total peace in the Middle East unless there is some kind of peace with Syria, Clinton added.

Asked whether U.S. aid to Egypt would be reduced, Clinton said he continued to support strong American aid to Israel, but said the aid issue would be a matter of close conversation with Mubarak when they resumed their talks over lunch.

Egypt receives 2.1 billion dollars in U.S. aid annually while Israel receives three billion dollars, making them the two biggest recipients of U.S. foreign aid.

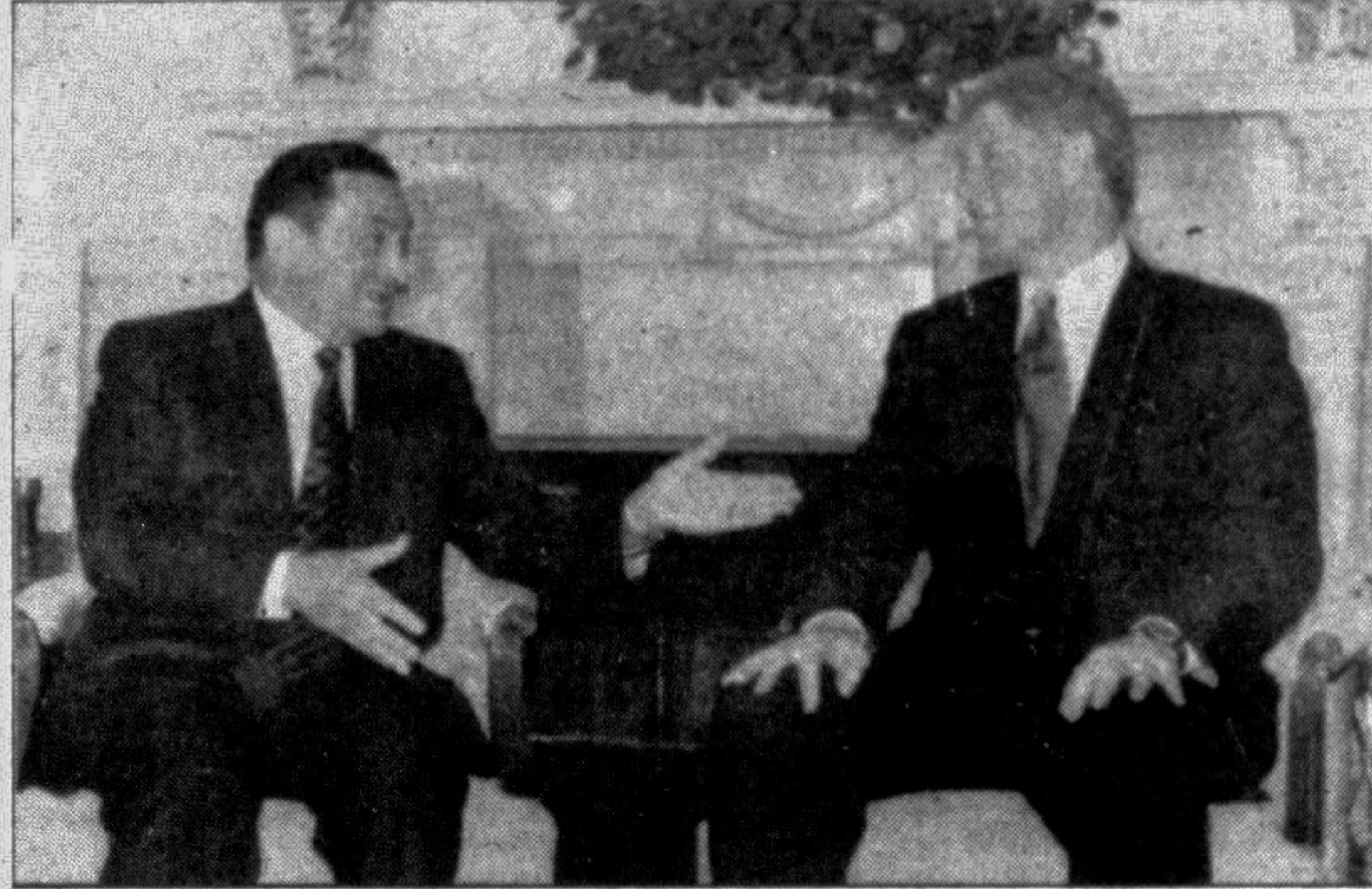
With the end of the cold war and competing demands for aid from the former Soviet Union and eastern Europe there has been talk of reducing aid to Egypt and Israel.

Mubarak, who invited Clinton to visit Egypt, said U.S. aid was crucial to carrying out economic reforms in his country.

The White House talks were held amid unusually tight security, even for a presidential visit. Concrete barriers kept traffic off Pennsylvania Avenue.

Clinton said security was "at the level we thought appropriate because of all the obvious tensions that surround the Middle East peace process."

Mubarak began a five-day visit to the United States Saturday, the first since the Israeli-Palestinian agreement on Palestinian autonomy was signed last month.



US President Bill Clinton (R) meets with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak (L) in the Oval Office at the White House Monday. Clinton and Mubarak discussed the Middle-East peace process. —AFP photo

BRIEFLY

Teresa meets Deng's disabled son:

Mother Teresa met with paramount leader Deng Xiaoping's disabled son Monday to discuss general cooperation in caring for the handicapped in China, an official spokesman said, AFP reports from Beijing.

The Chinese Federation for the Disabled spokesman refused to say whether Federation Chairman Deng Pufang and the 83-year-old Albanian-born nun discussed specific projects, such as her plan to open her first Chinese missionaries of charity home for handicapped children in Shanghai.

The 1979 Nobel Peace Prize winner, who arrived in Beijing Saturday after spending one day in Shanghai, may return to the eastern city before leaving China, the spokesman confirmed.

Mathias Rust freed:

Mathias Rust, who eluded Soviet air defences and landed a light aircraft in Moscow's Red Square, was freed from a Hamburg jail after serving time for attempted murder, court officials said on Monday, Reuter reports from Hamburg.

Rust, 25, was sentenced to two and a half years jail in April 1991 for stabbing a girl in the dressing room of a hospital after she refused to kiss him.

A Hamburg court spokesman said Rust was released on Sunday following a regional court's decision last month to cut his sentence by half.

Afghanistan needs \$ 600m aid:

Afghanistan needs 600 million dollar aid over the next two years if it begins to function after 14 years of civil war, U.N. officials said after presenting a rehabilitation plan to the government on Monday, Reuter reports from Kabul.

"Its aim is to earmark the most urgent projects that need to be implemented to get Afghanistan functioning again, David Lockwood, head of the United Nations Development Programme for Afghanistan told reporters.

He formerly presented the action plan, which envisages a need for more than 600 million dollar worth of foreign aid over the next two years, to Planning Minister Sayed Mohammad Ali Javed.

Actor Vincent Price dead:

Veteran Hollywood actor Vincent Price died of lung cancer at 82 years of age, his personal assistant Reg Williams said Monday from the actor's home here, AFP reports from Los Angeles.

Price, a star of horror classics such as "House of Wax" (1953), "The Raven" (1963), and "The Pit and the Pendulum" (1961), was famous for his mellifluous, semi-sinister voice which was used in Michael Jackson's hit record "Thriller."

He also starred in the Oscar-nominated "The Whales of August" alongside veteran actresses Bette Davis and Lillian Gish.

7 Indonesian children drown:

Seven Indonesian children drowned when their minibus sank after crossing a river by raft, Antara news agency said on Tuesday, Reuter reports from Jakarta.

It quoted police as saying parents were among some 20 passengers who escaped from the vehicle. But they were unable to save their children, mostly girls aged between five and 11, as the minibus slipped back down the river bank into the water.

Police said they had detained raft operators and the minibus driver after the accident, which occurred at the weekend near Karawang 60 km (40 miles) east of Jakarta.

Movie on Deng Xiaoping:

The Director and Producer of China's most successful movie ever are planning a new blockbuster, a two-part movie about senior Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping, AP reports from Hong Kong.

The film, titled "Deng Xiaoping," will portray 89-year-old Deng's rise after the death of Mao Tse-tung in 1976 and the effects of his economic reforms since 1979, producer Xin Ming told the China-funded Hong Kong daily Ta Kung Pao.

Xin will team up with Ding Yinnan, who directed Xin's 1991 film "Zhou Enlai," the story of China's former premier that made a record-breaking 210 million yuan (dollar 99 million) at the box office, the newspaper said Tuesday.

Kurds kill 42 civilians, torch houses in Turkey

ANKARA, Oct 26: Militants of the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) killed 42 civilians and wounded 22 others in two separate attacks in southeastern Turkey, the state-run radio reported today, says Xinhua.

Four PKK rebels Monday evening attacked the village of Yavi Beldest in the cat township in Erzurum Province forcing villagers to gather in a coffee house.

Following seizing money and wrist watches from the villagers, the militants opened fire on the crowd, killing 38 people, wounding 10 others, including many children, women and the elderly.

The PKK rebels fled the village after setting fire to the houses, the report said, adding that a searching operation was underway in the region.

Also on Monday evening, a group of PKK rebels stopped three passenger buses on the road between Erzurum and Erzincan cities, and opened fire on the passengers.

In the attack, four people were killed and 12 injured. Two girls were taken away by the rebels, said the report.

The incidents occurred at the time when Dogan Gures,

Chief of General Staff, and Defence Minister Mehmet Golhan arrived at Erzincan following a meeting of National Security Council (NSC) in Ankara Monday.

The meeting recommended that the government extend and emergency rule in 10 Kurdish-populated southeastern provinces for another four months.

About 7,500 people, including rebels, soldiers and civilians, have been killed in the PKK's 10-year-old separatist campaign.

Papandreou wins vote of confidence

ATHENS, Oct 26: New Greek Socialist Prime Minister Andreas Papandreou won a parliamentary vote of confidence early today but told Greeks they should expect no miracles during his four-year term, reports Reuter.

"We are no miracle-makers. We have the will and the capability to take the country out of its dead end but we need the support and help of every Greek," Papandreou said after the vote.

Renegade Bosnian army commander held

SARAJEVO, Oct 26: The Muslim-led Bosnian army has captured a military commander accused of running a crime ring in Sarajevo but a second renegade officer was still being sought by government troops today, UN sources said.

Security sources told Reuters the government troops and renegade soldiers were sniping at each other around the headquarters. The government arrested 14 soldiers today in a major crackdown on lawlessness in the Bosnian capital.

UN sources said the Bosnian army captured the commander of the 10th Mountain Brigade, Musan Topalovic — better known as "Coco" — earlier Tuesday morning.

But Ramiz Delalic, who heads the Ninth Mountain Brigade and is known as "Celo", was still inside his barricaded headquarters and surrounded by soldiers loyal to the Bosnian government.

Police near the scene in the city centre told Reuters several people were wounded in the clashes.

Earlier the Bosnian army set up tank barricades and armed guards at key Sarajevo points and forbade citizens to move about Tuesday, in a surprise sweep of the city for two warlords.

As that action was launched, UN officials announced that Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali had suspended

all aid shipments to central Bosnia following the killing of a relief worker and the wounding of 11 others Monday.

The Danish aid worker was killed when UN convoys came under fire at a front line between Bosnian government and Croat forces in central Bosnia. Nine Dutch UN soldiers and two other UN aid workers were injured.

It was among the highest number of UN casualties in a single day since war broke out in Bosnia more than 18 months ago.

The suspension of convoys arriving from Croatia would leave Mostar in the south and central Bosnia — both areas of Muslim-Croat battles and

among the areas most in need of relief without aid. It would not affect shipments to Sarajevo and northeastern regions, which leave from Serbia.

A UN relief worker, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the suspension would stay in effect pending results of an investigation into Monday's shooting and deliveries of guarantees of safety from all sides.

The aid convoy was returning empty from the town of Zenica to UN warehouses in the Croatian town of Metkovic when it and an escort convoy of UN peacekeepers came under mortar and small-arms fire near Travnik.

Georgian troops attack rebel stronghold

TBILISI, Georgia, Oct 26: Troops loyal to Georgian leader Eduard Shevardnadze attacked the rebel stronghold of Senaki on Tuesday, one day after recapturing the vital Black Sea port of Poti, reports AP.

The government troops, backed by tanks, converged on Senaki from two directions in an attempt to break the back of the rebel army, said Ministry of Defence spokesman Eteri Baladze.

The tide in Georgia's civil war has turned in Shevardnadze's favour over the past five days, after his troops united under a single command and received support from Russia, which promised to guard vital railroads.

A newly confident Shevardnadze demanded Monday that his enemies surrender.

"They have two ways out," Shevardnadze said in a radio address. "They can be liquidated or they can lay down their weapons."

The rebel army, believed to number up to 10,000 men, is trying to overthrow Shevardnadze and restore former Georgian president Zviad Gamsakhurdia to power. Gamsakhurdia was ousted in a

popular uprising in January 1992.

Shevardnadze's government is still reeling from its defeat last month by a separate group of rebels in the coastal province of Abkhazia, which is fighting for independence.

But the morale or government troops got a boost over the weekend with military victories over Gamsakhurdia's forces in his home province of Mingrelia in western Georgia.

Shevardnadze's soldiers, under the unified command of Defense Minister Georgy Karkarshvili, captured the towns of Abasha and Martvili on Sunday and retook the Black Sea port of Poti on Monday.

Ten rebels were killed in the fighting around Poti, according to Murma Sakadze, who was appointed by Shevardnadze as the seaport's new mayor.

Sakadze said on national television Tuesday that the port was quiet and returning to normal. Poti was vital to the Georgian government because food, fuel and other supplies arrive there by sea and are carried by railroad to Tbilisi, the capital.



Palestinian prisoner Mohamad Abu Samaan, 15, being greeted by his mother on his way out from jail in Ramallah, West Bank, Monday. The Israeli government is releasing some 700 prisoners following the PLO-Israeli negotiations in Taba. —AFP photo

'Russia will never dump N-waste into Sea of Japan'

TOKYO, Oct 26: Russia will never again dump nuclear waste into the Sea of Japan after the diplomatic storm unleashed by its mid-October sea burial of radioactive waste, the Russian Atomic Energy Minister said today, reports Reuter.

Minister Viktor Mikhailov told a Tokyo news conference: "As for the Sea of Japan, it will never be repeated."

But he refused to say whether Russia would stop dumping in other oceans.

"I can't say any more," he said.

Mikhailov said Moscow needed foreign financial backing to treat radioactive waste on Russian soil.

He proposed other countries finance the project by buying enriched uranium from the former Soviet Union's nuclear arsenal.

He said he had offered to sell Japan 100 million dollars worth of enriched uranium annually for 20 years but declined to say how Japanese officials responded.

The controversy flared 10 days ago when Russian tankers dumped 900 cubic metres (32,000 cubic feet) of low-level waste into the sea some 550 km (340 miles) off Japan's coastline.

The incident infuriated Japanese public opinion, coming as it did less than a week after Russian President Boris Yeltsin's fence-mending visit to Tokyo. During the visit, Russia and Japan had signed an agreement aimed at ending nu-

clear contamination of the world's oceans.

The Russian dumping also sparked widespread concern about the possible contamination of fish and other marine life.

Mikhailov appeared to be in a mellow mood than on Monday, when he accused Japan's electric power industry of releasing waste into the sea 10 times more radioactive than what Russia had dumped on October 17.

3 shot dead in Belfast

BELFAST, Oct 26: Up to three people were shot dead and several were wounded in a suspected Protestant extremist attack today to avenge a bombing by IRA guerrillas at the weekend, reports Reuter.

A police spokeswoman said: "There are fatalities, up to three, and there are injuries too. It may have been in a workmen's yard."

Irish radio said two gunmen entered the yard just before 8:00 am this morning and opened fire indiscriminately.

Security sources said it was a suspected revenge attack that had been feared since the Irish Republican Army killed 10 people last Saturday with a bomb in a Belfast fish shop.

Their intended target had been a big meeting of Protestant extremists but the bomb went off prematurely, killing the guerrilla who was going to plant it.

Off the Record

DNA test raises questions about a man's guilt

RICHMOND: A DNA test has raised questions over whether a man on death row is really guilty of raping and killing a woman 11 years ago, the state attorney general said Monday, reports AP.

Tests on sperm taken from a vaginal swab shows two genetic traits found in the blood of Earl Washington Jr, but also a third trait not found in Washington, the victim or her husband, state Attorney General Stephen D Rosenthal told reporters.

"Earl Washington may or may not have committed this crime. It is by no means absolutely conclusive one way or the other," Rosenthal said.

The state requested the test, Rosenthal said, but he declined to say why. More tests will be taken over the next two weeks, he said.

"I've been waiting a long time," Washington, 33, said in a telephone interview from death row at the Mecklenburg Correctional Center. He referred questions to his lawyer.

"Earl Washington is innocent in this case, and it's representative of everything that goes wrong with the death penalty," said the lawyer, Earl Freedman.

The only way Washington could be guilty is if two people committed the crime and the DNA test shows a mixture of their fluids, Freedman said. But he added that before she died, Rebecca Williams of Culpeper said only one man attacked her.

Hitler's "Mein Kampf" sold for \$17,700

MUNICH, Germany: A luxury two-volume edition of Adolf Hitler's Mein Kampf sold for 30,000 marks (17,700 dollars) at an auction here, the Hermann Historica auctioneers said Monday, reports AFP.

The book, offered by Hitler to his chauffeur and private secretary Emil Maurice, was bought by a British dealer at Saturday's auction.

Geese fly with human guides

WASHINGTON: An 18-member flock of geese guided by men in airplanes trying to teach the birds the forgotten migration routes of their ancestors reached a private research centre after a seven-day, 350-mile (560 km) flight from Canada, Reports AP.

After wintering at the Airline Conference Center in nearby Fauquier County, some of the geese will be escorted back to Canada next spring. The rest will be left alone to see whether they can find their own way home.

The experiment will be considered successful if the birds return by themselves to winter at the conference center next year.

Unlike some birds, which migrate by instinct, geese, cranes and swans learn their routes from their parents.

Canadian artist and pilot William Lishman, one of the experiment's organisers, landed his ultralight plane first Sunday. He climbed out and made a few honking noises to coax down the geese while Joe Duff, in another fabric-covered plane, flew with the geese in tighter and tighter circles until the lead goose landed.

The geese and their human guides left the Toronto area October 19, flying at speeds up to 50 mph (80-kph) and altitudes up to 3,700 feet (1,200 meters). They flew four days and rested three along the way.

Former E German police chief jailed for 6 yrs

BERLIN, Oct 26: A court on Tuesday convicted former East German secret police chief Erich Mielke of killing two policemen in Berlin more than 60 years ago, reports AP.

The Superior Court immediately sentenced the 85-year-old Mielke to six years in prison, following a 20-month trial. He was once the No 2 man in the Communist regime.

Mielke's supporters accused Berlin justice authorities of persecuting him for his role as the head of East Germany's dreaded secret police and foreign espionage network.

He was convicted of murdering two policemen in 1931, during one of the clashes between rightists and leftists.

Acute Respiratory Infections kill 1.5m African children a year

GENEVA, Oct 26: Acute Respiratory Infections (ARI) still claim the lives of 1.5 million young children in Africa every year, according to latest WHO estimates, reports BSS.

They are among the leading causes of death of under-five in the continent, with most victims dying before their first birthday. These statistics are contained in a WHO report "Time to act" which is being issued to health authorities throughout Africa.

"For the world outside developing countries it is hard to imagine that acute respiratory infections can be implicated in millions of deaths. But it is a hard fact that ARI account for 4.3 million deaths of young children each year worldwide, more than one third of them in Africa," says Dr Jim Tulloch, director of WHO's division of the control of diarrhoeal and acute

respiratory diseases.

On average, an African child suffers between six and ten episodes of ARI per year. Most are mild viral infections which cause a cough, a sore throat or a running nose, perhaps with some fever. Although the great majority of ARI cases require no treatment, other than general care at home, including extra fluids and making sure that the child eats well, up to 70 per cent of these children are being treated, unnecessarily and expensively, with antibiotics and other medications. A study conducted in one African capital showed the average cost to the family of the medicines prescribed for the treatment of ARI to be about US 20 dollar — a substantial proportion of the family income, and in almost all cases, an unnecessary expense.

The real killer disease among

ARI is pneumonia which, in about 25 per cent of cases, will result in death in a few days if not treated. The disease is an important cause of death in all countries where the infant mortality is over 40 cases per 1000.

This means all but a few of the countries in the African region.

In Africa, about 80 per cent of childhood pneumonia is caused by bacteria. Quite often, pneumonia is part of the vicious cycle of infection and malnutrition made even worse by outbreaks of malaria and diarrhoeal diseases. Most of the cases can be treated successfully if they are recognized in time and appropriate antibiotic is used. It is estimated that a 10 per cent reduction in the mortality from pneumonia could be achieved through high coverage with measles and pertussis

vaccination. Among other potentially successful preventive measures are: improved nutrition, with particular emphasis on breastfeeding, reduction of the incidence of low birth weight, and cutting down of indoor air pollution.

Important as these preventive measures are, the immediate answer to the problem of ARI mortality is to mark sure that children with pneumonia receive effective treatment.

In the past, the diagnosis and treatment of pneumonia have been seen as tasks requiring both considerable training and substantial technical resources. The development by WHO of a simple and effective diagnostic procedure has changed this perception," says Dr Tulloch. "We believe it can prevent at least 65 per cent of

pneumonia-related deaths. That is why we strongly advocate standard case management as the main strategy for the reduction of mortality from pneumonia."

The diagnostic procedure, although simple, can detect more cases of pneumonia than the clinical methods traditionally used. It can be used by health staff at all levels of the health system. Standard case management stresses the use of oral antibiotics that are effective, cheap and readily available (usually cotrimoxazole or amoxicillin) at the first level, with injectable second-line antibiotics for children who have been referred for hospital care.

This strengthened case management system is the core of the ARI control programmes which WHO, UNICEF and other

major agencies are supporting in developing countries throughout the world. The programme calls for the training and supervision of health workers, using materials developed by WHO, and for the strengthening of essential drugs supply systems. This can be achieved through existing primary health care programmes.

"So far, less than half the countries in Africa have adopted ARI control, but many more are now recognizing it as a major priority. In the coming years the WHO ARI programme will be giving special emphasis to the needs of African countries," stressed Dr Tulloch.

ARI control is technically simple and affordable. By using this methodology the global goal of reducing ARI-related deaths by one third can be achieved by all the countries of Africa.

Ghali optimistic about solving crisis in Haiti

LONDON, Oct 26: UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali said on Monday he was optimistic about solving the crisis in Haiti, reports Reuter.

"I believe that we will need more effort and more diplomatic activities, more negotiation, and I am optimistic that with more negotiation we will be able to overcome the difficulties and will be able to find a solution," Boutros-Ghali told reporters after talks with British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd.

US President Bill Clinton said earlier on Monday there were hints of progress in efforts to return ousted Haitian President Jean-Bertrand Aristide to power.