

BRIEFLY

Blast kills 12 miners in Ukraine:

At least 12 miners were killed and six seriously injured in a gas explosion at a coal mine in Eastern Ukraine, mining officials said on Monday. Reuter reports from Kiev.

One miner was also missing and feared dead after the blast on Sunday in the Donetsk mining region. The officials gave no details.

The explosion during maintenance work was the latest in a series of mining accidents in Ukraine. The worst killed 157 miners in the Lugansk region in 1992.

Italy seizes 5.5 tonnes of cocaine:

Italian police confiscated 5.5 tonnes of Cocaine from a truck in Europe's largest drug seizure yet, officials said Monday.

The Cocaine, with a street value of around 300 million dollars, was found when a truck was stopped on a road in Northern Italy overnight Saturday, police in Turin said.

First woman judge in Austria:

Austria on Monday appointed the first woman judge in its Constitutional Court, the country's highest court of appeal. Reuter reports from Vienna.

President Thomas Klestil named Lisbeth Lass, a 53-year-old lawyer from the western province of Tyrol, to the 12-member court panel, the President's office said in a statement.

Last week, Germany appointed its first woman judge to its top court.

Train mishap claims 7 in India:

A freight train derailed killing seven residents of a slum located near the tracks in the Bombay suburb of Thane, the United News of India reported Tuesday, AFP says from New Delhi.

Suburban train services were suspended and long-distance trains diverted following the accident Monday evening, the news agency said. Five women were among the seven dead.

2 Palestinians shot dead in Gaza:

Israeli soldiers shot dead two wanted Palestinians who refused an order to stop their car in the occupied Gaza Strip on Tuesday, Israel radio said. Reuter reports from Jerusalem.

Soldiers opened fire, killing two of the passengers, when the driver refused an order to stop near the Strip's main ezez checkpoint early on Tuesday, the radio said.

"During an investigation it became clear they were wanted," the radio said. It offered no further details.

Ex-Vietnamese minister on trial:

Former Energy Minister Vu Ngoc Hai, deputy minister Le Liem, and seven other defendants have gone on trial in the Supreme People's Court on charges related to fraud and corruption, AP reports from Hanoi.

Hai and others from the ministry and VINAPOL Metals Supply Co are charged with fraud related to the supply of materials for the prestigious north-south 500 kilovolt high power transmission line.

Hai is charged with taking advantage of his position during the course of his work which resulted in heavy losses to the state budget. Hai's trial was originally scheduled for Jan 15, but was reportedly postponed after Hai threatened some unspecified surprises.

Israel's official inquiry into Hebron carnage begins

JERUSALEM, Mar 8: Top army brass face questioning Tuesday when a committee of inquiry opens its investigation into the Hebron mosque massacre, reports AP.

The five-member independent commission is headed by President of the Supreme Court Meir Shamgar, and includes an Israeli Arab judge and a retired army chief-of-staff.

Senior military officers have reportedly sought legal advice on how to cooperate with the committee, according to Israeli television.

They apparently learned the lessons after a commission found in 1982 that top officers and ministers bore indirect

responsibility for a massacre of Palestinians in Beirut by Israel's Christian militia allies. It recommended some be dismissed.

While investigating commissions have no formal power to enforce their recommendations, Israeli governments traditionally have acted on their findings.

Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, who also serves as defence minister, and Lt. Gen. Ehud Barak, the military chief of staff, are expected to be summoned to testify.

The committee of inquiry began collecting documents last week and printed advertisements in local newspapers seeking witnesses to the

February 25 attack, in which a Jewish settler cut down 30 Muslims as they prayed in the Cave of the Patriarch, a site holy to both Jews and Muslims.

The attack was the bloodiest since Israel captured the territories in 1967. Another 29 people, all but two Palestinians, have been killed since the massacre. More than 450 people, nearly all Arabs have been wounded.

The committee requested and received Monday a copy of the army's own investigation into the Hebron massacre, the TV said.

Maj. Gen. Dani Yatom, head of the army's central command, will testify and is likely to be asked to explain the

army's policy of allowing Jewish settlers into the cave with weapons.

Commander of the West Bank Brig. Gen. Shaul Mufaz is also expected to testify Tuesday, where he will reportedly be asked of army warnings about a possible attack and what steps were taken about it.

Other senior officers, as well as police, security agents, Jewish settlers and Arab witnesses are to be summoned before the committee, which will hold open door sessions at the Supreme Court.

Palestine Liberation Organisation leader Yasser Arafat has set up his own commission of inquiry into the attack.

Kashmiris observe strike during visit by envoys

SRINAGAR, Mar 8: War-torn Kashmir valley held a general strike Tuesday in an effort to show 11 visiting ambassadors that the people all want independence from India, reports AP.

The one-day strike, which closed stores, schools and businesses, also was called to demand that India allow the ambassadors to meet with Kashmiris and their separatist leaders.

The diplomats arrived Monday on a three-day visit to Jammu-Kashmir state, where more than 8,200 people have died in a guerilla war for independence in the last four years.

The diplomats are travelling in bullet-proof cars guarded by Indian security forces, staying in three government guest houses, and being briefed by Indian officials.

As the New Delhi-based ambassadors arrived in Srinagar on Monday, police used batons and rifle butts to attack a group of lawyers who sought to meet the ambassadors. Witnesses said about 15 people, including some news photographers, were injured.

"The visiting diplomats should see the reaction and sentiments of the people of Kashmir in today's strike," said the pro-separatist All Party Conference of 33 Kashmiri professional organizations and political groups, which called the strike.

The diplomats are from Canada, Mexico, Hungary, Bulgaria, Indonesia, Sudan, Turkey, Senegal, Colombia, Venezuela and Nigeria. It was not clear whether they would be allowed to meet Kashmiri civilians and All Party Conference members Tuesday, but the ambassadors are not likely to meet rebel leaders because they usually don't dare enter areas heavily guarded by Indian forces.

India flew the diplomats to Kashmir, the only Muslim-dominated area of predominantly Hindu India, as part of a diplomatic blitz against claims of human rights abuses in the disputed state.

Islamic Pakistan, which also claims Kashmir, has stepped up an international campaign against alleged abuses by Indian security forces.



US President Bill Clinton (R) meets with Georgian leader Eduard Shevardnadze (L) in the Oval Office at the White House March 7. President Clinton offered 70 million USD in humanitarian and technical assistance to help the former Soviet republic. — AFP photo

DPRK accuses ROK of N-waste dumping

TOKYO, Mar 8: North Korea has renewed charges that its rival South Korea dumped a large amount of nuclear waste in the sea in the seven years through 1992, the North's official media said Tuesday, reports AP.

The Korean Central News Agency, monitored in Tokyo, said the North's latest charges were made Monday by Hwang Sang Chun, chairman of the State Environmental Commission.

It said Hwang, speaking at a news conference in Pyongyang, alleged that South Korea dumped a total of 29,513 curies of liquid waste, 84,737 curies of

gas waste and 29,034 drums of solid waste during the seven-year period.

The report failed to say where the alleged dumpings were made. South Korea is surrounded by the Yellow Sea, the Sea of Japan and the Korea Strait.

Hwang said the dumped wastes constituted a dangerous level of harm.

Last week, South Korea dismissed similar charges made earlier by the North, saying it does dispose of wastes from its nuclear energy plants into the sea, but only after strict treatment removes all danger of harm.

NASA plans 78 shuttle flights over next 9 years

WASHINGTON, Mar 8: NASA is planning 78 shuttle flights over the next nine years, including 10 visits to Russia's Mir space station and 30 missions devoted to building a future orbiting station, according to an internal report, says AFP.

The first space station construction mission is to begin in December 1997 and will be followed by three to six flights a year, space news magazine reported Monday.

The publication released a report by the national aeronautics and space administration, which periodically reviews its long-range plans.

The space shuttle Discovery is slated to be the first to hook up with the Mir in January and will alternate visits to the Russian station with Atlantis until 1997. During four of those trips, the shuttles will dock at the station and exchange equipment.

Russia urges Armenia to quit Azeri territory

MOSCOW, Mar 8: A senior Russian official on Monday urged Armenian forces to withdraw from territory they have seized inside Azerbaijan, the official Russian news agency Itar-Tass reported, says Reuter.

First deputy Foreign Minister Anatoly Adamishin, during a brief visit to the Azeri capital Baku, also told Azerbaijan's President Haydar Aliyev that Russia backed the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, Tass said.

Azerbaijan and Armenia have been fighting since 1980 over the Armenian populated enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh, which was placed under Baku's rule by the Kremlin in 1923.

Karabakh Armenians, with strong military and political support from Armenia proper, drove local Azeris out of the enclave last year and occupied large swathes of Azeri territory including areas close to the southern border with Iran.

Mandela warns of uprising if elections are delayed

THOHOYANDOU, South Africa, Mar 8: African National Congress supporters will rise up in anger if the nation's first all-race election is delayed, Nelson Mandela warned Tuesday, reports AP.

Dissident groups opposing the April 26-28 election have called for a postponement to permit further negotiations and international mediation of their demands for autonomous or independent states in post-apartheid South Africa.

Mandela told a morning news conference that his ANC, which is favoured to win the vote, refused to consider any delay.

"There is no possibility whatsoever of us shifting on this stance," he said. "If we did that, even our own members of the ANC would hang us."

He repeated his rejection of a whites-only homeland demanded by right-wing whites, saying he has made his position clear in talks with leaders of the Afrikaner Volksfront — an umbrella organisation of pro-apartheid whites claiming to represent the nation's 3 million Afrikaners, the Dutch-descended white settlers of South Africa.

Mandela also condemned Lucas Mangope, president of the Bophuthatswana black

homeland, which has allied itself with the pro-apartheid whites in seeking autonomy. Bophuthatswana was one of 10 tribal homelands created under apartheid and considers itself an independent nation.

The ANC plans to incorporate Bophuthatswana and the other homelands into South Africa after the election, but Mangope has vowed to resist.

Mandela accused Mangope of refusing to allow free political activities, and he called on the government to cut funding to the homeland, which generates only 26 per cent of its own revenue.

40 killed as train derails in South Africa

DURBAN, Mar 8: At least 40 people were killed Tuesday when a packed commuter train derailed near Pinetown outside the South African port of Durban, rescue officials said, reports Reuter.

"We have 40 people killed... we have three busloads of injured people being taken to hospital," Pinetown Protection Services Director Burger Van Heerden told Reuters.

Van Heerden said the accident, which he described as the worst train disaster in Natal province, took place shortly before 6 am (0400 GMT).

US defends military talks with China

CANBERRA, Mar 8: US Secretary of State Warren Christopher on Tuesday defended military consultations with China, saying they do not portend broader links, reports AP.

Christopher appeared taken aback when asked by a reporter whether US Undersecretary of Defense Frank Wisner's talks with Chinese officials will send a positive signal to Beijing.

"I think that our defense cooperation with China, at the moment, is in a very narrow range of issues, we're talking about defence conversion."

"The stories of any broader defence cooperation with China are pure speculation," Christopher said.

The Secretary of State was attending a signing ceremony for a memo of understanding for cooperation on environmental research and cleanup between the United States and Australian Environmental Protection agencies.

Wisner will accompany Christopher to Beijing this weekend, where the Secretary of State will meet Chinese officials. It will be difficult for President Clinton to renew China's most-favoured nation trade status unless they improve their human rights practices.

Wisner would be the highest-ranking Pentagon official to visit China in eight years.

On Monday night, Christopher downplayed connotations of US coddling of China in responding to a similar question about US moves to "briskly and promptly reconsider clearing the way for launch of a US-made Australian telecommunication satellite on a Chinese rocket."

Asked whether approval of the satellite would send the wrong signal to China, Christopher said, "It sends a signal of evenhanded treatment that was not a particular favour we were doing China."



Women of the Sarajevo neighbourhood of Marin Dvor turn their sidewalk into a washing room, March 07. A sudden turn of warm weather has given people an opportunity to do some 'spring cleaning'. — AFP Photo

40 feared dead in Lake Victoria ferry capsizes

NAIROBI, Mar 8: More than 40 people were feared drowned on Monday after a passenger ferry capsized on Lake Victoria in a storm, Kenyan television said, reports Reuter.

It said about 40 rescue vessels had arrived at the scene Sunday near Sikiri Island, six km (four miles) from Shoma bay town on the Eastern Kenyan shore of the lake.

The report said 24 bodies had so far been recovered but it was feared that the death toll was at least 47.

Bosnian war causes deep-rooted mental scars among children

BELGRADE, Mar 8: An entire generation of children harbouring deep-rooted mental scars is being brought up in the war zones of Croatia and Bosnia, and in sanction-gripped former Yugoslavia, reports IPS.

Witnessing the destruction of their homes, seeing friends and relatives slaughtered, and being torn from their families and sent away as refugees are causing serious problems now, and will lead to further problems in the future, say mental health experts here.

"The crisis in Yugoslavia has gone on too long," says Belgrade psychologist Ksenija Kondic. "There is no way to plan the fu-

ture. People feel hopeless, insecure and anxious. They are facing a life without prospects, one that is led from day to day."

Kondic, together with four colleagues is the founder of a Belgrade advisory centre for war-related mental health problems.

He says war atrocities, new models of behaviour and economic hardships, have touched everyone but it is the children who suffer most.

In three years of war, Belgrade mental health institute has treated several thousand children.

Experts at the institute say the most common psychological

disorders among children from war zones are disturbed eating and sleeping patterns, bed wetting, aggression, hyperactivity and an inability to get along with other children.

Being too small or unable to express their feelings, some children suffer physical symptoms such as asthma. "Unlike adults, children cannot express their anxieties verbally and their problems may go unnoticed," says Veronica Ispanovic from the institute.

The trouble is that some of the things that have happened to them could sink into the part of their unconscious and reappear sometime in the future

bringing the unexpected changes in behaviour that can be dangerous," says Dr Svetomir Bojanin.

Psychiatrist Jovan Bukelje agrees. He also says the children are likely to develop psychosomatic disorders later in life the most common of which would be stomach ulcers.

"Tomorrow, when there are no more tears, the other parts of the body will start to cry," he adds.

Rump Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) is now home to about 600,000 refugees from Croatia and Bosnia. According to the Red Cross, 90,000 of them are children under the age of

seven. Most are Serbs who had to flee war zones, but about 15 per cent are husbands, wives and children from mixed marriages. Some 95 per cent have found shelter at their relatives' homes in Serbia.

One of the most serious problems is the problem of children coming from mixed marriages," says Veda Rakic of the institute.

Before the war of disintegration in Yugoslavia, about their of marriages in Croatia and about a quarter of those in Bosnia were mixed.

"My mother is a Croat. My father is a Serb. I am nothing,"

Off the Record

НАКОМЕЦ В РОССИИ!



Top US model Cindy Crawford poses on the cover of the first Russian edition of Cosmopolitan magazine. Cosmopolitan will soon be on sale in Moscow, with a circulation of 60000 and sold for around 2 USD. — AFP photo

Fight over remote control leads to reckless manslaughter

NEWARK, N.J.: A 65-year-old woman was convicted of reckless manslaughter Monday for fatally shooting her husband during a fight over the couple's television remote control, which had been misplaced, reports AP.

Jurors deliberated about three days before convicting Ellen Gartland of Newark, New Jersey.

Mrs. Gartland testified during her weeklong trial in Superior Court that she and her 64-year-old husband, John, had been drinking at a neighbourhood bar before the shooting. They went home to discover the remote control was missing.

"Her husband demanded to know where the remote was and apparently they couldn't locate it," said Edward Gordon, assistant Essex County prosecutor.

Mrs. Gartland testified that after her husband shoved her, she got a shotgun from the closet to frighten him. She said it went off accidentally.

She faces up to 10 years in prison at her June 10 sentencing.

Priests admit molesting boys

HOLLIDAYSBURG: A retired Roman Catholic bishop admitted Monday he did little after three priests privately confessed to sexually molesting boys, reports AP.

James J. Hogan, bishop of the Altoona-Johnstown Diocese from 1966 to 1987, said he later transferred the priests, but not because of molestation. He said when he learned one priest was rubbing his penis on the bottom of the feet of young boys, he was not concerned the priest might be a pedophile.

"I did not recognise it as child molestation," he said. The revelations came as Hogan was cross-examined in the trial of another priest, the Rev. Francis E. Luddy, who is accused in a lawsuit of molesting Michael Hutchison Jr. from 1978 to 1984.

Hutchison, now 27, says the diocese and Hogan knew priests were molesting boys and followed a policy of moving them from one parish to another. Hutchison is seeking unspecified damages from the diocese, Hogan, Luddy and a parish where Luddy served.

Oldest Bentley car in the world destroyed

SOLIHULL, England: Fire destroyed the oldest Bentley car in the world on Monday and fans of the luxury marque said the one million pound (1.49 million dollar) vehicle was irreplaceable, reports Reuter.

The car, built in September 1921, was powered by an engine from the first production Bentley ever made in 1919 and its chassis was taken from the fifth.

The vehicle, owned by an unnamed businessman, was destroyed in a fire at an engineering firm in Solihull in central England where it was being restored and repaired with six other vintage Bentleys.

"This is a terrible day for Bentley owners. They must be devastated," said Bill Port, secretary of the Bentley drivers club.

Black family sues US govt for enslaving their ancestors

RICHMOND: A black family is suing the federal government for 2 million dollar in slavery reparations and to pay for a move to Africa, reports AP.

Khari A. Abayomi's lawsuit cites the kidnapping of his ancestors from Africa, their enslavement and forced labour, the breakup of their families and other wrongs. He wants a formal apology and "compensation for forced, ancestral indoctrination into a foreign society."

Abayomi filed the lawsuit January 28 in US District Court in Richmond.

Robert Jaspens, an executive assistant US attorney, refused to discuss the substance of the lawsuit.

Abayomi, 30, is a computer software developer with his own business. He lives in Highland Springs, a community about five miles (eight kilometers) east of Richmond. Abayomi, his wife, and three young children are seeking the money as a means to relocate to Africa.

27000 weapons still in hands of Nicaraguans

MANAGUA, Mar 8: Some 27,000 weapons, most of them AK 47 rifles, are still in hands of civilians, Ramon Arnoso Soza, chief of the Special Disarmament Brigade (SDB) was quoted as saying today, reports Xinhua.

In an interview with "Barricada" newspaper, the SDB leader said that 7,000 of those weapons have been sidetracked from Nicaragua to drug traffickers in exchange for drugs, sea products, clothing and home appliances.