

BRIEFLY

Murayama to delay ROK visit:

Japanese Prime Minister Tomichi Murayama will delay his planned visit to South Korea amid confusion after the death of North Korean leader Kim Il-Sung. Deputy Prime Minister Yohei Kono said on Sunday. Reuter reports from Tokyo.

Kono, in a live television interview from Naples where he was attending the Group of Seven summit meeting, said Murayama would visit South Korea but the original July 16 date would be changed.

2 die in US chopper crash:

A helicopter crashed on its way to rescue an injured hiker Saturday, killing both people on board. AP reports from Buena Vista.

The helicopter was trying to find a spot to land near the hiking accident victim when it crashed. Chaffee county Undersheriff Dave Bowers said.

Eight other rescue team members on the ground were able to respond virtually immediately, but the pilot and a flight nurse aboard apparently were killed on impact, he said. Bowers said one person on the ground was injured in the crash.

Ukrainians go to polls:

Ukrainians went to the polls in rainy weather to choose a president Sunday, settling a hotly contested runoff contest between incumbent Leonid Kravchuk and a strong pro-Russian challenger, AP reports from Kiev.

Kravchuk, a slight favourite over Leonid Kuchma, was buoyed by Western leaders' endorsement late Saturday of 4 billion dollars in aid for Ukraine. He appeared upbeat at the polls, saying he was "voting for a happy Ukraine."

'Iran only independent state':

Iran believes it is the world's only independent state. Reuter reports from Nicosia.

"The Islamic Republic is the world's only country that is truly independent of foreign powers," the official news agency IRNA quoted Majlis (Parliament) Speaker Ali Akbar Nateq-Nouri as saying on Saturday.

"The government of the Islamic Republic relies first on almighty Allah (God) and next on the support it receives from the masses," he was quoted as telling the people of Bahar near the western Iranian city of Hamedan.

Voting starts in Belarus:

Voting opened in Belarus yesterday in a presidential runoff poll to decide between Alexander Lukachenko, who won 44.8 of the vote in the first round last month, and the conservative prime minister, Viacheslav Kebich. AFP reports from Minsk.

Lukachenko was a clear favourite to become the former Soviet republic's first president, his opponent having scored only 17.3 per cent in the June 26 poll.

For the election to be valid at least 50 per cent of the 7.5 million voters must turn out by the close of polling at 10:00 PM (1800 GMT).

4 killed in French Alps:

Holiday accidents in the French Alps killed four people over the weekend, a Japanese woman who fell to her death while hiking and three French canoeists crushed by falling ice as they descended a mountain river. AP reports from Chamomix.

Mountain police said the Japanese woman, 59, was walking alone Saturday near a shelter on 4,807-meter (15,770-foot) Mount Blanc when she slipped on some ice and fell 250 meters (820 feet) to her death. She had stayed behind at the shelter while her husband headed toward the summit with a guide police said.

The couple was from Yamanashi, but their names were not released.

Protest against killing of two Israelis

JERUSALEM, July 10: Thousands of Israeli opponents of peace with the PLO demonstrated in cities across Israel on Saturday night against the killing of two Israelis by Palestinian guerrillas in the West Bank, reports Reuter.

The biggest protests organised by the Settlers Council representing more than 100,000 Jewish residents of the territories, took place outside Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's homes in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv.

Hundreds of police surrounded the protesters and no scuffles were reported. But police dispersed some demonstrations they said were illegal and arrested several demonstrators.

In Jerusalem, where a week earlier tens of thousands of right-wing Israelis crammed the city centre, only a few thousand marched peacefully, with torches to Rabin's residence.

They blamed the peace accord between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation for the killing this week of a soldier and a settler by Muslim gunmen also against the deal.

It's not peace it's terror, read a large banner. In Tel Aviv, protesters shouted "Rabin is a traitor" and burned a large picture of the prime minister.

Several hundred demonstrators also gathered in other

cities, including Haifa, Ashdod and Eilat.

The Israeli army continued its curfew on the West Bank city of Hebron imposed after the killing of a 17-year old girl from the nearby Kiryat Arab settlement on Thursday and poured troops into the area to track down the killers and contain violence.

Arafat seeks Fahd's help to implement self-rule

DUBAI, July 10: Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat met Saudi Arabia's King Fahd on Saturday on a visit to the Kingdom to seek badly needed financial help to implement Palestinian self-rule in Gaza and Jericho, Reuter reports.

Saudi television news said Arafat had met King Fahd at a place in the Red Sea port of Jeddah, but did not give details of what was discussed. Palestinian officials were not immediately available for comment.

The meeting was attended by senior Saudi officials including second Deputy Prime Minister Prince Sultan Bin Abdul-Aziz and Foreign Affairs Minister Prince Saud Al-Faisal.

Earlier Arafat warned the leaders of the world's richest nations that the Middle East peace process would collapse unless they provided financial aid for his people.

Shortage of funds forces India to halt major N-power plan

BOMBAY, July 10: India's ambitious nuclear power programme, aimed at generating 10,000 megawatts by the turn of the century, has virtually ground to a halt due to lack of funds.

Samir Chatterjee, Managing Director of the Nuclear Power Corp (NPC), told AFP in an interview here that new projects had been put on hold after New Delhi held back funding, citing a cash crunch.

He said the state-owned nuclear power supplier had four new reactors under construction as part of plans drawn up in 1987, before the NPC was transformed into a state-owned corporation from a government department.

"Beyond these there are no new projects due to a shortage of funds," he said. Plans for 10 more reactors had been shelved.

Two reactors are being built in the desert state of Rajasthan and two in Kalga in the southern state of Karnataka with a combined capacity of

880 megawatts after they are commissioned in 1997, he said.

But the projected target of 10,000 megawatts by 2000 from the present level of 1,720 megawatts was now unattainable, Chatterjee said.

The government had placed orders for 10 new reactors before the NPC was set up which would have taken supply to 7,000 megawatts by 1999, he said. "Out of these, the union cabinet had approved two but no money came through."

"In addition, plans had been drawn up for six more reactors each generating 500 megawatts. We could have met our original target," Chatterjee added.

The NPC official cited a small operational base and low power tariffs, fixed by New Delhi, for poor resource generation and said self-financing for new projects was out of the question.

"We get only 12 per cent

return for depreciated capital and we sell power cheap. Budgetary support from New Delhi is only 50 million dollars and we can generate only 26 million dollars internally."

"That is not enough for a new atomic power plant," he said. "We cannot raise money from the market as interest rates are very high."

Chatterjee said, "a one-one-one debt to equity ratio deal worked out with New Delhi had not been successful" as the money was not forthcoming from the government.

"So we changed the ratio to 2:1. This pushes up costs drastically as we pay a minimum of 17 per cent interest on debt," he said.

"We are telling the government to give us more money," he said. "It is in the interest of the country to support the nuclear power programme... the support should be there at least till 2000."

He said the NPC would try to raise funds through a public issue offered by a planned

subsidiary which would combine ongoing units with new projects and be "attractive from the investors' point of view."

Chatterjee said the NPC with its nine operating reactors and six power stations which generate 1,720 megawatts of power — or 2.5 per cent of the national output — had posted a 30 million dollar profit last year.

"By ourselves we are a profitable firm," he said. "But I am loaded with half-finished projects for which not enough money is coming from the government."

Two of the six NPC plants in Tarapur (built in the western state of Maharashtra in 1969) and in Rajasthan operate under inspections by the International Atomic Energy Agency.

India, however, has refused to sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty saying it discriminates between the nuclear haves and have-nots.

Fear of military instability diminishes

SEOUL, July 10: Fears of military instability on the Korean Peninsula diminished Sunday as indications grew that the Communist world's first father-to-son dynasty had taken hold, reports AP.

North Koreans, meanwhile, plunged into a week of frenzied mourning for their "Great Leader" Kim Il Sung, whose death at 82 from a heart attack was announced Saturday, a day after he died.

The North's political realignment was being closely watched for clues as to whether the hard-line state might now pose an even greater nuclear threat than previously, and what prospects might be for a North-South rapprochement.

South Korea initially had feared a chaotic power struggle might break out in the wake of Kim's death and spill across the border. Two days after Kim's death, it remained wary.

But by Sunday, it appeared that Kim's 52-year-old son and handpicked heir, Kim Jong Il, had taken control of the Pyongyang government.

The North's official news agency heaped praise on the late leader for his "greatest and priceless revolutionary feat" in picking a successor.

There were signs Kim was moving swiftly to consolidate his power base. Officials of the North's ruling Workers' Party were ordered to convene in Pyongyang by Monday, ostensibly to pay collective tribute to their late leader.

But a senior South Korean official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the gathering could be meant to pave the way for the quick election of the young Kim as party chief.

Southern officials took the developments as an indication that Kim Jong Il, at least for now, has managed to hold off hard-line military elements who likely had hoped to grab power upon his father's death.

North Korea's state radio on Sunday broadcast even more programmes than before extolling the younger Kim's virtues, and carried statements from a long line of top officials pledging loyalty to him.

In the demilitarised zone dividing the Koreas, cross-border loudspeaker announcements referred to Kim Jong Il as "His Excellency" — normally the term used to refer to the head of state.

Military officials reported no increase in troop activity Sunday along the tense, highly fortified North-South border. In fact, they reported that the North had halted virtually all training exercises, presumably as a sign of respect.



Thousands of people kneel down or stand in front of a giant statue of North Korean President Kim Il-Sung to mourn the death of the late president at the Korean Revolution Museum in Pyongyang on Saturday. — AFP photo

Govt tries to form unity cabinet S Yemenis plan guerilla war

SANAA, July 10: Yemen's victorious northern government set about forming a new unity cabinet but southern secessionist leaders who escaped from Yemen in the dying days of the civil war met in Saudi Arabia to plan their next moves.

One said this would include carrying on their struggle through guerrilla war against Sanaa's forces.

An official source in Sanaa told Reuters the government had begun consultations over a new cabinet, which would include southerners who had opposed a bid by southern leaders to dissolve a united Yemen formed in 1990.

"The government's aim would be to achieve national reconciliation at home overcoming the traces of the war, and forging a formula for relations with neighbouring countries, foremost of which is Saudi Arabia," he said.

Sanaa's forces entered the breakaway South's bastion of Aden on Thursday after capturing most of the South's population centres and military bases in a war that began on May 4.

An Arab League official told Reuters in Sanaa that northern President Ali Abdullah Saleh had asked a League delegation for help in getting back warplanes used by the South which had escaped unnamed neighbouring countries at the war's end.

It was not clear how many

planes were involved. In the two days since Sanaa announced Aden's fall, the value of the Yemeni rial traded by the northern capital's money-changers has soared, and is now at just 84 rials to the US dollar compared to 120 earlier in the week.

The state-controlled media

Mountbatten's killer released for talks with N Ireland

LONDON, July 10: An IRA bomber serving a life sentence for the murder of Lord Mountbatten was secretly released from prison to help in the peace negotiations in Northern Ireland, a British newspaper said today, reports Reuter.

The Mail on Sunday said Thomas McMahon, who was convicted of planting the device that killed Queen Elizabeth's cousin in 1979, was released for five days so he could persuade other members of the Irish Republican Army to stop fighting.

Officially, McMahon was allowed out to spend time with his family, the paper said. "Instead, he attended two secret meetings... with Sinn Fein leaders, the influential South Armagh Brigade and prisoners released from jails in Northern Ireland for the same purpose."

The situation in Aden, which was heavily shelled by northern forces during weeks of siege, was chaotic today.

The number of northern troops in the city centre was deliberately kept to a minimum about 3,000 men and the Sanaa appointed civil administration had yet to take control.

Off the Record

Mukai hopes to dine on sushi in space

TOKYO: Japan's first female astronaut is looking forward to marking another milestone — being the first in space to dine on sushi, reports AP.

Dr. Chaiki Mukai rocketed into space Friday aboard the shuttle Columbia on a two-week laboratory research mission.

The 42-year-old heart surgeon from Tokyo told Japanese Foreign Minister Yohei Kono and Makiko Tanaka, director general of the science and technology Agency, on Sunday that she was looking forward to eating sushi and octopus cakes and other traditional Japanese foods.

She told the officials during a 10-minute conversation that she was amazed by the view. "The earth is simply beautiful from here... It's not like in photos. I wish I could show it to everyone."

But Mukai said her duties have been keeping her very busy. "I was able to look at the earth for a few minutes about a half-hour after takeoff, but other than that, I don't get a whole lot of time to look out the window," she said, adding that the crew was keeping very busy managing the shuttle's experiments.

In a natural reaction to weightlessness, both Mukai's and Commander Robert Cabana's faces appeared slightly bloated in live coverage of the conversation Sunday morning on the Japan Broadcasting Corp.

"I felt a little ill early on, but after we got into orbit I was fine," Mukai said, referring to a bout of motion sickness.

Lesbian colonel returns to work after 2 yrs

CMP MURRAY, Washington: Two years after Col. Margaret Cammermeyer was kicked out of the National Guard for being a lesbian, the highly decorated Vietnam veteran was back at her old job on Saturday, reports AP.

A federal court ordered her reinstatement last month, ruling her discharge based on her sexual orientation was unconstitutional. The 9th US Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco on Thursday refused to delay that order.

A smiling Cammermeyer, dressed in a camouflage uniform, entered the main gate at Washington National Guard headquarters, south of Tacoma, to return to her job as chief of nursing services for the 164th Mobile Army Surgical Hospital.

Guard commander Maj Gen Greg Barlow asked Cammermeyer to report to work Saturday after the appeals court rejected the Justice department's latest effort to block her reinstatement.

"I never knew the military to move so fast," Cammermeyer said Friday night. "I'm more disappointed that it's taken two years to get here."

Monkey business indeed!

SYDNEY: Officials say a fire that damaged a zoo's orangutan quarters Sunday was strictly a case of monkey business, reports AP.

Firefighters were called to the Taronga Park Zoo after shredded paper bedding caught fire in an area shared by females Wanita and Willow.

Paul Davies, manager of the zoo's primate division, said he believes Willow poked a strip of cardboard from her bed through her bars and into a wall heater, sparking a blaze.

Senior keeper Lisa Naylor smelled smoke and moved the primate pair upstairs to the rainforest section. She then doused the flames and called firefighters.

Orangutans are listed as endangered in Southeast Asia. The Taronga zoo houses six of them.

Fighting increases in north Bosnia

SARAJEVO, July 10: Fighting has increased in the north Bosnian Ozren sector with heavy shelling and infantry assaults over the past 24 hours, a UN spokesman said here this morning, reports AFP.

There appears to be more infantry fighting, compared to previous days. UN protection force spokesman Commander Eric Chaperon said, pointing to an increase in small arms and machine gun fire in the Gračanica sector.

A total of 667 heavy detonations were reported along the eastern Ozren mountain front during the same 24-hour period, he said.

Meanwhile, in the western Bosnia Bihac pocket where government forces are waging a double battle against Serbs on the one hand and against Muslim rebels on the other, heavy fighting was also reported Saturday afternoon.

The situation in the town of Bihac remained confused with UN forces consigned to barracks by Bosnian military police. Sarajevo radio Sunday broadcast a victory statement by Bosnian army 5th corps commander, General Atif Dudaković, saying an attempt by Muslim rebels to attack Bihac had been smashed.

The Muslims under the command of regional leader Fikret Abdic, who declared his area autonomous last September, have been assisted in their rebellion by both Bosnian and Croatian Serbs who encircle the border enclave.

Reuter reports from Sarajevo: UN special envoy Yasushi Akashi raced against time to persuade Bosnian Muslims and Croats to go along with the Serbs and prolong a truce before it expired at 0959 GMT today.

The truce, although not entirely holding, is designed to enable all three sides in the 27-month conflict to assess an international plan drawn up by the Western powers and Russia dividing Bosnia into two almost equal parts.

Serbs, agreed on Friday to extend the ceasefire but Akashi reached only partial agreement with the Muslim Croat alliance at an earlier meeting.

Jammu Akali Dal chief shot dead

JAMMU, July 10: The President of Jammu and Kashmir unit of Akali Dal (Mann) Harnam Singh, was gunned down by militants in Nanak Nagar area here this morning, reports PTL.

Militants fired at Singh when he went to the market, an official spokesman said, adding he died instantly.

Singh was a former secretary of Guardwara Prabhankar Committee. Last year militants had thrown a grenade at his house but there were no casualties.

Some women from a television station came here the other day to do a story on the fountain. They drank the water and called us the next day and said: 'It's worked already.'

For single drinkers, Arboleda had a word of advice. "For all those people who came here tonight hoping to meet someone, I want to say: The solution does not lie in a glass of water because if a person is not able to laugh and break the barriers which divide us, the water although it is magical, will not work."

There are very few single people in this town. That is the proof," said Luisa Martin Ortiz of Daimalos.

"A woman from Arenas came here to a friend's house. She drank a glass of water and said: Oh, it's good. I'll have another. Shortly afterwards, she

13.2 lakh foreign residents in Japan

TOKYO, July 10: The number of registered foreign residents in Japan, totalled a record 1,320,748 at the end of 1993, accounting for 1.06 per cent of the country's total population, the Justice Ministry said, reports Kyodo.

The figure was up 40 per cent from five years ago and 60 per cent up from a decade ago, ministry officials said.

Koreans totalled 682,200, accounting for 52 per cent of the total, followed by 210,100 Chinese, 154,600 Brazilians and 73,000 Filipinos, they said.

An agency survey, conducted in November last year covering 1,524 language schools and universities nationwide, found that a record 76,940 people were studying the Japanese language, exceeding the previous record of 72,488 set in 1989.

Spaniards celebrate first festival of the fountain of love

DAIMALOS, Spain, July 10: Maria Jose tipped back her head and directed a jet of cool water from the three-handled earthenware jug into her mouth, reports Reuter.

"It's lovely, very cold," she said as her husband filled a plastic container with water from the fountain of love.

The sleepy village of Daimalos, huddled among the hills and almond trees of southern Spain, came alive to celebrate the first festival of the fountain of love.

Centre of attention was the water, hailed by the 12th century Arabs as a cure for impotence and infertility and subsequently covered over by disapproving Christians who thought its claims bordered on witchcraft.

According to legend, those who drink from the fountain will be married within a year.

But those who have already tied the knot need no despair. This magic water can extend the man's orgasm and guarantee that a woman will have one, says a sign along the rutted, winding path which climbs from the main and only road in Daimalos to the fountain.

The water trickles from a disappointingly ordinary tap set in the front wall of a building which encloses the source, covered by the original 12th century ceiling.

The mayor of nearby arenas, Antonio Ruiz, organised the fiesta late last month as part of what he calls magic rural tourism.

"Magic rural tourism involves the legends which all Spanish towns have and which for one reason or another have not been exploited," he said.

Arab settlers, who built the Ben Tomim Castle which

frowns down on Daimalos from a nearby hill, were the first to exploit the peculiar characteristics of the water.

The Arabs used to send their young people down from the castle to drink because they knew the water worked," said Ruiz.

His cousin, Encarna Pareja, who moved to Daimalos after her marriage at the age of 21, uses the water in her cooking.

"It's very effective. We are very happy here," she said, clutching the brimming Pepsi bottle she had just filled.

But some of the drinkers were less than keen on the water's ability to speed one to the altar.

Rafael de Montserrat said he had come to get some water as a favour for a sick friend. "I'm not thinking of getting married this year, or the next," he declared as his girlfriend Isabel nodded emphatically.

Anthropologist Eduardo Arboleda unearthed the legend of the fountain while studying the superstitions of the area.

"The fountain had its golden age under the Arabs in the 12th century but it is probably older than that," he said.

When the Catholic monarchs Isabella and Ferdinand, the Crown Prince of Aragon, came out power in the latter half of the 15th century and expelled the Moors, everything changed.

"The fountain was lost when the Christians arrived. As sexuality is something the church is not too fond of, they closed it up and covered it over," said Arboleda.

The very name of the town suggests disapproval as Daimalos' comes from the Spanish words "Aqui hay malos" or "here there are bad people," he added.

But the people were not to