

BRIEFLY

US court blocks N-fuel shipment:

A federal judge indefinitely blocked the shipment of spent nuclear fuel from Europe into South Carolina, saying the state has a right to challenge the environmental safety of a storage plan, AFP reports from Columbia, South Carolina.

US district judge Matthew Perry rejected arguments from the department of energy and issued a preliminary injunction blocking the shipment of 152 fuel rods from several European countries. He issued a temporary order last week.

UN to supervise Angolan truce:

The UN will have the overall responsibility of supervising a new ceasefire in Angola, peace negotiators agreed in Lusaka Tuesday, AFP reports from Lusaka.

The agreement on the UN mandate in a post-war Angola between the government and the rebel UNITA movement ends a protracted phase of the talks which began in Lusaka last November.

Banker shot dead in Japan:

An executive director of Sumitomo Bank was shot dead near his home in the central Japanese city of Nagoya early Wednesday morning, police said. Reuter reports from Tokyo.

The body of Kazufumi Hatanaka, 54, who was manager of the bank's Nagoya branch, was found by neighbours outside his 10th floor apartment with a gunshot wound to the head, a local police spokesman said.

6 die in UK gangway collapse:

Six people were killed and at least seven injured when a gangway collapsed as they were boarding a ferry for Belgium yesterday, police said, AFP reports from Ramsgate, Britain.

Nearly 40 firemen went to the scene with heavy lifting gear to try to free people from the debris.

OANA meet ends:

Major news organisations in the Asia-Pacific region yesterday accused some transnational news agencies of adopting "unethical and unfair practices" to "grab information markets" in the region, misusing the concept of free flow of information, PTI reports from Beijing.

Nearly 30 news agencies, including Japan's Kyodo, South Korea's Yonhap, Malaysia's Bernama and the Press Trust of India adopted a resolution to this effect at the ninth general assembly of the Organisation of Asia-Pacific News Agencies (OANA) which ended a three-day meeting here.

US secret service's nightmare:

Threats from the air long have remained the Secret Service's worst nightmare. This week's crash of a small plane on the White House lawn was dramatic reminder — and a warning that things could have been worse, AP reports from Washington.

The plane crash, which narrowly missed the presidential living quarters, is expected to prompt new, tighter security measures and more intensive air monitoring of the restricted airspace that includes the White House, the Capitol and other major federal buildings.

Amnesty for peace in Brazil:

Amnesty International urged Brazil's presidential candidates Wednesday to commit themselves to ending "the cycle of violence, which has brought despair to countless Brazilians," AP reports from Brasilia.

The appeal to candidates in the October 3 election was contained in a 21-page report, "Beyond Despair — An Agenda for Human Rights in Brazil," which the London-based human rights organisation released in the capital, Brasilia.

Liberians reject peace pact:

Delegates at a peace conference on Tuesday rejected a new pact to end Liberia's war, saying it would replace the interim government with a military junta of killers and looters, AP reports from Monrovia, Liberia.

"No! No! No to military rule!" chanted delegates at the national conference for peace in Monrovia.

7 Filipinos drown:

Seven people have drowned and two others are missing after huge waves swept them away at a beach resort where they were having an office picnic, a company official said Wednesday, AP reports from Manila.

Menlou Pibonia, vice president for marketing of Jollibee Foods Corp., said the incident happened Monday in Morong town, 80 kilometers (50 miles) west of Manila. The victims were from the Jollibee fast food outlet in nearby San Fernando, she said.

Hashish seized in Karachi:

Pakistani customs seized seven tonnes to high-quality hashish found in a container in the port of Karachi, officials said yesterday, Reuter reports for Karachi.

A spokesman for the customs department said the container, in the name of a Lahore-based exporter, was due to have been loaded on a ship bound for Poland. He did not name the vessel.

12 Jawara men rounded up:

Twelve former members of the government of Gambian President Sir Dawda Jawara before his overthrow in a military coup on July 22 were arrested Tuesday for unknown reasons, an informed source said, AFP reports from Banjul.

They were originally detained in the wake of the coup then placed under house arrest, where they were allowed to receive visitors.

Russian-Japan exercise:

Russia and Japan sent patrol and rescue ships to sea Wednesday as the two nations launched their first joint maritime rescue exercise, a news agency reported, AP says from Vladivostok.

The exercise might help ease the frictions between Moscow and Tokyo over alleged poaching. Russia accuses Japanese and other fishermen of frequently violating its territorial waters, and has launched a special operation this year to prevent poaching.

Renamo to run Mozambique polls:

Mozambique's former rebel Renamo Movement which has complained of lack of funds to fight the country's first multiparty elections next month, said on Tuesday it would definitely run, Reuter reports from Maputo.

Renamo Secretary General Vicente Ululu told a Maputo news conference that if Renamo boycotted the elections, the Mozambican people might live in uncertainty, which we don't want.

Lesotho King restores Mokhehle govt

MASERU, Sept 14: Lesotho's King Letsie restored to power today the government of ousted Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle, state radio reported, says Reuter.

A peace agreement, signed by the monarch and Mokhehle and guaranteed by Zimbabwe, Botswana and South Africa, specifies the immediate restoration of the sacked Prime Minister's government, which the King dissolved on August 17.

AP adds: Under the agreement, negotiated by the King, Mokhehle and envoys from South Africa, Botswana, and Zimbabwe, all participants in the peaceful ousting of Mokhehle's government August 17 would receive amnesty from prosecution.

It also would allow Letsie to abdicate so his father, King Moshoeshoe II, could replace him as king, and set up a national forum to discuss problems that led to the military backed ousting of the government chosen in last year's election. The first multiparty vote in Lesotho in two decades.

Mokhehle's Basotho Congress Party won the election and took over the government from military rulers.

Sporadic skirmishes erupted in ensuing months between rival military factions. Some military officers feared Mokhehle would eliminate the monarchy, the traditional leadership in Lesotho.

**Sharif ends anti-Benazir train march
Long march on Islamabad soon**

PESHAWAR, Sept 14: Pakistan's main opposition leader Nawaz Sharif concluded today the first stage of his anti-government campaign and announced the launch of a political "long march" on Islamabad, reports AFP.

Sharif, speaking at the end of a 1,700 kilometre (1000 mile) cross-country rail journey said he would call the march to continue his campaign to force the government of Benazir Bhutto to step down and call fresh elections.

Sharif, the former prime minister, left the southern city of Karachi by train on Sunday and travelled via Lahore in the east of the country, to Rawalpindi and ending up in the northwestern city of Peshawar. Thousands of people turned up at political rallies at

these and other more minor stops en route.

Sharif called the turnout a "vote of defiance" for Bhutto's government.

There were no major incidents during the trip and police adopted a low profile throughout.

Reuter adds: Sharif asked crowds if they were ready to face police batons in the cause of toppling Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, reports Reuter. "If I give you a call in the near future, will you join me?" He asked at least 25,000 supporters at a late night rally in the northwestern city of Peshawar. You won't be afraid of police, batons or arrest. Whenever I call you will you come?"

Sharif did not spell out his future tactics in what has been

come an increasingly bitter personal campaign against Bhutto who defeated him in a general election last October.

Very soon I'll tell you the whole programme, he said at the end of his three-day rail tour across the country, which he styled a "caravan of deliverance," to save Pakistan.

"Go go Benazir go" his supporters chanted.

There have been reports of violence during Sharif's protest journey and riot police have kept a low profile.

But people at the Peshawar rally, echoing complaints made elsewhere, said they had seen police turning back vehicles carrying Sharif supporters at checkpoints outside the town.

Witnesses said four people riding on top of one carriage of Sharif's train were swept off by

low branches. It was not immediately clear how badly they had been injured.

Sharif, hoarse and exhausted after getting a triumphant overnight reception from tens of thousands of people in his home city of Lahore, would not say exactly how he planned to engineer the downfall of Bhutto's 10-month old government.

Asked if his Pakistan Muslim League (PML) party would try to defeat her in a parliamentary vote of confidence, he told reporters that was among the options being considered.

Sharif launched his rail trip after calling last month for Bhutto and President Farooq Leghari to resign by September 11. They have ignored his deadline.

Experts to review radiation exposure to workers in Indian N-plants

BOMBAY, Sept 14: The Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB) has set up a nine-member apex committee of specialists to review the radiation exposure to workers in nuclear power plants, related facilities and other radiation installations, reports PTI.

The committee is chaired by Dr S S Ramaswamy, formerly director general, Factory Advice Service and Labour Institute, and presently a member of AERB.

The other members are Dr Arvind Kulkarni, radiation oncologist, Bombay Hospital and Research Centre, Dr Ravi Ramakrishnan, head of department of radiology, Kem hospital, G Vaidyanathan, deputy director general, directorate of Factory Advice Service and Labour Institute, Dr Abhijit Gangopadhyay of Tata Institutes of Social Sciences, S Krishnamoey, Dr G K Eyer and Dr G Venkataraman of BARC and Dr K S Parthasarathy, secretary, AERB, an official release said here.

One of the important facets of enforcing the radiation dose limits stipulated by AERB is to review the circumstances under which high levels of radiation exposures may have occurred in individual cases even while such exposures have not reached the prescribed limits.

Existing committees to review such high exposures have members drawn only from ARAB and the department of atomic energy. While these committees will continue to carry out investigations as in the past, the board has constituted an apex committee to overview the working of present committees in the critical area which involves potential over-exposures to radiation workers.

Carlos the Jackal carried forged passport

BEIRUT, Sept 14: Carlos the Jackal was carrying a stolen Lebanese passport when he was arrested and handed over to France in August, the Lebanese General Security Department said Wednesday, reports AP.

The passport held by the Venezuelan-born Carlos was among 999 passports stolen from the department during the last stages of Lebanon's 1975-1990 civil war, the department said in a statement. It said Lebanon had made several international appeals in the last four years for the arrest of anyone caught carrying the stolen passports.

France had requested clarification about the Lebanese passport Carlos held when Sudan turned him over to France six weeks ago. Lebanon's security department said France had been advised of its finding, which included a list of the serial numbers of the stolen documents.

Liberians urged to free UN observers

UNITED NATIONS, Sept 14: The Security Council on Tuesday demanded the immediate release of 43 UN military observers and six international workers seized by Liberian fighters, reports AP.

The unarmed observers were detained during the past few days and there were reports that "in some cases their situation has become quite desperate," said UN spokesman Joe Sillis.

In its statement, the Council called the seizure a "violation of international humanitarian law" and demanded that "those responsible release immediately the detained personnel."

The monitors and international workers were apparently seized by dissidents from Charles Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia.

2 FIS leaders placed under house arrest

ALGIERS, Sept 14: The top two leaders of the banned fundamentalist Muslim organisation the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) were released from prison and placed under house arrest, the president's office announced Tuesday, reports AP.

Three other jailed leaders of the Front were also released, a communiqué from

Alger's and placed under house arrest.

The communiqué did not say where Madani and Benhadi, arrested in June 1991 for "attacking state security," had been sent; only that it was "to another place of residence." Government sources however said they were moved to a nearby state-owned residence "for their own security" but would be able to receive visitors.

They had been sentenced in July 1992 to 12 years in prison each.

Noureddine Chigara, Abdelkader Omar and Kamel Guemzazi, also high-ranking FIS officials, were allowed to go free, the communiqué said.

"We are happy with the liberation of some of our leaders," said Rabah Kebir, leader of the Germany-based FIS in exile.

PHNOM PENH, Sept 14: The Cambodian government needs an "adequate" armed forces to combat the Khmer Rouge whose long-term strategy is to seize total power over the country, a visiting senior US official said today, reports AFP.

"Our judgement is that the Khmer Rouge top leadership has not changed since the days of the great genocide," said US Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Peter Tomsen, referring to the 1975-79 reign of terror by the faction which saw some two million Cambodians killed.

The target is the same and that is to seize power and go with their way of government," he told reporters at the US embassy here during a three-day visit.

FIS leader Abassi Madani and his deputy Ali Benhadi were released from a military prison in Blida, south of

Off the Record**Free condoms to protect peacekeepers from beauties**

HARARE: Zimbabwe's Defence Minister Moven Mahachi says Somali women are so beautiful he has had to warn Zimbabwean soldiers serving as peacekeepers in the horn of Africa country to behave, reports Reuter.

Mahachi, speaking in parliament on Tuesday night, agreed with an MP who said all steps, including providing free condoms, had to be taken to protect the Zimbabwean troops because they could hardly resist the Somali beauties.

"Yes, I agree the Somali women are nice-looking. Zimbabwean soldiers stationed there have been warned against interfering with them," Mahachi said. "I am happy to report that so far our army has been highly disciplined."

Porno art at nuns' gallery

SAN ANTONIO: Sculptures of genitalia. A painting of an angel having sexual intercourse on an altar. Pop star Madonna's latest book? Try the latest exhibit at an art gallery run by Roman Catholic nuns, reports AP.

The nuns and the Archdiocese of San Antonio have been besieged by irate callers. The archbishop has declared himself "highly offended, insulted and hurt at this art."

And on Tuesday, one day after the exhibit opened, it was shut down until further notice for review by the religious order that operates the gallery.

"We apologise for any confusion or hurt that the community has felt," said Edna Perez Vega, spokeswoman for the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word, an order of about 500 nuns throughout the United States, Mexico and Peru.

The exhibit of works by Houston artist Donnell Hill, titled "Spiritual, Sensual, Sexual," opened on Monday at a renovated century-old barn called ReBarn — a Center for Spirituality and Art.

Sister Alice Holden, the gallery's director, said she prayed before the exhibit went up and decided the work should be shown because "sexuality is a tremendous gift from God."

Deng's speeches to come on CD

HONG KONG: Deng Xiaoping's greatest hits are about to come out on CD, reports AP.

Four hours of speeches by the man who engineered China's economic revolution will be issued in a four disc set, "Great People's Voices: Deng Xiaoping's Original Speeches," the China-funded Ta Kung Pao newspaper of Hong Kong reported Wednesday.

It said the discourses were made between 1978 and 1985, the pinnacle of Deng's career, when he was transforming China from Maoist Communism to market style economics.

At 90, Deng is officially retired and rarely appears in public. But he remains China's most influential figure, known as the "Great Architect" of the reforms.

Ta Kung Pao said 20,000 sets of the CDs would be released Sept 25 in Beijing and elsewhere. Another 5,000 sets with an explanatory booklet in English will be released abroad, it said. It did not state the price.

Deng shunned the kind of personality cult that enveloped his predecessor, Mao Tse-tung, but lately Chinese officials have sought to glorify Deng to make sure his reforms survive him.

Last year, a Chinese company released a two-disc set of Mao's speeches, titled "Sound of the Giant Mao Tse-tung," marking the 100th anniversary of his birth.

Reception to Sushmita Sen

NEW DELHI: Miss Universe, India's Sushmita Sen was given a rousing reception here on Wednesday as she paraded down a main avenue of the capital in a carriage flying the Indian flag and drawn by four white horses, reports AP.

Thousands of New Delhi residents and schoolchildren lined the road to catch a glimpse of the 18-year-old Sen, who returned to India last week, four months after winning the title.

Dressed in white and wearing her crown, Sen, the first Indian woman to win the Miss Universe title, waved, blew kisses to the crowd and shouted, "I love India."

"Schoolchildren threw rose petals and flowers in the path of the carriage and waved white flags. 'Welcome Home, India is proud of you,' read signs along the parade route.



Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres (L) and PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat join hands in front of a choir, composed of Norwegian, Israeli and Palestinian children on Tuesday in Oslo. Peres and Arafat were celebrating the one-year anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Principles on Palestinian autonomy. —AFP photo

Delhi pledges to enforce SC verdict on Babri Mosque

NEW DELHI, Sept 14: India's government pledged even-handed treatment of Hindus and Muslims today in resolving their lingering conflict over the razed Babri Mosque, and promised to enforce any court verdict on the dispute.

The pledge was contained in a government deposition to the Supreme Court, which will decide on Hindu claims that the 16th century mosque in Ayodhya was built on the ruins of a Lord Rama temple.

The government referred the dispute to arbitration by the court after Hindu militants on December 6, 1992 stormed and tore down the crumbling mosque. Nearly 2,000 people died in ensuing religious riots across the country.

"Government will treat the finding of the Supreme Court as final and binding," solicitor general Dipankar Gupta said in a written undertaking to a five-judge bench dealing with the issue.

Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao's government stood by "the policies of secularism and even-handed treatment of all religious communities," the statement said.

"Government is committed to the construction of a temple and mosque, but their actual location will be determined only after the Supreme Court renders its opinion."

If efforts for a negotiated settlement between the two communities prove futile, the government would enforce a

solution on the lines of court findings, the undertaking said.

Hindus believe that the site of the Babri Mosque makes the birthplace of Rama, the warrior hero of the epic Ramayana whom they revere as an incarnation of Vishnu, one of the trinity of Hindu gods.

They claim that the moghuls built the Babri Mosque after demolishing a Rama temple that existed on the site.

Muslims, the largest religious minority in the overwhelmingly-Hindu country, refute the claim.

Hindu fundamentalists have vowed to build a grand Rama temple on the ruins of the destroyed mosque in Ayodhya, some 700 kilometres (437 miles) east of New Delhi.

EC's dispute with J&K over

NEW DELHI, Sept 14: A 20-month-old conflict between the Election Commission and the Jammu and Kashmir government over delimitation of the state has been resolved and the Deputy Election Commissioner, N A Viswanathan, has been appointed a member of the state delimitation commission which will begin work de novo, reports PTI.

The nomination of Viswanathan by the Chief Election Commissioner, T N Seshan follows an assurance given by the Jammu and Kashmir government to the Election Commission on resuming the delimitation work which was annulled last year by the commission as being "not in consonance with" the delimitation laws of the state.

The state government in a communication to the Election Commission on September five had assured that the delimitation work will be resumed at the stage at which it was last conducted with the participation of the Chief Election

Commissioner as a member of the J and K Delimitation Commission and will now be conducted with a newly nominated DEC by the CEC.

The Election Commission of India hopes and trusts that the proceedings of the J and K Delimitation Commission be carried strictly in consonance with the letter and spirit of the provision of the J and K Constitution and the Representation of the People Act 1957, the EC order of September nine said.

In its order in January last year, the commission had rejected an order of the J and K Commission about delimitation of assembly constituencies as being without jurisdiction and authority after a protracted battle on the non-inclusion of the CEC in the commission.

The commission had also later informed the Prime Minister that unless the delimitation work was started de novo no elections could be held in the state.

In its fresh order, the

Election Commission directed that the government of J and K should confirm, at any early date, that the delimitation work will be resumed at the stage at which it was last conducted with the participation of the CEC as a member, and now conducted with a newly nominated DEC by him.

It also made it clear that for any delay in furnishing this confirmation and the consequent delay in the resumption of the work of the state delimitation commission and for any constitutional consequences arising there from, the J and K government alone would be solely responsible.

The J and K government responded to this order on September five saying the state government confirms that the delimitation work will be resumed at the stage at which it was last conducted with the participation of the CEC as a member and will now be conducted with a newly nominated DEC by him.

Arab League asks member states to fund PLO

CAIRO, Sept 14: Arab League Secretary General Esmat Abdel Meguid urged member states today to help fund Palestinian self-rule, at the opening of a foreign ministers' meeting in the Egyptian capital, reports AFP.

A financial commitment was "necessary to allow a global programme to be launched capable of promoting the required development in the autonomous territories," said Abdel Meguid.

"Arab development funds and inter-Arab economic organisations are called upon to take a greater interest" in the Gaza Strip and West Bank town of Jericho, he added.

The Palestinian authority and PLO Chairman Yasser

Arafat have complained that funds pledged by the international community to back self-rule have been withheld, endangering the smooth running of autonomy launched on May 4.

The issue of Arab support for the fledgling self-rule was at the top of the agenda for the two-day meeting, said Kamal, Deputy Secretary General for Palestinian affairs, told AFP.

Abdel Meguid also appealed for reconciliation between Arab states, saying it was time to put behind them the "bitterness and painful memories" of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in August 1990 that sharply divided loyalties.

An initiative be launched in March 1993 to promote Arab

reconciliation should "form the bases" of this process, the Secretary General said, although the issue itself was not on the agenda.

The initiative called on all Arab countries not to interfere in the internal affairs of other states and to respect their sovereignty. But so far there have been few concrete results.

Yemeni Foreign Minister Mohammad Salem Bassandawa also backed reconciliation "holding ministerial sessions has become pure tradition. We meet, we go back to our capitals, as if we had not met at all," he protested.

"The time has come to adopt a mechanism to overcome inter-Arab differences."



This March 10, 1991 library picture shows Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) president Abassi Madani delivering a speech during a FIS meeting in Algiers. —AFP photo

President Liamine Zeroual said.

The freeing of the country's most prominent dissidents was a dramatic move designed to end more than two and a half years of a bloody Muslim insurgency that has left at least 10,000 people dead.

The violence was triggered by the banning of Front, known as the FIS, a widely popular movement that was about to win control of the National Assembly in January 1992.

FIS leader Abassi Madani and his deputy Ali Benhadi were released from a military prison in Blida, south of

'Cambodia needs adequate army to fight Khmers'

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