

BRIEFLY

Compilation of Gandhi's speech: A week before the 125th birth anniversary of Mohandas Gandhi, the government has produced a 100-volume compilation of the speeches of the apostle of peace. AP reports from New Delhi.

The final volume will be released just before the October 2 anniversary of Gandhi, who had once said practising truth and non-violence were the best way to spread his thoughts. United News of India reported Monday.

Four executed in UAE: The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has executed three men for murdering three Pakistanis and another man for raping 13-year-old Indian girl, police said yesterday. AFP reports from Sharjah.

Ishak Hussein, Mohammad Taher and Ibrahim Abbas, all stateless Arabs, were shot Monday by a firing squad at Sharjah's central prison for killing three Pakistani money changers in October 1992 in the eastern port of Khorfakkan.

Mahathir leaves for Turkey: Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad left yesterday for a 10-day official visit to Turkey, Jordan and Turkmenistan. Reuter reports from Kuala Lumpur.

Five agreements will be signed during Mahathir's trip. The Star newspaper said yesterday. The agreements will deal with double taxation in Turkey and with trade, investment guarantees, double taxation and economic, technical and cultural cooperation in Jordan, it said.

US invites Prince Hassan, Peres: President Clinton has invited Jordanian Crown Prince Hassan and Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres to a White House meeting in October 3, the White House said on Monday. Reuter reports from New York.

The trilateral meeting comes on the anniversary of the first meeting between the Crown Prince and Peres with Clinton as host in October 1, 1993, which established the US-Jordan-Israel trilateral committee.

Missile explodes in Greece: One soldier was killed and another injured when a missile exploded in an armoured Greek army unit on the Aegean Sea island of Kos, an army communique said on Monday. AFP reports from Athens.

The missile exploded while the two soldiers were examining it on Monday afternoon in the dormitory of an army post.

Algeria to ratify NPT: Algeria's foreign minister on Monday announced that his government would ratify the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) during the current General Assembly session, but he did not set a date. AP reports from United Nations.

I have the honour to solemnly announce from this podium the decision by Algeria to ratify the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) during this session. Foreign Minister Mohamed Salah Dembrj told the 184-nation assembly.

6 die in Salvadoran blast: Six people were killed and three wounded when hand grenades left over from El Salvador's 12-year civil war were set off in two separate incidents over the weekend, police said on Monday. Reuter reports from San Salvador.

Jose Eugenio Reyes, 30, killed himself, his wife, a seven-year-old daughter and a friend of the family by deliberately exploding a grenade during a domestic dispute in the central village of San Antonio on Saturday.

Prussian prince dead: Prince Louis Ferdinand of Prussia, grandson of Germany's last Emperor Wilhelm II, died at the age of 86, a spokeswoman for the family said on Monday. Reuter reports from Hanover, Germany.

The prince had campaigned for Prussian King Frederick the Great to be reburied in eastern Germany after unification in 1990, a stirred controversy with a call for a referendum on the restoration of the monarchy. He died late on Sunday. Frederick the Great, symbol of German militarism and enlightenment, was reburied at his Sanssouci Palace in Potsdam in a pomp-filled ceremony in August 1991.

Kenyan MP jailed: A Kenyan opposition member of parliament has been sentenced to a 12-month jail term for forging government documents. Local newspapers said yesterday. AFP says from Nairobi.

A magistrates court here found Otieno K'Opiyo, MP for the opposition Ford-Kenya party, guilty of forging a government veterinarian's certificate to allow him to export beef.

146 die in Angolan train mishap: At least 146 people died when a goods train was derailed in the Southern Angola province of Huila, the Angolan Angop agency said on Monday. AFP reports from Lisbon.

The accident, which also left 80 injured, happened on Thursday in the Tolunda district, the head of Angolan railways, Jose Salvador, told the agency in a report received in Lisbon.

China's first pilotless plane: China's first portable pilotless plane, developed by the National Defence Science and Technology University and the logistics department of the Guangzhou military area command, has passed appraisal by experts. The plane, named "Queen Bee", is a little over two meters long and can be carried by a single person. Xinhua reports from Guangzhou.

It can do filming of an area within a diameter of 10 m, and send pictures to the wireless control body on the ground.

ROK team to join UNOMIG: South Korea has decided to send a six-member team to the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) to help oversee the ceasefire between Georgia and Abkhazia, the Foreign Ministry said Tuesday. Xinhua reports from Seoul.

Three members of the team, comprised of military officers, are expected to arrive in Georgia early next week and the other three sometime in mid-October, the ministry said.

Roger Clinton to perform in ROK: The half-brother of US President Bill Clinton will give two performances in South Korea next month to raise funds for the handicapped, the concert organisers said yesterday. Reuter says from Seoul.

Roger Clinton, a professional musician, will perform on October 22 and 23 in Seoul along with local singers, said a spokesman for the Northeast Asia studies institute.

US-DPRK talks on N-plan yield no results

GENEVA, Sept 27: The United States said today no progress had been made in five days of talks with North Korea on reshaping Pyongyang's nuclear power programme to prevent it producing atomic weapons, reports Reuter.

But a terse statement from the US diplomatic mission in Geneva said talks would continue in the Swiss city on Wednesday. Pyongyang had earlier threatened to break off the negotiations.

North Korea's Deputy Foreign Minister Kang Sok-Ju met Washington's ambassador-at-large Robert Gallucci for 3-1/2 hours of talks today.

The two sides agreed last month on an outline accord under which Pyongyang would switch from graphite-moderated to safer, although more costly, light-water reactors.

But they remain far apart on implementing the accord and on the question of special inspections to check whether North Korea has already diverted plutonium from its one existing reactor.

"We can report no progress," the US mission said after today's meeting.

Pyongyang has been angered by the United States' deployment of Warships in the sea of Japan, a move which the commander of the US Pacific Fleet said last week was aimed at bolstering Washington's hand in the negotiations.

The isolated communist state's latest outburst came when a spokesman for the ministry of the people's armed forces said North Korea might have to pull out of the talks.

"Now that the United States is seeking a military show-

down, we cannot stick to talks indefinitely," the spokesman said in a statement carried by Pyongyang's official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA).

"Our people's army pins no hope on any dialogue accompanied by pressure," he said.

Most of Pyongyang's bile in recent months has been directed against South Korea rather than Washington. But apparently stepping up the tone of the rhetoric against the United States, the spokesman added:

"Behind the curtain of talks, the United States has all along watched for a chance to swallow up the DPRK (Democratic People's Republic of Korea), while extensively reinforcing its aggression forces in South Korea."



Mother Teresa (L) bows in a traditional Indian greeting after handing over the keys for the first set of homes built by a private charity for victims of Latur earthquake on Monday in Bombay. The massive quake devastated Latur in Maharashtra state in September last year, leaving 10,000 people dead and many more homeless. — AFP photo

S Arabia admits arrests of Audah, 110 followers

DUBAI, Sept 27: Saudi Arabia said on Monday that it had arrested a dissident Muslim Sheikh and more than 100 of his followers, reports Reuter.

An Interior Ministry statement carried by the official Saudi press agency said that 110 people were detained in connection with attempts to sow dissension and chaos.

It was the first official confirmation that the authorities were holding Sheikh Salman Al-Audah, a known critic of the government who says the conservative Kingdom is not strict

enough in its application of Islamic law.

A London-based opposition group, the Committee for the Defence of Legitimate Rights, alleged a week ago that more than 1,000 of Audah's followers had been rounded up after demonstrations against his arrest.

The ministry said that Audah and an associate had made provocative speeches and had contacts with suspicious foreign groups.

The total of those detained is 110 people. The release of some will be considered once

investigations now underway with them are complete," the Interior Ministry said.

"The cases of those who played a leading role... will be considered after the completion of investigations into... plans to cause chaos," the statement said.

The statement said the detentions took place "after those who pledged to avoid dissension failed to respect their pledges."

Some of the suspects could be released if they promised not to repeat their actions and found guarantors for their good behaviour, it said.

180 Kurd women protesters held in Germany

MANNHEIM, Sept 27: About 180 Kurdish women protesters were detained on Monday after Mannheim police broke up a banned demonstration against the Turkish government's military campaign against Kurdish separatists, police said, report AFP.

Firebombs were thrown at police in this southwest town when they moved into to disperse the crowd of some 300 women members of the Freedom Movement of Kurdistan Women (TAJK). Several protesters were injured, police said.

Separately, federal prosecutors said on Monday they had charged a Turkish national, named only as Mahmut, with kidnapping and membership of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), the separatist movement banned in Germany and Turkey, where it has waged a 10-year insurgency against the government.

Ex-Sandinista army occupy Venezuelan embassy

MANAGUA, Sept 27: A group of former Sandinista army officers took over the Venezuelan embassy here threatening unspecified action if President Violeta Chamorro does not keep promises made when she took office in 1990, reports AFP.

The protesters, who claim to be unarmed, took Venezuelan Ambassador Juan Jose Monsant and three diplomats hostage when they occupied the embassy on Monday, but released them unharmed five hours later.

Police have surrounded the embassy, which now appears to be occupied only by the protesters, whose number has not been determined and who claim to represent 1,500 former Sandinista officers.

The group said it had "25 groups ready to go into action" around the country, if Chamorro does not indemnify

former Sandinista army officers and help them return to civilian life by giving them jobs and land.

"Stop playing around with hungry people. Do you want this to become another Colombia or Peru?" they asked in a statement released to the press.

At 6:00 PM (midnight GMT) deadline was set by the group for their demands to be met, but it went by with no further statements or threats.

Vilma Nunez, president of the Nicaraguan Human Rights Centre, said a senior official had told her there would be "no new negotiations with the assailants."

Government Minister Alfredo Mediate said the government was studying agreements already signed with former Sandinista soldiers adding that "no more money was available for new demands." Nunez added.

2 Algerian GIA leaders killed

TUNIS, Sept 27: Security forces in Algeria killed the leader of the country's most feared Armed Islamic Group and his third lieutenant in a coup against fundamentalists trying to topple the authorities, reports Reuter.

But with the killing also on Monday of a foreigner and an Algerian lecturer in two separate attacks, and experience of other hardliners filling dead men's shoes, diplomats questioned whether the death of Armed Islamic Group (GIA) chief Cherif Gousmi, 26, would slow the spiral of violence.

"It is not possible to say anything at this stage, whether the GIA chief's death will mark a drop in violence... perhaps the men of the GIA will try a spectacular coup to revenge their leader," one diplomat said.

Another pointed out that Gousmi took over only in February and that the authorities had announced other successes against top militants.

Arab League urges China to block Israeli attempts

CAIRO, Sept 27: The Arab League on Monday urged China to block Israeli attempts to change UN resolutions concerning Arab and Palestinian causes, the local Middle East News Agency reported, says AFP.

The Arab League has asked China to continue its support for the just Arab causes... and to block any Israeli attempts to drop (UN) resolutions linked with the Palestinian cause from the (UN General Assembly's) agenda," Mena quoted Saied Kamal, assistant secretary general at the League as saying.

Kamal was speaking to journalists after meeting China's ambassador to Egypt Yang Fu Chang.

The UN General Assembly opened its 49th session last Tuesday. China is a permanent member of the UN Security Council.

Israel and the United States have tried in other General Assembly meetings to drop or modify UN resolutions.

Japan-Russian talks on arms control open

TOKYO, Sept 27: Japan and Russia opened negotiations in Tokyo yesterday on ways to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and related materials, Kyodo news service reported, says Xinhua.

Japanese officials said the three-day session is part of international efforts to work out a framework to control the international weapons trade, Kyodo said.

The officials were quoted as saying that representatives from Japan and Russia will exchange views on export control systems in their respective nations and discuss ways to effectively manage a new international export controls organisation to be inaugurated this fall.

Ex-Japanese minister found innocent in bribery case

TOKYO, Sept 27: A former cabinet minister was found innocent of bribe-taking Tuesday in the scandal that set off a wave of revulsion in Japan against political corruption, reports AP.

The judgement in favour of Takao Fujitani, 61, a former chief cabinet secretary, was a shock to prosecutors and illustrated the difficulty of convicting politicians under Japan's weak bribery laws.

The scandal, in which the high-flying Recruit conglomerate was found to have given cut-rate stock to a virtual who's-who of Japanese politicians, toppled the government of Noboru Takeshita in 1989.

Since the scandal was uncovered in 1988-1989, prosecutors have charged 12 with giving or accepting bribes.

Pak Senate body blames RAW for violence

ISLAMABAD, Sept 27: A Pakistani parliamentary committee has accused foreign and local intelligence agencies of having a hand in frequent outbreaks of sectarian violence, reports Reuter.

The Senate Standing Committee on Religious Affairs also cited "disrespect and irreverence" shown by Muslim Sects towards each other as a major cause of violence.

"One other major cause is the involvement of Pakistani and foreign intelligence agencies in sectarian differences and clashes," it said in a report released on Monday, which called for strict vigilance over these civilian and military outfits. The committee feels that agencies of some foreign countries, particularly (India's) RAW (Research and Analysis Wing) have a great hand in disturbing the peace of our country with their nefarious designs and activities," it said.

It asked the federal and provincial governments and their intelligence agencies to detect and deal with foreign agents with a heavy hand.

"There should also be a strict vigilance by the government on our own agencies like MI (Military Intelligence), ISI (Inter-Services Intelligence), IB (Intelligence Bureau) and the FIA (Federal Investigation Agency) for their involvement in sectarian problems and clashes," the report said.

An Interior Ministry official dealing with the FIA said: "There is definitely some misunderstanding and misconception about the FIA which primarily deals with corruption cases."

The Senate committee said it felt strongly that "terrorism is not restricted to the sectarian and religious field, but it also exists at an alarming scale on political, ethnic and linguistic grounds."

Off the Record

Fergie furious with her father

LONDON: Fergie is said to be furious with her father for writing about her love life, dad says he can't see Charles making king and dad's first wife says his affairs made her life hell, reports AP.

Fergie, the best known name for the Duchess of York, appears to be putting on weight again. And Diana? She's looking fine but is suffering from something called mob danger.

Fergie is furious with her 62-year-old father, Maj. Ronald Ferguson, Prince Charles' former polo manager, over his tell-tale book of memoirs "The Galloping Major." The Sun reported. It said she's told friends: "I am very disappointed in my father."

The Sun had a picture of a heavy-looking Fergie taken Monday and said the red-haired duchess, who dieted drastically after marrying the queen's second son Prince Andrew in July 1986, has obviously returned to food for comfort.

Fergie and Andrew, who are both 34 and have two daughters aged 4 and 6, separated in March 1992.

Bardot more interested in animals than bank balance



File photo taken on September 12, 1990 of French actress Brigitte Bardot, who quit acting when she was 39 years old to defend animal rights on behalf of her foundation. — AFP photo

PARIS: Brigitte Bardot, who took the cinema world by storm in the 1956 hit "And God Created Woman," turns 60 this week in typically down-to-earth style — continuing her work defending animals, reports AFP.

The sex-symbol who inspired a million look-alikes ditched the glamorous world of movies 20 years ago, declaring that she was more interested in helping animals than her bank balance.

"I have never considered myself either an actress or a star. I have always considered myself above all a woman," said the woman who has remained as popular in her mother country as ever.

Films like Louis Malle's "Vive Privee" and Jean-Luc Godard's "Le Mepris" were among her numerous award winners. While "And God..." proved an international success, as well as bringing her first husband in the shape of director Roger Vadim, who discovered her.

She finally gave up cinema at the age of 39, declaring that she did not want to start playing maternal roles. She prefers to forget her hey-day when she was the eternal quarry of the paparazzi.

China cancels councillor's Japan visit

BEIJING, Sept 27: China said today it had no choice but to cancel a senior government official's visit to Japan in a row over Tokyo allowing the vice premier of arch-rival Taiwan to attend the Hiroshima Asian Games, reports Reuter.

"As a result of the political trouble created by the Taiwan authorities and the Japanese government, the Chinese government had no choice but to cancel State Councillor Li Tieying's planned visit to Japan during the Hiroshima Asian Games," the Foreign Ministry announced.

Beijing issued the statement through the official Xinhua news agency. "Still, conversion also brings with it abuse and discrimination. Most women who wear the hejab (headscarf) say they have experienced some degree of taunting in the street, being spat at or having their scarves torn. Murray wears a long coat over an ankle-length dress and a hejab — although she admits she found it hard at first. She says it gives her personal space. "I don't get unsolicited attention," she says. "I cease to be an object of desire. Instead men deal with me as a person, not as a woman. They deal with my brain and my ideas." But she says her manner of dressing has cost her employment "we suffer discrimination by dress. It's not even about colour race, or creed," Murray says angrily.

Two Americans, Indian get UNEP prize

NAIROBI, Sept 27: M S Swaminathan of India and Paul and Anne Ehrlich of the United States have been awarded the 1994 UN Environment Programme (UNEP) prize for their life-long work dedicated to the protection of the environment, statement said here on Monday, reports AFP.

It said UNEP's selection committee had decided to award the Sasakawa Environment Prize to the three world renowned scientists due to their great contribution to the improvement of the quality of life on this planet.

The Sasakawa Prize, worth 200,000 US dollar, is one of the most prestigious environmental awards in the world.

LONDON, Sept 27: Twenty years ago, Sara Murray scarcely gave religion a thought. She was 18, and the Scottish protestant chanced upon a Korean inside a dustbin. She picked it up, skimmed through it and, in her own words, experienced a "bolt from the blue" that was to change her life, reports IPS.

Murray remains a practising Muslim to this day and while she has experienced antagonism and discrimination, she has no regrets about her conversion.

"British society has deteriorated so fast that people no longer know where they stand," she says adding that this has been largely the result of a breakdown of family and growing unemployment.

Islam offers hope for British women

moral codes are clearly defined. It provides a touchstone for living."

Sociologists here say Murray is echoing the sentiments of a growing number of British women. They say many are searching for a new morality and finding it in Islam, despite the western media's portrayal of it as a religion that suppresses women.

Mashuq Ali, director of the Centre for Islamic Studies at the University of Wales, affirms that conversion to Islam offers a sense of security to replace lost family, but he is convinced it is also a quest for spirituality in a secular society in which the church is undergoing an identity crisis.

"People who lose confi-

dence in the church turn to Islam for a clear-cut body of rules and practices by which to live," he says.

Living in Britain's multi-faith society also allows contact between people of differing religions, and many converts say their decision came about through a gradual build-up of interest, a "process of osmosis" in the words of Khadija at the Muslim Women's Institute.

Khadija describes herself as "a child of the 60s, very politically aware and in search of a more meaningful life." She converted to Islam in 1972 after arriving in England from the United States and meeting a group of Muslims.

"I took a long time to make

up my mind," she says. "For me it wasn't just a question of the security to be found in firm laws, it was more a matter of an inspiration."

Although there are no official figures for the rate of conversions, the Islamic centre has found that mixed marriages are the major reason behind their occurrence, as many partners wished to share the same faith.

All believes women have a romantic idea of taking their place in Islamic society alongside their husbands. The men in contrast adopt a more objective stance and treat it as a religious quest.

In Murray's view, the clearly defined territory for Muslim women takes feminism one

step further. She says: "We don't have to battle for equal rights as we are not equal, we are different. Men have a complementary, not superior role to women. There is a dividing line between the roles that is still flexible enough to allow personal development of both sides."

Murray experienced severe antagonism from her family, and even had to take out an injunction against her father when his refusal to speak to her ended in violence.

The situation could not be more different now — both her mother and her sister have converted to Islam. They say that she had a good strong family life, and it laid their fears to rest, she explains.