

## International

## Russia now a good friend, says China

BEIJING, Oct 4: Chinese Foreign Minister Qian Qichen in a message to his Russian counterpart today said their two countries had become "good neighbours and friends" after decades of tension, reports AFP.

Qian, who is now in Washington for talks with US President Bill Clinton and other senior officials, had sent a congratulatory message to Andrei Kozyrev on the 45th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Moscow and Beijing, the Xinhua news agency said.

Although the relations between China and Russia followed a tortuous road during the past 45 years, their rela-

tions are now those of good neighbours and friends," Qian wrote.

The foreign minister said a visit to China by Russian President Boris Yeltsin in 1992 "facilitated the development of cooperation" between the two countries in trade, culture and science and technology.

The recent visit to Russia by Chinese President Jiang Zemin raised bilateral ties to a completely new level prior to the start of a new century," he added.

Jiang, who went to Russia at the beginning of September, was the first Chinese head of state to visit Moscow since Mao Zedong in 1957.

## BRIEFLY

### LTTE men kill radio announcer:

Suspected Tamil Tiger guerrillas shot dead a radio announcer in northern Sri Lanka as the government suspended a major offensive against the rebels, officials said today. AFP reports from Colombo.

Guinness from the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) stormed the residence of Jeffrey Rajabdeen at Vavuniya late Monday and shot him at close range, an official said.

**China grants parole to Wei:** China's most famous dissident Wei Jiangsheng, who has not been seen in public since he was re-detained last April, has been granted parole, a Beijing-backed newspaper in Hong Kong reported yesterday. Reuter says from Hong Kong.

The Wen Wei Po quoted China's Vice Minister of Justice Zhang Geng as saying Wei had been granted parole according to Chinese law.

**2 more Jewish settlers held:** Police on Monday arrested two more Israelis suspected of membership in a Jewish armed underground that planned to wage attacks against Palestinians, AP reports from Jerusalem.

The arrests brought to 14 the number of suspects held in the case since September 2, including seven who have been released after questioning. Israel radio said.

**US Agriculture Secy quits:** Agriculture Secretary Mike Espy resigned on Monday, saying an investigation into charges he accepted gifts from firms doing business with his agency had distracted him from his duties, AFP reports from Washington.

This is my choice, no one has asked me to resign, said Espy who added that President Bill Clinton had accepted his resignation and that he would step down by December 31.

**Soyuz TM-20 blasts off:** A manned Russian spacecraft blasted off from Baikonur last yesterday morning on a mission to hook up with the orbiting space station Mir, mission control said. AFP reports from Baikonur, Kazakhstan.

The Soyuz TM-20 was carrying a German representing the European Space Agency and two Russian astronauts on a mission known as Euronair 94. The craft is scheduled to hook up with the Mir on Wednesday at 2330 GMT.

**Fire claims 2 in China:** Two men were killed and another injured in China's Shenzhen Special Economic Zone when a fire engulfed a commercial building, a news report said yesterday. AFP reports from Hong Kong.

The two men were overcome by smoke in the Changhong Industrial and Trade Co. hotel, located on the top floors of the firm's building, the Wen Wei Po newspaper said.

**ROK Planning Minister resigns:** The government's top economic planner resigned on Tuesday but the move was not expected to affect economic policy, presidential officials said, AP reports from Seoul.

President Kim Young-sam accepted an offer by Economic Planning Minister Chung Jai-suk to resign for health reasons and named Finance Minister Hong Jae-hyong to replace him, the officials said.

**Russia shuts down N-plant:** An emergency oil shortage at a Russian nuclear power plant forced officials to shut down one of its reactors, the ITAR-Tass news agency said on Tuesday. Radiation levels were reported normal. AP reports from Moscow.

Low levels of oil caused the plant's automatic protection system to switch off one of the generators Monday. Management at the Kalinin plant, located 160 kilometres (100 miles) northwest of Moscow, then decided to shut down the entire reactor unit.

**Cardoso wins exit poll:** Fernando Henrique Cardoso was headed for an easy first round victory in Brazil's presidential election, exit poll results showed on Monday. Reuter reports from Sao Paulo.

The results of the poll conducted by a private research firm Ibope, showed Cardoso, a free-market advocate, headed for a victory of about seven percentage points over the combined total of all his opponents.

**Volcano Mayon may erupt:** Scientists on Tuesday raised an alert at volcano Mayon after jets of steam and earthquakes were observed again, reports AP from Manila.

July Sabit, spokesman for the Philippine Institute on Volcanology and Seismology, also said scientists ruled out volcanic activity in Mount Malindang on Mindanao island after villagers reported sulfuric smells and river silting.

**Filipino hostage dies:** President Fidel Ramos on Tuesday urged kidnappers to free their two captives after a third died of sickness in captivity, AP reports from Manila.

Two government engineers and a woman community organiser of the National Irrigation Authority were kidnapped on September 14 in Siraway, a remote town 770 kilometres (480 miles) south of Manila. The chief engineer, Rolando Rizal, died after suffering from a diabetic attack in captivity.

**Chechen terrorists plead guilty:** Three Chechen terrorists pleaded guilty to causing the death of four hostages in a helicopter hijacking and kidnapping drama in July, a news agency reported Tuesday. AP reports from Stavropol, Russia.

Four women hostages were killed in an explosion and shootout July 29 when commandos stormed a helicopter held by armed kidnappers in Mineralniy Vody, a southern Russia resort town near the breakaway republic of Chechnya. Six other hostages and five policemen were wounded.

**US soldier shot in Haiti:** A US soldier was wounded by gunfire, the first such American casualty since the start of operation "Support Democracy" last month. US military spokesman said yesterday. AFP reports from Port-au-Prince.

The unidentified soldier underwent surgery overnight for the stomach injury and was listed Monday in stable condition. General Henry Hugh Shelton, the commander of US troops said. He added that the victim's chances of recovery were excellent.

## Demand for separate state: 14 killed in two days

## Curfew in 7 Uttar Pradesh towns

NEW DELHI, Oct 4: Seven hill towns in Uttar Pradesh, India's most populous state, were under curfew today following two days of violence which have claimed at least 14 lives, officials said, reports AFP.

The officials in the state capital Lucknow said curfew had been imposed in the towns of Roorkee, Shahaanpur and Muzaffarnagar to quell demands for "Uttarakhand," the official said.

Schools and colleges were order closed until Monday in the northern towns of Dehradun, Rishikesh, Shrinagar, Kotdwara, Pauri, Nainital and Haldwani to stem further violence in the impoverished hill districts.

At least 14 people have been killed and nearly 200 injured in clashes since Sunday between police and supporters of a movement in the hill districts to carve out a separate

state in Uttar Pradesh called "Uttarakhand."

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At least three people died and 40 were injured when police opened fire again on Monday to break up violent protests in the districts of

Prime Minister P V Narasimha

Rao's Congress (I) party to threaten to withdraw their support for Yadav's coalition government.

The congress said it was "actively considering" withdrawing support due to the violence.

Yadav met with Rao here Monday and said the police action in Muzaffarnagar was promoted by a directive from New Delhi's police commissioner to "stop and search" Uttarakhand activists proceeding to the capital for a rally.

The Asian Age newspaper said Yadav had brought photocopies of the order to show to Rao and Home Minister Shankarrao Chavan.

### Israel, Jordan pledge to sign peace treaty

WASHINGTON, Oct 4: Israel and Jordan pledged Monday to sign a peace treaty in the near future after they agreed during high-level talks at the White House to take steps to boost relations, reports AFP.

President Bill Clinton who hosted the talks said Jordan's Crown Prince Hassan and Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres had held a productive session in advancing the peace process in the Middle East.

In a joint communique, the three countries reaffirmed their commitment to "achieve a full peace treaty between the two countries, hopefully in the near future."

A senior US official, who requested anonymity, said earlier the two sides "certainly" hope to achieve peace."

Crown Prince Hassan of Jordan (C) speaks at a press conference at the White House in Washington on Monday as US President Bill Clinton (L) and Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres (R) look on.

— AFP photo



## Ousted Hutus demand power-sharing

KIGALI, Oct 4: Exiled Rwandan leaders blamed for orchestrating ethnic massacres want a share in the rebel-installed government that overthrew them or they will discourage Hutu refugees from returning home, reports AP.

But the new government that gained power in July is unlikely to offer concessions to Hutus it wants tried for war crimes.

Hutu leaders in neighboring Zaire have told a UN-sponsored task force on repatriation there can be no massive movement of returnees until a power-sharing deal is cut, the deputy commander of UN peacekeepers in Rwanda, Brig Gen Henry Anyidoho of Ghana, said Tuesday.

Anyidoho, the top UN official in the task force, returned Monday from visiting refugee camps in Zaire where he met with Hutu leaders, including former military chief of staff, Augustin Bizimungu.

They want to have a say in running the country politically. They said very clearly that if they stay outside it cannot be considered a solution to the

Rwanda situation," Anyidoho told reporters.

It says Hutu soldiers and civilian militias, spurred on by officials of the ousted government, massacred more than 500,000 people, most of the Tutsi, in an orgy of ethnic bloodletting after the death of Hutu President Juvenal Habyarimana in a mysterious plane crash April 6.

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aged bringing the Tutsi-led Rwanda Patriotic Front rebel army into a transitional government ahead of elections two years later.

Anyidoho said exiled Hutu leaders "want to go back to Arusha."

But he said UN officials were doubtful that previous talks, obstructed mainly by the former Hutu government, could be revived.

Even before the ethnic bloodletting, "there have been several attempts to put transitional structures into place, but all have failed," he said.

An estimated 20,000 Hutu soldiers loyal to the former government and some 50,000 militias are living in refugee camps outside Rwanda's borders.

They have killed and threatened refugees who want to go home and have terrorized relief workers.

Hopes of any significant repatriation receded as Hutu politicians, soldiers and refugee leaders held sway in refugee camps, said Anyidoho.

He said Zaire vowed to disarm the Hutu soldiers and militias, but UN members of

the task force, which includes 10 Zairean officials have not been shown any seized weapons.

No decision has been made whether UN peacekeepers might have a role in disarming refugees, he said.

The UN refugee agency says reprisal killings by Tutsi soldiers in the new government's army have deterred the return of refugees, but it also conceded that pressure and intimidation by Hutu extremists are the main factors halting repatriation.

Relief workers have been driven out of Katala camp near Goma by violent clashes as security deteriorated in Zairean camps in recent days.

On Monday, the UN Children's Fund reported Hutus manning roadblocks to control routes leading to the Rwanda border from refugee camps in Tanzania, after a series of attacks on refugees there.

UNICEF said calm returned to Benaco camp Tuesday and the medical charity Doctors Without Borders said its relief workers who fled violence in Benaco have returned to Tanzanian camp.

Cambodian troops kill 18 Khmers

PHNOM PENH, Oct 4: Government forces have killed 18 Khmer Rouge guerrillas in clashes over the past three weeks in Cambodia's north-western province of Battambang. Vice-Governor Serey Kosal said today, reports AFP.

Speaking on state-run radio, Serey Kosal also said that 13 guerrillas defected to Cambodian authorities in Battambang over the same period.

Serey Kosal said he believed the Khmer Rouge had concentrated up to 2,000 guerrillas in the province.

The Khmer Rouge's Pailin headquarters is located in western Battambang near to the Thai border.

The Khmer Rouge has increased guerrilla strength in the districts of Mong Russey, Rattanak Mundul, EK Phnom, Sangke and Battambang, he said.

But the vice-governor added that the Khmer Rouge were now "different" to the formidable guerrillas of the past.



French President Francois Mitterrand (L) greets Japanese Emperor Akihito (2nd R) and Empress Michiko (R) upon their arrival at Orly Airport, near Paris on Monday for a six-day state visit to France.

— AFP photo

## Ozone hole over Antarctic reappears

WELLINGTON, Oct 4: A hole in the ozone layer over the Antarctic has reappeared and it is wider than last year, scientists said today, reports Reuter.

"The ozone hole over Antarctic appears fully formed and is larger and more intense than last year," the New Zealand Antarctic programme and the National Institute of Waters and Atmosphere research (NIWA) said in a joint statement.

Satellite data from the United States National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) showed a rectangular shaped area of very low ozone concentration covering the Antarctic continent, compared with a slightly smaller triangular hole observed last year, Clarkson said.

Since the late 1980s a large hole has formed during the southern spring in September and October. Scientists estimate more than

half the ozone over the Antarctic has been lost.

The normally thick layer of ozone absorbs harmful ultraviolet radiation from the sun, protecting people and animals from skin cancers.

This year more than 70 million tonnes of the gas is expected to vanish for the spring season," NIWA scientist Tom Clarkson said.

The level today fell to 133 units and New Zealand scientists Sylvia Nichol said it could fall lower over the next week.

In the mid-1980s readings were around 300 at this time of the year.

Clarkson said zone depletion is triggered by the combination of sunlight, cold spring temperatures and pollutants from Chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs). CFCs are gases widely

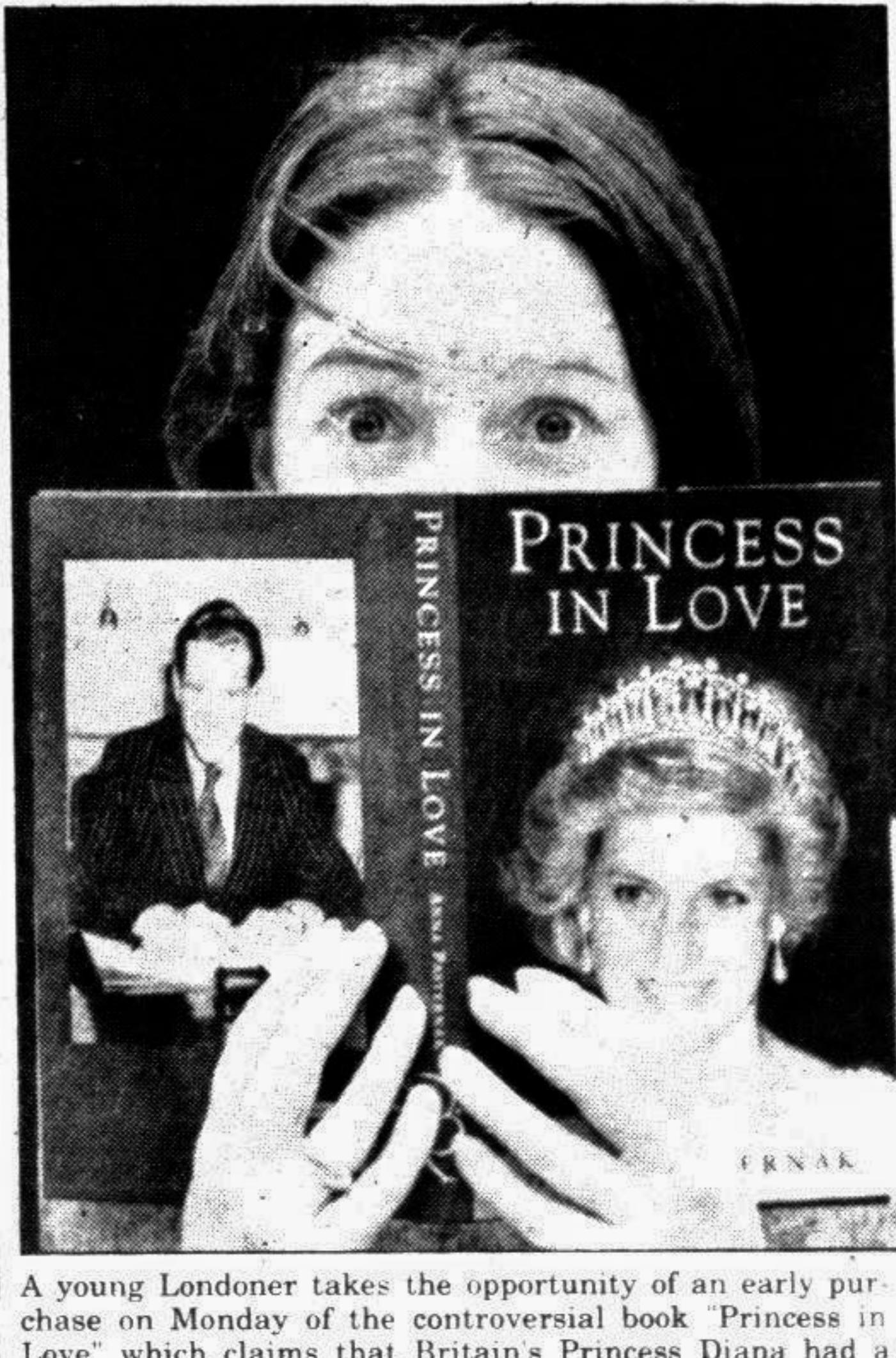
used as refrigerants, industrial cleaners and as propellants in many aerosol sprays.

Nichol said she expects similar sized holes to develop over the Antarctic for the next 20 years, despite international action to limit the use of CFCs, because of the amount of chlorine pollutants already in the atmosphere.

Opposition Labour Party environment spokesman Peter Hodson said the size of the hole was a concern, particularly as this year there was no effect from the eruption of Mount Pinatubo in the Philippines. Scientists believe a 1991 eruption of the volcano contributed to ozone depletion.

It said the move came after a visit on August 3 by French Defence Minister Francois Leotard whom the group dubbed the minister of war.

## Off the Record



PRINCESS IN LOVE

A young Londoner takes the opportunity of an early purchase on Monday of the controversial book "Princess in Love" which claims that Britain's Princess Diana had a three and a half year affair with Major James Hewitt, a former cavalry officer.

— AFP photo

### Reports differ about Di's affair