

BRIEFLY

Java train mishap claims 12: An Indonesian passenger train yesterday ploughed into a mini-van at a railway crossing in central Java killing 12 people and leaving three seriously injured, the official Antara news agency reported. Reuter says from Jakarta.

Police spokesman Ahmad Rifai told the agency 10 people were dead at the scene and two others died in hospital.

Jiang Zemin to visit S-E Asia: Chinese leader Jiang Zemin will visit Southeast Asia for the first time as president next month, the Foreign Ministry announced Friday. AP reports from Beijing.

Jiang, who became president in March 1993, will be in the region November 11-22. Vice Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan told a news conference.

Kalyan Singh released: The former Uttar Pradesh chief minister and Bharatiya Janata Party leader, Kalyan Singh, was released from Tihar jail yesterday morning after a days token imprisonment in accordance with the Supreme Court directive. PTI reports from New Delhi.

Kalyan Singh was welcomed by party workers and leaders as he came out of the maximum security prison at around 0915 hrs.

Algerian journalist shot dead: Two suspected Muslim guerrillas shot dead an Algerian journalist working for his country's official news agency APS on Thursday, the agency said. Reuter reports from Tunis.

Mohamed Salah Benachour was gunned down in Boufarik, some 30 km (20 miles) south of Algiers as he was returning from work. APS said. He was the third journalist working for the agency to be killed since last July.

Lankan troops kill 6 Tigers: Security forces fought two gunbattles with suspected Tamil Tiger guerrillas in eastern Sri Lanka and killed six men, the military said yesterday. AFP reports from Colombo.

Five men believed to be from the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) were shot dead in the Ullukulam region while the other was killed in Kaluvankerni late Thursday, the military said in a statement.

US detains 68 illegal immigrants: US Customs inspectors detained a record 68 illegal immigrants Thursday in three vans trying to cross the border into the United States from Mexico. AP reports from San Diego.

Immigration and Naturalisation Service officials had predicted more smugglers would try to bring illegal immigrants through border crossings, because of a new federal crackdown in the rural areas between crossings.

UN to send observers to Angola: The UN Security Council agreed Thursday to send military observers back to war-battered Angola if a peace treaty is signed as expected this weekend, diplomats said. AP reports from United Nations.

The resolution authorises 350 military observers, 126 police observers and an "appropriate number of international and local staff."

Iran Air guard held in London: Police arrested an armed security guard on board an Iran Air Jumbo jet at Heathrow Airport Thursday night after he allegedly threatened police officers with a hand gun. AP reports from London.

The 28-year-old Iranian, who was not identified, was disarmed and taken into custody but later released. Scotland Yard said.

US prison population doubles: The population of US state and federal prisons doubled the past decade and this year topped 1 million for the first time, reaching 1,012,851 at the end of June. AP reports from Washington.

Of the total, 919,143 were in state prisons and 93,708 in federal prisons, according to Bureau of Justice Statistics released Thursday. The total is more than double the 462,002 prison population of December 31, 1984.

Kim praises ex-POW: President Kim Young-sam warmly embraced and welcomed back Friday the South Korean prisoner of war who escaped North Korea after 43 years in captivity. AP reports from Seoul.

Li Cho Chang-ho, 64, who arrived Sunday, was the first POW to successfully escape the communist North since the 1953 conclusion of the three-year Korean War, according to South Korean intelligence officials.

Gunmen kill 3 in S Africa: Gunmen armed with AK-47 assault rifles killed three people and wounded six when they opened fire on a Johannesburg taxi rank early yesterday South African police said. Reuter reports from Johannesburg.

They said the shooting took place in the centre of the city, which last year was dubbed the murder capital of the world.

US, ROK war games next month: The United States and South Korea, who agreed last week to cancel their major team spirit military exercise as a gesture to North Korea, yesterday announced a seven-day exercise would be held next month. Reuter reports from Seoul.

A spokesman for the US forces in Korea said the combined field training exercise, codenamed Foad Eagle 1994, would be held from Tuesday at many sites.

2 N Koreans jailed in Russia: A court sentenced two North Korean drug smugglers to seven years in prison after they were caught in a major sting operation. The ITAR-Tass news agency reported Friday. AP says from Vladivostok.

The two smugglers were detained in June, carrying eight kilograms (18 pounds) of heroin, on the Russian-Korean border near Khasan. The report said.

14 more executed in China: Fourteen people were executed in the southwestern province of Yunnan for drug offenses, the government newspaper Legal Daily reported Friday. AP reports from Beijing.

All were arrested for unspecified drug-related activities in the provincial capital of Kunming, the newspaper said. They were sentenced at a public rally on Thursday, and executed immediately after. It said.

Afghan leaders invited to Jakarta for peace talks

KABUL, Oct 28: Jakarta has invited the leaders of Afghanistan's warring factions to Indonesia for talks aimed at restoring peace and stability to the war-torn Afghan capital, an Indonesian diplomat said here, reports AFP.

"My mission is to help the peace process in Afghanistan," the Indonesian ambassador to Afghanistan, Abdulgant, told AFP Thursday.

He said Indonesian President Suharto had instructed him to invite all the Mujahideen leaders to Indonesia for talks.

Clinton pledges redoubled support for Israelis, ME peace

JERUSALEM, Oct 28: President Clinton said Friday his venture into Mideast diplomacy will lead to redoubled US support for the people of Israel and for Middle East peace, reports AP.

Before a scheduled flight to Kuwait to visit US troops, Clinton attended ceremonies at Jerusalem's Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial, which commemorates the six million Jews killed by the Nazis in World War II.

"I leave redoubled in the support of the American people for the people of Israel and redoubled in my determination to continue until we have a comprehensive peace," Clinton said.

Clinton, on a six-nation tour

of the Mideast, spoke to reporters after writing in a guest book at the memorial.

"I wrote that today we are one step closer to the time when the people of Israel can live together in peace with all of your neighbours, the time when the people of Israel will never again suffer death and destruction," he said.

Clinton flew to Israel Thursday after extraordinary talks in Syria in which he said President Hafez Assad "went beyond anything he said before" on making peace with Israel. Clinton met in Jerusalem with Israeli officials who said progress, indeed, had been made.

Assad, who has built his career on confrontation with Israel, spoke anew Thursday of "full peace" in return for the Golan Heights and Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon. Clinton told the Israeli Knesset, or parliament, "Something is changing in Syria."

Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin expressed confidence Israel could overcome differences with Syria and Lebanon, the last two holdouts to peace among Israel's neighbours.

"It might take time. One has to be patient," Rabin said. "I believe that it will not take long and hopefully we'll find ways and means by which to overcome these gaps."

Clinton announced the US Secretary of State Warren Christopher would return to the Middle East in a few weeks on a followup peace mission.

Before the Holocaust memorial visit, Clinton met with Israeli President Ezer Weizman for breakfast Friday.

Before entering Weizman's official residence, Clinton shook hands with dozens of school children among hundreds who lined his motorcade route and cheered the president.

"Kleen-ton, Kleen-ton," the flag-waving children yelled. Clinton stopped the motorcade just short of Weizman's residence and got out of his limousine to shake hands.

Poland needs strong presidency for reforms, says Walesa

WARSAW, Oct 28: President Lech Walesa, saying Poland was like a cart stuck in the mud, appealed to Poles on Thursday to increase the powers of the president to give the country a strong hand to reform it, reports Reuter.

Stepping up a power struggle with the left-wing coalition government, Walesa said Poland was drifting without firm leadership five years after the end of communist rule.

"Poland is like a horse cart which is stuck in the mud. We are going forward more slowly and with more difficulty. Anger and weariness is increasing," he said in a televised state of the nation address.

"Do not allow for chaos in the homeland, for the return of the old (communist) system, for disorder, for fishing in dirty water," he said, sitting in front of a large Polish flag.

Walesa said privatisation was moving at a tortoise, space, too little money was being spent on military reforms, quarrels were erupting at every turn, banks had not adapted to free market rules and crime and unemployment were rising.

Walesa, who was elected president in 1990 after leading the solidarity movement to victory over the communists in 1989, said Poles should vote for a strong presidential system in a referendum on a new constitution expected to be held next year.

His ideas for a powerful, French-style presidency are opposed by the governing left-wing parties which favour a stronger parliament and government.

"I ask you for your support, for your vote for a strong state, for a wise constitution, for strong democracy and freedom in security — for the system of presidential government," Walesa said.

"The Polish home must have a good landlord and strong state authority — democratic and lawful and effective."

Fresh violence in Karachi: 10 killed

KARACHI, Oct 28: After a brief lull, sectarian violence erupted again in this southern port city leaving at least 10 people dead overnight, officials said today, reports AFP.

Tension mounted after police Thursday discovered two bodies bearing torture marks, they said. One victim was identified as an activist from the militant Shi'ite Muslim group, Tehrik-e-Jafria Pakistan, officials said.

Unidentified gunmen later in the day shot dead three people including a youth considered close to the extremist Sunni Muslim organisation Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP). Another SSP activist was shot dead by snipers.

Clinton urged to destroy Saddam

KUWAIT, Oct 28: Kuwaiti newspapers urged US President Bill Clinton ahead of his short visit to the Emirate today to destroy Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, reports Reuter.

"Clinton — you have declared war against the enemies of peace," said Al Anbaa newspaper in an editorial. "Saddam Hussein is the premier enemy of peace. He is the most deserving to receive the arrows of American power in order to deter or remove him."

"This peace that you are trying to make President shall remain incomplete and threatened as long as the infidel of Baghdad heads the ruling authority there," said journalist Hamed Boyables in a column published in Al-Siyassah newspaper.

Rebels end polls boycott in Mozambique

MAPUTO, Oct 28: A top UN envoy tried to talk Mozambique's former rebel leader into calling off his election boycott Friday, as voting continued for a second day across a country struggling to leave war behind, reports AP.

One news agency quoted a provincial official saying that RENAMO had called off its boycott. The report by the state-owned AM agency could not immediately be verified, but diplomats said there was progress made in an all-night marathon negotiating session with rebel leader Afonso Dhlakama.

Dhlakama's pull-out, announced only hours before voting began Thursday, had no noticeable effect on public participation in Mozambique's first multiparty ballot.

More than half the 6.3 million registered voters went to the polls Thursday, even in areas dominated by Dhlakama's Mozambique National Resistance, known as RENAMO, officials said. Voting was continuing peacefully Friday.

United Nations and other foreign observers were worried that Dhlakama's resistance and charges that the balloting was open to fraud would renew conflict. The vote was meant to culminate a 1992 peace agreement mediated by the United Nations, the Vatican and Italy that ended a 15-year war between RENAMO and the governing Mozambique Popular Front, FRELIMO.

Lanka lifts nationwide curfew

COLOMBO, Oct 28: After five days of unexpected calm, the government Friday lifted the nationwide curfew it imposed after the top opposition candidate for president and 53 others were killed by a bomb, reports AP.

"The curfew has been lifted as of this morning, but may be reimposed if there are serious outbreaks of violence," said Brig Gemunu Kulatunga, the defense ministry spokesman.

Skirmishes continued in the countryside between the military and Tamil rebels, but no serious incidents of civilian violence have been reported since the killing.



A young Bosnian woman soldier charges an attack-position during her military training on a hill near Sarajevo on Thursday, as the first group of women army volunteers prepare for war. — AFP photo

Iran accuses US of not seeking peace in ME

TEHRAN, Oct 28: Iran's spiritual leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei accused the United States on Thursday of not seeking peace in the Middle East but oppression and brutal compromise, reports Reuter.

Khamenei, whose country has condemned peace talks with Israel, also said the presence of US and other western forces in the Gulf was causing tension in the region.

The official news agency Irna said Khamenei blasted the "arrogant powers for their attempts to impose unjust compromise on Middle East countries" and said: "What they are looking for is not peace but rather oppression and brutal compromise."

"I explicitly announce that in any incident in which a Palestinian youth gets killed, a Palestinian mother loses her beloved ones and a Palestinian family loses its bread winner, the US president and administration are directly involved," Irna and Tehran radio quoted Khamenei as saying.

They said Khamenei was addressing a large crowd in ray in southern Tehran.

"The Zionist regime (Israel) has formally announced that it would assassinate members of the Islamic resistance of Palestine. Hamas, wherever it gets hold of them, while those claiming to advocate democracy and human rights have remained silent on blatant instances of state terrorism," he said.

US President Bill Clinton, on a tour of the Middle East where on Wednesday he witnessed the signing of a peace treaty between Israel and Jordan, later that day criticised Muslim militants for trying to derail the peace process and warned, "you will not succeed."

In a speech to Jordan's parliament, Clinton hammered at a central theme of his tour of six countries — that "enemies of peace" must not be allowed to halt the march toward peace.

Clinton made clear he was talking about Islamic militants. Khamenei said Iran could not remain silent "towards the criminal behaviour" of Israel towards Palestinians.

"The people of the region including the Muslim nations of Jordan, Egypt and Morocco, unlike their weak leaders, do not accept the treacherous and brutal compromise accord with Israel and will never remain silent on such big oppression," he said.

Iran's Jomhuri Eslami newspaper on Thursday said the peace treaty between Israel and Jordan was doomed to fail "because any signature by a regime (Israel) which in its essence is illegal and imposed cannot be a guarantor of peace."

Off the Record



Superstar and singer Diana Ross poses for photos holding a quadruple platinum award on Thursday in London that she was presented by record company EMI for her One Woman, The Ultimate Collection Album. The album has sold in excess of a million copies in the UK alone, making it the biggest selling album of Diana Ross in her 30-year career. — AFP photo

Sex scandal hits beauty pageant

MANILA, Philippines: Candidates from Papua New Guinea and New Zealand pulled out of the Miss Asia-Pacific beauty pageant after one of them accused contest officials of condoning sexual harassment. It was reported Friday, says AP.

The newspaper Today quoted unnamed sources as saying Tania Doyle of Papua New Guinea and Sarah Grace of New Zealand left the country after an incident October 18 at a Quezon City hotel.

According to the newspaper, Miss Doyle complained that pageant chaperones forced her to entertain "VIP guests" at a dinner at the hotel.

The newspaper quoted Leandro Enriquez, president of the pageant, as denying the allegation. He accused the two women of violating pageant rules by entertaining male friends at a hotel bar without chaperones.

The pageant finals are scheduled for November 5 in the central Philippine city of Cebu.

Deadly passion!

ROME: She was lovely, a red-haired beauty who dreamed of becoming a fashion model. The coroner counted 24 stab wounds on her body, and police charged her ex-boyfriend, reports AP.

Italians joined the victim's distraught mother in her tearful cry: "Why? Why?" Witness Italy's latest crime wave: Violence carried out by jealous or jilted lovers, many still in their youth.

The October 22 slaying of Stefania Massarini in Genoa and other crimes like it have triggered soul-searching about the nature of rage and whether the fabric of Italian society is beginning to fray.

The nation's top statistics agency reported at least 40 such murders so far this year — about one a week in a nation where most homicides rank as top news stories. It said "acts of passion" — including attacks by upset lovers and family members — rose from 1,461 to 1,496 between 1992 and 1993.

Behind the raw figures, however, many theories are offered on why more and more broken relationships lead to violence. Some suggest young men are lashing back at the growing independence of women. Others blame the influence of violent television programmes or a resurgence of a strong macho culture that led to cliches about hot-blooded Italians. The influence of drugs is also cited.

Men commit the majority of the so-called passion attacks.

"Young men tend to depend on the object they possess with tooth and nail as demonstrated in the crime pages in newspapers... They are reacting to an end to the tradition in which women could not rebel or decide to break relationships," said Fulvio Scapparro, a University of Milan psychology professor who specialised in youth issues.

"It is difficult to educate our young people these days... to choose reason over violence," said Rev Giorgio Parodi at the funeral Mass for Massarini, the slain would-be model.

... For soliciting prostitute

NEW YORK: A man arrested for soliciting a prostitute had an arsenal of weapons in his van, including more a dozen pipe bombs, a bulletproof vest and a flame-thrower, police said Thursday, reports AP.

Antonio Olmeda, 36, was arrested in the Bronx borough late Wednesday after he agreed to pay an undercover police woman posing as a prostitute 10 dollars for sex, said Detective Joseph McConville, a police spokesman.

Police seized his van as part of an anti-prostitution campaign that forces those arrested for soliciting prostitutes to forfeit property. Among the items found in the back: 18 pipe bombs, a flame thrower, a number of explosive canisters, a dozen clips for Uzi submachine guns, a shotgun with a laser sight, swords, machetes and 1,000 rounds of ammunition, much of it illegal, black talon bullets.

Capt Richard Romaine said police didn't know what Olmeda intended to do with the weapons.

Olmeda was charged with soliciting a prostitute and various weapons charges.

Bosnian govt forces consolidate new gains in Bihac

SARAJEVO, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Oct 28: Government forces have consolidated the new positions they conquered west of Sarajevo following a stunning victory over Bosnian Serbs that forced thousands of Serb civilians to flee, reports AP.

The victory could bolster the confidence of the outgunned Muslim-led government army that has fought a mostly losing battle for 2 and a half years, making it less likely to compromise in UN-brokered negotiations.

"Any offensive is counter-productive and certainly does not contribute to improve

the lot of the civilians population," Sergio De Mello, one of the top UN envoys in former Yugoslavia, said Thursday.

The Bosnian Serb army's chief of staff acknowledged the extent of the defeat near the northwestern town of Bihac. In a letter to the UN peacekeepers, Lt. Gen. Manojlo Milovanovic demanded they "urgently put pressure on the Muslim side to stop the offensive, especially against civilians."

The Serbs suffered "immense material damage and losses," Milovanovic said.

UN relief workers estimated 7,500 Serb civilians —

mostly women, children and elderly — had fled advancing government forces in two areas: 2,500 from the Kupres area 55 miles (90 kms) west of Sarajevo and the rest from the Bihac enclave in the northwest.

Relief workers began sending in food and blankets to the displaced — one of the largest throngs of Serb refugees to flee at one time since the war began in April 1992. More than 200,000 people have died or disappeared since Bosnia seceded from Yugoslavia.

During the first two years of the war, Serb forces took about two thirds of Bosnia-Herzegovina, with the Muslim led government controlling the remainder.

The heaviest government offensive centered around the Serb-held town of Kupres, where government army officials said they were closing in on the north and east.

UN relief workers said Serb civilians were fleeing to safer rebel-held lands.

Bosnian Army sources said most of the high ground north and east of Kupres has been captured by government forces. They predicted the town would fall when the high points of land north, northeast and east are taken.

In the attack outside Bihac, the government's most successful of the war, Bosnian army forces captured up to 60 square miles (150 square kilometers) of territory east and southeast of the town, said Lt. Col. Tim Spicer, a peacekeeper spokesman.

Bosnian army sources said the sweep became possible after commando units positioned behind Serb lines helped capture a complex of military barracks on the plateau overlooking Bihac.

Bosnian Serbs didn't have time to destroy underground warehouses packed with weapons, equipment, and am-

China to recall delegates from Korean MAC

SEOUL, Oct 28: China has signalled the imminent recall of its delegates from the Korean Military Armistice Commission (MAC), and a farewell party was held for the monitors in the demilitarised zone, North Korean broadcasts said today, reports AP.

In Seoul, Foreign Ministry and military officials cited the radio reports as saying the Chinese delegates had paid a final call to the North Korean border outpost of Panmunjom Thursday night, where they attended a party hosted by Pyongyang's troops.