

BRIEFLY

Deng's speeches published: China has published a collection of Deng Xiaoping's speeches on his "One Country, Two Systems" policy, a report said on Monday. In a further move to promote reunification with Taiwan, AFP reports from Beijing.

A seminar to promote the "Deng Xiaoping on the Reunification of Our Motherland" — bringing together some 48 published articles and speeches on the subject by the 90-year-old leader since 1978 — was held on Sunday, the Economic Daily said.

26 killed in Chinese road mishap: Twenty six people were killed and 20 injured when a petrol tanker crashed head on into a crowded bus, sending it into a deep ravine, a newspaper in southern China reported. Reuter says from Beijing.

The tanker was overtaking another vehicle in Guangdong province when it hit the oncoming bus travelling from neighbouring Hunan on Sunday morning, the Yangcheng Evening News said in an edition received in Beijing on Tuesday.

Attack on Japanese tourists: An angry gunman opened fire on a bus carrying Japanese tourists in Cairo on Monday wounding the driver, one of the passengers told AFP in Cairo.

Tokyo teacher Huroyasu Sasaki told AFP he had seen a man shooting at the bus driver wounding him in the leg, before firing at the bus which police said was carrying 27 passengers.

Storms swamp Gulf states: Heavy storms have swamped Gulf desert countries more used to unbroken sunshine than hours of wind and rain, weather services said on Monday, AFP reports from Dubai.

Qatar said in a statement from the Education Ministry on Monday that it was suspending school and university classes to "protect pupils and students." And Bahrain has been hit by floods and raging winds since Sunday, the worst for 15 years, the officials agency GNA said. Violent downpours and storms also shook Saudi Arabia, Oman and the United Arab Emirates.

22 die in Mexican bus mishap: At least 22 people died and 33 were hurt when a bus ran off a highway on Monday in the central state of Queretaro, the official news agency Notimex said. Reuter reports from Mexico City.

Police said the accident apparently occurred when the driver fell asleep at the wheel and the bus plunged into a road-side canyon 33 feet (10 metres) deep, Notimex reported.

US-Israeli joint exercise: US and Israeli forces are conducting joint land, sea and air exercises in Israel this month, including manoeuvres in the Negev Desert, officials said on Monday, AP reports from Jerusalem.

Over the next three weeks, US 6th Fleet ships and American aircraft will participate in the exercises along with about 7,500 US troops, said US Embassy spokesman Richard Scorza. The exercises began over the weekend despite a strike at Israel's shipyards in Haifa that initially threatened a delay.

Serbian police officer killed: A murder suspect approached by police on Monday opened fire, killed an officer, fled, shot at police in pursuit, lobbed a grenade and put a bullet in his own head, Serbian authorities said, AFP reports from Belgrade.

The suspect was hospitalised after the shootout that ended near the Serbian presidency building, police said. A total of four policemen were wounded, three of them in the grenade blast, and a man who was with the suspect was arrested.

Castro visits Paris museums:



Cuban President Fidel Castro gestures as he addresses an audience of dignitaries at UNESCO headquarters on Monday in Paris. — AFP/UNB photo

Cuban President Fidel Castro toured Paris museums yesterday, enjoying a rare visit to western capital that prompted harsh criticism in the French press, Reuter reports from Paris.

The revolutionary leader, who has hailed his Monday talks with President Francois Mitterrand as ending "apartheid" imposed on his communist government, turned to tourism and extended his controversial three-day stay by one day to Thursday. He arranged to visit the army and Louvre museums before meeting French businessmen to woo investors to Cuba.

Kazakh MPs defy president's parliament dissolution order

ALMA ATA, Mar 14: A majority of deputies from Kazakhstan's parliament met today, defying a dissolution order by President Nursultan Nazarbayev, and unanimously voted to keep the legislature working, reports Reuter.

A total of 130 deputies from the 177-seat assembly met in the parliament building and, by a show of hands, voted in favour of a motion that said there were no grounds for the parliament to be declared illegitimate.

Nazarbayev announced on Saturday that parliament was disbanded after the constitutional court ruled on March 6 that elections held a year ago were illegal.

Rebel deputies, led by writer Orlin Suleimenov, accuse Nazarbayev of using the constitutional court ruling to get rid of a parliament that is not compliant to him, and rule

by decree. They said today they had been locked out of their offices and had their telephones cut off. But they managed to hold a spirited session of the "alternative assembly" under Suleimenov's chairmanship.

Suleimenov, Kazakhstan's best known opposition politician, told journalists: "The executive and judicial powers have taken revenge on parliament."

An earlier report says: Rebel members of parliament plan to hold the first sitting of their alternative assembly today to denounce what they say is a drift to totalitarianism.

Seventy members of the dissolved 177 seat parliament said they would join the rebel group. The rest were apparently resigned to last weekend's move by Nazarbayev and his pledge to rule by decree

pending a new election. The rebels pledged they would do everything to prevent violence erupting over any possible confrontation between president and parliament.

Our regime is becoming a fascist regime, deputy Nurbakit Kuashybekov told Reuters. "Every totalitarian regime ends in violence. That is the path we want to avoid. We want to work legally, but we fear the security forces."

Kuashybekov said politicians of all persuasions had joined the rebel group likely to become the chief vehicle for opposition to Nazarbayev's administration when an election is called.

Suleimenov's leadership will give it prominence, he won recognition in the Soviet Union and the West when he led a campaign to stop nuclear testing at Kazakhstan's

Sempalatinsk site. Nazarbayev told local journalists there was no hurry to hold an election. Time for reflection, was needed, a presidential spokesman said.

The President dissolved parliament after the constitutional court in the second largest former Soviet republic ruled that last year's general election was illegal.

Most Kazakhs appeared to take the news calmly. The streets of the capital Alma Ata were quiet as temperatures plunged below freezing.

Officials said the parliament chamber was closed for renovations.

Western investors in the energy rich country said they did not see any need for concern at present provided Nazarbayev remained in charge to implement his economic reforms.

India to exchange missions with Taiwan soon

TAIPEI, Mar 14: India, which recognises the rival Chinese government in Beijing, has agreed to exchange non-diplomatic missions with Taiwan, the Foreign Ministry said on Tuesday, reports AP.

Taiwan's New Delhi office will be its first representative mission in South Asia, the ministry said.

Negotiations began a year ago because "both sides find it necessary to increase contacts," Foreign Ministry spokesman Rock Leng said.

The offices will issue visas and help promote trade and investment, but a date for their opening is yet to be decided, Leng said.

Communist China, which claims sovereignty over Taiwan, dictates a "one-China" policy, whereby countries cannot have diplomatic relations with both.

India established diplomatic ties with Beijing in 1949, and has had cool relations with Taiwan.

Rabanni's troops, Taliban pursue battle in hills

KABUL, Mar 14: Government forces and the Taliban Islamic militia pursued their battle in hills south of the Afghan capital today, reports AFP.

While Kabul remained calm, the sound of artillery gunfire from the rival forces could be heard in southwest districts of the city.

President Burhanuddin Rabanni's forces are attempting to force the Taliban out of the Khairabad hills and the Islamic militia's base at Rishkor, around 20 kms (12.5 miles) south of Kabul.

If successful, the Rabanni troops then want to move on the Taliban's new stronghold at Charasyab a little further south of the current battle-zone.

Tanks, heavy artillery and truckloads of troops were waiting near the former Royal Palace at Cheliston, in the southern suburbs, for an order to join the combat in the Khairabad hills.

US spends \$5b on ICBM programme

WASHINGTON, Mar 14: The United States is spending about five billion dollars on intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) defence programme, reports PTI.

Concerned over the potential ballistic missile threat, the US would complete the programme in the next six years.

The director of the ballistic missile defence organisation, Lt Gen Malcolm O'Neill, said the defence system would be 90 per cent effective against an attack with up to four intercontinental ballistic missiles fired by a rogue nation, a hostile Russia or China or by accident.

He told a congressional hearing that the amount would be enough for 20 high-speed interceptor missiles, ground-based radars and spaceborne sensors.



Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak (L) gets out of a limousine as Japanese Emperor Akihito greets him before their meeting at the Imperial Palace in Tokyo yesterday. — AFP/UNB photo

Drug barons back terrorists to stir up unrest in Karachi

KARACHI, Mar 14: An army of up to 4,000 terrorists funded by drug barons is stirring up the chronic violence that has left more than 1,000 dead over the past year in Karachi, a police official said today, reports AFP.

Preliminary investigations after the arrest of 350 people in a two-day clampdown in the sprawling port city indicated that traffickers were the cause of Karachi's strife, government officials said.

Karachi Police Chief Afzal Shigri claimed 3,000 to 4,000 terrorists were actively involved in creating unrest. Many of those arrested are members of ethnic and sectarian parties and at least six have been charged with terrorism, he said.

The statements have turned the spotlight from India, long blamed by the government as being the cause of Karachi problems, to drug gangs. But observers say the authorities may be "oversimplifying a complex problem."

UN renews sanctions on Iraq

UNITED NATIONS, Mar 14: The UN Security Council renewed international economic sanctions on Iraq, despite a lingering disagreement over the need to prolong an oil embargo against Baghdad, reports AFP.

France and Russia, two of the council's five permanent members, have said they will seek to ease the oil embargo if a UN commission determines that Iraq has complied with UN demands to eliminate all its weapons of mass destruction.

The international sanctions against Iraq were renewed in a Council vote on Monday because Baghdad has not yet fully complied with UN resolutions that were imposed in 1990 when Iraqi troops invaded Kuwait, said the current Council President, Li Zhaoxing of China.

The decision was a victory for the United States, which

had campaigned for the sanctions against Iraq to be maintained. The sanctions are to be lifted only after Iraq conform to international regulation and monitoring of its weapons programme in particular weapons of mass destruction.

"As soon as we receive a positive confirmation from the special commission that the conditions have been met, it would be time to present a resolution" to lift the embargo, Russia's UN Ambassador Sergei Lavrov said.

But the US ambassador to Egypt calls Israel to commit to NPT

TOKYO, Mar 14: Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak on Monday called on Israel to commit to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in order to buttress moves for peace in the Middle East.

the United Nations, Madeleine Albright, said that the United States would continue to take a hardline. "Only when Iraq chooses full compliance by action should the Council consider modifying sanctions," she said.

Diplomats who attended the closed-door meeting said that none of the representatives of the Council's 15 member states pressed for an immediate easing of the sanctions on Baghdad.

Council members were at odds over how to word a joint statement on how Iraq has or has not complied with the UN demands.

Diplomats said the regime of President Saddam Hussein, whose troops were chased from Kuwait by a US-led multinational coalition in February 1991, had yet to fully comply with UN demands for the elimination of its weapons of mass destruction.

Kumaratunga meets LTTE leader in Copenhagen

COLOMBO, Mar 14: President Chandrika Kumaratunga urged Tamil Tiger guerrillas to open political talks to end Sri Lanka's ethnic war at her first meeting with a European-based rebel leader, a press report here said today, reports AFP.

Kumaratunga had the unscheduled meeting with Lawrence Thilakar of the rebel Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) at the conclusion of the United Nations Social Development Summit in Copenhagen on Sunday, the island newspaper reported.

During the 30-minute discussion with Thilakar, who operates from the LTTE's Paris office, Kumaratunga called for substantive talks aimed at ending the conflict which has claimed over 30,000 lives since 1972.

The President clearly asked the Tigers to inform her government in writing of their desire to enter the phase of political discussions at the earliest," the English-language

Island said in a report by its Copenhagen correspondent.

Kumaratunga had earlier accused LTTE leader Velupillai Prabhakaran of slowing the peace process she initiated after coming to power in August with a mandate to restore peace to Sri Lanka.

The government has charged that the LTTE was only interested in talking about day-today economic issues facing territory under their control in the island's north, where the guerrillas maintain a de facto separate state.

A government offer to involve a retired French diplomat, Francois Michael, has already been turned down by the Tigers, saying the French government nominee was a friend of Kumaratunga.

The Island reported Kumaratunga told a press conference in Copenhagen that the LTTE was building bunkers in the island's multi-ethnic eastern region with cement sent by the Colombo government.

Off the Record

Stories do undo

LONDON: A World War I veteran has married a lady nearly half his age after telling war stories that won her heart, reports AP.

George Brunwell Jameson, 102, and Julie Robinson, 53, were married last Friday at a registry office near their home on the Devonshire coast southwest of London, British newspapers reported Tuesday.

Jameson, a widower called "GB" by his friends, told the Daily Express newspaper he was "jolly lucky" to have found the perfect companion so late in life.

"We are very much in love with each other in spite of the age difference," he was quoted as saying, "I don't give a damn what people think — age does not matter to me."

Robinson, an Australian immigrant and former history teacher, saw Jameson appear on a BBC television documentary about the war in 1993, soon wrote to him seeking more information, and eventually travelled to his home.

"George is the funniest and kindest man I have ever known," the Daily Mail newspaper quoted her as saying. "He is a darling."

The veteran is believed to be one of only nine surviving members of the British Expeditionary Force sent to France in the opening days of the war in 1914. His recollections have provided a trove of material for historians at the Imperial War Museum in London.

The 10 wives to stand trial

KUALA LUMPUR: An Islamic court on Tuesday ruled that there was enough evidence to prosecute 10 wives of a man for allegedly violating a law that allows Muslims to only have four wives, reports AP.

Judge Zainuddin Munajat ruled that the 10 women will make their defence on April 11 in his court in Johore Bahru town, national news agency Bernama reported.

The women are alleged to have abetted and illegally cohabited with a self-professed religious teacher, a Singapore citizen who lives in neighbouring Johore Bahru in Malaysia.

The town is 300 kilometres south of Kuala Lumpur. The case has drawn widespread attention in Malaysia, where about 55 per cent of its 19 million people are Muslims from the ethnic Malay community to which the accused also belongs.

Four of the accused — the legal wives of Abdul Talib Harun — are charged with helping him break "hukum syarak," the Islamic law that prohibits Muslims from being wedded to more than four women at a time.

The women, identified as Jamaliah Kartimun, 26, Haslinda Sipon, 25, Sabariah Abu, 28, and Ummu Safiqah Abdullah, 27, face a maximum fine of 500 ringgit (200 dollar) and three months jail if convicted.

The other six women, aged between 24 and 27, are charged with illicit sexual relations and cohabiting with Abdul Talib, 34, out of wedlock.

Di hottest fashion icon

LONDON: So who's really hot in British fashion? Look out for newcomers Pearce Florida and veterans Betty Jackson, Helen Storey and Roland Klein. But Britain's hottest fashion icon is still Diana, reports AP.

After a five-year absence, the 33-year-old princess made a surprise appearance Monday at London Fashion Week, giving Britain's fifth-largest industry a boost and putting little-known designer Joe Casely-Hayford in the spotlight.

From a front-row seat, Diana watched his catwalk show featuring puffball knee-length shorts, flowered satin trousers and cashmere sweaters with loose sleeves. She smiled at the finale — glowing T-shirts reading "Prozac Babe," emblazoned with capsules of the anti-depressant drug which shone in the dark.

For Monday anyway, the princess was looking, not buying. She wore a slick black suit with velvet and satin lapels by designer Catherine Walker. Casely-Hayford was hoping she would come backstage and place an order for one of his figure-hugging dresses.

Sandwiched between the "can't miss" shows in Milan and Paris, London proved a convenient stop this year, offering its unique mix of elegance, innovation and outrage. The number of buyers was up by more than 25 per cent.



US-DPRK N-talks from Mar 25

WASHINGTON, Mar 14: The United States and North Korea will resume talks on their nuclear agreement in Berlin on March 25 to 29, the State Department announced on Monday, reports AFP.

North Korea has yet to agree to the US demand that South Korea build the two light-water nuclear reactors that Washington promised Pyongyang under the deal struck last October.

Pyeongyang is threatening to scrap the agreement if Washington does not drop the demand.

Women make little progress in the field of diplomacy

UNITED NATIONS, Mar 14: Although women have made advances in many fields in recent decades, diplomacy does not appear to be one of them, according to a UN report, reports Reuter.

"Throughout its 50 years of history, the vast majority of the delegates selected by their national governments to represent their countries at United Nations bodies have been male," the report said.

Women continue to be largely absent in the highest ranks of the permanent mis-

sions to the United Nations in New York," it added.

In 1989, when the world body had 159 members compared with 166 now, women accounted for 20 per cent of the diplomatic personnel of permanent missions. Fifty-seven of the delegations had no women on their diplomatic staff.

"As of January 1994, only seven missions out of 187 (including two observer missions) were headed by women. Among the 240 delegates holding ambassadorial rank,

only 11 were women," added the report, titled "participation of women in political life and decision-making."

"Of the total diplomatic staff of missions, women represented only 22 per cent. In the permanent missions of 67 member states, there were no women at all."

"The figures reflect negligible increase since 1949, when women at the diplomatic level in permanent missions to the United Nations constituted 16 per cent of the total."

Of the 49 presidents of the UN General Assembly elected since 1945, only two were women — Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit of India in 1953 and Angie Brooks of Liberia in 1969.

Since the establishment of the 15-judge International Court of Justice (ICJ) at the Hague in 1945 there has not been a single woman judge.

Among the numerous UN conferences held since 1945 and headed by appointed senior UN officials, only six were headed by women, and

four of those were world conferences on women.

Of the 89 executive heads of various organisations of the UN system elected or appointed by member states, there have been no women.

But four women have been confirmed by the UN General Assembly as heads of major UN programmes. They are Sadako Ogata of Japan, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Catherine Bertini of the United States, executive director of the World Food Programme, Elizabeth

Buchanan to run for president

WASHINGTON, Mar 14: Conservative commentator Pat Buchanan said on Monday that he would run for President in 1996 after a campaign four years ago that many saw as decisive for the Republican Party, reports AFP.

Buchanan said he would formally announce his decision next Monday in New Hampshire, where the first primary is held. The first caucuses are in Iowa.

"The revolution we began there triumphed in 1994 and we're going to carry it all the way in 1996," Buchanan told