

North Korea releases South's ship, 21 crew

SEOUL, Aug 13: North Korea released a South Korean rice-aid ship and its 21 crew today after officials from both sides reached agreement late on Saturday in Beijing, a spokesman at the Unification Ministry said. Reuter

The ministry spokesman said the ship had left the northern port of Chongjin today at 10 am (0100 GMT) as agreed with the Stalinist North.

"The ship should reach our port of Pohang around 3 pm (0600 GMT) tomorrow," he said.

"South Korea also agreed to resume rice aid to the North as earlier scheduled," the spokesman told Reuters.

The spokesman said the agreement was reached with the North after three days of talks in Beijing on the return of the Samsun Venus and its crew, held by the communist North on spying charges.

North Korea agreed to return the ship and crew after the South expressed regret

for the incident and assured the North it would not recur, the spokesman added.

Under an accord signed in Beijing last June, South Korea is supplying 150,000 tonnes of free rice to the North to ease what Seoul says is a chronic food shortage and to improve ties. Half has been shipped to the North already.

North Korea abruptly cancelled on Wednesday a third round of talks on rice aid that were scheduled to start the next day in Beijing, accusing a crewman on the 9,400-tonne Samsun Venus of illegally taking photographs.

Pyongyang said the crewman, who it named as Ri Yang Chon, took photographs of port facilities when the ship docked at Chongjin in early August.

North Korea's Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) said on Sunday Ri Yang Chon took 14 photographs and had admitted to premeditated espionage.

International

Defector General may not disclose military information

Iraq offers arms secrets to UN

BAGHDAD, Aug 13: Iraq today asked the head of the UN disarmament commission to visit Iraq immediately and receive weapons secrets it says were hidden by a minister who defected last week, reports AFP.

Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tareq Aziz said Industry Minister Hussein Kamel Hassan, who defected to Jordan last week had hidden important information from UNSCOM, the UN special commission on disarmament Iraq.

He said Iraq "sent an invitation to (UNSCOM chief Roll) Ekeus so that he comes to Baghdad urgently because we are ready to give him information that Hussein Kamel had hidden," according to the official Iraqi news agency.

The Industry Minister risked being branded a traitor by military men left to face deteriorating conditions in Iraq and weakening his influence within a potentially significant core of nationalist opposition to Saddam outside

shaken his father-in-law Saddam Hussein's regime but the former official who holds Iraq's deepest military secrets may not be willing to share them with the West, reports Reuter.

Analysts said the lieutenant general, who made a dramatic call on Saturday to Iraqi soldiers and civilians to help overthrow Saddam, could jeopardise the influence he hopes to maintain at home if he hands over Iraq's carefully-guarded secrets.

"Getting Iraq's deepest secrets might be a tough nut to crack," said Phebe Marr, a senior fellow at the Pentagon's Institute for National Strategic Studies and author of a history of Iraq.

She said Hussein Kamel had been branded a traitor by military men left to face deteriorating conditions in Iraq and weakening his influence within a potentially significant core of nationalist opposition to Saddam outside

Iraq. US officials refused to say whether they had been in contact with Hussein Kamel, who arrived on Jordan's King Hussein's doorstep this week along with his brother, Saddam Kamel Hassan, who is in charge of Saddam's guards, and their wives, both of whom are Saddam's daughters.

At a palace press conference in Amman on Saturday, Hussein Kamel side stepped questions about his contacts with the United States, emphasising that he had been in touch with Iraqi dissidents inside and outside Iraq.

Although he was treated in Amman in February for what Jordanian officials said was a brain tumour, Hussein Kamel, in his early 50s, appeared fit and brimming with bravado.

Some described the brothers' defections in what was already a shrinking circle of loyalty to Saddam as possibly the biggest blow to the



General Hussein
Iraqi leader's stability since he quelled Kurdish and Shi'ite rebellions after the 1991 Gulf War.

"He's about as close to Saddam as you can get," said one state department source with long experience of Iraq.

China won't stop N-tests

TOKYO, Aug 13: Chinese President Jiang Zemin has indicated that China would continue nuclear testing until a comprehensive global ban on such tests comes into force, the Japanese daily Asahi Shimbun reported today, says AFP.

China has participated in a "solemn and serious" manner in the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty talks under way in Geneva, Jiang was quoted as saying in an interview with Asahi published.

China will halt nuclear testing after the treaty takes effect, said Jiang, who is also Communist Party chief.

The Geneva talks have been aimed at achieving a comprehensive test ban at the end of 1996.

China conducted an underground nuclear test in May, ignoring a moratorium on testing observed by the other nuclear states since 1992. Then France drew international condemnation after announcing in June that it would resume nuclear testing in the South Pacific in September.

In the interview, Jiang also blamed the United States for strains in Sino-US relations since Taiwanese President Lee Teng-Hui was granted a US visa for a private visit in June.

King Hussein, US Gen Peay talk ME situation

AMMAN, Aug 13: Jordan's King Hussein met late Saturday with the head of the US army's central command, General James Henry Binford Peay, the official news agency Petra said. AFP reports.

Jordanian Premier Ziad ibn Shaker and the Commander in Chief of the Jordanian army also attended the talks with Peay, which focused on the situation in the Middle East, Jordanian, American cooperation and matters of common interest.

The talks came the same day as the first public appearance of General Hussein Kamel Hassan, son-in-law and top military aide of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, who defected to Amman on Tuesday.

Hassan suggested in a press conference Saturday that he had no contacts with United States officials concerning Iraq's chemical and biological arsenal, which he helped build.

However a Western diplomat told AFP earlier that Hassan had held preliminary contacts with US military officials, who arrived in Amman on Friday.

Greenpeace ship off to Mururoa to join protest

SUVA, Aug 13: Greenpeace flagship Rainbow Warrior set sail today for Mururoa atoll to join a fleet of ships as protesters against French nuclear tests due to begin next month gained momentum, reports AFP.

The unarmed New Zealand navy research ship Tui also left Auckland to join the Flotilla, which is expected to number at least 20 vessels from around the world.

A second Greenpeace ship, The Vega, which first went to Mururoa 20 years ago, was due to leave Papeete in French Polynesia, the island group on which the nuclear test series are to be held.

At least 16 other vessels are already on their way from numerous international ports.

Prospects for political solution in Karachi still bleak

KARACHI, Aug 13: The Pakistan security forces said today their crackdown on Karachi militants was reducing violence, but prospects still remain bleak for a political solution to the strife in the country's largest city, reports AFP.

Administration and security officials, boasting several major blows against city gunmen, admitted the battle was not won though.

"We have struck solid blows against the militants," said a senior police official. But he added "it is a long drawn out battle, terrorism has not been eliminated fully."

More than 30,000 police and para-military rangers are

deployed in Karachi, drawing some protests from residents of districts bearing the burnt of the clampdown, who say innocent people are often harassed and detained.

The killings go on in Karachi. But the 11 deaths in the past four days are down from an 10 violent deaths a day in recent weeks.

A senior police official told AFP that 81 terrorists had been killed since January. Federal Interior Minister Naseerullah Babar, put in charge of the crackdown by Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, added that between 400 and 500 militants were in custody.

"They are feeling the pinch after the death of their commander-in-chief Farooq Dada," he said. Faheem Farooqi, billed as another highly wanted terrorist, was arrested last week.

Among them are 12 for whose arrest the government

placed rewards of millions of rupees," Babar said. According to the minister, almost all of those detained belong to Mohajir Quami Movement (MQM).

Babar said there were still around 1,000 militants still at large. But he declared, "we have broken their backbone" and recalled the killing this month of alleged terrorist leader, Farooq Dada. Police said he was head of the MQM military wing and was wanted for more than 100 attacks.

"They are feeling the pinch after the death of their commander-in-chief Farooq Dada," he said. Faheem Farooqi, billed as another highly wanted terrorist, was arrested last week.

President Lee Teng-hui of

leading a pro-independence trend, demanded the president step down and end his bid to run for a second term, next year.

"Lee Teng-hui is the source of chaos in Taiwan," said Feng Hu-Hsiang executive secretary of the Alliance for Democratic Reform, one of the protest organisers. He added that Lee's policies would bring a crisis to Taiwan.

Protesters shouting "we are Taiwanese, but we are also Chinese," marched from the Chiang Kai-Shek Memorial Hall to Sun Yat-Sen Memorial Hall.

Late nationalist leader

Chiang and Sun, founder of

the Chinese Republic in

1911, are the main spiritual

influences for wingers

strongly against Taiwan's in-

dependence.

Some protesters, accusing

President Lee of running for re-

election "for the sake of Tai-

wan."

China staged one series of

missile tests off northwest

Taiwan last month in what

was seen as an attempt to in-

imidate the nationalist is-

land after Lee's private visit

to the United States in June.

It is to start an even larger

series of missile tests this

week to apply more pressure.

Beijing views Taiwan as a

rebel province and vowed to

retake it by force if the island

declared independence.

Former Prime Minister

Hau Pei-Tsun and former

Parliament Speaker Liang Su-

Jung joined the protest, orga-

nised by the alliance and

right wing New Party.



An elderly man raising his hands in supplication as some 20,000 Christians gather in the Yoido district in South Korea. Christians met to mark 50 years of liberation from Japanese colonial rule with prayers for peace and the peaceful reunification of the two Koreas, divided by the Cold War since the Japanese surrender.

— AFP/UNB photo

Cong (I) in turmoil again

NEW DELHI, Aug 13: India's ruling Congress (I) Party is in turmoil again as its top leaders engage in factional fighting, leaving Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao watching with renewed concern, party sources said, reports AFP.

With general elections expected early next year, a divided but confident opposition is laughing on the side-lines as the 74-year-old Prime Minister tries to balance differences and avoid a revolt arising from several internal crises.

More than 50 Congress MPs have accused Home Minister Shankar Rao Chavan, a Rao confident, of flirting with two Hindu nationalist parties governing the western state of

Maharashtra.

Chavan, a party veteran, has been under attack since he attended a public function in Bombay on August 7 organised by the Hindu parties to celebrate his 75th birthday.

Angry Congress leaders are baying for Chavan's head.

"The moral of Congressmen will naturally be affected if leaders honey-moon with rival parties," charged Civil Aviation Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad.

Congress MPs in Bombay

watching with renewed concern, party sources said, reports AFP.

Rao has not commented on the attack on Chavan, and

Congress sources say he is

more distressed by the re-

lusal of Railway Minister C K Jaffer Sharif to quit the cab-

inet to do party work.

Sharif, an influential

Muslim from southern India,

has subtle warned Rao that

he would stage a revolt if he

was sacked. With general

elections expected in early

1996, party sources say, Rao

cannot ignore the threat.

To add to Rao's woes,

Chavan and Sharif are pub-

lically quarrelling, while a Rao

baiter, Sharad Pawar, has put

the Congress on the spot by

publicly apologising for the

1990 razing of a 16th-cen-

tury mosque by Hindu fanat-

ics.

Pawar, a former defence

minister, offered the apology,

apparently without the party

leadership's authorisation,

while addressing a public

meeting about 10 days ago in

the northern town of

Ramgarh.

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