

BRIEFLY



Former University of California Professor Theodore J. Kaczynski (C) is handcuffed and escorted by US Government agents to his arraignment in Helena, Montana, on Thursday. Kaczynski is a prime suspect in the Unabomber serial bombing case. The Unabomber, suspected of killing three people and injuring 23 others, had eluded the FBI since the first mail bomb attributed to him, exploded near Chicago in May 1978.

— AFP/UNB photo

2 Greenpeace ships back in Auckland: Crews from two Greenpeace ships which sailed into Auckland harbour on Friday said that they are uncovering the full extent of French 'sabotage' on the formerly impounded vessels. AP reports from Auckland.

The Rainbow Warrior II and the MV Greenpeace were two of five ships the French Navy impounded last September during protest against nuclear testing at Mururoa Atoll. They were released by the French military last month after almost six months in detention at Hao Atoll. Both ships were rusty and a fresh coat of paint on the MV Greenpeace only covered up the damage, crew members said.

Russia to launch foreign sat: Preparations at the Baikonur cosmodrome got under way Thursday for Russia's first launch of a foreign commercial satellite.

A news report said, AP reports from Moscow.

The launch was originally scheduled for March 28, but was delayed after engineers found a leak in the satellite's propulsion system.

Chinese PM shortens Europe tour:

Chinese Premier Li Peng has drastically shortened a European tour starting next week, apparently to avoid human rights demonstrators. A Hong Kong newspaper reported Friday. AP says from Hong Kong.

The South China Morning Post reported from Beijing that Li cancelled stops in Luxembourg and Holland, and cut his stay in France from seven days to three.

It quoted unidentified sources as saying envoys of the three countries were called to the Foreign Ministry in Beijing Thursday and told that the trip, in preparation for months, had to be cut short because Li 'is very busy.'

Chirac begins Egypt tour today:

French President Jacques Chirac begins on Saturday a three-day visit to Egypt to celebrate a friendship between the two countries which may run deep but does not always translate into political action. AFP reports from Cairo.

We salute the role of France based on friendship with all Arab countries, Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Mussa told journalists. Chirac's visit has a particular resonance with us because of the privileged ties between France and Egypt in all walks of life, particularly our historical cultural relationship, Mussa said.

2 journalists jailed in Egypt: A court sentenced two journalists with a leading Egyptian opposition newspaper to six months in jail Thursday for slandering a member of parliament, AP reports from Cairo.

Mahmoud el-Maqrashi, editor-in-chief of Al-Arabi, and Gamal Fahmi, a columnist, were also fined the equivalent of 208 dollars, the government-owned Al-Ahram newspaper reported.

Russian plane shot down in Chechnya

MOSCOW, Apr 5: A Russian plane was shot down on Thursday during a raid against Chechen rebel positions, in the southwest of the breakaway region. Interfax News Agency said, reports Reuter.

It quoted Russian officers as saying the pilot of the Sukhoi Su-25 on a reconnaissance mission over the village of Gokskoye, managed to eject after being hit around 5 pm (0900 GMT). He was alive and in Russian hands.

It was not clear whether Chechen guerrillas holed up in Gokskoye about 30 km (20 miles) southwest of the regional capital Grozny had fired on the plane.

The guerrillas who have heavy weaponry taken from former Soviet garrisons and captured from Russian troops during the fighting of the past year, have brought down at least one jet during the 16 month conflict, a well as Russian helicopters.

Western journalists reported seeing planes bombing

the village earlier in the day and Interfax said federal aviation had started bombing 1 pm (0900 GMT) its latest report said the operation to wipe out the guerrillas there was continuing.

Reuter correspondent Lawrence Sheets who visited the village earlier this week said it was largely destroyed and that most of the population appeared to have fled. Small groups of Chechen separatist fighters had set up positions in the ruins.

According to the local peaceful administration and the Russian military, there were no citizens in the village, Interfax said.

People in the regional centre Urus-Martan were taking shelter in cellars for fear of attack, it added.

AP adds, Chechnya's Kremlin-backed government expressed shock and indignation Thursday at the bombings of two Chechen villages that had signed peace pacts with the Russian military.

Situation worsens in Liberia: UN

UNITED NATIONS, Apr 5: The situation in war-ravaged Liberia is rapidly deteriorating and West African peacekeepers lack the resources to control the slide into chaos, according to UN report, reports AP.

The report drafted by Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, is expected to be presented to the Security Council next week. The Associated Press obtained a draft copy Thursday.

In the report Boutros-Ghali cited the upsurge in fighting since last December. A ceasefire declared in August 1995 has been repeatedly violated by groups of rebels.

The situation in Liberia is rapidly deteriorating and I fear that, unless the peace process is put back on track in the very near future, the consequences could be disastrous, Boutros-Ghali said.

Brown's death may delay efforts to rebuild Bosnia

SARAJEVO, Apr 5: The death in a plane crash of US Commerce Secretary Ron Brown and business leaders interested in investing in Bosnia could mean painful delays in efforts to rebuild the Balkan nation, reports AP.

"I am not sure we can overcome the loss of Brown," said Bosnian Prime Minister Hasan Muratovic, who had been scheduled to meet him in Sarajevo on Thursday.

Brown was to coordinate with us and find the best way to spend US aid of 200 million dollars for this year, he said. Surely there will be consequences.

If the crash slows down international reconstruction efforts, "it will be a loss that is felt not only by the family and friends of the people who were on that plane, but by the people of Bosnia," said Randolph Ryan, spokesman for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

"We need a successful reconstruction effort in order for peace to be preserved in the long run," said Klas Bergman, spokesman for the World Bank.

16 killed in truck mishap
14 bus passengers electrocuted in southern India

NEW DELHI, Apr 5: Bicycles strapped to the roof of a bus struck overhead electrical wires in southern India, electrocuting 14 passengers, a news agency reported Friday, says AP.

United News of India said the bus was carrying about 60 people in Andhra Pradesh state, almost 1,000 miles (1,600 kms) south of New Delhi. Two passengers were in serious condition at a hospital, the news agency said.

In another accident in western Maharashtra state, 16 people were killed when their truck overturned, Press Trust of India reported.

The victims were taking ride on the cement-laden truck and some were crushed to death by the cement bags. Poor villagers in India take regular rides on trucks as they offer cheaper mode of transport than bus services.

The area is about 1,400 kilometres (868 miles) west of New Delhi.

Nobel laureate held for child abuse

FREDRICK, Maryland, Apr 5: A Nobel Prize winner was arrested and charged with child sex abuse involving a 15-year-old boy he had brought to the United States from Micronesia, the FBI said, reports AP.

Dr Daniel Gajdusek, who was given the Nobel Prize in 1976 for his work on infectious diseases, was charged with child abuse and unnatural perverted sex practices, FBI spokesman Larry Foust said Thursday.

The FBI initiated a criminal investigation in November 1995 focusing on the doctor's relationships with minor children he had brought to the United States from Micronesia and New Guinea, Foust said.

More charges may be filed. The then 15-year-old boy lived with Gajdusek, now 72, at the time of the alleged abuse in the late 1980s and 1990s. The current age of the victim was not available.

Belarus warns NATO against moving N-arms

MINSK, Belarus, Apr 5: The president of the former Soviet republic of Belarus warned NATO on Thursday not to move tactical nuclear weapons into Poland or the Czech Republic, reports AP.

President Alexander Lukashenko said he would respond to such a step with "adequate measures," the Interfax news agency reported.

Lukashenko, speaking at a news conference in Minsk, gave no specifics but refused to say whether he would halt the withdrawal of nuclear warheads from Belarus, one of four former republics to inherit the Soviet nuclear arsenal.

It was not clear whether Chechen guerrillas holed up in Gokskoye about 30 km (20 miles) southwest of the regional capital Grozny had fired on the plane.

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Indian Muslims in quandary over whom to vote for in polls

in the northern Indian town of Ayodhya on December 6, 1992.

The BJP and other Hindu groups claimed the mosque was built by a mediaeval Muslim ruler after razing a Hindu temple commemorating the birthplace of the mythical Hindu warrior-king, Lord Rama.

The destruction of the Babri Mosque sparked Hindu-Muslim clashes nation-wide which claimed the lives of more than 2,000 people, mostly Muslims, in the worst attack on the community since the 1947 partition of India and Pakistan.

The BJP is again propagating a right-wing Hindu election pitch, like the one in 1992, aimed at consolidating Hindu votes in the general elections.

The Congress, India's oldest political party, has traditionally been the main recipient of

Muslim votes but many Muslims have snapped ties with the party for failing to prevent the razing of the Babri Mosque.

There is a lot of confusion now within the community, said Ahmed Bukhari, Deputy Cleric of the Jama Masjid, New Delhi's oldest mosque built in the 17th century. Muslims don't really have a third choice apart from the Congress and BJP.

Although Muslims would prefer a non-Congress, non-BJP alternative a "third option" has been rendered futile by fighting between left and centrist groups.

A secular centre-left coalition is a viable option only available in some of India's 25 states.

Another Muslim leader who spoke on condition of anonymity said "our main tar-

get is the BJP." We will issue a message to Muslim voters to try and defeat the BJP candidate in every constituency, he said.

The Muslim outrage at the BJP over the desecration of the Babri Mosque has been exacerbated by similar campaigns recently.

BJP chief Lal Krishna Advani this month toured several states on a van resembling an ancient chariot to promise good governance — a Hindu concept revolving around the legendary "golden rule" under Lord Rama.

He said the Muslim electorate — a formidable force in Uttar Pradesh, India's most populous state, and the key provinces of Bihar and West Bengal was being ardently wooed by all parties.

Syed Shahabuddin, a former diplomat and a leader of the Samata (equality) Party, said Muslims had always been underrepresented in parliament due to obscurantism, low educational levels and a "short-sighted" view.

Muslims constitute about 20 per cent of the total voters but there are only 28 Muslim MPs in the 545-seat parliament.

Votes should not be frightened away on co-religionists who don't stand any chance, Shahabuddin said. The objective should be to keep both the BJP and the Congress from winning and where there is no choice, people should vote for the Congress.

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Every party has promised the moon but nobody has done anything since independence for Muslims. There are issues like reservation (in government jobs) and the (Muslim) personal law, which everybody

ignores, he said.

Asghaer Ali Engineer, director of the prestigious Institute of Islamic Studies, said Muslim voters had shed their naivete and no longer responded to *fatwa* (religious order) or directives from opposition leaders.

Muslims continue to be deeply alienated from the Congress in general mostly on account of Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao's soft attitude towards Hindu forces and its neglect of concrete Muslim problems, he said.

Maulana Wahiduddin Khan, a religious scholar, said the crux of the problem was that Muslim had always remained on the fringes of Indian politics.

Muslims have never really entered the election process. They just go and cast votes and elect candidates who don't care about them, he said.

International

Serbs slaughtered 7000 in Srebrenica

SAHINCI, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Apr 5: UN investigators stacked up rows of blindfolds on a muddy hillside Thursday, powerful evidence that beneath them lay the victims of ethnic slaughter, reports AP.

The dozens of blindfolds, strips of cloth mostly in dark colours, support survivors' accounts that up to 7,000 men were slaughtered by the Bosnian Serbs who overran the Muslim enclave of Srebrenica last summer.

In Bosnia's first spring thaw in peace after four years of war, investigators are spreading out in pursuit of human remains and other physical evidence to back up such accounts. What they find will be used by the war crimes tribunal in the Netherlands to prosecute those responsible.

Other mass graves dot Bosnia — Bosnian Serbs have excavated more than 100 bodies.

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UN officials believe between 88 and 90 prisoners are still held by Bosnian Muslim, Croat and Serb forces.

Meanwhile, the UN Security Council demanded Thursday that parties in Bosnia release all remaining prisoners, a move that the United States and others say must be taken to avoid international sanctions.

US Secretary of State Warren Christopher is reportedly in the final stages of considering targeted penalties against Beijing over its alleged sale of nuclear related technology to Pakistan.

Shen said China had reportedly states it had not and would not transfer equipment or technology for use in making nuclear weapons to any country.

As a signatory to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, US officials have said they

China strictly abides by its international legal obligations in the treaty for preventing nuclear weapons proliferation and does not advocate, encourage or carry out nuclear proliferation.

Washington says state-owned China National Nuclear Corp sold Pakistan 70,000 dollar worth of ring magnets used in centrifuges that enrich uranium of use in nuclear weapons. Their sale is not prohibited under the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Pakistan last month received nuclear related material from China.

US officials have said they are concerned about a pattern of nuclear cooperation in which China has provided experts and assistance. The US negotiator on the issue

Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Robert Einhorn, visited Beijing last month.

UN, EU teams in Somalia to meet leaders

Heavy fighting breaks out in south Mogadishu

MOGADISHU, Apr 5: Heavy fighting erupted in south Mogadishu on Thursday after peace talks broke down. Seven people were killed, including three civilians, reports AP.

While combat raged on the south side of the capital, delegates from the European Union and United Nations arrived in the peaceful northern suburbs to meet with Somali leaders one year after the UN pullout.

After talking with Ali Mahdi who controls northern Mogadishu, the chief of EU humanitarian affairs, Emma Bonino, said the European Union would continue to provide Somalia with emergency help wherever security permitted.

Bonino said Gen. Mohammed Farah Aidid, who has appointed himself president of Somalia, refused to meet with her because the delegation

landed at an airstrip in territory he does not control. The delegation also visited the central town of Beletuun and planned to visit Bardera and Kismayo in southern Somalia on Friday.

Forces loyal to Osman Hassan Ali Ato and Aidid fought fiercely in south Mogadishu after talks deadlocked.

Elders including Gen. Abukar Ato, a prominent general belonging to the Habar Oidir subclan, the same as Aidid and Ato, have been seeking a truce since the two factions began fighting over the port of Merca last month.

Supporters of Aidid insist that Ato's men pull out of strategic points in south Mogadishu, including the former US Embassy and the university compound once used by UN forces, which they occupied after withdrawing from Merca. Ato refused.

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