

BRIEFLY



Republican presidential candidate Bob Dole (L) shakes hands with Mother Teresa Saturday at the Gift of Peace convention in Washington, DC.

— AFP/UNB photo

Bob Dole meets Mother Teresa:

Mother Teresa as business cards. Sen. Bob Dole has disclosed. But not normal business cards, AP reports from Washington.

They read: "The fruit of SILENCE is Prayer, the fruit of PRAYER is Faith, the fruit of FAITH is Love, the fruit of LOVE is Service, the fruit of SERVICE is Peace. She gave him one during a half-hour private meeting Saturday, their first, during which they discussed her Nobel Prize winning work for the poor, the power of prayer and the value of adoption as an alternative to abortion.

Deuba greets Gowda: Nepali Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba has congratulated H D Deve Gowda on his assumption of office as Prime Minister of India, the state-run RSS news agency said yesterday. AP reports from Kathmandu.

In a message of congratulations Deuba wished for the continued progress and prosperity of the people of India under Gowda's able leadership. The Nepalese premier also expressed confidence that the traditionally close relations between Nepal and India would be further enhanced and strengthened during Gowda's tenure.

Lebanon, Syria discuss ME peace: The leaders of Lebanon and Syria were to meet in the Syrian capital Damascus on Sunday to discuss the future of the Middle East peace process following the election of Benjamin Netanyahu as Israel's next prime minister. AP reports from Beirut.

Official sources, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Lebanese President Elias Hrawi left Syria at midmorning for talks with Syrian President Hafez Assad.

33 Mexican die as train, bus collide: A bus and a passenger train collided at a railroad crossing in this Pacific Coast port, killing 33 people and injuring 13, officials said Saturday. AP reports from Mazatlan.

Sinaloa state attorney Luis Zuniga Vizcarra, who is investigating the crash, said it occurred around 10 pm Friday. He said all the victims were Mexicans. Zuniga said 20 bodies were picked up at the site, and another 13 died at neighbouring hospitals soon after. He said the only person who was not hurt was a four-year-old boy named Juan Carlos Garcia Cruz.

Siberian train crash death toll 18: The death toll of a train crash in western Siberia reached 18 on Saturday when one person died in a hospital, a report said. AP reports from Moscow.

More than 40 people were injured Friday night when a passenger train crashed into four freight cars carrying cement near the village of Litvinovo in the Kemerovo region of Siberia, some 2,000 kilometres (1,200 miles) east of Moscow. Investigators said the freight cars rolled onto the track because they were improperly parked, the Interfax news agency said.

Quake hits northwest China: A strong earthquake shook houses and sent residents scurrying onto the streets in northwest China, an official report said Sunday. AP reports from Beijing.

The magnitude-5.4 quake struck Gansu province, 1,200-kilometres (740 miles) west of Beijing, Saturday night. There were no immediate reports of casualties or major damage, the Xinhua News Agency said. The tremors in Gansu and neighbouring Qinghai province drove people out of their homes. Walls cracked in buildings near the quake's epicenter in Tianshu county. Xinhua said.

Kidnapped US observer freed: Former Nicaraguan rebels released a kidnapped American election observer and her Nicaraguan driver Saturday in jungle-covered northeastern Nicaragua, a government official said. AP reports from Managua.

Cynthia Gersony, 41, of New York City "has been freed by the renamed Contra group that kidnapped her Saturday near the Honduran border," said government spokesman Emigdio Quintero. officials said her driver, Roberto Moncada, also was freed. Some former members of the Contra group, which waged an insurgency against the leftist Sandinista government in the 1980s, have resurfaced in armed gangs in northern Nicaragua. Police recently began a sweep in the region to end the banditry.

Italian newsmen observe strike: Rome's largest newspaper wasn't published Saturday after journalists struck to protest its sale to a construction mogul who owns the rival daily in the capital. AP reports from Rome.

The sale of *Il Messaggero* Friday also put back the spotlight on an old dilemma — the concentration of Italy's media in a few, powerful hands. Journalists at the paper, founded in 1878, first said they would strike for a total of seven days. After a meeting Saturday with the new owner, the journalists decided that Sunday's edition would come out, but without their bylines.

Boat collision kills 2 in Japan: A 96-tonne Japanese fishing boat collided into another boat in waters off Japan's northernmost island of Hokkaido yesterday, killing two men and leaving three missing, the Maritime Safety Agency said. AP reports from Tokyo.

The accident occurred in the sea of Japan some 40 kilometers (24 miles) off Takashima promontory after the Hoikko Maru collided into the 124-tonne Heikyo Maru which was at anchor, an agency official said.

The Heikyo Maru sank soon after the collision. Thirteen of its 16 crew members were rescued by the Hoikko Maru, but two of them died in hospital.

2-yr old ceasefire in Azeri-Armenian war under threat

Nakhichevan, Azerbaijan: A two-year-old ceasefire in the Azeri-Armenian war is under threat in Azerbaijan's Nakhichevan enclave after more than a week of sporadic clashes, local officials said Saturday, reports AFP.

Shamsadin Khambabayev, head of the Nakhichevan administration, said an Azeri soldier was seriously wounded by shelling with artillery and mortars early Friday.

Three Azeri soldiers have been killed and five wounded in sporadic clashes that began May 20, he said.

Shells hit the town of Ordubad Thursday, destroying a house, though nobody was hurt in that incident.

Suu Kyi fears long prison terms for detained NLD activists

YANGON, June 2: The leader of Myanmar pro-democracy party said Saturday that despite the release of about 100 of her supporters, more than 20 others had been sent to the capital's notorious Insein prison and were expected to face long prison terms, reports AP.

"It will be a sign that there is no justice and no rule of law in this country," said Aung San Suu Kyi, giving her customary weekend speech at the gate of her Yangon home. "We look upon the international community to stand by us in asking for justice and democracy in Myanmar."

According to the few visitors allowed access and information smuggled out by pris-

oners, conditions at Insein prison are so harsh and overcrowded that they pose a threat to prisoners' health.

The government detained 262 people two weeks ago in a failed bid to stop Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy from holding a party congress.

In Washington Friday, the State Department said it is consulting with Congress on the possibility of imposing sanctions on the military regime, which seized power in 1988 after violently suppressing pro-democracy demonstrations.

"We want the rest of our people released, we want all of our people released," said Suu Kyi, winner of the 1991 Nobel Peace Prize for her nonviolent promotion of democracy.

Despite the mass arrests, the conference has posed the biggest challenge to the regime since Suu Kyi was freed

from six years of house arrest last July.

Speaking to a cheering crowd of about 6,000 people, Suu Kyi also said Saturday that some detainees had been forced to sign documents that they would no longer work for her party.

"Any undertakings signed under duress will not be considered valid by us," she said. "We continue to look upon them as our members and we shall continue to work together with them."

The crowd was slightly smaller than the one that attended her street-side speech last week, held during the conference itself. But it was still attracted more than twice as many people as had

previously been attending the events, which have been held since Suu Kyi was released from house arrest.

The government has responded to the congress by denouncing Suu Kyi in the state-owned press and staging mass rallies around the country opposing the pro-democracy movement.

Myanmar state-controlled press said Saturday that the rallies staged by a government front group show the people are against the pro-democracy movement.

The state-run New Light of Myanmar newspaper editorialized that "The voice of the masses at the rallies is the true reaction of patriots who have stood the test of time."

Karachi likely to become 7th populous city by 2015

ISLAMABAD, June 2: Karachi, Pakistan's largest city with a population of 10 million, half of whom live in slums is facing a growing prospect of being overwhelmed by sheer numbers and socio-economic pressures, reports AFP.

The sprawling city on the Arabian sea coast was 21st on a 1990 list of the world's most populous urban centres, but is expected to move up to seventh by 2015, the United Nations says.

In 20 years with its population touching 20 million, Karachi will become more crowded than Beijing or New York, says the 1996 UN Report on the State of the World Population, released last week.

Employment and economic opportunities in the hub of Pakistani industry and commerce have continued to attract people from rural areas despite years of unrest in the city.

Relative calm has returned to Karachi in recent months after more than 2,000 killings since early 1995, amid a tough crackdown against ethnic militants by police and paramili-

tary troops frequently accused of committing excesses.

But the underlying cause of the unrest — distrust between the government and the ethnic opposition Mohajir Quami Movement (MQM) representing Karachi's large Urdu-speaking settler community — remains.

Although Urdu is also the national language, Sindhi is the main language in Sindhi province of which Karachi is the largest city.

Meanwhile, the city's woes are multiplying amid mounting pressure on its alarmingly inadequate civic services and health care, housing and transport, officials and residents say.

Only 46 per cent of houses get piped water and about 66 per cent have electricity, while the city's sewerage system is in disrepair.

A national census is long overdue — the last one was conducted in 1981 — and no exact estimate of Karachi's population is available. Private social welfare bodies say the number is far more than 10 million.

Sketches of India's new cabinet

UNDATED, June 2: H D Deve Gowda, prime minister, quit farming for politics, was chief minister of Karnataka state; pro-modernisation, reports AP.

Indra Kumar Gujral, external affairs minister, minister in many previous governments, former ambassador to the then Soviet Union.

M Arunachalam, urban affairs and employment minister, former industries minister who led economic reforms in Congress government; broke away to start a new party.

P Chidambaram, finance minister, former commerce minister and architect of India's economic reforms. Attorney, studied at Harvard Business School.

Murasoli Maran, industry minister, former urban affairs minister from a regional party.

T G Venkataraman, surface transport minister, criminal lawyer and former lawmaker.

Ram Vilas Paswan, railways minister, former minister and a champion of low-caste people.

Chandradev Prasad Verma, rural areas and development minister.

Jairam Prasad Nishad, environment minister.

Devendraprasad Yadav, food and civil supplies minister, a socialist lawmaker from Bihar.

M D Taseeruddin, minister of state for home, a Muslim lawmaker.

Off the Record

Just call him Dr Wonder

BIRMINGHAM, Alabama: Just call him Dr Wonder. Stevie Wonder is getting an honorary doctorate from the University of Alabama at Birmingham, home to the new Stevie Wonder Centre for Computing in the Arts, reports AP.

After a Saturday night concert with the Birmingham Metropolitan Orchestra, he was to receive the honorary degree at graduation ceremonies Sunday.

Sporting his trademark beaded braids, Wonder spoke to reporters about his friendship with the university's music department chairman, Henry Panion, and the centre, a music technology section of the university's soon-to-be-completed Aly Stephens Performing Arts Centre.

"I'm very proud of this state. I sound like a politician but I'm very proud of this state because I look here and obviously we know the history of this state," said Wonder, 46. "And we know that we have grown from and away from that."

Wonder helped pioneer the use of synthesizers and other technology to make music. The Wonder Centre for Computing in the Arts is designed to teach music students how to use the technology and to honour its origin.

Princely way of sketching

LONDON: The future King of England has a princely way with a pencil and paper, an art critic says.

Thirteen-year-old Prince William's pencil sketch of a tall English house has been chosen from more than 250 entries to go on display in an exhibit of students' art at Eton College, where he started as a pupil last year.

"There is no doubt that Prince William has a flair for drawing and if his interest in art continues, his talent will go from strength to strength," said The Times art critic, Dalya Alberge.

Writing in Saturday's edition, Alberge said the picture seemed to have been sketched by someone much older, showing "both sensitivity and confidence."

The Times quoted an unidentified member of Eton's staff as saying it was no mean feat to be included in the exhibit.

"There are 250 boys in William's year but very few had work on show. William has considerable talent," the staff member was quoted as saying.

Birthplace in auction!

DUBLIN, Ireland: The birthplace of playwright Samuel Beckett has been sold at auction to an anonymous buyer for more than \$1 million dollars, reports AP.

The author of "Waiting for Godot" and "Endgame" was born in 1906 in the large turn-of-the-century house. The four-bedroom house called Cooldrinagh, with a tennis court and swimming pool, is in Foxrock, an affluent Dublin suburb.

The anonymous buyer paid \$1.3 million for the house at Thursday's auction.

"We are not in a position to reveal the identity of the buyer," said a spokeswoman for the auctioneer, Lisney.

Beckett, who spent most of his life in France, won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1969. He died in 1989.

Croats dig up 87 bodies in former Serb held areas

ZAGREB, Croatia: June 2: Officials have dug up the bodies of 87 elderly Croats killed after they refused to flee when their villages in southern Croatia fell to Serb rebels, the state-run news agency HINA said Saturday, reports AP.

Autopsies showed that most of the victims had been shot in the head from close range, HINA said.

The bodies were discovered at 21 sites in and around several villages between the Dalmatian coastal city of Zadar and Knin, the capital of Serb-Croat war.