

BRIEFLY



Undated file photo of US makeup artist and founder of a cosmetics empire Max Factor (R) with an unidentified woman. Actor died of heart failure at his home in West Los Angeles, a Max Factor Museum spokesman announced on Saturday. Factor was reported to be either 91 or 93. Factor is said to have coined the terms "lipstick" and "makeup". — AFP/UNB photo

80 Egyptian Islamic militants held: A total of 80 Egyptian Islamic militants have been arrested in the past week in their stronghold of the southern province of Minya police sources said Saturday. AFP reports from Minya, Egypt.

"They were second generation members of the armed extremist group Jamaa Islamiyya who were giving help to the organisation's armed activists still at large," said the source.

Blast kills 6 in Kiev: A gas explosion in a mine in eastern killed six workers and wounded seven on Saturday, civil defence officials said, AFP reports from Kiev.

Only one of the workers on hand at the time of blast in the Donetsk region escaped injury, said Lieutenant Colonel Viktor Tkachenko, head of the Civil Defence Department. Tkachenko said that in 1995 gas explosions killed 300 miners in Ukraine.

Rocket attack in Kabul kills 1: One person was killed in Kabul yesterday when three rockets were fired into the Afghan capital. Xinhua reports from Islamabad.

Reports from Kabul said that it was not clear who launched the attack, although previous ones had been blamed on the Taliban militia. Taliban, which controls half of the Afghan territory, was been attacking Kabul for more than eight months in a bid to topple the Kabul regime led by President Burhanuddin Rabbani. Ten days ago, 15 rockets landed in a residential area of Kabul but caused no casualties.

6th suspect of IRA attacks held: Police investigating recent IRA attacks in London said Saturday that they had arrested a sixth suspect, AP reports from London.

Like the five men arrested Friday — four of them in Northern Ireland, one in London — the latest suspect was being questioned in London. None of the suspects has been publicly identified, one of those detained in Northern Ireland was released late Friday, and a second was released Saturday afternoon, police said. Police sources said the investigation focused on the massive IRA bombing in London on Feb. 9, which killed two men and marked the end of a 17-month ceasefire.

Mishap kills UN envoy in Vietnam: A top member of Vietnam's UN mission was killed when the station wagon he was in rolled several times after swerving to avoid colliding with another vehicle, police said, AP reports from Sturridge.

Tran Van Viet, 53, was first secretary of the mission. State Police Sgt. Rocky Lapomardo said, Viet suffered massive head injuries and was pronounced dead at the scene Saturday, Lapomardo said. The car was less than a mile (1.6 kms) from a toll booth, police said. The skies, according to the National Weather Service, were clear at the time.

67 boat people leave Indonesia: A wooden boat carrying 67 Chinese boat people bound for Australia, left the West Timor harbour of Kupang on Saturday, the official Antara News Agency said yesterday. AFP reports from Jakarta.

The boat, which had spent four nights in Kupang for repairs to its propellers, was told to leave the harbour late Saturday, said Antara, quoting the head of the Kupang harbour's operation, Captain Lindung Langguli. The boat left after its propeller was repaired and it was adequately stocked with fuel, food and water. Langguli said.

China frees veteran dissident: China yesterday released veteran dissident Ren Wanding after he served seven years in prison for his role in student led pro-democracy demonstrations in 1989 that were brutally crushed by the army, a family member said, Reuters reports from Beijing.

"The police brought him home at around 2.00 am (1800 GMT) and then took him to a northern city at 7.00 am (2300 GMT)," Ren's wife Zhang Fengying told Reuters. "They did not say when he could come back... they said they were going to let him rest," Zhang said.

Govt allocates \$10m to buy food for Kabul residents

KABUL, June 9: Afghan President Burhanuddin Rabbani has approved the allocation of 10 million dollars to buy food for Kabul residents suffering under the pressure of runaway inflation, officials said Sunday, reports AFP.

The food purchases from other countries and distribution on local markets in the Afghan capital would help the government bring prices under control, Rabbani was quoted by the officials as saying.

Presidential spokesman Aziz Murad did not say where the food would be bought and how it would be shipped to Kabul since large areas surrounding the capital are controlled by rival Mujahideen factions.

The allocation was part of other measures, including the

Arafat repeats call for creation of Palestinian state

GAZA CITY, June 9: Palestinian President Yasser Arafat repeated a call for the creation of a Palestinian state on Saturday in defiance of Israeli Prime Minister-elect Benjamin Netanyahu, reports AFP.

"A Palestinian state will be created, God willing," said Arafat at a meeting of all the Palestinian negotiators involved in talks with Israel.

The meeting was the first session of the committee charged with negotiations with Israel since right-wing leader Netanyahu's victory in the May 29 polls in the Jewish state.

It came as Syrian, Egyptian and Saudi leaders meeting in Damascus on Saturday announced a full Arab summit to be held Cairo on June 21-23 to coordinate an Arab stance to Netanyahu's new government on the peace process.

The Palestinian leader also said Wednesday in Jordan that a Palestinian state would come "very soon" with Israel annexed east Jerusalem as its capital.

Tigers kill 17 soldiers

COLOMBO, June 9: Tamil Tiger guerrillas ambushed an army patrol in eastern Sri Lanka today killing at least 17 soldiers, defence sources said, reports AFP.

Gunmen from the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) attacked the soldiers at Jayanthiyaya while they were on a routine patrol, the sources said adding that rebel casualties were not immediately known.

The attack took place in the same area where nine police constables were killed by the Tigers in a similar ambush two days ago, officials said.

There had been an escalation of Tiger attacks in the eastern regions following the loss of the rebels' northern citadel of Jaffna to security forces earlier last month.

The Tigers are leading a protracted campaign for independence in the island's northern and eastern regions where the two million Tamil minority is concentrated. More than 50,000 people have died in bitter fighting since 1972.

Militants ambush Israeli patrol in Lebanon

MARJAYOUN, Lebanon, June 9: Muslim guerrillas ambushed an Israeli armored patrol in occupied south Lebanon on Sunday and initial reports from security sources said there was an undetermined number of casualties, reports, AP.

The sources said a remote-controlled roadside bomb ripped through the three-vehicle patrol near the village of Reihan at 9 AM (0600 GMT) before the guerrillas fired three arm-piercing Sager missiles on the Israeli.

One armored personnel carrier was shrouded in smoke after it took a direct hit and medical teams were seen treating wounded men on the spot pending the arrival of helicopters to evacuate them, said the sources, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Malaysia may one day consider reuniting with Singapore: Mahathir

KUALA LUMPUR, June 9: Malaysia may one day consider reuniting with Singapore, but the likelihood of it happening at the moment was remote, news reports today quoted Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad as saying, reports AFP.

Both countries might have their own terms and conditions, he said, adding that "while we do not want anyone to dominate us, Singapore, too, does not want anyone to dominate it."

"I do not think it's time yet. May be one day," Mahathir said Saturday, responding to Singapore's elder statesman Lee Kuan Yew's remarks in favour of a reunion with Malaysia. Lee was Prime Minister from 1959 until 1990 when he stepped down to take the position of senior minister. Singapore, which had joined the federation of Malaysia in 1963, gained independence in 1965.

City summit for new answers to old problems

ISTANBUL, June 9: As city officials from around the world swap ideas on how to improve urban life, a gap is becoming clear between those who have the power to make change happen and those who don't, reports AP.

When American and Latin American municipal leaders leave the UN conference on cities, they can decide which ideas to put into action. But in parts of Europe and much of Africa, local officials can't make decisions or spend money without approval from the national government.

The power struggle is one of the most important issues at the conference, because it will ultimately determine who is responsible for making the world's cities more livable in the 21st century.

"I think that the message from this conference should be

Solid Arab stand against Israel urged Arab leaders warn Israel not to jeopardise peace process

DAMASCUS, Syria, June 9: After two days of meetings, the leaders of three pivotal Arab states issued a strongly worded statement reaffirming their intention to achieve a comprehensive, just peace with Israel, reports AP.

The leaders of Syria, Egypt and Saudi Arabia called Saturday for an all-Arab summit to form a solid front against Israel's new rightist government, and warned that any Israeli slowdown in the peace process could trigger a fresh "cycle of violence."

Just, comprehensive peace, they said, "requires that Israel also adhere to it seriously, with no backing away or renegeing on anything which has been achieved."

Arab countries are worried that Israeli Prime Minister-elect Benjamin Netanyahu will abandon the basic tenet of the US-sponsored peace process — giving up land Israel captured in war in exchange for peace.

Netanyahu promised during the election campaign to slow the peace process despite commitments made by his predecessor, Shimon Peres. He has ruled out major territorial concessions to Syria, vowed to block Palestinian statehood and supported building more Jewish settlements in the West Bank.

Although there have been signs since the May 29 election that Netanyahu may be softening his position, his promises caused considerable apprehension among Arabs.

Syrian President Hafez Assad, Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and Crown Prince Abdullah of Saudi Arabia said the June 21-23 all-Arab summit would help unify Arab nations and increase their effectiveness in dealing with Israel.

However, complete unity will be impossible, as Mubarak said Saturday that Iraq will be excluded from the Cairo summit because of remaining divi-

sions in the Arab world over its 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

"Basically the invitation is to all, but because of the present circumstances... we will postpone the issue of inviting Iraq to another stage due to the current sensitivities," Mubarak said after arriving at the Cairo airport.

In addition to the lingering differences over the Iraqi invasion, Jordan and Syria have had a falling out over Jordan's decision to break with its powerful northern neighbour to sign a separate peace deal with Israel.

At Saturday's meeting, Assad, Mubarak and Abdullah warned that it would be disastrous — and dangerous — for Israel's new leadership to retreat from previously linked peace accord pledges.

Any attempt by Israel to back off agreements already reached, or to delay implementing them, "will place it in confrontation,"



Italian Foreign Minister Lamberto Dini (L) and European Commission President Jacques Santer arrive at Sarajevo airport on Friday for meetings with state leaders of the ex-Yugoslavia in an attempt to boost the peace process. — AFP/UNB photo

Over 5,000 hear Suu Kyi's speech defying ban

YANGON, June 9: Despite a new draconian law aimed at pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi, authorities did not interrupt her first weekly address since the law was passed, reports AP.

More than 5,000 people risked harsh punishment to gather outside Suu Kyi's home Saturday for the hour-long speech, which was milder than usual and did not criticise the regime. It was unclear whether she will face charges.

The law announced Friday curbs virtually all political activity, decreeing prison sentences of five to 20 years for anyone who seeks to "undermine the stability of the state, community peace and tranquility."

After crowds swelled to

10,000 last month, the regime said it was banning the weekly meetings — already prohibited under a law that forbids gatherings of more than 50 people but which has not been enforced.

The crowd Saturday cheered when a defiant Suu Kyi appeared at the front gate of her Rangoon home wearing a long-sleeved jacket with jasmine garlands and pink and yellow roses in her hair.

"Long live Aung San Suu Kyi," they chanted. "Let the cause for democracy be successful."

Suu Kyi, leader of the National League for Democracy, won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1991 for her efforts to bring democracy to Myanmar.

She has met with her supporters every Saturday since

being released from six years' of house arrest last July.

"All along we stressed discipline and order among the crowd, which is essential for peace and tranquility. We have always been constructive and never destructive," Suu Kyi said to enthusiastic applause Saturday.

Mya Mya Win, a 24-year-old member of the opposition movement, said she did not fear the government's new law. "I believe in what we are doing," she said.

The new law says groups found violating the ban on assembly will themselves be banned. It also forbids unauthorized writing of a state constitution.



Actress Raquel Welch waves to photographers and fans as she sits in front of her newly unveiled star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame on Saturday in Hollywood, California. Welch is known for her work in film classics "Fantastic Voyage," "One Million Years, BC" and "The Three Musketeers," for which she won the Golden Globe for best actress. Welch's star is located right next to Bob Hope's star on Hollywood Boulevard. — AFP/UNB photo

CBI may interrogate Rao's son in urea scam

NEW DELHI, June 9: India's apex investigating agency may interrogate former premier PV Narasimha Rao's son for alleged corruption in a urea deal between a Turkish firm and India's state-run National Fertiliser Ltd., newspapers reported today, says AFP.

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) had evidence that PV Prabhakar Rao had accepted part of the four million dollars, supposedly paid in kickbacks, by the company Karsan Danismanlik Turizm Sanayi Ticaret Ltd., the reports said.

CBI sources said another recipient of the bribe was Prakash Yadav, son of former minister for chemicals and fertilisers Ram Takhan Yadav, a senior member in Rao's Congress (I) government.

The CBI began an investigation into the scandal in April. Sambasiva Rao, the Indian agent for Karsan, told CBI officials that he paid off Rao's son and Yadav to clinch the 38 million dollar contract.

Top officials of National Fertiliser Ltd. have said the deal,

for the import of 200,000 tonnes of urea, was finalised in great haste on November 1, 1995.

The entire consignment was supposed to be delivered by March but none of it has reached India. However, in a major violation, the entire amount of 38 million dollars was paid in advance to Karsan through a Swiss bank.

The CBI last week made a formal request to the Swiss government for details of withdrawals made from the account in Geneva's Pictet Bank. Interpol has also been alerted and information sought from Turkey and CIS countries where Karsan is said to have operations.

The scandal is a fresh setback for Rao, whose 11-year-old Congress Party suffered its worst electoral debacle in the April-May polls, amid widespread charges of corruption in several scandals.

Rao has denied involvement in an unprecedented 21-million dollar bribery scandal allegedly implicating a New Delhi businessman.

US to begin fresh debate over efforts to crackdown on illegal immigration

WASHINGTON, June 9: US legislators will soon begin a new round of debate over efforts to crackdown on illegal immigration, with heated negotiations expected over an explosive provision that would let states bar the children of illegal immigrants from public schools, reports AFP.

Both Houses of Congress have overwhelmingly passed tough bills aimed at making it far more difficult for undocumented aliens to enter the United States and to find work here when they do.

The two versions must now be reconciled in a conference committee, where sparks are expected to fly over a lower-house provision to allow states to expel undocumented children from government funded classrooms.

"That's clearly the biggest bone of contention," said one Senate aide, who asked not to

be named. A spokesman for Republican representative Lamar Smith of Texas, who supports the provision, said the goal was not to ban these children from public schools but to let states choose whether to do so.

Republican leaders in both houses of Congress, including Republican presidential candidates and Senate majority leader Robert Dole, have meanwhile lent their support to the measure.

Congressional aides declined to speculate how long it would take the house and Senate conferences to draft a final version.

President Bill Clinton, who must sign it to become law, has pointedly opposed efforts to allow states to keep the youngest illegal immigrants out of public schools and is expected to veto the legislation.

Izetbegovic for hunting down war criminals

ZUC HILL, BOSNIA, June 9: Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic on Saturday called for reconciliation among former Bosnian foes but indicted war criminals must face justice if there was to be peace in the country, reports Reuters.

"I am speaking about reconciliation because of Bosnia and its future but with the irrevocable condition that war criminals be hunted down and punished," he said.

"Without the punishment of war criminals there can be no peace nor reconciliation," he told a rally attended in blistering heat by thousands of people from all over Bosnia.

Izetbegovic was referring to Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic and his army commander General Ratko Mladic, both indicted war criminals.

Under the Dayton accord signed last December, both should have been handed over to the war crimes tribunal in the Hague.

But the two cling to power and Karadzic has been accused of being the biggest single obstruction to the peace process.

The rally was organised to commemorate the defence of Sarajevo and one of the most fierce battles in the 43-month war which started on June 8, 1992.

Zuc Hill overlooks a vital Bosnian Serb supply route connecting two then Serb-held Sarajevo suburbs in the north-west. The Serbs had taken the hill they would have split the Bosnian capital in half.

Thousands are believed to have been killed in the three-year fight for the hill.

Off the Record

War against rats!

NEW DELHI: A well-known Hindu temple in southern India has gone to war against hundreds of rats that have made it miserable for its huge kitchen staff, the Press Trust of India (PTI) said Sunday, reports AFP.

The Hill-Top Temple at Tirupati, in the state of Andhra Pradesh, has deployed 25 employees for its round-the-clock campaign against the rat menace, the news agency said.

B. Ramachandra Reddi, a temple official, was quoted as saying that the employees had been trapping 50 to 200 rodents every day and later torching them in a far-away forest.

"The rodents have been creating havoc, specially in the canteen and its stores, the kitchen and the special quest houses" for pilgrims, PTI said. Reddi said the temple had set aside some 14,000 dollars to fight the rats.

Woman at 60 becomes mother

ATHENS: A 60-year-old woman from Greek island for Rhodes has given birth to two twin boys, local press reported Saturday, says Xinhua.

According to Athens daily Eleftheros Typos (Freedom News), Christoula Karioti, 60, had given birth by caesarean section in her eighth month of pregnancy at Athens Alexandra Hospital, breaking Greek record for the oldest mother (previously 58).

Doctors said the two boys, weighing 1.5 and 1.8 kilograms respectively, had been found to be in good health. Senior Greek doctors have condemned the decision to let Karioti have children. The criticism was fuelled by reports that she had not initially revealed her real age to doctors.

"There is a code of ethics observed in this country and abroad which states that a woman should not be made pregnant by artificial insemination if she is over the age of 45, that is if she has completed menopause and cannot conceive on her own," said Athens' gynaecology professor Dimitris Loutradis. "This is because the complications shown during pregnancy tend to increase with the age of the woman. There is the danger that children born to mothers beyond the age of conception may quickly become orphans."

Most Britons no longer believe in God

LONDON: Most Britons no longer believe in God, but a majority still consider themselves religious, suggests a poll in the independent on Sunday newspaper, reports AFP.

It said that only 43 per cent of Britons polled believed in the Almighty — compared with 76 per cent six years ago — although 67 per cent felt they were religious.

The poll, by the Mori organisation, was commissioned by the British Humanist Association. It questioned 1,000 men and 1,068 women.

The Anglican church has said that, according to its polls, more than 70 per cent of Britain believed in God.