

Protest against political wrangling in Gujarat

India's parliament breaks up in disarray

BRIEFLY

80 pc support attack on Iraq in US: An opinion poll taken after the United States launched cruise missile strikes against Iraq found eight in 10 Americans approved and nearly 75 per cent approved of President Clinton's handling of the situation. AP reports from Washington.

Farrakhan arrives in Cuba: Louis Farrakhan, leader of the militant Nation of Islam group, arrived in Cuba on Tuesday saying he wanted to learn about the effects of a longstanding US economic embargo on the island. Cuban news agencies said. Reuter reports from Havana.

Clinton 21 pts ahead in CNN polls: A new national poll puts President Clinton 21 points ahead of Bob Dole as the fall campaign season begins. AP reports from New York.

Strong quake rocks Algeria: A strong earthquake shook Algiers yesterday causing minor damage according to first reports. AFP reports from Algiers.

Clash claims 1 in Belfast: One man was killed and another who was with him was badly hurt in a gun attack at Lurgan 20 miles (30 kilometres) southwest of Belfast Tuesday night. AP reports from Belfast.

Palestinian plane hijacker held: A Palestinian who hijacked a Bulgarian charter plane to Norway on Tuesday was arrested at Oslo Airport less than an hour after landing. police said. Reuter reports from Oslo.

Russian composer Veniamin dies: Veniamin Basner, who composed classical music, musicals and movie scores, has died at age 72. The ITAR-Tass news agency reported. AP reports from St. Petersburg.

2 girls found dead in Belgium: Belgian police have found the remains of two missing teenage girls, victims in a paedophile abduction, sexual abuse and murder case that has sent shivers of alarm across Europe. Reuter reports from Brussels.

30 die from encephalitis in Nepal: At least 30 people have died from encephalitis in Nepal in the past three weeks while 48 others have been afflicted, a public health service official said yesterday. AFP reports from Kathmandu.

Telephone scam in India: More money, jewellery seized from ex-minister's locker. NEW DELHI, Sept 4: Police seized more money and jewelry from bank lockers of a former telecommunications minister accused of favoring some companies with lucrative government contracts. newspapers reported Wednesday. reports AP.

Hutu rebels shell Burundi's capital: BUJUMBURA, Burundi, Sept 4: Hutu rebels shelled Burundi's capital Tuesday and fought by the hundreds with troops in the north, intensifying their war against Burundi's coup-installed military government. reports AP.

Clinton wanted allies' support, but prepared to go alone: WASHINGTON, Sept 4: When the calls and cables went out around the world over the weekend, President Clinton had already made up his mind. Iraq must be punished — severely. reports AP.

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NEW DELHI, Sept 4: India's parliament broke up in disarray for the second straight session today after opposition Hindu nationalists protested against political wrangling in the western state of Gujarat. reports Reuter.

Officials said both the upper and lower houses adjourned after sitting for less than one hour. They will not reopen until Friday because Thursday is a Hindu holiday.

Wednesday's adjournment, and a similar curtailment on Tuesday, delayed a reply by Finance Minister P. Chidambaram to debate on the federal budget for 1996/97 (April-March).

Today, members of the oppo-

sition Hindu Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) approached the Speaker's chair in the lower house and shouted protests at what they said was a conspiracy by other leading parties to oust the BJP led government in Gujarat.

"It is a murder of democracy," they shouted, while facing angry retorts from members of ex-prime minister P.V. Narasimha Rao's Congress Party, who joined them near the Speaker's chair.

Congress leaders had said the BJP government in Gujarat had lost its majority after a split in the ranks of the BJP.

The row erupted when the Deputy Speaker of the Gujarat State Assembly, a Congress

member, adjourned the assembly indefinitely on Tuesday when the BJP-led government was expecting to prove its majority after the party split.

The BJP split in Gujarat last month after it expelled a powerful caste chieftain, Shankarsinh Vaghela, following a clash with other senior leaders.

The state assembly's Deputy Speaker was filling in for the Speaker, a BJP member who was ill. He recognised 46 break-away BJP members as a separate political group in the assembly before adjourning the house.

BJP leaders say the Deputy Speaker violated democratic norms by not allowing Chief



President of Palestinian Authority Yasser Arafat and his wife Souha talk together during a ceremony of Independence Qatariya Day held in Gaze City Tuesday. Marathon efforts to arrange a first meeting between Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Arafat bogged down amid Palestinian charges that the Israelis were reneging at last minute on key understandings. — AFP/UNB photo

Palestinian leaders waiting for Israel's reply

TEL AVIV, Sept 4: Palestinian leaders were waiting early Wednesday for Israel's response to proposals that could pave the way toward a long-awaited first meeting between Yasser Arafat and Israel's new prime minister. reports AP.

Netanyahu is under pressure from Israel's allies, his security establishment and Cabinet moderates to meet Arafat to rekindle the peace process. But right-wing officials representing key Likud constituencies bitterly oppose the meeting.

Despite the reported progress, Arafat might also feel constrained by widespread Palestinian discontent with Tuesday's US missile strike

against military targets in Iraq. Still, unspecified contacts continued Tuesday.

An AFP report from Jerusalem: Officials were edging closer to arranging a meeting on Wednesday between Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian President Yasser Arafat, an Israeli official said.

"All being equal a meeting should materialise on Wednesday or Thursday," Netanyahu's media adviser David Bar-Ilan told Reuters. "The gap is extremely narrow between the sides. There is agreement on practically all points."



Firemen walk next to the devastated Hotel d'Angleterre Tuesday after a massive bomb attack killed at least one person and injured 10 others, in central Algiers. — AFP/UNB photo

Kuwaiti forces on full alert

KUWAIT CITY, Sept 4: Kuwaiti armed forces are on full alert and the situation in Iraq is being monitored closely. The defence minister said in interviews published today. reports AP.

"We have a plan in place to meet the situation and we are now executing it in general," Defence Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Hamad Al-Sabah said in an interview with AFP.

He said Kuwait was monitoring the situation in Iraq closely, but added that what was happening in the north was an Iraqi affair.

He said Kuwaiti forces were on full alert, although he said the borders with Iraq were extremely quiet with no unusual movements reported.

India to patrol southern coast to prevent Tamil's entry

NEW DELHI, Sept 4: The Indian coast guard will soon begin patrolling the country's southern coast around-the-clock to prevent entry by Sri Lankan Tamil guerrillas, a senior official said today. reports AP.

Coast Guard Director General P.G. Jacob said in Madras that his men would not allow separatists to sneak through with Tamil civilians fleeing war-torn Sri Lanka.

"Though the refugees cannot be prevented, the Coast guard will not permit Tamil militants (to enter India)," Jacob said. "More than 1,000 Sri Lankan Tamils have taken refuge in the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu during the past two months to escaping fighting between troops and Tamil Tiger guerrillas on the island."

Tamil Nadu has been home to some 100,000 Sri Lankan refugees since 1983. The state, home to about 55 million Indian Tamils, is separated from Sri Lanka by a narrow strait.

University teachers in Nigeria defy govt order to return to class

LAGOS, Sept 4: Thousands of university professors defied a government order to end a 5-month-old strike Tuesday, despite warnings they would lose their jobs. reports AP.

"We have resolved that we will not be stamped into returning to work," said Sola Fajana, an economics professor at the University of Ibadan, one of the 39 campuses nationwide affected by the strike.

At least five professors have been arrested and the unions representing strikers have been banned since the strike began April 9.

There are more than 12,000 university professors in Nigeria, and most have supported the protest.

Their main demand is more money, but they also are using the strike to publicise their opposition to government spending policies that they say ignore educational needs.

On Monday, Gen. Sani Abacha's government warned that if they did not return to work Tuesday, the universities would be closed and the strikers fired. There were no immediate reports of government action at any universities Tuesday.



Iraqis carrying weapons demonstrate in Baghdad Tuesday after the US fired Cruise missiles on southern Iraq. The attack came in retaliation for Saddam Hussein's drive in the Kurdish safe haven in the north. — AFP/UNB photo

Off the Record

Because it passed its expiry date

LONDON: The Princess of Wales, who last week collected a 17 million pound (25 million dollars) cash divorce settlement, was refused credit for 24 pounds (36 dollars) worth of lipstick. It was reported Tuesday. says AFP.

An electronic cash register at the cosmetics counter at the Seanky Harvey Nichols department store twice kicked back her charge card, which had passed its expiry date, and the princess had to dig out cash for the two lipsticks, according to press reports.

"It was all very embarrassing," said a spokesman for the store. "I hope she wasn't upset because she's one of our favourite customers."

Following the finalisation of their divorce after 15 years of marriage, accountants for her former husband Prince Charles wrote to some 40 retailers patronised by the princess saying he was no longer responsible for paying her bills.

One-tenth of European males impotent!

PARIS: Some 26 million European men over 18, or about a tenth of the continent's male population, have an impotence problem, mainly because of psychological causes. French specialist Alain Jardin said Tuesday. reports AP.

Various risk factors were also to blame, including diabetes, arterio-sclerosis and smoking. Professor Jardin told a urology congress.

China won't use its power against neighbours: Li Peng

BEIJING, Sept 4: Chinese Premier Li Peng said today China would not use its growing clout to threaten other states, reports Reuter.

Beijing's military muscle was for defensive needs and would not be used against its regional neighbours. Li told an international gathering on World Economic and Political Trends in the 21st Century.

"As China develops it will not threaten other states," Li said. "China does not engage in military expansionism. China's military strength is entirely of a defensive nature."

The premier said Beijing was pursuing a policy of fostering long-term economic growth and this required an international climate of stability. China has enjoyed double digit economic growth since 1991.

Li did not refer to disputes with Tokyo over the Diaoyu Islands, known in Japanese as the Senkakus, or mention frictions with Southeast Asian nations over the Spratly Islands in the South China Sea.

There was also no mention of China's military exercises and missile tests off Taiwan's coast earlier this year, when Beijing was widely seen as attempting to interfere in the island's first direct presidential election.

The peaceful reunification of Taiwan was a Beijing objective, the premier said. "Taiwan is an inalienable part of Chinese territory," he said.

He said Taiwan should be recovered peacefully under the "one country, two systems" formula, which Beijing says it will apply toward the British colony of Hong Kong after it reverts to Chinese rule on July 1, 1997.

Beijing says the formula allows Hong Kong to maintain its capitalist system as part of China's communist state.

The premier called the return of Hong Kong an important milestone in Chinese history.

Nur in Christian stronghold to promote accord

ZAMBOANGA, Philippines, Sept 4: Muslim leader Nur Misuari went into a Christian stronghold in the southern Philippines today in the face of Christian hostility. reports AFP.

Misuari, who arrived from the Muslim-dominated city of Cotabato, was met at Zamboanga airport by almost 1,000 supporters, including guerrillas of his Moro national liberation front (MNLF).

Zamboanga's mainly Christian residents ignored his arrival and there was no repeat of the angry protests after Misuari signed a peace agreement with the government in Manila on Monday.

Misuari was taken to a Muslim district on the outskirts of the city where he was to stage a ceremonial signing of the peace agreement.

Clinton wanted allies' support, but prepared to go alone

WASHINGTON, Sept 4: When the calls and cables went out around the world over the weekend, President Clinton had already made up his mind. Iraq must be punished — severely. reports AP.

And while the president and his top advisers would have preferred a stronger show of support from allies than the missile attack on Iraq mustered, there was no cajoling. In fact, the United States would have gone it alone — if need be.

And it would again, judging by the harsh statements Tuesday by Secretary of State Warren Christopher and other American officials.

"Our response must be and will be forceful and immediate," Christopher said, denouncing Iraqi president Saddam Hussein as an unyielding threat to his people, his neighbours and to stability in the Middle East. As it turned out, Britain, Germany, Canada, Japan and a few others registered public

support following the cruise missile assault. Many others, led by Russia and France, registered reservations — and disapproval.

The government of Russia considers the American military operation an unacceptable reaction to the latest events in northern Iraq, an official government statement said in Moscow.

French Foreign Minister Herve de Charette said dialogue between Iraq and the Kurds is "the only way to contribute, by a political solution, to the return to calm and stability in Iraqi Kurdistan."

Egypt and Syria, which sent 55,000 troops to fight Iraq in 1991, predicted the US attack would only worsen the plight of Iraqis, who are suffering under UN sanctions imposed when Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990.

Minister John Major, who defended the United States as completely justified in firing 27 missiles at military targets, and several other government leaders who concur in the American government's contempt for Saddam Hussein.

In what the Pentagon described as a "mop-up" operation, the United States said Tuesday night it had fired 17 more missiles at Iraqi air defense sites because critical targets weren't destroyed in the first raid.

Britain shares with the United States responsibility for maintaining a no-fly zone over northern Iraq to protect the Kurds, long a target of Baghdad's wrath and, according to State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns, the target of an extermination campaign by Saddam five years ago.

France also shares that responsibility, so its exception to Clinton's decision rattles the

fragile alliance. Christopher, on a trip previously arranged, will try to repair the damage Thursday in Paris over lunch with Foreign Minister Herve de Charette and in a call on President Jacques Chirac at the Elysee Palace.

Burns confidently offered assurances that "the international coalition is intact," and diplomatic sources said France had neither opposed nor supported the decision when Christopher spoke with de Charette by telephone over the weekend and Clinton called Chirac before ordering the attack.

Clinton did not seek Chirac's advice, said the sources, who declined to be identified. He had also made the decision to strike at Iraq, but he also said he would welcome French support, US sources said.

France contends that Saddam did not violate the no-fly zone when he sent tanks, troops and helicopters into northern

Iraq on Saturday and that Iraq's territorial integrity should be observed.

Israel's foreign ministry expressed its support for the US action, noting that Israel is the only state in the region which is directly threatened by Iraq.

Russia and the Arabs are key dissenters. Like the French, though, Moscow would welcome whatever public support for the US as it sought to ease its own economic plight. Privately, however, Saudi Arabia did not object, the US official told the Associated Press.

The Saudis — who met with the weekend with Gen. John Shalikashvili, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff — also sup-