

**BRIEFLY**



A soldier from the 9th Muslim brigade is standing in front of a poster of Alija Izetbegovic during a political rally in Tuzla, Tuesday. Some 17,000 people gathered in the city's stadium to hear their President and leader of the SDA (Party for Democratic Action) Alija Izetbegovic addressing his supporters and showing their support for the SDA in the upcoming September 14 elections in Bosnia. — AFP/UNB photo

**China urged to free dissident:** The United States has made repeated requests of Chinese authorities for the release of Bao Tong, a leading dissident, the State Department said Tuesday. AP reports from Washington.

Spokesman Nicholas Burns said Bao was released from prison on May 27 after serving a seven-year sentence only to be sent to a different detention centre. Bao is the most senior Communist confined in the 1989 crackdown on pro-democracy activists. He was a top political aide to ousted reformist party chief Zhao Ziyang.

**40 feared dead in UP boat capsize:** A boat sank in a Himalayan river in northern India and at least 40 people were feared drowned, a local news agency reported Wednesday. AP reports from New Delhi.

The river taxi was carrying about 60 people when it sank Tuesday night in the Rapti River near Katraghat in the state of Uttar Pradesh, Press Trust of India news agency reported. Twenty passengers swam to safety, it quoted local officials as saying. Rescue efforts were going on, it said. Details of the disaster were sketchy because of poor telecommunications links in the area.

**Perot picks Choate as running mate:** Snubbed by several established political figures in his search for a running mate, Ross Perot picked economist Pat Choate to share his Reform Party's presidential ticket. AP reports from Dallas.

Choate is a protectionist and was a strong Perot ally in opposing the North American Free Trade Agreement. "Pat Choate is a leader who can get the necessary job done by rallying ordinary working people to defend their own interests," the Reform Party said in a written statement announcing the choice. Perot revealed his No. 2 choice as part of a television interview. Ahead of the broadcast, Perot gave few hints, saying only that the candidate "has the background, experience and the qualifications."

**NZ's PM meets Dalai Lama:** New Zealand's Prime Minister ignored strong protests from China and met Tibet's Dalai Lama on Wednesday. AP reports from Wellington.

The two men warmly greeted one another before they entered the prime minister's office. Prime Minister Jim Bolger made no comment about the 30-minute private meeting, which aides described as "friendly." Earlier Bolger had said he would meet the Dalai Lama in the Tibetan exile's role of a spiritual rather than political leader.

**8 killed in SA violence:** Gunmen shot to death eight men at a notorious workers' dormitory in Soweto, police said Wednesday. AP reports from Soweto.

The Tuesday night attack at the Dube hostel raised fears of renewed clashes between supporters of the African National Congress and rival Zulu nationalist Inkatha Freedom Party in the area. Dube hostel has long been an Inkatha stronghold in the black township southwest of Johannesburg.

**Violence in Haiti worries US:** The State Department said Tuesday it is asking the Haitian government to investigate allegations of official involvement in recent political killings. AP reports from Washington.

"We believe these are serious allegations, that they require intense investigation, and we have recommended to President (René) Preval that his government conduct an investigation," spokesman Nicholas Burns said. He said US officials believe Haitian authorities are investigating National Security adviser Anthony Lake and Deputy Secretary of State Strobel Talbott raised the issue during a visit to Haiti in late August.

**Hurricane kills 7 in Puerto Rico:** Hurricane Hortense swirled across Puerto Rico on Tuesday with torrential rains that unleashed deadly floods and mudslides, forcing homeowners to flee to rooftops for safety and leaving at least seven dead, Reuters reports from San Juan, Puerto Rico.

Governor Pedro Rossello told reporters in the evening that the confirmed death toll from the storm was seven and that at least four people were missing.

**Typhoon claims 16 more in China:** Another 16 people were killed and 80 went missing in South China's Guangxi province as typhoon Sally moved further inland in its trail of destruction, it was reported today. AFP reports from Hong Kong.

The fast-moving typhoon killed at least 139 people and left another 130 missing after it hit coastal Guangdong province on Monday. Sally lashed several areas in Guangxi region at the border with Vietnam on Tuesday, the Beijing-backed Wen Wei Po daily reported.

**Strong quake hits Japan:** A strong earthquake jolted Japan's capital and nearby cities Wednesday, sending skyscrapers swaying back and forth, but there were no immediate reports of damage or injuries. AP reports from Tokyo.

The quake struck at 11:37 a.m. with a preliminary magnitude of 6.6 and was centred 40 kilometres (25 miles) off the Pacific coast of central Japan, about 30 kilometres (19 miles) under the ocean floor, the Central Meteorological Agency said. The agency issued a warning saying that a tsunami, or undersea wave, could strike coastal areas.

**China sends 2 giant pandas to US:** China sends 2 giant pandas, "Shi Shi" and "Bai Yun" to the United States Tuesday for a 12-year breeding research project by Chinese and American scientists, an official report said. AP reports from Beijing.

The scientists hope to increase their understanding of the panda's reproductive system, with the eventual aim of increasing the rare animal's numbers, the Xinhua news agency said. China has just 1,000 giant pandas left in the wild, Xinhua said.

**UNGA endorses global N-test ban treaty**

UNITED NATIONS, Sept 11: The General Assembly voted overwhelmingly Tuesday to endorse a treaty banning all nuclear test blasts. President Clinton called the move a crucial step toward lifting "the dark cloud of nuclear fear that has hung over the world for 50 years."

The action opens the door for the treaty to be signed by UN member states — although it must overcome strong opposition from India if it is ever to become law.

The vote was 158 for the treaty. Three countries — India, Bhutan and Libya — voted against. Cuba, Lebanon, Syria, Tanzania and Mauritius abstained.

The five major nuclear powers — the United States, Russia, France, Britain and China — and Israel are expected to sign the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty in two weeks.

The five major powers have detonated all but one of the 2,045 known test blasts carried out since 1945. The United States has conducted about half of them.

Some 150 nations are expected to sign the agreement when world leaders gather in New York later this month for the opening of the General Assembly.

"We are taking the next crucial step toward lifting the dark cloud of nuclear fear that has hung over the world for 50 years now," Clinton said, speaking in Kansas City.

UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali applauded the agreement, saying the "prohibition of nuclear weapons tests is an important first step toward nuclear disarmament and the future elimination of all nuclear weapons from the face of the earth."

India, which carried out its only test blast in 1974, said it would not sign the treaty, blocking it from becoming law. Reacting to India's position, Pakistan also has said it would not sign the agreement.

The treaty must be signed and ratified by the 44 nations known to have nuclear reactors, including India and Pakistan, before it becomes law. North

Korea, which must also sign and ratify the treaty if it can become law, did not vote.

India has said the treaty is flawed because it does not include provisions for disarmament. India also said the major powers could refine their arsenals despite the treaty by using highly advanced tests that did not involve nuclear explosions.

"India will never sign this unequal treaty. Not now. Not later," Indian representative Arundhati Ghose told the assembly.

Clinton said he was optimistic that nations would sign the treaty.

The overwhelming endorsement in the General Assembly could pressure countries to honour the ban even if they refuse to sign the agreement.

In the light of this commitment, how easy would it be for anyone to now conduct a nuclear test?" asked Australian Ambassador Richard Butler. "It is today vastly harder than it has ever been before."

Delegates from some developing countries joined India in expressing concern that the treaty did not call for disarmament or ban laboratory testing.

"The treaty will allow the most technologically sophisticated nuclear weapons states to continue to improve their arsenals," said Zimbabwean Ambassador M.T. Mapuranga.

By not calling for disarmament, the treaty "does not dissolve the nuclear club but only makes it more exclusive."

India blocked the proposed treaty last month at a Geneva drafting conference. Australia moved to circumvent the veto by taking the unusual step of bringing the proposal to the assembly as a resolution.

Treaties are generally brought to the assembly for endorsement only after they have been unanimously approved at drafting conference.

AFP adds, Indian Foreign Minister Inder Kumar Gujral in Delhi today branded a global nuclear test ban treaty adopted by the UN General Assembly as a "charade" and "a deliberate attempt to deceive the world."

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**Governor of Nangarhar shot dead Troops seize Jalalabad from Taliban**

KABUL, Sept 11: A column of government troops has seized the eastern Nangarhar provincial capital of Jalalabad, an official spokesman said here today, reports AFP.

The spokesman told journalists troops seized Jalalabad after its governor, Haji Abdul Qadir, fled in fear of the approaching Taliban religious militia.

"Our troops marched into Jalalabad at 11 am and secured the city and the airport," said Amrullah spokesman for a Kabul government faction.

"We are now flying ammunition into Jalalabad airport and consolidating our positions in the city."

The Taliban took most of the area Tuesday as part of an offensive in the region.

The city was previously in the hands of a Mujahideen council allied neither to the government nor the Taliban.

Reuters adds, The acting governor of eastern Afghan province of Nangarhar, which was under attack by rebel Taliban Islamic militia, and another member of a provincial ruling council were shot dead today, a Pakistan-based Afghan news service said.

Engineer Mahmood and council member Saz Noor were attacked while driving on the highway from the provincial capital Jalalabad to the Pakistan border post of Torkham, the Afghan Islamic Press (AIP) said. It did not identify the attackers.

AP adds: Heavy fighting in Afghanistan's strategic eastern province of Nangarhar raged Wednesday amid reports of mass defections to rival Taliban fighters.

Nangarhar governor Haji Abdul Qadir crossed into neighboring Pakistan late Tuesday after Taliban troops moved toward Khogiani, about 40 kilometres (25 miles) south of the provincial capital of Jalalabad.

He was apparently accompanied by his family and several of his senior lieutenants, and their families.

Meanwhile, Pakistan has sealed its borders with Afghanistan after dozens of Afghan religious students tried to cross into Nangarhar province to join the Taliban, said Mohammed Shahbaz, an official at the border.

The disgraced minister, who has been suspended from the Congress (I) Party following the scandal, is reported in London for medical treatment.

Hashimoto plans to hold snap polls on Oct 20

TOKYO, Sept 11: Japanese Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto has decided to hold a snap election on October 20 after dissolving the lower house of parliament later this month, press reports said today, reports AFP.

The Mainichi Shimbun said the premier would call an extraordinary parliament session on September 27 and speak on issues including US base cuts in Okinawa before the dissolution on the first day of the session.

The proposed move is the result of progress made on Tuesday on Okinawa issues between Hashimoto and local governor Masahide Ota, the figurehead of the anti-US campaign in the southern island, the daily said.

Fighting leaves 9 killed in Lanka

COLOMBO, Sept 11: Nine people, including three soldiers, were killed in clashes between Tamil Tiger guerrillas and government troops in northern Sri Lanka, a military official said Wednesday, reports AP.

At least six rebels died when government troops attacked a group of guerrillas with mortars and machine guns near the Pooneryn army base on Tuesday, said Major Tlak Dunuwille, a military spokesman.

Two soldiers died when the rebels fired back before retreating, carrying the bodies of some of their colleagues. Soldiers later recovered two guerrilla bodies, two automatic rifles, ammunition, four hand grenades, and a pair of binoculars, said Dunuwille.

3 missiles fired at US planes

Washington warns Baghdad not to rebuild anti-aircraft defence

WASHINGTON, Sept 11: The United States on Tuesday sharply warned Iraq not to rebuild damaged anti-aircraft defences, but officials denied reports from Baghdad that Iraq had fired missiles at US warplanes, reports Reuters.

"We have made it very clear to Saddam Hussein that if he rebuilds his defences, and threatens our missions over the no-fly zone... that we will take action, Pentagon spokesman Ken Bacon said.

Other defence officials said privately that Iraq had "reconstituted" three or four missile sites destroyed in US cruise

missile attacks last week.

In Baghdad, meanwhile, the Iraqi news agency quoted a military spokesman as saying that three surface-to-air missiles had been fired at US aircraft policing a no-fly-zone over southern Iraq and chased them away. "We have absolutely no indication of that," responded air force Col. Doug Kennett, a defence department spokesman in Washington.

Bacon told reporters at the Daily Pentagon briefing that Saddam had been warned by the United States in both written diplomatic notes and via public statements by Defence

Secretary William Perry and others that he should not rebuild air defences in southern Iraq.

Meanwhile Iraq said on Tuesday its air defence units fired three missiles at US planes policing the no-fly-zone in southern Iraq and said the attack had forced the planes to leave Iraqi airspace.

"At 17:12 hours (13:13 GMT) our air defence units fired three surface-to-air missiles against three hostile targets causing them to flee," said an Iraqi military spokesman, quoted by the official Iraqi News Agency (INA).

southern "no-fly" zone northward about 60 miles (95 kms), almost to the outskirts of the Iraqi capital.

It's an old story for the Kurds. They get sympathy but little else from the international community.

Now, a week after the Iraqi incursion and the US response, both countries have largely moved to the sidelines, seemingly pleased with the fruits of their actions.

Iraq apparently has broken up a CIA operation, based in northern Iraq, aimed at undermining Saddam's rule. It also has a foothold in the Kurdish territories for the first time in five years. The United States, meanwhile, has further reduced Iraq's military capability in the south, presumably making less vulnerable both the nearby oil fields and US and allied pilots who patrol the ex-

tended no-fly zone.

Where all this leaves the Kurds is subject to conjecture. Saddam was able to benefit from the divisions that have plagued the Kurds for years. When one of the warring factions, the Kurdistan Democratic Party, invited Saddam's troops to come to their rescue, he accepted eagerly.

The rival Patriotic Union of Kurdistan has been on the run ever since. US government analysts believe Saddam will over time be able to reassert control over the entirety of Kurdistan. There is no evidence the United States intends to stop him.

"We should not be involved in civil war in the north," Defence Secretary William Perry says. "We should focus our actions where our interests are."

The administration is far more interested in what Saddam does with the sites damaged in last week's missile attacks.

"We have warned Saddam Hussein that any attempt to repair those sites or reinforce them will be taken very seriously and he must understand the consequences of such an act," Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Gen John Shalikashvili says.

The United States will do its best to help the two Kurdish antagonists to patch up their relations.

"Our ability to control internal events in Iraq is limited," Clinton told reporters Monday as US officials said only Western government and relief officials were being evacuated from northern Iraq despite fears that Saddam was ordering severe reprisals — including death — against his opponents

**Off the Record**



A model an outfit by Spanish designer Roberto Verino for the 1997 Spring-Summer collection with hair styling by Angelo Navarro at the "Pasarela Cibeles" fashion show in Madrid Tuesday. — AFP/UNB photo

**Vampire game leads him to jail**

VIRGINIA BEACH, Virginia: A man was convicted of biting and sexually molesting eight teen-age girls as part of a vampire game, reports AP.

The girls testified that Jon C Bush taught them a game in which he played the leader of a family of ancient vampires. The girls were told they could become vampires by having sex with him or by letting him "mark" them by biting them hard, usually just below the breasts.

The girls, 13 to 16 when Bush met them, sometimes painted their faces white and their lips and fingernails black for excursions to malls or the oceanfront. Bush often wore snap-on fangs and would walk with his hands folded in an X across his chest.

The 27-year-old air-conditioner repairman was found guilty by a judge of charges including crimes against nature, indecent liberties and contributing to the delinquency of a minor. He could get more than 100 years in prison at sentencing Nov 26.

The girls said Bush told them he drained energy from people through sexual contact.

**Shi'ite-Sunni clash leaves 14 killed in Pakistan**

PESHAWAR, Sept 11: A shootout Tuesday between rival Muslim sects in a remote corner of Pakistan has left at least 14 people dead, including the principal of a local high school, authorities said, reports AP.

They said the gunbattle began at the only high school in the tribal town of Parachinar, about 100 kilometres (60 miles) southwest of Peshawar, the capital of Pakistan's Northwest Frontier Province.

It quickly spread to engulf other parts of the town. A curfew has been imposed and the paramilitary Frontier Constabulary deployed, said a government official, who didn't want to be identified by name.

He said the fire fight was apparently the result of a clash last Aug 26 between rival Sunni and Shi'ite Muslims in Parachinar.

At that time a fight broke out between Sunni and Shi'ite Muslim students during an Islamic studies class. The school was eventually closed and there were reports of the occasional rocket being fired.

Tuesday was the first day the school had been open since that incident. Witnesses said students arrived at school with automatic rifles and opened fire on each other. Several students were killed as well as Israr Hussein, the school principal.

In Pakistan's lawless tribal belt where tribesmen are heavily armed feuds are often settled with violence. In recent years there has been an increasing number of clashes between militant Sunnis and Shi'ites in Pakistan.

Most of Pakistan's 130 million people are Sunni Muslims who generally get along with their Shi'ite brethren.

**Socialist govts urged to take stronger stand against Myanmar junta**

UNITED NATIONS, Sept 11: A Myanmar opposition leader urged the Socialist International on Tuesday to take a "stronger and more concrete stand" against the military government in Myanmar, reports AP.

In a speech to the organisation's 20th congress, Win Khet of the National League for Democracy said democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi remains in danger despite her release last year from six years of house arrest.

Khet told the congress that diplomatic efforts by Japan and Southeast Asian governments to engage Myanmar in dialogue had failed to achieve any relaxation in curbs against democracy.

"It is clear... that the Myanmar generals are determined not to change," he said. "Instead of reconciliation, they are intent on destroying all opposition."

He said it was time "for governments, especially those represented in the Socialist International, to take a stronger and more concrete stand." Khet expressed appreciation for Denmark's efforts to urge the European Union to impose sanctions on Myanmar.

**US, Iraq seemingly pleased with fruits of their latest actions**

WASHINGTON, Sept 11: As strategic regions go, northern Iraq is no Kuwait. It's a good distance away from the oil fields that lie under Kuwait and other Gulf countries, and when Iraq's President Saddam Hussein sent his troops into Kurd country last month, there was no international clamor for retaliation, reports AP.

Nothing underscored the powerlessness of the Kurds more than the nature of the US response. President Clinton decided that a military strike, albeit limited, was appropriate, lest Saddam believe he could act with the kind of impunity he had shown previously.

But Clinton struck hundreds of miles (kilometres) to the south of the Kurdish region. He ordered two US cruise missile attacks on Iraq's air defence network south of Baghdad, and he extended the US-imposed

southern "no-fly" zone northward about 60 miles (95 kms), almost to the outskirts of the Iraqi capital.

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"Our ability to control internal events in Iraq is limited," Clinton told reporters Monday as US officials said only Western government and relief officials were being evacuated from northern Iraq despite fears that Saddam was ordering severe reprisals — including death — against his opponents

there.

Saddam's Kurdish allies on Monday overran the last stronghold of their rebel rivals, the city of Sulaymaniyah, where the Washington Post said about 200 Iraqi Arab dissidents were holed up.

The newspaper reported in Tuesday's editions that more than 100 Iraqi dissidents and military officers associated with a CIA-financed effort to topple Saddam were arrested and executed in June by security agents who penetrated the group, the Iraqi National Accord.

Five years ago, there was an outpouring of sympathy for Iraqi Kurds when, following an abortive anti-Saddam uprising in the wake of the Gulf War, they fled for the Turkish border ahead of Saddam's advancing army, their desperate plight

shown on television screens around the world.

It is not clear what fate awaits the allied programmes designed to feed and defend the Kurds that were established in the aftermath of that episode.

State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns predicted Monday that the KDP won't be secure with Saddam as an ally and that the rival PUK will rule the day it established links with neighbouring Iran.

Burns said the short-term gains for KDP leader Massoud Barzani by aligning himself with Baghdad will only lead to long-term problems for him.