

BRIEFLY

US ex-vice president Agnew dead: Former US vice President Spiro Agnew, who served under President Richard Nixon from 1969-1973, has died at a Maryland Hospital. Cable News Network said yesterday. He was 77. AFP reports from Washington.

The former Maryland governor was taken to a hospital in Ocean City, Maryland, where he passed away Tuesday. CNN said, adding that no other details about his death were released. Officials at Ocean City's Atlantic General Hospital would not confirm or deny the report. Agnew resigned as vice president while facing charges of tax evasion in 1973, one year before Nixon was brought down by the Watergate scandal.

5 soldiers killed in Philippines: Five soldiers were killed in two attacks by suspected Muslim guerrillas near Cotabato, a southern Philippine city, military spokesman said yesterday. AFP reports from Cotabato. Philippines.

An infantry platoon was attacked near the town of Pikit on Tuesday, leaving three soldiers dead, while two other infantrymen were killed at the public market of Pikit on Sunday, lieutenant Noel Detoyato told reporters. He accused the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), which is preparing for peace talks with the government, of being behind the two attacks. However a spokesman for the ground denied any role in the ambushes.

Quakes rock Hokkaido: A pair of moderate earthquakes with preliminary magnitudes of 5.5 and 5.2 struck off the east coast of Japan's northernmost main island of Hokkaido on Wednesday morning, but there were no immediate reports of damage or injuries. AP reports from Tokyo.

Both temblors struck about 60 kilometers (37 miles) beneath the ocean floor in the same general location about 450 kilometers (279 miles) east of the coastal city of Kushiro, located 890 kilometers (552 miles) northeast of Tokyo, the Sapporo District Meteorological Observatory said.

There was no danger of tsunami or undersea waves triggered by volcanic activity or earthquakes, it said.

22 insurgents in Myanmar surrender: Twenty-two anti-government insurgents in Myanmar surrendered to the ruling military authorities last month, Myanmar state-run radio reported Tuesday. AFP reports from Bangkok.

Those who surrendered included militant pro-democracy students from the All Burma Students' Democratic Front and ethnic Karen minorities, radio Yangon said in a broadcast monitored in Bangkok. The rebels gave themselves up with their weapons to the Myanmar army between August 1 and 12, the report said.

Landslide kills 4 in Philippines: At least four gold miners were killed and 15 others missing and feared dead in a landslide on a remote mountain, police said Wednesday. AP reports from Iligan, Philippines.

Regional police spokesman, Nelson Constantino said heavy rains triggered the landslide late Tuesday on the mountain village of Mount Mambitayan in Proserpina, the capital of Agusan del Sur province, 840 kilometers (525 miles) southeast of Manila. Constantino said four survivors who suffered cuts and fractures told authorities that the 15 missing miners were buried under boulders and mud on the side of the mountain where they were digging for gold.

Assassination attempt last year
Mubarak blames Iran

CAIRO, Sept 18: President Hosni Mubarak has accused Iran of helping assassins who tried to assassinate him last year, marking the first time the Egyptian leader has publicly said that Iran participated in the plot, reports AP.

Egypt has long blamed its southern neighbour Sudan for masterminding the attempt in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in 1995. The charges led to UN diplomatic sanctions on Sudan after it refused to turn over three suspects.

Khartoum denies any role and says the men are no longer in Sudan.

Mubarak said the Iranian role came to light through confessions by some of the assailants on trial in Ethiopia.

There is information coming from the confessions of the arrested terrorists that Iran is involved and that it helped Sudan train for this attack," Mubarak told the London-based Arabic newspaper al-Hayat in an interview published Wednesday. His remarks were carried Tuesday by Egypt's Middle East News Agency.

Infiltration from North suspected
DPRK submarine found stranded in ROK east coast

SEOUL, Sept 18: Thousands of soldiers and police scoured rugged border mountains Wednesday for an unknown number of infiltrators from a stranded North Korean submarine off South Korea's east coast, reports AP.

KBS TV, quoting police sources, reported that several gun shots were heard in the area and said it could have been a gunfight between South Korean troops and the North Koreans.

The Defence Ministry ordered a massive manhunt after the submarine was found stranded on a reef off Kangnung, 120 kilometers (80 miles) northeast of Seoul, at about 1:35 am (1635 GMT).

It offered a cash reward of 100 million won (125,000 dollars) for information leading to the whereabouts of the intruders.

The exact number of infiltrators was unknown. The Defence Ministry said the submarine, capable of carrying up to 10 people, is believed to have planned to drop off just half that number. But when the submarine became stranded, the rest of the crew also left, it said.

After daybreak, police found footprints believed left by the infiltrators on a road leading to a rugged mountain. They also discovered a North Korean rifle, 150 rounds of ammunition, a life jacket and several pieces of clothing.

All army units and militia forces in the area were put on alert. The searchers were using dogs to sniff out the infiltrators. Helicopters were hovering over the area.

"This is a clear violation of the armistice," said Lt. Gen. Kim Kong-jin, who was directing the search. Appearing on television, he asked people to report anyone who looks suspicious.

TV footage showed the gray-brown top of the submarine near ragged rocks about 20 meters (yards) off the shore. Police were ordered not to approach it for fear it was booby trapped.

The documents made public Tuesday show intense concern within the Eisenhower administration over secret reports that hundreds of prisoners of war had been left behind. And testimony Tuesday before the House National Security personnel subcommittee brought forth several theories on their fate.

The documents include intelligence reports, classified policy statements, and memo-

International

Iraqi leader warned of new attack

US sends 3,500 soldiers to Kuwait, deploys Patriot

WASHINGTON, Sept 18: In moves designed to "keep Saddam Hussein in a box," President Clinton has dispatched 3,500 US Army soldiers to Kuwait and warned the Iraqi leader of new attacks should he threaten his neighbours or US forces, reports AP.

The warning to Saddam will remain in effect indefinitely, the US State Department said.

"It's obvious that he's always pushing the envelope," Clinton said Tuesday. "We didn't want to create a precedent that would lead him to believe he could take further action. We didn't want there to be any ambiguity

at all.

After congressional leaders met with Clinton at the White House, Democratic senators said Clinton had not hesitated in sending the troops to Kuwait. Although plans to send 5,000 soldiers were announced on Friday, reports emerged Monday the decision was being reviewed.

"We're doing it because the Kuwaiti government feels threatened," US Defence Secretary William Perry said of the deployment. The 3,500 soldiers from Fort Hood, Texas, would join 1,200 others conducting exercises in Kuwait by the end

of the week, he said.

Perry flatly rejected speculation that the Kuwaiti government initially was unwilling to accept additional US forces, or that the US-led coalition that mounted the 1991 war against Iraq had been fractured during the past two weeks of confrontation with Saddam.

The bottom line is, the coalition is alive and well," said Perry, who had returned early Tuesday from two days of consultations with Gulf and European allies.

Senate Republican leader Trent Lott of Mississippi expressed satisfaction after at

tending the meeting with Clinton, although he termed it "somewhat belated."

He said he hoped "there will be no basis" for the troops to go into action, but added that would depend on whether Saddam threatens US forces or his neighbours.

Before departing for a three-day campaign swing in the Midwest and West, Clinton said his actions were designed to improve the strategic position of the United States and our allies to keep Saddam Hussein in a box and limit his ability to threaten his neighbours.

The actions are designed to tell Saddam the "box you are in is now a tighter box," Clinton said.

Perry asked at a Pentagon briefing what Iraqi steps actions would prompt renewed US strikes, replied: "We will not tolerate any threatening actions against our air crews. Should any be taken, he pledged, "we will respond very sharply."

Another report from Kuwait adds: The United States has deployed Patriot anti-missile units in the Kuwaiti desert as it prepares for possible military action against Iraq.

AP from London further adds: Britain is still ready to send troops to Kuwait to defend it against threats of Iraqi attacks. Foreign Secretary Malcolm Rifkind said Tuesday.

Speaking after talks with Kuwaiti foreign minister, Sheikh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Sabah, Rifkind said: "We have shown in the past a willingness ... for troops to be sent and if it became necessary in the future we would also respond in a positive way."

The British foreign secretary said he had an "important and positive discussion" with his Kuwaiti counterpart, who had earlier also visited France.



Denise Brown (L), the sister of murder victim Nicole Brown, is accompanied by her attorney as she is followed by reporters outside the Orange County Courthouse where O J Simpson is fighting for custody of his children September 17. The two Simpson children have been staying with the Brown family since the slaying of their mother and the Brown's want permanent custody of the children.

— AFP/UNB photo

'Syria trying to press Israel into talks on its terms'

JERUSALEM, Sept 18: Syria has shifted troops closer to Israeli-controlled territory in Lebanon — a move Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Tuesday was intended to pressure Israel to resume negotiations with the Syrians on Syrian terms, reports AP.

The three suspects, who were arrested shortly after the attempt, reportedly said they were trained in Sudan and their weapons were carried in a diplomatic pouch from the Sudanese Embassy in Ethiopia.

Syria has long accused Sudan and Iran of supporting Muslim militants fighting a simmering insurgency in southern Egypt. Mubarak's adviser, Osama el-Baz, said earlier this month Iran had a role in the assassination attempt, but offered no details.

In a wide-ranging interview, Mubarak said he has expressed reservations to Washington about US attacks on Iraq.

"I told them that killing innocent people will have bad reactions in the area and that we want a peaceful solution to the problem," said Mubarak, a key US ally in the region.

Iraqi military commentators are skeptical of Syria's motivations.

"When you add what the Syrians say to their troop movement in Lebanon over the past month, you get the picture that they are readying the infra-

structure for a military option along with the diplomatic signals," commentator Ron Ben-Ishai wrote in the *Yediot Ahronot* newspaper.

Tensions between the two countries have risen since Netanyahu's Likud Party took office in June.

Netanyahu has said he does not want to return the Golan Heights, a strategic plateau and close ally of Syria, said the Syrian army was redeploying its forces to more defensive positions following hard line statements by Netanyahu.

"There are fears of an Israeli escalation," he said. "The redeployment is a precautionary measure to confront any possibility of an aggression on Syrian troops based in Lebanon as well as in Syria."

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