

BRIEFLY

Roadblocks to Suu Kyi's house lifted

A blockade on the road to dissident leader Aung San Suu Kyi's home was lifted Monday for the first time since October 12. AP reports from Yangon.

11 army officers jailed in France

Eleven French army officers and a former officer were given jail terms in Pau, France Monday for embezzling military property over five years up till 1994. AFP reports from France.

Algerian forces kill 5 militants

Algerian security forces killed five Islamic fundamentalists and seized about 100 homemade bombs at Megtata Kheira between Kolea and Zeralda west of Algiers. El Watan Daily reported yesterday. AFP says from Algiers.

Myanmar military team in China

A Myanmar military delegation led by deputy commander-in-chief of the defence services General Maung Aye left Yangon yesterday for Beijing to begin its 10-day goodwill visit to China. Xinhua reports from Yangon.

Floods claim 88 in Thailand

Floods have killed at least 88 people across Thailand and caused damage estimated at 88 million US dollars, according to the Thai interior ministry. Xinhua reports from Bangkok.

Flood death toll rises to 13 in Indonesia

The number of deaths from three days of flooding in the Indonesian province of Central Java has risen to 13 people, a report said while local sources said yesterday that the water has already subsided. AFP reports from Jakarta.

Nat'l Conference denies killing of party activists

Kashmir's new ruling party, the National Conference, denied on Monday that Muslim separatist guerrillas attacked a party worker's house and said a blast which killed at least five people was part of an army attack on militants hiding there. reports Reuters.

Accounts of the incident from the party, the army and local news agencies contradicted each other on many points. They are trying to put blame on the army, an army spokesman told Reuters in the state capital of Srinagar. We strongly deny their allegations that army has blasted the house. The explosion was at the Anantnag district home of Abdul Rashid Nadaf, a worker for the anti-separatist National Conference which won last month's election in Muslim majority Jammu and Kashmir state and has installed its leader, Farooq Abdullah, as chief minister. A police spokesman said there were two blasts which were still being investigated. The Press Trust of India and the United News of India, quoting official sources, reported a single blast and said seven relatives of the politician were killed in an attack by suspected separatist rebels.

International UNSC intends to adopt resolution calling for truce

Taliban rule out power-sharing deal with ousted Afghan govt

KABUL, Oct 22: The Taliban fundamentalist militia today ruled out any power-sharing deal with the ousted Afghan government and vowed to eradicate its forces, reports AFP. The stand reported by the Taliban-run Radio Shariat came one day after the Islamic militia's leadership said it would agree to an unconditional ceasefire to halt fighting with advancing ex-government troops north of the capital. The acting head of the militia's Ruling Council in Kabul, Mullah Mohammed Hassan told the UN's special envoy to Afghanistan there could be no political deal with the ex-regime. Radio Shariat said. "We will not make a joint government with those who have destroyed this country over the past four and a half years," Hassan reportedly told UN special ambassador Norbert Hol.

"State power is not booty and is an asset of the people and we will not share it with those who have proven to be the enemies of the people," Hassan said during a meeting with Hol here Monday. President Burhanuddin Rabbani and his military Czar Ahmad Shah Masood fled Kabul on September 27. The Islamic warriors then quickly captured two provinces north of capital, but began to lose key ground after Masood launched a guerilla war two weeks ago. But despite seeing their advance into northern Afghanistan halted, the Taliban has vowed to fight on until it wipes out Masood's forces. Radio Shariat said. "We will continue our Jihad until not even an inch of Afghan territory is under their control," the station said quoting top Taliban Commander Maulawi Jalaluddin Haqani. "We will save the whole country from the evil of the bandits," Haqani said.

The pledge came a day after Radio Shariat, the new name for the official Radio Kabul, said the Taliban were prepared to fight to the death if necessary to defend Kabul from Masood's forces. Meanwhile, ex-government forces battled the Taliban militia just 12 kilometres (7.5 miles) north of Kabul today at the final pass leading to the capital, witnesses said. The former government forces of Ahmad Shah Masood fired rockets and tank cannons at Taliban forces defending the Khay Kana Pass and heights above the pass, according to an AFP correspondent at the scene. "We have orders to advance and take the pass," ex-government Commander Sabir said. The salvos drew sporadic artillery fire from the Taliban, who mounted their defences on the old road, one of two main northern routes out of Kabul, just two kilometres (one mile) below the pass, he added.

Sabir said Masood's forces controlled the heights east of the pass and the plains to the north. He said the two sides were separated by less than a kilometre (half a mile). He also said the former government forces have taken the village of Karez-i-Mir, just 10 kilometres (six miles) from Kabul, site of a battle Monday night. Independent confirmation was not immediately available. Three buses carrying civilians came under shell fire early today and two people were seriously injured when one of the buses was struck, said Mahmoud Kadhjoni, a doctor at the Red Cross Hospital in Huserin Kot, several kilometres (miles) behind the front. Reuter adds from United Nations. The UN Security Council intends to adopt a resolution on Tuesday calling for a ceasefire and political negotiations in Afghanistan where the radical Islamic Taliban has captured

the capital, Kabul. But still in dispute in the document, drafted by Russia, are objections to the Taliban's discrimination against women and girls who have been denied schooling and work. China believes human rights concerns are not the province of the Security Council and Egypt is sensitive to possible criticism of Islamic practices, diplomats said. Consequently Russia may have to soften the language on women. The resolution, careful not to take sides in the conflict, says the main responsibility for finding a political solution to the conflict, lies with the Afghan parties. The document calls for states to refrain from interfering in Afghanistan's internal affairs and stop supplying arms and ammunition in the country's civil war. But it does not impose an arms embargo as Pakistan had wanted, with members saying this would be

nearly impossible to enforce. It requests Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali and UN representatives to cooperate with interested states and organisations such as the Organisation of the Islamic Conference to promote a political dialogue. Pakistan has offered to negotiate a ceasefire, overshadowing, at least temporarily. In a news conference in Kabul on Monday, Hol, in an apparent reference to Pakistan, warned that no single country could bring peace to Afghanistan. "People may think in Kabul it is more important to follow the advice of other negotiators but in the long run help for reconstruction will only come from the international community," he said after talks with Taliban representatives. The Organisation of Islamic Conference also proposed a truce and a conference in Saudi Arabia of the warring groups.

Gandhi's hand written papers likely to fetch \$1.2m

LONDON, Oct 22: Handwritten papers belonging to Mahatma Gandhi, India's first post-colonial leader, have surfaced after nearly 50 years, reports AP. The papers, which have languished until now in a cupboard in Madras, India, are expected to fetch between 600,000-800,000 pounds (900,000-1.2 million dollars) when they go on sale in London on November 14.

Phillips auctioneers said Monday the documents were a "major 20th archive," and contain 70 speeches, articles and draft letters. They include the prologue to Gandhi's last will and testament. "It is difficult to over-emphasise the importance of something so central to the 20th century," said Felix Pryor, Phillips consultant at Phillips. Gandhi led India's 350 million people to independence from Britain in 1947 and was assassinated the following year by a Hindu fanatic. The documents cover his last fast and the days leading up to his death. The drafts of speeches and letters from the last six months of Gandhi's life were stored by his secretary, V. Kalyanram. Phillips said that Kalyanram, now in his 70s, will not receive a penny from the sale of the 70 documents, which cover 450 pages in three loosely-bound volumes. He will give the proceeds to a Hindu charitable foundation for the construction of a temple.

Russian minister in Delhi to sign defence accord

NEW DELHI, Oct 22: Russian Defence Minister Igor Rodionov arrived in New Delhi on Monday on a three-day visit to sign a defence cooperation agreement including the supply of warplanes to India, officials of both countries said, reports Reuter. The visit is the first by a Russian defence minister to India, which was a close ally of the former Soviet Union. Rodionov was expected to sign defence deals on the supply of 40 Sukhoi Su-30MK long-range fighter bombers and MSTA-S self-propelled howitzers, the Press Trust of India said. Rodionov will meet Indian leaders, including Prime Minister H D Deve Gowda, Defence Minister Mulayam Singh Yadav and External Affairs Minister J K Gujral. He is also scheduled to meet the chiefs of India's defence forces, an Indian defence ministry official said. PFI said agreements on the training of Indian military personnel and a new service-to-service exchange between the armed forces of the two countries were likely to be finalised. As the former Soviet Union's main non-communist ally, India was one of Moscow's biggest arms clients. Russian Prime Minister Boris Yeltsin, visiting New Delhi in 1993, signed a treaty resolving a thorny debt issue that had curtailed supplies of defence equipment.

Yandarbiyev hopeful of peace in Chechnya

MOSCOW, Oct 22: Chechnya's rebel leader said Monday he sees many remaining obstacles to peace in his republic but remains hopeful Russia will live up to its commitments, reports AP. Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev, interviewed by Russia's NTV Independent Television, voiced regret that ousted Russian security chief Alexander Lebed "was not allowed to carry his job through to the end." But he called personnel shuffles among top Moscow officials "their internal affair" and expressed hope that lingering problems — mainly the complete withdrawal of Russian troops — can be worked out. "Russian prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin's signature on joint documents" endangers a certain confidence in the peace process, the Interfax news agency quoted the separatist chief as saying. "As a self-respecting politician, he should value his own signature." Chernomyrdin, meanwhile, stressed that his government is committed to the existing peace deal in Chechnya as the country's Security Council held its first meeting Monday with its new secretary.

Wildfire destroys 12 houses in Los Angeles

LOS ANGELES, Oct 22: Wind-whipped flames destroyed at least 12 expensive homes and damaged eight others in an exclusive orange country community on Monday while firefighters battled a 1,500-acre (607-hectare) wildfire north-west of Los Angeles, reports Reuter. California's notorious Santa Ana winds, gusting up to 50 mph (80 kph), spread both blazes quickly, forcing hundreds of people to evacuate their homes. The orange country blaze in a posh suburb near Tustin was brought under control in about three weeks but not before it had wreaked havoc in the neighbourhood of million-dollar homes.

Indian opposition slams govt for failure to win UNSC seat

NEW DELHI, Oct 22: The Indian opposition criticised the government today over the country's failure to win a UN Security Council seat, reports AFP. The issue was not properly managed, said Krishan Lal Sharma, spokesman for the Hindu Nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (Indian People's Party), after Japan beat India to the nonpermanent seat by 142 votes to 40 at the United Nations in New York on Monday. The mobilisation which India should have done was missing, he said. "The government should analyse the causes of the defeat. It shows we have no friends." It is a matter for serious consideration for the Indian government because it reflects adversely on our foreign relations. India's UN Ambassador

Prakash Shah expressed surprise and disappointment at the result, noting that even Japanese diplomats had expected the battle between the Asian rivals to run to two rounds. Shah told AFP in New York that he had received encouragement from many states who had apparently switched allegiance at the last minute in the secret ballot. But the BJP official and a spokesman for the Congress (I) Party denied the defeat was linked to India's refusal to sign the nuclear Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) in the face of strong international pressure. Vithal Gadgil of the Congress which props up the coalition government because it reflects adversely on our foreign relations. India's UN Ambassador

"We will continue our efforts to get a Security Council seat," the spokesman said. "India deserves to be on the Council considering its size, population everything." India's centre-left government offered no reaction on Monday's UN vote. External Affairs Minister Inder Kumar Gujral is in hospital, while Foreign Secretary Salman Haider refused to comment. The UN Security Council has 15 members. Japan will be one of 10 rotating members while Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States hold veto power as permanent members of the Council. Meantime, Japan's successful campaign for a non-permanent seat on the UN Security Council will not affect its relations with India, Japanese Foreign Minister Yukihiko Ikeda said today.



Newly elected Nicaraguan President Arnoldo Aleman (L) is congratulated by former US president Jimmy Carter (L) Monday as Costa Rica's former president Oscar Arias (C) looks on, at Aleman's house in the neighbourhood of EL Cruzero in Managua, Nicaragua. According to the Supreme Electoral Council fifth report, conservative Arnoldo Aleman led Sandinista Daniel Ortega by 417,642 votes to 338,367 with 45.97 per cent of the votes tallied. — AFP/UNB photo

Tigers attack police post, kill 16 cops, 3 guards

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka, Oct 22: Tamil Tiger rebels firing overran a police post in north-central Sri Lanka early Tuesday, killing 13 policemen and three paramilitary guards, military officials said, reports AP. Four policemen and two paramilitary guards were also injured in the attack in which the rebels fired rockets and machine guns at the post at Paliyagodella village in the Polonnaruwa district, said the officials, who asked not to be named. The rebels torched a small building that made up the post in the remote village about 180 kilometres (112 miles) north-east of Colombo, the capital, before returning to the jungle. "Reinforcements were rushed to the location from nearby police post and together with the army engaged the fleeing terrorists... police confirm that terrorists have suffered

heavy casualties," said Major D. Ranawake, a military spokesman, in a statement. The rebels are fighting for a separate homeland for minority Tamils, claiming they are discriminated against by the majority Sinhalese, who control the government and the military. More than 46,000 people have been killed in the 13-year war. AFP adds, the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) ambushed the police on a routine patrol at Paliyagodella, the sources said adding that there were no immediate reports of rebel casualties. The attack came two days after security forces carried out an air and sea assault on a key Tigers base at the north-eastern region of Chundikkulam leaving nine sailors and four guerrillas dead.

'Iraq fails to clear up doubts about its N-arms'

MANAMA, Oct 22: UN disarmament envoy Rolf Ekeus headed back to New York today after saying Iraq had failed to clear up doubts about how many ballistic missiles and other banned weapons it retains, reports AFP. Ekeus, Chairman of the UN Special Commission (UNSCOM) on disarmament Iraq, left the UNSCOM rear base in Bahrain at dawn today after making a brief stopover following a three-day visit to Iraq UN officials said. "We have not cleared up any more issued than what has been reported in our October 11 report to the Security Council," Ekeus told reporters in Baghdad at the end of a three-day visit to Iraq. Iraq has still not accounted for between six and 16 long range ballistic missiles like the Scuds fired on Israel and Saudi Arabia during the 1991 Gulf War, Ekeus added. "Our ambition now is to narrow the number."

PLO-Israeli blame each other for impasse in Hebron talks

JERUSALEM, Oct 22: Deepening a sense of crisis in Israeli-Palestinian peace talks, Palestinian negotiators unexpectedly walked out of talks in Jerusalem Monday night, reports AP. The walkout came hours after US mediator Dennis Ross announced that he was returning to Washington. Israelis and Palestinians blamed each other for an impasse after two weeks of talks. It was not clear when the Palestinians intended to return to the negotiating table. Moshe Fogel, a spokesman for Israel's government, told the Associated Press that "in principle" the negotiations would continue Tuesday. He said the Palestinians seemed angry, "but we believe they are delaying tactics." The latest round of talks be-

gan in response to a plea from President Clinton following a week of violence in which Palestinian police and Israeli soldiers opened fire on one another, killing 79 people. At a summit in Washington, Clinton persuaded the two sides to negotiate non-stop until they reached agreement. But since then, the Palestinians, have walked out of talks several times to consult with Arafat, each time returning to the table. It was unclear whether Monday's returning to the table. It was unclear whether Monday's walkout was more serious. Ross said there had been progress in the latest round — just not enough. Israel, on the other hand, claimed that only details remained unresolved and accused Palestinians of stalling. The Palestinians said

both were overestimating the progress. The talks continued after Ross announced his departure. But Palestinian negotiators "got up and walked out" from a session discussing security in the West Bank town of Hebron after Israeli troops pull out. A Palestinian official said on condition of anonymity that the chief Palestinian negotiator, Saeb Erekat, went to the nearby autonomous West Bank city of Bethlehem to report to Yasser Arafat on the new disagreements. Fogel said the Palestinians walked out after the Israelis refused to renegotiate aspects of the agreement that had been worked out in recent negotiations. A separate committee working on civilian aspects of the new Hebron arrangement was still meeting, he said.

'Syria ready for war if Israel refuses to give up Golan'

TEL AVIV, Oct 22: Syria is ready for war against Israel if the hardline government of Benjamin Netanyahu refuses to give up the Golan Heights, an Israeli TV station quoted a "very senior" Syrian government official as saying, reports AP. The official told visiting journalists in Damascus Saturday that the United States has promised Syria to pressure Israel on the issue after next month's US election. Channel 2 TV said. Israeli journalist Eldad Beck, who in an unusual gesture was allowed to visit Damascus with French President Jacques Chirac, quoted the official on Monday as saying Syria does not want war but is ready for it, and that war would cause heavy casualties on both sides. The official called on Netanyahu to accept unwritten

understandings reached with his dovish predecessors, which allegedly included a timetable for a Golan withdrawal. Edward Djerejian, a former US ambassador to both Israel and Syria, told The Associated Press that in talks with Syrian officials last week he found they "are not eager to choose a military option" and they stressed Syria has made "a strategic decision for peace." Djerejian met Syrian President Hafez Assad on October 15 and then transmitted a message to Israel that Syria is interested in renewing the talks. On Sunday, Channel 2 reported that Netanyahu had transmitted a message to Syria promising to "take into account" that ideas were raised and certain understandings were reached during the term of the previous government.

New US immigration bill to cut influx of illegal aliens

WASHINGTON, Oct 22: The new immigration bill signed by President Clinton September 30 attempts to reduce the influx of illegal aliens but stops short of significant changes on legal immigration, reports USIS. When President Clinton signed the immigration reform bill on September 30 he said, "This bill includes landmark immigration reform legislation that reinforces the efforts we have made over the last three years to combat illegal immigration." Republicans and Democrats generally praised the bill, which was passed with concessions from both sides as members of Congress sought passage of legislation before adjournment for national elections. Under Democratic pressure, Republicans removed a provision that would have deported



Palestinian women with children pass by an Israeli paratrooper manning a position in the centre of the West Bank town of Hebron, Monday. Palestinians in West Bank city of Hebron will have to wait even longer as the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations on Hebron has got into a halt with unsolved differences that has made US mediator Dennis Ross, giving up after 16 days in the area and going back to Washington. — AFP/UNB photo

New US immigration bill to cut influx of illegal aliens

legal immigrants who used specified public benefits for more than 12 months in their first seven years in the United States. Also eliminated was a provision that would have barred both legal and illegal immigrants with AIDS from federally financed treatment programmes. And Republicans removed a provision that would have allowed states to deny public schooling to children who are in the country illegally. However, there was little disagreement over items in the bill that focused on clamping down on illegal immigration. The bill, aimed at strengthening the Border Patrol along the 3,200-kilometre frontier with Mexico, adds 5,000 new Border Patrol officers and 1,500 support personnel over the next five years. It also authorises

\$12 million for improved equipment and technology. Another provision calls for a 22-kilometre border fence south of San Diego. That fence alone is projected to cost more than the allotted \$12 million. In addition, the legislation gives the attorney general right to waive environmental protection laws for border control construction, a measure that drew angry protests from ecologists. The legislation adds 600 new Immigration and Naturalisation Service (INS) investigators to handle cases involving criminal aliens, visitors who overstay their visas, and employers who hire illegal immigrants. Critics say the bill weakens anti-discrimination provisions protecting legal workers and deletes enhanced penalties

against employers who hire illegal immigrants. Other provisions in the legislation raise criminal penalties to up to 15 years for document fraud and up to 10 years for smuggling people across the border. A criminal penalty will also be imposed on anyone making a false claim for citizenship. Republicans also compromised by scaling back proposed income requirements for the sponsors of legal immigrants. Instead of having to earn twice the amount of the established poverty level, sponsors will have to earn only 25 per cent more than the poverty rate or find a cosponsor who accepts joint liability for the immigrant. The toughest provisions of the bill streamline deportation proceedings. It also stipulates

that asylum seekers with falsified or borrowed documents can be detained at the border and denied asylum unless they can show a "credible fear" of persecution if they returned to their point of origin. The bill, with some exceptions, sets a one-year time limit for applying for political asylum after entering the United States. The legislation provides for 100 per cent reimbursement by the federal government to hospitals that provide emergency medical services to illegal aliens and reimburses states for incarceration of illegal aliens. Eighteen months after the effective date of the law, all border crossing cards must contain a biometric identifier and be machine readable. In three years, no one will be admitted without such a card.

Any alien who is convicted of a crime of domestic violence, a crime of stalking, or a crime of child abuse, child neglect or child abandonment will now be deported. The immigration bill is the culmination of a two-year effort. Last spring, an unusual alliance of high-technology companies, civil liberties organisations, and conservative think-tanks fought the effort to curb legal immigration, saying such moves would keep families apart and bar new entrepreneurial talent. Although the immigration bill includes some of the toughest measures taken in decades against illegal immigration, it does far less to discourage legal immigration than was originally proposed.

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