

BRIEFLY

Deuba arrives in Pakistan

Nepalese Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba was warmly received by his Pakistani counterpart Benazir Bhutto when he arrived in Islamabad Friday for talks, aimed at promoting trade and economic ties, officials said. AFP reports from Islamabad.

Deuba, the first democratically elected Nepalese Prime Minister to visit Pakistan, is responding to an invitation by Bhutto who visited Nepal in May 1994. Formal talks between the two premiers will be held on Saturday when Deuba will also meet Pakistani President Farooq Ahmed Leghari, officials said.

8 buried alive in France

Eight people were buried alive when a violent explosion believed caused by gas flamed a house in this eastern French town, firemen said early yesterday. AFP reports from Sarreguemines, France.

They said the eight remained buried for several hours after the blast, which was heard all over the town.

Rescue workers dug out a 65-year-old woman who was rushed to hospital where both her legs were amputated.

Diana's trip to Sydney ends

The Princess of Wales concluded the official portion of her three-day trip to Sydney when she visited more than 100 patients at the Sacred Heart Hospice on Saturday morning. AP reports from Sydney.

Diana met with patients in the inner-city hospice's day care unit and those in two other wards for around 90 minutes. Around 250 people outside the hospice greeted her arrival and two drag queens shouted "Di. Di. We love you. Di" as Diana stepped out of her limousine.

8 killed in Somalia

At least eight people were killed and 13 others injured on Friday during a heavy mortar and artillery exchange between militia supporters of two Somali factions in South-Mogadishu. AFP reports from Mogadishu.

Most of the shells landed on residential areas of the war-torn city's southern districts.

Plane crash kills 14 in Guatemala

Fourteen people were killed Friday when their turbo-prop plane crashed into Lake Peten-Itza in northern Guatemala, civil aviation officials said. AFP reports from Guatemala.

The 14 included 13 Guatemalans and an American woman, officials said. The cause of the crash, which took place at 1405 GMT, was under investigation, said civil aviation chief Juan Luis Munoz. The pilot did not make contact with the nearby airport, Santa Elena, to report mechanical trouble, Munoz said.

Frank Sinatra hospitalised

Legendary singer Frank Sinatra was admitted to the hospital on Friday suffering from a pinched nerve, his publicist said. Reuter reports from Los Angeles.

Susan Reynolds said the singer, who will be 81 next month, was in the Cedars-Sinai Medical Centre in Beverly Hills undergoing tests. "It's a pinched nerve, that's all there is," she said, declining to elaborate.

Morocco's ex-PM passes away

Maaoui Bouabid, Morocco's prime minister from 1979 to 1983, died Friday after suffering a heart attack, his political party said. He was 69. AP reports from Rabat.

Bouabid, head of the Constitutional Union party since it was founded in 1983, held several ministerial posts beginning in 1958 including labour, social affairs and justice. His party is currently a member of the governing coalition.

Road mishap claims 39 in Peru

A bus plunged off a cliff near Lima Friday, leaving at least 39 people dead and 15 injured, police said. AFP reports from Lima.

The crash occurred near the towns of San Antero and Matucana 244 kilometres (150 miles) east of Lima.

The bus, which was carrying about 60 passengers, lost control, rolled several times and plunged 500 metres (1,650 feet), police said.

Local residents helped rescue the injured.

A police team which specialises in traffic accidents arrived on the scene to determine the cause of the accident.

Quake shakes Japan

An earthquake registering 5.0 on the Richter Scale shook eastern Japan's Izu group of islands, south of Tokyo, on Saturday, but there was no danger of tsunami tidal waves, the Meteorological Agency said. AFP reports from Tokyo.

Israel, PA may sign Hebron accord during Cairo confce

JERUSALEM Nov 2: Israel and the Palestinians are close to finalising an accord on an Israeli troop pullback from Hebron and it will be signed during the November 12-14 economic conference in Cairo, Israeli radio said today, reports AFP.

In contrast to the Israeli optimism, the Palestinian leadership charged that Israel's right-wing government was holding up an accord by rejecting commitments already undertaken by the previous Labour administration.

The radio, citing US diplomatic sources, said US Secretary of State Warren Christopher was expected to attend a signing ceremony in Cairo.

Israel was scheduled to pull out of 80 per cent of Hebron in March, but Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has been de-

manding greater security guarantees for the 400 Jewish settlers living in the West Bank City.

Earlier AP says: American mediator Dennis Ross is likely to rejoin negotiations next week between Israel and the Palestinians with the hope of completing an accord on the future of the West Bank town of Hebron, reports AP.

The unannounced target date for the long-elusive agreement is November 12, when Israelis and Arabs are due to hold an economic conference in Cairo, Egypt, according to diplomatic sources.

An agreement on Hebron would be celebrated there, with Secretary of State Warren Christopher heading the US delegation, said the sources, speaking on condition of anonymity.

The accord would give the Arabs impetus to resume expanding economic ties with Israel. Arab countries have slowed down or stopped their economic dealings with Israel until they are convinced Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's hardline government will give up ground as his predecessor did.

US State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns said Friday, Ross had been in touch with the two sides and planned to speak to Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat on the telephone this weekend.

The negotiators are taking a break Friday and Saturday for the Muslim and Jewish Sabbath.

On Wednesday, Ross said Israel and the Palestinians were close to an agreement and most issues were resolved.

Beijing elects committee to select chief executive of HK

BELJING: Nov 2: Hong Kong came a step closer Saturday toward knowing who will lead it into Chinese rule next year, with the election in Beijing of a committee to select the Chief Executive, reports AP.

The selection of the Chief Executive is one of the most closely followed issues in Hong Kong ahead of the British colony's return to Chinese rule on July 1, 1997.

Replacing the British governor as Hong Kong's top official, the Chief Executive will be expected to hold China to its promise that the territory can keep its capitalist system and a "high degree of autonomy" after the handover.

The Chief Executive is expected to be chosen before the end of the year by a 400-member Selection Committee.



Former US president Gerald Ford (L), US Republican presidential candidate Bob Dole (2nd-L), Elizabeth Dole (2nd-R) and former US president George Bush (R) are introduced at a Dole/Kemp campaign rally in president Ford's hometown of Grand Rapids, Michigan, on Friday. Dole is starting a marathon 96-hour-campaign trip across the United States.

— AFP/UNB photo

Row over expulsion of embassy staff

Pakistan rejects Indian protest

ISLAMABAD, Nov 2: Pakistan on Friday rejected an Indian protest over the expulsion of its embassy official in Islamabad on alleged charges of espionage, reports AFP.

The concern expressed by the Indian Ministry of External Affairs is misplaced," a foreign office spokesman said in a statement.

In a lodgment the protest after Pakistan expelled A K Wahl, a non-diplomatic staffer at the Indian High Commission last week, claiming he was caught by the Islamabad police while pursuing as information of a "sensitive nature" from his local contact.

The foreign office had said Wahl "confessed" he was an agent of the Indian secret service. Research and Analysis Wing RAW.

Wahl's expulsion came a day after a Pakistan embassy official, Haifiz Mushtaq Ahmed Khoso, was "abducted" by Indian intelligence in New Delhi on October 25 and declared persona non grata on similar charges.

Khoso returned late Friday, saying he was coerced into signing the confession.

The foreign office accused India of making a big issue out of the apprehension and expulsion of one of their own officials who is a confirmed RAW agent and was caught red-handed.

India is trying to divert attention from the indefensible action of its intelligence agencies" against Khoso and was "conveniently ignoring" his kidnapping, the Pakistani spokesman said.

Khoso was physically manhandled and assaulted before his release the next morning, the spokesman said adding he was "coerced to make a false confession which was videotaped".

Rwandan troops enter Goma

US strongly advises Rwanda not to make invasion attempt into Zaire

WASHINGTON, Nov 2: The United States on Friday strongly advised Rwanda's military not to attempt an invasion into neighbouring Zaire, the State Department said. Reports AFP.

Following the recent incursion of Rwandan troops into Zairean territory, Washington made a clear demarche to the Rwandan government that it ought to restrain its own military, State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns said.

"We recognise the current borders of Zaire and they ought to be respected," he said, adding that the United States has "ongoing concern" about the stability of Zaire.

Burns said that US ambassadors in Kigali and Kinshasa were involved "on a daily basis"

with efforts to get both governments to stop the fighting, and that a State Department official would visit the region next week. He declined to identify the official.

Burns said he could not confirm reports from humanitarian sources that Rwandan soldiers had entered the Zairean city of Goma on Friday.

Meanwhile, the UN envoy to the region, Canadian ambassador to the United States Raymond Chretien, will meet on Monday at the state department with Peter Tarnoff, Assistant Secretary for Political Affairs and George Moose, Assistant Secretary for Africa.

Burns also reaffirmed US support for a regional African conference to seek a solution to the conflict.

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ernment, faced by fighting in the east of the country, said Friday it had decided to deport Rwandan and Burundian refugees from Zaire "progressively and by force."

In a statement issued after a cabinet meeting, the transitional Zairean government said that it had decided to start returning "progressively and by force all the Rwandan and Burundian refugees on its territory."

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Taliban down plane

KABUL, Nov 2: The Taliban militia ruling Kabul said today a warplane which bombed the Afghan capital and killed three children was shot down as it flew back north, reports Reuter.

The official radio, renamed Radio Sharia after Islam's stern law which the Taliban want to impose on Afghanistan, said the plane was brought down by "special guided missiles" after a bombing run over Kabul on Thursday.

It said the pilot was killed when his plane was brought down over the Kohdaman mountains north of Kabul after it "bombed Kabul city's residential areas."

There was no independent confirmation of what would be the first known shooting down of a warplane since the Taliban took Kabul on September 27.

A northern alliance between Uzbek leader Abdul Rashid

Dostum and the ousted government's military chief Ahmad Shah Massood has been battling towards Kabul for the past two weeks.

Dostum, who has a small air force, has conducted several air raids on Kabul over the past week, most of them aimed at the airport on the northeastern edge of the city which is used for both civilian and military traffic.

Although one of first bombs landed at night in a city centre park, there had been no civilian casualties in the raids until Thursday.

But then one plane dropped two 250 kg (550 lb) bombs on a northwestern residential area, destroying two houses, killing three children and wounding seven people, some seriously.

Local people said the attack was probably aimed at a nearby military base.

Off the Record

Fergie denies her suicide report

LONDON: The Duchess of York on Friday denied a report that she said she would have committed suicide in 1992 if it had not been for her daughters, a news agency said, reports AP.