

International

Debate on deployment of int'l force continues

Battle over Ghali's reelection filled with diplomatic ironies

UNITED NATIONS, Nov 22: After the United States cast the lone vote in the Security Council against Boutros Boutros-Ghali's reelection, the 15 ambassadors joined the UN chief behind closed doors — for lunch, reports AP.

"After such a vote, I expected the atmosphere to be gloomy," said one ambassador who asked that he not be named. "But there were all these conversations and chitchat like nothing happened."

The unexpected conviviality of the monthly lunch Tuesday between the council and the secretary-general is not the only irony in the ongoing battle which places the United States against most of the 185-member United Nations.

Six months ago, ambassadors of major countries were complaining privately that Washington had not shown its hand on whether to grant the 74-year-old Egyptian a second term.

Now, the organization is up in arms, with diplomats and UN officials grumbling over American attempts to dictate the choice of the new secretary-general without considering the views of 184 other governments.

Governments which usually side with the United States on UN major issues — such as Britain, France, South Korea, Chile and Poland — sided against the Americans in the council vote.

"The vote ... in the Security Council shows the indignation aroused by the behavior of the United States," the French newspaper *Le Monde* said Thursday. "Fourteen to one: the Americans have been driven to use their veto in a public demonstration of their isolation."

Ironically, Boutros-Ghali's widespread support is a relatively new phenomenon.

In 1993, Boutros-Ghali was jeered and spat at in Bosnia and forced to take refuge in a US Marine compound from garbage-throwing protesters in Somalia. Human rights organizations have complained about his reluctance to speak out about human rights abuses in Burma and elsewhere.

He has also crossed swords with the UN staff union over alleged favoritism in personnel policies. Privately, European diplomats have been as critical as the United States of the sluggish pace of UN reform.

US suspends reconnaissance flights over eastern Zaire

WASHINGTON, Nov 22: The United States suspended reconnaissance flights over eastern Zaire after Zairean rebels fired on one of the planes, the Pentagon said Thursday, reports AP.

Pentagon spokesman Kenneth Bacon told reporters that the overflights by P-3 Orion reconnaissance aircraft, which were being used to assess the number of refugees in the region, could resume.

"I would expect flights to resume, but we don't know" for certain, Bacon said.

Zairean rebels fired a burst of anti-aircraft fire at one of the Navy planes Wednesday when it flew over a rally of thousands of rebel supporters in eastern Zaire.

The plane was too high to be hit. It was over a crowd of about 10,000 people gathered in Goma, the capital of northern Kivu province, now under rebel control.

Bacon said the crew members reported "bullets exploding way below the plane," but that

the type of guns used wasn't clear. Two P-3s have been conducting their missions out of Entebbe, Uganda.

The spokesman said 365 US military personnel were now in place in Central Africa, even though a formal decision has not yet been made on moving forward with a multinational relief operation to assist refugees.

That number is nearly half the 800 troops the United States has said it is willing to contribute to such an effort.

Another report from Frankfurt says, a multinational coalition meeting Friday in Germany is debating whether a military mission to help refugees in eastern Zaire is still needed now that many of them have returned home.

The refugees, mostly Rwandan Hutus, fled to camps in Goma, the capital of northern Kivu province, now under rebel control.

Bacon said the crew members reported "bullets exploding way below the plane," but that

they'll be discussing."

Gideon Kayinamuna, Rwanda's UN ambassador, has said his country no longer wants international troops on its land, which probably would be a key staging ground for any such mission.

Reuter adds: The United Nations refugee agency said on Thursday it had traced the whereabouts — for the first time in weeks — of up to 700,000 missing Rwandan Hutu refugees in east Zaire using Western satellite pictures and overflights.

"We've located these refugees with the help of satellite pictures and information from Western overflights in the region and other sources," UNHCR spokeswoman Melitta Sunjic told Reuters.

It was the first time a humanitarian agency was able to come up with an overall picture of the mass flight across eastern Zaire's banana plantations, forests and bushes since the Hutu refugees fled an ethnic Tutsi revolt.

Canadian Deputy Foreign Minister Gordon Smith, who also attended the UN meeting, said options being considered include scrapping the mission.

But Smith said most countries agree there is still a need for some kind of mission to help the estimated 500,000 refugees still believed scattered around eastern Zaire.

More than 25 countries are taking part in the planning meeting in Stuttgart. It will be headed by Multi-National Force Commander, Gen Maurice Baril of Canada, spokesman Lt Charles Brown said Thursday.

Brown could provide no details on how the mission might shape up, saying "that's what

BJP calls for removal of UP governor

Stalemate in Indian parliament continues

NEW DELHI, Nov 22: Protesting right-wing Hindu lawbreakers forced the adjournment of India's Parliament today for the third consecutive day, reports Reuter.

The Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) led the protest, calling for the removal of the governor of Uttar Pradesh, where the party claims it has been denied a chance to rule.

"Sack Bhandari" BJP lawmakers shouted, referring to Governor Ramesh Bhandari.

The BJP was joined by its regional allies in Maharashtra State, the Shiv Sena party, which demanded that two districts in neighbouring Karnataka state, Belgaum and Karwar, be folded into Maharashtra.

The Speaker of the Lower House, P.A. Sangma, was unable to quell the din. He quickly adjourned the House and ordered all official business put off until next week.

The Upper House also adjourned amid loud shouting by BJP members. They were joined by members from the southern state of Andhra Pradesh, who demanded immediate debate over a recent cyclone which killed 971 people and left 925 missing.

Both houses were expected to resume official business on Tuesday. Monday is a religious holiday.

"I hope a long adjournment will calm down the people and the House can function," vice president: Kочeril Raman Narayanan, who heads the Upper House, said.

BJP deputies said they expected the din over Uttar Pradesh, which dominated attention during the first three days of this winter session of Parliament, to die down next week.

The BJP emerged as the biggest single party in recent assembly elections in Uttar Pradesh but fell short of an outright majority.

President Shankar Dayal Sharma last month accepted a recommendation by Governor Bhandari and imposed federal rule over the state, home to 140 million people.

BRIEFLY

Mother Teresa hospitalised: Nobel Peace laureate Mother Teresa was admitted to hospital early yesterday following chest pains, hospital sources said, AFP reports from Calcutta.

Her office said the 86-year-old nun was brought in "after chest pain." She said doctors were attending her and would be available for comment after a medical board meeting, Ashim Bardhan, Mother Teresa's personal physician said. "We can comment on her condition only later in the day."

US housing secy resigns: US Housing Secretary Henry Cisneros submitted his resignation on Thursday, the latest Cabinet member to quit ahead of President Bill Clinton's second term. Reuter reports from Washington.

"I have concluded that I cannot ask to be considered for service in the next four years," Cisneros wrote in his resignation letter to Clinton.

Cisneros, 49, will stay as head of the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) until Clinton's inauguration in January, a department spokesman said.

Russian cargo craft docks with Mir: A Russian cargo craft docked with the Mir space station yesterday bringing much-needed supplies to the two Russian cosmonauts and US astronaut who have been in orbit for two months, Reuter reports from Moscow.

A mission control spokesman said the freighter linked up with Mir at 4:01 am (01:01 GMT).

The docking has passed successfully in automatic mode, the Mir crew plans to open the door at 5:33 am (02:33 GMT), the spokesman told Reuters.

LTTE kills Lankan officer: Tamil Tiger guerrillas ambushed an army jeep in north-eastern Sri Lanka, killing an officer and wounding two others, official sources said yesterday, AFP reports from Colombo.

Gunmen of the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) attacked the military vehicle in the region of Kantalai on Thursday night by setting off a land mine and later attacking with automatic guns, the sources said.

Security forces have also been placed on maximum alert for possible rebel attacks to mark the 42nd birthday of rebel supremo Velupillai Prabhakaran on Tuesday.

Opponents sign deal in Belarus: Political opponents in Belarus signed a compromise deal on Friday to resolve a standoff which threatened stability in the former Soviet republic. Reuter reports from Minsk.

Journalists watched as President Alexander Lukashenko, Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin, Belarus Parliament Speaker Semyon Sharshetay and the Speakers of Russia's two Houses of parliament signed the agreement.

Former ME peace broker under fire

OSLO, Nov 22: When Terje Roed Larsen was a Middle East peace broker, he was a national hero. But a month after joining Norway's new government, he's fighting for his political future against abruptly hostile national news media reports AP.

"Terje is in big trouble," Norway's largest newspaper, *Verdens Gang*, said Thursday about allegations of questionable investments and sloppy management a decade ago.

Larsen won Norwegians respect for brokering the months of secret Israeli-PLO talks that led to the 1993 peace agreement. He was praised as top UN peace envoy in the Middle East in the years that followed.

Yet since returning home to become ministry of planning and reform on Oct 25, he has faced only criticism.

He has been relentlessly attacked on front pages for poor management, questionable investments and using Norwegian funds to run his UN office in the Gaza Strip.

"No one gets hit harder than a hero," said Larsen's spokesman Leiv Ellingsen on Thursday. "Here we have a world class politician who returned home to this tiny pond ... to take his first national political job."

"They aren't criticizing his work as minister. The media found a few minor things, and now the pack is after him for them. Most are a decade old, and didn't even involve him directly," he said.

Yet the storm, with daily newspaper coverage and television debates, has become so intense that opponents say Larsen's credibility is slipping. They ask whether a man whose past record appears sloppy should plan Norway's future.

"I had not expected my first press conference as a minister to be about something like this," Larsen told the news media last week. "If I had been an editor, this story would not have been a top priority."

Norway's largest newspapers disagreed, accusing him of withholding or misrepresenting key facts during that news conference.

Liberian civil war claims 50,000 children

MONROVIA, Nov 22: Some 50,000 children have been killed in Liberia's civil war, the United Nations said here Thursday, reports AFP.

"Fifty thousand children were killed while 30,000 to 50,000 were abandoned with 300,000 uprooted from their homes, often abused, drugged and made to carry arms," during almost seven years of factional conflict in this West African nation, according to a statement jointly released by UN humanitarian organisations.

Around 150,000 people have been killed in the conflict in Liberia, the conflict began in December 1989.

The agencies said they would focus much attention on 15,000 child soldiers among Liberia's estimated 60,000 fighters who African peacekeepers are due to begin disarming across the West African country Friday.

Yeltsin moves from hospital to test home

MOSCOW, Nov 22: President Boris Yeltsin moved from hospital to a government test home today to continue his convalescence from open heart surgery, ITAR-Tass news agency said, reports Reuter.

Reporters at the scene said they saw Yeltsin's motorcade leave the Central Clinical Hospital about 9:15 am (06:15 GMT) heading towards the nearby Bayvika Sanatorium.

NTV commercial television later showed Yeltsin, wearing a fur hat and long dark coat, waving cheerfully as he stepped into the presidential Mercedes-Benz Limousine.

Yeltsin, 65, is said to be making steady progress after his November 5 quintuple bypass operation but doctors have warned him against taking things too fast.

SC to hear arguments in harassment case against Clinton

RICHMOND, Virginia, Nov 22: The Supreme Court will hear arguments concerning the timing of Paula Jones sexual harassment case against President Clinton on Jan. 13, exactly one week before his inauguration for a second term, reports AP.

Jones' attorney, Gil Davis, said Thursday he would argue that the case should proceed. The Clinton administration has argued that it should be delayed until after the president leaves office.

Davis, a Republican who is expected to run for Virginia attorney general next year, said, "It's important that the case go forward to say to all Americans that no matter what public position you hold ... you can't shield yourself from personal accountability."

Clinton has said he doesn't recall ever meeting Jones, and his attorneys have argued that only "exceptional circumstances" should force a sitting president to face a civil trial.

Nepal-India agree to set up jt hydro project soon

KATHMANDU, Nov 22: Nepal and India have agreed to finalise the detailed project report for a joint large scale hydro project on the Mahakali, border river between the two countries as soon as possible, reports Xinhua.

A joint communique issued Thursday simultaneously in Kathmandu and New Delhi said the two countries agreed that the Detailed Project Report (DPR) for Pancheshwar Project, located on Nepal's western border river with India, should be finalised expeditiously.

The joint communique came out after a three-day visit to India by Nepali Water Resources Minister Pashupati Shumsher

Rana who held talks with his Indian counterpart Janeshwar Mishra and other senior officials during the visit.

The Pancheshwar Multipurpose Hydro Project, about 450 km west of Kathmandu, is a centerpiece of the Nepal-India treaty on the integrated development of the Mahakali river, which was signed last February and ratified by the Nepali Parliament in September.

According to an earlier technical report on the project prepared by the Nepali side, the 10 billion US dollar project would include a 315-metre-high dam and generate over 6,000-megawatt electricity after its full completion.

However, the Indian Government, paying more attention to the irrigation function of the project, has proposed a 280-metre high dam and a much lower generating capacity between 2,000 and 4,000 megawatt for the Pancheshwar Project, it was reported.

The joint communique also said the two governments agreed to form a joint Mahakali river commission as stipulated in the Mahakali treaty to monitor the development of the border river.

The two sides also agreed to constitute a joint team to study the possibility of navigation on three major rivers following from Nepal to India, it added.

Massive protest against alleged election fraud in Belgrade

BELGRADE, Nov 22: Tens of thousands of chanting people marched through Belgrade on Thursday to protest alleged election fraud by Serbia's president Slobodan Milosevic, reports AP.

Shouting "Red Bandits" and "We won't give up our victory," the crowd of about 30,000 stopped by Milosevic's state-run Serbian TV, cursing and booing riot police deployed around the downtown building. They demanded "liberation" from his main propaganda tool that had been blasting the opposition.

Meanwhile, the leaders and about 60 other members of the opposition coalition Zajedno together pledged to continue their hunger strike in Serbia's parliament building and stay locked inside until their demands are met.

Similar protests were reported in several other Serbian towns and cities, including in

the second largest city of Nis.

"Our position is crystal clear. We are defending the law," Zoran Djindjic, head of the Democratic Party, told The Associated Press.

The opposition leaders, who claim that Milosevic robbed them of a victory in all of Serbia's major towns in Sunday's local elections, sent Milosevic four demands, including that he recognise their initial election results and bring criminal charges against local election officials.

The protests came after Milosevic-controlled Electoral Commissions on Tuesday night annulled and called for re-runs of Sunday's local elections in several Serbian districts, mostly in places where the four-party opposition coalition claimed clear victory.

Zajedno claims to have won in 44 municipalities across Serbia, including Belgrade and the former Communist bastions of Nis, Kragujevac, Uze and Novi Sad.

Milosevic's coalition claimed victory in 184 of Serbia's 189 municipalities. Most, however, are small districts and practically irrelevant compared to bigger Serbian towns.

Opposition leader Vuk Draskovic appealed to opposition voters to stage peaceful protests every day.

"I call on people to come out and show Milosevic with determination that the voice of people is the voice of God," Draskovic said.

"Milosevic carried out an act of political terrorism which we will not tolerate," he told the crowd.

He said that his wife Danica, an outspoken Milosevic critic, had been missing since earlier Thursday, after state TV carried her statement, allegedly calling for terrorism in Serbia.

Off the Record



US President Bill Clinton holds a baby koala named after his daughter Chelsea on Friday as First Lady Hillary Clinton stands with him at the Rainforest Habitat in Port Douglas, Australia. The baby koala is sitting atop a stuffed animal, used a surrogate mother when holding new-born koalas. The Clintons are spending four days in Australia before flying Saturday to Manila for the APEC conference. — AFP/UNB photo

Greedy father's homicide plot

WILLIAMSPORT, Pennsylvania: A man was convicted of trying to push his 9-year-old deaf daughter into the path of a pickup truck to collect more than 200,000 dollars in life insurance money, reports AP.

David Crist's attempted murder conviction in the 1993 plot clears the way for him to be tried in the attempted electrocution of his 4-year-old daughter and the contract slaying of his only brother. In each case, prosecutors said, the motive was greed.

"Justice was a little delayed but justice was served," Prosecutor Thomas Marino said Thursday. "Mr Crist will stay behind bars where he belongs."

Prosecutors said Crist was so deeply in debt that he concocted the scheme to fake a flat tire, then push his daughter in front of a pickup truck driven by an accomplice, a woman who testified he offered to pay her 5,000 dollar. Jurors sat riveted last week as Diane Crist, now 13, testified through a sign-language interpreter that her father twice threw her onto a rural road to be hit by a pickup truck.

"When I got up I was limping and I said, 'Daddy, help me.' But he came over, picked me up and threw me back down on the road!"

Diane's right ankle was broken, her face, knee and thigh were scraped, and her side was bruised.

Crist, 38, who was also convicted of solicitation of criminal homicide and five other charges, faces up to 30 years in prison when sentenced in January.

Search for mystery plane that never crashed

ANNECY, France: A thunderstorm and a loud transport plane convinced witnesses a plane had crashed in the French Alps Thursday, setting off a daylong search for a "mystery plane" that never existed, police said, reports AP.

More than 150 police, firefighters and rescuers combed the mountainous area between Annecy and the nearby town of Thones after residents reported hearing a blast and seeing a flaming aircraft fall from the sky.

Rescue officials set up a crisis centre in Annecy and used a helicopter to fly over the area where witnesses said they saw it go down.

But the noises were apparently caused by a mountain thunderstorm and the normal roar of an Antonov-12 transport plane flying at low altitude and bound from Germany to Spain, where it later landed safely, authorities said on customary anonymity.

Police earlier had said they were unable to determine the "mystery plane's" origin using registered flight plans, while Swiss air traffic had said its radar failed to pick up a "spot" in the mountainous region. Traffic controllers in the region said they had received no distress call from the plane.

Zairian rebels separating out young Rwandan Hutu men

GOMA, Nov 22: Zairian rebels are separating out young Rwandan Hutu men from crowds of returning refugees, other refugees have said as they arrive in Goma by the busload, reports AP.

Only women, children and old people climbed off the rickety buses and trucks Thursday in Goma after a six-mile (ten-kilometer) ride from the town of Sake and the sprawling Mugunga refugee camp.

Nothing was immediately ascertained about the men's fate.

The rebels, who control a swath of eastern Zaire, refused to let journalists and aid workers out of Goma to look into what happened to the men.

Most of the Rwandan refugees were frightened and exhausted after spending more

than three weeks walking through the hilly forests west of Goma following Zairian rebel attacks on the UN camps.

Refugees also reported intense fighting between the Zairian rebels and the Rwandan Hutu militias, who were driven out of Mugunga by the rebels last week. That fighting allowed 500,000 Rwandan Hutus to escape from the control of the Hutu militias and return home.

Local residents in Goma reported seeing troops from the Tutsi-led Rwandan Patriotic Army in the area around Sake — 14 miles (23 kilometers) from the border with Rwanda — and claimed they were leading the battle against the Hutu militias and Zairian troops.

The rebels' restrictions on journalists also made it impos-

sible to confirm the accounts of fighting. It was the first time since the refugee exodus began last week that foreign aid workers and journalists were confined to Goma.

Some refugees said the rebels were separating out young men they suspect of being part of the Rwandan Hutu militias from groups of several hundred refugees. UN workers, who declined to be identified, said they also have received reports that young men are being detained by the rebels.

Refugees reported that the Rwandan Hutu militiamen who have joined forces with Zairian government troops are battling with the rebels south and west of Goma. That battle zone stretches from the town of Minova on the shore of Lake Kivu up to Matchanga, 15 miles (24

Botha denies committing offences during 11-yr rule

CAPE TOWN, Nov 22: Former President FW Botha denies committing any offence during South Africa's apartheid era that would prompt him to apologize or seek amnesty, reports AP.

His comments Thursday were the first public response to allegations that during his 11 years as head of state he ordered attacks on government opponents that killed people and damaged property.

Botha's denial came during talks with retired Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu, the Nobel Peace Prize laureate who heads the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Botha agreed to continue meeting informally with the commission, which was appointed to uncover apartheid-era crimes. He also said he would encourage his former colleagues in government to do the same.

Tutu told journalists later that he regarded the meeting as a "breakthrough."

For the most part, Tutu's commission has been unable to get top apartheid-era officials to testify voluntarily about killings, torture and other abuses against government opponents.

Botha only agreed to meet informally with Tutu after testimony in criminal trials and commission hearings implicated him in attacks on anti-apartheid activists in the 1980s.



Actor Sylvester Stallone poses for photographers in front of two replicas of new postage stamps featuring Stallone in the Rocky movies on Thursday in New York. Five postage stamps from Gambia, Ghana, Grenada, Uganda and St Vincent were unveiled to mark the 20th anniversary of the premiere of the original Rocky film. — AFP/UNB photo