

### Gandhi sent 'little thing' to Queen on her wedding

NEW DELHI, Oct 13: India's independence hero Mahatma Gandhi had sent a "little thing" to Queen Elizabeth II on her wedding — a tablecloth made of cloth woven by him, the United News of India (UNI) said today, reports AFP.

The British monarch, who will visit India for the third time today, was touched by the gift and said she would preserve it as a "precious souvenir," the news agency quoted a book by Gandhi as saying.

UNI said Lord Mountbatten, the last British Governor-General of India, had asked Gandhi, to "write a few words of blessings" on the occasion of the Queen's marriage to Prince Philip on November 19, 1947 — the year of Indian independence.

Gandhi responded by spinning cloth — a form of protest he had launched to denounce the sale of Manchester cloth in India — and got an admirer to make a tablecloth out of it.

He sent the gift on November 9, 1947. Lord Mountbatten with a letter saying: "This little thing is made of double yarn of my spinning."

# Controversy marks Queen's India visit



NEW DELHI, Oct 13: Ceremonial cannons boomed in salute to welcome Britain's Queen Elizabeth II Monday on a visit marked by diplomatic controversies even before it began, reports AP.

Wearing a deep pink floral dress, pearls and white heels, the queen was led by a slow marching military escort to a guard of honor at the red sandstone presidential palace that was built during the 200 years of Britain's rule over India that ended 50 years ago.

At the far end of the sandy

courtyard where the ceremonies were held, a British spokeswoman read a statement by Foreign Secretary Robin Cook replying to an angry denunciation of Britain by India's prime minister for what he saw as unwarranted meddling in India's dispute with Pakistan over Kashmir.

"A third rate power has presumed to say that they have a historical responsibility to solve the Kashmir issue," Under Kumar Gujral was quoted in Indian newspapers as saying in a private meeting Saturday with Egyptian intellectuals on a visit to Cairo.

Gujral allegedly said Britain was responsible for the Kashmir dispute in the first place, as a fallout of the partition of India when it ended its colonial rule in 1947.

The Indian Foreign Office issued a cautiously worded denial, saying the quotes attributed to Gujral "are completely without foundation."

Gujral's alleged outburst followed reports that Cook, while in Pakistan, had renewed London's offer to mediate the

Kashmir dispute if both India and Pakistan asked it to.

India rejects any outside interference in Kashmir, while Pakistan wants the dispute resolved through the United Nations.

Since 1989, a secessionist war in Kashmir against Indian forces has left more than 16,000 dead. India accuses Pakistan of supporting the insurrection by arming and training the rebels and facilitating their infiltration across the border, Pakistan says its support of the Kashmiri uprising is limited to diplomacy.

At the ceremony, cavalrymen on horseback, another British inheritance, lined up smartly in two rows as the queen was welcomed by the national anthems of the two nations.

There were smiles, as the queen, her husband the Duke of Edinburgh, India's President KR Narayanan and Gujral posed for photographers at the beginning of her weeklong tour.

On Tuesday she visits the northern city of Amritsar, where another controversy awaits her. Some Sikhs, an in-

fluential minority in India, want an apology for a 1919 massacre of more than 300 unarmed civilians by British soldiers, in an incident that gave popular momentum to the Indian independence movement.

On Sunday, police used water cannons to break up a demonstration in New Delhi of Sikhs demanding an apology, the latest in a series of protests. Britain has indicated the queen will not express verbal regret, but that the laying of a wreath at the memorial site should be seen as a gesture of reconciliation.

Gujral had suggested in an interview with British journalists that she should not visit Amritsar to avoid controversy.

Gen. Reginald Dyer ordered soldiers to fire on the civilians who were listening to Indian leaders campaigning for independence in the courtyard named Jallianwala Bagh, which had only one gate. Dyer said he wanted to prevent an uprising and he was exonerated by British authorities.

Mainstream Sikh organisations, mindful of the 1 million

Sikhs living in Britain, welcomed the Queen. Priests in Amritsar's Golden Temple planned an elaborate and enthusiastic welcome. An organisation of Sikh priests put advertisements in dailies praising her visit as a "grand gesture."

This was the Queen's third visit to India, but never before had her trips generated such controversy. She was here in 1961 and 1983.

Her first visit came when "India was still the former colony living out the nostalgia of the Raj days," said an editorial in Monday's Times of India. "Today's India carries a little or no baggage from its colonial past," the daily said.

"Britain should prove to be a considerate guest, appreciative of the hospitality being laid out for the occasion without advising the host on how its household should be run," the daily said.

**Scuffles break out as Queen visits nat'l muse um**

AFP adds: Minor scuffles broke out in New Delhi today as

Queen Elizabeth visited India's National Museum at the start of the British monarch's six-day state visit to India.

About 20 men tried to rush the royal motorcade but were pushed back by police before being detained.

The protesters, claiming to belong to a group called the Young India Society, said they were protesting over the Queen's visit and over a massacre of civilians by British colonial troops in 1919 at Jallianwala Bagh in Amritsar.

One of the group, Bhupinder Kumar, said: "This Queen should go back. We don't want her here after Jallianwala Bagh and 200 years of crime. We are not bootlickers like other Indians."

Narendra Singh, a student, added: "Why is the government bringing her? She wants to colonise India for a second time."

Around 200 police were deployed around the museum, which is displaying a collection of world treasures loaned from Britain.

### Singer John Denver killed in jet crash

PACIFIC GROVE, California, Oct 13: Famed folk singer John Denver was killed in a single-engine plane crash off the Northern California coast, a family member said "early Monday. He was 53, reports AP."

"I heard from my sister that yes, he was on the plane. And he has perished," said Terri Martell, whose sister Annie, was Denver's first wife.

Martell spoke by phone with The Associated Press early Monday from her home in Minnesota. Martell, her voice broken, said she did not wish to discuss the death at length.

"I should not be talking to reporters," she said.

The Monterey County coroner had not yet confirmed Denver's death early Monday.

The body was recovered by a lifeguard in the Monterey Bay. Denver was a licensed pilot.

The plane, made of fiberglass with a single engine and two seats, was considered an "experimental" aircraft, and was possibly home-built, said Pacific Grove police Lt. Carl Miller. It took off from Monterey Airport shortly after 5 pm (0000 GMT) Sunday.

### 3 MCC activists shot dead in Patna ULFA militants attack police convoy, kill 4

GUWAHATI, Oct 13: Four Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) jawans were killed and at least 19 others injured, some of them seriously, when ULFA militants ambushed them under Lakhimpur Police Station in lower Assam's Goalpara district last night, reports PTI.

Official reports reaching here today said a convoy of the ten CRPF battalion was travelling in three vehicles when over 20 ULFA militants armed with sophisticated weapons fired indiscriminately killing the four jawans on the spot and injuring 19 others.

There was exchange of fire for about two hours which started at 2200 hours last night after which the militants escaped under cover of darkness, reports said.

Those killed included constable Jogendra Nath Rai, Rajendra Singh, Naik DS Soren and driver Kalam.

Some of the seriously injured

were being rushed to the Guwahati Medical College Hospital here while others were admitted in the local hospitals.

Police and CRPF contingents were rushed to the spot and extensive combing operation has been launched to nab the culprits. The operation was continuing till this morning.

Meanwhile, three supporters of the banned Maoist Communist Centre (MCC) were shot dead by armed members of the CPI-ML (Party Unity) at Rehila village under Bhagwanpur police station on Saturday night, police sources said today.

Heavily-armed CPI-ML (Party Unity) activists attacked the village near Masaurhi and gunned the three down.

The victims were identified as Laldeo Yadav, 40, Naresh Yadav and Surendra Yadav, 30, the sources said.

A manhunt was launched to nab the killers.



President Bill Clinton greets former Miss Universe of 1981 Irene Saiz, right, at La Carlotta Air Base in Caracas Sunday, as he and First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton, left, arrive for the start of a week-long trip of South America. Saiz, is the leading presidential candidate, running for the COPEI Party.

### Tamils stay at home to protest police checks in N Lanka

COLOMBO, Oct 13: Thousands of people in a frontier town in northern Sri Lanka stayed at home today to protest against police checks hindering Tamil travellers. Residents in the region said, reports Reuters.

Shops, schools and offices were closed and the streets were deserted in government-held Vavuniya town as residents responded to a call to stay at home by a former Tamil rebel group, the People's Liberation Organisation (PLO), of Tamils (PLO), they said.

Vavuniya is like a ghost town, there are no vehicles and all shops, offices and schools are closed. The only people on the streets are policemen and soldiers," said a resident contacted by telephone.

Vavuniya, 220 km (135 miles) northeast of the capital Colombo, has for many years been the frontier town in the 14-year-old Tamil ethnic war.

Thousands of people have to pass through Vavuniya to travel to and from regions still held by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil

Elam (LTTE) rebels in the north.

The protesters wanted the government to speed up the release of more than 10,000

**Taliban concede loss of strategic town in north**

KABUL, Oct 13: After a ferocious battle with opposition soldiers, the Taliban religious army withdrew its forces from the northern town of Tashkargan, the Taliban's information minister said Monday, reports AP.

"I confirm the fall of Tashkargan," Amir Khan Muttaqi said in a brief statement in the Afghan capital Kabul.

Taliban troops withdrew from the city, located 220 kilometres (130 miles) northwest of Kabul, on Sunday after several days of fierce battles with a northern opposition coalition that controls the northern 20 per cent of Afghanistan.

Tamil travellers at 10 transit camps in Vavuniya who are awaiting police clearance before continuing their journey, mostly out of rebel-held areas, residents said.

They also want the police to relax procedures for issuing passes to travellers and residents in Vavuniya — a measure adopted by the authorities to prevent rebel infiltration and to start investigating the cases of hundreds of Tamils who have gone missing in northern Sri Lanka.

Defence Ministry officials said on Monday that four soldiers and ten guerrillas had been killed when LTTE rebels attacked government defence lines in northern Sri Lanka on Sunday.

Troops had recovered two rebel bodies, but guerrilla net radio transmissions had indicated higher casualties, they said.

Ten soldiers were also wounded in the fighting, about 230 km (143 miles) north of the capital Colombo.

## BRIEFLY

**Road mishap claims 6 in India:** Six persons, including five members of a family, were killed and six others injured in a truck-tempo collision at Kumbhara in Bhandara district of Maharashtra on Sunday, police said, PTI reports from Nagpur.

The dead included two women and two children. The mishap occurred near Duggur police station, 15 km away from Taluka town of Sakoli in the district when a truck coming from the opposite direction dashed against the tempo, carrying passengers.

**Police raid 200 offices in Japan:** Japanese police raided more than 200 offices of gangsters yesterday following shootouts suspected of being in retaliation for the killing of the number-two man in the nation's largest organised crime syndicate, police said, AFP reports from Tokyo.

The Osaka prefectural police, mobilising 1,300 officers, raided at least 204 offices in western Japan, including the headquarters of Yamaguchi-Gumi, Japan's largest underground syndicate based in Kobe.

**4 killed in US chopper crash:** A helicopter crashed in a remote area, killing four people, including a member of the state board of education and a coal company executive, AP says from Sago.

The Bell 206 Jet Ranger went down at 11:50 AM Sunday, the Federal Aviation Administration said. Killed in the crash were Kathleen and John Falts of Morgantown, said Rod Blackstone, spokesman for Gov. Cecil Underwood. Mrs. Falts, 48, was a member of the state Board of Education.

**22 Vietnamese arrested in HK:** Hong Kong police arrested 22 Vietnamese immigrants after a two-day operation on the territory's Lantau Island, the government said yesterday, Reuters reports from Hong Kong.

The Vietnamese, all men, told police they sailed to Hong Kong in search of jobs, a government statement said. Five of the Vietnamese were detained for questioning and the rest have been sent to a Holding centre to await repatriation. The operation which began on Saturday.

**Road mishap kills 12 in Colombia:** At least 12 of the 80 people aboard a makeshift bus died Sunday in the northeast province of Antioquia when the driver lost control and the vehicle plunged into a river, police said, AFP reports from Bogota.

The bus, whose passengers were mostly farmers, was travelling between two towns in a remote part of the province.

### Militants kill 23 more civilians in Algeria

PARIS, Oct 13: Algerian newspaper Liberte said today that Muslim rebels killed 23 civilians, including at least seven women, one baby and two girls, by cutting their throats in two attacks this weekend, reports Reuters.

Liberte also reported the Algerian army, on a continuing three-week-long offensive against Muslim guerrillas near Algiers, said troops had shot dead at least 35 rebels.

AP adds: Attackers tortured, slit the throats and then hacked the corpses with axes of a family of 11 in a village south of Algiers, hospital sources said Sunday.

The attackers also mutilated the body of the father of the family, tearing out his eyes and slitting his throat, the sources said speaking on condition of anonymity out of fear of reprisals.

### Clinton admn on wrong side of humanity, says Jody Williams

WASHINGTON, Oct 13: Jody Williams didn't really expect the phone to ring with President Bill Clinton's congratulations after she and the organisation she heads won this year's Nobel Peace Prize. She was right: He didn't call, reports AP.

"I think it's pretty clear," Williams said Sunday on ABC television.

"The message we've been sending this administration for the past few years is that they are on the wrong side of humanity," Williams said. "He knows what our message is. I would say the same thing to him on the telephone as I've said to him on TV."

### India's Maharajas to meet to review their status

NEW DELHI, Oct 13: India's Maharajas, who once ruled over 100 million people across 565 princely states, are to meet to review their status and role in independent India, officials said today, reports AFP.

Organisers said the princes, whose last privileges ended in the early 1970s, and around a quarter of a million of their up-caste followers would take part in the conference on Sunday.

Digvijay Singh, a former federal minister and the chief of the body representing the Maharajas, said the one-day meeting would "highlight the principles of the upper castes in today's world" and discuss ways of defending their heritage.

"It will also give directions to the community to change with the times," Singh said.

The kingdoms of the Maharajas, tolerated under the British Raj, were incorporated into India after the country's independence in 1947.

### Diana had no chance of surviving Paris car crash

WASHINGTON, Oct 13: Princess Diana's injuries from the Paris car crash that killed her were so massive that she had "no chance" of surviving the accident, Newsweek magazine reports, says AFP.

Quoting the French doctor who was first on the crash scene, Newsweek says in its issue to be published today that Diana could not have survived even if nearly two hours had not elapsed before she arrived at a hospital.

"Her heart had been ripped out of its place in her chest," Dr Frederic Maillez is quoted as saying. "No one had ever survived this kind of lesion before. There was no chance for her."

Maillez, one of the last people to see Diana before she slipped into unconsciousness, refused to tell Newsweek what she said. The photographers who had been chasing her have said Diana told rescue workers: "Leave me alone" and "my God."

"I must respect the privacy of the patient," said Maillez, an emergency doctor working for SOS medicines, a private firm.

But Maillez, who arrived on the scene three minutes after the August 31 crash, suggested Diana did not leave any final message or requests, as previously claimed by the family of the princess companion, Dodi al-Fayed, also killed in the crash.

### ROK president's son jailed for bribery

SEOUL, Oct 13: The second son of South Korea President Kim Young-sam was sentenced by Seoul District Court today to three years in prison and fined 1.44 billion won (1.57 million dollars) for bribery and tax evasion, reports Reuters.

Prosecutors had requested a seven-year prison sentence and total penalties of 4.77 billion won for presidential son Kim Hyun-chul.

Kim Ki-sup, a close associate of Kim Hyun-chul and a former top intelligence official, was sentenced to one and a half year in prison, but was not fined for his role in managing money for the 38-year-old Kim

and taking bribes.

Prosecutors had sought a three-year prison sentence and penalties of 150 million won for Kim Ki-sup.

Chief Judge Sohn Ji-yeol said the panel of judges believed Kim Hyun-chul had failed in his duties as the son of an incumbent president and that he had intentionally or unintentionally violated tax laws.

"The judges are well aware of many people's interest in this case, but the interest of the political community and the general public cannot enter the courtroom," Sohn said.

### Tel Aviv frees 9 more Arabs

ISRAELI military is to demolish the family homes of four Palestinians who carried out suicide bombings in Jerusalem which left 21 Israelis dead, an army spokesman said today, reports AFP.

The families have been informed of the army decision to destroy or condemn the houses in the village of Asira Shamaliya, the spokesman said.

Israel has identified four of the five Palestinians who carried out the July 30 and September 4 attacks in Jerusalem as being from Asira Shamaliya, near the city of Nablus on the West Bank.

A demolition order is normally carried out within 48 hours.

The punishment comes five days after the army lifted a 17-day siege on the West Bank village of 8,500 people.

Israel sealed off Asira Shamaliya after it used genetic tests with family members to identify four of its residents as the Hamas suicide bombers who blew themselves up in the

attacks in Jerusalem.

AP adds: Israel released nine more Arab prisoners Monday as part of a deal cut with Jordan after a botched assassination attempt on a Hamas leader in Amman.

The prisoners, most of whom are Jordanian citizens, were sent by helicopter to Jordan where they were expected to be placed in a Jordanian prison, said Prison Authority spokeswoman Orit Messer-Harel.

Moshe Fogel, spokesman for Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government, said Israel will free 50 to 60 prisoners in all as part of the agreement worked out last week.

"This is part of the agreement that was reached at that time to end the incident," said Fogel.

Last week, Netanyahu freed Ahmed Yassin, founder of the militant Muslim group Hamas, and 20 other Arab prisoners, most of whom had Jordanian passports.

In exchange, Jordan freed two Israeli Mossad agents involved in the September 25 assassination attempt.

### Russian arms exports boom after fall of Soviet Union

MOSCOW, Oct 13: Most speculators at Moscow's International Air Show rapidly watched Sukhoi and MIG jet fighters streak across the sky, but Russian arms makers trailed their sights on the ground, reports AP.

A MIG salesman homed in on a group of lavishly uniformed military officers from African, Arab and Asian nations. The jet carries a big bomb for a small price, he told them. As it comes packed with standard options that include anti-tank and air-to-air missiles.

Such sales pitches are increasingly persuasive. After flitting to pieces along with the Berlin Wall, Russia's arms industry has rebuilt itself into one of the world's top exporters of high-tech weaponry.

Since hitting rock bottom in 1992, Russian arms sales have doubled or tripled, depending on who is doing the counting.

And unlike Communist times, when Soviet Block satellites had little choice about whose arms to buy, the Russians are increasingly competitive on the open market. Sukhoi and MIG jets, for instance, perform on a par with their American-made rivals but can sell at a quarter of the price.

To be sure, the Russians are a long way from regaining their position as the world's largest arms dealer. Their sales amount to only about a third of the current leader, the United States, and they have to battle a reputation for poor service and shoddy workmanship.

But what irks Western analysts is that in several regions,

like Asia and the Middle East, Russia has sold weapons to countries on both sides of potential conflicts. And they are wooing new customers in volatile parts of Latin America and Southeast Asia.

Russian officials insist they keep a tight lid on nuclear technology and materials that could be used to make atomic bombs. And they maintain that they observe all UN arms embargoes and other international agreements.

All the same, the Russians have entered some markets where others have begged off. A case in point is Indonesia's planned purchase of 12 Sukhoi warplanes.

Originally Indonesia wanted to buy US F-16s. But they cancelled the deal in anger after American lawmakers complained about human rights abuses in East Timor, a former Portuguese colony annexed by Indonesia in 1976.

Worries about human rights, don't register in Russia, where money woes vex politicians and pensioners alike.

"We will have to move beyond bread and butter issues before we can have some compassion for the East Timorese," says Pavel Felgenhauer, a military analyst for the respected newspaper Segodnya.

In some cases, Russia's arms sales even seem to violate their own national security. For instance, their top customer is China, a past and potential rival with whom they share a long border.

### Italy's ruling coalition may form new govt

ROME, Oct 13: Italy's caretaker ruling coalition said after talks late on Sunday it might be able to salvage its parliamentary majority and form a new centre-left government with Romano Prodi as Prime Minister, reports Reuters.

"The meeting went well," Luigi Manconi, spokesman for the Green Party which is part of the coalition, told reporters.

"It's still possible to work to rebuild the majority. The one thing which is certain is that the will exists to rebuild a majority led by this premier (Prodi)," said Manconi.

"It's up to Communist Refoundation, which caused the government collapse, to give signals and guarantees and to take steps forward," he added.

His comments were greeted enthusiastically by the communists, who forced Prodi to resign as Prime Minister last Thursday by refusing to vote his 1998 draft budget through the lower house chamber of deputies.

"Good news at last," said Refoundation official Nerio Nesi. "Now dialogue can begin again. I'm convinced that if we get round a table an agreement

can be reached. What's certain is that no one wants to humiliate anyone else."

Refoundation's employment spokesman Franco Giordano sounded a similarly positive note.

"Now we can open a real dialogue without prejudice," he said. "There must be dialogue on the budget but also on issues outside that, starting with the 35-hour week."

Prodi declined to comment as he left the prime minister's offices where the Ulivo (Olive tree) coalition meeting took place. "I've nothing to say, leave me in peace," he told reporters.

"I'm just hungry," he added as he walked towards a restaurant with his wife and two colleagues.

Sunday's developments were the clearest indication yet that Ulivo and Refoundation can patch up their differences and avoid the need for either an interim government of technocrats or a snap general election.

Refoundation had given Prodi a parliamentary majority since he was elected 17 months ago.



An indigenous Mexican walks past a policeman during a march marking Columbus Day, also called Dia de la Raza (Day of the Races) in Mexico City's Zocalo Square, Sunday.