



Lee Hoi-Chang, the ruling New Korea Party's presidential candidate, shakes hands with Kim Dae-Jung, head of the opposition National Congress for New Politics, at the end of a forum on the 1997 presidential election at the Press Centre in Seoul Friday. The ruling party filed a legal complaint Thursday, asking prosecutors to investigate Kim on corruption charges. — AP/UNB photo

International

New Congo leader calls for govt of national unity

BRAZZAVILLE, Oct 18: Gen Denis Sassou-Nguesso, making his first public appearance since declaring victory in the Republic of Congo's civil war, has called for a government of national unity while his soldiers looted this war-ravaged capital, reports AP.

Sassou-Nguesso was greeted with a hero's welcome Friday in his hometown of Oyo, 250 miles (400-km) to the northeast of Brazzaville, where he sipped celebratory champagne and vowed to bring peace after four months of civil war.

"We are going to offer Congolese people national reconciliation," the former military dictator said at a press conference. "Congolese people must have peace gain in their country."

He said he would begin meeting with political groups "on forming a broad national unity government."

Though he kept details of his plans to a minimum, he also pledged to work with the international community and the United Nations, suggesting Gabonese President Omar Bongo — his son-in-law — as a mediator.

He also vowed to make ending the fighting between Republic of Congo's warring militias a top priority.

The Republic of Congo borders the far larger Congo, formerly Zaire, and Brazzaville is located just across a river from the Congo's capital, Kinshasa.

In Brazzaville, things were less than peaceful. While the fighting that has wracked this riverside city has ended, some of Sassou-Nguesso's Cobra militia were plundering whatever they could.

The heavily armed soldiers, many of them gulping beers, loaded trucks with refrigerators and televisions, carried heavy

sacks of food or pushed along wheelbarrows filled with their spoils.

In front of the presidential palace, once the home of President Pascal Lissouba, soldiers were piling goods into trucks.

"This is the home of the people, this is not his house," a soldier said before ordering visitors to leave.

The Cobras, who marched into the capital Wednesday and claimed control of the country, have acknowledged the looting but blamed it on Lissouba, whose whereabouts were unknown, and said they would stop it.

For five years Lissouba didn't invest one cent in the country," Jean-Marie Tassoua, a top Cobra commander, told reporters.

After four months of fighting, the city centre was a wasteland, block after block of destroyed buildings and rubble.

Pakistan urges India to talk on Kashmir issue

ISLAMABAD, Oct 18: Pakistan today urged India to agree to substantive discussions on the thorny Kashmir dispute in order to put the bilateral dialogue back on track, reports AP.

India can show "sincerity of purpose" by accepting that all outstanding issues on the agenda be dealt with specifically and substantively, a foreign ministry spokesman told a press briefing.

New Delhi "is stuck" where it was, the spokesman said, referring to obstacles arising from Indian unwillingness to set up a joint committee to tackle Kashmir, the principal source of tensions between the neighbours.

At the second round of foreign secretary-level talks in Islamabad in June the two sides

had set an eight-point agenda, including peace and security, the Jammu and Kashmir state, as well as confidence-building measures.

It was also agreed between them to set up joint working groups to discuss the identified topics.

Pakistan says India is unwilling to go ahead with the establishment of the agreed mechanism to thrash out the Kashmir dispute, which has sparked two of the three wars between the two countries since their independence in 1947.

The neighbours resumed bilateral dialogue in March holding three sessions between their foreign secretaries in New Delhi and Islamabad. They have so far failed to fix a date for a fourth meeting.

Queen Elizabeth awards MBE to 2 in India

CHENNAI, Oct 18: Queen Elizabeth II today invested a British social worker and an Indian official working in the British High Commission at Chennai with awards of Members of the British Empire (MBE), at a private ceremony here, reports PTI.

The British renowned social and health worker, Sylvia Wright and the official, Rajaram Venugopal, were the proud recipients of the award, under the civil division of the most excellent order of the British Empire, instituted in 1917.

The Queen invested these honours at the official residence of the British Deputy High Commissioner for Southern India, Sidney Palmer, before leaving for London, winding up her week-long visit to the country.



Britain's Queen Elizabeth II watches an Indian woman draw water with the aid of a hand-pump during her visit to a mini colony in Cochin Friday. The mini colony is part of an urban poverty alleviation project funded by British aid. — AP/UNB photo

A senior minister says Gujral govt not under threat

NEW DELHI, Oct 18: The government of Indian Prime Minister Inder Kumar Gujral is not under threat despite quarrels within his multi-party coalition, a senior minister said today, reports AP.

S R Bommai, who holds a cabinet portfolio, said the United Front coalition would last its full five-year term because none of its partners or allies are keen to face fresh general elections.

The government will continue as parties, including the Congress (I), are not prepared for mid-term elections in the country right now," Bommai told members of his Janata Dal Party, the front's largest com-

ponent.

The Congress, which keeps Gujral's coalition afloat with its parliamentary support, in recent days has expressed discomf with the government's policies.

Bommai's assurance to his centrist party came a day after a senior communist minister of the front brought his quarrels with Gujral out in the open and threatened to walk out from the six-month-old government.

Agriculture Minister Chaturaman Mishra withdrew his threat late Friday night after the prime minister denied criticising the veteran communist leader in comments to newspa-

pers.

Mishra, one of two communists in the centre left front, told Gujral that he was willing to step down over press reports that the government was unhappy that his ministry was slow in spending budget.

The agriculture ministry is considered an important department in a country where around three quarters of the 960-million population live in rural areas.

The CPI, which opposes Gujral's decision to adopt free-market policies, today said it would discuss the incident at party leadership meeting next week.

Che Guevara laid to rest in Cuba

SANTA CLARA, Oct 18: As Cuba laid to rest Ernesto "Che" Guevara 30 years after his death, Fidel Castro invoked the memory of the revolutionary hero in a call to aid the movement both men helped create, reports AP.

Speaking Friday to thousands gathered before Guevara's new mausoleum, Castro called Guevara and the comrades who died with him "a detachment of invincible fighters... who have arrived to fight alongside us."

Cannons thundered a 21-gun salute, air raid sirens screamed across the length of Cuba and children sang to honour Guevara and six men who died with him in an ill-fated attempt to spark a peasant uprising in Bolivia in 1967.

Despite the failure of that revolt, Guevara has become a global symbol of rebellion, his face emblazoned on T-shirts and flown on flags by leftists and rebels around the world.

"Why did they think that by killing him, he would cease to exist as a fighter?" Castro said. "Today he is in every place, wherever there is a just cause to defend."

The ceremony capped a week-long celebration of Guevara's memory in this city of about 220,000 people, some 180 miles east of Havana.

Guevara captured the city in December 1958, driving dictator Fulgencio Batista into exile and paving the way for Castro to take power in Cuba.

"Che is waging and winning more battles than ever," Castro proclaimed, standing beneath a giant bronze statue of Che in battle fatigues.

International support for Cuba has rallied around the symbol of "Che," and Cuba is urging its own people to emulate the socialist self-sacrifice Guevara espoused to work harder and more efficiently to revive a moribund economy and ease the pressure of US economic sanctions.

his six comrades arrived in small wooden caskets aboard trailers towed by green Russian jeeps. They rested before the Cuban leader as he spoke.

Soldiers, students and civilian militiamen paraded past the mausoleum-top reviewing stand, where Castro was accompanied by his brother, Vice President Raul Castro, and other top officials.

More than 100,000 people filed past Guevara's remains in a local library on Wednesday and Thursday. The vast lines snaking through the narrow streets were serenaded by songs honouring Guevara.

While much of the crowd was organised by local unions and Communist Party social groups, the affection for Guevara here seemed unforced.

"I like him very much," said 8-year-old Aretia Rodriguez, standing about seven blocks back in the line Thursday night. "He was honest, determined, brave. He fought a lot for our liberty."

Ayodhya demolition case

Hearing adjourned till Nov 1

LUCKNOW, Oct 18: The designated CBI court here Friday adjourned the hearing of the Ayodhya demolition case until November 1 for framing of charges against 49 accused, including BJP leader L K Advani and Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Kalyan Singh, reports PTI.

Lawyers for the accused told the special judge, JP Srivastava, that since their clients had to come from different places, it was not possible to ensure their presence in the court in such a short time.

They opposed the CBI objection to the long adjournment. The judge had ordered framing of charges against the accused after having found their prima facie involvement in the conspiracy to demolish the disputed structure at Ayodhya on December 6, 1992.

He had asked the accused to be personally present in the court during today's hearing.

The accused also included BJP Vice President, Rajmata Vijaya Rajwade, Dr M M Joshi and the Shiv Sena chief Bal Thackeray.

Fourteen accused including Kalyan Singh, Advani and Thackeray, had been granted exemption from their personal appearances. Altogether 34 accused were present before the special judge.

India, Pakistan cut defence spending

NEW DELHI, Oct 18: Contrary to Western claims that India and Pakistan are in an arms race, both nations have cut their defence spending over the last decade, a military analyst said Friday, reports AP.

India cut its military spending, measured as a share of the gross domestic product, by 31 per cent from 1988 to 1996. Over the same period, Pakistan reduced military spending by 24 per cent, said Jasjit Singh, director of the government-sponsored Institute for Defence Studies and Analysis in New Delhi.

Indian military expenditure ranged from 2.5 to 3 per cent of GDP in the last decade, Pakistan's 5 to 7.5 per cent, he said.

Both nations have launched reforms to improve their economies and spend more money on improving health, education and infrastructure during this period, he said. They also have been emphasizing programmes to cut troops, he said releasing his institute's annual study, *The Asian Strategic Review*.

Kofi Annan seeks advice from Nobel laureates

UNITED NATIONS, Oct 18: Seeking to tap the world's top talents, Secretary-General Kofi Annan has asked all living Nobel prize-winners if he might sometimes consult them for "advice and ideas," the UN said on Friday, reports Reuter.

Annan sent letters to laureates who won the prize in their personal capacities. UN spokesman Fred Eckhard said. This excludes the few instances where the prize was awarded to organisations rather than individuals.

This year's Nobel laureates, whose names have been announced only in the past few days, are also being approached, as will future winners.

In his letter, Annan said he hoped the United Nations would be able to "draw upon the great intellectual resources you personally and collectively represent."

"As we approach the turn of the century, it is abundantly clear that the many challenges facing humanity require new and innovative strategies," he wrote.

It was also clear the United Nations could not fulfil the responsibilities set out in its charter alone and needed to "reach out to a wider circle of talents than it has customarily done in its search for global excellence," he said.

China to stop selling anti-ship missiles to Iran

WASHINGTON, Oct 18: China has promised the United States it will stop selling anti-ship cruise missiles to Iran, a senior US official said Friday, reports AP.

The pledge came in a meeting two weeks ago between Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and Chinese Foreign Minister Qian Qichen at a United Nations gathering in New York, the official said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

State Department spokesman James P Rubin said Albright brought the matter up with Qian, as she has in all their encounters leading up to the Oct. 29 summit here between President Bill Clinton and China's President Jiang Zemin.

"Secretary Albright has raised in all her meetings with the Chinese foreign minister our deep concerns about the sale of conventional weapons and cruise missiles to Iran," Rubin said. "I have no comment on his response."

Off the Record



A model poses in a black embroidered see-through dress and matching hat as part of Jacques Fath's 1998 spring-summer ready-to-wear collection designed by Russian-American fashion designer Elena Nazarov and presented in Paris on Friday. — AP/UNB photo

'Virgin in a condom' stolen

SYDNEY: A statue of the Virgin Mary inside a condom was stolen from Sydney's Museum of Contemporary Art, less than a week after a vandal attacked the "Piss Christ" photograph in Melbourne, reports AP.

The 4.2-inch (10.5-cm) tall statue, "Virgin in a Condom," sculpted by British artist Tania Kovats, disappeared Friday during the museum's busy lunch period about lunch time.

Shaped out of resin and inserted in a real condom, the artwork had been part of an exhibition addressing links between Britain and Australia, a museum spokesman said Saturday.

Museum spokeswoman Cas Bennetto said the statue had been attracting many complaints since controversy blew up over Andres Serrano's "Piss Christ" photo, which was withdrawn from display Sunday at the National Gallery of Victoria after a vandal damaged it with a hammer.

"I've received a number of complaints about this work so it's fair to say that some patrons have found it offensive," she said.

But interestingly those complaints have only happened since the incident in Melbourne and this show has been going since the 22nd of August.

Security at the Museum of Contemporary Art had been tightened since the Melbourne attack and Bennetto said it would be examined again in light of Friday's theft.

Woman cuts nails after 24 yrs!

DALLAS: It took a doctor and a manicurist just 20 minutes to end Lauretta Adams' dream of setting a world record, reports AP.

The 43-year-old woman said she had been growing her fingernails for 24 years. Last year, when she was interviewed about her quest to get into the Guinness Book of Records, her nails ranged from 100 to 128 inches (250 to 325 cm) long.

Since then, some had grown as long as 160 inches (400 cm), and the inconvenience had turned to pain, she said. She had them cut off two weeks ago.

"For about the last year, they'd been hurting me," Adams told Dallas-Fort Worth television station KDFW. "Besides, the world record holder is a man from India and he has me beat by 76 inches (190cm). I would never have been able to pass him."

She said she kept her clippings, but hasn't decided what to do with them.

Rwanda genocide trial Former PM indicted

NAIROBI, Oct 18: The International Court conducting genocide trials after Rwanda's civil war has indicted former Prime Minister Jean Kambanda and three other recently arrested suspects, it announced Friday, reports AP.

The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, which sits in the northern Tanzanian town of Arusha, named the others in a statement received in Nairobi as former army general Gratien Akibigili, former army major Aloys Ntabakaze, and the former prefect of the southern town of Butare, Sylvain Nsabimana.

The four, arrested in Kenya in July, will face charges of genocide and crimes against humanity, the statement said.

Kambanda, 42, was prime minister during the 1994 war when Hutu extremists slaughtered between 500,000 and 800,000 men, women and children before being defeated by

Provision allowing illegal immigrants to stay in US expires Oct 23

WASHINGTON, Oct 18: The US Congress must again confront a pressing immigration question next week: whether to keep letting certain illegal immigrants pay US dollar 1,000 fines to stay in the United States while seeking legal status, reports AP.

Last month, Congress extended a provision letting the immigrants remain in the country. That reprieve expires Thursday.

Thousands of immigrants face a difficult decision: remain here illegally or leave to secure green cards abroad. With the application process sometimes taking years, the immigrants face a lengthy period away from family and jobs if they leave the United States.

Critics contend the measure fosters illegal immigration and wrongfully rewards those who broke US laws by entering the country without authorisation or overstaying their visas. They also argue it is unfair to those who apply for visas overseas, waiting sometimes years for permission to enter the country.

"Let's end this... flimflam that offends all those who respect our laws and play by the rules," a leading critic, Rep Dana Rohrabacher, wrote colleagues this week.

But supporters say the provision, first enacted in 1994 and supported by US President Bill Clinton, benefits only those already eligible for legal residence. And they say it doesn't grant flimsy preferential status over those who apply abroad.

The Senate has approved a permanent extension. But that approval is included in an appropriations bill that has yet to be finalised.

Since Congress remains far from completing its appropriations process, another short-term stopgap bill is expected next week.

US defers move for more sanctions against Iraq

UNITED NATIONS, Oct 17: The United States on Friday postponed a move in the UN Security Council formally pressing for the imposition of additional sanctions against Iraq, reports AP.

Western diplomats said that the US and British delegations on Friday decided to hold further informal consultations, after Russia called for a compromise.

"We are ready to compromise," Yuri Fedotov, the number two at the Russian mission to the United Nations told reporters.

But he made it clear that his delegation was opposed to the US plans for "the immediate activation of the sanctions" which would punish Iraqi officials linked to the country's military establishment for denying access to UN arms inspectors.

British Ambassador Sir John Weston, whose country is the main co-sponsor of a US draft resolution, also signalled that he was prepared to hold further

consultations before presenting the text to the 15-member Security Council.

Council diplomats are insisting on the need for a unified approach in dealing with Iraq, which on Thursday threatened to cut off all cooperation with the United Nations if the sanctions were toughened.

Iraq has been under an international sanctions regime since 1990 following the invasion of Kuwait. The oil embargo can only be lifted when UN arms inspectors certify that Iraq has fully dismantled its weapons of mass destruction.

The UN Security Council threatened in June to impose the additional measures if UN Special Commission chairman Richard Butler reported that Baghdad was continuing to deny access to Iraqi sites.

Some council diplomats feared that the Iraqi threat on Thursday would provide the US delegation with ammunition to press for the adoption of the additional sanctions.