

International

New Congo leader calls for govt of national unity



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

BRIEFLY

60,000 hit by malaria in Calcutta:

Nearly 60,000 people have been affected by malaria in the eastern Indian city of Calcutta in the past 18 months, the United News of India reported yesterday. AFP says from New Delhi.

Nineteen of the victims have died of the disease, it added. City health department chief Ratish Das said 57,000 of some 250,000 people tested positive for malaria during a survey of the disease in Calcutta. Das said 7,000 of them were suffering from a malignant strain of the killer disease.

New Polish PM hospitalised: Hours after his appointment as Poland's new prime minister, Jerzy Buzek was hospitalised due to a serious throat infection, officials at Warsaw Hospital told AFP yesterday from Warsaw.

Buzek, 57, was admitted Friday night.

"His condition is good, he has no fever but he should rest for at least Sunday," said Erman.

8 miners killed in Colombia: At least eight miners were killed Friday in a cave-in at a coal mine near the border with Venezuela. An estimated 10 were missing, AP reports from Bogota.

Rescue teams were digging toward a chamber where other miners were believed trapped, said Col Miguel Benedetti, a civil defence official. The missing miners had been working in two tunnels some 400 metres underground, rescue workers told radio reporters on the scene.

Prisoners riot in Peru: More than 1,000 prisoners rioted for a second day on Friday to demand better conditions at an overcrowded jail in a remote part of the Peruvian Andes, police said. Reuter reports from Huanuco.

A police spokesman at the nearby town of Huanuco, Felix Guzman, told Reuters that 200 officials were trying to regain control of the Potracaancha penitentiary. "Up to now, there have been no deaths or injuries," Guzman said.

Spokesmen for the 1,135 prisoners in Potracaancha, which was built for 600, sent out a letter demanding better food, more drinking water and speedier trial processes.

US, Japan reach maritime deal: US and Japanese officials reached agreement in principle on Friday to resolve a dispute over access to Japanese ports that threatened to turn into an all-out trade war. Reuter reports from Washington.

"We think we have a very concrete agreement that sets very clear parameters and which would open up the port services of Japan in a very meaningful way," Under Secretary of State Stuart Eizenstat told reporters following a day of senior level negotiations. As a result of the breakthrough, the US Federal Maritime Commission announced late on Friday it had postponed plans to deny Japanese ships access to US ports and agreed to reassess developments on Monday.

Peacekeepers to leave Haiti Nov 30: UN peacekeepers will leave Haiti on Nov 30. US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright said after meeting with President René Preval at the National Palace on Friday. Reuter reports from Port-au-Prince.

About 1,000 Pakistani and Canadian troops are currently patrolling Haiti's streets.

Foreign troops landed in Haiti in September 1994, when 20,000 US troops restored President Jean-Bertrand Aristide to power, three years after he was ousted by a military coup.

Zhao turns 78: China's fallen Communist Party chief Zhao Ziyang has celebrated his 78th birthday while under virtual house arrest in Beijing, a human rights group said yesterday. Reuter reports from Beijing.

Zhao had thrown a birthday party on Friday and many people from home and abroad had sent him birthday cards, said the Hong Kong-based Information Centre of Human Rights and Democratic Movement in China. Zhao was in good health and spirits, the group said.

Sources say Chinese authorities have barred Zhao from receiving visitors as punishment for his appeal last month to the party leadership to review the 1989 pro-democracy protests.

100 infected with AIDS in Vietnam: At least 100 people have been infected with AIDS in Vietnam after undergoing transfusions using blood from HIV positive donors, an official said yesterday. AFP reports from Hanoi.

About 200 blood donors carrying the human deficiency virus (HIV), which can lead to acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) were detected across the country, said Do Trung Phan, head of the Health Minister's Haematology and Blood Transfusion Institute.

Official figures suggest at least 8,000 people have tested positive for HIV, although the figure could be up to 100 times higher, Phan said.

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 AFP.

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.

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.

BRAZZAVILLE, Oct 18: Gen Denis Sassou-Nguesso, making his first public appearance since declaring victory in 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 again 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 militia 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.

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

The accused also included BJP Vice President Rajmata Vijay Raje Scindia, 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.

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.

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.

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 Analyses 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.

Security at the Museum of Contemporary Art had been tightened since the *"Piss Christ"* photograph in Melbourne, reports AP.

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 fulfill 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."

China also has agreed in principle to halt assisting Iran's nuclear programme although the details of that arrangement are still being worked out in hopes of making a summit announcement.

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 Nazaroff 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 Tanja 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 Bernetto 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.

"We 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 *"Piss Christ"* attack and Bernetto 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 Laurette 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 AFP.

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 Akibiliz, former army major Aloysi Ntabakuzi, 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 the Tutsis.

On Wednesday, the tribunal announced the indictment of Georges Ruggio, who is a Belgian who worked for the Hutu propaganda station Radi-television Milles Collines, and former army lieutenant Samuel Imanishimwe. They were also arrested in Kenya.

On Friday, 27-year-old Arsen Shalom Ntobaholi, who was born in Tel Aviv, Israel, and was a student at the National University of Rwanda, pleaded not guilty to seven counts of genocide and related charges.

WASHINGTON, Oct 18: The US Congress must again confront a pressing immigration question next week: whether to keep letting certain illegal immigrants 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 job if they leave the United States.

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 filers 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.

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