



An unidentified woman, dressed as Miss Liberty, participates in a protest march of hundreds of Church of Scientology followers in Berlin Monday. The Scientologists were protesting against religious discrimination. On Tuesday the German Supreme Administrative Court will decide on whether Scientology is a religion or a business organisation. Banner in background reads "Religious tolerance now!" — AP/UNB photo

Pakistan ratifies CWC: Pakistan yesterday ratified the International Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), the government announced. AFP says from Islamabad.

The convention, which entered into force in April 1977, has development, production, stockpiling and use of chemical weapons. Pakistan's instrument of ratification to the CWC was to be deposited with the Secretary General of the United Nations in New York yesterday, the announcement said. The country had signed the CWC in January 1993.

World's tallest man seriously ill: World's tallest man, Alam Channa, seriously ill due to renal failure, has appealed for help from public for his treatment abroad. PTI reports from Islamabad.

Channa, 44 and standing at 7 ft 8 inches, is currently under treatment at the Shifa International Hospital here for a damaged left kidney. Doctors have advised him treatment in the United States which would cost him nearly one lakh US dollar.

Thai village headman kills 6: A Thai village headman, enraged over being investigated for corruption, killed six local officials and wounded two others when he opened fire with a shotgun in a district office, local papers reported Tuesday. AP reports from Bangkok.

Veera Jitjantuk, 42, a village headman in Chaiyaphum province, 275 kilometers (171 miles) northeast of Bangkok, burst into a room in the district office on Monday at 10 am where 21 officials were meeting and unleashed a barrage with his shotgun. He then walked among the wounded, shooting them at close range before fleeing the scene. The Nation newspaper quoted witnesses as saying. The two wounded officials were hospitalised, but their conditions were not known.

Pavarotti honoured in UK: Luciano Pavarotti received yet another honour Monday but this one wasn't for his singing. AP reports from London.

The superstar tenor was awarded a special achievement trophy at the Gramophone Awards in recognition of his work to raise 5 million pounds (dhs 8 million) for the orphaned children of Bosnia. Legendary cellist Mstislav Rostropovich received the lifetime achievement award for his outstanding contribution to classical music.

Fire claims 5 in Germany: A 32-year-old man and his four children died in a fire at their home in Oberhausen in western Germany, police said, AFP reports from Oberhausen.

The children, two boys and two girls, were aged from one year to 16. The mother, 40, was seriously hurt but survived. The fire apparently started in the living room of the house and then spread upstairs, surprising the family. The house was completely ablaze when firemen arrived. Police do not suspect arson.

2 Israelis arrested in Cairo: Two Israelis were arrested in Cairo while they were filming bridge deemed by the authorities to be of strategic importance, police said yesterday. AFP reports from Cairo.

Soliman Dahduh and Yusef Daud, both of the Muslim druse sect, were picked up on Sunday after they were seen filming the Imbaba bridge in Cairo's northern suburbs with a video camera, said the source. The pair were arrested by police guarding the bridge, and are being questioned by interior ministry security services.

Yemeni president in Jordan: King Hussein, frustrated by the stalled Mideast talks and enraged by a bungled Israeli spy drama, said Monday his outlook had changed three years after signing a peace treaty with Israel. AP reports from Amman.

"It was an encouraging start, full of hope, that our peace treaty will be a step towards a bigger deed a comprehensive peace," Hussein said. "I can't say the climate now is the same as three years ago." Hussein said at a joint news conference with visiting Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh.

French newsmen De Virieu dies: Francois-Henri de Virieu, a popular figure in French television news who was later elected mayor of a Paris suburb, has died, the Marly-le-Roi City Hall said Monday. He was 65, AP reports from Paris.

De Virieu died of complications from pancreatic cancer Sunday night at his home in Marly-le-Roi, where he was elected mayor in 1995 after a 37-year career in print and television journalism. De Virieu, the long-time host of presidents and prime ministers on the weekly television news magazine,

UF set to postpone leadership meet

Political crisis defused as Gujarat CM resigns

NEW DELHI, Oct 28: A political crisis in the western Indian state of Gujarat was defused today after the chief minister agreed to step down, the Press Trust of India reported, says AFP.

Shankarsinh Vaghela resigned after the Congress (I) Party, which kept him in power, said it would withdraw its support and force new elections unless he quit.

Dilip Parikh, a member of Vaghela's own Rashtriya Janata Party (National People's Party), was sworn in today as the head of a new Cabinet, most of whom had served in the previous administration.

Vaghela, who headed a Hindu nationalist government last year, had won Congress support when he broke away and formed a government headed by his new party.

But Congress, which bitterly opposes the Hindu nationalists right-wing agenda, turned against Vaghela after accusing him of not consulting it on major policy decisions.

Gujarat is the second Indian state to be rocked by political unrest this month.

The Hindu nationalist government of the northern state of Uttar Pradesh has been accused of bribing opposition

members to stay in power. The accusations led to a mass brawl in the assembly chamber.

Meanwhile, India's minority ruling coalition was set to postpone a critical leadership meeting following a political crisis in the key state of Uttar Pradesh, officials said on Tuesday.

They said the United Front coalition partners were expected to put off Wednesday's meeting and assemble instead early in November.

Yadav Reddy, a spokesman for Prime Minister Inder Kumar Gujral's Janata Dal (People's Party), said the meeting of the Front's Steering Committee, a think-tank which co-ordinates policy among the fragile coalition's dozen left-wing and centre parties, "was most likely" to be postponed.

He added: "It will be a stormy one as developments in Uttar Pradesh will be discussed."

The coalition Cabinet remains badly split over the handling of the Uttar Pradesh crisis, which arose after a mass brawl in the state assembly earlier this month before a vote of confidence.

The Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP, Indian People's Party) govern-

'India likely to deploy N-sub'

HYDERABAD, Oct 28: India is on the verge of deploying nuclear submarine and join the select band of nations possessing nuclear submarine capability, former Chief of Army Staff Gen (retd) Sundarji said today, reports PTI.

Speaking at a seminar on problems of national security in 21st century here, he said India was on the threshold of deploying state-of-the-art nuclear submarine in a year or two.

USA, France, Russia, China and Britain are the five nations having nuclear submarines. He attributed most of the problems including the Kashmir imbroglio and insurgency in the north east to mismanagement and inept handling of these problems.

"It's our own creation and we ought to be blamed for it," he said adding there was no need for accusing Pakistan.

Pak HC asks govt to state if it wants to retain political cell in ISI

ISLAMABAD, Oct 28: The Pakistan Supreme Court has asked the federal government to state whether it wanted to retain a political cell in Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), reports said today, according to AFP.

The order was issued here on Monday by a three-judge bench hearing a case related to alleged bribing of politicians by the country's prime anti-espionage agency, the Nation and other local dailies reported.

The bench, headed by Chief Justice Sajjad Ali Shah, turned down a request by the Attorney General Moammad Farooq that the case be heard in camera.

Asghar Khan, a former air force chief, has alleged the ISI distributed 140 million rupees (about three million dollars) among selected politicians during Pakistan's 1990 general elections.

His counsel, Wahabul Khairi, pleaded the 1990 electoral process was influenced by the "distribution" of the funds.

40 killed in bus plunge in India

NEW DELHI, Oct 28: At least 40 people were killed when a bus plunged into a river in the northern Indian state of Himachal Pradesh, domestic agencies said today, reports AFP.

The United News of India said the overcrowded bus, carrying more than 50 people, fell into the Beas river near Mandi district, 200 kilometers (124 miles) from the state capital Shimla.

It said 10 people swam to safety and two bodies were recovered from the site of the early morning accident.

Pak lobbies admit setback to campaign on Kashmir at CHOGM

EDINBURGH, Oct 28: Pro-Pakistan lobbies expecting Britain to hand them Kashmir have admitted a setback to their campaign at last week's Commonwealth summit here, reports India Abroad News Service.

Separatist Kashmiri groups backed by Pakistan have for the last two years expected the Labour Party in government to lead the international fight on their behalf. Several Labour Party leaders had announced their intention of doing so.

But the meeting between Indian Prime Minister Inder Kumar Gujral and British Prime Minister Tony Blair, where Britain said it has no intention of mediating on Kashmir, has come as a setback to them.

A further setback came by way of a large demonstration in Edinburgh by other Kashmiri groups opposing Pakistani occupation of Kashmir.

Separatist groups at first dismissed the outcome of the talks between Blair and Gujral as Indian propaganda. "We do not believe that Labour has gone back on its promises to intervene in Kashmir," Zafar Khan, leader of one of the factions of the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF), told India Abroad News Service after that meeting.

But on Sunday Foreign Secretary Robin Cook appeared on BBC TV to reiterate publicly what Blair had told Gujral. Cook made it clear that the British government has no intention of mediating on Kashmir if one of the two parties do not want it. That has come like

a blow to Kashmiri separatists in Britain, the leader of one group admitted.

Some Kashmiri groups responded with clear Pakistani blessings. A Kashmiri separatist group held a large demonstration outside the Edinburgh conference centre. The group, the Tehrik Kashmir, is one of about ten groups in Britain and is undisputedly close to the Pakistani government. Other groups such as the JKLF, which are relatively independent, did not take part in that demonstration.

The Pakistani lobby, which has been seeing an ally over Kashmir slip out of their hands, made strenuous efforts to put up Kashmir on the agenda inside the conference centre and outside.

Interventions by Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and Foreign Minister Gohar Ayub Khan were made at the executive sessions of the conference but ignored. Pakistani efforts outside the conference centre failed to get much attention either.

Some Kashmiri separatist groups backed by Pakistan held large demonstrations in London while the Edinburgh conference was proceeding. These protest demonstrations were held on the 50th anniversary of the abortive attempt by Pakistani raiders to capture Kashmir in October 1947.

Over the past few years such protests have died out. Last year no more than 20 people demonstrated outside India House in London on October 27, the day Indian troops intervened to fight off the raiders. This year several hundred people marched from Hyde Park to Trafalgar Square in protest on Sunday. The following day, on Monday, a group held an hour-long demonstration outside 10 Downing Street. Blair was in Edinburgh at the time.

Conversations with several of the demonstrators in Edinburgh showed that many of them were not Kashmiris at all.

Chinese herbs can help cure liver cirrhosis

BEIJING, Oct 28: A doctor at the Beijing Friendship Hospital has proved that traditional Chinese medicine is helpful in reversing liver fibrosis and cirrhosis at an early stage, reports Xinhua.

Since 1986, Dr Wang Bao'en and his colleagues have used a herbal compound made of 10 types of traditional medicine to treat more than 100 chronic hepatitis and liver fibrosis patients. Results have been positive, according to Beijing-based health daily.

The prescription has also proved effective in another 60 cases of early-stage liver fibrosis and cirrhosis, the newspaper reported.

About 83 per cent of those patients said their symptoms have improved after a six-month course of treatment, it said.

Police scuffle with NLD members

Suu Kyi barred from holding political gathering

YANGON, Oct 28: Myanmar military authorities today set up barricades and blocked opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi from holding a political gathering in a small town outside the capital, an opposition source said, reports Reuters.

The gathering at Mayangon township, about seven miles from the Myanmar capital, would have been the 1991 Nobel Peace laureate's second political meeting outside Yangon since she was released from house arrest more than two years ago.

They had a plan to hold a ceremony at a township NLD office there at 9:00 (0130 GMT) this morning, a source from Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD) told Reuters.

The purpose of the ceremony was to reorganise the township NLD youth wing and Aung San Suu Kyi was supposed to attend it. However, access to the venue was barred by barricades by security personnel. So they didn't go there, he said.

Government officials were not available for comment. An aide of Suu Kyi told Reuters by telephone from her house that she had not yet returned to her home.

Last week Suu Kyi — who has been under close surveillance with her movements limited since last December — was allowed to meet NLD youth members and speak in a township a few miles outside of Yangon. Analysts had said the move could be a possible easing of tension between the military government and the opposition movement.

As Suu Kyi's motorcade approached the Mayangon office of the National League for Democracy about 9 am, about a dozen party members rushed past police barricades toward her white sedan.

A scuffle then broke out between the party members and Myanmar riot police, who had blocked the road leading to the office in northern Yangon to prevent the meeting.

Reporters, other party members and local residents were pushed away from the scene by riot police, and were unable to see the result of the incident.

The incident dashed hopes by supporters of Myanmar's pro-democracy movement led by Suu Kyi that tensions between the democrats and the military government were easing.

Last week, the military government had allowed Philippines Foreign Minister Domingo Siazon to meet with the Nobel laureate. He was the highest-ranking government official from a Southeast Asian country ever to meet her.

Suu Kyi was also permitted to visit an NLD office in Thaketa township, a northern suburb of Yangon, on October 21, where she met about 100 members of the youth wing of her party.

Off the Record

First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton is greeted by students on her arrival at Chicago's O'Hare International Airport Monday. Mrs Clinton is in Chicago for events to celebrate her 50th birthday. — AP/UNB photo

Good news for impotent US men!

BETHESDA, Maryland: Millions of impotent American men are about to get a treatment revolution — new pills that promise to restore sexual function without the discomfort and embarrassment of traditional therapies, reports AP.

The first oral medicine for impotence — a drug that can cause erections within 20 minutes of swallowing the pill — could be sold by April, impotence specialists said Monday.

"Some of these drugs are very potent, very unique," said Dr. Harin Padma-Nathan of the University of Southern California, and director of The Male Clinic in Santa Monica, California. "We could combine them in a cocktail, ... some to work in the brain and some to work locally, for the best effect."

Patients who have tried the experimental pills say they work easily. "My wife said it was like I was Tarzan," said Alfred Pariser of Los Angeles, who was impotent for a year following prostate cancer surgery until he tried Viagra.

Symbolic protest against child labour

1 lakh children to boycott fireworks during Diwali

NEW DELHI, Oct 28: Around 100,000 children will boycott fireworks during the Hindu New Year this week as part of a protest against child labour, activists said here today, reports AFP.

RS Chaurasia, the general secretary of the South Asian Coalition on Child Servitude (SACCS), said schools petition against child labour containing between 50-60,000 names would also be handed to the Indian president on Wednesday following a protest march.

"We have around 50,000 names on the petition and we expect to have another 10,000 by tomorrow," he said.

"We have visited around 150 schools and about 80 to 90 per cent of the children have pledged not to buy fireworks. This represents a real change in attitudes."

"When we started our campaign two years ago, most children and teachers were against

Sino-US meet signals a step forward to build ties in 12 yrs

WASHINGTON, Oct 28: President Bill Clinton will meet with Chinese President Jiang Zemin in the privacy of the White House residence Tuesday night, hoping to narrow their differences a day before their much heralded summit, reports AP.

Administration officials said Monday the leaders would talk informally for about an hour without other officials present. It will be more of a social meeting than an attempt to address disputes about human rights, trade and arms sales, the officials said.

The purpose is to try to build the same kind of ties with Jiang that Clinton has found effective in problem-solving with other major leaders such as Russian

rights abuses by the Chinese government.

In Washington, Jiang will stay at Blair House, the government guest house across from the White House.

Wednesday's meeting will be the first US-China summit in 12 years, signaling the biggest step toward normalising relations since the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre.

Administration officials say the meeting itself — rather than any agreements — is the most significant development.

Even so, Clinton and Jiang are expected to announce that China will limit its arms exports to Iran and end nuclear cooperation with the Middle Eastern country, which the United States accuses of sup-

porting terrorism. That would clear the way for Clinton to approve the first export of advanced nuclear reactor technology to China.

The expected accord drew strong criticism from two key Republican senators, Jesse Helms of North Carolina, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and Richard Shelby of Alabama, chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee.

Even before Jiang reached Washington, demonstrations protesting religious persecution in China began. Carrying white candles, several hundred people held a prayer rally near the White House on Monday.

White House press secretary Mike McCurry said Clinton

'US, China likely to sign accord on N-tech sales'

BEIJING, Oct 28: China's Foreign Ministry today gave strong indications that an agreement to resume US nuclear technology sales to China is on the verge of being signed, reports AFP.

Asked whether there were any new developments in negotiations, spokesman Tang Guoqiang told reporters: "Be patient, wait less than two days, then you will know what kind of agreement can be reached," he said.

While speculation has been running high that Washington's ban on the exports would be lifted during Chinese President Jiang Zemin's visit this week, officials from both countries

have refused to confirm that negotiations on the issue were completed.

China reportedly agreed in talks last week in Beijing to end nuclear cooperation with Iran, which Washington has accused of seeking to develop nuclear weapons.

Tang refused to confirm any change in nuclear cooperation with foreign countries, saying China has never encouraged nuclear proliferation in any form. "China has adopted a cautious and responsible attitude toward nuclear exports," he said.

The reported commitment came on the heels of several other steps taken by Beijing.



From left to right, Republic of Congo President Sassou-Nguesso, Gabonese President Omar Bongo, Angolan President Jose Eduardo dos Santos and Congo President Laurent Kabila pose for a family photo in Luanda during the summit, Monday. The leaders or four central African nations gathered in Angola to assess the recent power shifts in a region that has seen two leaders violently toppled this year. The talks were expected to centre on efforts to return stability to the region. — AP/UNB photo