

BRIEFLY

9 killed in Indian road mishap: Nine persons were killed and three others injured, when their Govindgarh-bound jeep collided with a truck at Reengus in Sikar district Thursday.

Hun Sen in Vietnam: Cambodia strongman Hun Sen and his hand-picked co-premier, Ung Huot, were among dozens of leaders and dignitaries attending the opening session Friday of the Francophonie summit in Vietnam.

9 get death sentences in China: A court in the southern Chinese city of Guangzhou has sentenced nine people to death for selling a powerful amphetamine known as 'ice'.

Flood death toll rises to 1,000 in Somalia: The death toll from flooding in southern Somalia has hit 1,000, a spokeswoman said after a meeting of relief agencies in Nairobi Thursday.

2 Turkish hostages freed in Chechnya: Two Turkish citizens held captive for months in Chechnya have been freed by a special anti-kidnapping unit in the southern Russian republic.

Indian police nab 6 heroin smugglers: Punjab police said Friday they had arrested six men attempting to carry 88 kilograms (194 pounds) of heroin across from Pakistan into the northern Indian state.

Quake rattles Tibet border: A moderate earthquake rattled a remote mountainous area on the borders of Tibet on Friday, but there were no reports of casualties or damage.

Expulsion of US weapons inspectors Clinton to deal with Iraq 'in very determined way'

WASHINGTON, Nov 14: With tensions rising, President Bill Clinton pledged to deal 'in a very determined way' with Iraq's expulsion of American weapons inspectors.

Defying Baghdad's threat to shoot down surveillance flights, the Pentagon said a U-2 spy plane would fly over Iraq this weekend.

From the White House to the United Nations, the Clinton administration talked tough about Iraq but did not appear headed into an immediate military crisis.

US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, meanwhile, proceeded with a 12-day trip that is to take her to Europe, the Persian Gulf, South Asia and Canada.

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On Capitol Hill, House Speaker Newt Gingrich offered strong backing.

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UN arms teams. The Chief UN Arms Inspector, Richard Butler, ordered most of his staff out of Baghdad, thereby halting searches for weapons indefinitely.

Six US inspectors arrive in Amman. AFP says, six US arms inspectors serving with the United Nations arrived in Jordan early Friday after driving from Baghdad in the wake of their expulsion from Iraq.

Britain seeks diplomatic solution. Meanwhile, Britain is seeking a diplomatic solution to the Iraq crisis but a military option is still a possibility.

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Lounge at the Karameh Border Post, 400 kilometres (250 miles) east of Amman.

They made no statement to waiting journalists before boarding three hire cars and heading for Amman, followed by the Jeeps which had brought them from Baghdad.

The Americans had left Baghdad at 2000 GMT Thursday after Baghdad's top authorities, the Revolutionary Command Council and the leadership of the ruling Baath Party, ordered their 'immediate' expulsion.

Defence Secretary George Brown said the move should not be read as a decision to send invincible to the Persian Gulf, but called it a 'commonsense measure'.

On Friday morning, with air force Harrier Jump-Jets ordered to join Invincible in Gibraltar, BBC radio asked the foreign secretary if a strike on Iraq was possible.

'Of course we are taking very seriously the crisis,' Cook told the BBC. 'It's quite right that we've got to make sure that we are capable of responding to any crisis in the region. No option is ruled out.'

Britain ordered the Royal Navy aircraft carrier HMS Invincible back from the Caribbean on Thursday after Iraq demanded all US arms inspectors leave the country immediately and America warned of 'grave consequences'.

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Off the Record

Dodi Fayed was a cocaine user!

Dodi Fayed once was in the habit of spending 15,000 dollars a week on cocaine for himself and friends, according to a magazine profile that his father denounced as despicable.

The article in the December issue of Vanity Fair also portrays Fayed, who died in the Paris car crash that killed Princess Diana, as a pampered spendthrift who lived beyond the 100,000 dollars monthly allowance given him by his father, Mohammed Al Fayed.



The elder Fayed, the millionaire owner of London's Harrods department store, criticised the article as 'a tawdry exploitation of a man who is not here to defend himself.'

The magazine quoted a friend, Nona Summers, as saying Dodi Fayed 'was into cocaine' during the 1980s and another person as saying he had a kilo of cocaine in his New York hotel suite.

Mohammed Al Fayed De-walk on a pontoon in the nounced the drug allegations as French Riviera resort of St cruel and despicable.

The writer of this article manages to produce only two witness to give the impression that he was, the elder Fayed said. 'That a magazine could attempt to defame Dodi on the basis of such spurious testimony is not reputable journalism.'

The release also disputes the magazine's portrayals of Dodi Fayed as a security fanatic and a debtor.

QUEBEC CITY: A prototype for an 'invisible condom' to help fight HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases was unveiled on Thursday by a Canadian university.

Developed over seven years by Laval University's Infectious Diseases Research Centre, the new 'condom' is in fact a non-toxic polymer-based liquid that solidifies into a gel at body temperature.

A woman or male homosexual partner would apply the liquid to genital or anal parts before a sexual encounter.

Laval said tests showed that the gel formed a water-proof film that dramatically reduced transmission of the HIV virus responsible for AIDS and could also block the virus responsible for genital herpes.

Laval Infectious Diseases Research Centre Director Michel Bergeron told a news conference 'we developed our invisible condom to protect women who are victim of men who refuse to wear latex.'

'We call it invisible because it can be used without telling the partner who doesn't want to use a latex condom' Bergeron said.

Researchers find HIV virus hiding in blood cells. WASHINGTON, Nov 14: A drug 'cocktail' that revolutionized the treatment of AIDS is unable to wipe out reservoirs of virus hiding in certain blood cells, researchers find in a discovery that dims hopes for a cure.

The finding means that patients may have to take the AIDS drugs for the rest of their lives — while hoping for new types of treatment to stamp out the final traces of infection by the virus that causes the disease.

Three separate teams of scientists reported finding evidence that the HIV virus lurks in inactive white blood cells in patients who have been taking the drug cocktail for up to three years and seem otherwise virtually free of the virus.

Two papers, by researchers from four different laboratories, will be published Friday in the journal Science.

Despite the disappointment, Dr. Robert F. Siliciano of Johns Hopkins said that studies did find good news.

Combination of drugs that block two enzymes that the HIV virus uses to reproduce have been enormously effective in stopping the infection.

Although we held out hope that the eradication hypothesis might pan out, I don't think that people really thought it would,' said Dr. Joel Gallant of Johns Hopkins University.

This means, he said, that as long as HIV patients continue to carefully and diligently take the three-drug cocktail 'they have an excellent chance of surviving.'

US Congress relaxing immigration provisions

WASHINGTON, Nov 14: A year after passing a tough new immigration law, Congress is relaxing provisions that could have forced hundreds of thousands of illegal immigrants and one-time refugees out of the United States.

Immigrant advocacy groups welcomed the moves, which they attribute largely to a desire on the part of Republican leaders to quell perceptions that the party is anti-immigrant.

But others accused lawmakers of abandoning their earlier resolve to crack down on illegal immigration, bowing instead to a drumbeat of individual hard-luck stories and heavy lobbying from business, religious and immigrant organisations.

The rollbacks that we've seen this year are directed at some of the most significant of those reforms in the 1996 law.

The easing of immigration provisions occurred on two fronts:

A deal approved Thursday night by Congress, which now goes to President Clinton for his signature, would allow illegal immigrants with green-card applications filed as of January 14, 1998, to remain in the United States while the government processes their paperwork in exchange for a 1,000 dollar fine.

Allowing applicants to remain here pending completion of their paperwork spares them from a key sanction in the 1996 immigration law. Under that law, people found to have lived here illegally can be barred from re-entering for up to 10 years.

The NLD issued a statement condemning the military government's action, saying it had acted unlawfully in preventing a legal political party from carrying out its work.

The government responded by calling her stubborn, and saying 'her act was an obvious confrontational and dishonest political stunt.'

Suu Kyi remained in her car with the windows rolled up, snacking on bread, biscuits and milk as the women police officers pulled out chairs around midday after standing for hours in the hot sun.

At about 7 p.m. the government cut off the electricity to the nearby NLD office and the hundred or so supporters dispersed.

The military government blocked Suu Kyi from leaving her home Thursday for the second time in two weeks.

The latest standoff developed Thursday morning when police surrounded a car carrying Suu Kyi and three members of her party as it left her lakeside compound about 8:30 a.m.

Suu Kyi has said she will visit all the Yangon township party offices to reorganise the youth wing of her party.

The military allowed her first foray to meet youth members about a month ago, but then backtracked and blocked her three subsequent attempts.



Jemima Khan, daughter of the late Sir James Goldsmith, arrives for his memorial service at London's St John's Concert Hall, Westminster, Thursday.

Dilip Parikh ministry wins confidence vote. GANDHINAGAR, Nov 14: The newly-formed Dilip Parikh ministry yesterday comfortably won the confidence vote by 98 votes to 76 in the 182-member State Assembly.

With this hurdle crossed despite the BJP hope of toppling it, the RJP ministry may now face the task of accommodating the supporting party, congress, which has 44 members in the house compared to 46 of the ruling party.

Soon after the voting, Parikh, who succeeded Shankar Singh Vaghela following a congress demand for change in leadership, said he was prepared to accommodate congressmen on receipt of a concrete proposal.

Rabin's son receives death threat. JERUSALEM, Nov 14: Yitzhak Rabin's son received a death threat as he attended a memorial ceremony on the second anniversary of his father's assassination, reports AP.

The threat was made Wednesday in a call to Yuval Rabin's mobile phone, said Tal Silverstein, a leader of the Dor Shalom peace group which the younger Rabin founded after the assassination.

The ominous message was recorded on Rabin's voice mail and was played on Israel radio Thursday.

'If you follow in your father's footsteps you will end up as he did.'

6 cops killed in northern Lanka

Tigers bomb Colombo's largest power generating plant, part of fuel depot on fire

COLOMBO, Nov 14: A series of time bombs exploded inside Colombo's largest power generating plant Friday, setting part of the fuel depot on fire, officials said, reports AP.

Suspicion for the attack fell on separatist Tamil Tiger rebels, who also were blamed for an assault one month ago in the central business and tourist district of the capital, killing 18 people and wounding 105.

No one was injured in the pre-dawn explosions at the Kelanitissa power station, about three kilometres (2 miles) north of downtown Colombo.

The Defense ministry said in a statement that the fire was caused by a leaking fuel tank. It did not say what caused the explosions.

As a precautionary measure the area has been sealed off by the security authorities and movement of traffic and people has been suspended temporarily.

The saboteurs bored a hole through the security fence of the high security station to plant at least six devices inside, said an official on condition of anonymity.

Fire fighters took 45 minutes to bring the blaze under control.

Defence Secretary Chandrananda de Silva and high ranking military officials inspected the site and the hole through which the infiltrators entered the power station.

Hundreds of government troops in battle fatigues cordoned off the station and started searching for the infiltrators, but none were found, he added.

Friday is a full moon day, which is a Buddhist holiday in Sri Lanka where 70 per cent of the people are Buddhist.

Last month's attack blamed on the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam also fell on a full moon day.

Tamil Tiger rebels attacked two fuel storage depots near Colombo in October 1995, setting ablaze about 30 oil storage tanks which burnt for days.

The Kelanitissa power station uses fuel to supplement the hydroelectric supply to the Indian ocean island nation of 18 million people.

Meanwhile, rebels attacked a police patrol in eastern Sri Lanka Friday, killing six policemen, an official said.

Five policemen were wounded in the gunfight that lasted for over two hours in the eastern Ampar district, said Maj. Kumara Dewage, a military spokesman.

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Kabila regime creates climate of terror, says UN report. GENEVA, Nov 14: A 'climate of terror' prevails throughout Congo under President Laurent Kabila's military regime, according to a UN human rights report released Thursday, reports AP.

The 50-page report, by UN special investigator Roberto Garretton, is more critical than a brief summary of the report released Wednesday.

It does, however, credit the Kabila government with ending looting and reducing crime after ousting President Mobutu Sese Seko last May and changing the name of the country from Zaire to the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Celestin Lwanga, Congo's justice minister, declined to give a detailed reaction to the report, but called it 'a little flimsy.'

'I don't see how he, a Chilean, has a valid opinion,' the minister said.

Garretton, who has been denied government permission to visit Congo since last March, said he based his report on information from UN officials, humanitarian organisations and other sources.

He said his conclusions are similar to those in a report by the Lutheran Church.

'The number of victims is unimaginable,' Garretton said. 'The situation is very complex, and more than one sector is to blame. Interethnic conflicts have in fact been going on in

troops were massacring refugees in then eastern Zaire.

The new report, delivered Tuesday to the UN General Assembly, says Kabila's government has 'absolute control' over the country.

'The regime has eliminated the civil rights of life, liberty and physical integrity,' it said.

Political murders, police brutality, disappearances, torture, attacks on women's dignity and restrictions on political life and free expression are listed by Garretton as some of the ways in which basic rights are being violated.

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Britain's Prime Minister Tony Blair accompanied by his wife Cherie, dressed in traditional Indian sari, arrive at Grosvenor house in London, Thursday to attend British Indian Golden Jubilee Banquet, celebrating 50 years of India's independence.