

Major powers show 'firm solidarity' at Geneva meet

Iraq agrees to immediate return of all UN arms inspectors

BAGHDAD, Nov 20: Iraq agreed today to the immediate return of all UN arms inspectors, under an accord hammered out earlier with Russia, Baghdad's official INA news agency announced, reports AFP.

The news followed an hastily-arranged overnight meeting in Geneva of the five permanent member states of the UN Security Council on the stand-off with Baghdad over weapons inspections. Iraq and Russia have agreed to adopt an accord for Iraq's acceptance that UNSCOM returns in its full composition and resumes its normal activities as of today, INA said.

Iraq calls emergency parliament meet

AP adds: Iraq called an emergency meeting of its Parliament on Thursday to discuss a Russian proposal to end the crisis with the United Nations by allowing US arms inspectors to return to the country.



Protestors against the United States' involvement in Iraq march in downtown San Francisco Wednesday. Approximately 75 demonstrators gathered along Market Street to denounce possible US military action in Iraq and show their support for the lifting of the sanctions against Iraq. — AP/UNB photo

Allowing the American inspectors back would end a three-week stalemate that saw a US military buildup in the Gulf and Iraqi threats to shoot down an American U-2 spy plane making flight over Iraq as part of the UN weapons inspection programme.

In late October, Iraq demanded the Americans leave the UN teams of experts monitoring to ensure that Iraq destroys all its weapons of mass destruction under UN resolutions.

Alleged support for Rajiv murder

Congress (I) presses UF govt to oust DMK

NEW DELHI, Nov 20: The Congress Party insisted Thursday that Prime Minister I K Gujral's shaky coalition oust a member accused of supporting former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's suspected assassins, reports AP.

Congress lawmakers debated their position on the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam, or Dravida Progressive Front, for an hour Thursday morning, and emerged determined, said Mrutyunjaya Nayak, secretary of the party's legislative committee.

demands to oust the DMK. But in hectic private talks over the last few days, Front leaders were divided. Many don't want another election just two years after the last one.

The Congress lost power two years ago and lacks a charismatic national leader like Rajiv. His mother, Indira Gandhi, and grandfather, Jawaharlal Nehru, also were prime ministers. Many Congress lawmakers feel the party could win more votes if elections are held

now, when memories of the Gandhi-Nehru rule have been revived by discussion of the assassination report.

The Congress first shook the government six months ago by successfully getting the Front to replace its prime minister H D Deve Gowda with Gujral. Newspapers speculated that it now wants to split the Front by demanding expulsion of the DMK.

Sonia didn't turn up at AICC HQs for security reasons

NEW DELHI, Nov 20: Sonia Gandhi did not turn up apparently for security reasons at the AICC headquarters Wednesday. For a function which she was scheduled to address on the occasion of Indira Gandhi's 80th birth anniversary, reports PTI.

Off the Record

2nd set of septuplets born alive. DES MOINES, Iowa, Nov 20: A US seamstress gave birth Wednesday to four boys and three girls, only the second set of septuplets ever known to be born alive. It took a medical team of more than 40 specialists just six minutes to deliver the babies by Caesarean section, reports AP.

Govt to withdraw 500 troops from N Ireland

LONDON, Nov 20: Five hundred paratroopers will be pulled out of Northern Ireland within the coming days, the government said Wednesday, the first scale-down of troops in the British-ruled province since the IRA's renewed ceasefire in July, reports AP.

'Candle in the wind' by sound-alikes?

CANBERRA, Nov 20: A shipment of fake video compact discs of Elton John's tribute song 'Candle in the Wind', sung at the funeral of Princess Diana, has been seized by Australian customs, reports Reuters.

AIDS to leave 40m children without parents by 2010

WASHINGTON, Nov 20: In a sobering account of the worldwide impact of AIDS, the US Agency for International Development said Wednesday that 40 million children in developing countries will be without one or both parents by 2010, reports AP.

Computer acts more like human

NEW YORK: IBM researcher Mark Lucente waves his hands in the air before the computer. Two colorful spirals on the screen float in the same direction, reports AP.

BRIEFLY



Miss World finalists from Malaysia, Ariana Lai Poh, left, and Nepal Jharana Rashid, right, pose on the beach on location in the Seychelles, Wednesday, ahead of this week's Miss World pageant. — AP/UNB photo

Gujral proposes universal treaty of extradition

NEW DELHI, Nov 20: Prime Minister I K Gujral Wednesday proposed a universal extradition treaty to prevent criminals from finding a safe haven in other countries, reports PTI.

An increasingly integrated world provides to the perpetrators of crimes, new forms of escape and refuge and perhaps one important step would be a universal extradition treaty, the prime minister said in his inaugural speech at the Indira Gandhi International Conference here.

Gujral said the universal extradition treaty would enable the international community to pursue criminals across national frontiers and prevent them from escaping to other countries after committing the crime.

4th Indo-Russian IGC session postponed

MOSCOW, Nov 20: The fourth session of the Indo-Russian Inter-Governmental Commission (IGC) on trade, economic, scientific, technological and cultural cooperation scheduled for later this month has been postponed as the fate of its Russian co-chairman, First Vice Premier Anatoly Chubais hangs in the balance, sources here told PTI.

Sudanese burn US flag, Clinton's effigy

KHARTOUM, Nov 20: In an anti-US rally here Wednesday, tens of thousands of Sudanese demonstrators burned the US flag and an effigy of President Bill Clinton, reports AFP.

The protest, outside the US embassy in the Sudanese capital, targeted US economic and trade sanctions imposed on Sudan and followed a similar flag-burning demonstration last week by a smaller crowd of around 1,500.

Earlier Wednesday, the Bank of Sudan banned transactions in the US dollar. Sudanese President Omar Al-Beshir addressed the demonstrators Wednesday, accusing the United States of "looting and stealing."

Netanyahu meets party men to shore up support

JERUSALEM, Nov 20: Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu held intensive meetings with members of his own party Wednesday to shore up support for his leadership amidst mounting party rebellion and growing frustration among coalition partners, reports AP.

'Queen, Prince Philip found formula for successful marriage'

LONDON, Nov 20: The much-ridiculed institution of royal marriage got a boost Wednesday from someone who ought to know. Prince Philip, married for 50 years to Queen Elizabeth II, called the marriage a successful partnership and expressed pride in their children, whose marital history is less happy, reports AP.



President Clinton surrounded by members of Congress and adopted children signs the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997, a law designed to speed the movement of children from foster care to permanent homes, in the East Room of the White House Wednesday. — AP/UNB photo

Serial killer executed in Texas:

A suspected serial killer was executed in Texas by lethal injection on Wednesday after leaving his final words on the Internet. Reuter reports from Huntsville.

50 hurt as 2 trains collide in Canada:

Two commuter trains collided inside the main railroad station in Toronto on Wednesday, leaving up to 50 people hurt, none seriously, police said. Reuter reports from Toronto.

Argentina to sign Ottawa treaty:

An international treaty banning the use, export, production, development and stockpiling of anti-personnel landmines was negotiated in Oslo earlier this year. More than 100 countries have agreed to sign the treaty, but so far China, Russia and the United States have refused to do so.

Rains claim 4 in Malaysia:

At least four people have been killed in heavy tropical rains that have cleared the haze over Malaysia but flooded roads and houses, news reports said Thursday, AP reports from Kuala Lumpur.

Bombs at US embassy in Denmark:

Two fire bombs were thrown at the US embassy in Copenhagen on Wednesday, just hours after the US state department advised Americans abroad to exercise increased caution, AP says from Copenhagen.