

To eradicate Kurdish bases Turkey may send troops into Syria as well

ANKARA, Oct 4: The Turkish government, which sent about 10,000 soldiers into northern Iraq to attack Kurdish rebels, has said it might send forces into Syria to eradicate guerrilla bases there, according to news reports, says AP.

Turkey's incursion into northern Iraq on Friday followed two days of airstrikes against suspected rebel bases, the daily Hurriyet said Saturday.

Turkish Kurdish rebels fighting for autonomy in south-eastern Turkey wage cross-border raids from camps in Iraq, Iran and Syria. The Ankara government accuses Syria of aiding the rebels, a charge Damascus denies.

Turkey warned the Syrian government Friday that its "patience was running out," and Gen. Huseyin Kivrikogulu, chief of the general staff, has described the mounting tension with Syria as "an undeclared war."

Fueling tension between the two countries are Turkey and Israel's expanding military and diplomatic ties. Syria claims the ties are a threat to the Arab world, and on Saturday, Dam-

Britain considers sending troops to Kosovo Y'slav air defence put on alert to counter NATO airstrikes

PRISTINA, Yugoslavia, Oct 4: The Yugoslav air defence has been put on high alert as the threat of NATO airstrikes against Yugoslavia to put an end to fighting in Kosovo draws near, reports AP.

In an effort to show they are willing to back down, Serbian authorities on Saturday installed an interim government in the rebellious Serbian province. A western diplomat also said that up to 120 Yugoslav army armoured vehicles, including tanks, have been pulled out of Kosovo so far.

But the West apparently remained unmoved. Speaking in Copenhagen, Denmark, German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel said that the NATO intervention clock "is at one minute to 12." He stressed that "no ultimatum, no date has been set," but added: "Milosevic must know that we are serious."

The Yugoslav government said on Friday the fighting had ended and blamed continuing violence on ethnic Albanian rebels. Serbia is the larger of two republics that comprise Yugoslavia.

Hundreds of people have died since the Serbs began their efforts to crack down on separatist resistance in the

province, which is populated largely by ethnic Albanians, and an estimated 275,000 people have been driven from their homes.

Zoran Andjelkovic, the man appointed by the Serbian Parliament to head the 18-member Interim Executive Council, told the new members at their first session in the Kosovo Parliament building. "We have to defeat the terrorists and work for the benefit of all our citizens."

Meanwhile, the Yugoslav air defence has been placed on the highest state of alert to counter possible NATO airstrikes, said a Yugoslav army commander who spoke Saturday on condition of anonymity.

The Yugoslav government also has called a special session of the Federal Parliament for Monday to discuss how to "Protect the international position and state interests" of the country.

Ethnic Albanian political leaders rejected the interim council. Andjelkovic appointed seven Serbs, five ethnic Albanians and the rest Turks and Muslims. He said he consulted no political parties.

Constituting the council, moribund since 1980, was part



A photograph of President Clinton and Monica Lewinsky in the Oval Office at the White House serves as a birthday gift from the president to Lewinsky. The photograph was part of the material in the Starr Report released by the House Judiciary Committee on Friday. — AP/UNB photo

Clinton welcomes progress in Indo-US talks

NEW DELHI, Oct 4: United States President Bill Clinton has written a "thoughtful and positive" letter to Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee, according to the Indian Express daily here today, reports Zin-hua.

Clinton explained the deferment of his trip to India which had been planned for November this year, and welcomed the progress made in Indo-US talks following India's nuclear tests in May.

The newspaper said senior US administration officials told its correspondent in Washington that the communication would keep the two leaders in more frequent contact directly in the weeks ahead as they work more closely to bring the dialogue between the two countries to fruition.

Indian diplomats confirmed that a letter had been sent but withheld comment pending its receipt in New Delhi where a clutch of holidays was expected to delay an official reaction.

The letter, which was sent Wednesday, is Clinton's first formal communication to the Indian Prime Minister after the

Indonesian police to be separated from army

JAKARTA, Oct 4: Indonesia's police will be separated from the Armed Forces (ABRI) from April next year, Military chief General Wiranto said today, reports Reuters.

"ABRI is set to reposition or separate the national police from the army," Wiranto, who is defence minister, told a news conference.

Starting from April 1999, the operation and supervision of the national police will be released from ABRI and placed with, or more accurately returned to, the defence ministry. Indonesia's police force was incorporated into the armed forces in 1965.

Separation of the police and army was one of the demands of Indonesian reformists calling for the military to be overhauled in the wake of the resignation of former president Suharto in May amid a deep economic crisis, mass protests against his rule and an explosion of rioting in Jakarta.

Anwar now takes his battle against KL authorities to court

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 4: Malaysia's deposed deputy premier Anwar Ibrahim, forced after his arrest to abandon his nascent reform movement on the streets, now takes his battle against the authorities to the courts, reports AP.

Anwar, who denies 10 corruption and sodomy charges, is represented by nine top lawyers. They have been told to appear at the High Court on Monday when a trial date will be set, legal sources said.

The stage is set for a protracted legal battle at the trial as Anwar's defence panel is made up of experts in civil, criminal and traditional Muslim laws.

This is a high-profile court case. It is unprecedented and the court proceedings are unpredictable at this stage. Anwar's case is the most unique in Malaysia's legal history," one source added.

BRITFLY

2 die as police opens fire in India: Two persons, one of them a woman, were killed late Saturday night when police opened fire on a crowd which attacked a locality dominated by members of another caste at Tiruppalani village about 10 km from Ramanathapuram in south of Tamil Nadu, police said. PTI reports from Chennai.

District police sources told PTI that Muniyammal, a 45-year old woman died on the spot, while Arumugam, 47 succumbed to bullet injuries in the Ramanathapuram Headquarters Hospital. Another man nursing a bullet injury had been admitted to the hospital. A report from Ramanathapuram said, quoting the police, that the firing occurred when a group of Dalits from a neighbouring village arrived at Tiruppalani late in the night and started attacking shops, leading to a lathi charge by the police.

Cardoso certain to remain in power: Brazil's President Fernando Henrique Cardoso is virtually certain to remain in power, with an opinion poll giving him 49 per cent of the vote on the eve of the Sunday's election. AFP reports from Rio de Janeiro.

Cardoso's main rival, Luis Inacio Lula da Silva would get 24 per cent of the vote, according to the poll conducted by the Brazilian Public Opinion Institute (IBOPE) and broadcast by Globo Television. Cardoso's support was up two percentage points from a Friday poll, while Lula's remained the same.

Thai police detain 1 for smuggling: Police have seized 21 kg of heroin from a man from Malawi as he was preparing to board a flight to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Thai newspapers reported yesterday, AP says from Bangkok.

Police quoted the man, identified as Yenri Suen Onabanjo, 32, who was arrested Saturday, as saying was trying to smuggle the drug, the Bangkok Post reported. It said the heroin had been concealed inside audio loudspeakers.

Bus accident claims 11 in China: A bus packed with holiday travellers has veered off a bridge in south China, killing 11 people and injuring 30, the state-run Beijing Evening News reported yesterday, AP says from Beijing.

Only one person, a small child, on the bus escaped injury when it plunged about 80 metres in Hunan province's Cili county on Thursday, the newspaper said. Among those injured, some were in critical condition, it said.

British-born actor McDowall dies: Roddy McDowall, the British-born actor who starred in "Planet of the Apes" and "How Green was My Valley," died at his home on Saturday. He was 70. AFP reports from Los Angeles.

McDowall was diagnosed in April with terminal cancer and he died at his studio city home, KNX Radio said. Funeral arrangements have not been announced. Flowers were placed on his star on the Hollywood walk of fame and Hollywood Mayor Johnny Grant called him "a true gentleman" and a "splendid actor."

11 killed in shootouts in Malaysia: Police Killed 11 people, including a woman reported to be eight months pregnant, in two weekend shootouts with groups of alleged criminals, according to reports on Sunday, AP reports from Kuala Lumpur.

No police were injured in either of the firefights. Police said they killed six men in a van who refused to stop when intercepted late Saturday night and started to shoot at officers. The Kelantan state police chief said police had not identified the bodies, but that all the dead men were wanted for armed robbery, firearms smuggling and drug trafficking. One of five people killed Friday night when police stormed a house in the capital to arrest kidnappers of a politician's son was eight months pregnant. The Sunday newspaper reported, quoting her relatives. The woman and her husband were both killed, leaving daughter aged 5 and 8, the paper said.

Russia marks Sputnik launch day: Russia marked the 41st anniversary on Sunday of the launch of the Sputnik satellite — the first manmade object sent into Earth's orbit, AP reports from Moscow.



Australian Prime Minister John Howard, center, is surrounded by his family after winning the Australian Federal Election in Sydney on Saturday. From left are Howard's son Richard, Howard's wife Janette Howard, his daughter Melanie and his youngest son Tim. — AP/UNB photo

Over half a million minors catering to 'sex tourists' in Asia

LONDON, Oct 4: Asian and European countries will agree next week a programme to combat child prostitution in Asia, where more than half a million minors are estimated to be involved in a trade catering to "sex tourists," reports AP.

A three-day conference in London will gather experts from 10 East Asian and the 15 European Union nations, Interpol, charities, international children's organisation and the private sector will also attend.

"The aims is to agree practical steps in the fight against the commercial and sexual exploitation of children," said the British Foreign Office.

The October 6-8 meeting was initiated by Britain and the Philippines at the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) in April.

The 10 Asian countries represented are Brunei, China, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

But already on the eve of the conference, governments are facing criticism that they are not doing enough to fight the scourge of child prostitution.

The End Child Prostitution Pornography Trafficking Campaign (ECPAT) said that while it welcomed ASEM's role in combatting child abuse more resources needed to be devoted to the effort.

which everything else stands, ECPAT said in a statement.

"Children are being sexually abused and exploited each day... we must start to turn words into action."

So far tougher laws and greater cross-border police action have failed to stop paedophiles, pimps and traffickers destroying the lives of hundreds of thousands of children across Asia each year.

ECPAT has estimated that there are 200,000 children lured or forced into prostitution in Thailand, many smuggled in from Burma, China's southern Yunnan province, Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam.

In Cambodia one third of prostitutes are aged 17 or below and some are just 10 or 12 years old while the Philippines has between 60,000 and 100,000 child sex workers according to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

Sri Lanka is still a haven for homosexual paedophiles with thousands of beach boys among the 30,000 child prostitutes and in India major cities have an estimated 20,000-30,000 minors working in the sex industry, UNICEF said.

Among the practical steps the conference is to adopt — cooperation between police forces (including intelligence sharing on when known sex offenders travel abroad), training and assistance.

'CTBT will collapse within decade of implementation'

MOSCOW, Oct 4: The Comprehensive (nuclear) Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) may collapse within a decade of its coming into force, if no steps are taken towards total elimination of nuclear weapons, a top Russian defence expert says, reports PTI.

Professor of the Russian Military Sciences Academy, Major Gen (ret'd) Vladimir Belous did not rule out that "one or other" recognised Nuclear Weapon States (NWS) may walk out of CTBT in the name of "supreme national interests," after eight to 10 years of its coming into force and will set "example" for others to follow suit.

Belous believes that by that time the permitted sub-critical tests and other procedures under CTBT permitting the verification of existing stockpiles and "vertical proliferation" would become obsolete.

In its latest issue "Voyennoye Obozreniye" (military review), a weekly supplement of "Nezavisimaya Gazeta" daily, Belous wrote an article on the problems of verifying the integrity of existing nuclear stockpiles of the NWS.

Blair to question China over its HR record

LONDON, Oct 4: Prime Minister Tony Blair has said that he will question China's Communist regime over its human rights record during his visit to the country, Sunday Business newspaper reported, says AP.

"There is no point in denying we have our differences with China. Over political and civil rights. Over Tibet. Over freedom of speech. The treatment of dissent. Religious freedom. The importance of democracy," Sunday Business quoted Blair as saying in an article in the newspaper attributed to the prime minister.

Blair departs Monday on his five-day visit to China and the former British colony of Hong Kong, which reverted to Chinese rule on July 1, 1997.

Andrew forced to deny media reports about palace

LONDON, Oct 4: Prince Andrew was forced to deny Saturday reports in the British media that royal press spokesmen under the media during the last 20 years, reports AP.

In an informal interview in Malta with the daily tabloid The Mirror, the Duke of York, Queen Elizabeth's second son, was said to have compared the royal press service at Buckingham Palace to soviet bureaucrats.

Off the Record

For the love of mom! NEW DELHI: In the hope that he could bring her back to life, a doting son kept the dead body of his mother for 126 days in the central Indian city of Jaipur. The last rites of Harpreet Singh's mother Nirmal Kaur, 56, who died on May 29 this year was performed only last week, newspapers have reported, reports IANS.

"I always believed that my mother would become alive one day. I could never imagine living without her," Singh, in his 20s, told a television channel.

So attached was Singh, an unemployed engineer, to his mother that he didn't tell any of his relatives, friends and neighbours about her death. Instead, he kept the decomposing body of his mother in a room of his isolated home in a neighbourhood in Jaipur city. Singh, considered mentally disturbed by his relatives, started special prayers for the resurrection of his mother, newspapers said. For all the four months he lived only on milk, delivered on his door steps by a milkman.

"He never spoke to us. He lived a very isolated life. We never knew that he has kept the body of his mother here. The only thing that came from his building was the smell of insects," one of Singh's neighbours said. The bizarre incident came to light when Nirmal Kaur's younger sister Sudershan Kaur came from Delhi to meet her. On reaching her sister's place, Singh reportedly told Kaur that his mother had gone to Chandigarh. What came as a big shock for Kaur was when Singh asked her aunt to immediately leave her house.

In support of legalisation of Marijuana ...

BOSTON: With swirls of marijuana smoke wafting through the air, about 40,000 people gathered in Boston on Saturday for a rally supporting legalisation of the drug, reports AP.

Police, who had vowed a crackdown on the 9th Annual Freedom Rally, arrested about 40 on drug possession charges. That's far fewer than the 150 arrests at last year's event, which attracted about 10,000 more people.

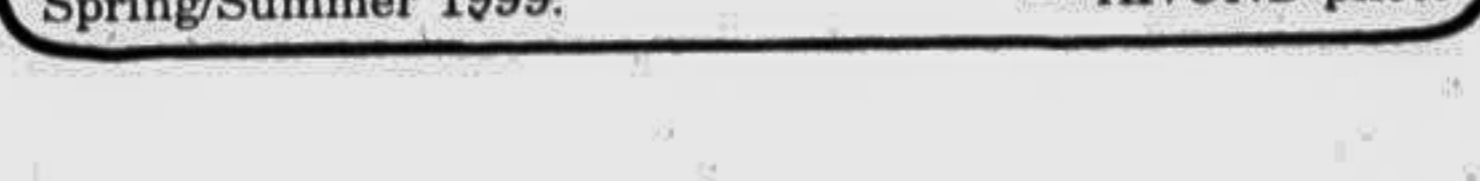
"The cops were trying to intimidate people from coming ... but I don't think it worked," said Bill Downing, president of the Massachusetts Cannabis Reform Coalition.

At one police checkpoint, Amy Cook and three other students prayed for pot smokers to turn away from drugs. "They're going to do what they're going to do. But they might see us and think twice later," she said.

Doug Goudreau, 19, of Peabody, said marijuana was plentiful at the rally — at about \$15 per cigarette, or \$10 to \$15 for a small bag. The police, he said, missed a lot of the dealing.

"They don't know what's going on," Goudreau said. "They look for the fools who are acting stupid."

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Italian showgirl Alessia Merz closes the You Young Coveri Fashion show taking a bath in a tub filled with milk, in Milan on Saturday. The show was part of the presentations of the fashion collections for the Spring/Summer 1999. — AP/UNB photo