

International

BRIEFLY

World

Train crash kills eight

COPENHAGEN (AP) — A crowded express train sped into an area under repair and derailed Monday, killing at least eight people and injuring 72 others in Denmark's worst train accident in 20 years.

"There are several overturned cars, partly on top of each other," assistant police commissioner Palle Hasselgren told Danish radio.

Rescuers struggled to pull bodies from beneath an overturned train car at the accident site about 80 kilometres southwest of Copenhagen. They feared new victims would be found in the wreckage in a search extending into the night.

Police helicopters and air force planes were called in to help evacuate casualties.

Groups clash

NOUMEA (Reuters) — White settlers and native New Caledonians known as Kanaks exchanged gunfire today in the first major battle between the two groups since three policemen were hacked to death last Friday.

The shooting between pro-independence citizens and French loyalists occurred in the village of Saint Louis, a few kilometres from Noumea, capital of the French-owned South Pacific territory.

Witnesses said the trouble began when loyalists built roadblocks on the main highway near the village, about 10 kilometres from Noumea. The whites claimed they had been shot at overnight.

The Melanesian Kanaks responded by sealing all roads into Saint Louis.

The Kanak National Socialist Liberation Front accused loyalist white groups of firing shots from their barricades. There were no casualties in the shooting.

GNP rises

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. economy, shrugging off the effects of the October stock market collapse, grew at a respectable 2.3-per-cent annual rate in the first three months of 1988, the government said today.

The Commerce Department, issuing its first look at overall economic performance this year, said the increase in the gross national product was propelled by a strong increase in consumer spending and the biggest surge in business investment in more than four years.

Economists said any lingering fears that the record 508-point drop in the New York stock market on Oct. 19 would topple the country into a recession should be buried by the new GNP report.

The GNP growth was accompanied by a slowdown in the rate of inflation, with a price measure tied to the GNP rising at an annual rate of 2.4 per cent, down from a 2.7-per-cent increase in the fourth quarter.

ARAB GUERRILLAS LAUNCH RAID

Five die in Israeli border clash

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israeli troops ambushed a band of Arabs today at the Lebanese border as the guerrillas launched a raid into Israel, the military said. Three Arabs and two Israeli soldiers were killed.

Two other soldiers were wounded, the army said. One was in serious condition with a gunshot wound to the chest, hospital authorities said.

The Israeli army said the clash occurred about 200 metres inside Israel after troops on an early morning patrol met guerrillas trying to infiltrate from Lebanon.

However, a Lebanese police spokesman said the pre-dawn clash occurred in Lebanese territory near the southern village of Kfar Shouba when Israeli troops opened fire at a seven-man guerrilla group.

The army said soldiers chased the guerrillas through rocky terrain and scrub brush and fought a brief battle in which the guerrillas threw hand grenades and fired a rocket.

The Israelis "fired flares at the rate of 20 every five minutes as their helicopter gunships chased the guerrillas in the region," he said.

The guerrillas were "apparently ambushed before launching a

cross-border raid into northern Israel," the spokesman said.

The Lebanese police spokesman said the guerrillas were from the Lebanese Communist party and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine of George Habbash.

Today's incident was the 11th attempted infiltration and the deadliest along the Lebanese border since Nov. 25 when a guerrilla landed in northern Israel on a hang

glider, entered a military base and killed six Israeli soldiers before being shot to death himself.

Israeli officials have linked past infiltration attempts to a nearly five-month long Arab uprising in the occupied territories in which 173 Palestinians and two Israelis have died.

The two dead soldiers were the first Israeli casualties connected with Lebanon since Feb. 23, when two soldiers died when their tank

ran over a mine in south Lebanon.

In the occupied Gaza Strip, meanwhile, UN officials and news reports said Israeli steps to break the Palestinian uprising could temporarily block tens of thousands of Palestinians from reaching jobs in Israel.

A spokesman for the UN Relief and Works Agency said the army was preventing people from reaching jobs by taking their identity cards and returning them only after the Arabs underwent lengthy checks at three government offices.

"Lines of hundreds of people are standing in front of these offices," said the spokesman, Christine Dabagh.

Israeli television said the program was aimed at breaking a tax boycott that has been a tactic of the Palestinian uprising.

A military official said the new policy was part of an effort to challenge the Palestinian leadership.

Israeli leaders, meanwhile, expressed concern about attempts by PLO leader Yasser Arafat and Syrian President Hafez Assad to end five years of bloody rivalry and revive a hard-line alliance against Israel.

Assad, who expelled Arafat from Syria in 1983, met the PLO chief on Monday in Damascus.

Students protest election

SEOUL (CP-AP) — Riot police used tear gas to break up student demonstrations against alleged vote fraud as South Koreans cast ballots today for a new parliament in an election the governing party was expected to win.

About 300 Yonsei University students, many throwing rocks or firebombs, took part in one demonstration to protest alleged election manipulation in favor of the governing Democratic Justice Party of President Roh Tae-woo.

Earlier, police broke up a similar protest by 50 Yonsei students. No injuries were reported in either demonstration.

Yonhap, the Korean news agency, said police took more than 120 students into custody in Kwangju and nearby areas in southwestern South Korea as they broke up anti-government protests.

About 26 million people were eligible to cast ballots at 13,812 pollings stations across the country.

However, the violence and widespread corruption appeared to be dampening voter enthusiasm, with unofficial estimates putting the turnout about 10 per cent below last December's presidential election the brought Roh to power.

Opposition leader Kim Youngsam of the Reunification Democratic party, who ran for an assembly seat in the southern city of Pusan, accused the government of staging "unfair, unjust elections unprecedented in our history."

Kim's party, along with the Party for Peace and Democracy, forms the major opposition to the government. However, analysts said before the vote that their failure to unite could be a major factor in keeping the DJP in power.

PLO, Syria try end feud

DAMASCUS (AP) — PLO chief Yasser Arafat concluded reconciliation talks with President Hafez Assad, and sources said Arafat left for Libya.

Arafat's 3½-hour meeting with Assad on Monday night was aimed at reviving a hard-line alliance against Israel and U.S. Middle East peace efforts, and at ending a five-year feud that has hampered efforts to forge Arab unity.

Arafat left by plane after meeting for one hour today with Vice-President Abdul-Halim Khaddam, one of Assad's closest aides.

But Arafat left behind a close

aide, Farouk Kaddoumi, head of the PLO's political department, and other advisers and members of Fatah's 10-man governing central committee to continue reconciliation talks with Syrian leaders.

One source, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the fact that Arafat's top aides stayed behind indicated the PLO-Syrian reconciliation process was continuing.

It was Arafat's first visit to the Syrian capital since Assad expelled him on June 24, 1983, at the height of the feud touched off by a Syrian-backed mutiny in the PLO against Arafat's leadership.

PERSIAN GULF POLICY

U.S. backing off broader role

WASHINGTON (AP) — New declarations that the United States doesn't want a "serious shooting war" with Iran come amid signs that the Reagan administration is backing away from earlier proposals to broaden the U.S. role in the Persian Gulf.

The new suggestions by top administration officials come after a week-long review of Persian Gulf policy triggered by the April 18 clash between the U.S. navy and Iran, in which six Iranian ships were damaged or sunk.

U.S. officials said last week the policy was under review, specifically the rules of engagement which permitted the navy only to protect itself and 11 U.S.-flagged Kuwaiti tankers.

But on Monday, administration officials suggested that there may be no change in that policy. State Secretary George Shultz stressed that no final decision had been made, but said "we will not get tied up in any serious shooting war with the Iranians."

Presidential spokesman Marlin Fitzwater reflected the new line, telling reporters that "everybody acknowledges that we need to move back to some more limited set of rules."

For the last 10 months, U.S. war-

ships have been escorting the 11 U.S.-flagged Kuwaiti tankers through the gulf, which is one of the venues for the long Iran-Iraq war. Kuwait is an ally of Iraq.

The United States has previously attacked Iranian forces and facilities in retaliation for alleged Iranian mine-laying activities. Last week's clash was in revenge for an April 14 incident in which a navy frigate hit a mine the United States claimed was laid by Iran.

Administration officials suggested last week the rules might be changed to let the navy aid other merchant ships should they come under attack.

"Right now the rules of engagement are essentially the same as they were last week, reflecting the emergency nature of the situation," Fitzwater said Monday. "But the question is, where do we move back to? . . . I can't discuss specifics."

Shultz, appearing on NBC's Today program from Belgium where he was meeting with other NATO officials, said "as far as our rules of engagement are concerned, what the right ones are for this stage of the game in the gulf is being considered in Washington, and there is a process of consultation going on, and I think it's pre-

mature to describe them in any particular way."

On April 18, Fitzwater said, navy vessels were given wider latitude. "You'll recall at that point that our ships were engaging hostile forces in any number of areas," he said. "And we now want to move back to our conservative set of rules. And so that decision has to be made about where to move back to. . . ."

One change may be the addition of up to six 33-metre U.S. coast guard ships to help patrol the shallow gulf waters.

That proposal was criticized on Capitol Hill, where senators noted that the coast guard is already slashing its anti-drug patrols and some routine search-and-rescue missions because of budget cuts. But the navy has offered to pay for the coast guard's Persian Gulf patrols.

"Ridiculous, harebrained, absolute utter nonsense," said Senator Alfonse D'Amato (R-N.Y.), a critic of administration anti-drug policies.

The lightly armed Island class patrol vessels would be pulled off anti-drug patrols in the Caribbean, coast guard officials said Monday. The vessels would be replaced by new coast guard cutters now under construction.

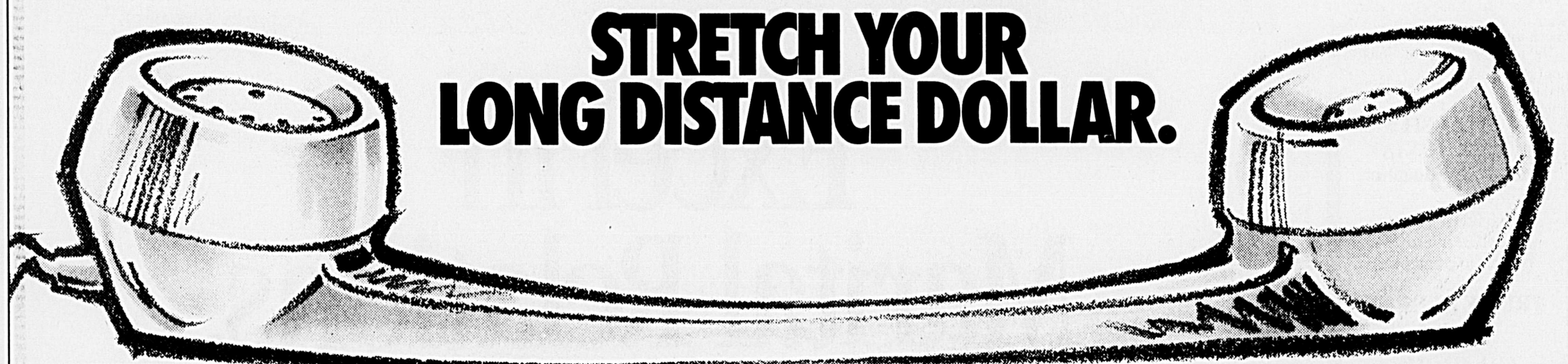
Chirac tries to heal split

PARIS (Reuters) — Conservative Premier Jacques Chirac, badly bruised in the first round of France's presidential election, sought Monday to rally the divided rightist vote.

Chirac's spokesman, Alain Juppe, said the centre-right coalition government has expressed full support for the premier in his second-round battle on May 8 against Socialist President Francois Mitterrand.

"The campaign for the second round, which begins today, will be conducted with greatest vigor in order to spare France a long period of confusion and instability," Juppe told reporters.

Barre has asked his supporters to back Chirac. Le Pen, who is angling to make Chirac pay a price for his support, has promised to announce his second-round intentions on May 1.



STRETCH YOUR LONG DISTANCE DOLLAR.

Announcing lower long distance rates for most calls within B.C.*

April 1, 1988, direct dialed calls within B.C. were reduced by an average of 21.6%. Operator-assisted station-to-station calls were also reduced an average of 11.5%. And that averages out to you now paying less for long distance.

At B.C. Tel, we've even reduced the Automated Calling Card (ACCS) transaction fee to 75 cents from a dollar.

Here are just a few examples of how much you'll save on some typical five-minute calls:

	Was	Now	Saving
Direct dialed Vancouver to Victoria, 5:00 p.m.-11:00 p.m.	\$1.76	\$1.31	\$0.45 (26%)
Operator-assisted station-to-station, Kamloops to Vancouver, 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.	\$4.55	\$3.70	\$0.85 (19%)
Person-to-person, Dawson Creek to Prince George, 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.	\$6.00	\$5.95	\$0.05 (.8%)

Lower long distance rates from B.C. Tel let you stretch your call without extending your budget.

*New rates do not apply to some special rates from the following communities: Agassiz, Bowen Island, Castlegar, Grand Forks, Whalley. Nor do they apply to areas served by Northwestel Inc. The new rates have been approved on an interim basis by the CRTC.

B.C. Tel

We make it a way of life.