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From Associated Press reports

Israelis hand Sinai over to Egyptians

RAFAH, Egypt

Israel returned the eastern Sinai Desert to Egypt Sunday, ending nearly 15 years of occupation in emotion-charged ceremonies that brought cheers, tears, riots and vows of eternal peace.

Shouts of "Allah Akbar" — "God is Great" — went up from a throng of 2,000 Arabs watching as a huge red, white and black Egyptian flag was unfurled over the new Sinai border checkpoint outside Rafah.

Trumpets blared, drums boomed, fireworks puffed in the sky, Bedouin men on camels cheered and Bedouin women trilled in high-pitched ululation — their traditional tongue-warbling outpouring of deep feeling.

A few hours before the evacuation, about 70 Jewish nationalists opposed to the withdrawal came out of the obliterated Israeli town of Yamit. They wept, kissed the ground and rent their garments in Jewish funeral tradition.

Anti-withdrawal activists claimed some of their people were still inside the Egyptian-ruled area and would try to stay there, Associated Press correspondent Larry Thorson reported.

Fifteen minutes before the withdrawal deadline two Israeli Kfir jetfighters screamed over Rafah and headed southeast along the new 130-mile border.

A scorching dust storm gave way to light rain that failed to dampen the joy of the throng of camel-mounted Bedouins and Rafah Arabs who came on foot to watch the changeover.

On the other side of the checkpoint, Israeli troops fired tear gas and shots in the air to repel Palestinians who began lobbing rocks when the army put a border of barbed wire across the main street of Rafah, Associated Press photographer Max Nash reported.

Explosion, fire kill 34 at art exhibition

TODI, Italy

An explosion and flash fire ripped through an antiques exhibition Sunday, killing at least 34 people and injuring dozens of others, police said. Many jumped from the roof of the four-story building onto mattresses piled up below.

"There was a tremendous explosion which shook the entire

area," said Paolo Pianigiani, a reporter at a radio station across the street from the 15th century building housing the exhibition.

"For a minute we thought it was an earthquake, then we saw smoke, fire and there were people screaming, screaming," he said. "Fire spread quickly and the heat was so intense...I saw a bronze statue literally melt."

Authorities said about 200 people were inside when the blast occurred. They said dozens of people leaped to safety by jumping onto the mattresses, which townspeople piled on a flatbed truck. People fled to the roof in panic because the windows were blocked by anti-burglar bars.

Firefighters said they were still searching for victims in the rubble and that the death toll could go as high as 45. The dead and injured were all believed to be Italians.

The Italian news agency ANSA, in an unconfirmed report, said at least 60 people were injured.

Police officials said the fire was caused by an explosion, possibly a gas leak at a bar on the third floor.

Thirty of the injured were taken to hospitals in Perugia and at least eight others were flown by police helicopter to a burn treatment center in Rome, fire officials reported.

Reagan, Congress haggle over budget

WASHINGTON

Negotiators for the White House and Congress met for more than two hours Sunday but made little progress toward agreement on a budget compromise, officials said.

Several sources, who asked not to be identified by name, said participants were still "moving in the general direction of setting targets" for \$83 billion to \$87 billion in spending cuts and tax increases to reduce the deficit, but shying away from making specific recommendations.

This approach means "deferring the major decisions that need to be made" to the House and Senate, where major clashes can be expected, one official said.

But even this scaled-down compromise effort has produced difficulties at the bargaining table.

Sources say the White House is demanding that House Democrats, in considering legislation to raise taxes, agree in advance not to even consider repeal of the 10 percent income tax cut scheduled for July 1983.

Sources said Democrats laid out their objections to this demand at the talks on Sunday.

The next session is scheduled for Tuesday.

Democrats insist that any compromise budget include steps to change Reagan's tax policy, which they say treats the wealthy better than the low and middle income taxpayers.

Meanwhile, sources said that whatever the outcome of the talks, there is unlikely to be an agreement on a plan to reduce and delay the 7.4 percent cost-of-living increase that Social Security recipients are due to receive on July 1.

Archbishop meets with Polish head

WARSAW, Poland

Martial law ruler Gen. Wojciech Jaruzelski met with Archbishop Jozef Glemp on Sunday, the eve of the Roman Catholic primate's departure for the Vatican, the Polish news agency PAP reported.

PAP gave no details of the unexpected meeting — the second between church and state leaders since the Dec. 13 imposition of martial law.

The agency said the meeting took place in the same government housing complex where Glemp and Premier Jaruzelski met with Solidarity leader Lech Walesa last November to discuss a possible accord between the communist government and the now-suspended independent labor movement. No agreement was reached, and Jaruzelski declared martial law a month later and suspended Solidarity.

Jaruzelski and Glemp last met on Jan. 9 but church sources said no progress was made during the brief session.

The archbishop, returning to his residence Sunday after the two-hour meeting, refused to comment on the talks and said an official communique would be released.

He was asked if he was optimistic and he replied, "I am always optimistic."

In another development, the government released a speech by Jaruzelski claiming the West is only hurting itself by imposing economic sanctions on Poland that could force it to default on its massive foreign debt.

"If the capitalist countries and their financial and economic factors want us to pay back our debts, to fulfill our commitments, they should not — in their own interest — block our import possibilities for much longer because the result could be limiting our growth of production and export," he said.

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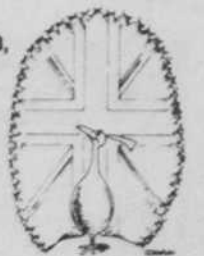
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