

World news

IN BRIEF

UFO report from China

HONG KONG, Monday (AFP). — China reported an unidentified flying object over its remote north-western region of Xinjiang today.

The UFO — as big as a basketball and beaming like a searchlight — was sighted cruising alongside a Beijing-Urumqi passenger flight on Friday night, the New China News Agency said.

Air-traffic controllers told the airliner there were no other aircraft in the vicinity, while the UFO failed to respond to light signals flashed to it by the flight crew, NCNA said.

After three minutes the object split in two, spinning at high speed and encircled by a green ring of light, it added.

Then it disappeared — only to be seen again a half-hour later by passengers on a Guangzhou-Urumqi flight.

World record for joke-teller

LISBON, Monday (AFP). — Peruvian Mr Felipe Carbonell said yesterday that he had beaten the world

day that he had beaten the world joke-telling record of 48 hours, but intended to keep on going for another day to make sure of his win.

Mr Carbonell, a 55-year-old Madrid-born Peruvian, held the Guinness Book of Records title for non-stop joke-telling until 1984, when he lost it to American Mr Tim Benker.

His marathon joke-telling session to regain the record took place at a Lisbon hotel.

Factions block land reforms

MANILA, Monday (Reuter). — A Philippine congresswoman has urged landowners to "take up your guns" to block land reform in escalating opposition to President Aquino's land redistribution program.

"Take up your guns, unite, stand up and fight . . . and let us protect our property," Ms Hortencia Starke told plantation owners in Davao yesterday.

Ms Starke is a major landowner on the sugar-growing island of Negros, where planters have already formed private armies to resist the break-up of large family holdings.

Her speech followed a threat by communist rebels last week to launch their own land reform program and back it by force.

Mitterrand has them guessing

PARIS, Monday (Reuter). — Politicians of left and right are up in arms over President Francois Mitterrand's refusal to confirm what they believe is France's worst-kept secret: that he will run for a second term this year.

Rivals denounced the Socialist leader yesterday, five weeks ahead of the first round of polling in the presidential election, for not saying if he will stand.

The President, favourite in the opinion polls, sent a message to a Socialist campaign rally that he would announce his decision this week.

Bagsnatchers get 3 years

SUVA, Monday (AAP). — Two young men were sentenced to three years' jail today after snatching the handbag of an Australian tourist at Pacific Harbour, 50km west of Suva, on Friday.

Mr Makario Anisimai, 20, and Mr Josetaki Toribau, 19, pleaded guilty.

The court was told they stole the bag of Mrs Christine Elizabeth Colquhoun, of Sydney, containing passports, cash and other items worth

passports, cash and other items worth more than \$F3000 (\$A2875).

The magistrate told the two men the court had no sympathy with them. Their action could deter tourists at a time when Fiji was striving to attract them back following the political crises of the past year.

Rightist surge in W. German poll

BONN, Monday (Reuter). — Extreme rightists emerged from nowhere to grab a large protest vote against West Germany's mainstream parties in a state election, deepening the national slump of Chancellor Helmut Kohl's Christian Democrats (CDU).

All four major parties lost ground in yesterday's election in Baden-Wuerttemberg, while groups like the neo-Nazi National Democratic Party soared out of the political wilderness to win a combined 5.1 per cent of the vote. The CDU clung to majority power.
