World

Panama looks at second canal — Panama will send a special emissary to Japan this month to discuss construction of a second Panama Canal. Japan is interested in building a waterway that is capable of accommodating larger ships. President Jimmy Carter has supported the project.

Pope: lust no. eroticism maybe — Citing Plato and Christ, Pope John Paul II called lust “sinful,” but said that eroticism is an important part of love and an ethical factor in life. Said the Pope, “The human heart deserves that those things that are erotic should at the same time be ethical.”

Schmidt sworn in — West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt was formally sworn in by the Parliament Wednesday. Schmidt’s left-liberal coalition also managed to win an increased, 45-seat majority in last month’s federal elections. Schmidt now faces the task of reconciling economic constraints and US pressure to commit more money to NATO defense spending.

Brezhnev congratulates Reagan — Soviet President Leonid Brezhnev congratulated Ronald Reagan yesterday on his victory and said he hopes for better relations with the United States under a Reagan Administration. “Accept congratulations on your election to the post of President of the United States of America,” said Brezhnev’s telegram, addressed to “esteemed Mr. Reagan, Los Angeles.” The message was the first official foreign reaction to Reagan’s Tuesday win. Mexico and Panama warned that a “big stick” diplomacy will enmesh the US in a Vietnam-style war south of the border, however, calling Reagan’s victory a “stroke of very bad luck for all of Latin America and the third world in general.”

Nation

Baker seen as new Senate majority leader — Senator Howard Baker, the moderate whose presidential bid was flattened in Reagan’s drive to the White House, is now seen by many as the chamber’s new majority leader. Baker, currently Senate minority leader, said Wednesday that 40 of the 53 republican Senators have pledged to support him when the Senate meets in January.

Ray asks for pardon — James Earl Ray, sentenced to prison for 99 years for the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., wants a full pardon. Ray, sentenced for the 1968 slaying in Memphis, submitted a 38-page document requesting a parole hearing and charging that “elements associated with the illegal traffic in narcotics” financed King’s murder. The Parole Board would decide in about a week whether to grant Ray a hearing.

Nitrous blow-up in California — An explosion in Richmond, California, blew out the walls of a chemical plant building, shattered windows in a 10-block area, and rocked communities as far as 10 miles away. The explosion took place as a worker was transferring nitrous oxide, commonly called “nitrous” or “laughing gas,” or sometimes even “whippets,” from a storage tank to a tanker track. Officials at first thought the gas was toxic, and residents nearby were alerted that they might have to leave their homes. A plant manager reassured them, however, saying that even in large concentrations the gas is not harmful.

Pigeons can hear earthquakes — Dr. Melvin Kreithen of the University of Pittsburgh has concluded that pigeons have the ability to detect coming earthquakes. The studies, conducted by Kreithen at Cornell, show that pigeons can hear down to about 2 cycles per second, and therefore can hear the runnings (f the earth during small quakes that often precede larger ones.

Weather

A cold front will develop in the vicinity this weekend, keeping skies generally cloudy. The Boston area should be fortunate to remain on the mild side of the front for much of the weekend. Variable conditions today with some sun and highs near 54. Cloudiness will persist in tonight, keeping lows mild near 44. For Saturday, cloudy, mild, and a few showers. Highs near 56. Conditions continuing overnight and into Sunday with lows near 43. Things may finally clear a bit on Sunday. Partly sunny with highs near 55. Chance of rain 30 percent this morning, 60 percent from Friday night through Sunday morning.

By James Franklin

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