news roundup

World

Philippine army head named in Aquino plot — Gen. Fabian C. Ver, chief of staff of the Philippine armed forces, was one of 26 people cited Wednesday by an investigatory commission on being involved in last year's assassination of opposition leader Benigno S. Aquino. Ver, a cousin and close political associate of President Ferdinand E. Marcos, has taken a leave of absence from his post. Ver demanded an immediate trial separate from his alleged conspirators, only one of whom is a civilian. Aquino was killed Aug. 21, 1983, as his helicopter was preparing to take off from an airport in Manila, and his death triggered a bloody civil war.

Chopper crash kills Salvadoran military leaders — Fifteen people, mostly El Salvadoran military personnel, were killed Tuesday when their helicopter exploded while in flight. Four top Salvadoran officers died, including Lt. Col. Domingo Monterrosa, who was widely viewed as the most effective combat commander against the leftist rebels. The rebels are still waging guerrilla war against the government despite last week's preliminary peace talks.

Nation

Crime family leadership indicted — Eleven men, described by US Attorney General William French Smith as "the entire leadership of the Columbo family," were indicted Wednesday on 51 counts of racketeering activity including extortion, theft, loan sharking and drug trafficking. The New York-based crime syndicate is still named for long-time leader Joseph Columbo, who died in 1978.

Taxes down, FICA up — Although the federal income tax rate will remain the same, indexing of tax rates will increase income tax exemptions, the standard deduction and tax brackets by 4.1 percent for returns filed next year. The indexing adjustment, passed as part of Pres- ident Ronald Reagan's tax package in 1981, is designed to prevent taxpayers from being pushed into higher tax brackets due to the 'ef- fects of inflation. Most workers, however, will end up with less take-home pay, since the Social Security withholding rate will increase to 7.05 percent on Jan. 1 from the present 6.7 percent, and the first $35,600 will be subject to withholding instead of the previous threshold of $37,800. As a result, most taxpayers earning under $56,000 per year will see an overall tax increase rather than a tax cut.

Fare war in the air? — People Express airline announced Wednesday a substantial reduction in many of its fares, raising speculation that other airlines will follow suit. The largest fare reduction, $19 during off-peak hours and $29 during peak periods. So far, no other airlines have lowered their fares on the route.

Sports

Patriots fire head coach — The New England Patriots yesterday fired head coach Ron Meyer, the first time in National Football League history that a head coach with a winning record (the Pats are 5-3) has been canned in the middle of a season. Meyer fired one of the most effective coaches in the league.

Cubs star wins Cy Young — Rick Sutcliffe was the unanimous choice of the Baseball Writers Association of America as the top pitcher in the National League. His 16-1 regular season won-lost re- cord for the Chicago Cubs was a primary reason the team won its first title since 1945. Only three other pitchers had previously won unani- mous Cy Young selections: Steve Carlton, Sandy Koufax and Bob Gibson. Sutcliffe, who was struggling with a 4-5 record with the Cleveland Indians before being traded to the Cubs on June 13, was unhittable during the last part of the regular season, winning his final 14 decisions. His only blemish on his record was the loss to the San Diego Padres in the fifth and deciding game of their playoff series, which kept the Cubs out of the World Series. Sutcliffe has filed as a free-agent; he is now free to sign with any other team if he wishes.

Weather

Damp and dreary, take two — Today will be cloudy and cool with periods of rain and drizzle, with highs around 53-57. Intermittent drizzle will continue tonight through tomorrow morning, but skies may clear later in the afternoon. Lows tonight around 47-51, highs tomorrow around 57-61.

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