

# Search for Khomeini's successor underway

From Associated Press reports

NICOSIA, Cyprus — President Ali Khamenei is Iran's caretaker leader, but the true successor to the late Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini has yet to be chosen.

The transfer of power may be resolved Aug. 18, when a presidential election is scheduled in tandem with a referendum on constitutional changes aimed at eliminating a system of competitive power centers that has snarled decision-making.

Khamenei, 49, was chosen Sunday by the 83-member assembly formed after Khomeini's fundamentalist Shiite Moslem revolution in 1979 to determine the succession and write the new constitution.

Khamenei acknowledged his temporary role and said that, when the constitutional changes have been ratified, "we should be able to fill the vacuum" caused by Khomeini's death.

Reports from Tehran indicate Iran will have a collective leadership of three to five men in the absence of a single figure with Khomeini's religious and political authority.

In order for that to happen, the 20-member committee Khomeini assigned to reform the constitution will have to change the religious requirements for leadership to allow lower-ranking figures to participate.

Most analysts believe the power struggle of rival factions and leaders will intensify.

Here are sketches of some of the main candidates for a collective leadership:

— Hashemi Rafsanjani: The 55-year-old speaker of parliament, a

middle-ranking cleric, also is military commander-in-chief.

With Khamenei's support, Rafsanjani sought to improve relations with the West and end Iran's isolation. He was a key figure in persuading Khomeini to accept the U.N.-sponsored cease-fire that halted fighting in the 8-year-old war with Iraq last August. He is the only declared candidate for president.

— Ali Akbar Mohtashemi: The

interior minister, 43, is among the most radical hardliners. As ambassador to Syria in 1981-1985, he was closely linked to the Shiite fundamentalist Hezbollah, or Party of God, in Lebanon and considered by Western Intelligence to have masterminded suicide bombings of American, French and Israeli targets.

— Hussein Musavi: The prime minister, 48, is a radical who has led the government since 1981. He sits

on the 12-member Council of Guardians, which is dominated by conservatives and oversees all legislation, and is a member of a special Expediency Council appointed by Khomeini in 1988 to resolve differences between the parliament and Council of Guardians.

— Musavi Khoeihi: The prosecutor-general, 47, is anti-Western and known as "the red mullah" because he studied at Patrice Lumumba Uni-

versity in Moscow and Leipzig University in East Germany.

— Ahmad Khomeini: The late patriarch's son, 43, has wielded considerable political influence behind the scenes. He holds no office, but controlled access to his increasingly reclusive father and now is making an open bid for power. He formerly was allied with Rafsanjani, but now is aligned with Mohtashemi and the hard liners.

## Death toll rises in Soviet gas explosion

From Associated Press reports

MOSCOW — As many as 800 people may have died when gas leaking from a pipeline filled a mountain valley, exploded and engulfed two passing trains in flames, a newspaper editor in the area said today.

In the first precise official report, Tass said its preliminary count showed 400 of the more than 1,200 people aboard the passenger trains, including many children bound for summer camp, were dead or missing after Sunday's explosion in the Ural Mountains along the Trans-Siberian Railroad.

"Military units are searching the adjacent forest and mountains in the hope that some of the passengers managed to escape the tornado of fire," the official news agency said.

The blast was equivalent to the explosion of 10,000 tons of TNT, Gen. Mikhail Moiseyev, the Soviet military chief of staff, told Tass.

President Mikhail S. Gorbachev, who visited the remote site Sunday,

told the new Soviet parliament "a few hundred people" had been killed. He said incompetence and a lack of discipline might have contributed to the accident.

Gennady K. Dmitrin, editor of Evening Chelyabinsk, said his newspaper has a list of between 500 and 800 people dead. He said that list was preliminary. Dmitrin said children under age 8 did not have train tickets and therefore were not included in the count Tass gave for the number of people aboard.

Asked about the death toll given by Dmitrin, Dr. Vladimir Ruchki, a local Health Ministry spokesman said: "It's about right." He said more than 600 people were hospitalized. Tass said more than 500 people were hospitalized and that 85 percent suffered severe burns.

Moiseyev told Tass the liquefied gas explosion "had the same yield as a 10,000-ton bomb and was so powerful that it felled all trees within 2.5 miles." He said the blast hurled two

locomotives and 38 passenger cars from the rails, with most of the cars destroyed by a one-mile-long blaze. The total number of railroad cars was not known.

In Moscow, speaking to Congress, Gorbachev called for a minute of silence and the 2,250 deputies stood to mourn the victims. Gorbachev then recessed the session for a national day of mourning.

The 58-year-old Soviet leader, in remarks from the Kremlin's Palace of Congresses broadcast live on radio and television, said the 1,153-mile-long pipeline burst a half mile from the rails. He said the liquefied petroleum gas poured down a slope toward the tracks for three hours. Despite the leak, pumps were turned on to compensate for the pressure loss.

"Everything started to accumulate, and when this mass reached the level of electrical train contacts, a spark ignited this condensed cloud," Gorbachev told the deputies.

The two passenger trains — trav-

eling in opposite directions — had made unscheduled stops near each other between the city of Ufa and the town of Asha, 750 miles southeast of Moscow. One train was on a siding, and the other was on the main tracks, the Soviet president indicated.

"How could it be that again there is incompetence, irresponsibility, mismanagement, disgrace? Comrades and I, and all residents there, said there will be no progress if we have such laxness," Gorbachev said.

He said investigators would examine why the gas pump was turned on despite the leak and why the two trains made unscheduled stops at the same place.

It was the third major Soviet train accident in a year and added to the disasters during Gorbachev's 4-year-old rule. They include the Chernobyl nuclear power plant explosion, the sinking of a cruise ship and a nuclear-armed submarine, and the Armenian earthquake.



**Players**  
CHAPEL HILL

# SUMMER SPECIALS

**Tuesday & Wednesday**     **\$1<sup>50</sup> Drinks • 24 oz. Draft • \$1<sup>00</sup> • No Cover**  
**MUSIC REQUESTS ALL NIGHT!**  
(Rock-N-Roll, Progressive, Top 40)



**Thursday — LADIES NITE!!**

- **50¢ Draft/\$2<sup>00</sup> Drinks**
- **Progressive Music**
- **Ladies no cover 'til 10**

**Friday & Saturday**

**1.25 longnecks/2.50 drinks**  
**Best in Top 40 & Progressive Music!**

**Memberships only \$3.00!! • Call 929-0101 for details.**