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THE INDEPENDENT

THURSDAY

SUMMARY

Privatisation anger over Brel assets

British Rail Engineering, sold to a consortium of private companies and its management for £13.6m, has land assets potentially worth £50m-£100m, it emerged, sparking renewed controversy over privatisation..... Page 3

Rescuer missing

A naval rating was missing

crucial both to how quickly the inspections can be done and to

Gorbachev rebut

Soviet le tension

OBLIGED TO calm domestic and international nerves before next week's vital Central Committee plenum, Mikhail Gorbachev yesterday categorically denied reports that he was planning to abandon the post of general secretary of the Soviet Communist Party.

"These rumours are groundless," a plainly irritated Mr Gorbachev declared to reporters as he began a meeting in the Kremlin with Brazil's president-elect, Fernando Collor de Mello. "No one has said that, and I am certainly not in the process of trying to do it." Beyond that he will have given George Bush the same message in a telephone conversation disclosed by Tass last night.

On Tuesday night Western diplomatic, political and financial circles were thrown into turmoil by a report on the safety of the nuclear navy.

num that he was relinquishing the party job that he has held since March 1985, and keep only that of President of the Supreme Soviet, or head of state.

Yesterday, however, they regained a semblance of calm, as Mr Gorbachev assailed the "vogue in the international press" to set "rumour mills" working on the eve of regular Central Committee meetings. "Evidently it is in someone's interest to propagate such things," he added, not masking his disapproval. Later an exasperated Gennady Gerasimov, the Kremlin spokesman, made another public rebuttal, stating that he had been told by Eduard Shevardnadze, the Foreign Minister, who is one of Mr Gorbachev's strongest Politburo supporters, that the rumours were "absolutely unfounded".

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Glasgow Evening Times

Call for subs inquiry

SCOTTISH CND wants a public inquiry into the reports of cracks and leaks in nuclear submarines.

The Rev Adrian Rennie, the organisation's press officer, said there were three main issues an inquiry was needed to deal with.

- What danger is posed to the Scottish people from the damaged reactors?
- Why had the Ministry of Defence misled Scottish CND and the Scottish media on January 22 when the first reports of the faulty reactors came out?
- How much damage has already been done to the environment of the Clyde and the Irish Sea?

Mr Rennie said: "A public inquiry is essential. We have the right to know how much danger we are in."