

TOKYO WARNS NORTH KOREA AHEAD OF TEST-FIRE

Dropping of missile in Japan to be regarded as 'attack'

AFP, Tokyo

Japan warned North Korea on Sunday it would view any test-fired missile that landed on Japanese soil as an attack...

Foreign Minister Taro Aso said Tokyo was ready to slap sanctions on the North, which surprised the world by firing a missile over Japan in 1998 without warning...

"If they failed and the missile dropped on ... Japan, things would be complicated," Aso said on Japanese television.

Reports of the imminent test of a long-range missile with the range to hit parts of the United States

have drawn stiff warnings from Washington as well as from Japan and South Korea.

Japan's Sankei Shimbun newspaper, citing unnamed Japanese government sources, said citizens of the Stalinist state had been advised to raise the national flag at 0500 GMT and watch a message on television.

But that time passed without word of any launch, and South Korea's Yonhap news agency cited an official as saying that a similar call to citizens was issued last year on June 18 as part of an unrelated domestic anniversary.

North Korea last year said it had nuclear weapons and since November has boycotted six-nation talks on its atomic drive, saying it will not come back to the bargaining table until the United States lifts sanctions on it.

"We will immediately appeal to

the United Nations Security Council if North Korea test-fires a missile and threatens Japan's national security," Aso said.

"That's a matter of course -- and the United States will support us." Aso also said Tokyo was ready to impose economic sanctions against North Korea in retaliation.

Washington is a permanent Security Council member together with Britain, China, Russia and France, while Tokyo holds one of the non-permanent, rotating seats on the 15-member council.

Thomas Schieffer, the US ambassador to Japan, said Saturday there were signs the North was preparing a missile launch and warned that such a move would be "grave and provocative."

But Schieffer declined to give a time-frame for a launch of a Taepodong-2 missile, which has a range of 3,500 to 6,000 kilometers (2,200 to 3,750 miles).

In South Korea, a defense ministry spokesman declined to comment on any North Korean preparations but said his country's military alert level had not been changed.

"The military is on the same level of alert as usual. There has been no upgrade in the military alert yet," the spokesman said.

In the six-nation talks -- which group North and South Korea, China, Japan, Russia and the United States -- the North had agreed to give up its nuclear program in exchange for aid and security guarantees.

But the talks have been stalled since Pyongyang said the United States would first have to drop

financial sanctions imposed over alleged counterfeiting and money-laundering.

Analysts have speculated that North Korea -- which US President George W. Bush in 2002 branded as part of an "axis of evil" with Iran and Saddam Hussein's Iraq -- is trying to regain the limelight while much international attention is focused on Iran's nuclear program.

South Korea, which has been working to reconcile with its estranged northern neighbor, has also warned against a missile launch.

In August 1998 North Korea tested a Taepodong-1 missile with a range of up to 2,000 kilometers.

At the time Pyongyang called it a satellite launch. But in 2002 it agreed not to test further long-range missiles in a declaration with Japan paving the way for the normalization of relations.



Indonesian girls play at a golf course near the Mount Merapi volcano in Sleman, Yogyakarta. Merapi showed less volcanic activity yesterday but scientists warned that it was still extremely dangerous.

Hanoi pilot held in Australia with suitcase full of dollars

AFP, Hanoi

A Vietnam Airlines pilot was held in Australia after being caught with a suitcase full of hundreds of thousands of dollars that could have come from drug trafficking, state media said Sunday.

Tran Dinh Dan was arrested on June 3 at Sydney international airport.

The Australian Federal Police officially asked narcotic police in Vietnam to cooperate in investigating the case, allegedly in connection with a transnational drug trafficking ring, the news portal Dan Tri said.

A police statement confirmed the arrest of a Vietnamese national but did not disclose his profession.

"A 37-year-old Vietnamese national was charged on 4th June after customs officers at Sydney airport discovered he was concealing more than half a million Australian dollars in his suitcase," the police said in a statement.

"He was charged with one count of money laundering and one count of failing to declare excess currency."

Reports in Vietnam said police found around 560,000 US dollars (413,000 Australian dollars).

They quoted the Australian police as saying the pilot admitted he was given the cash in Vietnam and was transporting it for a drug trafficking ring.

The money was likely to be laundered or reinvested in other illegal activities, they added.

Police are seeking several other people allegedly connected to the case.

One killed, six hurt in troubled Thai south

AFP, Narathiwat

A Thai businessman was shot dead Sunday and a bomb blast wounded six people, including four police, in the latest violence to hit the country's insurgency wracked south, police said.

The attacks followed more than 70 bomb blasts over four days which police have blamed on Islamic militants. An explosion late Saturday killed one man and injured two women in a hotel karaoke bar in Yala province.

In Sunday morning's shooting in neighbouring Narathiwat province, Muslim businessman Niso Mueda, 48, a former provincial government official, was shot dead in his car by a gunman using an AK-47 assault rifle, said police.

And four policemen on patrol in the province's Chao Ai Rong district were hit by an explosive device that also injured two villagers, police said.

A separatist movement has simmered in the south ever since Thailand annexed an ethnic Malay sultanate there a century ago, and insurgencies erupted in the 1970s and again in early 2004.

The latest unrest between militants and security forces of the mainly Buddhist country has claimed more than 1,300 lives, although police also blame organised crime groups in the border region for many killings.

Thai police Friday arrested six suspects under emergency laws following the latest wave of attacks using mostly small and crudely-made explosive devices made with agricultural fertiliser and packed with nails.

Suu Kyi to spend another birthday alone

AFP, Bangkok

Myanmar's democracy icon Aung San Suu Kyi, who turns 61 today, will spend another birthday alone, under house arrest imposed by a junta that has ignored an international outcry for her freedom.

The opposition leader and Nobel peace prize laureate, known to many of her followers simply as "The Lady," has spent more than 10 of the past 17 years under house arrest at her lakeside residence in central Yangon.

Her only contact with the outside world has been a shortwave radio and a monthly visit from her doctor. She lives with two maids but is not allowed to receive guests, including her two adult sons.

Hopes for her release ran high after the isolated military regime allowed a top United Nations envoy to visit her on May 20 -- the first meeting between a foreigner and the pro-democracy leader in two years.

UN Secretary General Kofi Annan also urged junta leader General Than Shwe to free her.



Instead, the regime extended her house arrest by another year on May 27 and rebuffed an ensuing international uproar, calling her detention an internal matter.

The United States, a vocal critic of Myanmar, responded by saying it would pursue an unprecedented UN Security Council resolution to condemn the junta's repressive policies.

But despite rising international pressure on the country formerly known as Burma, isolated for its

abuses against dissidents and ethnic minorities, analysts and diplomats say the regime is unlikely to set her free anytime soon.

"The government is afraid of Aung San Suu Kyi because she is still very popular among the people," a Yangon-based diplomat told AFP, asking not to be named. "If she goes free, she can quickly draw people and call for democracy."

Soe Aung, a spokesman for the Network for Democracy and Development, a Thai-based group of Myanmar's pro-democracy exiles, agreed.

"The government is afraid of her charisma," he said. "If she is freed, she will travel all over the country to demand democracy. The government cannot stop her."

Aung San Suu Kyi, the daughter of the country's independence leader General Aung San, studied and worked abroad, including for the United Nations, but returned to Myanmar in 1988 to care for her ailing mother.

'Money can delay life and death'

AFP, Sydney

Money might not buy love, but it can delay both life and death, according to two Australian economists.

An announcement in the government's May 2004 budget that a "Baby Bonus" of 3,000 dollars (2,250 US dollars) would be paid for each child born on or after July 1 that year saw more than 1,000 births delayed, the researchers say.

"We estimate that around 700 births were shifted from the last week of June 2004 into the first week of July 2004," said Australia National University economist Andrew Leigh.

"But more troublingly, we found that around 300 births were moved by more than two weeks."

Leigh said that using daily births data, he and Melbourne Business School economist Joshua Gans found that there were more births on July 1 2004 than on any other date in the past 30 years.

The babies who had to wait around a while so their parents could cash in on their births were mostly delivered by caesarean section or induction, Leigh told AFP.

The two economists found similar blips in the data when they checked the death records of 1979, when the government abolished inheritance tax.

Rather than being taxed on up to 28 percent of the value of their estate, a significant number of rich people put off drawing their final breath until July 1, when they were free to die untaxed, they said.

"Over half of those who would have paid inheritance tax in its last week of operation managed to avoid doing so," said Leigh and Gans.

There were "noticeably fewer deaths during the last week of June than in the first week of July," they said, estimating that about 50 wealthy people managed to cheat the taxman.

They concede that relatives of the dead may have fiddled the date of their loved ones' deaths to protect their inheritance, but say this is not the case in the births data.

"The share of births that were induced and/or delivered by caesarean sections was particularly high in July 2004," said Gans. "This suggests that we're not merely observing misreporting of babies' birth dates -- there was a real shift in births."

Slovak left-wing Smer party wins elections

AFP, Bratislava

Slovak left-wing opposition Smer party came top in Saturday's legislative elections with 29.14 percent of the vote, giving leader Robert Fico an opportunity to roll back liberal economic reforms that have split the country.

"For us, the result is fantastic," said 41-year-old Fico. "I hope that we will succeed in forming a coalition government which will be able to push through a left-wing programme," he headed.

The result puts Fico in pole position to form a coalition government, ending the eight years in power of Prime Minister Mikulas Dzurinda.

The former lawyer, who celebrated news of the victory early Sunday by singing Slovak folk songs at the party's headquarters, will command 50 seats in the 150-



Robert Fico

seat parliament against 31 for his nearest rival Dzurinda's Slovak Democratic and Christian Union.

Dzurinda's party obtained 18.35 percent of the vote in a poll marked by a low turnout of 54.6 percent, according to the results of the final count released by the Slovak Statistical Office on Sunday morn-

ing. After eight years in power, Dzurinda was battling for a third term to continue reforms that have brought Slovakia strong economic growth -- at 6.1 percent the highest in central Europe -- but stubbornly high unemployment at 15.5 percent.

In third position with 11.73 percent was the extreme-right Slovak National Party, which is opposed to gypsies and the country's half-a-million strong Hungarian minority.

Just behind with 11.68 percent came Dzurinda's former coalition partner, the Hungarian Coalition Party, which champions the rights of the Hungarian minority.

The Movement for a Democratic Slovakia of former prime minister Vladimir Meciar -- which topped the polls in previous elections in 2002 -- slipped badly to 8.79 percent.

Delhi nominates Tharoor for top UN post

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

India has nominated UN Under Secretary General Shashi Tharoor for the world body's top post which it said should rightfully come to Asia when incumbent Kofi Annan's term ends in December this year. Capping weeks of speculation, the Indian External Affairs Ministry on Thursday evening announced the candidature of 50-year-old Tharoor, an eminent writer and academician with nearly three decades of experience of working with the UN.

If elected, Tharoor, currently the UN Under Secretary General for Communication and Public Information, will be the youngest UN Secretary General and the second Asian after U Thant to occupy the prestigious post.

"India's nomination of Tharoor for the post is based on the UN's commitment to the rotational principle under which the next Secretary General should be from Asia," Indian External Affairs Ministry spokesman Navtej Sarma told reporters.

Having backed the candidature of Tharoor, who was born in London and educated in India and the

United States, India is now in touch with other countries to drum up international support, Sarma said.

"We have taken up the issue of seeking support for the candidature of Mr Tharoor through diplomatic channels with all member-countries of the United Nations and our missions are actively seeking such support," he said.

Others from Asia already in the race for the top UN post are Jayantha Dhanapala, a seasoned diplomat and adviser to Sri Lankan President, Thailand's Deputy Prime Minister Surakiart Sathirathai and South Korean Foreign Minister Ban Ki-Moon.

"Mr Tharoor's internationally acclaimed stature and experience

make him eminently suitable to become the next Secretary General of the United Nations," Sarma said adding India believes that the next UN chief should have a strong commitment to UN reforms, have impeccable credentials and be acceptable to a majority of the countries.

"India is a founder-member of the UN and we have consistently and significantly contributed to all aspects of its functions. India is strongly committed to comprehensive reforms of the UN and believes that the reforms and the expansion of the Security Council in both permanent and non-permanent categories is central to the process of UN reforms," the spokesman said.

Chinese city opens restored Great Wall to tourists

AFP, Zhangjiakou

Tourists to the Great Wall of China more often than not get a decidedly modern view of the ancient structure, walking along stretches rebuilt and repaved to handle millions of visitors every year.

But a battle-scarred section in the historic garrison town of Zhangjiakou, 180 kilometers (110 miles) northwest of Beijing, is one of the first to allow visitors to walk next to the ancient edifice in its natural state.

The Great Wall's Dajingmen Gate is being restored for tourism, but unlike other tourist sites along

the wall it has been left largely in its natural state of decay.

"In the Zhangjiakou region, archaeologists have found remnants of the Great Wall dating to the Qin Dynasty over 2,200 years ago," Chang Jingzhong, head of the Zhangjiakou cultural affairs bureau, told AFP.

There are also parts of the wall built in successive dynasties afterwards including the Han, Northern Wei, Tang, Jin, Ming and Qing Dynasties.

"This is why we call Zhangjiakou a Great Wall Museum."

A new park along the Taiping Mountain Range above the west

side of the Dajingmen Gate allows tourists to climb along several kilometers (miles) of tree-covered pathways next to the crumbling wall in varying states of disrepair.

The park is the answer to increasing demands by Great Wall enthusiasts and tourists who have longed to be able to visit the ancient wall in a natural state, but who have also feared that increasing tourist traffic will further erode the structure.

"The Dajingmen Gate is the symbol of Zhangjiakou, so we are trying to preserve the historic record as best we can, while also making it accessible to tourists," Chang said.

"The gate itself once marked China's northern border and largely dates to the early Ming Dynasty (around 1368), but was rebuilt again during the Qing Dynasty in 1546."

The gate is one of the four major historic passes along the Great Wall, and was the first gate in a line of defenses protecting the capital from Mongolian and other armies north of China.

Although the gate and a stretch of the wall in Zhangjiakou city proper are being renovated, the wall on the Taiping Mountain ridge has been largely spared of the rebuilding that other Great Wall tourist sites have undertaken.

The Juyongyuan Gate, just outside Beijing near the ever popular Badaling Great Wall, has been massively rebuilt as one of the wall's great gates and was once the second line of the capital's defense after the Dajingmen.

The other two great gates are Shanhaiguan, also known as the "Old Dragon's Head", where the eastern-most end of the Great Wall falls into the Bohai Sea, and the Jiayuguang Gate to the west where the wall disappears into the deserts of Gansu province.

Although the distance between Shanhaiguan to Jiayuguang is nearly 1,600 kilometers (992 miles) as the bird flies, the actual wall is estimated to be over 6,000 kilometers long as it winds back and forth along mountain ridges.

Zhangjiakou, often referred to in history books by its Mongolian name of Kalgan, is situated in a strategic pass that competing armies have fought over for several millennia.

New Paris museum for tribal arts

AFP, Paris

Europe's newest museum, dedicated to celebrating tribal arts and cultures, will be inaugurated on Tuesday by French President Jacques Chirac, the culmination of an 11-year personal quest. The Musee du Quai Branly, housed in a stunning new building designed by the architect Jean Nouvel on the banks of the River Seine, will bring together for the first time a wealth of some 300,000 objects from Asia, Africa, Oceania and the Americas, some dating back to the B.C. era.

"This museum in some way is the recognition of cultural diversity, of what it brings to today's world and how it is necessary for the respect of mankind and for peace," Chirac told a television documentary last week.

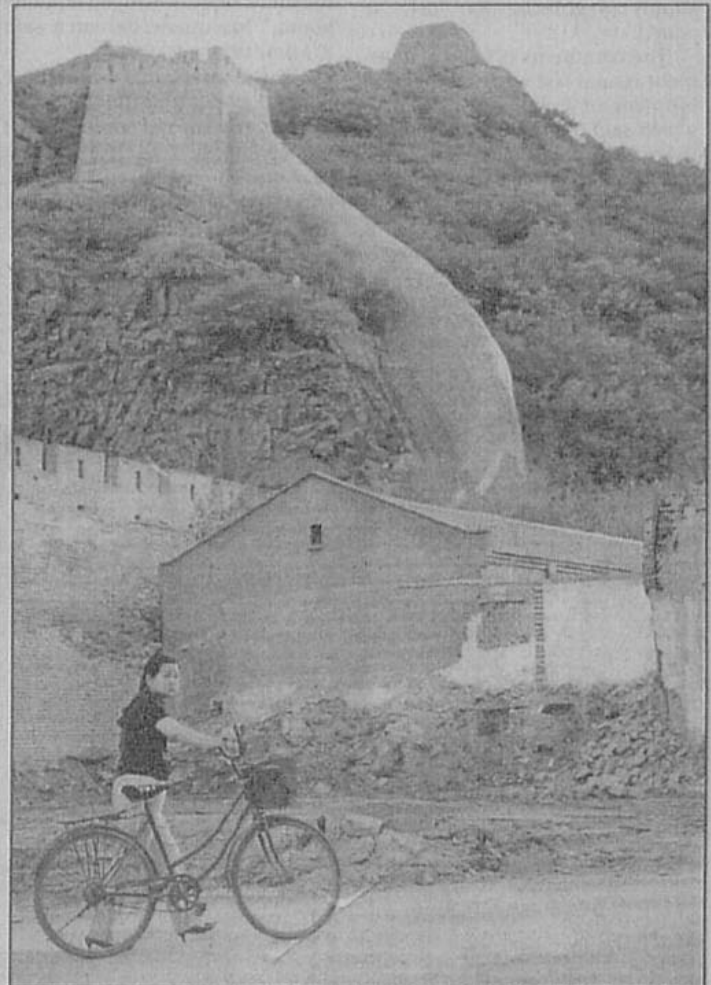
"Nothing is worse than the disparaging glances sometimes thrown by pseudo intellectuals on the art, pro-

duction and talent of others."

The French president, whose office is surrounded by works of tribal arts and who has been caught during boring meetings leaving through auction catalogues, first set up a commission to study the project in 1995.

For architect Nouvel, the new museum of four buildings linked by walkways and footbridges and including three suspended galleries and a eye-popping vegetal wall, is directly inspired by the collection.

"It is a sanctuary for the scorned and censured works produced not so long ago in Australia and America. It is a haunted place, wherein dwell and converse the ancestral spirits of those who awoke to the human condition and invented gods and beliefs. It is a strange, unique place. Poetic and disturbing," he wrote in his 1999 submission which won him the competition to design the museum.



A woman walks with her bicycle past a partially refurbished section of the Dajingmen Great Wall yesterday in the historic garrison town of Zhangjiakou.

Advertisement for Daka Bank (ঢাকা স্টক এক্সচেঞ্জ লিমিটেড) featuring a 250 KVA generator sale. The ad includes contact information, a list of services, and a list of products for sale.