



## Ramos-Horta named new E Timor PM

AFP, Dili

Nobel prize-winner Jose Ramos-Horta has been named as East Timor's new prime minister, President Xanana Gusmao announced yesterday, ending weeks of political uncertainty in the nation.

The premier's position was left empty last month when Mari Alkatiri resigned, bowing to pressure to take responsibility for violence which saw at least 21 people die and 150,000 flee their homes for makeshift refugee camps.

"We have agreed to declare as prime minister Jose Ramos-Horta, first deputy prime minister Estandisau da Silva and second deputy prime minister Rui Araujo," Gusmao said after meeting with leaders from the ruling party.

Da Silva is currently agriculture minister while Araujo is health minister.

## Rumsfeld sued over wrong detention

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE, Los Angeles

A Los Angeles filmmaker has sued US Defence Secretary Donald H Rumsfeld and many high-ranking military officials for wrongly imprisoning him for 55 days in Iraq last year.

Cyrus Kar, 45, filed his suit in a Los Angeles federal court on Friday, alleging that his imprisonment violated his civil rights, international law, the Geneva Convention and fundamental principles of the due process of law.

The suit is the first civil action challenging the constitutionality of the detention and hearing policies of the US government in Iraq.

Kar, a US citizen and navy veteran, went to Iraq 14 months ago to make a documentary film about Cyrus the Great -- the Persian king who issued the world's first human rights charter.

# US ready for bilateral talks with N Korea

## Japan presses for sanctions

AP, AFP, Seoul/Tokyo

A US envoy expressed support for China's proposal to hold informal six-nation talks on the North Korean nuclear threat and offered to meet bilaterally with the North on the sidelines of those discussions.

US Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill was in Seoul as part of a regional tour to coordinate the international response to the North's test-firing of seven missiles on Wednesday. The tests caused international outrage but also division over whether North Korea should be punished.

Japan's foreign minister said yesterday that his nation would not compromise in its push for a UN resolution on North Korea that could lead to sanctions, despite opposition from China and Russia.

Foreign Minister Taro Aso said Japan, which has a temporary seat on the UN Security Council, was resolved to keep working for a

resolution, instead of a milder and non-binding Council statement, after the North's missile tests.

"We may amend the draft but we are firm on the binding resolution that includes sanctions," Aso said in a speech. "Japan will not compromise. We will go all the way."

Over Chinese and Russian objections, Japan on Friday proposed a UN Security Council resolution that would impose sanctions on North Korea and order the communist regime to stop developing ballistic missiles.

Backed by the United States, Britain and France, the resolution condemns the launches that the North conducted Wednesday in defiance of international warnings.

Beijing has floated the idea of an informal meeting between members of the six-party nuclear talks the two Koreas, China, Russia, Japan and the United States. Pyongyang has for months refused to attend formal negotiations,

protesting US financial restrictions imposed over the North's alleged counterfeiting, money-laundering and other illegal practices.

"As many of you know, the Chinese have talked about putting together a six-party informal, and we both support that and we think that all countries are prepared to come to that informal meeting," Hill told reporters after meeting with Chun Young-woo, South Korea's top nuclear negotiator.

Asked about the possibility of a bilateral meeting with the North, he said: "Within the informal six-party talks, yes, I can."

"I just can't do it when they are boycotting the six-party talks."

But Hill rejected North Korea's demand that the US drop restrictions imposed on a Macau bank for allegedly aiding the North's illicit activities. The US has argued that the nuclear talks and financial restrictions are separate issues and should not be linked.

"This is not a time for so-called gestures of that kind," Hill said in response to the North Korean demand. "We have a country that has fired off missiles in a truly reckless way that affects ... regional security."

The North has defended its right to test missiles and said the launches could continue.

Japan urged the United Nations to vote soon on the Security Council resolution and warned it would not compromise on its stern wording. The measure would call for other countries to "take those steps necessary" to keep the North from acquiring items that could be used for its missile programme.

"Japan will not give in. It definitely must be a resolution containing sanctions," Japanese Foreign Minister Taro Aso was quoted by Kyodo News agency as saying during a speech in Osaka on Saturday. Japan "will not back off from the resolution. We will hold on until the end."



Cars drive toward the outbound entrance of the Holland Tunnel Friday in New York. The FBI said it had foiled a "real deal" terror plot by a group of al-Qaeda followers to attack transport tunnels in New York, with three suspects already in custody overseas.

## Benazir, Sharif should be allowed to return

Says US envoy

PTI, Islamabad

Former Pakistan prime ministers Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif should be permitted to return from their exile abroad to take part in next year's general elections, US Ambassador to Islamabad Ryan C Crocker has said.

His remarks came close on the heels of recent assertions by US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice that President Pervez Musharraf should ensure free and fair polls and that the international community would monitor all aspects of polls including the right of the candidates to assemble and campaign.

Both Benazir and Sharif have a democratic right to come back, Crocker was quoted as saying in Lahore on Thursday by Pakistani daily The Post.

There was no elaboration or confirmation of what Crocker said.

However, 'Online' news agency reported that Crocker termed the issue of return of Benazir and Sharif as an internal matter of Pakistan.



Palestinian children from al-Ajuri family play on the debris of their destroyed home in Beit Lahya, northern Gaza Strip yesterday. Israeli forces pulled back from northern Gaza yesterday, three days after it launched a deadly military incursion into the area.

## Iran rejects West's timetable for talks

AFP, Brussels

Iran's top nuclear negotiator, Ali Larjani, on Friday again resisted pressure from the West for a swift response to its offers of economic incentives in return for the suspension of Tehran's uranium enrichment programme.

"The timetable drawn up by other people has no influence on what we do," he told a news conference in Madrid.

Larjani said Tehran had been working seriously on the offer made on June 6 by six western powers, France, Britain, Germany, the United States, Russia and China, but "needed to devote sufficient time (to it)".

"We view this proposition in a positive light but there are doubts about it which we have to clarify through dialogue," he said.

"I see no reason to be pessimistic," he continued, adding, "we do not need to be given a time limit to respond ... that does not make sense."

"If negotiation is to take place it needs to be in the language of negotiation," he stated in response to questions about western pressure on Iran to respond quickly.

Iran is facing mounting international pressure to show ahead of the Group of Eight (G8) summit on July 15-17 that it is ready to accept the offer from the six powers.

On Thursday the European Union, Russia and the United Nations' nuclear watchdog, the IAEA, all reiterated appeals for Tehran to respond soon, and the United States again brandished the threat of UN Security Council sanctions.

On Friday Larjani held discussions in Madrid with Spanish Prime Minister Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero and Foreign Minister Miguel Angel Moratinos.

The latter stressed that Spain supported the international offer and hoped Iran would "respond promptly" to the proposal, which Madrid supported, according to the foreign ministry.

## Duma passes law to fight extremism

AFP, Moscow

Russia's lower house of parliament passed an anti-extremism law yesterday that human rights defenders say could be used to hobble opposition parties and the media.

The State Duma, dominated by the pro-Kremlin United Russia party, passed the new law by 338 votes to 99 against, with one abstention, easily clearing the 226-vote hurdle.

President Vladimir Putin, who is to host the Group of Eight (G8) summit in Saint Petersburg next weekend, must now add his signature for the law to go into effect.

The law expands the definition of extremism to include slander against public officials, including accusations against a public official of having committed serious or extremist crimes.

Hindering the work of the authorities, electoral commissions or officials will also be considered extremist, as will involvement in riots, hooliganism or vandalism for ideological, religious, political or ethnic motives.

## India, IAEA discuss nuke safeguards

PTI, New Delhi

Officials of India and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) met here yesterday to negotiate the proposed Safeguards Agreement, which is required to be put in place to allow the international community to resume nuclear trade with New Delhi.

The Indian side was headed by Joint Secretary (Disarmament) in the External Affairs ministry Hamid Ali Rao.

Officials of the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) also participated in discussions with the IAEA delegation.

Under the Indo-US civil nuclear deal signed in March during the visit of President George W Bush here, New Delhi and the IAEA have to work out an 'India-specific Safeguards Agreement' for supervision of civilian nuclear facilities of this

country.

In the civil nuclear agreement, India had classified 14 of its 22 atomic reactors as civilian, which will be covered under the IAEA safeguards agreement.

After the signing of the Indo-US civil nuclear deal, Atomic Energy Commission chairman Anil Kakodkar had travelled to Vienna to hold preliminary discussions with IAEA officials on the proposed Safeguards agreement.

India is expected to seek an early conclusion of the agreement with IAEA in view of the US Congress' desire to see progress on it before the American Parliament approves a change of law to allow nuclear trade with New Delhi.

International Committees of both US House of Representatives and the Senate recently approved two bills providing for a change of law that will end India's nuclear apartheid.

## Kashmir woman leader survives attack: 5 killed

REUTERS, Srinagar

A woman politician in Indian Kashmir survived a sixth attempt on her life yesterday when suspected militants threw a grenade, but five of her supporters were killed and 45 wounded in the attack, police said.

Sakina Itoo, 36, lawmaker and a leader of the National Conference party, was coming out of a shrine along with dozens of her supporters when the militants struck, a police spokesman said.

"Itoo received splinter injuries but she is out of danger" the spokesman said, adding that a prominent former state lawmaker, Ghulam Nabi Dar, and four others were killed in the explosion.

No militant group has claimed responsibility for the attack which took place in Kulgam, 65km south of Srinagar, summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir state.

Five children and six policemen

were among the wounded in the explosion. Hundreds of people, many of them wailing, rushed to hospitals looking for their relatives.

"The explosion was deafening, I saw people falling on each other ... bleeding and screaming for help," Mohammad Shafi, who witnessed the attack, told Reuters.

Itoo, a former tourism minister, has survived five previous attempts on her life since an Islamic insurgency broke out in the region in 1989. More than 45,000 people have been killed since then.

Her father, a former speaker of the state legislature and senior leader of the National Conference party, was killed by militants in 1995.

Violence has increased in the state in recent months as summer melts snow in the region's mountain passes, allowing easier movement of militants. Kashmir is part-ruled by nuclear rivals India and Pakistan, but claimed in full by both.