

## Kuwait snaps all job contracts

NICOSIA, May 27: Kuwait issued new regulations on Sunday restricting the employment of foreigners in ministries and state institutions, reports Reuter.

All employment contracts for foreigners agreed before the Iraq occupation are no longer valid, Kuwait news agency reported.

Foreigners could only work for the government if no Kuwait was available for the job, it said.

Kuwait depended heavily on foreigners before Iraq's August 2 invasion, a reliance the government now hopes to reduce.

The regulations were issued by the Civil Service Commission to "organise the process of holding contracts with non-Kuwaitis at this decisive stage," KUNA said.

### Mahathir says

## Paid agents feeding information to West

KUALA LUMPUR, May 27: Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad has accused paid agents of undermining Malaysia's stability by feeding baseless information to western governments and the media, newspaper reports said Monday, reports AFP.

Speaking in Seremban town south of here on Sunday, Dr Mahathir did not identify the so-called agents but he said they included people who championed the western concept of democracy that placed individual freedom above the rights of a community.

"They are so engrossed with western democracy that they are willing to tell the western-dominated media that our country is not stable," the English language daily The Star reported.

Dr Mahathir's remarks followed his criticism last week of a United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) report ranking Malaysia alongside the Soviet Union, North Korea and China in terms of the freedom its citizens enjoy.

A human freedom index framed by the UNDP placed Malaysia 55th on a list of 88 countries, below Israel which the Malaysian government has repeatedly criticised for denying Palestinians their basic rights.

Dr Mahathir said his government would expose the agents because they would destroy Malaysia if allowed to proliferate.

The concept of placing individual freedom above a community's rights was not suited to Malaysian conditions, he said, adding "What we want is democracy which benefits the majority without forsaking the minority of the country".

Opposition leader Lim Kit Siang, responding to Dr Mahathir's remarks, said Monday

# Tearful adieu to the end of India's ruling dynasty

NEW DELHI, May 27: An emotional crowd of thousands gathered here today weeping and shouting "Rajiv, we will never forget you" as they bid farewell to the ashes of the slain former Premier which will be carried throughout India, reports AFP.

Diplomats joined the throngs at Mr Gandhi's childhood home, Teen Murti House, as 28 urns containing the ashes which lay at the foot of a huge tree in the garden, were

distributed to the representatives of the country's states.

Mr Gandhi's Italian-born widow, his son and daughter, all dressed in mourning white and hidden behind a thick wall of military, police and paramilitary guards, set out to accompany two of the urns in a cavalcade through the city.

Other reports says: Rajiv Gandhi, the handsome but flawed son of India's ill-fated house of Nehru-Gandhi, always lived with the threat of death.

He invariably appeared in public surrounded by bodyguards. His loose-fitting Hindu clothes hid the bulk of a bullet-proof vest during ceremonial occasions. At rallies he delivered speeches from behind armoured glass. He did not by the bullet but the bomb.

It was the tragedy which millions of Indians had feared, sensing that, whatever their political views, this man of 46 who had seemingly been born to rule, was an international

symbol of a kind of stability. When he died he was campaigning to retrieve power for his Congress Party which had lost office in the election of 1989.

Rajiv was the grandson of Pandit Nehru, independent India's first prime minister and key associate of Mahatma Gandhi, the "father" of the Indian people in the long battle for independence. He was the third member of the dynasty to die unnaturally, the second by

assassination. His younger brother, Sanjay, was killed while stunt-flying a plane over Delhi in 1980. His mother, Indira, was gunned down by a Sikh bodyguard in the grounds of her residence in the capital in October, 1984 — a victim of the campaign for independence in the Punjab by Sikh nationalists.

Born into the byzantine politics of his native land, he was nevertheless a very western, Cambridge-educated figure, a product of the Beatles era who loved European music and food. When his mother, Indira, insisted on consulting astrologers during her Premiership he scolded her: "We are not living in the flintstone age now."

His first career was as a professional pilot for Indian Airlines flying domestic routes in the north of the country. When he was finally persuaded to enter politics fulltime, he had to abandon his great ambition — training to fly a Boeing jet.

Perhaps that was always a futile dream. From birth Rajiv's fate was intertwined with the politics of post-independence India.

The family name was Nehru and his mother acquired the legendary Gandhi name by marrying a Parsi businessman from Bombay. But it was more than a coincidence. The Nehru and Gandhi families together forged modern India.

The forceful Mrs Gandhi took the fast track to a political career. She moved with her children to the Prime Minister's residence to become her father's official hostess. As India's first Prime Minister, Nehru ruled from Independence in 1947 until 1964 and during that time Mrs Gandhi

began to lay her own power base.

In 1959 she was elected President of the Indian National Congress Party and, although there was a two-year break in the dynastic rule when Nehru died in 1964, she was ready to take the reins as Prime Minister after an election victory in 1966. They were turbulent years with India racked by war with Pakistan, economic failure, overpopulation and resurgent nationalism that continues to threaten India as a unified state.

By this time, although regarded as the "mother" of the nation and widely respected on the international stage, she had become remote and autocratic. Her handling of the Sikh problem, sending in her army in full knowledge that it would deeply offend many of her countrymen, was seen as evidence of an insensitivity and dwindling respect for democracy. It was a fateful decision.

During the latter years of her reign it was the younger son, Sanjay, who had become her heir apparent. He was never far from her side as her official adviser. But he quickly made enemies with his arrogant attitude which offended MPs and government officials alike. His career began with an ambitious attempt to start his own car factory which ended in a spectacular bankruptcy. Allegations of corruption were never far behind him and his reputation reached its low point during the state of emergency in the mid-seventies with his ruthless application of the National Regeneration Programme, which embraced slum clearance and birth control, when he was widely accused of brutality.

The death of Sanjay was the turning point in Rajiv's life. Seemingly destined to lead the life of a typical upper-class Indian professional, he found himself faced with the challenge of maintaining the dynasty.

He was reluctant to the last. "The way I look at it, Mummy has to be helped somehow," he said.



Fatal destiny: Rajiv (left) had no connection with politics until his younger brother Sanjay (top) died in a plane crash. After his mother Indira (above) was shot, he took over her role as leader but Mr Clean became tarnished in the mire of Indian politics.

### Rajiv's ashes to be scattered in sacred rivers

## BJP flexing muscles: massive hunt for fake reporter

NEW DELHI, May 27: The grieving family of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi took the ashes of the slain leader on a train of mourning Monday to be scattered in the water of sacred rivers, reports AP.

Gandhi's widow Sonia and two college-age children boarded the train with two copper urns containing some of Gandhi's cremated remains. (After a 20-hour ride, the ashes will be immersed at Sangam, the confluence of the Ganges and Yamuna rivers which will bear them 1,000 kilometers (600 miles) to the Bay of Bengal.)

One of the 32 urns was

given to an Indian air force officer to scatter over the snowy Himalayan Mountains, as was done with the ashes of Gandhi's mother, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, who was assassinated in 1984.

The other urns, containing mostly ashes from the fragrant sandalwood funeral pyre, were given to state leaders of the Congress Party to take to their states.

Gandhi was killed last Tuesday by a suicide bomber at a campaign rally near the southern city of Madras.

Congress chief rival, the Bharatiya Janata Party, a Hindu revivalist party, moved to capitalise on the confusion in

Congress by portraying itself as the only party capable of giving India stable government — the plank on which Gandhi had hoped to ride back to power.

BJP leader Murli Manohar Joshi said the choice now before the voter was between "a bunch of undisciplined non-leaders and non-parties on the one hand, and a disciplined, well-organized party like the BJP on the other."

Police were seeking a mystery man who posed as a reporter at the rally, who they believe may have been part of a backup squad if the primary assassin failed, said sources close to the investigation.

The man hired a free-lance

photographer and stood with a pen and notebook nearby as Gandhi came into the meadow to address the rally. The photographer was one of the 18 victims, but the unidentified phony journalist disappeared.

Suspicion has fallen on Tamil militants seeking independence in Sri Lanka. Some of the militants are based in southern India, which has a large Tamil population of its own.

Talks were suspended until Wednesday on "naming a new Congress Party leader, deepening the apparent disarray in the party which has dominated Indian politics since independence from Britain in 1947."

A consensus appeared to be emerging to appoint P. V. Narasimha Rao, a Congress veteran and old Gandhi family friend, as interim party president until after national elections are completed in mid-June. A first round of voting for the new Parliament was held the day before the assassination.

Congress had hoped to reap a sympathy vote and postpone a bruising internal fight by naming Gandhi's 43-year-old widow as party leader. She rejected the offer.

Gandhi's remains were bound with full military honours on a gun carriage to the New Delhi railway station from Teen Murti, his childhood home and home of his grandfather Jawaharlal Nehru, India's first prime minister.

Two military policemen placed the 18-inch-high (45-centimeter-high) urns on a white train coach bedecked with marigolds. A picture of Gandhi framed in white jasmine was attached to the side of the special car.

"This is a special trip," said H. N. Tripathi, the train's engineer. "He was a very simple man.... He was the heart of India."

A commando of the National Security Guard stood guard at the gate of an adjoining, blocked most people from entering the station. Party officials and a few others touched the train as it pulled out of the station.



SRIPERUMBUDUR (India): Photo taken from an Indian paper 27 May of the suspected assassin (C) of former prime minister Rajiv Gandhi, waits in line with a garland on hand to greet Gandhi before his address at an election campaign rally 21 May. She is accompanied by Congress (I) party worker Latha Kannan (R) and daughter Gokila (L). —AFP photo

### Planes barred from leaving or landing

## Rebels tighten grip around Addis Ababa

ADDIS ABABA, May 27: Ethiopian rebels tightened their grip around the capital, Addis Ababa, ahead of peace talks with the government opening in London Monday, reports Reuter.

They said in a radio broadcast on Sunday night that no plane should try to take off or land from Addis Ababa Airport as it was within heavy artillery range.

A Reuter correspondent with the rebels said earlier that they had captured the airbase at Debre Zeit, about 50 km (30 miles) southeast of the capital, effectively putting the air force out of action and en-

circling the city.

But despite fears in Addis Ababa of a possible bloodbath, the rebels said they did not intend to storm the capital unless the US brokered peace talks failed.

A column of 12 government T-54 tanks rumbled through the streets near the president's palace at nightfall on Sunday and sporadic gunfire echoed across the city.

Western diplomats said the makeshift government which took over from hardline military ruler Mengistu Haile Mariam last week had little choice in the peace talks but to surrender.

In less than a week, the Ethiopian army and air force have crumbled and most of the navy escaped across the red sea to Yemen on Sunday after rebels of the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) captured Asab, the last government-held port.

Allied rebel groups after a series of lightning attacks, now control most of the country and forced Mengistu to flee into exile in Zimbabwe on May 21.

Djibouti Radio monitored by the British Broadcasting Corporation, said about 10,000 Ethiopian soldiers and civilians had fled to Djibouti.

### Iraq demobilises 3 reservist groups

BAGHDAD, May 27: Iraq has demobilised three groups of reservists who were called up to serve after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait last August, an army spokesman said today, reports AFP.

He told the defense ministry newspaper, Al-Qudsisiya, that the measure involved all reservists born between 1961-1963—some 150,000 forces according to reliable Iraqi sources.

Iraq has demobilised a total of 17 reservists since the Gulf war ended in February with the liberation of Kuwait, according to the military spokesman.

## Suspected assassin's body embalmed

NEW DELHI, May 27: Indian investigators have embalmed the body of a woman suspected to have assassinated former Premier Rajiv Gandhi by triggering a bomb concealed on her person, newspapers reported Monday, reports AFP.

The body, which has not been claimed, has been placed under "strict vigilance" in police custody in the southern state of Tamil Nadu, where Gandhi was killed on May 21, the United News of India (UNI) said.

The Patriot and other newspapers quoted a UNI report as saying that the unidentified woman's body would not be cremated but probably buried at a secret location to safeguard the skull. The body could be exhumed later if necessary.

A dark-skinned bespectacled woman, wearing Indian dress, is believed to killed

Gandhi, 46, with a highly malleable plastic explosive in the town of Sriperumbudur, near the Tamil Nadu capital Madras.

She reportedly set off the powerful bomb wired to her body while pretending to touch his feet as a mark of respect.

Gandhi was at Sriperumbudur to address an election meeting.

News reports, citing security investigation leaks, have said that the woman could be a member of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), Sri Lanka's most powerful Tamil separatist group, which has denied the charge.

It has not been established whether the woman was an Indian or Sri Lankan, nor whether she was living in or visiting Tamil Nadu, a coastal state separated from Sri Lanka by a narrow strip of sea.

## Off the Record

### World told of their stolen childhoods

NEW YORK: Some 50 years after being hidden in basements and attics across Europe, more than 1,500 Holocaust survivors met in New York on Sunday to tell the world of their stolen childhoods, reports Reuter.

"It's the first time that we have gotten together. It gives us a chance to give testimony. We might just be the last ones to do it," said Renee Fersen-Osten, a writer whose recent book "Don't they know the world stopped breathing?" Tells how she was hidden from the Nazis in a French convent.

Sponsored by the B'nai B'rith Anti-Defamation League, the two-day event, the first international convention of Jews who were hidden as children during World War Two, has drawn survivors from across America and Europe. Many fear the horror will be forgotten or downplayed in world history.

At seven, Fersen-Osten and her sister were left at a convent sheltering Jews in Toulouse, southern France, by her parents. They were instructed to change their names and religion so the Nazis could not find them.

A few weeks later said the Gestapo looted her mother and father into a lorry for Auschwitz. It was too dangerous for them to say goodbye because acknowledgement meant detection.

"As a small child my world just crumbled," Fersen-Osten, now 56, said, years later her family was reunited but her life, she said, has been forever changed.

### 60 dead dolphins in Gulf oil slick

MANAMA (Bahrain): Scientists have found the bodies of some 60 dolphins and 11 sea cows washed up on beaches, a Saudi Arabian wildlife expert said Sunday, reports AP.

The area where the animals was found was not affected by the Gulf War oil spill, and it was not clear whether their deaths had any connection with that pollution.

Abdul-Aziz Abuznada, chairman of the kingdom's National Commission for the Protection and Development of Wildlife, said the animals were found by scientists conducting the first Saudi study of oil-affected wildlife since the slick was released in late January.

He told the government-run Saudi press agency, monitored in Bahrain, that the dead animals were found in a patch of central Gulf coastline between Al-Khobar and Salwah.

That is more than 80 miles (130 kilometers) south of the oil-affected area.

The agency's dispatch did not say why killed the animals and Abuznada could not be reached for comment. He told SPA that organs were removed from the animals for further analysis.

Saudi officials told an environmental conference in Bahrain last week that the oil slick also killed an estimated 20,000 birds in the first few weeks and a total of three or four times that many in three months.

## BRIEFLY

**Thatcher in Moscow:** Britain's former Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, arrived here Sunday for a four-day visit to the Soviet Union, the Tass news agency reported, AFP says from Moscow.

During her stay, Mrs Thatcher is to meet with Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev, Prime Minister Valentin Pavlov and Defense Minister Dmitri Yazov, Tass said.

Mrs Thatcher is to make a speech before the Foreign Affairs Commission of the Supreme Soviet, or Parliament, and a will also address the Soviet Institute of International Relations, the agency said.

The former British leader is also scheduled to visit Leningrad.

**Building of dam in India opposed:** Activists from Japan, India, Europe and the United States called for a halt to the massive dam project being built in Western India, Reuter says from Tokyo.

The World Bank and the Japanese Government in 1985 approved loans for a series of dams to be built on the Narmada, the second longest river in India.

Supporters say the dams will provide irrigation, drinking water and electrical power. Activists say such benefits will only go to rich landowners and industrialists, small dams in many villages would be better, and the loans were given without adequate social and environmental assessment.

**Immigrants flood UK illegally:** Thousands of immigrants are entering Britain illegally using genuine but falsely-labelled British passports stolen from government stocks by "what is thought to be Britain's biggest-ever illegal passport syndicate", the Sunday Express reported, AFP reports from London.

The paper said the main beneficiaries of the illegal passports were wealthy Hong Kong residents anxious to leave the colony before it reverts to Chinese rule in 1997.

The Sunday Express said one of its reporters posing as a wealthy Hong Kong businessman paid 5,000 pounds (8,500 dollars) for an authentic passport obtained through an "immigration consultant" based in Leicester whom it named as Vindokumar Patel.

**Palestinian shot dead:** An Israeli soldier on Sunday shot dead a Palestinian who hurled stones at a bus carrying soldiers in the occupied West Bank, the army said, reports Reuter from Jerusalem.

An army statement said soldiers ran after people who threw stones at their passing bus in Hebron.

"During the chase, three local residents attacked one of the soldiers and the soldier opened fire. As a result of the fire, one attacker was killed. The army imposed a curfew on the area," the communique added.

**Iraq ready to check N-arms:** Iraq showed full cooperation in letting international scientists check its nuclear capabilities, said officials from the UN International Atomic Energy (IAEA), Reuter reports from Vienna.

A group of 34 scientists was the first disarmament team to visit Iraq under the terms of the Gulf War Ceasefire Agreement which requires Baghdad to allow checks on its nuclear arsenal, the removal of chemical and long-range missiles and the search for biological weapons.

"The Iraqis could not have been more forthcoming," an IAEA official said.

**150,000 Iraqis killed in war:** Around 110,000 to 150,000 Iraqi soldiers and civilians were killed in the six-week Gulf War, a fact-finding report estimated Sunday, Xinhua reports from Cairo.

Reports reaching Cairo quoted an unofficial French investigation group as saying that among those killed were 35,000 to 45,000 civilians and 75,000 to 100,000 soldiers.

The figures were unveiled from data provided by the Iraqi Foreign and Information Ministries and ruling Arab Baath Socialist Party officials in the Iraqi army, the report said.