

# No accord on allies' pullout from Iraq

WASHINGTON, June 21: The United States and its allies are discussing leaving some forces in the region of northern Iraq, but no decisions have been made about such units, the Pentagon's spokesman said Thursday, reports AP.

Defense Department spokesman Pete Williams refused comment on reports that the United States has agreed to extend a deadline for the withdrawal of its troops from northern Iraq in order to make a smooth transition for a residual protection force for the Kurds.

In Berlin, Secretary of State James A. Baker III also refused

to say whether the United States would join a multinational force to protect the Kurds.

"We're going to be there as long as is necessary to do the job that we originally came to do, which of course is primarily a humanitarian effort. It's important the U.N continue to move forward expeditiously in placement of their guard forces there," Baker said in response to a query.

At the Pentagon, Williams insisted there "isn't an answer" to the question of exactly when US forces would leave the region.

The Washington Post reported Thursday, quoting

British and American officials, that the United States had agreed to extend a pullout deadline 10 days to July 4 in order to provide more time for a transition period.

French and British officials have pressed for a multinational presence in the region, to include U.S. troops, in order to ease Kurdish anxieties about further repression from the Iraqi military, the Post reported. A so-called "crisis brigade" could be established in Turkey to monitor any potential abuses of the Kurds, the paper said.

Williams refused to confirm such details, repeatedly saying that no U.S. withdrawal date has been set, nor that any agreement had been reached among the allies about the future of their forces in the region.

"The precise question is when do you leave. If you leave, do you leave some sort of force behind in the region somewhere?"

That's subject being discussed with the allies and I just don't have an answer for you yet because that's still under discussion," Williams said.

Williams said the discussions were taking place among the various governments, the White House, State Department and Pentagon.

"Everybody's in the act," he said.

The spokesman said there are about 1,900 U.S. troops remaining in northern Iraq. There were some 12,000 allied military forces in the region earlier this month.



WASHINGTON: U.S. President George Bush walks with former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher as they leave the Oval Office at the White House Thursday. Bush said that "picking her brain" helped him to prepare for a meeting with Russian Republic President Boris Yeltsin. Photo — AFP/UNB

# Elections in Punjab postponed till Sep 25

NEW DELHI, June 21: India's Election Commission said Thursday it had postponed elections in the troubled northern state of Punjab until September 25, reports Reuter.

"It is not possible to conduct a fair and free poll for the parliamentary and assembly constituencies on account of the prevalent circumstances in

the state," the Commission said in a statement. It did not give specific reasons.

The Congress Party had opposed holding elections in Punjab as scheduled on Saturday.

Sikh militants campaigning for a separate homeland in Punjab killed 76 people, mostly Hindus, last Saturday in a twin train attack near Ludhiana city aimed at scaring off voters.

Elections in the rest of the country had ended last Saturday after an interruption caused by the assassination of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi on May 21, a day after the first stage of the three-phase polling.

More than 2,600 people have been killed in separate violence in Punjab this year.

## Bush, Thatcher discuss Soviet Union

WASHINGTON, June 21: President George Bush met former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher Thursday to hear her views on Russian President Boris Yeltsin and the Soviet Union, reports Xinhua.

Bush and Thatcher, who was here on a private speaking tour, had breakfast in the White House residence before going into a discussion in the Oval Office, both occasions attended by National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft.

"She shared with us her views on the Soviet Union, having returned from a very interesting and very constructive trip not so long ago," Bush said after the meeting.

# Benazir demands Sind govt's dismissal

ISLAMABAD, June 21: Opposition Leader and former Premier Benazir Bhutto condemned Thursday new legislation approved by Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's cabinet to curb a wave of terrorism in Pakistan, reports AFP.

Ms Bhutto called for the dismissal of the provincial government in Sind and its replacement with "a broad-based government which is acceptable to PPP and MQM."

said, "these ordinances are not a solution to the prevailing law and order situation in Sind."

The MQM (Mohajir Qaumi Movement) represents Urdu-speaking settlers from India who make up the majority in urban Sind. It is a centrist coalition partner of the ruling Islamic Democratic Alliance (IJI) in Sind.

Under new legislation approved by the cabinet Wednesday, the central government can declare an area a "terrorist-affected zone," if violent crime has occurred widely in the region, officials said Thursday.

Police and paramilitary troops will be allowed to use firearms against any person carrying weapons, explosives or acting in contravention of any regulation to be enforced in the disturbed area.

Under the decree — soon to be promulgated by the President — a 30-day period will be given to surrender all illegal arms.

Ms Bhutto said the purpose of the legislation was to "suppress" political opponents and give more powers to "corrupt officials" in different institutions.

Ms Bhutto's remarks followed the recent arrests of 750 people — many belonging to her Pakistan People's Party (PPP) after Tuesday's murder of a special courts' judge in Karachi.

Talking to reporters at Islamabad Airport before leaving for Karachi, Ms Bhutto

added, "I have been heartened and encouraged by President Yeltsin's commitment to democratic values and free-market principles and we look forward to working with him," Bush said, with Yeltsin at his side.

# Rao first South Indian to become Prime Minister

NEW DELHI, June 21: A veteran statesman, P. V. Narasimha Rao, is a scholar-politician to become the country's ninth Prime Minister and the first from south India, reports PTI.

Rao is a man of powerful socio-economic and political convictions and has five decades of administrative and political career.

Popularly known as "PV," the 70-year-old Rao is the senior-most member of the CWC who brings to his new position a wealth of experience as a scholar, lawyer, journalist, linguist and a successful administrator.

legislature. This included a two-year tenure as Chief Minister from 1971 to 1973 when he succeeded Congress stalwart, Brahmananda Reddy.

In the 1972 Assembly elections in Andhra Pradesh nearly 75 per cent of the Congress tickets were given to candidates from the scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and backward classes.

He distinguished himself in every field of interest ranging from literature to diplomacy and headed key portfolios in the Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi governments.

Chosen the Congress-I President after Rajiv Gandhi's assassination, and a member of the AICC, Congress Working

Committee and the party's Parliamentary Board for the past two years, Rao earned fame for his land reform measures as the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh.

Born on June 28, 1921, into an Agriculturist family at Karimnagar in Andhra Pradesh, Rao studied at Somania, Bombay and Nagpur Universities and got his B. Sc and L. L. B. degrees.

Rao started his political career as a Congress activist during the freedom movement in the erstwhile Hyderabad State. He was the General Secretary of the Hyderabad State Congress Committee and became its Vice-President in 1956.

He was elected to the Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly for the first time in 1957 from Manthani constituency in Karimnagar district.

He held a wide range of ministerial posts during the two decades. He served in the

These measures won for the party an impressive number of 220 seats in an Assembly of 270.

Rao moved to Delhi as AICC General Secretary in 1975 and continued in that position till 1976. During that period, he played a key role in drafting the political, Economic and foreign policy resolutions for the AICC session at Kamagatur Nagar in Chandigarh.

In the 1977 General Elections, he was one of the few Congress heavy weights to withstand the Janata 'wave' and enter the Lok Sabha. He was elected from Hanmakonda constituency.

Since then Rao has held several important ministerial posts, including the Defence, External Affairs, Home and Human Resource Development portfolios at the centre.

An accomplished linguist fluent in many languages, Rao was made the Minister for External Affairs in the Indira Gandhi Cabinet when the Congress-I came back to power in 1980.

He was moved to the Ministry of Home Affairs in July 1984, a month after the Operation Blue Star. He continued in that post till Rajiv constituted his cabinet after the party's victory in the eighth Lok Sabha elections in December 1984.

## 20 killed in Salvador clashes

Clashes between Salvadoran army troops and leftist rebels have caused more than 20 casualties around the country in the past 24 hours, rebel and military sources reported Thursday, says AFP from San Salvador.

The precise numbers of dead and wounded were not immediately known.

Meanwhile negotiators from the administration of right-wing President Alfredo Cristiani and the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) began a fifth day of talks in Quetzaltenango, seeking to end the 11-year civil war which has claimed more than 75,000 lives.

Police and paramilitary troops will be allowed to use firearms against any person carrying weapons, explosives or acting in contravention of any regulation to be enforced in the disturbed area.

Under the decree — soon to be promulgated by the President — a 30-day period will be given to surrender all illegal arms.

## Iran to return Iraqi planes

Iran will return all Iraqi planes which took refuge at Iranian airfields during the Gulf war, Iranian Ambassador in Pakistan Javad Mansouri said in Quetta on Thursday, reports Reuter.

"Iran will fully abide by the international rules allowing all planes to return to Iraq," he told a news conference in Quetta. He would not state exactly when the planes would be returned, saying it would be done in "due course of time."

Government officials claimed the middle-class, demanding stability, supported

## Baker-Bessmertnykh meet fails

U.S. Secretary of State James Baker and Soviet Foreign Minister Alexander Bessmertnykh failed to make sufficient progress Thursday on a Strategic Arms Reduction Accord in order to fix a U.S.-Soviet summit date, reports AFP.

Baker said in Berlin after almost two hours meeting that with respect to the possibility of a summit between President Bush and President Gorbachev, "I think we are right where we were when we last met."

He handed a new U.S. proposal to Bessmertnykh in Geneva at their last meeting on June 7. Bush said Monday that Gorbachev's reply was positive concerning the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START).

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## Australia to sell wheat to Iraq

Australia became the first nation to resume wheat sales to Iraq with the signing today of a contract to supply 100,000 tonnes, reports Reuter.

"The sale is the first to be made to Iraq since the United Nations embargo on trade with Iraq came into force in August 1990 and has been made on the basis of cash payment," Australian Wheat Board (AWB) Chairman, Clinton Condon, in Melbourne said.

No price was given in for the deal but industry analysts said about 120 U.S. dollars a tonne would be a fair price.

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## Israel to free 300 Palestinians

Israel officially announced Thursday that it will release 300 Palestinian prisoners as a gesture marking the upcoming Muslim Eid-ul-Azha holiday, reports AP from Jerusalem.

The release will encompass prisoners whose sentence expires before the end of July, a Defense Ministry statement said in Jerusalem.

A senior military official dismissed reports linking the release to a possible swap of missing Westerners and Israeli soldiers in Lebanon.

"If you are trying to connect it to any exchange of hostages, this has nothing to do with it," said the official, who briefed journalists on condition of anonymity.

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## Pak troops in S Arabia back home

The Pakistan Defence Ministry announced Thursday that the 12,000 Pakistani soldiers deployed in Saudi Arabia prior to the Gulf war would return home next week, reports AFP from Islamabad.

The decision was taken following "mutual consultation" between Islamabad and Riyadh, a ministry statement said.

Following the cessation of hostilities with Iraq, Islamabad had reaffirmed on several occasions that its troops would remain in Saudi Arabia as long as Riyadh wanted them there.

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## Italian reporters on strike

Reporters on the main Italian news agencies and newspapers began a three-day strike yesterday in demand of higher pay and new contracts, reports Xinhua from Rome.

National and private television and broadcasting stations will also be hit by a three-day walkout from today.

The strike will stop the publication of major newspapers for three days. The only news will be a five-minute programme on television.

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## Bush stresses strong backing for Gorbachev

WASHINGTON, June 21: President George Bush lavished praise on Russian President Boris Yeltsin on Thursday for pushing radical reforms but emphasized strong US backing for his embattled chief rival, Soviet Leader Mikhail Gorbachev, reports Reuter.

The high-profile meeting between Bush and Yeltsin, coupled with introductory remarks in the White House Rose Garden, was in stark contrast to Yeltsin's visit two years ago when he bravely got in a word to Bush.

"We have been heartened and encouraged by President Yeltsin's commitment to democratic values and free-market principles and we look forward to working with him," Bush said, with Yeltsin at his side.

# Roh's party sweeps local elections

SEOUL, June 21: President Roh Tae-woo's government swept to an overwhelming victory in local elections Friday, showing public support for stability after more than a month of political turmoil and demonstrations, reports AP.

Final results showed Roh's Governing Democratic Liberal Party won 564 out of 866 seats in local councils in 15 large cities and nine provinces.

Government officials claimed the middle-class, demanding stability, supported

# Former actress set to become Tamil Nadu's first elected woman Chief Minister

MADRAS, June 21: Tamil Nadu will have the first elected woman Chief Minister in the election of Miss Jayalalitha, the 43-year-old AIADMK supreme, as the leader of the AIADMK Legislature Party today, reports PTI.

Miss Jayalalitha, the youngest Chief Minister to assume office in the state, by steering the AIADMK, founded by her political mentor and former Chief Minister, late MG Ramachandran, back to power by routing the DMK and its allies in the June 15 elections has fulfilled her vow to 'teach a lesson' to those who allegedly tried to outrage her modesty in the Tamil Nadu Assembly on March 25, 1989.

The AIADMK, which fought the elections in alliance with the Congress (I) had won 163 seats in the 234-member House, which is more than the seats ever won by any party in Tamil Nadu, except the undivided DMK, which won 184 seats in 1971. While the Congress (I) bagged 61 seats, the opposition has been reduced to a single digit strength.

Miss Jayalalitha, who gave up acting and went into a trauma after her mother's death in 1971, had acted in 125 films, which included 82 Tamil, 26 Telugu and 5 Kannada pictures, besides, one each in Hindi and English. She is proficient in English.

1982 and was appointed by MGR as the party's Propaganda Secretary within six months, raising many eyebrows in the party and outside. Miss Jayalalitha's entry into politics and her rise in the party hierarchy caused anxiety to the

Government candidates took the majority of seats in the first round of elections in March that formed local councils in small cities, counties and municipal wards.

The main opposition party led by two-time presidential candidate Kim Dae-jung won 165 seats; the splinter Democratic Party won 21 seats, the dissident People's party won one seat.

Independent candidates captured 115 seats, a sign of growing public distrust of faction-ridden political parties.

# Ballad for Schwarzkopf

TAMPA, (Florida): A new folk ballad inspired by General Norman Schwarzkopf opens with the recorded sound of a Patriot Missile being launched and ends with the sound of a fireworks celebration. But the song never mentions Schwarzkopf by name, reports Reuter.

That's because nothing rhymes with the famous General's last name, said Tampa Real Estate investor and part-time songwriter John Centinaro.

The new tune, "The General was a bear," was produced and sung by local artists and is being distributed through Tampa record shops.

Centinaro said he wrote the ballad to honour the four-star general, who is nicknamed "bear" and plans to retire from the military in August.

A chorus pays homage to Schwarzkopf, singing: "You can call him General, you can call him bear. When freedom is in trouble, you can call him there. We salute you, General. Yes we're proud to say, you'll always be our hero in the USA".

# Swami sentenced

MARTINSBURG, (West Virginia): The leader of a Hare Krishna breakaway sect convicted of authorising kidnapping, beating and murder to cover up illegal activities of the group was sentenced on Thursday to 30 years in federal prison, reports Reuter.

Kirtanananda Swami Bhaktipada, 53, leader of the controversial New Vrindaban Hare Krishna Commune of northern West Virginia, was sentenced after being found guilty on six counts of mail fraud and three counts of racketeering, including conspiring to kill a fringe member of New Vrindaban.

He had faced up to life in prison and more than 76 million dollars in fines, but US District Judge Robert Merhige Jr levied no fine, a court official said.

Bhaktipada, formerly known as Keith Ham, was reported to be the son of a Peckskill, New York Baptist Minister.

In 1987, Bhaktipada was expelled from the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, charged with violating the religion's belief.

Bhaktipada was convicted by a federal jury last March.

The New Vrindaban compound is one of West Virginia's largest tourist attractions. It features remote control Swan Boats, an elephant and "Prabhupada's palace of gold," a monument of the founder of the Hare Krishna Sect.

Members of the community claim the compound attracts about 250,000 visitors a year.

# Off the Record



# Last testament of Mao's wife

TOKYO: Chairman Mao Zedong widow Jiang Qing wrote a last testament before killing herself last month in which she accuses senior leader Deng Xiaoping of betraying her husband and the Chinese people, a Japanese weekly magazine reported today, says Reuter.

The independent Shukan Bunshun said it had obtained a copy of a 20-page document written by Jiang, leader of the "Gang of four" before she hanged herself in Beijing on May 14 at the age of 77 while serving a life sentence.

It said it received the copy from reliable sources in the Chinese government and the document was being held under tight security by the Communist Party, which denied that it existed.

The Shukan Bunshun, a popular and reputable magazine, said Jiang's testament accused Deng of betraying Mao by promising him that none of his policies would be changed after his death.

"He was a traitor to Chairman Mao, a traitor to the Chinese Communist Party and a traitor to the Chinese people," the magazine quoted Jiang as writing.

"You, Deng, you are happy too soon, you were the main plotter in massacring the patriotic students," she said, referring to the army's slaughter of pro-democracy demonstrators in Beijing on June 4, 1989.

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of films. However, MGR, with whom she had a close relationship helped Miss Jayalalitha to overcome the depression and grief by kindling her interest in politics and encouraging her to follow his foot steps. She joined the AIADMK in

legislature. This included a two-year tenure as Chief Minister from 1971 to 1973 when he succeeded Congress stalwart, Brahmananda Reddy.

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