

Nuclear arms in Clark air base?

MANILA, June 13: The United States should tell the Philippines whether it stores nuclear weapons at an air base threatened by an active volcano, a key senator said Thursday, reports AP.

Sen. Leticia Ramos-Shahani, who chairs the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, referred to warnings that eruptions of Mount Pinatubo could cause radioactive contamination if volcanic materials spread to nuclear weapons which may be stored at Clark Air Base.

The volcano, which is 16 kilometers (10 miles) west of Clark, has erupted repeatedly over the past two days. Its latest explosion came early Thursday.

Last Monday, nearly 15,000 Americans evacuated Clark because of the threat of eruptions. About 1,500 American security forces stayed behind to guard the installation, one of the largest US military bases overseas.

The United States refuses to confirm or deny whether it keeps nuclear arms in the Philippines, and Philippine officials say they lack the resources to determine for themselves if the weapons are there.

There must be action because this may be affected by Pinatubo," Mrs. Shahani said in a radio interview. "This policy of neither confirming nor denying must be changed. They should remove these nuclear weapons. It is very dangerous with this volcano and I believe it would be OK to change the policy."

Mrs. Shahani, sister of Defense Secretary Fidel Ramos, said diplomatic pressure should be asserted on Washington to relax the "no confirmation" policy and she would consult her Senate colleagues on the issue.

On Monday, the chairman of the Anti-Bases Coalition, Rolando Simbulan, warned of possible radioactive contamination if volcanic materials reach nuclear weapons allegedly stored at Clark.

The more deadly radioactive contamination which can spread over a wide area depending on the prevailing wind direction should be our concern," he told a press conference.

The US Air Force no longer maintains combat aircraft at Clark, which is primarily used for training and as a transit point in the military's worldwide logistics network.

\$114m military assistance remains frozen US reaffirms ban on aid to Pakistan

WASHINGTON, June 13: The House voted to reaffirm a ban on US aid to Pakistan because of its secretive nuclear programme, Reuter reports.

The 252-151 vote was a rebuff for the Bush administration which had asked for repeal of a law that prohibits aid to Pakistan unless the President can certify to Congress that it does not have a nuclear device.

President Bush was unable to make such a certification last year and so Pakistan, which had long been one of the biggest recipients of US assistance, has received no aid this year.

The administration had proposed 268 million dollars in aid — including 114 million dollars in military assistance for the year starting October 1, but without the nuclear certification this too will remain frozen.

Pakistan's 1991 aid has been divided up among other recipients, with a largest part going to the African Development Fund.

After the vote, the House set aside the Foreign Aid Bill for later consideration.

Earlier AP report adds: US Defence Secretary Dick Cheney and a high-level Pakistani delegation on Wednesday explored the nuclear dispute blocking US aid to Pakistan but did not report any progress.

Cheney's 40-minute talk with Akram Zaki, minister of State for Foreign Affairs, and Pakistan Senate Chairman Wasim Sajjad was positive and provided an "intense understanding of matters of mutual interest," Defense Department spokesman Kenneth Satterfield said.

Their discussion covered bilateral defense issues and "reflected Pakistan's long-standing status as a strong ally of the United States," Satterfield said.

The Defence Department confirmed that the talk covered the nuclear controversy that eight months ago resulted in freezing US assistance to Pakistan, runnerup to Israel and Egypt as top aid recipient. President George Bush in October informed Congress he could not certify that Pakistan does not possess a nuclear device.

Lack of the certification, required annually by law, brought a cutoff of more than a half billion dollars in 1991 military and economic aid.

Satterfield referred requests for details of Cheney's exchange with the Pakistanis to the State Department, which he said handled details of the cutoff. State Department Press officer David Denny said there would be no comment until conclusion of the Pakistani visit.

Zaki and Sajjad have met with Reginald Bartholomew, undersecretary of state for security affairs, and planned to talk Thursday with Vice President Dan Quayle, National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft and the undersecretary of state for political affairs, Robert Kimmitt.

A meeting late Tuesday with the chairman of the lower House Asia-Pacific subcommittee, Democratic Rep. Stephen Solarz, produced no indication of any breakthrough on the nuclear certification problem, Solarz' office said. Solarz is a strong critic of Pakistan's nuclear programme.

Arms of woman prisoner broken

350 PPP activists in jail: fresh polls demanded

KARACHI, June 13: Some 330 political activists, most of them members of opposition leader Benazir Bhutto's People's Party (PPP), are in jail in Pakistan's Sindh province, a local human rights group said today, reports Reuter.

The President of the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, Aqil Lodhi, said in a statement that the list included Bhutto's husband Asif Ali Zardari and a former provincial Chief Minister, Qaum Ali Shah.

Other prominent activists in jail in the volatile southern province include former Federal Ministers, and office bearers of opposition parties and student groups.

A government spokesman described the list as bogus, saying those it named faced criminal charges, including conspiracy to murder.

President Ghulam Ishaq Khan dismissed Bhutto's 20-month-old government last August on disputed charges of abuse of power. He set up special courts which are trying Zardari and other PPP members on various charges.

Most of the 330 jailed activists have been in prison since last August, and were arrested in a crackdown on political opponents of the present government in Sindh, Bhutto's home province.

Tiwana had one of her arms broken and is in hospital being treated for shock, he said.

As Islamabad report says: Pakistan's opposition alliance on Wednesday demanded fresh elections under a neutral administration, saying it was cheated in last October's ballot through large-scale rigging by a caretaker government.

The People's Democratic Alliance (PDA) of former Prime

Minister Benazir Bhutto made the demand as it issued the summary of a report which said at least 70 out of 207 elections for Muslim seats in the 217-seat National Assembly (lower house) were rigged. Ten seats are reserved for non-Muslim minorities who vote separately.

Bhutto told a news conference enough evidence has been gathered to prove that the PDA rather than Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's Islamic Democratic Alliance had won the October 24 elections.

"History of Pakistan would have been different if the verdict of the people had been accepted," she said.

"The PDA calls for free and fair elections under a neutral caretaker government, with all the authority to hold free and fair elections," said PDA Secretary-General, Khurshid Mahmud Kasuri.

The PDA also demanded reform of the electoral system.

"No fair elections are possible under the present system," said Kasuri.

Prabhakaran appears in public meet

COLOMBO, June 13: Tamil Tiger guerrilla leader Velupillai Prabhakaran spoke at a public meeting in Sri Lanka's rebel-controlled north for the first time in four years, drawing many people, residents said yesterday, reports Reuter.

The Tiger leader made a surprise appearance at a meeting to commemorate a Tamil cultural festival in Jaffna town on Monday.

The crowds were thrilled when Prabhakaran spoke and many others gathered at the meeting when news spread that the Tiger leader had come, a resident said by telephone from northern Vavuniya town, 100 km (65 miles) from Jaffna.

Prabhakaran, leader of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, made his last appearance on a public platform in August 1987 when Indian troops arrived on the island to implement a peace accord aimed at ending the Tamil revolt for a separate state.

BRIEFLY

1,000 US workers on strike: More than 1,000 workers at a US government uranium enrichment plant went on strike Tuesday at the Portsmouth Gaseous Diffusion Plant, Xinhua reports from Washington.

About 400 salaried managers and supervisors, who continued to operate the plant, had to stay there overnight. The workers initially used their cars to block the plant's six entrances.

A court ordered to stop blocking the gates.

Quake shakes Hokkaido: A severe earthquake with a preliminary reading of 6.0 on the Richter scale shook the northern island of Hokkaido Thursday morning, the Central Meteorological Agency said, AP reports from Tokyo.

The tremor was centered in the Tokachi area in south-eastern Hokkaido, about 120 kilometers (72 miles) below ground level, the agency said.

The Richter scale is a gauge of the total strength of an earthquake. A quake registering 6 on the scale is considered "severe," capable of widespread damage near the epicenter.

Manila-Pyongyang exercise: The Philippine and North Korean government formally agreed in Manila Thursday to work for the establishment of diplomatic relations within the year, officials said, AFP from Manila reports.

North Korean Vice Premier Kim Dal-Hyon and Foreign Secretary Raul Manglapus signed the agreement at the end of a five-day visit by a diplomatic and trade delegation from Pyongyang.

Bush criticises Congress: US President George Bush criticised the democrat-controlled Congress for failing to enact urgently needed legislation to repair the nation's roads and bridges, Reuter from Washington says.

Bush, observing his 67th birthday, told some 1,000 persons invited to an unusual outdoor night-time speech at the White House, "I can not fully explain this inaction to the American people."

He is seeking 105 billion dollars over five years to repair highways, bridges and invest in mass transit.

The democrats have criticised the plan as inadequate.

Iraqi bank for civil servants: Iraq's ruling Revolutionary Council has set up a bank which will grant civil servants and officers decorated during the Gulf War with interest-free loans, Baghdad Radio said Wednesday, AFP from Baghdad reports.

The new establishment, the socialist bank, will be operational once the council's decision is published in the official journal, the radio said.

The bank, the first of its kind in Iraq, will have capital of 500 million dinars (about 1.5 billion dollars).

"Friends of the President (Saddam Hussein)" will also benefit from the loans, the radio said, identifying them as "officers and soldiers who received at least three times the badge of courage during the Iraq-Iran War."

Inflight voice telephone in France: The French State Telephone Company said it made the first inflight voice telephone call by satellite on Wednesday, making it possible for airline passengers to call anywhere from virtually anywhere, Reuter reports from Paris.

A spokesman for France Telecom said the call was made to Paris from a plane flying over Western France via an inmarsat satellite.

He said France Telecom, together with Australian company OTC Ltd and Teleglobe Canada, was now offering airlines a worldwide aircom inflight telephone system called Aircom.

Up to now, inflight telephone systems used ground relays, leaving passengers unconnected when flying over water.

Package bomb kills 2: A parcel bomb exploded Wednesday at a transport company office, killing two police officers called to the scene to inspect it and injuring six other people, police said, AP from Madrid reports.

The blast took place as the two police bomb experts attempted to place the 'suspicious package inside a specially armored police van, said a police spokesman, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

The bombing was the second fatal terrorist attack in a week in Madrid. Last Wednesday, a bomb exploded under the car of an air force lieutenant, killing the officer. Police suspected the bombing was the work of Basque separatists.

No group immediately claimed responsibility for Wednesday's package bomb. But the spokesman said the blast appeared similar to numerous others claimed in the past by the Basque separatist group ETA.

Off the Record

Hagler's punch at girlfriend's jaw



according to Hagler's attorney. The trial was set for July 15.

BOSTON: Former middle weight boxing champion Marvelous Marvin Hagler has been sentenced to a year's probation and community service on a charge of assault and battery that left his girlfriend with a dislocated jaw, reports AP.

But an appeal for a trial was immediately filed, setting aside the sentence imposed by Boston Municipal Court Judge Michael Graco.

Hagler's attorney, Morris Goldings, said Pilagonia was pursuing a criminal charge because of a civil suit that she has filed in Middlesex Superior Court seeking monetary damages from Hagler.

Sean Connery a Freeman

EDINBURGH (Scotland): Sean Connery, Edinburgh's most famous son, has been made a Freeman of the Scottish Capital, an honour he shares with Winston Churchill and Charles Dickens, reports AP.

The 60-year-old actor was honoured Tuesday by Lord Provost Eleanor McLaughlin.

"He has probably been the greatest promotion man for the city of Edinburgh that we have ever had," Ms. McLaughlin said. "I can't tell you how much excitement there has been among the women of Edinburgh."

She said the actor had "walked with kings and millionaires but at all times he is still that boy from Edinburgh." Connery starred in several James Bond films and won an Oscar for his role as a tough but virtuous Chicago cop in "The Untouchables."

Foreman Yeltsin takes off to Russian presidency

MOSCOW, June 13: Yeltsin Boris Nikolayevich, was born in the village of Butka in Sverdlovsk region, on February 1, 1931. Russian, a graduate of the Urals Polytechnic Institute, he worked as a foreman, a work superintendent, a senior engineer and chief of the construction department of the amalgamation "Yuzhgorstroi", according to IAN.

From 1963 Yeltsin worked as chief engineer and manager of the Sverdlovsk House-Building Mill. In 1968 he was appointed chief of a department and, subsequently, Secretary of the Sverdlovsk Regional Party Committee, and in 1976 — First Secretary of this Committee. He was a member of the Presidium of the 9th to 11th Supreme Soviets of the USSR. Secretary of the Communist Party's Central Committee.

From 1985 to 1987 Yeltsin was First Secretary of the Moscow City Party Committee. In 1986 Yeltsin was freed from



his duties as Secretary of the Communist Party's Central Committee following his new appointment in the Moscow City Party Committee. From 1986 to 1988 was an alternate member of the Central Committee's Politburo and in 1986 was a member of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR. The Plenary Meeting of the Moscow City Party Committee, convened on November 11, 1987, freed Yeltsin from his duties of First Secretary and member of the Bureau of the Moscow City Party Committee for "serious mistakes in running Moscow's Party Organisation". From 1987 till 1989 he was First Deputy Chairman of the USSR Committee for Construction and had the rank of a minister.

Since 1989 Yeltsin has been a People's Deputy of the USSR. Subsequently, he was relieved from his duties of minister and First Deputy Chairman of the State Committee for Construction at his own request following his election as People's Deputy of the USSR. A member of the USSR Supreme Soviet's Council of Nationalities (1989). From 1989 to 1990 he chaired the USSR Supreme Soviet's Commission for Construction and Architecture. In 1990 was elected People's Deputy of the Russian Federation and in May 1990 — Chairman of the Supreme Soviet of the Russian Federation.

Boris Yeltsin was nominated candidate to the post of the Russian Federation's President by the Democratic and Social Democratic Parties, and by the workers of the Sverdlovsk Scientific and Production Amalgamation "Avtomatika".

Boris Yeltsin claims that his course shows a way out of the total crisis through radical economic reforms. He intends to combine radical change in the social set-up (privatization and land reform) with broad social programmes. He promises to increase the minimal wages, pensions and student grants 1.5 times compared with the average union level, extend the annual leaves for all categories of the working people, and cut down the working day by one hour. He is campaigning for filling the Republic's sovereignty with an economic content. To do so he proposes to exercise control over the emission of money and take enterprises in the basic industrial branches.

Thugs dump ballot boxes in Ganges

PATNA (India), June 13: Thugs hired by politicians steal ballot boxes and dump them in the holy Ganges River. A polling officer is caught stuffing bogus votes in the box he is supposed to protect, reports AP.

Bihar, India's violent state, has its own way of voting. By the time voting ended Wednesday evening, at least eight people were killed and 15 wounded in clashes between thugs of rival politicians and with police, officials said. News reports put the toll at 12 dead.

The hired thugs, called goondas in the Hindi language, fought with steel pipes, guns, bombs, swords, clubs and even with bows and arrows while on horseback.

At least 393 people, most of them goondas, were arrested Wednesday during voting in the state's 16 parliamentary districts, Jya Lal Arya, a senior bureaucrat, told reporters.

The state sends 54 members to the 545-seat, policy-making, lower house of Parliament. Two races were canceled because of deaths of candidates. Elections to the remaining seats were held May 20.

Chief Judicial Magistrate Vadevil Rathnam remanded the two to police custody for 30 days.

Bhagyanathan's sister Nalini is also wanted by the police for alleged involvement in the assassination conspiracy, investigators said.



MOSCOW: An elderly woman wearing medals and holding a flower casts her vote Wednesday at a polling station for the first direct Russian presidential elections. — AFP photo

Two arrested for killing Rajiv Sikh militants open fire on Doordarshan chief: driver killed

NEW DELHI, June 13: The chief of India's state-run television was injured and his driver killed when suspected Sikh terrorists opened fire outside his home in the capital on Thursday, police said reports AP.

Director General Shiv Sharma received two bullet injuries in the shoulder and was rushed to a hospital, according to reports reaching the police control room.

The driver of his car was killed and two bodyguards were injured in the barrage of

automatic rifle fire, the reports said.

Sharma is the top official in Doordarshan, India's only television station.

United News of India said the attackers were dressed in military-style commando suits. They were suspected to be Sikh militants fighting for an independent nation in the northern state of Punjab, the news agency said.

Last December, Sikh militants killed the local chief of state-owned radio in Chandigarh, the capital of

Punjab. Television and radio officials have become targets for separatist militias because they represent the government and are often criticized for a heavy pro-government slant in reporting the insurrections.

The Doordarshan chief in Srinagar, the center of an independence struggle by Kashmiri Muslim militants, was shot and killed last year.

Another report from Madras said, officials investigating former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's killing said



NEW DELHI: This photograph released by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) shows Gandhi's suspected assassin (2nd from left), minutes before she detonated the bomb strapped to her body May 21. She was identified as "Thanu". At far right is suspected accomplice "Sivarajan", unofficially identified as an intelligence chief of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) by the Press Trust of India (PTI). Women at left and centre are identified as Congress (I) Party workers, both killed in the blast. — AFP/UNB photo