

Indian trawlers pose threat to Lankan waters

ANALATIVU (Sri Lanka), Apr 7: The navy has sought India's cooperation to keep Indian fishing trawlers from straying into Sri Lankan waters as they are posing a security hazard, reports AP.

Navy Commander Vice Adm Clancy Fernando took a group of reporters in a naval boat Monday to show some 100 Indian trawlers fishing 5 kilometers (3 miles) off the northern Jaffna island of Analativu.

Tamil Tiger rebels are using the Indian trawlers as cover to move about and also attack naval boats, Fernando said.

Government aircraft flying approaching the military airstrip at Palali from the Point Pedro region were particularly vulnerable, he said.

"It is easy for a rebel boat armed with a 50-caliber machine gun to shoot down a plane while it attempts to land from there," Fernando said.

Pelivan's resignation accepted Hundreds killed in Bosnia fighting

SARAJEVO (Yugoslavia), Apr 7: Two days of heavy fighting between Croatian forces and Serbian militia backed by Yugoslav army troops have left hundreds dead at Kupres in south-western Bosnia-Herzegovina, radio Sarajevo reported Sunday, reports AFP.

Yugoslav federal warplanes carried out air raids Saturday against Croatian positions around Kupres which is located on a strategic highland, the radio said.

The official Croatian news agency said for its part that Croatian forces had taken control of Kupres, 100 kms west of Sarajevo, after two days of fierce clashes.

Hina said that two Yugoslav federal warplanes had been shot down over Kupres and one over Tomislavgrad, 110 kms southwest of Sarajevo.

The news agency said that an alert had been sounded in Tomislavgrad, a town populated mainly by Croats.

AP adds: As ethnic tensions rise in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Yugoslav army is beginning to bring over equipment from war-torn Croatia, a UN peacekeeping official says.

Col. Robert Meilic, whose 800 French infantry soldiers began their first peacekeeping patrols Monday in southern Krajina, the heartland of Serb rebellion in Croatia, said the Yugoslav army had begun to remove weapons from the French-patrolled zone of Croatia to neighboring Bosnia.

If fighting in Bosnia flares, he said, he planned to shift some of his men eastward to patrol the Croatian side of the Bosnian border.

That now looks likely. On Monday, at least fourteen people were reported killed in clashes in the Bosnian capital of Sarajevo. The European Community agreed to recognize the republic, prompting fears ethnic Serbs there might rise in battle.

Serbs, who make up a third of Bosnia's population, want their regions to stay in a Serbian-dominated Yugoslavia or join Croatia's Serb enclave of Krajina, which has declared itself a republic.

Bosnia's Croats and Slavic Muslims, accounting for over 60 per cent of the population, voted in a referendum for an independent Bosnia.

But Croat militias have also begun to seize territory as the central, mountainous republic disintegrates.

All three ethnic groups in Bosnia are well armed. Many predict a war there would be much bloodier than the nine-month conflict in Croatia, where almost 10,000 perished in fighting between Serbs and Croats.

It is widely feared that the Serb-dominated Yugoslav army would prop up Serb militias in Bosnia.

"The Yugoslav army wants to get out of Krajina as soon as possible to reorganize its forces in Bosnia-Herzegovina, where it has a lot of problems," Meilic said.

Soldiers based at the former tourist center of the Plitvice lakes, former Croatian tourist attraction some 60 kilometers north of Gracac, said their unit would be pulling out in a few days.

Meilic's French troops are the first arrivals in Croatia of a planned 14,000-strong contingent of UN peacekeepers, the first such force to be deployed in mainland Europe.

They began patrols Monday in their zone, which used to be about one-fifth Croat but is now 98 per cent Serb. Croat villages lie deserted and in ruins.

Reuters reports: Leaders of Bosnia-Herzegovina said Monday they had accepted the resignation of the republic's Prime Minister, Jure Pelivan, after ethnic fighting in the Yugoslav republic.

The Bosnian state presidency also announced a night curfew from 10 pm (2000 GMT) in the capital Sarajevo, approved a proposal to hold early parliamentary elections and called for an immediate ceasefire in the republic.

AP adds: The European Community decided Monday to recognize Bosnia-Herzegovina as an independent state but not the Yugoslav republic of Macedonia, an EC spokesman said.

EC Foreign Ministers took the decision after several hours of discussion. The EC recognized Croatia and Slovenia in January.

Sevan speeds up efforts for Afghan peace

ISLAMABAD, Apr 7: UN mediator Benon Sevan went to Iran Monday to try and speed up efforts towards peace in Afghanistan, UN officials said, according to AFP.

Sevan is currently seeking agreement from different Afghan factions on a list of impartial figures to take part in a transitional administration in Kabul to replace the government of President Najibullah.

The government of Iran, where many Shiite Mujahideen groups are based, and Pakistan, where many Sunni factions have set up camp, have said they would support UN peace efforts.

The UN official has shuttled between Islamabad, Peshawar, Teheran and Kabul during the past weeks to facilitate a change in the administration in Afghanistan from this month. He is expected to meet UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali later this week in Switzerland.

Polish army won't join politics

Polish Defence Minister Jan Parys said on Monday unnamed politicians had sought unofficial military backing but the army would not get involved in politics, Reuters reports from Warsaw.

"Without the defence minister's knowledge, in recent days certain politicians have been inviting selected officers and promising them promotions in exchange for some sort of army support," Parys told a televised meeting of the armed forces general staff.

"I hereby state that the army under my command will not let itself become embroiled in political intrigues by those wanting to overthrow democracy."

"Such politicians are acting against the interest of the army and the country and are common political swindlers of Poland's armed forces, alerted Parys to the political overtures last week.

US to upgrade ties with DPRK: The United States will take its first step toward upgrading diplomatic contact with North Korea if inspections of the Communist state's nuclear facilities begin by June, news reports said Tuesday, AP says from Seoul.

South newspapers, quoting unnamed South Korean officials, said in similar reports that Washington would notify North Korea by letter soon of its intention to upgrade its counselor-level contact in Beijing as soon as inspections are complete.

An upgrade in contact, which could lead to improved ties between Washington and Pyongyang, could come as early as July, the papers said.

North Korean officials said their Supreme People's Congress, which opens Wednesday, will ratify an international safeguards agreement allowing nuclear inspections. Procedures would be worked out with the Vienna-based International Atomic Energy Agency.

Muslims celebrate Bairam: Chinese Muslims celebrated their Bairam festival Sunday, especially in Beijing, South China's Guangzhou city and northeast China's Xinjiang Uygure autonomous region, Xinhua reports from Beijing.

More than 60 mosques held ceremonies marking the end of the annual fasting period of Ramzan. Muslims of ten ethnic nationalities, including the Hui, Uygur and Kazak, gathered for a singing and dancing party at the nationalities palace of culture in Beijing.

Meanwhile, more than 2,000 Muslims gathered at Guangzhou's Hualisheng mosque for a ceremony. About 50 Muslims from Pakistan, Indonesia, Malaysia and Bangladesh as well as from Hong Kong and Macao who are working, studying or visiting here also joined the ceremony.

Leaders of the Beijing and Guangzhou municipal and the Xinjiang Uygure autonomous regional governments also attended Sunday's ceremonies held respectively.

Quake shakes area near Pinatubo: A mild earthquake shook the area near the Mount Pinatubo volcano Tuesday. There were no reports of casualties or damage, AP reports from Manila.

The Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology said the quake, measuring three on the Rossi-Forel scale, occurred at 8.54 am (0054 GMT) and was epicentred about 90 kilometers (56 miles) northwest of Manila.

The tremor was felt across a wide area of the central Luzon island, including the US-run Subic Bay naval base about 80 kilometers (50 miles) west of Manila.

The Institute said the quake was caused by movement along a fault associated with the Mount Pinatubo volcano, which erupted last June, killing nearly 700 people and forcing the United States to close Clark Air Base.

Floods kill 61 in China: At least 61 people were killed in southern China's Guangdong province during floods caused by heavy rain since mid-March, China Daily reported Saturday, Xinhua says from Beijing.

The rainfall was as heavy as 369 millimeters a day in some areas. The floods injured at least another 100, according to an official of the Guangdong flood control headquarters.

ROK recognises Georgia: South Korea on Monday recognised Georgia as an independent state, a Foreign Ministry spokesman said Monday, Reuters reports from Seoul.

South Korea has established diplomatic ties with most of the former Soviet republics in recent months.

Truce begins in Moldova: Foreign Ministers trying to end months of bloody clashes between Moldovan government forces and Russian-speaking separatists have worked out a ceasefire to go into effect Tuesday, reports Reuters.

"We have agreed an immediate and all-embracing ceasefire starting at 1500 (1200 GMT) Tuesday followed by further separation of armed formations involved in the conflict," Moldovan Foreign Minister Nikolai Tiu said.

More than 50 people have been killed and hundreds wounded in months of fighting between Moldovan authorities and rebel Russian-speakers who have set up their own republic on the east bank of the river Dnestr.

Tiu told reporters that he and his counterparts from Russia, Ukraine and Moldova had reached the agreement.

'Russia needs presidential system'

MOSCOW, Apr 7: The Russian Federation needs a Presidential system for at least two or three years to get over its present difficulties, Russian President Boris Yeltsin said Sunday in a televised speech, reports AFP.

"What kind of Russia do we need, Presidential or Parliamentary? In a Parliamentary-type republic, the President is nothing more than a figurehead," Yeltsin told about 2,000 supporters at a meeting at the Hotel Russia.

"With the present line-up of forces, including those in Parliament, and with the multiplication of parties against a backdrop of serious crisis, to opt for a system of Parliamentary rule would be very difficult, undesirable and frankly unacceptable," Yeltsin said.

The Russian leader was speaking to a gathering of the "citizens' assembly" of the Russian Federation which opened here Sunday on the eve of a meeting Monday of the Russian Congress of people's deputies.

Representatives of various political parties and trade unions as well as businessmen and Russian deputies are taking part in the assembly.

Yeltsin has moved during the past week to tighten his hold over political, economic and military affairs before attacks by disgruntled Conservatives expected Monday when the Russian Parliament opens.

Reuters from Moscow adds: Russian President Boris Yeltsin Friday signed a decree temporarily taking over control of all border troops in the troubled transcaucasus region, a senior Yeltsin spokesman said, Reuters reports from Moscow.

The decree was another move by Yeltsin to protect the ex-soviet army, facing increasing demands from some members of the new common-



Boris Yeltsin

wealth for troops and equipment.

Valery Gritshin, head of Yeltsin's Information Department, said the troops would stay under Russian jurisdiction until border protection agreements were signed with the three transcaucasus republics — Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan.

Barbulis fired: Another report says: Boris Yeltsin removed his first deputy premier on Friday in a Cabinet reshuffling three days before a crucial session of parliament.

Gennady Barbulis, the second most powerful official in the Russian government, will keep his other post as state secretary, said government sources.

Troops launch fresh offensive Six Tigers shot dead in Lanka

COLOMBO, Apr 7: Security forces shot dead six more Tamil guerrillas in eastern Sri Lanka as troops launched another offensive in the strife-torn region, military officials here said today, reports AFP.

Troops killed six members of the rebel Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in Irelakulam in coastal Batticaloa district during operations Monday, officials said.

"There is an operation on at the moment in the area. No details are available," a military official said adding that ground forces were being assisted by air force helicopters.

A military statement said that LTTE rebels had fired on a group of civilians who had gone fishing in a lake in north-east Well Oya. One civilian was missing while the rest escaped unhurt, the military said.

A human rights group has accused Tamil Tiger rebels of large-scale torture and annihilation of their opponents.

The University Teachers for Human rights in its ninth reports issued from Thiruvallur in the rebel-held Jaffna peninsula accused the Tigers of holding 3,000 to 4,000 of their opponents prisoner and torturing them by using young boys below the age of 16.

The brutal manner in which they torture the prisoners in the underground bunkers, and the sadistic nature of the boys who are involved in this dastardly act bring out the true color of the nature of the struggle," said the group in its report.

The group is an independent body of Tamil professors from the University of Jaffna. It has in the past also criticized the government of atrocities against the Tamils and others. The whereabouts of the members is being kept secret fearing reprisals by the Tigers.

The report said it is sad to note that neither responsible organization nor religious institutions such as churches have raised the issue of human rights violations with the Tigers.

The guerillas keep their cadres under a tight organizational structure.

Crushing defeat for ruling coalition in Italian polls

ROME, Apr 7: Italy's governing coalition suffered a crushing defeat in Parliamentary elections Sunday and Monday that is sure to usher in a major political realignment, according to nearly complete results released today, reports AFP.

Although the four-party coalition won only 47 per cent of the vote, down from 53.8 per cent in the previous elections, it will maintain slim majorities in both chambers because of Italy's complex electoral system.

In the Senate, the four parties — the Christian Democrats, The Socialists, The Social Democrats and The Liberals won — 161 seats, according to almost definitive results issued by the Interior Ministry.

With 315 seats in the Upper House, that translates into a majority of three over the median of 158.

In the 630-seat Chamber of Deputies, the coalition, with 48.5 per cent of the vote, will receive 329 seats, or 13 above the median.

But because party discipline is low and many legislators don't show up on important votes, such slim majorities are considered unworkable and analysts were unanimous in predicting that a new coalition, with a broader majority, is in the making.

Also, the public perception that the vote was a rebuff for the government is likely to lend more impetus for a new coalition.

The winners in the voting were mostly groups that denounced the mainstream parties' hold on power and the government's inability to make progress on major issues.

Three killed in Kuala Lumpur airport fire

KUALA LUMPUR, Apr 7: Malaysia's Kuala Lumpur International Airport was closed early Monday after a fire at the main terminal killed three security guards, the national Bernama News Agency reported, according to Reuters.

MANILA (Philippines), Apr 7: Officials shut down the radar approach to Manila's airports Tuesday as striking air controllers defied government back-to-work orders for a third day, reports AP.

The country's air controllers walked off the job Saturday demanding that their operations be privatized.

President Corazon Aquino's chief aide, Franklin Drilon, called the strike illegal and said the change in controller's status would require an act of Congress.

The strike has crippled both international and domestic air service. Four international carriers — Japan Airlines, Thai International Airways, Singapore Air and Kuwait Airways — canceled scheduled flights to Manila.

Controllers launched the strike at the beginning of one of the peak travel periods of the year.

Strike cripples Manila's air service

Abduction of women a booming business

HONG KONG: The abduction of women for sale is a booming business in southern China's Guangdong province despite continued crackdowns by the authorities, it was reported here Friday, reports AFP.

In a recent raid in the city of Mouming, police smashed 230 gangs involved in the traffic and rounded up more than 3,000 suspects, the semi-official Hong Kong China news service said.

The victims, mostly of them teenage girls who were lured to the prosperous province in hope of a better living, were sold to peasants who could not find wives locally.

The agency did not give any figures on the victims.

It cited the case of an unnamed rural county where bachelors had accumulated a total of 20 million yuan (four million US dollars) in cash over the past three years for the purchase of wives.

Those whose age or some handicap made it hard for them to find wives were the hottest customers, the report said.

Off the Record

She reveals to woo voters

ROME: Sex is no sin, proclaimed Italy's Porno Queens, driving home the party of love's message at the end of their campaign for next week's parliamentary elections, reports Reuters.

Although they know they will win few seats, they bared the flesh to the bitter end to woo voters.

At a rally in pouring rain in a Rome square on Thursday, Blonde Porno star Moana Pozzi said voters had been unexpectedly nice to her and fellow — candidate Ilona Staller, known as "Ciccolina" (little cuddly one).

"Love is the most important thing in the world, it's why we're on earth. Lots of people have forgotten that," said Pozzi, sitting in vain for the skies to clear.

She was wearing a fake red fur and — as she revealed at the end of her speech — matching red lace bra, panties and stockings.

"We're not just campaigning for sex although that's a wonderful thing and no sin. We're pushing for other aspects of love too," Pozzi told Reuters.

"Man was born for sex, too. Seeking pleasure doesn't mean you're devils. You won't go to hell for seeking pleasure." Umbrellas waved in agreement.

She repeatedly chided enthusiasts who interrupted to urge her to reveal all. "Be sweet, be patient. It's raining." Only after her speech she did open her coat.

Claudio, a 32-year-old Dustman taking a quick break from his afternoon shift, said he was there "just out of curiosity."

Asked how much he liked Pozzi, he said: "Well, I like her physically. But I'm not sure I like her politically or that I'll vote for her."

Because they bored with adult sex

BANGKOK: Child prostitution in Asia has increased dramatically in recent years, partly because tourists are hoping to find youths untouched by AIDS, social activists said Friday, reports AP.

"They think they are fresh, that they are virgins," said Suarat S. Srisang, executive secretary of End Child Prostitution in Asian Tourism. "But many times they are not virgins as advertised."

The tourist, mostly men, take the risk anyway because they are bored with adult sex and away from home where nobody knows them, said Martin Staebler, representative of Third World Tourism European Ecumenical Network.

They also know that while child prostitution is illegal in many Asian countries the laws are rarely enforced, he said.

Staebler was one of 130 representatives from 20 countries who attended a four-day international conference on ways to end child prostitution as a tourist attraction in Thailand, Sri Lanka, Taiwan and the Philippines — the countries with the biggest problems.

The representatives said Asian countries should begin enforcing laws against child prostitution and stop advertising sex — even subtly as tourist attractions.

"That misguided tourists and misguided and greedy tourism industry somehow work into each others' hands at the expense of the children, that's a pretty sick alliance," Staebler said.

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Fujimori dissolves Congress, suspends Constitution

LIMA, Peru, Apr 7: President Alberto Fujimori has shut down magazines and radio station and detained opposition politicians after suspending the constitution and sending tanks to surround Congress, reports AP.

"It's necessary that we make clear this is not a coup d'etat," said Fujimori at a meeting Monday night with his new Cabinet. "It's a change of direction. We have a task of great responsibility before us."

The new prime minister, Oscar de la Puente, read a series of goals of the "emergency government of national reconstruction," among which was the intent to fire all judges in the judicial system who proved corrupt or had a party bias.

Scores of congressmen and journalists were placed under house arrest. Among them was former President Alan Garcia—Fujimori's principal opponent, US diplomats said.

After shaking up his 14-member Cabinet, Fujimori swore in his Cabinet members Monday night at the presidential palace. At the same time, lawmakers gathered across town but were kept from entering a hall by troops.

A congresswoman slapped a soldier, and a tear-gas grenade was fired into the crowd. Sen. Raul Ferrero rushed forward and was

beaten down with nightstick. Other lawmakers moved to help him up, and another politician was hit. Police fired into the air, sending reporters and bystanders ducking for cover behind cars.

"We will meet again, in public, tomorrow," shouted Aurelio Loret de Mole, the Vice President of the Chamber of Deputies, with gas-induced tears streaming down his face. "If they stop us, we will meet again the next day."

Journalists were under close watch at The Associated Press office, three soldiers in olive uniforms watched cartoons on television through the day, resting their Belgian-made rifles against a desk.

Fujimori said legislative and judicial corruption were shackling his efforts to beat a deep recession and combat a 12-year-old guerrilla insurgency that has moved into Lima's shantytowns from mountain strongholds.

Nearly 25,000 people have died in political violence since the Shining Path took up arms in 1980.

The Shining Path has been seeking to provoke a military coup as part of its strategy. Its hope is that a repressive military regime will push Peruvians to support its insurgency.

Fujimori has lacked control of Congress since taking office in July 1990, and early on forged an alliance with the military. In recent months he had been warring with Congress, and legislators had begun rescinding presidential decrees.

The military, which ruled Peru from 1969 to 1980 and remains the leading institutional power in this country of 22 million people, said the emergency decree would speed economic recovery, put down the insurgency and rebuild government institutions.

Many Peruvians have been unhappy with Congress, which they view as corrupt. The judiciary has been criticized for setting accused guerrillas free on technical grounds.

Fujimori promised a plebiscite for a "new legislative structure." He gave no date for the vote.

The announcement came just after the arrival of Bernard Aronson, top State Department official for Latin America. US officials in Washington said Aronson would suspend his trip and return home.

The US government called Fujimori's state of emergency declaration "regrettable" and suspended the \$18.45 million of the 237 mil-

lion dollar in 1991 military and economic aid to Peru that had yet to be disbursed.

Latin American leaders, fearing a return to dictatorship after a decade of democratization, condemned Fujimori's move as a "classic coup."

It heightened fears of the military on the continent that first were raised by an attempted coup in Venezuela in February.

In Washington, the Council of the Organization of American States called for an emergency meeting of the hemisphere's foreign ministers to deal with the situation.

The military closed the magazines Carretas and Si, and Radio Antena Uno was shut down after the Senate president called over its airwaves for Peruvians to rebel against Fujimori.

A blank space appeared on the front page of La Republica, a left-leaning Lima daily. A newspaper spokesman said military censors forced them to remove a story.

Gustavo Gorriti, a former Mieman Foundation fellow at Harvard and an expert on the Shining Path, was arrested at home Sunday night, his wife Esther said.

The New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists sent a letter to Fujimori urging him to restore press freedom and withdraw troops from media offices.

Iraq downs Iranian plane

BAGHDAD, Apr 7: Iraqi forces shot down one of eight Iranian warplanes raiding Iraqi territory Sunday, the Foreign Ministry announced, reports AFP.

In a statement reported by the official news agency INA, the ministry said two Iranian pilots were captured and identified them as captains Kassem Mohammad Amin and Arslan Sherifi.

The eight planes carried out four raids, it said. Iraq had protested against the Iranian raids in a message to the United Nations and the Arab League and urged them to take "urgent measures" against Tehran, the ministry said.