

## Japan, DPRK to start normalisation talks on May 13

TOKYO, Apr 28: Japan and North Korea will hold their seventh round of normalisation talks in Beijing on May 13 and 14. The Foreign Ministry said today, reports Reuter.

Japan will tell North Korea that it welcomes its ratification of a nuclear accord and hopes Pyongyang will make clear that it has no intention of producing nuclear weapons, ministry spokesman Masamichi Hanabusa told reporters.

North Korea recently ratified an international nuclear safeguards accord meaning it will have to open its nuclear facilities to outside inspection. No date has been set.

Tokyo, Washington and Seoul fear North Korea is building a crude nuclear bomb. Pyongyang has denied such allegations.

Normalisation talks have been bogged down over the nuclear issue and Tokyo's demand that Pyongyang allow Japanese wives of North Koreans to return home for visits.

Japan will again raise the issue of the Japanese wives, none of whom have been allowed to visit Japan since about 1,800 left for North Korea from 1959 to 1963 with their husbands, Hanabusa said. About half are believed to have died.

Hanabusa said he had no idea how many were still alive.



MOSCOW: Dimitri Biryukov, Editor-in-chief of the Russian language New York Times poses with the first copy of the paper after a press-conference in Moscow Monday. The paper will have a circulation of 100,000 and will be sold for five roubles. —AFP/UNB photo

## NY Times to launch Russian-language bi-weekly in CIS

NEW YORK, Apr 28: The New York Times announced on Monday that it will begin publishing a Russian-language bi-weekly edition in the Commonwealth of Independent States, reports AP.

Times publisher Arthur O Sulzberger Jr made the announcement at a news conference here, which was hooked up by telephone to a simultaneous news conference in Moscow.

He said initial press runs of 100,000 copies will feature 16-24 pages of news, features and opinion. It will sell for 5 rubles, or about 5 cents, in the Russian Republic and other parts of the new Commonwealth.

The venture marks the first time in the Times' 141-year history that it has been printed in a foreign language, said Sulzberger.

## Off the Record

### Penguins dance with Tagore songs

CALCUTTA: Rabindranath Tagore has acquired an unusual new following among the inhabitants of the icy Antarctica—the penguins. They dance with ease to the tunes of 'Rabindra Sangeet', PTI reports.

The penguins are very much responsive to music and much like the human beings. They move their bodies to the notes of music, said a Zoologist who recently returned from an expedition to Antarctica.

Srikumar Chattopadhyay, who was a member of the 11th Indian Scientific Expedition Team, said that he conducted various experiments with the penguins at Schirmacher oases in east Antarctica and found that they responded with body movement when Tagore music was played.

### Arms of CIS Pacific Fleet stolen

MOSCOW: Thieves used forged documents to enter and arms depot of the CIS Pacific Fleet in Vladivostok and steal a large quantity of Kalashnikov automatic rifles and Makarov pistols, Itar-Tass news agency said Tuesday, AFP reports.

It took guards a day to realize that the weapons were missing, the agency said, adding that so far 13 of the automatic rifles had been recovered and that the military magistrate had opened an investigation in the theft.

It was very curious that the thieves physically attacked no one but simply showed fake documents to gain access to the depot, where rockets and other artillery hardware were also stored, Itar-Tass said.

### Panda mates foil mating in London zoo

LONDON: It may be spring but love is not in the air at the panda enclosure of the London zoo, AP reports.

Ming Ming, the 11-year-old female, is recovering from a torn ear suffered on her first date with Bao Bao, several weeks ago. So if the patter of little paws is to be heard, the zoo may have to resort to artificial insemination, curator Dr. Jo Gipps said Monday.

Aggression between two mating pandas was to be expected, he said.

On their first encounter, the two pandas started hitting each other. When it became clear the meeting was not going as planned, keepers tried to distract the pandas using dustbin lids, air horns and fire extinguishers, Gipps said.

"Bao Bao was following her with more avarice than aggressive intent and perhaps getting a bit cross she wasn't responding the way he wanted," he said.

Ming Ming, much smaller than Bao Bao, spent more than a week in the zoo hospital with her wounded ear and snagged claw.

The 13-year-old male, who met Ming Ming after years of solitude in Germany, is unlikely to get a chance to mate again.

Panda mating season lasts just a few days, once a year, and Ming Ming could be ready any day now, Gipps said.

Artificial insemination of pandas in captivity has been successful in more than 25 cases, he said.

If Ming Ming relented and softened towards Bao Bao, another natural mating attempt might go ahead, he added.

### UFO sighting panics Aussies

SYDNEY: A very large, round object with bright flashing lights was still unidentified hours after visiting and terrifying residents of towns near here early Tuesday, police said, AFP reports.

The unidentified flying object (UFO) was sighted over the New South Wales county towns of Toukley and Wyong, according to police who received several calls from residents they described as worried and even hysterical.

They reported "seeing something hover silently above their townships then speed off in a blaze of flashing lights," said Toukley police Sergeant Wayne.

Shaw, whose station received a spate of calls from 2.30 am. All the callers described a huge, glowing, round object with bright red and white flashing lights, Shaw said.

"One man was walking his dog along the beach and the dog became hysterical, snapping its leash and running away," he said.

The object then took off at high speed heading North without making a sound.

"Some of the callers sounded a bit hysterical, but they seemed to be of sound mind," Shaw added. "But so far we've got no idea what I could have been."

Police and residents who contacted a nearby air base were told the RAAF did not have any aircraft in the sky at the time, apart from a helicopter which had been 20 kilometres out to sea.

## 1.30 lakh join public-sector stoppage in Germany

BONN, Germany, Apr 28: Tens of thousands of employees joined nationwide picket lines on Tuesday, swilling Germany's first public workers strike in 18 years to new proportions, reports AP.

Commuters jammed autobahns in Germany's most populous state, North Rhine-Westphalia, as workers were forced to use their cars rather than idled mass transit.

The strike was spared job actions by transit workers on Monday, the first day of the nationwide strike.

But on Tuesday, the ranks of striking workers were swelled by 57,000 employees in North Rhine-Westphalia, about half of them in the transit sector.

Key cities such as Duesseldorf, Cologne and Bonn are in North Rhine-Westphalia.

Union officials said about 130,000 workers were participating in the strike on Tuesday, 55,000 more than the day before.

Garbage disposal workers, letter-carriers and federal railway employees are also among the public workers participating in the job actions.

Telephone workers in some areas joined the strike, but it was not clear whether there was any interruption in service.

Frankfurt's freight train depot was empty of trains.

Postal employees stayed away from their work places in 48 cities, including Cologne, Muenster, Bremen, and Nuremberg.

About 6,500 postal workers struck in the Ruhr Valley alone.

## Americans fed up with own govt, says Bush

MIAMI, Apr 28: US President George Bush said on Monday that Cuba will one day join former communist states in embracing democracy but acknowledged that America is suffering from a deepening cynicism about the way its government works, reports Reuter.

His condemnation of Fidel Castro's government was the sort of declaration any politician must make in this city, which has a large number of Cuban people, many of whom fled Castro's rule and would like to see him gone.

Bush earlier this month tightened the US trade embargo against Cuba. He ordered US ports to refuse entry to ships that had made a stop in Cuba on their way to the United States even if they stopped somewhere after leaving Cuba.

The president used most of this speech to promote a new "ethic of responsibility" in America — timely remarks, since a new USA Today/CNN/gallup poll said on Monday that 61 per cent of voters believe quite a few people running the government are at least a little crooked.

In a start of term speech to 1,600 graduates of Florida International University on the eve of the Pennsylvania presidential primary election, Bush spoke optimistically about prospects for change in Cuba but acknowledged that Americans are fed up with their own government.

"I guarantee you, freedom will come to Cuba, make no mistake about it," he said to an audience that included many Cuban-Americans. In Spanish, he said: "In the '90s, it (the Castro regime) will explode."

## Indian Foreign Ministry says Pak bid to internationalise Kashmir issue 'mischievous'

NEW DELHI, Apr 28: India today said Islamabad's undiminished support to terrorism and its "mischievous" attempt to internationalise the Kashmir issue had further exacerbated the already strained bilateral relations, reports PTI.

The External Affairs Ministry's annual reports (1991-92) regretted that the Pakistan Foreign Secretary Shahryar Khan's assurances to India last year to approach issues with a new mind had failed to get reflected on the ground.

Surveying the momentous changes on the global scene, the report emphasised that the perception that the world had become unipolar needed to be seen in the context of unified Germany and Japan on the road to becoming still more important centres of economic power.

It also cautioned that the end of cold war and lowering and elimination of East-West tensions had not brought solutions to the basic and fundamental problems of development faced by the large majority of countries.

The report reaffirmed the continuing relevance of the NAM and described its endorsement of the Indian proposal for the democratisation of the United Nations and expansion of the security council as a major achievement.

AP adds: Hundreds of thousands of Kashmiris continued a strike for the third day Tuesday to protest the alleged death of two top Muslim militants in police custody.

Shops, banks, schools and colleges were closed throughout the Kashmir valley, the Muslim dominated region

where Islamic guerrillas are fighting for independence from the predominantly Hindu India.

Attendance in government offices was thin because public transport including trucks were off the road. Hospitals and other essential services functioned normally, said a police official, speaking on condition of anonymity.

The outlawed Ikhwan ul-Muslimeen or Muslim Brotherhood rebel group called the strike alleging that paramilitary policemen last month killed two of its leaders who were arrested during a raid.

The government has said the two militants, Javed Ahmed Shaha and Mohammad Sadiq Sofi, escaped while being taken for interrogation to a neighbouring town from Srinagar, the summer capital of Jammu-Kashmir state.

On Monday, Indian army troops raided a Muslim Brotherhood hideout in the town of Handwara, 20 kilometre (12 miles) north of Srinagar, and killed five rebels after a two-hour gun battle, said the police official, speaking on condition of anonymity.

But a rebel spokesman said soldiers lined up the five men and shot them dead.

More than 4,000 people have been killed in Kashmir since 1989 when the separatist insurgency escalated.

Jammu-Kashmir is India's only Muslim majority state with 65 per cent of its 6 million people following Islam. Nationwide, Muslims are 12 per cent of India's 844 million people. Hindus account for 82 per cent.

## People's Daily endorses Deng's reform drive

BEIJING, Apr 28: The Communist Party newspaper for the first time endorsed senior leader Deng Xiaoping's new economic reform drive on Tuesday, giving him a major boost over hard-line party leaders, reports AP.

The front-page editorial in the People's Daily (Renmin Ribao) came a day after the paper published comments by Deng threatening to use force to crush any attempts toward political change. His comments were reprinted in several national papers Tuesday.

The timing of the articles indicated a trade-off, with Deng apparently appeasing conservatives by taking a tough stance against a possible renewed democracy movement, thus clearing the way for the editorial supporting his economic reforms.

Market-style reforms Deng ushered in during the late 1970s stalled after hard-lines gained more influence following the military's bloody crackdown on the 1989 democracy movement. His comments made clear that the leadership would not allow reforms to extend beyond the economy.

"Once the forces of turmoil reappear in the future, we will not hesitate to use any means to eliminate them as soon as possible," the full-page article in Monday's People's Daily paraphrased Deng as saying.

"We can use martial law or even measures harsher and stricter than martial law to prevent any interference from the outside," it said.

The writer, who used the pen name Leng Rong, did not say when Deng made the comments.

"Comrade Deng Xiaoping has pointed out that liberalism and turmoil destroy stability," he said.

## Sikhs kill 11 Hindu pilgrims in Punjab

LUCKNOW, Apr 28: Sikh separatist rebels opened fire on Hindu pilgrims travelling in a bus, killing 11 people and wounding 22, police and news reports said Tuesday, reports AP.

Four Sikhs in a van stopped the bus near the pilgrim town of Haridwar Monday and fired automatic guns after asking all women and children to get down, police spokesman MP Nishra said.

He said nine people were killed instantly and two died in a hospital. Untied News of India said 22 people were injured.

The bus was going to Haridwar, located on the banks of the holy Ganges river in Uttar Pradesh State, 425 kilometers (270 miles) north of Lucknow, the state capital.

Mishra said the gunmen were believed to be Sikh militants who have been fighting since 1982 for an independent nation in the northern state of Punjab, which is separated from Uttar Pradesh by a narrow part of Haryana state.

In a bid to dramatise their separatist campaign, the militants have often staged attacks outside Punjab, mostly in the neighbouring Haryana and the hills and marshy rice fields of northern Uttar Pradesh.

More than 13,000 people have been killed in Punjab in the past five years.

## BRIEFLY

**Peace talks adjourned in Bosnia:** Peace talks on Bosnia-Herzegovina opened Monday, but the meeting quickly adjourned after the representative of one of the three warring factions failed to show, an officials said, reports AP from Lisbon.

Serb and Muslim delegates met briefly Monday and agreed to resume talks, said Foreign Minister spokesman Paulo Chaves. He gave no other details of the meeting.

The Croat representative did not appear and it was not immediately clear whether the delegate would attend a session on Tuesday.

Portugal holds the six-month rotation presidency of the 12-nation European community, which is sponsoring the peace initiative.

**Suleyman, Ozal honoured:** Turkish Prime Minister Suleyman Demirel and President Turgut Ozal were honoured on last night at a ceremony marking the 500th anniversary of the expulsion of hundreds of thousands of Sephardic Jews from Spain to Turkey, Reuter reports from New York.

The celebration, sponsored by the quinquennial foundation of Istanbul, marks the milestone in 1492 when Spain expelled more than 200,000 Jews. Some 70 per cent of them went to the Ottoman empire, of which the modern Turkish republic was a part.

"Turkey is our ally and our friend, and I am honoured to salute the Turkish people in commemorating a great moment in their history," President George Bush said in a videotaped message to more than 600 people at the gathering here.

**Clark new US Asst Secy of State:** US President George Bush on Monday nominated veteran diplomat William Clark to replace Richard Solomon as Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, reports Reuter from Charlotte.

Clark has been US Ambassador to India since 1989 and before that, he was Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Asian and Pacific Affairs at the State Department.

He has also held posts at the US Embassy in Cairo in the mid-1980s.

The White House made the announcement in Charlotte, where Bush was attending a campaign fund-raiser. Clark's nomination requires Senate confirmation.

**Woman speaker in UK parliament:** Betty Boothroyd, a former chorus-line dancer, was elected on Monday as the first woman Speaker of the British Parliament since the post was established more than 600 years ago, reports Reuter from London.

Boothroyd, 62, a right-wing member of the opposition Labour Party who has served as Deputy Speaker for five years, was elected to preside over the often unruly 651-member House by 372 votes to 238, reflecting her popularity on all sides.

She played down the significance of her sex.

"Elect me for what I am, not for what I was born," she said before the vote.

**Tajik opposition resumes action:** Thousands of opponents of the communist leadership of Tajikistan, a former Soviet central Asian republic, resumed their protests in the Tajik capital Dushanbe on Monday, ITAR-Tass news agency reported, AFP says from Moscow.

Three weeks of protests by the nationalist and Islamic opposition led to the resignation of the parliamentary speaker, Safarali Kendjayev, last week.

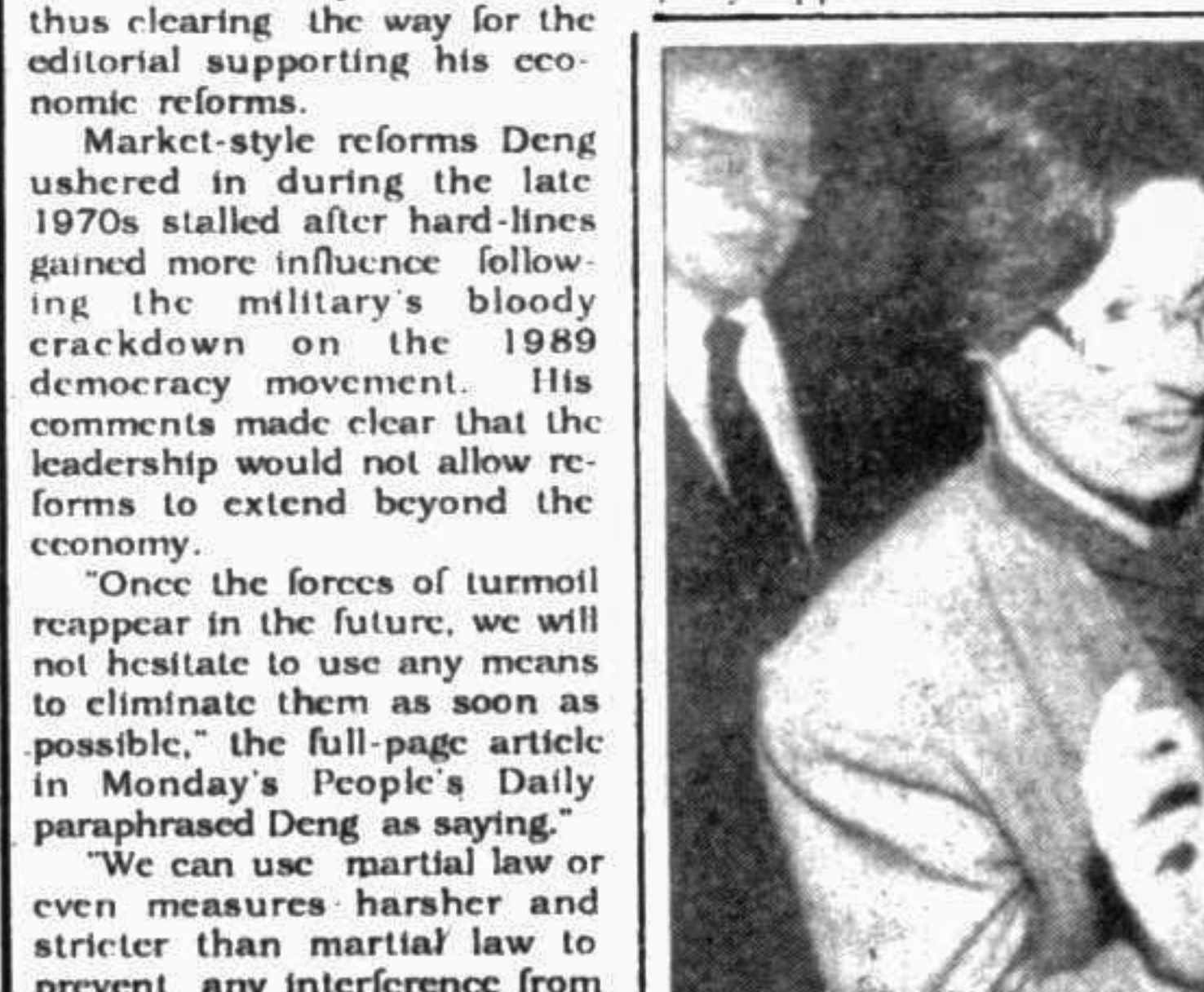
But conservatives countered with a series of demonstrations beginning last Saturday to demand Kendjayev's return to office.

Following the removal of Kendjayev and the repeal of a law on press censorship, opposition leaders agreed to halt all protests until the next parliamentary elections, which are due by the end of the year.

**Earthquake shakes Alaska:** An earthquake measuring 4.5 on the Richter scale shook interior Alaska on Monday. There were no immediate reports of injury or damage, reports AP from Alaska.

The quake was centred 14 miles (22 kilometers) north-east of the tiny community of Lime village, about 160 miles (257 kilometers) northwest of Anchorage. It struck at 1:31 pm (2130 GMT).

Guy Urban, a geophysicist at the Tsunami Warning Center in Palmer, said there was no reason to believe the quake was linked to a magnitude-6.9 earthquake Saturday and sharp aftershocks Sunday that struck Northern California.



BONN: German Housing Minister Ingrid Schwaetzer speaks to reporters Monday before taking part in the FDP (Federal Democratic Party) meeting. Schwaetzer will replace Hans-Dietrich Genscher as Foreign Minister, a FDP member announced Monday, making her the first woman to hold the position in Germany. —AFP/UNB photo

## Fighting continues in Bosnia-Herzegovina

BELGRADE, Yugoslavia, Apr 28: Fighting flared Tuesday in Bosnia-Herzegovina, hours after Bosnian officials ordered federal troops out of their republic following the proclamation of a new Yugoslavia by Serbia and Montenegro, reports AP.

The fighting cast doubt on any success for European Community talks in Lisbon, Portugal, with leaders of Bosnia's Slavic Muslims, Serbs and Croats.

Bosnia's presidency late Monday demanded the federal military withdraw its estimated 100,000 troops under the supervision of the republic's Interior Ministry and EC monitors.

But Gen Milutin Kukanjac, an army commander for Bosnia, told reporters earlier that the army would not withdraw. The army says more than 80 per cent of federal troops in Bosnia are local ethnic Serbs.

According to a statement carried by the Belgrade-based Tanjug news agency, army members can join a newly formed Bosnian defense force or leave the republic "in an orderly fashion."

Immediately after the announcement, fierce fighting erupted in the Sarajevo suburb of Ilidza, apparently between Serb and Muslim militias.

Mortar explosions, cannon fire and light artillery reverberated overnight. Gunfire was still being heard Tuesday morning.

Clashes were reported elsewhere. Radio Sarajevo claimed Serb irregulars killed seven Muslims in Foca, a predominantly Muslim town toward the Montenegrin border seized by Serbian forces two weeks ago.

An unspecified number of people died and more than 20 people were wounded in an artillery attack late Monday on southwestern Mostar, where Croats oppose local federal forces, Tanjug said.

The army command also reported several people killed in the northern town of Derventa.

Serbs, who comprise about one-third of Bosnia's 4.4 million people, reject indepen-

dence. Paramilitary Serbs, sometimes backed by federal troops, have seized large chunks of territory in hopes of proclaiming their own republic inside Bosnia.

Muslims and Croats overwhelmingly backed independence in a Feb 29 vote that set off ethnic violence in which more than 250 people have died.

In the federal parliament in Belgrade, Serbia and its lone ally Montenegro proclaimed a new Yugoslavia, occupying 45 per cent of the territory of what was once a six-member federation.

Bosnian officials argued that proclamation made the federal army an occupation force.

"Today a new state has been

## Accord on South African interim govt in offing

JOHANNESBURG, Apr 28: The government has moved closer to agreement with its major negotiating partners on an interim government to lead South Africa from white rule to multi-racial democracy, officials said Tuesday, reports Reuter.

A technical sub-committee at multi-party talks, the convention for a democratic South Africa (CODESA), on Monday proposed the appointment of a cabinet-level interim joint council with as yet undefined powers.

Officials said the proposed council would include members of the main parties and would rank with President.