

ROK team leaves for LA today to seek riot compensation

SEOUL, May 3: South Korean leaders moved swiftly Sunday to seek compensation for thousands of Korean-Americans for losses in bloody riots in Los Angeles, some of which targeted Koreans, reports AP.

The Foreign Ministry said a delegation headed by Assistant

Foreign Minister Ho Seung would fly to Los Angeles Monday to meet with Mayor Tom Bradley, California Gov. Pete Wilson and other US officials to seek financial aid for injuries and rebuilding.

The riots last week in Los Angeles were triggered by the acquittal of four white police officers in the beating of a black motorist, but some attacks were on Korean immigrants or Korean-Americans.

Looting and burning was widespread in the area in Los Angeles called Korea town, where about 400,000 Koreans live or do business.

The Foreign Ministry said a 19-year-old Korean student was shot to death, 30 Koreans were hospitalized and dozens more were injured. It said more than 850 Korean stores were looted and burned, and property damage exceeded \$200 million.

"Damage was more than physical, but the collapse of the American dream," said the parliament Speaker, Park Jyun-Kyu, in announcing that the government would seek compensation.

Racial tensions in American cities continued to dominate newspaper and television news in South Korea even as Los Angeles quieted. More than 1 million ethnic Koreans live in other US cities and there was lingering concern that unrest might spread to other Korean communities.

A large percentage of businesses owned by ethnic Koreans in the United States are in or near black areas of large American cities such as New York, Philadelphia and Chicago.

Zardari allowed to attend NA opening session.

KARACHI, May 3: A Pakistani court today allowed the detained husband of former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto to attend parliament's opening session in Islamabad, reports Reuters.

Asif Ali Zardari, arrested before he was elected as a member of the National Assembly (Lower House) last October, would fly to Islamabad immediately, his lawyer, Raja Qureshi, told reporters. Parliament begins a new session today.

Qureshi said the court had rejected several such applications in the past.

Iqbal Haider, a leader of Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party described the permission as a good gesture.

Zardari faces at least 10 charges including conspiring to massacre 29 people in Karachi after Bhutto's dismissal by President Ghulam Ishaq Khan in August, 1990, on charges of misuse that she denies. He has been acquitted on two charges.

20-man ruling council formed in Sierra Leone

CONAKRY, May 3: Soldiers who seized power in the West African country of Sierra Leone named on Friday a 20-member ruling council chaired by captain D T Strasser, reports Reuters.

The government radio in the capital Freetown, monitored in neighbouring Guinea, named 18 officers and two civilians as members of the New National Provisional Ruling Council.

President Joseph Momoh fled Sierra Leone on Thursday, one day after mutinous soldiers took over his offices at gunpoint.

Captain Strasser has been acting as spokesman for the soldiers, who have promised to

introduce multi-party civilian rule and go back to barracks as soon as the army ends rebel incursions from Liberia to the east.

The list, read out by a radio announcer, included three colonels, two of them retired, a lieutenant-commander, six majors, captain Strasser, seven lieutenants and two civilians.

West African diplomats said the council gave balanced representation to the 13 main tribes in the former British protectorate.

The announcement thanked Sierra Leone's police and security forces for their support and thanked god that no blood was shed in the coup.

Indian Defence Ministry says

Pak nuclear programme triggering arms race

NEW DELHI, May 3: India's Defence Ministry has warned that Pakistan is triggering an arms race on the subcontinent by developing a nuclear weapons programme and arming itself far in excess of security needs, reports Reuters.

"Pakistan's pursuit of its militarisation programme has continued to outpace by far the country's legitimate defence requirements," the Ministry said on Saturday in an annual report for the 12 months ending in March 1992.

"Such a programme would only give rise to a fresh arms race in this region and ultimately be detrimental to the economies and the people of both countries," it said.

"Pakistan's clandestine nuclear weapons programme also continues to be pursued," it added.

Both India and Pakistan deny possessing atomic weapons, but they are both considered nuclear-capable. India exploded an atomic device in 1974, but says its nuclear programme is for peaceful purposes.

India has remained seriously concerned because of political, diplomatic, moral and material support that Pakistan provided to armed militant groups in Kashmir and Punjab," the Defence Ministry said.

Both states, which border Pakistan, are in the grip of rebellions against Indian rule. Islamabad has denied charges that it is involved.

The ministry also said India

continued trials of its indigenous produced battle tank during the year and expects to introduce pre-production models by March 1994.

India also commissioned a locally-built submarine in February this year and has successfully tested a pilotless target aircraft, it said.

The country's missile programme was also pursued, and tests of short and medium-range surface-to-surface and surface-to-air missiles were conducted, it said.



MOSCOW: Former East German First Lady, Margot Honecker (I) receives flowers and a communist flag from a pro-communist supporter from behind the bars of the Chilean embassy on Friday. Mrs Honecker and her husband, Eric, have been in asylum here for the past five months.

Strike paralyses Kathmandu

KATHMANDU, May 3: Businesses remained closed Sunday after the radical communists called for a strike — the second in four weeks — demanding the resignation by Prime Minister Girtija Prasad Koirala and protesting price rise, reports AP.

Streets of downtown Kathmandu were deserted except for a few buses and private vehicles.

Police in riot gear patrolled the streets. However, some buses had been damaged in stone throwing by the strikers, police said.

The strike was called by Nepal Communist Party Unity Center, which organised a strike on April 6 to protest rising prices and alleged nepotism by the 11 month-old Nepali Congress government.

"Today we have one additional demand — that Prime Minister Koirala should resign," said communist leader

Pro-democracy movement stirs Thailand

BANGKOK, May 3: Thailand's small but influential pro-democracy movement has taken on new life in protests against Prime Minister Suchinda Kraprayoon, a former coup leader and army chief, reports AP.

Activists have called for major anti-Suchinda rallies this week, when the government is to present its policy statement to the Parliament.

Up to 50,000 people attended an April 20 protest rally in one of the country's biggest demonstrations since a people's revolution ousted a military dictatorship in 1973. Some people have drawn parallels to 1973.

Students, academics, professionals and some media organisations form the heart of the pro-democracy campaign,

while the four opposition political parties are providing money and organisation.

Outside Parliament, activists are carrying on the hunger protest of former legislator Chalard Vorachart, who collapsed on April 30 after fasting for over three weeks. From his hospital bed, Chalard says he wants to continue his hunger strike, his doctor said.

Hunger strikes are highly unusual in Thailand. Before his collapse, Chalard said most Thais are too scared to protest military interference in politics, and the country has no leaders to show them the way.

A prominent human rights lawyer, Thongchai Thongso, expressed dismay that once again, an army commander has springboarded directly into

the prime minister's seat.

"Suchinda is a capable man," Thongchai said in an interview. "What people do not like is the way he came to power — destroying democracy first, and then taking power."

Suchinda helped spearhead a 1991 military coup that toppled the elected government of Prime Minister Chatichai Choonhavan. He then served in the junta that governed the country with an interim Cabinet until elections this past March. He was selected premier last month by a coalition of five pro-military parties that emerged from the election.

Suchinda has dismissed Chalard's fast as a minority act and downplayed the political impact of the protest rallies. But the government clearly has

been rattled by the latest protests, and senior military officers have warned protesters to show restraint.

The four main television stations, all controlled by the military, have been informally advised to restrain coverage of protest rallies.

The anti-Suchinda movement is steered mainly by a coterie of university teachers loosely aligned in the Campaign for Popular Democracy.

Gotham Arya, an engineering professor who is its vice chairman, said the group has been sporadically active since it was founded about 14 years ago to fight for constitutional reform. The movement received new impetus from protests over the 1991 coup, he said.

Gorbachev in USA

SANTA BARBARA, California, May 3: Former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev set foot on US soil on Saturday for the first time since he fell from power, reports Reuters.

Gorbachev, who now writes newspaper columns and heads a Moscow think tank, was greeted at the start of a two-week US tour by former President Ronald Reagan, a close friend.

As the two men met on the tarmac at Santa Barbara airport, they hugged each other. Reagan's wife, Nancy, and Raisa Gorbachev, also embraced.

Gorbachev, who resigned as Soviet leader on December 25, 1991, was also accompanied by his daughter, Irina.

Gorbachev is touring the United States to promote his message for a new world order.

There was little ceremony as Gorbachev and Reagan met. Gorbachev's arrival was watched by a crowd of only 500 people, most of them invited by the Arco Petroleum Company, which is sponsoring part of the visit.

BRIEFLY

Ozal undergoes surgery: Turkish President Turgut Ozal underwent successful surgery on Saturday to remove a cancerous prostate gland and physicians said there was no early indication the malignancy had spread, reports Reuters from Houston.

"I think his prognosis to recover and live a healthy vigorous life is excellent. I'm really very optimistic about it," said Surgeon Peter Scardino, who performed the operation at Methodist Hospital in Houston, Texas.

Ozal, 64, will be released from the hospital in about a week, said Scardino, who is head of the Urology Department.

Philippine Town Mayor shot dead: Gunmen shot dead a Philippine Town Mayor and two other people, raising to 26 the death toll in campaign violence before next week's national elections, police said Sunday, reports Reuters from Manila.

Mayor Wilson Antonio was preparing to address a campaign rally in a town in Antique province, 400 km (250 miles) southeast of Manila, Saturday when seven armed men tried to drag him away.

The gunmen shot Antonio when he resisted. The Mayor's son, who had grabbed the gun of one of the assassins, and a local councilman were also killed, police said.

Nine killed in Punjab blast: Nine shoppers were killed and 20 others injured Saturday when a bomb packed into a metal bicycle basket exploded in a busy market centre of Gurdaspur in north India's Punjab state, police said, reports AP from Amritsar.

Among those killed were three women and two children, police said in Amritsar, some 80 kilometres (50 miles) southwest of Gurdaspur, which is a hotbed of Sikh militancy. The bomb went off around 8:00 pm (1430 GMT) as people were returning home from the Gurdaspur's central market after weekend shopping.

So far, none of Punjab's several Sikh separatist groups have claimed responsibility for the blast.

Talks on Nagorno-Karabakh likely: Feuding Armenians and Azerbaijanis will meet for high-ranking talks in Tehran Wednesday through Friday, possibly on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and border clashes, ITAR-Tass news agency reported Saturday, says AFP from Moscow.

Armenian President Levon Ter-Petrosian will be in Iran at the time of the talks, the Russian-Armenian news agency pro Armenia said quoting an Armenian official.

Hero's welcome to Kenneth Matiba: Thousands of cheering Kenyans gave popular opposition figure Kenneth Matiba a hero's welcome on his return from London on Saturday to challenge the leadership of beleaguered President Daniel Arap Moi, reports AFP from Nairobi.

Crowds waving palm fronds lined the streets in pouring rain as Matiba drove from the airport into Nairobi for a thanksgiving service at all saints' cathedral.

Thousands of supporters chanting "Moi must go" packed the grounds of the Anglican cathedral.

Some climbed nearby trees to get a glimpse of Matiba, a former Cabinet Minister who spent nearly a year in London where he was treated for a stroke he suffered after Moi jailed him for campaigning for multi-party democracy.

Rocket engine deal with India not suspended, says Moscow

NEW DELHI, May 3: Russia said today it had not suspended a 250 million dollars contract to sell rocket engines to India after the United States objected to the deal, reports Reuters.

"There has not been any suspension," Russian First Deputy Premier Gennadi Burbulis told reporters after arriving for a three-day visit. "It was only a practical, technical break."

A Russian youth magazine touched off a furore in India's Parliament when it reported two weeks ago that Russian President Boris Yeltsin had ordered a "pause" in the contract following objections from US Secretary of State James Baker.

US Embassy diplomats say Washington has raised objections to the contract because it believes it violates the Missile Technology Control Regime, an agreement among western countries to limit the spread of missile technology, particularly to the developing world.

Russia is not a signatory to the agreement, but has agreed to abide by its provisions, the diplomats said.

Under the deal Russia is to supply cryogenic rocket engines to India, which is trying to develop satellite launching capability.

India was to start taking delivery of the rocket engines by 1994 under the contract signed last year between the Russian space agency Glavkosmos and the Indian space research organisation.

Moscow late last month summoned Indian Space Secretary UR Rao for urgent talks on the issue.

Burbulis said Russia had to show respect "for anyone who has questions of legal or treaty character" about the deal. He said he could not rule out the participation of "independent international experts" in approving the contract.

In a prepared arrival statement, Burbulis said his talks

with Indian leaders would "dispel groundless allegations that Russia is growing cold towards India".

Burbulis, the most senior Russian leader to visit India since the disintegration of the Soviet Union last year, said he would sign a new treaty on Indo-Russian cooperation.

The former Soviet Union was India's chief diplomatic ally and arms supplier, as well as one of its biggest trading partners. The two nations were bound by a 20-year friendship pact that included defence cooperation.

Burbulis said he would discuss resuming deliveries of spare parts for India's Moscow-supplied defence equipment interrupted — by the collapse of the Soviet Union — with Defence Minister Sharad Pawar.

About 80 per cent of India's military equipment was supplied by the former Soviet Union or made under licence.

Bush declares Los Angeles city a disaster area

LOS ANGELES, May 3: President Bush formally declared America's second-largest city and its environs a disaster area after three days of rioting that deeply scarred Los Angeles and shook the Nation, reports AP.

As residents of burned and looted neighborhoods swept up under the eyes of armed soldiers, the chief organizer of the 1984 Olympics — Peter Ueberroth — was named Saturday to oversee reconstruction and said he would ask for Japanese help.

Troops continued to patrol the streets and guard stores, but calm largely prevailed after a citywide curfew chased people off the streets Saturday night. An estimated 15,000 homes and businesses remained without power, leaving a large section of the hard-hit area blacked out.

The death toll from the riots remained at 41 Sunday but the number of injured jumped to 2,116. 211 of them hurt critically.

In 1965, 34 people died in the Watts riots that devastated some of the same neighbourhoods. Of riots in recent US history, only the Detroit riots in 1967 had a higher death toll — 43.

Ueberroth said government would have to work with businesses, private foundations, religious leaders and South Central residents to rebuild and to create a local economic base that generates jobs.

"I'll even ask the private sector abroad," Ueberroth said.

"If there's major groups that are here in Southern California — as an example Japan... we'll open our facility to try and include them and let them participate in this rebuilding."

Korean-Americans and other demonstrators marched through Los Angeles and staged a rally Saturday, singing the Korean and American national anthems and hearing prayers of forgiveness for the rioters, many of whom targeted Korean-owned businesses. Organizers and helicopter pilots estimated the crowd at 100,000, but police said there were 25,000.

"This is our country," Helen Kime, a medical student and member of the Korean American Society, told the crowd. "It is not a Caucasian or Latino

or Afro-American or Korean-American country. It is a patchwork of many people and we need to keep it together."

About 1,300 Marines relieved National Guard troops patrolling the city, which exploded into violence following Wednesday's acquittal of four white policemen who beat a black motorist, Rodney King.

Although things were much calmer Saturday, a 65-year-old woman was fatally shot by a sniper as she walked down a riot-ravaged street in South Central Los Angeles, sheriff's deputies said. And a fire engulfed a commercial building northeast of downtown Saturday night.

It was unclear if the killing and fire were related to the rioting or was part of the every-

Off the Record

AIDS through straight sex on the rise

LONDON: The British medical journal said on Friday a growing number of AIDS sufferers in Britain had been infected through straight sex, reports Reuters.

It said a feature of recent AIDS research was that a small but growing number of heterosexual victims did not appear to fit into traditional high risk categories — drug users, bisexuals or travelers to sub-Saharan Africa.

Statistics issued separately by the Health Department showed a 45 per cent rise in heterosexuals contracting AIDS through conventional sexual intercourse, in the year to March against the same period a year ago.

The number of women contracting Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) also leapt 46 per cent to 140 in the year, the Health Department said.

Hitchcock's 'The Birds' in reality

TEL AVIV: Alfred Hitchcock's horror movie 'The Birds' became reality in a Tel Aviv street at the weekend as a flock of Ravens repeatedly attacked residents, reports AFP.

Police said a woman was knocked over and slightly injured along with her son on Friday night as dozens of the big birds dived on them from telephone wires, rooftops and television aerials.

But the nightmare worsened on Saturday as the Ravens swooped along Shalom Aleichem street and the screaming reached a crescendo.

"They started to attack anybody who ventured into the street, a neighbour told voice of Israel radio.

Frightened people called police who in turn brought in a zoologist. He suggested shooting one of the birds and stringing it up as a scarecrow.

Anti-stress audios & videos for bored dogs, cats

TOKYO: Overstressed cats and dogs in Japan no longer need to envy the relaxation salons their owners use to escape the pressures of modern life, reports AFP.

Instead they can turn to anti-stress cassettes — video or sound — and even yoga now offered by companies competing with each other to find new and ever more ingenious ways of tapping the guilty conscience of their owners.

"We thought that dogs and cats left in small apartments waiting for their owners to return were probably feeling even more stress than human beings," explained a spokesman for Nippon Crown, which last October released two compact disks, one for 'healthy cats', the other for 'healthy dogs'.

Each of the disks, which sell for 17 dollars, features original music composed specially for dogs and cats by Hiroki Sakaguchi with advice from Vet Norio Aoki, who says he has worked on the subject for 20 years.

Birth of a big kid

JAKARTA: An Indonesian woman has given birth to a seven kilogram, 69 centimetre boy in central Java, the Jawa Pos said Friday, reports AFP.

Sri Kushardiati, 32, a housewife from Karanganyar, central Java, gave birth through caesarian surgery to the huge baby at a private hospital in nearby Solo Tuesday, the Pos said.

The baby, carried for nine months and 20 days, was in good health, the paper said.

The boy was the second child of Kushardiati and her civil servant husband Susetyo.

Key of world war III turns into key to welfare

LONDON: A nuclear rocket key which could have started world war three is to be presented to a British scientist as a mark of gratitude by a group of Russians, Reuters reports.

Professor Paul Cook, President of the British Science and Technology Trust, will receive the key from four-year-old Lena Rozova in a ceremony on May 12.

The gift thanks him for collecting more than one million pound (1.77 million dollar) in medicines for sick children in the former Soviet Union and for arranging operations in London on Lena's once-paralysed arm.

The key came from a rocket launcher which until recently had a nuclear missile trained on Britain.

"The key is very symbolic," the Professor told reporters.

Militants gun down 8 Sikhs in Punjab

AMRITSAR, May 3: In an apparent show of strength, Sikh militants gunned down eight members of their community Sunday, hours before the state chief minister was to visit the holy town in the northwestern state of Punjab, police said, reports AP.

Militants lined up eight labourers at a farmhouse in Kaderabad village, 30 kilometres east of Amritsar, and shot them at point blank range with AK-47 rifles, said Paramjit Singh Gill, a senior police officer.

The militants accused the labourers of informing police about one of their top commanders, which led to his death in a police encounter last week, Gill said.

The militants escaped under cover of darkness, he said. Chief Minister Beant Singh was scheduled to drive to Amritsar, the holiest city of the Sikhs, Sunday morning to attend a funeral ceremony of a politician who died recently.

Sikh militants have stepped up their campaign for an

independent state of Khalistan or Land of the Pure after a democratically-elected government was formed in March. Most Sikh political parties boycotted the elections, which had a voter turnout of a little over 20 per cent.

On Saturday, two bombs exploded in a shopping centre at Gurdaspur, 45 miles (75 kilometres) north of Amritsar, killing at least nine people and injuring 22 others, police said.

The bombs were planted on a bicycle, said, police officer SK Goel. Sikh militants have been blamed for 794 deaths in the state this year. About 13,000 people have been killed in the state during the last five years.

Sikh separatists claim the Hindu-dominated federal government has been stealing the agricultural and industrial wealth of the state and is trying to stifle the Sikh culture and religion.

Nationwide, Sikhs make up 2 per cent of India's 844 million people.

day violence that plagues the area.

But there were clear signs of normality returning. The number of fires dropped dramatically. Traffic picked up on the freeways. And officials said there was good chance Los Angeles schools would reopen Monday after two days of closures.

"We made great progress," Mayor Tom Bradley said. "I'm encouraged by that. But I'm not prepared to say it's over."

Bradley extended the city-wide nighttime curfew through the weekend.

Two courts scheduled special Saturday sessions to begin processing some of the more than 6,300 people arrested in the rampage.

Many parts of the South Central area, the hardest hit by arson and looting, were without markets as well as electricity. The shopping carts outside one looted grocery on Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard were filled only with trash.

"We don't have no food," complained 8-year-old Frederick Brewer. "We have to go way out somewhere else to get food."

The rioting struck hardest at economically fragile low and middle-income areas, many of which had still to rebound from the Watts riots.

Jack Kyser, chief economist at the Economic Development Corp of Los Angeles, estimated that up to 10,000 businesses may have been burned, looted or destroyed.