

Ghali's envoy to visit Tripoli

Move to convince Libya to comply with UN demands

UNITED NATIONS, May 7: UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has decided to send an envoy to Libya to convince the country to comply with Security Council demands, diplomatic sources said Wednesday, reports AFP.

Vladimir Petrovsky, Deputy UN Secretary General, was to leave New York for Tripoli on Thursday, the sources said.

Boutros-Ghali decided to send Petrovsky to Tripoli after meeting Tuesday with Libyan ambassador to the United Nations Ali Ahmed El-Huderi, Diplomatic sources said.

The Secretary General already has sent several envoys to Tripoli in recent months on similar missions, but all have returned empty handed.

The 15-member Security Council slapped a military and air embargo on Libya last month after the north African country refused to hand over two agents accused of the 1988 bombing of a Pan Am passenger jet over Lockerbie, Scotland.

Both Washington and London have south to extradite the two Libyans, while French authorities have demanded the right to interrogate four other Libyans in connection with the 1989 downing of a French UTA plane over Niger.

The two attacks left a total of 440 people dead.

The Security Council also has demanded that Libya formally renounce international terrorism, and provide concrete proof of that commitment.

Libyan Leader Moammar Gaddafi said Tuesday that it was up to the Libyan people to decide the fate of the two men

'Mujahideen victory will have no impact'

Saxena advocates maximum autonomy for Kashmir

NEW DELHI, May 7: The governor of Indian Kashmir wants the troubled state to be given maximum autonomy, but has reiterated that secession is out of question, the Statement newspaper reported today, reports AFP.

Girish Chandra Saxena also said in an interview that the assumption of power by the Mujahideen in Kabul would have no impact on Kashmir.

It is the first time a top Indian official has publicly advocated maximum autonomy for Kashmir, India's only Muslim-majority province whose ownership is disputed by neighbouring Pakistan.

"Short of secession or Azadi (freedom), Kashmir can have anything within the framework of the Indian constitution," said Saxena, the Chief Administrator of the northern border state now governed directly by New Delhi.

The statesman said Saxena's comments hinted at the possibility of Kashmir enjoying the status it enjoyed until 1953 when the Indian government controlled only matters relating to defence, communications and foreign affairs.

He added that "doors were open" for Kashmiri political leaders and Muslim militants to "begin a meaningful dialogue" to end a bloody separatist campaign, which has left thousands dead since 1989.

Pakistan controls the northern third of Kashmir, and New Delhi and Islamabad have gone to war twice over the picturesque state since 1947.

"In case of Kashmir's secession from the Indian union, the whole basis of our nationhood shall be eroded and we can't allow dislocation of our political structure," Saxena told the Statesman in Kashmir's summer capital Srinagar.

This is a question of our survival, of our way of life in our polity," said Saxena, a former chief of India's external intelligence agency.

He said there was grouse in Kashmir valley against New Delhi, disenchantment against Pakistan, and people were also fed up with militants.

"We don't want to build up the idea that things should be settled for what could be achieved peacefully."

The governor added that the developments in Afghanistan, where India strongly backed former President Najibullah and where the Mujahideen have taken power, would have no effect on Kashmir.

"The Afghans have their own preoccupations and they shall have to concentrate on their home," Saxena said, adding that the Mujahideen "can't find time to join Kashmiri militants."

Sections of Afghan guerillas have in the past expressed support for the Muslim separatist campaign, and the changes in Afghanistan have sparked concern here that Kashmir separatism might escalate.

Saxena said some 4,000 Muslim militants were "still active" in the Kashmir valley and another 3,000 were waiting in Pakistan held Kashmir to sneak into India. He indicated that security forces had killed some 3,000 rebels so far.

India accuses Pakistan of arming the Kashmiri militants. Islamabad denies the charge, but supports the Kashmir separatist campaign, calling it a struggle for self-determination.

Off the Record

Busting to get back bustier lost in LA bust-up

HOLLYWOOD: Among the thousands of dollars in furniture, television, stereos and other merchandise carted off during last week's Los Angeles riots, a merchant wants just one item returned, says Reuter.

You might say he's busting with efforts to reclaim this purple and gold item.

Lingerie Purveyor Frederick's of Hollywood hopes the offer of a 1,000 US dollar, no-questions-asked reward will entice someone to return rock star Madonna's bustier.

The sequin-trimmed, purple bustier with gold tassels was stolen last Thursday from Frederick's Lingerie museum at its flagship store in the heart of Hollywood.

The company offered the reward on Wednesday saying the bustier is irreplaceable.

Madonna wore the bustier in the music video "Open Your Heart." She donated it to Frederick's after her first world tour in 1987.

Frederick's known for its line of exotic and racy lingerie, said looters made off with about 200,000 dollar worth of bras and panties and other lingerie from the store.

Two other items stolen from the lingerie museum - Ava Gardner's pantaloons from the movie "Showboat" and a bra from Katey Sagal, who stars in the television show "Married... With Children" - have already been returned.



11 killed in Sind gunbattle

KARACHI, Pakistan, May 7: At least 11 people including a policeman and six bandits were killed in three operations against criminals in southern Pakistan, police said today, reports Reuter.

Policeman Ladh Khan Vasano was killed and six off-

Australia lifts ban on contacts with PLO

CANBERRA, May 7: The Australian government has lifted a ban on official contacts with the Palestine Liberation Organization PLO on the eve of a six-nation visit to the Middle East by Foreign Minister Gareth Evans, reports AFP.

The decision reflects "the generally constructive role" played by the PLO since the Gulf War early last year, Evans said in a statement late Wednesday.

"In response to the PLO's support for Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, restrictions were imposed in January 1991 which barred Australian ministers and officials from initiating contacts with the PLO," the statement said.

Those restrictions have now been lifted.

The PLO's representative in Canberra, Ali Kazak, said he was asked to see Evans last week to be informed of the decision Kazak described the decision as a return to the status quo.

Evans is expected to meet PLO officials in Cairo, Amman and in the Israeli-occupied territories when he visits the Middle East this month.

Ramos just ahead of closest rival

MANILA, May 7: The Philippine Presidential race is possibly the most unpredictable in the country's history, with the latest opinion poll putting former Defence Chief Fidel Ramos just ahead in a bitter four-cornered contest, reports Reuter.

Filipino's vote in the country's biggest elections on Monday, choosing a successor to President Corason Aquino, a new Congress and more than 17,000 local officials.

Politicians regard the battle for the Presidency as a watershed that will decide whether the struggling Southeast Asian country strengthens its recently-restored democracy or slips back towards dictatorship and possible military rule.

Former Armed Forces Chief Ramos is just ahead of closest rival, Miriam Santiago, in the latest opinion poll published by the Manila Chronicle today.

Santiago, who has led in several other polls, is a feisty ex-judge dubbed "the iron lady of the east" for her fierce attacks on corruption and promise of strong leadership.

Ramos enjoyed 17.6 per cent support, against 16.2 per cent for Santiago.

Diana to be guest of honor at 'First Night of the Proms'

LONDON: Princess Diana will be guest of honor at the "First Night of the Proms," and Soprano Dame Kiri Te Kanawa will close the opera season, organizers said Wednesday, reports AP.

The wife of Prince Charles, heir to the British throne, is patron of the London Symphony Chorus, which is appearing at the July 17 opening of the 98th Promenade Concerts.

This year's series of 66 concerts in 58 days at London's Royal Albert Hall includes 11 foreign orchestras.

One of the highlights will be on the last night, September 12, when New Zealand Soprano Dame Kiri sings arias by Puccini and Massenet. She last appeared at the Proms in 1980.

On average 4,000 people a night attend each concert, all of which are aired live on radio by the British Broadcasting Corp.



BRIEFLY

Ghali's call to help Y'slavia: UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali urged the international community Wednesday to "contribute generously" to help Yugoslavia meet its growing humanitarian needs, AFP reports from New York.

More than one million people have been displaced in the Yugoslav conflict with thousands of people being forced to seek refuge outside the country, Boutros-Ghali said in a communique.

Boutros-Ghali said he was "increasingly alarmed over the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Yugoslavia," particularly in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The Secretary General also said he supported the joint appeal from the UN high commissioner on refugees, UNICEF and the World Health Organization for humanitarian assistance.

Israel to boycott Ottawa talks: Israel will boycott the Mideast peace talks scheduled for next week in Ottawa because Palestinians from outside the occupied territories plan to attend, the External Affairs Ministry said Wednesday, reports AP from Toronto.

In Jerusalem, state-owned Israel TV said Israel has officially notified the United States and Russia it will also boycott the talks in Brussels, Belgium.

The Ottawa talks on Palestinian refugee rehabilitation will go ahead anyway next Wednesday through Friday, and Canada hopes Israel will join later rounds, ministry spokesman Rodney Moore said.

"Nobody ever believed the great problem of refugees would be resolved at one session," he said. "That is why we hope Israel will be able to attend later meetings."

8 killed in Jakarta truck accident:

Eight people were killed and 14 seriously injured when a truck plunged into a river in Ngawi east Java Province, the Kompas daily said Thursday, AFP reports from Jakarta.

The daily said the truck, carrying crops and 22 villagers working on a farm, plunged into the river Tuesday when the driver tried to avoid another truck.

Qatar, Iran want peace in Gulf:

Qatar and Iran on Wednesday stressed the need for stability in the Gulf to allow the countries of the region to devote themselves to development, the Qatari news agency (QNA) said, AFP reports from Doha.

The delegations of Qatari Crown Prince Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani and Iranian first Vice President Hassan Habibi also expressed their "support" for the new interim Islamic government in Afghanistan, QNA said.

Habibi arrived Tuesday in Qatar for a three-day officials visit at the invitation of the crown prince who visited Iran last November.

Habibi is the highest-ranking Iranian officials to visit a Gulf Arab country since the February 1991 end of the war against Iraq.

Road mishaps claim 46 in China:

Two road accident killed a total of 46 people in China, the Legal Daily said Thursday, Reuter reports from Beijing.

A bus plunged down a 145 metre (475 foot) cliff in the southwestern province of Sichuan on April 13, killing 28 people, the newspaper said.

Eighteen people were killed on April 3 when a minibus crashed into a river in Zhejiang province in eastern China.

Drought may affect 3m Africans:

More than three million people could be hit by a "killer drought" in southern Africa that will need millions of tonnes of food aid and may threaten the future of democratic reforms in the region, US officials and other experts said on Wednesday, reports from Washington.

About 30 million of the 100 million people living there may be directly affected by the drought, officials from the Agency for International Development (AID) said at a US House of Representatives hearing.

"Approximately 3.4 million may be exposed to famine or will be vulnerable to acute food insecurity," an AID statement said.

Anti-Suchinda demonstrations on

BANGKOK, May 7: Several thousand demonstrators rallied in front of Parliament for a fourth straight day Thursday, pressing for the resignation of Prime Minister Suchinda Kraprayoon.

Suchinda, the nation's army chief, has angered the protesters by going back on his word not to accept the post of prime minister.

In a speech Thursday before Parliament, Suchinda accused some of the protesters of seeking to install a Communist-style system. He defended himself by saying the Constitution does not require that the prime minister be an elected politician.

The stock market's main index continued to fall Thursday, although not as sharply as Wednesday, when it plummeted nearly six per cent.

Riot police had blocked off the streets adjoining the Parliament but later let demonstrators through after one drove a pickup truck through a barricade. No one was hurt.

Crowds were thinner than on Wednesday, when the streets were jammed with tens of thousands of people - one of the largest rallies since the people's revolution that toppled a military dictatorship in 1973.

In front of Parliament, pro-democracy party leader Chamlong Srimuang went into the fourth day of his hunger strike. He has vowed to continue until he dies or Suchinda resigns. His immense popularity - due to his strict Buddhist integrity - has sharply raised the stakes in this political struggle.

"It doesn't look good" said Foreign Ministry spokesman Sakthip Krairiksh. "With Chamlong, if anything happens to him I'm sure the mob will rise."

Suchinda, who had been the army chief, was chosen prime minister April 7 by a coalition of five pro-military parties that emerged from the March election for Parliament.

He led a military coup that ousted an elected government in early 1991 and went back on his promise not to accept the prime ministership.

The demonstrators cut across all sectors of society and include some of the country's best-known social and community leaders.

A group of 42 academics sent a letter Wednesday to the widely revered constitutional monarch, King Bhumibol Adulyadej, criticizing military interference in politics and asking that the king dissolve the Parliament and call new elections.

Otherwise, civil war may erupt, they warned in the letter.

One activist, Anitra Puangsuan, said at Thursday's rally that the only settlement was through the king since the government would not listen to the people.



MANILA: Opposition presidential candidate former first lady Imelda Marcos reaches out to her supporters during a political rally Wednesday at Manila's central park. More than 30,000 attended the rally. — AFP/UNB photo

10 killed as troops storm security prison in Peru

LIMA, May 7: Police and troops battled Wednesday to regain control of cellblocks in a high-security prison occupied by leftist rebel inmates, who fought back with explosives, guns and acid, reports AP.

Officials said eight male inmates and two police were killed in the fighting, which began after troops blew a hole in a cellblock occupied by about 130 women on Wednesday, and then raged into the night.

Male inmates slipped into the block and battled alongside the women, whom prison authorities were seeking to transfer.

At least 11 police officers and an undetermined number of inmates were hurt in the fighting at Canto Grande prison, officials said.

Police said they moved on the cellblock because inmates belonging to leftist rebel groups had turned it into a training and indoctrination center.

Canto Grande, on Lima's northeastern outskirts, holds 700 rebels among a total of about 2,000 inmates.

Several hundred troops entered the four-cellblock prison on Lima's northeastern outskirts about 4 am (0900 GMT) Wednesday. Hours later they blasted into the women's cellblock, whose doors had been barricaded from inside.

Clashes leave 70 dead in Nagorno-Karabakh

MOSCOW, May 7: Fighting intensified between Armenians and Azerbaijanis on Wednesday, leaving more than 70 dead in the Nagorno-Karabakh region and in Nakhichevan, reports reaching here said, according to AFP.

The clashes were particularly violent north of Nagorno-Karabakh, sources said in Yerevan and Baku, as Armenia and Azerbaijan were to start high-level peace talks in Tehran.

Nagorno-Karabakh is a secessionist Armenian enclave in western Azerbaijan, and Nakhichevan is an Azerbaizani enclave in south Armenia.

At least 27 people were killed early Wednesday in an Azerbaizani offensive against the village of Talish in the Shauman region of Nagorno-Karabakh, according to Armenian authorities in the capital Yerevan quoted by the ITAR-TASS news agency.

Azerbaijan's defence ministry, quoted by the same agency, meanwhile said three Azeris had been killed and eight wounded in Armenian attacks on two villages in the Germanboy region.

Earlier Wednesday Azerbaijan said 43 people — 40 Armenians and three Azeris — died late Tuesday in the Fizuli region of southeast Nagorno-Karabakh and in Germanboy to the north.

Pickett 'like a loaded gun'

ENGLEWOOD, NJ: Singer Wilson Pickett pleaded innocent Tuesday to charges of drunken driving and striking an elderly pedestrian. A prosecutor said Pickett "is like a loaded gun," reports AP.

Pickett was charged in an April 24 accident in which authorities said he injured an 86-year-old man while driving with a blood alcohol level more than double the legal limit.

The accident occurred little more than a week after Pickett allegedly threw a vodka bottle at his former girlfriend and threatened her family. Last May, he was accused of driving across the lawn of his neighbor, Mayor Donald Aronson.

Prosecutor Leopold Monaco tried to get Pickett's driver's license revoked, saying, "Him still being out there ... is like a loaded gun."

But Municipal Court Judge Joseph Clark released the 51-year-old rhythm and blues singer on his recognizance and allowed him to keep his license.

Clark ordered Pickett to abide by a court agreement that he reached Monday with his former girlfriends, Jean Cuscaux, to enter alcohol rehabilitation.

Pickett, whose songs include "Mustang Sally" and "In the Midnight Hour," will enter the rehabilitation program when he returns next month from a tour in Australia.



A 1929 photo of German-born silver screen legend Marlene Dietrich in her first famous role as Lola in Josef Von Sternberg's "Blue Angel". Marlene Dietrich died at her Paris home Wednesday aged 90. —AFP/UNB photo

Tigers kill 3 Lankan troops

COLOMBO, May 7: Three soldiers were killed and six wounded in a Tamil rebel ambush in eastern Sri Lanka today, police said, reports Reuter.

The soldiers were attacked while patrolling a road in Plonnaruwa district.

Police said the attackers were Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam guerillas fighting for their own homeland in the north and the east.

The tigers killed 56 Muslims in a raid on a village in the same district last week.

Gorbachev for creation of a global govt to resolve cirisis

FULTON, Missouri, May 7: Former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev called here Wednesday for the creation of a global government, which would adopt "a world perspective" when resolving international problems, reports AFP.

Now retired from public office, as was Churchill 46 years ago, Gorbachev said the world was facing global problems which should be dealt with on a global level — terrorism, crime, drugs alcoholism, the environment and hunger.

Ongoing events such as regional conflicts and new rise in nationalism also threaten emerging peace, Gorbachev said.

World leaders must therefore "adopt a world perspective and seek solutions generally applicable," he said.

"There must be an adequate response to global challenges and changes. We must seek means of collective action by the world community."

The United Nations could take on the role of a world government, said the former Soviet leader, who proposed that Germany and Japan be admitted to the Security Council as permanent members.

Only an attitude of "victor and vanquished" could explain their continued absence from the Security Council, he said.

Gorbachev urged that Article 53 of the United Nations charter, which defines "hostile nations" in a reference to the Second World War, be immediately scrapped.

Aside from Germany and Japan, Gorbachev said that India, Italy, Indonesia, Canada, Poland, Brazil, Mexico and Egypt should be brought into the Security Council as permanent members.

Today, democracy must prove that it can exist only as an antithesis of totalitarianism," he said, calling for "a democratically organized world community" instead of one dominated by a singled superpower.

Gorbachev, who paved the way for the political and economic liberal nation of the former communist bloc, is on a two-week private trip to the United States, accompanied by his wife Raisa and daughter Irina.

They arrived in the United States Monday and were entertained for two days by Ronald and Nancy Reagan at their California ranch. The Gorbachev also are to meet with former President Jimmy Carter and members of the Kennedy family.

Gorbachev will deliver a speech before a joint session of Congress in Washington on May 13.

US, Israel conduct jt exercises

JERUSALEM, May 7: Israeli and US troops last month conducted major joint maneuvers in the first such exercises since the Gulf War, a newspaper reported here yesterday, reports AFP.

The Haaretz daily quoted an Israeli military source as saying the exercises, organized at Washington's request, took place in southern Israel and involved different services, including the medical corps.