

# Russia hopes to sell \$ 5b arms to foreign buyers each year

MOSCOW, May 8: Russia hopes to sell five billion dollars worth of arms and 800 million dollars in uranium to foreign buyers each year to earn badly needed hard currency, a senior aide to President Boris Yeltsin said, reports AFP.

Mikhail Malaya, Yeltsin's top adviser on converting the military-industrial complex of the former Soviet Union to civilian uses, said Russia hoped to maintain arms exports at about 40 per cent of the level of the Soviet regime.

The Soviet Union in 1990 exported 40 billion dollars worth of armaments and military technology, and Russia should be able to gain hold of 40 per cent of that market, he told a press conference Thursday, estimating future Russian weapons sales at five billion dollars per year.

"Given the current economic crisis, Russia cannot afford to take a more moral position than the United States or the nations of Europe" on the question of arms sales, he said.

He also said Russia could earn another 800 million dollars per year from uranium exports.

He said Soviet production had represented 40 per cent of world output of uranium, but that for ideological reasons the former Soviet Union had restricted its exports to seven per cent of the market.

"If this quota was raised to 25 per cent (of the world market) the Energy Ministry could bring 800 million dollars annually into state coffers," he said.

Turning to the issue of military reconversion, Malaya complained that the 40 billion rubles allotted by the Russian parliament for the programme during the current year was insufficient.

He said experts had estimated the programme's total cost at 150 billion dollars spread out over 15 years.

# Benazir to sit with Sharif for 'positive talks'

ISLAMABAD, May 8: Pakistan's opposition leader Benazir Bhutto said she will go for talks with Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif provided it is based on positive intentions, reports Xinhua.

In response to the Prime Minister's invitation for dialogue, Benazir Bhutto, Leader of the Opposition in National Assembly and Co-Chairperson of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) said that if the offer was for Nawaz Sharif's personal interest, we would reject it and continue our Jihad (holy war) to oust the most corrupt government.

She made the remarks in an address to a huge public meeting in Chakwal of Punjab Province on Thursday evening.

She also criticised variety of policies of the Nawaz Sharif's government, according to local press reports today.

The government should be responsible for all the problems and ills of the society, she said.

**Curfew in Quetta**  
A Quetta report adds: An

indefinite curfew was imposed Friday in Quetta city near the Afghan border where ethnic and political tensions between Pashtuns and Baluchas have risen in recent days, authorities said.



Parliamentary forces have been deployed throughout the city, the capital of Baluchistan province, following strike calls Thursday by rival parties and

reports of incidents elsewhere in the province.

Officials attribute the tensions to a controversial move to increase the number of seats in the municipal council

On Thursday a local cadre of the opposition Pakistan People's Party was killed and four supporters wounded in Dera Bugti, 300 kilometers (180 miles) to the east, where a curfew was immediately imposed.

Another report says, Pakistan has discovered the largest coal field in the South East Asia and the Middle East region, according to local press reports Friday.

The coal field, with calculated reserves of over 10 billion tons, was discovered near Thara Jo Goth in the desert of Sindh province, by the Pakistan Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Resources in collaboration with two units of the US in their geological survey, the reports said.

The potential of coal production in the country is likely to increase substantially with the discovery of the new coal field, the reports said, adding that Pakistan will leap a step towards self-reliance in the energy sector as the discovered coal is remarkably low in sulphur and ash contents.



FRANCE: American actress Sharon Stone, star of the film (Basic Instinct) poses with Dutch director Paul Verho even on Thursday, at the presentation of the film in competition at the 45th Cannes film festival. — AFP/UNB photo

## Turkmen crossword is a record puzzler

ASHGABAT: The world's biggest Crossword Puzzle in the Turkmen language including 5,500 words could take a worthy place in the famous Guinness Book of World Records, reports Tass says PTI. The puzzle was compiled by Philologist S Zakharov from Ashgabat.

The work, covering an area of two by three meters impresses by its originality. The giant puzzle unites 550 blocks of various designs in the form of cotton buds, butterfly wings and other drawings.

The author said he did not intend to break any records. However, the giant crossword puzzle is several times bigger than the biggest Russian puzzle of 1,274 words.

## Atheism is ok for scouts

SANTA ANA: Twin 10-year-old boys kicked out of the Cub Scouts for refusing to say "God" in the scout promise must be allowed to rejoin their pack, a judge has ruled, reports AP.

Superior Court Judge Richard Frazier Thursday said the Orange County Council of the Boy Scouts is a business under state law, and therefore cannot exclude people because of their religious beliefs.

William and Michael Randall were ousted from Cub Scout Pack 519 in January 1991 after announcing they didn't believe in God and wouldn't say the word "God" during recitation of the Cub Scout Promise.

The oath reads: "I promise to do my best to do my duty to God and my country, to help other people, and to obey the Law of the Pack."

The religious requirement does not convert Scouting to religious organization that would be exempt from state civil rights laws, the judge ruled.

## Lennon's jacket fetches record price at auction

LONDON: An anonymous bidder paid 24,200 pounds (43,500 dollars) at auction Thursday for a leather jacket worn by former Beatle John Lennon, a record for celebrity clothing, auctioneers Christies said, reports AP.

The sale of dozens of items of rock and pop memorabilia raised a total 186,900 pounds (336,000 dollars).

Lennon wore the jacket both on and off stage in the early 60s, when the Beatles were playing clubs in their northern England hometown of Liverpool and in Hamburg, Germany.

He later abandoned it when the group's manager Brian Epstein persuaded the "Fab Four" to brush up their wardrobes. The jacket had been expected to fetch 4,000-6,000 pounds (7,000-11,000 dollars).

Another anonymous buyer paid 9,000 pounds (16,000 dollars) for a purple lurex and lace stage outfit worn by singer Prince on his 1984 Purple Rain tour.

## Delhi sending troops to Haryana to counter Sikhs

NEW DELHI, May 8: The federal government said Friday it is sending paramilitary reinforcements to Haryana state to counter growing Sikh terrorism, after Sikh guerrillas shot and killed 15 people at a liquor store, reports AP.

The guerrillas, dressed in military uniforms and riding two motorcycles, raked the liquor shop with automatic gunfire on Thursday, also wounding an unspecified number of people.

Deputy Home Minister MM Jacob told Parliament he was consulting with state authorities to evaluate their security needs. Haryana borders the state of Punjab, where Sikh militants are demanding an independence.

Increasingly, the decade-old struggle in Punjab has spilled over into neighboring Haryana and Uttar Pradesh states. Bombings and clashes also have occurred in New Delhi, the federal capital, and India's commercial capital, Bombay.

In other incidents late Thursday, Sikh gunmen shot and killed a member of Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao's Congress party in Mehul Khurd village in Punjab's Sangrur district.

Two militants were also killed by security forces in Tarn Taran district near Amritsar, the United News of India news agency reported.

Police officer Gian Singh said the four Sikh gunmen fired indiscriminately from AK-47 assault rifles at a group of about 40 people drinking liquor.

Clashes leave 40 dead  
Lankan troops launch major search for Tigers  
COLOMBO, May 8: Government troops backed by helicopters launched today a major search for Tamil guerrillas in eastern Sri Lanka after overnight violence left at least 40 dead in the region, military officials here said, reports AFP.

Security forces were combing the jungles of Batticaloa district for Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) guerrillas who killed 13 troopers and lost 26 of their own men in a series of strikes yesterday, officials said.

In one fierce attack in Vakkarai in Batticaloa, LTTE guerrillas killed nine soldiers including a captain and lost 16 of their cadres, military officials said, adding that there were several wounded on both sides.

Official said the troops were ambushed by heavily armed LTTE cadres as they were returning to their camp following an operation against militants in nearby Kidiraveli.

The Vakkarai attack came hours after another group of Tigers had gunned down three soldiers

## 'Report on torture in custody biased' India won't allow Amnesty to visit Punjab, Kashmir

NEW DELHI, May 8: India said on Thursday an Amnesty International report alleging torture, rape and death in custody in the country was unfair and biased, reports Reuter.

Junior Foreign Minister Eduardo Falcio said in a written reply to parliament that the report by the London-based human rights group was "exaggerated and presents a one-sided and biased picture of the human rights situation in India."

Falcio said India had refused to allow Amnesty to visit Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir, two northern states where militants are fighting for separate homelands, to probe the human rights record there.

"Amnesty International have proposed visits to certain parts of India, including Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir. These visits have not been agreed to so far," he said.

He said the group's report, "India - torture, rape and deaths in custody", which appeared in a local newspaper, resorted to sweeping and unsubstantiated generalisations.

Militant separatists in the two states have accused Indian security forces of violating human rights, especially of detained suspects.

Falcio said some Sikh organisations had submitted memoranda to the United Nations on alleged human rights violations in Punjab.

The allegations contained in such memoranda "are grossly exaggerated, politically motivated, and seek to distort out of context the situation prevailing in Punjab", he said.

India has acknowledged some violations of human rights by security forces in these states but maintained that the militants' allegations had been exaggerated.

## Azerbaijan, Armenia sign truce accord

NICOSIA, May 8: The Azerbaijani and Armenian leaders on Friday signed an Iranian-brokered agreement to end their bloody dispute over Nagorno-Karabakh, the official Islamic Republic News Agency reported, reports AP.

The accord was signed by Armenian President Levon Ter-Petrossian and Yagub Mamedov, the acting president of Azerbaijan, on the second day of peace talks supervised by Iranian President Hashemi Rafsanjani. IRNA said in a dispatch monitored in Nicosia.

It said the document commits the two sides to an immediate cease-fire. It also calls for lifting the economic siege imposed on the disputed province

## North Korea admits progress in talks with South

SEOUL, May 8: North Korea's delegation to the inter-Korean prime ministers talks returned home today saying the meeting had produced significant progress toward peace and unification, reports AP.

Prime Minister Yong Hyong-Muk and his entourage left for the northern capital of Pyongyang, where Yon and his southern counterpart, Chung Won-Shik, will meet again from September 15.

North Korean spokesman An Eyoung-Su praised the outcome of the Seoul talks, which he said had opened a "bright avenue" toward personal exchanges and reconciliation.

The two sides took the first step in translating a reconciliation pact into reality Thursday by agreeing to launch key executive commissions this month



SEOUL: North Korean Prime Minister Yon Hyong-Muk (R) waves upon departure May 8 as South Korean Prime Minister Chung Won-Shik (L) looks out. The North Korean delegation said the meeting between inter-Korean prime ministers had produced significant progress toward peace and unification. — AFP/UNB photo.

## Suchinda refuses to resign

BANGKOK, May 8: Prime Minister Suchinda Kraprayoon refused to resign Friday, an aide said, as mass protests against him were held for a fifth consecutive day, reports AP.

Enduring intense heat, thousands of people demonstrated at a public field Friday, demanding that Suchinda give way to an elected politician. It was one of the largest anti-government rallies since a people's revolution toppled a military dictatorship in 1973.

Protesters and opposition parties have petitioned the revered constitutional monarch, King Bhumibol Adulyadej, to intervene to secure Suchinda's resignation.

But an aide to the Prime Minister said Suchinda would not resign.

"At the moment he cannot do this," said Phairin Jitrakulpong.

As army chief, Suchinda led a 1991 coup that ousted the elected government. He was named prime minister last month by a coalition of five pro-military parties after the March election for parliament. Suchinda did not run in the election.

Tens of thousands demonstrated Thursday despite the military's warnings it would take action against protesters. Reliable crowd estimates were not available.

The speeches and music continued all night. By morning, several thousands remained at the rally.

Planes dropped numerous leaflets Friday from the military urging people to stop protests and allow the government and the parliament resolve the problem.

The protesters cut across all classes and include some of the country's best-known social and community leaders.

## 3 held as police, youths clash in Toronto

TORONTO, May 8: Police clashed with youths on the streets of Toronto for the third time this week following a peaceful anti-racism rally Thursday outside the Ontario legislature, reports AP.

At least three teenagers, all under 18, were arrested, police said.

No injuries were reported. About 1,000 people took part in a 2 1/2-hour rally at Queen's Park in central Toronto, then dispersed peacefully as police flooded the main streets to head off a repeat of riots Monday and Tuesday.

The clash occurred later outside the Eaton Centre, a shopping mall and popular hangout for youths

the government's work. He denied that his plan would undermine democracy, saying that France has a strong president yet is unquestionably democratic.

Walesa said he does not favor really parliamentary elections as a solution. Elections were held in October and opinion polls have indicated that extremist parties would reap the greatest benefit if elections were held again now.

The address was greeted by applause in the chamber, although the 29 parties of parliament have no strong bloc supporting him.

Walesa speech came during a time of political confusion that he termed a "Bernuda triangle" of unclear relations between the president, the government and parliament.

Just Wednesday, the minority government of Prime Minister Jan Olszewski suffered its second major parliamentary defeat in two months on economic policy.

Parliament upheld constitutional court rulings requiring 2.1 billion in extra pay and pensions, even though the treasury is empty and paying the obligation would mean

## Rafsanjani likely to win run off polls

TEHRAN, May 8: Run off elections on Friday are expected to give President Hashemi Rafsanjani firm control of the 270-member House and a mandate for wide-ranging political and economic reforms, reports AP.

Rafsanjani's anti-Western opponents who dominated parliament for the last four years, were routed in the first round of voting April 10.

They were trying to salvage as a large minority bloc as they can in the new Majlis, or parliament, scheduled to convene May 28, but were given little chance of success.

Rafsanjani, 57, seeks to end Iran's isolation and invite foreign investment.

His supporters, many of them Western-educated technocrats who are despised by Islamic fundamentalists, won most of the 137 seats decided in the first round of voting. Rafsanjani's followers are expected to take most of the remaining 133 seats on Friday.

Both sides are calling on Iran's 30 million-strong electorate everyone over 15 years old is eligible to vote.

The government said nearly 19 million people or 65 per cent, voted in the first round.

Some foreign observers suspect that figure may have been inflated to boost Rafsanjani's image.

If last month's pattern is repeated radical leaders such as parliament Speaker Mehdi Karrubi and former Interior Minister Ali Akbar Mohtashemi will lose their Majlis seats.

Supreme Military Court Head Registrar Colonel Kolen Gabriel said 16 were charged with subversion, the Jakarta Post daily said.

Gabriel said 15 were involved in separatist movements in the country's western and eastern most provinces of Aceh and Irian Jaya, and one involved in "security disruption" in the southern Sumatan province of Lampung.

3,550 courtmartialled in Indonesia  
JAKARTA, May 8: The Indonesian military court martialled more than 3,550 members of the Armed Forces in 1991, it was reported here today, reports AFP.

## BRIEFLY

**Afghans on hunger strike:** A group of Afghans who fled to China from their country's civil war began a hunger strike in a Beijing park Friday to press the United Nations to grant them refugee status, Reuter reports from Beijing.

About 40 men said they would continue their fast until they got a positive response from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

They have camped out with their wives and children since Wednesday in a small park in front of the UN Mission in Beijing. The women and children did not join the fast.

**Headscarf for Afghan women:** Afghanistan's new rulers banned alcohol on Thursday and asked all women to wear a concealing headscarf in its opening moves to turn the country into an Islamic state, reports Reuter from Kabul.

Afghan television said the leadership council grouping the leaders of the new government decided that buying, selling or consuming alcohol or narcotics would be punishable under Islamic Law usually flogging.

Alcohol was frowned upon by devout Muslims of Afghanistan under the old regime, but was not illegal and was freely available in urban areas.

A lunch with a leader of the former ruling party last week was accompanied by large glasses of whiskey as in the past.

**Fresh fighting in Sarajevo:** Fresh fighting broke out in Sarajevo as UN envoy Marrack Goulding prepared to leave for Zagreb after inconclusive talks with Yugoslav and Serbian leaders on a peace-keeping force for Bosnia-Herzegovina, Reuter from Belgrade says.

Heavy artillery, mortar and machinegun fire broke a two-day lull in the Bosnian capital Sarajevo late on Thursday, with shells raining on southwestern suburbs around the Serb-held Ilidza area and the Muslim villages beyond.

Witnesses said at least one building was set on fire and tracer bullets streaked across the night sky.

**Diamond mine collapse: 100 killed:** About 100 people were killed in Sierra Leone when an illegally-dug diamond mine caved in, police said on Thursday, Reuter reports from Freetown.

The accident happened on Tuesday at Nyea in the diamond-rich eastern region of the impoverished West African country, about 300 km (200 miles) from the capital Freetown.

Police said unlicensed miners dug a tunnel 10 metres (30 feet) deep which collapsed, burying those in the pit and trapping others who had been standing on the surface.

Police said the dead included would be rescuers. State radio said bodies were still being removed from the scene.

Sierra Leone remains one of the world's poorest countries despite rich mineral deposits.