

Excise minister of Orissa resigns

BHUBANESWAR, May 9: Prasanna Kumar Acharya, Orissa's Minister for Excise today resigned from the council of ministers owing "moral responsibility" for the unprecedented liquor tragedy at Cuttack, according to official sources, reports PTI.

Fresh rift in Afghan govt as ceasefire expires

Najibullah will be put on trial

ISLAMABAD, May 9: Afghan President designate Burhanuddin Rabbani has said that the deposed President Najibullah would be questioned for his past deeds and would be put on trial before an Islamic court to be set up soon, reports Xinhua.

He advised the women to observe the Islamic hijab (veil) but warned that no one had the right to touch any woman in case she was not observing hijab.



Najibullah throughout the 14-year war against the Soviet-installed government.

by the personal rivalries and ambitions that kept them from forming a united front government and rebel leader Gulbuddin Hekmatyar hailed Hekmatyar's rocket attacks while the leaders tried to work out their differences and bring Hekmatyar's Hezb-e-Islami group into the government.

army generals and senior security officers in his administration who had once served under Najibullah.

Two soldiers shot dead in Quetta

QUETTA, May 9: Gunmen killed two paramilitary soldiers in curfew-bound Quetta, scene of ethnic and political tensions between Pashtuns and Baluch near the Afghan border, military authorities said, reports AFP.

BRIEFLY

Cannes Film Festival begins: The 45th Cannes Film Festival opened in Cannes, a coastal city in southern France, Xinhua reports from Paris.

Over 200 held in Algerian riot: One person was killed, eight injured and more than 200 arrested in unrest Friday before and after weekly prayers in Muslim fundamentalists strongholds, according to police and the state-run media, AP reports from Algiers.

221 more freed in Myanmar: Myanmar's military government Friday freed another 221 prisoners convicted of criminal offenses under an amnesty announced two days earlier, official Radio Rangoon reported, AFP says from Bangkok.

Sunday is mother's day in US: President Bush on Friday issued a proclamation in honour of Mother's Day "in grateful recognition of the contribution that mothers everywhere make to their families and to the nation," AP reports from Los Angeles.

One shot dead in Nagaland: Separatist tribal rebels shot dead four policemen in India's northeastern Nagaland state on Friday, police said, Reuter reports from India.

14 killed in Punjab violence: Fourteen persons, including five militants, were killed and seven suspected militants arrested in Punjab since Friday night, police said, PTI reports from Chandigarh.

8 Palestinians go on trial in Athens: Eight Palestinians went on trial in Athens on Friday on murder charges arising from a bomb blast last year intended for the British consulate in the Greek port of Patras, reports Reuter.

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NATO may offer military expertise to CSCE in Oslo meet

BRUSSELS, May 9: NATO could decide within the next few weeks to take on a new peace-keeping role in Europe, offering its military expertise and perhaps even troops for operations beyond its borders, an alliance official said on Friday, reports Reuter.

There is no intention of the alliance serving as Eur-ope's policeman," the official said. The Netherlands, backed by the United States, Britain and several other allies has suggested putting NATO assets at the disposal of the 52-nation Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE).

military expertise and give NATO a valuable new mission — and it could all be sanctioned at the Helsinki summit," said one alliance diplomat.

monitors sent by the European Community to Yugoslavia have already been killed.

Tajik president still in hiding

MOSCOW, May 9: Tajik President Rakhmon Nabiyev Friday promised in a radio broadcast to work with the opposition, but he remained in hiding as opposition demonstrators sought to arrest him, reports AFP.

Shah's brother arrested for possessing drug

LOS ANGELES, May 9: The brother of the late Shah of Iran was arrested on Friday at his two million dollars Beverly Hills mansion on charges of possessing opium for sale and for personal use, authorities said, reports Reuter.

Off the Record

'Starry-eyed Anne gets her man' LONDON: Princess Anne has danced the night away with a handsome navy frigate commander just two weeks after getting a divorce, British tabloids reported yesterday, says Reuter.



Polls a judgement of Cory's tenure

MANILA, May 9: In the largest election in Philippine history, voters will be passing judgement on President Corason Aquino even though the woman once hailed as a saviour of democracy will not be on the ballot, reports AP.

Shusha falls to Armenian forces

MOSCOW, May 9: Armenian forces early today took control of the town of Shusha, the last Azeri stronghold in the disputed enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh, an Azeri official said, reports Reuter.

McLean crowned as Miss Universe

BANGKOK: Miss Namibia, 19-year-old model Michelle McLean, was crowned Miss Universe here Saturday in a glittering pageant overshadowed by huge anti-government demonstrations on the streets of Bangkok.

Magical love brings unholy end for bishop

DUBLIN: An American woman revealed Friday that she had a baby by Eamon Casey, the Irish Roman Catholic bishop of Galway, 65, who resigned Thursday citing "personal reasons," reports AFP.

To have fried, becomes fried

NEW DELHI: A monkey fell Friday into a huge frying pot and splashed hot oil, injuring seven people at a community kitchen in a holy Hindu town, a news agency reported.

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Koreas' nuclear inspection by mid-June

SEOUL, May 9: Rivals South and North Korea have agreed in principle to conduct their first mutual nuclear inspections by mid-June, the prime minister's office said Saturday, reports AP.