

Sanction on India a humiliation: Leftists

Call to cancel joint exercise with US

NEW DELHI, May 13: India's leftist parties reacted indignantly Tuesday to the trade ban slapped on the space research agency by Washington over Russia's contract to sell technology to New Delhi, calling it a humiliation.

The United States is making use of the Indian government's weaknesses, Communist Party of India (Marxist) leader Harkishan Singh Surjeet told AFP.

India should react by cancelling the naval exercises with the US to signal that India will not tolerate such humiliation, he said referring to the first-ever joint naval exercise being planned for September.

It hurts our patriotic feelings... the US wants us and Russia to depend on it, the Marxist leader said.

The government remained silent, but officials said they worried over the ban's effect on Indo-US ties, which had begun to warm since the breakup of the Soviet Union.

Worried scientists at the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) called an emergency meeting at headquarters in the city of Bangalore, saying the sanctions were a surprise.

They declined comment on its repercussions on the agency's ambitious space programme.

Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao, who made a public appearance Tuesday, remained non-committal on the ban on ISRO, but in a speech exhorted domestic scientists to encourage research and development.

The US trade ban on ISRO and its Russian counterpart, state-owned Glavcosmos, follows Moscow's rejection of Washington's requests to block a 200-million-dollar rocket

technology transfer deal to India.

The sanction also bans US firms from importing from these two entities for two years, the US State Department announced in Washington Monday.

The United States said the sale of Russian rocket engines to India would violate the non-proliferation treaty known as the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR).

The MTCR forbids the sale of technology that would enable the development of launchers with a minimum capacity of 500 kilograms and a range of at least 300 kilometers.

New Delhi argues the technology is for civilian use, and has said that it was not against buying the engines from the West provided it could match the Russian price tag.

We cannot comment on this trade ban now it is being reviewed at the highest level, said a senior Foreign Ministry official Tuesday.

We tested Prithvi (Earth) to prove we do not need to import military technology. The Russian technology is for civilian use, Defence Minister Sharan Pawar said Monday referring to a second test flight of India's latest tactical missile.

The Communist Party of India (CPI), which was formerly allied to the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, said all Indian political organisations were against the US pressure.

Americans have no right to poke their nose in our affairs... this (sanction) is a classic case of new type of neo-colonialism, said CPI leader Indrajit Gupta, adding that New Delhi should not bow under US pressure.

This ban affects our strategy of self-reliance, Gupta said. The United States, India's largest trading partner, suspended duty free access for Indian pharmaceuticals in April as the Russian space technology transfer row heated up.

Relations between India and the United States have been thawing since the breakup of the Soviet Union, once New Delhi's closest ally, although differences persist on crucial defence and trade issues.

Reuters Reports: India said on Tuesday that US sanctions imposed because New Delhi planned to buy Russian rocket engines were 'an avoidable irritant' in bilateral relations.

Washington's decision has certainly generated misunderstanding in parliament and elsewhere about US policy perceptions, and to that extent it is an avoidable irritant in our relations, a Foreign Office spokesman told reporters.

BRIEFLY

Israeli planes raid Lebanon: Israeli aircraft attacked positions of pro-Iranian Shi'ite Muslim guerrillas in south Lebanon at dawn Wednesday security sources said, Reuter reports from Lebanon.

They said the jets attacked Foru positions of the Islamic resistance in the Iqim-al-Toufah area 40 km (25 miles) south of Beirut.

There was no immediate report of casualties.

Protesters storm town hall: Scores of supporters of an opposition Mayoral candidate stormed a town hall south of Manila damaging the building and election materials in protest the poll count, the town Mayor said Wednesday, AFP reports from Manila.

Santa Rosa Mayor Tito Gonzales said the protesters Tuesday smashed windows and furniture, then invaded the room where election returns were being counted and ruined the precinct-level ones by pouring ink on them.

Police moved in to eject the rioters, who were apparently enraged their candidate was trailing, Gonzales said without naming the candidate.

The Mayor reported no casualties and said the count was continuing.

Ghali lauds Bush: President George Bush met UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros Ghali at the White House on Tuesday and said he wanted to be "as cooperative as possible" in helping the United Nations carry out its mission, reports Reuter from Washington.

Bush praised the new UN leader as someone who is "off to a fantastic start" even though the international body is faced with "a very difficult time". Boutros Ghali took over as Secretary General on January 1 from Javier Perez de Cuellar.

Bush said the United Nations was at "perhaps the most challenging time in its history as it begins to fulfil its mission in not just the social and economic side... but in the political side."

"I want to work with him to see where the United States can be as cooperative as possible with the United Nations," Bush told reporters.

Sabaha denounces terrorism: Kuwait Prime Minister Saad Al-Abdallah Al-Sabah on Tuesday denounced what he said were terrorist attempts at "destabilising" the Emirate, although he did not give any details, reports AFP from Kuwait City.

The official Kuna News Agency quoted Sheikh Sabah as saying that "Criminal and terrorist acts" had recently been perpetrated in the Emirate, with the aim of "Destabilising the country, sowing sedition and harming our national unity."

The Premier, who is also the Kuwaiti Crown Prince, was speaking during a meeting attended by top Interior Ministry and police officials, the agency said.

He called on the security services to step up their efforts and also on the population to be "vigilant" and help unmask "suspicious elements."

Quake hits Samoa Island: A major earthquake measuring 6.8 on the Richter scale was recorded Wednesday near the Samoa Islands, the Hong Kong Observatory reported, AP says from Hong Kong.

An Observatory statement said initial reading of the quake, recorded at 2.18 a.m Hong Kong time (1818 GMT Tuesday), determined the epicenter to be near the Samoa Islands in the Pacific Ocean.

The Observatory said the earthquake was "in the vicinity" of the islands, but gave no further details.

The Richter scale is a gauge of the energy released by an earthquake, as measured by ground motion recorded on a seismograph.

Venkataraman to visit China: India's President Ramaswamy Venkataraman will pay a six day official visit to China next week, a Foreign Ministry spokesman said on Wednesday, Reuter reports from New Delhi.

He said Venkataraman's visit from May 18 would be the first by an Indian president to China.

The spokesman said the visit 'has strong political overtones in the context of our developing bilateral relations'.

India's head of state has a mainly ceremonial role and his overseas visits usually reflect this.

Bush request approved: A House of Representatives panel Tuesday approved President George Bush's request to complete 20 B-2 Stealth Bomber planes on the condition that they work as advertised and don't cost more than 44.4 billion dollars, AFP reports from Washington.

The House armed services procurement subcommittee agreed in closed session that the Air Force cannot spend the money until it proves the aircraft meets Radar-evading standards and will not cost more than 44.4 billion dollars.



Princess Diana of Wales (R) speaks to a woman holding her child in the society for the welfare of mothers and children in Cairo on Tuesday. Princess Diana is on a five-day visit to Egypt. —AFP/UNB photo

Dispute over enclave of Nagorny-Karabakh
UN Council okays fact-finding mission

UNITED NATIONS, May 13: The Security Council on Tuesday approved the urgent dispatch of a fact-finding mission to study ways of settling the dispute between Armenia and Azerbaijan over the enclave of Nagorny-Karabakh, reports Reuter.

An agreed statement read at a brief council meeting said the mission should examine ways of assisting peace efforts already being made by the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) and see how the international community could provide humanitarian assistance.

About 2,000 people have been killed during the past four years in fighting over Nagorny-Karabakh, a largely Armenian-inhabited region that has been administered by Azerbaijan since 1923.

A number of Council members, including the United States and Britain, consider the lead in trying to resolve the dispute should be left to the CSCE and not assumed by the United Nations. The world body is already overburdened with peace-making and peace-keeping chores, most recently

in Yugoslavia and Cambodia.

Council sources said a five-member team would leave within a couple of days, headed by Francesco Vendrell, a senior UN political adviser of Spanish nationality.

Other members would come from UN departments or agencies specialising in humanitarian aid, refugees and peace-keeping.

The mission's itinerary was not spelled out but it was expected to visit Baku and Yervan, the Azeri and Armenian capitals, as well as Nagorny-Karabakh.

British Ambassador Sir David Hannay said fact-finding was important because "accounts that come out of the region are highly coloured by the interests of the different parties."

But he did not think that "any one on the Security Council believes that it would make sense for the United Nations to supplant the CSCE as the principal searcher after peace."

Armenian forces last weekend captured Shusha, the last Azeri stronghold in the enclave.

Bush, Clinton win Virginia primaries

WASHINGTON, May 13: Bill Clinton and President Bush easily won primaries in Nebraska and West Virginia on Tuesday, as the two vied for leadership on urban issues drawing new attention because of the Los Angeles riots, reports AP.

Clinton was leading in West Virginia's Democratic primary with 74 per cent of the vote to Brown's 12 per cent with 90 per cent of precincts reporting. That lead would give the Arkansas governor his biggest

victory of the primary season.

In Nebraska, Clinton led Brown 48 per cent to 22 per cent with 95 per cent reporting.

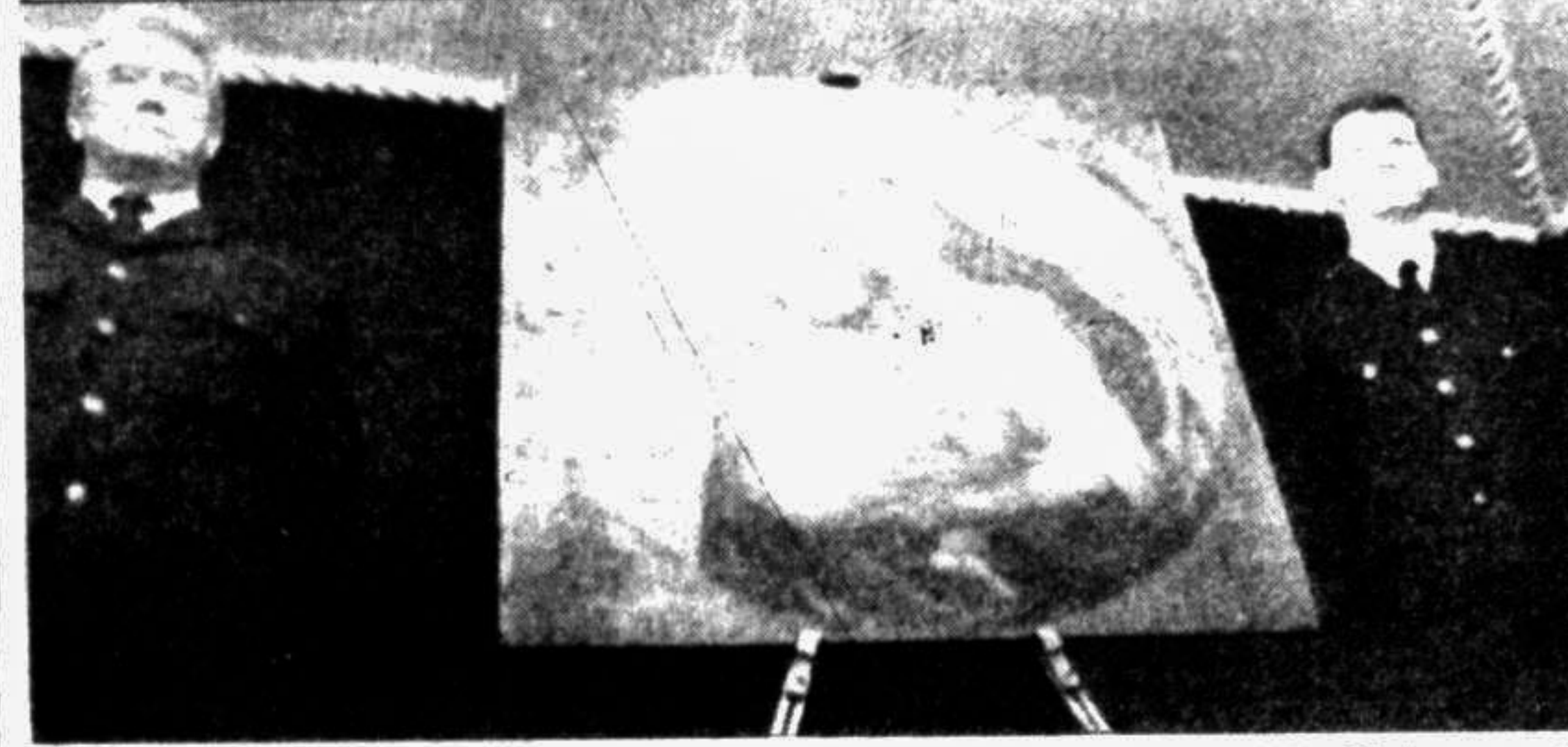
The polls hadn't even closed in Nebraska when Bush aide Mary Mattelin hailed "big wins in both states...." This is the time to put together your fall plans, she said, referring to the November general election.

Bush was gaining 81 per cent of the West Virginia Republican vote to 15 per cent

for Republican challenger Patrick Buchanan with 89 per cent of votes counted. Bush led 84 per cent to 14 per cent in Nebraska with 96 per cent of precincts reporting.

The president already had the Republican nomination locked up, and Arkansas Governor Clinton was looking ahead to the June 2 California primary to clinch the Democratic nomination.

Bush met with congressional leaders of both parties Tuesday to work out proposals



LONDON: Security guard painting by Raphael. The Leeswood Tondo of the Madonna and Child shown for the first time in 350 years, at the Dorchester Hotel May 12. The painting found at a house in Wales is estimated to be worth several million pounds, measures 95cm diameter. The painting is believed to have come to England in 1636 as a gift from Pope Urban VIII Queen Henrietta Maria, Catholic wife of king Charles. — AFP/UNB photo.

Serb leaders in Bosnia declare unilateral ceasefire

SARAJEVO, May 13: Serb leaders in Bosnia-Herzegovina on Tuesday declared a five-day unilateral ceasefire from 6 a.m. today, the Belgrade-based news agency Tanjug reported, says Reuter.

The truce was announced after a day of fierce fighting near Sarajevo and in other Bosnian towns and further diplomatic isolation of Yugoslavia.

The unofficial Serb parliament meeting in Banja Luka, northwest of Sarajevo, announced the ceasefire.

It called on the European Community to resume its conference on Bosnia to try to forge a peace agreement between warring Serbs, Muslims and Croats fighting for territory in the former Yugoslav republic.

The ceasefire is to start at 6 a.m on Wednesday, the parliament said in a statement

addressed to the EC.

It was unclear whether Serb forces would heed the ceasefire but the parliament earlier announced it was setting up its own army in Bosnia and said it was taking command of Yugoslav federal army units based on its territory.

Fighting raged in flashpoints in Bosnia on Tuesday and Sarajevo Radio said the besieged Muslim villages of Sokolovic and Kolonija were pounded by shells soon after the last EC monitors pulled out of the Bosnian capital nearby.

Serb forces fired shells into the Dobrinja district of Sarajevo, the radio said.

Witnesses in Mostar, southwest of Sarajevo, said a third of the city had been destroyed, a third was without power or water, and heavy street fighting was continuing.

Sarajevo radio said three people had been killed in the capital and three in Mostar in the preceding 24 hours.

The situation is deteriorating from hour to hour, Hajrudin Somun, adviser to Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic, told reporters.

Twelve EC monitors, who said they had been held at gunpoint and prevented from carrying out their duties during their time in Bosnia, slipped out of their Sarajevo hotel at dawn and moved to the Croatian port of split.

The monitors left after EC foreign ministers decided on Monday to recall ambassadors from Belgrade for consultations.

The United States is taking this action in coordination with the European Community and in light of the aggression carried out against Bosnia-Herzegovina by Serbian civilian and military leaders in clear and continuing violation

of all CSCE (conference on cooperation and security in Europe) principles, State Department spokeswoman Margaret Tutwiler said.

Austria recalled its envoy on Tuesday and Norway and Sweden were delaying the arrival of their ambassadors to Belgrade.

Serbia — dominant partner in a new, rump Yugoslavia proclaimed last week — has borne the brunt of international anger at continued fighting in Bosnia.

At a CSCE meeting in Helsinki on Tuesday, European countries rapped Yugoslavia on the knuckles for its role in the Bosnian conflict and reduced its role in European security conference decisions on the issue till the end of June.

Medical authorities said more than 1,300 people had been killed since the Muslim and Croat majority voted for independence in early March.

Off the Record

Patients without AIDS seek hospital care

CHICAGO: The costs associated with the AIDS virus are much higher than previously thought because many people infected with the AIDS virus — who aren't yet classified as having the disease — require hospital care, a new study says, reports AP.

For every 100 people who require hospitalization because of AIDS, an additional 53 people infected with the HIV virus that causes AIDS also are hospitalised, a survey of 325 hospitals in 1988 found.

"This is a crisis now, Dennis P. Andrulis, the study's lead author and president of the National Public Health and Hospital Institute, said at a news conference in Washington on Tuesday.

The survey is being reported in Wednesday's Journal of the American Medical Association.

Hospitals are cutting back on other types of care, including emergency services, because of the load of HIV-infected patients who don't have AIDS, Andrulis said.

The study found people infected with HIV who didn't have AIDS were poorer and didn't have as much insurance as people with AIDS. Most of those without AIDS were inner-city residents, many of them minorities who became infected through intravenous drug use, the study said.

Twenty-four per cent of the people hospitalised with HIV-related problems didn't have insurance, compared with 15 per cent of AIDS patients, the study found.

AIDS is diagnosed only when a patient has a certain cluster of symptoms defined by the Federal Centers for Disease Control. People who are infected with HIV, which causes AIDS, often go years before developing those symptoms. But they are susceptible to many other illnesses before then.

Tough search for an Indian chef

STOCKHOLM: Indian chefs are hard to find and hire, at least in Sweden, reports AP.

Ask Khanna Satish, owner of the oldest Indian restaurant in the west coast city Göteborg. Since 1989, Satish has been trying to employ an Indian chef.

He prepares the food for his customers, but due to failing health and the effects of childhood polio, he needs help.

The National Job Center has advertised the position several times without any result.

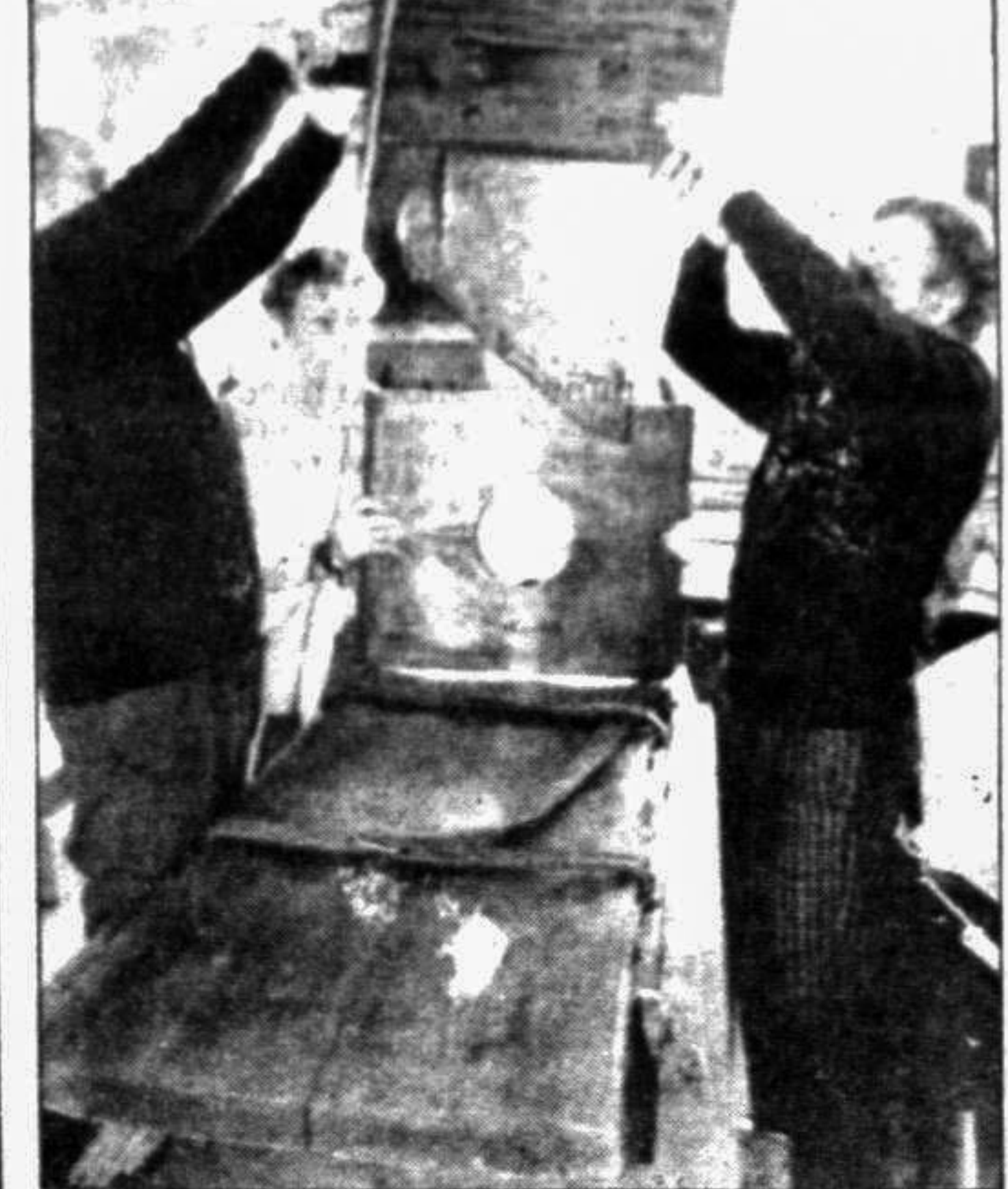
Last year Satish tried to solve the problem himself by hiring a chef from India. But the Ministry of Labour turned down the application for a work permit.

The ministry said a Swede could do the job just as well. Satish disagrees.

"It has to be an Indian, brought up with Indian food culture, who can prepare Indian food," he told the national news agency TT.

Satish's final hope is an appeal to Labour Minister Borje Horlund.

If he doesn't intervene, Satish will have to close his restaurant.



The guillotine, first used by French revolutionaries in 1792 and which once belonged to Adolf Hitler, is prepared on May 11 for the auction on Saturday in Hamburg. It is expected to fetch 250,000 deutsch mark (156,000 US\$), a spokesman said. —AFP/UNB photo

Just to take a closer look

NEW YORK: New Yorkers pushed and shoved to catch a glimpse of Raisa Gorbachev when she showed up at a Fifth Avenue bookshop on Tuesday to sign copies of her memoirs, reports Reuter.

Wearing a green suit with black trim, she arrived at Brentano's bookshop to applause and cheers from hundreds of people, some waiting over an hour to see the wife of former Soviet Leader Mikhail Gorbachev, currently on a US tour.

Inside the bookshop, people stood three and four deep to buy the book and then had to stand in line another hour to have her autograph.

"I'd like to thank everyone here," she told some of the 200 people lucky enough to make it into the bookstore to buy "I hope: Reminiscences and reflections".

"I would like to thank everyone who purchased my book. I would like to thank people who read my book. I am here today to sign my book as long as my hands can move," she said through an interpreter, adding in English, "Thank you very much."

Marijuana for police tiger for Bella

TEXAS: Police expected to find marijuana, but the tiger was a shock, reports AP.

Police found 50 pounds (22.5 kilograms) of marijuana and 200 pounds (90 kilograms) of cat during a drug raid in El Paso Monday.

They pulled a ventilator and looked through the roof. They could see the tiger looking back, Police Sgt Bill Freil said.

Police arrested Armando Chavez, 44, and Francisco Ordaz, 32, on marijuana possession charges. Each remained in custody Tuesday in lieu of 55,000 dollars' bond.

A hunk of meat helped lure the tiger from the garage where it was kept.

"He's about 6 months old. He's a Siberian tiger, and he's a pretty-looking animal," said Charles Bella, a big-cat expert who helped capture the animal. "It looked like they just threw food in to him and didn't clean up."