

# Presidential hqs, parliament now under control of Popular Front Opposition sweeps Mutalibov from power

BAKU, (Azerbaijan), May 16: Opposition forces in Azerbaijan swept President Ayaz Mutalibov from power only a day after the former Soviet republic's conservative-dominated parliament reinstated him, reports Reuter.

Red tracer bullets flashed across the night sky on Friday as thousands of opposition Popular Front supporters rallied to celebrate a day when they took over presidential headquarters, parliament and the key buildings on after the other.

"The Popular Front now controls almost everything in the republic," a senior Front member Isa Gamberov said in a television broadcast after the seizure of parliament.

Mutalibov aroused the wrath of the opposition by resuming office on Thursday and attempting to impose a two-month state of emergency in the Transcaucasian republic.

He deployed troops around key buildings, clamped down on the press and banned all political and social organisations.

But the nationalist Popular Front, which commands widespread support among the people and the country's national army, mobilising resistance swiftly and effectively. They took control of parliament after a gunbattle.

In a matter of hours, the television centre, airport and the red and white marble presidential headquarters were in opposition hands.

"They just strolled in. The building was empty, so there was no fighting," said eyewitness Arif Simenov after the takeover of the president's offices.

Mutalibov's whereabouts were not known. Leading Popular Front member Tokfik Dzheilov called on people to consolidate the victory by rallying outside parliament on Friday evening. By midnight, the crowd numbered about 5,000.

"All of Mutalibov's bands have not yet been removed," he said in an address broadcast on Azeri radio.

Later, radio Russia reported that shots had been fired at the Popular Front's headquarters in Baku and that military vehicles could be heard approaching the building. But there were no immediate reports of casualties.

The Azeri news agency Turan said that one person had been killed and three wounded in the clashes around parliament, an imposing 14 storey building overlooking the Caspian Sea.

The violence followed parliament's decision to reinstate Mutalibov, 53, after Shusha, the main Azeri stronghold in the disputed enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh, fell to Armenian guerrillas last weekend.

The former communist party chief had handed over power in March to parliament Chairman Y Yagub Mamedov after being blamed for the loss of another important Azeri settlement, Khodzhal.

The latest reversal in Mutalibov's fortunes could mean that new presidential elections, scheduled for June 7 but cancelled by Mutalibov, will go ahead.

Popular Front Leader Abulfelz Elchibey had been clear favourite to win the election.

In his broadcast, Gamberov said Friday's triumph cleared the way for Azeri military efforts to regain territory in Nagorno-Karabakh lost to Armenians.

At least 1,500 people have been killed in the past four years of fighting over the mountainous enclave, populated mostly by Armenians but ruled by Azerbaijan since 1923.

Armenian radio, monitored by the British Broadcasting Corporation, said that five Azeris had been killed and two Armenian border guards wounded in clashes on Friday near the border between the two countries.

ITAR-Tass news agency reported that Armenian guerrillas shot down a helicopter gunship over Nagorno-Karabakh, killing one pilot and taking another prisoner.

## Sevan for peace in Kabul for relief works

KABUL, May 16: UN special envoy on Afghanistan Benon Sevan, ending a three-day mission here to identify Afghanistan's immediate humanitarian needs, called for continued peace to allow relief operations to begin, reports AP.

"We want to move as soon as possible" to look after the country's immediate needs of food aid, health and drinking water facilities, fuel and agricultural supplies, Sevan told reporters before leaving for Tehran yesterday.

The international community has an interest in helping the country, which suffered through 14 years of war, he said, adding however that "the response remains to be seen."

## Thai govt won't amend constitution

BANGKOK, May 16: The leader of the pro-democracy movement has accused the government of stopping demonstrations last week by deceit and urged the public to return to the streets Sunday, reports AP.

The opposition on Monday suspended a week of protests against Prime Minister Suchinda Kraprayoon after announcing that the government parties had agreed to reforms that would force Suchinda to resign.

But the government parties have since denied agreeing to constitutional amendments requiring the prime minister to be an elected member of Parliament, which Suchinda is not. They said they are still reviewing the reforms.

## BRIEFLY

**Mozambican peace talks May 26:** The mediators seeking to halt the long-running civil war in Mozambique are calling the two sides together for a new session of peace talks in Rome on May 26, a Foreign Ministry spokesman said Friday, reports AP from Rome.

The mediators — the Italian diplomat Mario Raffaelli, the Catholic community of Sant'egidio and the Archbishop of Betra Jaime Gonçalves — indicated that this 11th session of the talks was expected to be mainly devoted to military matters and should lead to a countrywide cease-fire.

**6 killed in US plane crash:** A single-engine plane crashed into a swamp and burned, killing all six people on board, reports AP from Greenville.

The plane went down about 250 yards (meters) from the end of a runway at Pitt-Greenville Airport after taking off in dense fog, but rescue workers had to hike about 1.5 miles (2.5 kilometers) because all-terrain vehicles got stuck in mud, officials said.

A flight plan for the Piper Cherokee PA 32 indicated the six were traveling from Greenville in eastern North Carolina to West Palm Beach, Fla.

Rescue workers hiked to the crash through snake-infested, thigh-deep water and mud. Sheriff's deputies shot several water moccasins, Pitt County Sheriff Billy Vandiford said.

**Gorbachev concludes US tour:** Former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev Friday concluded a two-week tour of the United States with a visit to the John F Kennedy Library, reports AP from Boston.

The Kennedy family presented Gorbachev with copies of notes Kennedy made at a 1961 briefing on a nuclear test ban treaty.

Back then, Gorbachev said, "most politicians were dominated by a different logic, that of total confrontation in the arms race. Should we be surprised that John F Kennedy also paid his dues in this respect?"

But, Gorbachev added, in reference to the Cuban missile crisis of 1962, "at the height of the Cold War, (Kennedy) was able to wrench himself and his thinking out of this vicious circle."

**Release of Afassi demanded:** The French Human Rights League called Friday on European governments to intervene for the release of political prisoners in Syria, reports AP from Paris.

The organization expressed particular concern for the health of former Syrian President Nureddin al Afassi, 63, who was arrested and imprisoned after the 1970 coup in Damascus for refusing to cooperate with the new government.

Afassi, a member of the Baath Party and president from 1966 to 1970, suffered a heart attack April 27 and has been in a coma since May 3, the League said, calling on the Syrian government to do everything to ensure that he has proper medical attention.

Afassi is one of the longest-held political prisoners in the world, it said.

**Six Tamils shot dead:** Security forces shot dead six Tamil guerrillas including two senior cadres during search operations in eastern Sri Lanka, military officials in Colombo said Saturday, reports AP.

Troops gunned down the six, from the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), in coastal Batticaloa district Friday, a military spokesman said, adding that two of them were identified as senior LTTE members in the area.

The LTTE is fighting for an independent homeland in the northeast for Sri Lanka's minority Tamils, who are concentrated in the region. Thousands have died in the LTTE-led separatist campaign.

**Quake shakes Mexico:** An earthquake measuring 5.1 on the Richter scale shook the southern coast of Mexico on Friday, the US geological survey said. There were no reports of injuries or damage, reports Reuter from Colorado.

The earthquake struck at 3:32 pm (2132 GMT) about 115 miles (185 km) southeast of Acapulco off the coast of the state of Oaxaca. It was felt along the coast.

About 13 hours earlier, an earthquake measuring 4.1 struck about 10 miles (16 km) northeast of Acapulco.

Earthquakes of magnitude five on the Richter scale are powerful enough to cause heavy damage in populated areas.

**3 more killed in S Africa:** At least three people were killed in political violence Friday in South Africa, according to police reports, says AP from Johannesburg.

Police said two men were killed in separate attacks on computer trains travelling to Soweto black township.

In one incident a large group of armed hostel dwellers were on the train when a killing occurred. Police said they escorted the men back to the hostel without disarming them.

Police also said they prevented another group of armed hostel dwellers from boarding a train in Soweto.

Police reported that an IFF leader was gunned down in Alexandra township north of Johannesburg on Friday morning. The killing was condemned by both the IFF and the ANC.

**21 held for throwing bomb on UK police:** COVENTRY, (England), May 16: Police clashed with youths throwing petrol bombs and stones and made 21 arrests in the fourth successive night of violence in this central English city, a spokesman said today, reports Reuter.

Police decided to take action after incidents in which about 20 petrol bombs were thrown on a local authority housing estate and another area of Coventry four miles (seven km) away.

Two police officers were slightly hurt, one after being hit in the face by a petrol bomb.

## Koreas meet on N-inspection again May 20

SEOUL, May 16: North and South Korean officials failed on Friday to narrow differences over mutual inspection of their nuclear sites, a Southern spokesman said, reports Reuter.

He blamed North Korea's "insincere attitude" for the lack of progress at working-level talks in the border hamlet of Panmunjom.

"Both sides only agreed to meet again on May 20," he said.

Seoul, Washington and Tokyo fear North Korea is close to producing a crude nuclear bomb. The increasingly isolated North insists its nuclear programme is for peaceful purposes.

The spokesman said the North had rejected a Southern call to work out an inspection formula first.

## Move to end deadlock in S African talks

JOHANNESBURG, May 16: President FW de Klerk and ANC leader Nelson Mandela intervened Saturday to break a deadlock over a new constitution to end decades of white minority rule, reports AP.

The African National Congress president said the dispute would go to another committee for resolution, while an effort is made to speed the move to a multi-racial government and constitution.

"Let us all move forward together to arrive as speedily as possible at our common objective of a democratic South Africa," Mandela told applauding delegates.

Both leaders said Saturday considerable progress had been made at the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA) despite the constitutional disagreement over regional government.

"We made remarkable progress... not withstanding the one important setback which I do not want to underestimate," de Klerk said.

De Klerk urged the conference to speed its efforts to meet the expectations of all South Africans. "We dare not fall into strife and confrontation," he said.

The two sides deadlocked Friday over a government demand that clauses in a new constitution involving regional government be approved by a 75 per cent majority. The ANC offered a 70 per cent majority.

The CODESA management committee, which oversees the talks, would try to solve the problem, Mandela said Saturday.

## 11 more freed in Myanmar

BANGKOK, May 16: Myanmar's military junta has freed 11 dissidents, including a senior member of the main opposition party, in the latest of a series of releases that began last month, Yangon radio reported, says Reuter.

The releases brought to 102 the number of political prisoners freed since general Than Shue took over as chairman of the ruling State Law and Order Restoration Council in April.

The state radio report, monitored in Bangkok on Friday night, said those freed included Tun Aye, a central executive committee member of the National League for Democracy (NLD) imprisoned since May last year. Four others were women.

The NLD won a May 1990 general election by a landslide but the general's refused to let it govern and arrested most of its leaders.

## Off the Record



FRANCE: American filmmaker David Lynch and film editor Mary Sweeney stroll, Friday, on the foreshore at Cannes, one day before Lynch presents his film "Twin Peaks" to the 45th Cannes International Film Festival. — AFP/UNB Photo

## NAM welcomes Libya

NUSA DUA, (Indonesia), May 16: Non-Aligned foreign ministers today welcomed Libya's acceptance of a United Nations Resolution calling on Tripoli to cut all links with terrorist groups, reports Reuter.

The welcome was included in a generally moderate statement issued after a two-day conference on the Indonesian island of Bali to prepare for a summit of the Non-Aligned Movement in Jakarta in September.

Indonesian Foreign Minister Ali Alatas told reporters the statement's moderate tone reflected changes in the world.

Libyan Foreign Minister Ibrahim Mohamed Beshari said in Bali that acceptance of Security Council Resolution 731 did not include extraditing the two men.

## Marlene Dietrich laid to rest

BERLIN: Marlene Dietrich, the legendary film star, was buried in her native Berlin on Saturday, reports AP.

Leading the procession of mourners into the Friedenau Cemetery was the late actress' daughter, Maria Riva.

About 1,000 people stood outside the cemetery and there was repeated applause on the arrival of the casket covered with bright flowers.

"Dear Marlene, welcome home," actor Maximilian Schell said during brief remarks at grave side. Schell starred with Dietrich in the 1960 movie "Judgment at Nuremberg."

Bright sunshine and summer-like temperatures filled the cemetery for the burial service, which has broadcast live on nationwide German television.

## Because she was unfaithful

NEW DELHI: An Indian rickshaw man peddled to a local police station with his wife's severed head and complained that she had been unfaithful, the Press Trust of India (PTI) news agency said on Friday, reports Reuter.

PTI said Kannan, 40, placed the woman's head on a table at a police station in Madras, in Southern India, and told the stunned policemen that he had killed his wife for infidelity.

The agency said Kannan was arrested and remanded in custody for 15 days.



SREMSKA RACA, Yugoslavia: Serbian refugees sitting on a truck after leaving the Bosnian towns of Bosanski Brod and Bosanski Samac and travelling towards Belgrade, on Friday. More than 6,000 Serbian refugees fled from this area during the last — AFP/UNB photo

## Security Council demands pullout of federal army UN announces truce in Bosnia

SARAJEVO (Bosnia-Herzegovina), May 16: UN officials announced a new ceasefire among Serbs, Muslims and Croats and the Security Council demanded the withdrawal of federal and Croatian armies from the war-torn republic, reports AP.

The most recent ceasefire comes a day after artillery duels and house-to-house fighting rocked this capital of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

In New York on Friday, the UN Security Council unanimously passed a resolution demanding that Serb-led federal forces and Croatian soldiers withdraw from Bosnia. It urged all parties to honour the truce.

UN spokesman Fred Eckhard said if the truce holds, the warring parties will meet again Saturday for more political talks.

A ceasefire reached Wednesday broke down in fewer than 24 hours. In an apparent measure of the United Nations, Serb mortar crews Thursday repeatedly struck the Rainbow Hotel, base for some 275 U.N. peacekeeping officers.

"If you hit this place seven times, that's deliberate," said Capt Douglas Martin, from Canada.

NUSA DUA, Indonesia, May 16: Ministers of the Non-Aligned Movement called upon the United Nations today to send a peacekeeping force to Bosnia-Herzegovina, reports AP.

In a 28-point press communique after a two-day meeting that spilled into the early morning hours of today, they urged an "immediate cessation of hostilities and bloodshed" in the former Yugoslav republic.

On Friday morning Serb irregulars prevented two U.N. armored personnel carriers from reaching the city center, saying the United Nations had not cleared their movements with Serb authorities.

UN leaders have harshly condemned Serb aggression in Bosnia. "Any change of borders by force is not acceptable," Friday's resolution said, in a criticism of apparent efforts by Serbia to absorb areas

of neighboring republics into a Greater Serbia.

UN troops in Croatia, meanwhile, were sent Friday to take control of the eastern Slavonia region that was captured by Serb-led forces last year.

Council resolution also demands that demobilized troops and militiamen in UN-protected zones in Croatia be disarmed.

Thursday's shelling and house-to-house battles in Sarajevo gave way Friday to "an unbelievable calm, a horrible silent night," Sarajevo radio said. Hospital officials said at least six people were killed and 140 wounded Thursday.

Reuter adds: Sporadic shelling broke the calm around Sarajevo late on Friday, straining a ceasefire agreed by warring Muslims Serbs and Croats to halt fighting in Bosnia.

Bosnia's foreign minister Haris Silajdzic called on the United Nations to mount a "desert storm" type operation to eject Yugoslav federal soldiers from his newly-independent republic.

Referring to UN approval of US-led action that forced Iraqi troops out of Kuwait last year, Silajdzic told reporters in New York: "The United Nations can provide the umbrella for an operation just like the one we had in the Gulf."

The Council also demanded full cooperation with a 14,000-man UN Protection Force (UNPROFOR) which is taking control of three Serb-populated areas of neighbouring Croatia to replace the Yugoslav army.

The resolution calls on Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali to study ways of protecting humanitarian supplies.

## Astronauts prepare for return to earth

SPACE CENTER, Houston: Endeavour's astronauts said they learned lots of ideas about assembling a space station during a maiden voyage that featured a record-setting four spacewalks and the rescue of a wayward satellite, reports AP.

"That was one of the purposes of this mission, was to go look at what it's going to take to build space station. I think we learned a heck of a lot," astronaut Pierre Thuot said during a crew news conference Friday.

Endeavour was scheduled to land at 2057 GMT Saturday at Edwards Air Force Base in California. The touchdown was to feature the first use of a shuttle drag chute.

## Nepalese broke a single day record

KATHMANDU: More climbers have climbed Mount Everest during the current climbing season than ever before, the Nepal Tourism said on Friday, reports Reuter.

It said 39 climbers had stood atop the world's highest mountain during the Himalayan spring season compared to the previous record of 31, achieved in Autumn 1990.

The record could go higher. Not all the expeditions from Nepal's south side have completed their climbs. Nor have the four expeditions on the northern and eastern sides in Tibet.

The ministry said the season record was broken on a single day.

Thirty climbers reached Everest's 8,848-metre (29,028-ft) summit on Tuesday, a single day record. One expedition belatedly realised it had forgotten to report the success of two of its Nepali sherpas, taking the final total for the day to 32.

Not everyone was happy with the new record.

## 21 held for throwing bomb on UK police

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Two police officers were slightly hurt, one after being hit in the face by a petrol bomb.

## Soviet republics fail to unite on national army

TASHKENT, Uzbekistan, May 16: Former Soviet republics have failed to unite on the basic issue of collective security, casting doubt on the Commonwealth's ability to overcome unrest, reports Reuter.

As leaders met in the Uzbek capital, violence flared again in the alliance's troubled transcaucasian region, where opponents of Azerbaijan's President Ayaz Mutalibov claimed control of the former Soviet republic after seizing the parliament and other key buildings.

In Tashkent, only 11 of the Commonwealth's 11 members, signed a defence agreement committing signatories to come to the aid of any other member subjected to an attack.

The treaty brought together Russia and central Asian states, but Slav neighbours Ukraine and Belorussia, as well as Moldova, Kyrgyzstan and Azerbaijan, declined to join.

Russian President Boris Yeltsin said he regretted the large number of refusals.

Regret will be felt more strongly still in the Commonwealth of Independent States' high command, which viewed the treaty as an opportunity to restore order as national armies emerge.

Yeltsin aide Gennady Burbulis said the pact was precipitated by recent events in the central Asian region — a reference to instability in Tajikistan and in neighbouring Afghanistan.

"We had this agreement in mind, but the leaders of the Asiatic republics were very interested and indeed spurred us on," Burbulis told journalists.

But the agreement immediately raises at least one painful question for the Commonwealth.

Armenia and Azerbaijan are two members effectively at war over the territory of Nagorno-Karabakh.

Armenia is part of the defence agreement and entitled to support from other signatories. Azerbaijan remains outside.

Ukrainian President Leonid Kravchuk declined to attend Friday's summit in Tashkent, saying he had to stay at home to play host to finish President Mauno Koivisto.

Kravchuk has called for reforms of the Commonwealth, which he feels cedes too much influence to Russia.

The leaders of Moldova, Azerbaijan and Tajikistan, all plagued by conflicts, also stayed away.

Unlike the previous meeting in Kiev, the Tashkent summit was not marred by public clashes and predictions of collapse. But it still failed to produce agreements on major economic issues and on dividing Soviet State property.

The leaders attending approved a series of other documents on airspace, the former Soviet space programme, approval for establishment peace-keeping forces and a clearing system of payments between republics to help industry function better.

Yeltsin defended himself against allegations by Conservatives in the Russian parliament that he had arrived for the summit drunk and was unfit to lead a nuclear power.

"There is a big campaign to discredit the president, reform and authority. This is a fight, a real fight, and we must not only fight but also win," he said.

The NEGA news agency said a large number of people were killed in ceasefire violations in South Ossetia, which has been struggling to break away from Georgia.

The ceasefire was agreed on Wednesday during a visit to South Ossetia by Georgian leader Eduard Shevardnadze.

Three hours after the summit began, an earth tremor shook Tashkent, but caused no casualties or damage.

Itar-Tass news agency reported that more than 200 people had died in landslides over the past two days in the central Asian state of Tajikistan.

Iraqi Kurds go to polls weekend

ZAKHU, (Iraq), May 16: Iraqi Kurds vote this weekend for a parliament and the leader they hope will guide them toward their long-cherished dream of self-rule, reports AP.

But the two leading candidates are the heads of powerful guerrilla militias and differ widely on their view of the future.

Massoud Barzani favours a negotiated autonomy with Iraq. His long-standing rival, Jalal Talabani, says Kurds must fight until Iraqi President Saddam Hussein is overthrown.

Barzani, 45, took over leadership of the most powerful Kurdish guerrilla militia, the Kurdistan Democratic Party, in 1979.