

Kazakhstan may allow Russia to deploy Nuclear arms

MOSCOW, May 18 : Kazakhstan President Nursultan Nazarbayev hinted today that his republic might allow Russia to deploy Nuclear arms on its territory after it had given up its own atomic arsenal, reports Reuters.

"Russia is now our military and political ally," he said in answer to a reporter's question before leaving for a visit to the United States.

"The question of giving Kazakhstan territory for our common defence and for deployment of Nuclear missiles will be decided on mutually advantageous grounds," he said.

Defence was one of the subjects discussed when Nazarbayev met Russian President Boris Yeltsin in Moscow on Sunday.

Kazakhstan, second largest by area of the 15 former Soviet republics, pledged on Sunday to join the 1968 Nuclear Non-

Proliferation Treaty and rid itself of Nuclear arms.

The Kazakh Defence Ministry said the signing of a defence pact by six members of the Commonwealth of Independent States, including Kazakhstan and Russia, had made it possible to become a non-nuclear state.

"Now that Kazakhstan has become a member of the (Commonwealth) collective security committee and has been provided with a Nuclear umbrella ... Kazakhstan has changed its position," Nazarbayev said.

The former Soviet arsenal of nearly 30,000 atomic weapons was spread over Russia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan and Belarus. Kazakhstan initially refused to follow Ukraine and Belarus in pledging to go non-nuclear.

In Washington, the Kazakh leader is to meet US President George Bush.

Benazir urges India, Pakistan to slash defence spending

ISLAMABAD, May 18 : Pakistani Opposition Leader Benazir Bhutto called on India and Pakistan on Sunday to slash their defence spending, reports Reuters.

"Time has come for India and Pakistan to sit across the table and come up with a positive, calculated plan to cut the defence expenditure, thereby releasing funds for the social sector and improving their economic base for their countries to survive," she said in parliament.

Finance Minister Sartaj Aziz said on Friday security concerns did not permit Pakistan to make the defence budget cuts demanded by its western aid donors.

But he said on Friday there was no defence spending increase in real terms if inflation, a halt to US military aid and the cost of pensions were taken into consideration.

Pakistan's budgets for the fiscal year 1992/93, which begins on July 1, raised defence spending by about 8.4 per cent over last year's to 82.15 billion rupee (dollar 3.26 billion).

Bhutto said a unilateral defence cut by Pakistan was a difficult proposition after three

years with India since the two countries gained independence from Britain in 1947.

"But this does not mean we should be paralysed by inactivity," she said.

"The problem needs a political solution. It needs a bilateral



solution and just throwing the charge of defence expenditure at the door of the military... does no service to a civilian leader to whom all segments of the society, including the military, look for leadership and solution of problems."

In the latest Indian budget, announced in February, defence spending rose by seven per cent to 175 billion rupee (dollar 6.1 billion). But it meant a cut in real terms for the second year running be-

cause of high inflation and devaluation of the Indian currency by about 20 per cent against the dollar.

Bhutto said the sub-continent was "crying for a solution" that could give economic freedom to its masses.

"The leaders of both sides need to rise and meet this challenge or they will be waylaid by history and time."

AFP adds: At least nine people were injured — seven of them shot by a paramilitary patrol — during a protest by Baluchis in Pakistan's south-western Baluchistan province Sunday, official sources said.

The patrol opened fire in self-defence after a stone-throwing mob attacked them and tried to torch their vehicle in the town of Khuzdar, about 350 kilometers south of here, the sources said.

All the injured were hospitalized in Khuzdar except one seriously wounded person who was transferred for treatment to Karachi in neighbouring Sindh province, they said.

Earlier in a Baluch-dominated part of Quetta, a policeman was hit in the leg by a sniper and a magistrate's driver received minor injuries

when he was waylaid by a group hurling stones, the sources said.

The Baluchis had called for a transport and business strike Sunday to demand the holding of elections for Quetta municipal corporation which were postponed May 7 following a dispute over the demarcation of constituencies.

Witnesses said the strike call went unheeded in the provincial capital where Pashtuns, a minority in Baluchistan as a whole, are a majority.

However, the protest disrupted life in Baluch populated regions in southern and central parts of the province, reports reaching here said.

In Quetta, armed police patrolled the streets and a curfew, which has been applied daily for the past several days, went into force in the afternoon.

Baluch political parties and student organizations are bitterly opposed to recent orders for a judicial commission to redraw municipal constituencies which came after Pashtun protests that the addition of 12 seats had benefited Baluchis.

Off the Record



Volunteers, AIDS patients and HIV carriers, holding candlelight march for AIDS victims in downtown Tokyo on Sunday to attend the 9th International AIDS Candlelight memorial and mobilization. — AFP/UNB photo

For fear of AIDS they now suck their own fingers

HONG KONG : Hong Kong's most powerful Triad Gang has dropped a blood oath ritual from its initiation ceremonies because of the AIDS risk, the Sunday Morning Post Newspaper said, reports Reuters.

The Sun Yee on society used to initiate newcomers to its 47,000 strong organised crime gang by requiring to 40 to mix their blood in a communal bowl and then drink it, the Post ousted an anti-Triad detective as saying.

They have changed the ceremony through fear of AIDS, they no longer drink the mixed blood in the bowl, they suck their own fingers, he was quoted as saying.

The ceremony ends with initiates swearing a blood oath while the bowl is smashed to symbolise the fate of traitors. Police said they did not know whether any of Hong Kong's other five Major Triad societies had adopted similar safe rituals.

Some 40 people have died in Hong Kong of AIDS which is mainly spread through infected blood and sexual intercourse, government statistics show 276 people carry the HIV virus, which causes AIDS, although officials believe the number is much higher.

Japanese children are too busy studying

TOKYO : More than 50 per cent of parents in Japan think their children are too busy studying for exams and don't have enough leisure time, according to the results of a survey released Monday, reports Reuters.

Some 3,000 parents were questioned in the survey organised by the prime minister's office.

Among parents of male children, 54 per cent said they wanted their sons to finish university while 33 per cent said they would leave the decision up to their children.

But only 23 per cent of parents of female children wanted their daughters to go on to university.

It was the first such survey conducted by the government.

Bush collapsed in Japan for Halcion addiction

ROCKVILLE : Food and Drug Administration experts Monday began a safety review of Halcion, the most widely prescribed sleeping pill in the world, reports AP.

Halcion has been banned in Britain, but remains hugely popular in the United States.

President Bush's doctor said it may have been the reason that Bush vomited and collapsed in front of Japan's Prime Minister during a trip to Tokyo last January.

Actor Burt Reynolds says he was addicted to it, and almost died.

The drug's manufacturer Upjohn Co., says it welcomes the inquiry by the FDA's scientific advisory panel.

At the same time, Upjohn is aggressive about suing the drug's critics for libel, filing three suits in England and threatening another in the United States.

Isolated anecdotes and dramatic charges have resulted in a rash of questions about the product's safety and its development by the Upjohn Co., the company said in a letter to news organizations this week.

Bush has stopped taking the drug, also known by the generic name triazolam, but his physician, Dr. Burton J. Lee, has said he would prescribe it again if he thought it was needed.

Reynolds told TV Guide magazine he once was taking the pills six at a time to control pain from an injured jaw and was consuming as many as 50 a day. He said he went into a coma and almost died when he tried to quit cold turkey.

The Physicians Desk Reference, a catalog of drugs, says doctors are advised not to give patients prescriptions for Halcion with more than a 30-day supply and warns that some people may experience withdrawal symptoms.

There also are a number of other side-effects, including headaches, dizziness, nausea, confusion, memory impairment, nightmares and depression.

The panel meeting Monday could recommend that the FDA impose restrictions on Halcion, or even an outright ban. On the other hand it would find the drug in its current dosage and labeling is safe and effective.

The FDA is not bound by the advice of its advisory panels, but usually follows their recommendations.

Mutalibov hospitalized

MOSCOW, May 18 : Azerbaijan's President Ayaz Mutalibov, overthrown Friday by the opposition in Baku, has been hospitalized in Moscow, an official of Azerbaijan's mission here said today, reports AFP.

Mutalibov was recalled as head of state on Thursday by the Azeri parliament but was ousted time following day.

The Azeri official gave no details on Mutalibov's condition.

The Russian Foreign Ministry press office said it had not been in formed that Mutalibov was in Moscow.

BRIEFLY

5 shot dead in Assam: In a renewed bout of violence, militants belonging to the Bodo Security Force (BSF) shot dead five persons, including a woman, at Ultapani village in Assam's Kokrajhar district on Friday last, according to a delayed official report received on Monday, report PTI from Guwahati.

The victims have been identified as Suati Basumatary (70), Mini Brahma (22), Prabhat Brahma (30), Delka Basumatary (20) and Bipin Narzary, the report added.

The ABSU, meanwhile, in a press release issued yesterday condemned the killing and alleged that it was the handiwork of the present Congress-I government in the state to thwart the ongoing negotiations on the Bodoland issue.

Life term for Nazi commander: Former Nazi concentration camp commander Josef Schwammberger, 80, was condemned in Germany Monday to life in prison, AFP reports.

His 11-month trial was one of the last major hearings against a war criminal from the Hitler era.

Schwammberger was found guilty of seven counts of murder and being an accomplice in 32 other murders.

Koreas open liaison offices: South and North Korea came a step closer to unification today as commissions to carry out a historic reconciliation pact, officials here said, AFP reports from Seoul.

The national unification board announced that the two Koreas each opened a liaison office, which will begin by handling personal and message exchanges between the two sides, will arrange in the future reunions of separated families and exchanges of telephone calls and letters.

The two sides also launched three joint commissions—military, economic and socio-cultural—to execute an agreement signed in February on non-aggression, reconciliation and exchanges.

But before they can begin operating, the three commissions will have to wait until the two sides formally agree on their functions, a task the rival governments have agreed to achieve by their next prime ministers talks in mid-September.

Blacks beat white motorist: Black suspected gang members beat a white motorist in an apparently racially-motivated attack that sparked clashes between police and a crowd hurling rocks and bottles, police said Sunday, reports AFP from Las Vegas.

Police fired tear gas and foam pellets to disperse the crowds and between 30 and 40 people were arrested in the incident, police said.

Two stores were looted in the violence that ensued after a white motorist was attacked Saturday night after he drove near a community center where a picnic was breaking up, police said.

Sergeant Mike Dacey said the attackers were black and appeared to target the man because he was white.

Venkataraman in China: President Ramaswamy Venkataraman arrived here today as the first Indian head of state ever to visit China, reports AFP from Beijing.

Venkataraman, here for a six-day tour, attended a welcoming ceremony off Tiananmen Square with his Chinese counterpart Yang Shangkun.

He is due to meet Chinese leaders including Yang, Premier Li Peng and Communist Party leader Jiang Zemin and go on a tour of the provinces.

3 shot at in N Ireland: Three civilians were shot and wounded by British soldiers in Northern Ireland on Sunday after an angry crowd attacked an army patrol and stole a machinegun, police said, Reuters reports from Belfast.

Four soldiers were hurt in the clashes in the county town of Coalisland where Irish nationalists claimed British paratroopers had assaulted and harassed local people.

A large force of police and troops sealed off the town on Monday and hunted for the machinegun. A rifle stolen in the incident was recovered.

An army spokesman said a crowd of 20 to 30 people set on the 12-man army patrol and seized the weapons.

Co-pilot survives plane crash: The co-pilot of an airplane that crashed in northeastern Costa Rica survived and trekked for five days through the jungle surviving on lizard eggs before reaching help, officials said, AFP reports from San Jose.

Alexander Zeddon, 28, told authorities Saturday he was co-piloting the twin-engine Cessna 310 when it went down May 12 in bad weather. He was traveling with the pilot and three other passengers.



AZERBAIJAN: The mother and relatives of Mohamed Kuilev, 37, who was crushed by an armoured personnel carrier during the storming of the parliament by Popular Front forces last Friday grieve at his grave in Baku in Azerbaijan. — AFP/UNB photo

Fresh fighting in Sarajevo

BELOGRADE, May 18 : Fresh explosions shook Sarajevo today and Muslim Serb forces clashed in the suburb of Buca Potok, a Bosnian territorial defence spokesman said, reports Reuters.

Shooting continued through the night in the suburb and prevented firemen reaching burning buildings, the spokesman reported by telephone from the Bosnian capital.

Firing was also reported in the centre of Sarajevo, where a sniper shot dead an electricity worker trying to restore electricity supplies on Sunday.

The Yugoslav army accused the Bosnian presidency of impeding the withdrawal of fed-

eral troops ordered home from Bosnia where the Serb minority opposes the former Yugoslav republic's independence.

More than 1,300 people have been killed in over two months of fighting between the Serbs, backed by the army, and majority Croats and Muslims who voted for independence in a referendum in early March.

Serbs, who make up a third of Bosnia's 4.5 million people have seized most of the state with federal army support.

The Yugoslav news agency Tanjug quoted the army as saying the pullout had been delayed by attacks on its bases in Sarajevo, Zenica and Pazarić by

Muslim and Croat forces.

Bosnia's presidency gave the army the green light on Sunday to leave its embattled base in Sarajevo as long as it carried only light weapons.

"This removes all obstacles for a peaceful withdrawal from the barracks..." a presidency statement said.

There was no immediate response from the army, which has backed Serb irregulars opposed to Bosnian independence with heavy artillery and air power.

Serb forces bombarded Muslim populated districts on Sarajevo's outskirts on Sunday and rival gunmen fought house-to-house battles in the ancient Bosnian capital, where

Lockerbie bombing

AL can send observer in trial: Hurd

CAIRO, May 18: British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd on Sunday said the Arab League could send observers to attend the trial in Britain of two Libyans charged in the Lockerbie bombing, reports AFP.

Addressing journalists here after meeting Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and Arab League Secretary General Esmat Abdel Meguid, Hurd declared that if Libya wanted to convince the world it had abandoned terrorism it would have to extradite the suspects.

But he stressed that in stepping up pressure on Tripoli, the West was not seeking to overthrow Libyan leader Moamer Gaddafi.

Masood meets Hekmatyar to thrash out differences

KABUL, May 18 : Afghan Defence Minister Ahmed Shah Masood met today with his main rival Gulbuddin Hekmatyar to thrash out differences, his spokesman said, reports AFP.

The spokesman did not give the location of the meeting, the first between the two men since Masood joined the interim government after the April 28 transfer of power to a Mujahideen administration in Kabul.

"I don't know the place. I only know that they are meeting today," said Masood's spokesman, Mohammad Yunus Qanooni.

Sources at the Defence Ministry here said details would be available by the evening.

Masood and Hekmatyar, who belong to rival Mujahideen

factions, had fought for the overthrow of the communist regime of former President Najibullah, which crumbled last month.

Sources here said the much awaited meeting would be at a location controlled by Hekmatyar somewhere outside Kabul.

Hekmatyar, leader of the fundamentalist Hezb-i-Islami faction, was Sunday reported in eastern Sarowbi district.

Leading members of Hezb had left Kabul, the party office said.

Hekmatyar, a 43-year old Pashtun leader, has so far refused to join the government, insisting on the withdrawal of former regime militiamen who two months before its fall sided with Masood, a 39-year-old ethnic Tajik.

The meeting follows bitter fighting over Kabul between

Masood's and Hekmatyar's troops ahead of the transfer of power to the interim administration currently headed by moderate leader Sibgatullah Mojaddedi.

Mojaddedi told reporters here Sunday that negotiations were continuing between Masood's Jamaat-i-Islami and Hekmatyar's Hezb delegations to patch up their differences.

Hekmatyar had earlier told a 31-member commanders and religious leaders delegation headed by Jalaluddin Haqqani that his Mujahideen would not attack Kabul.

Haqqani who has been given the arbitration power by the two sides has said the commanders were busy in drafting a formal peace accord which he hoped would be acceptable to the rival groups.

Opposition wins Ecuador polls

QUITO, (Ecuador), May 18: Ecuador's ruling Social Democratic Party, widely blamed for an ailing economy, was ousted in general elections on Sunday by rightist parties promising a healthier future with free-market policies, reports Reuters.

However the conservative Republican Unity Party and Social Christian Party were unable to muster enough support to avert a run-off vote on July 5, according to exit polls by television stations Telecentro and Teleamazonas.

The government of President Rodrigo Borja conceded defeat almost three hours after polls closed and the two main opposition leaders claimed victory.

"We have won and the country has pronounced itself in favour of our proposal," Republican Unity leader Sixto Duran Ballen told reporters.

Italy yet to elect president

ROME, May 18: The Italian parliament, facing political chaos over the election of a new head of state, changed its voting rules on Sunday after officials detected evidence of cheating at the ballot box, reports Reuters.

The unprecedented scandal broke after the outgoing four-party coalition, riven by internal strife, failed to elect a president, forcing Christian Democrat leader Arnaldo Forlani, 66, to withdraw his bid.

'Fahd's reforms a codification of royal authoritarianism'

CAIRO, May 18 : A New York-based human rights group made a scathing attack on reforms announced by King Fahd of Saudi Arabia, saying they merely "codify royal authoritarianism," reports Reuters.

In a 62-page report sent to Reuters in Cairo, Middle East Watch, an arm of human rights watch, criticised the US administration for praising the reforms, announced on March 1.

"While these laws constitute significant steps towards codifying the largely unwritten legal system of the country, they fall far short of internationally recognised standards in their treatment of civil and political rights," it said.

"These laws had been long overdue — disappointingly, the final products are far below expectations," the report added.

King Fahd, under growing domestic and foreign pressures to introduce democratic reforms into his extremely conservative kingdom, issued three "basic laws" on March 1. One of them provides for an appointed consultative council.

But in an interview published on March 28, the monarch ruled out elections and western-style democracy in Saudi Arabia, saying they were unsuitable for the region.

US officials have said the new Saudi laws are "very important steps" on the road to democratisation.

But the report said, "while the United States publicly pushes for democratic reforms in Cuba, Iraq, Kenya and elsewhere, it has remained mute towards one of the most singularly undemocratic nations in the world, its long time ally Saudi Arabia."

"It (Middle East Watch) calls on the US administration to take advantage of the 50-year-old special relationship between the US and Saudi Arabia to press for laws that do more than codify royal authoritarianism," it said.

The group criticised the way the laws were drafted by an ad hoc committee headed by Prince Nayef bin Abdulaziz, the king's brother. Prince Nayef also heads the Interior Ministry, which the report described as "the principal government agency identified with most violations of human rights in Saudi Arabia."

It attacked the new consultative council, saying the statutes gave the king the right to dismiss any or all of its 61 members.

The report also accused the Saudi government of putting pressure on neighbouring Gulf states to limit democratic reforms.

The report called for an explicit Saudi ban on torture, extra judicial killings and discrimination on the basis of gender or religious beliefs.

It said that the reforms did not protect free speech, assembly or association and that Saudi Law in fact banned most forms of association, including trade unions and political parties.

"No change is contemplated in these areas," it said.

"Comments by Saudi leaders since the laws were issued have not indicated that the new statutes are a beginning towards a full process of democratisation," it added. "Rather, they appear to be the maximum concessions that the ruling family is willing to grant in response to both internal demands and external pressures."