

ICRC official succumbs to injuries

GENEVA, May 19: An official of the International Committee of the Red Cross died Tuesday in Sarajevo from wounds suffered in the shelling of a convoy bringing medical supplies to the beleaguered Bosnian capital, the ICRC said, reports AP.

Frederic Maurice, 39, the incoming chief of the ICRC's mission in Sarajevo, died early Tuesday at the city's hospital, an ICRC statement said.

Two other ICRC delegates were hurt and a civilian was killed when the Red Cross convoy was hit by rockets and mortar shells Monday, in no-man's land between Serb and predominantly Muslim Bosnian territorial fighter positions.

ICRC headquarters in Geneva said the circumstances of the attack remained unclear.

Bosnian officials and witnesses blamed Serb forces for the attack.

Heidi Huber, the outgoing ICRC chief of mission in Sarajevo, said, "they knew exactly who we were."

The attack occurred even though a new cease-fire was announced and Serb fighters and Muslim-led defenders paused in their battle for Sarajevo, among the fiercest in the violent breakup of Yugoslavia.

Maurice had worked since 1980 for the ICRC. He is survived by a wife and two children.

The ICRC is a Swiss-run agency providing humanitarian aid during armed conflict and pledged to neutrality.

UN resolution on Palestinian 'right to return' not part of peace process: US

WASHINGTON, May 19: The United States, trying to defuse a public row with Israel, said on Monday a UN resolution on the Palestinian 'right of return' was not part of the terms of reference of the Arab-Israeli peace process, reports Reuter.

In a prepared statement, state department spokeswoman Margaret Tutwiler said that the only agreed terms of reference for the US sponsored peace talks were UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, which call on Israel to trade occupied land for peace.

The agreed terms of reference specifically name only two Resolutions: 242 and 338. It is these resolutions, not the many, many other resolutions passed by the United Nations over the years, that constitute the agreed terms of reference for the peace process, Tutwiler said.

She added that to avoid misinterpretations, from now until Israel's June 23 election she would not respond to questions on the peace process or the Arab-Israeli negotiations.

Tutwiler unleashed a storm in Israel last week when, in answer to a reporter's question, she said the United States still supported UN General Assembly Resolution 194, passed in December 1948 with US support.

Tutwiler later blamed the media, especially the Israeli media, for distorting her comments.

The resolution, which is reaffirmed annually by the General Assembly, said Palestinians displaced by Middle East war should be allowed to return to their homes in Israel as soon as was practicable or should be given compensation if they did not wish to return.

It also says that Jerusalem and holy places elsewhere in Israel should be placed under UN control.

Israeli Ambassador Zalman Shoval, in an interview with Reuter in Chicago, welcomed Tutwiler's statement on the primacy of resolutions 242 and 338.

"I believe that today's statement by the spokesperson of the state department clarifying this time not in parenthesis, but really clarifying this whole question around resolution 194 will be helpful," Shoval said.

Asked on Monday whether she still stood by resolution

194, Tutwiler said: "Henceforth I am just not going to respond to every comment or question on the peace process or the Arab-Israeli conflict."

Security Council resolutions 242 of 1967 and 338 of 1973 call upon Israel to withdraw from land it occupied during the 1967 Middle East War in return for secure borders and peace with its Arab neighbours.

The resolutions call for a "prompt, just and permanent" solution to the refugee problem but do not refer to the

Palestinian "right of return." Israel and Arabs have widely differing views on the meaning of resolution 242. Specifically, Israel says it does not require a full withdrawal from all the territories occupied in 1967, while Arabs argue that it does.

But Israel accepts resolution 242 as a starting point for negotiations. It does not recognise resolution 194 or the Palestinian 'right of return' which it says is a mechanism to destroy the Jewish state.



BANGKOK: Soldiers patrol on the road near the Royal Hotel Tuesday, after a violent night of clashes between troops and protestors demanding the resignation of non-elected Prime Minister Suchinda Kraprayoon. Scores of anti-government protestors were fed dead after troops opened fire to dispel the rally. — AFP/UNB photo

Suharto won't limit president's term of office

JAKARTA, May 19: Indonesia's President Suharto, who has been in power for nearly 27 years, has dismissed the idea of limiting the president's term of office, the Daily Merdeka newspaper reported today, reports Reuter.

"Limitation is just the same as castration and a violation against our constitution," Suharto was quoted as telling Suprpto, Chairman of Kosgoro, an organisation affiliated to the ruling Golkar party.

Suharto, 71, who took over following an abortive communist coup attempt in 1965, is widely expected to run again when his fifth five-year term ends next year.

Questions about the president's future have surfaced during the current election campaign. A leading dissident group and an opposition party have suggested that the head of state should serve no more than two terms in office.

Britain's vow for fair trial positive: Libya

CAIRO, May 19: A Libyan envoy on Monday described as "positive" Britain's vow to guarantee a fair trial to two Libyans accused of blowing up a Pan Am airliner in 1988, reports Reuter.

Arab League delegate Ali Al-Treiki told reporters he was briefed by Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Moussa and top Presidential Adviser Osama Baz on British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd's fleeting visit to Cairo on Sunday.

"This statement is positive and we hope on going contacts between Egypt and other parties will reach a solution," Treiki said in response to Hurd's statement that Britain would guarantee a fair trial for the two defendants.

The issue is complicated but there is no problem without a solution," he added.

The two Libyans are accused of bombing a Pan Am airliner over the Scottish town of Lockerbie, killing 270 people.

Italy seeks US help to stop exodus of Y'slav refugees

ROME, May 19: Italy, fearing a chaotic exodus of refugees from the Yugoslav civil war, prepared on Monday to declare a state of emergency and appealed for help from the United States and European partners, reports Reuter.

Hours after Rome asked US President George Bush to intervene, Immigration Minister Margherita Boniver said she would seek a state of emergency over worries Europe's largest refugee movement since World War two could spill into Italy.

"It's unthinkable that such a mass of suffering and desperate people should be just an Italian problem. European countries must set up a quota system for taking in refugees, Boniver told a news conference.

Boniver said she would ask the Italian cabinet to declare a state of emergency when it meets today. "I think this will be granted," she said.

US accord on Start with 4 CIS states

WASHINGTON, May 19: The United States has reached an agreement with four former Soviet republics on an protocol enforcing the Start treaty reducing strategic weapons, a senior US official said here Monday, reports APF.

The protocol could be signed at the end of the week in Lisbon at the second international conference of aid to the Commonwealth of Independent States, said the official who spoke on condition of anonymity. The official spoke shortly before the arrival of Kazakhstan's President Nursultan Nazarbayev on an official visit at the White House.

an army of helpers including red cross volunteers.

She said countries which should play a big part were first and foremost other border states — Austria and Hungary — but that others such as Germany should also join in the effort.

"We want no repeat of what happened when we were left alone to take in 26,000 Albanians in 1990-91," she said.

A United Nations special envoy said earlier on Monday that beside 350,000 Bosnian refugees, there were 300,000 Croats displaced from their homes and 45,000 more accommodated in Slovenia.

Some 800 refugees arrived by train in the northeast Italian port of Trieste on Saturday. Boniver said she had given the green light for some 700 refugees currently aboard trains in the Zagreb area to be put up in army camps today.

Order to arrest Imelda

MANILA, May 19: A Manila Judge ordered the arrest of former Philippine First Lady Imelda Marcos today after she failed to appear in court on currency violation charges, reports Reuter.

Judge Teresita Flores ordered the arrest of the flamboyant 62-year-old widow of the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos after she did not show up to answer charges that she failed to report dollar deposits in Swiss Bank accounts.

Marcos, one of seven candidates in last week's Philippine presidential elections, said at the weekend she would boycott all court proceedings against her to protest against alleged fraud in the poll.

Marcos faces 54 criminal and civil cases involving tax evasion, currency violations and corruption.

The Marcoses, overthrown in a popular revolt in 1986 that swept President Corazon Aquino to power, are accused of stealing 5 billion dollars during their 20-year-rule.



Imelda Marcos was ordered to appear in court on Monday. In that case the judge ordered her to explain her action by June 1.

In today's case involving alleged violation of central bank regulations for failing to report dollar deposits held in Swiss Banks, Government Prosecutor

Filipino army to support winner

MANILA, May 19: The armed forces chief said Monday the slow vote count from the presidential election must continue and pledged the military's support for the eventual winner, reports AP.

The outcome of the race remained in doubt more than a week after the balloting, and most ballots from metropolitan Manila, where about 10 per cent of the voters live, have not yet been tabulated.

With 33 per cent of the 27 million ballots counted Tuesday, anti-graft crusader Miriam Defensor Santiago was running a close second to Fidel Ramos, the candidate backed by President Corazon Aquino.

A day earlier, Santiago softened her strident calls for nationwide protests against alleged election fraud, saying on Manila television that any dissatisfaction should be shown within the political system.

A full inquiry could discredit the entire political system,

US Marine aviators molested 26 women in '91

WASHINGTON: The head of the US Navy has asked his top legal officer to review options for holding individual Navy and Marine Corps officers accountable for their role in a 1991 sex abuse incident, reports AP.

Navy Secretary H Lawrence Garrett III has asked the Navy's judge advocate general, Rear Adm John E Gordon, to review the service's 2,000-page investigation into misconduct that occurred at a convention in Las Vegas.

The investigation, released last month, found that Navy and Marine Corps aviators had molested at least 26 women — half of those Navy officers amid drunk revelry at the annual Tailhook convention of Navy pilots.

However, the Navy's inspector general, Rear Adm George W Davis, who conducted one of two investigations into the incident, said "closing ranks and obfuscation" on the part of officers who supposedly had knowledge of the incidents made it impossible to know the exact nature, severity and or number of incidents.

Despite conducting more than 1,500 interviews during a seven-month investigation, the inquiries by the Naval Investigation Service and the inspector general turned up only two primary suspects, Navy officials have said.

Some officers refused to allow their men to be photographed, making it difficult for the victims to identify their attackers. Many others simply stated that they hadn't seen any misconduct at all.

After the incident became public, Garrett severed the Navy's relations with the Tailhook Association, a booster club for naval aviators named after the mechanism that snares an aircraft as it lands on a carrier.

Off the Record

Saudi Arabia is only trying to please God

NICOSIA: Saudi Arabia said on Monday it was only trying to please God by paying the entire cost of repairing one of Islam's holiest shrines, reports Reuter.

"The initiatives of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to repair the houses of God have never been for political or propaganda objectives," a spokesman said after a cabinet meeting.

"It has and still undertakes such a solemn Islamic action out of its conviction to please God," the Saudi Press Agency (SPA) quoted acting Information Minister Alawi Darwish Kayyal as saying.

King Fahd of Saudi Arabia and King Husseini of Jordan, close friends until they fell out during the Gulf crisis, are locked in a public tussle over who should pay for repairing Jerusalem's dome of the rock — the site where according to Muslim tradition the Prophet Mohammed (SM) stopped on his way to heaven.

Kayyal did not refer to Jordan's announcement last week that the king would pay 8.25 million dollar of his own money into a special fund for renovating the 7th century shrine.

Jordan, which controlled east Jerusalem and the West Bank from 1950 until it lost it to Israel in the 1967 Middle East war, remains the guardian of Jerusalem's Muslim holy sites.

Addiction is America's No 1 health problem

NEW YORK: Former US health secretary Joseph A Califano Jr announced the creation Monday of think tank to combat the problems of various addictions, reports AP.

Addiction is "our country's No 1 health problem," he said in announcing formation of the Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University.

The center "springs from the conviction that our nation cannot deal with our other basic problems — unless we deal with addiction and substance abuse," said Califano, health secretary in the Carter administration. Califano is giving up a law practice to head the center.

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation is providing 8 million dollars for five years to establish the center, which is also depending on 2 million dollars from corporations and banks. Columbia faculty will participate in the center's operation.

Organizers estimate that 18 million Americans have a drinking problem; 2 million Americans are addicted to cocaine and 1 million use heroin. Smokers number 54 million.

The federal government currently spends about 200 million dollars to combat substance abuse while devoting billions to cancer, heart disease and AIDS research three diseases whose largest single cause is substance abuse and addiction, Califano said.

Early breast cancer prevents new cancers

SAN DIEGO, May 19: Giving women chemotherapy for early breast cancer may protect them from getting entirely new kinds of cancer many years later, according to a study reported Monday, reports AP.

The study, conducted in Sweden, found a significant reduction in the development of a variety of new tumors, especially cervical cancer, after drug treatment for breast cancer.

Researchers theorized that the cancer-killing drugs may wipe out minuscule clumps of tumor cells throughout the body long before they can be found.

"Adjuvant chemotherapy may protect against the development of new primary cancers, at least in the first 10 years" after treatment, said Dr Rodrigo Arriagada of Gustave-Roussy Institute in Villejuif, France.

Arriagada conducted the study with researchers from Karolinska Hospital in Stockholm and presented his results at a meeting of the American Society of Clinical Oncology.

Dr Victor G Vogel of MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston said, "One could hypothesize that there are emerging tumors that, if exposed to chemotherapy, could be interrupted at an early stage."

However, Dr Bernard Fisher of the University of Pittsburgh said US studies of women receiving chemotherapy for breast cancer have shown no reduction in other cancers.

In the United States, a major study is getting under way to see if tamoxifen can prevent breast cancer in women who have never had the disease. Doctors will study 16,000 women who are considered to be at high risk of breast cancer because of a family history of the disease and other factors.

Fisher, who is directing the US study, emphasized that the Swedish findings about tamoxifen were not statistically meaningful.

Over the next 10 years, an estimated 1.5 million women in the United States will be diagnosed with breast cancer, and almost half a million will die of the disease.

BRIEFLY

China may expel Lena Sun: The Chinese Foreign Ministry Tuesday accused Washington Post correspondent Lena Sun of engaging in activities incompatible with her status as a journalist, reports AFP from Beijing.

Lena Sun was engaged in activities incompatible with her status. China's competent departments are making further investigation on her case," a ministry spokesman said.

The charge was diplomatic language for engaging in espionage, which meant that Sun could be expelled, a Chinese diplomat said.

Chinese security agents searched the Washington Post's bureau for three hours Sunday and confiscated some of Sun's notes and a list of telephone numbers of dissident's family members, the newspaper said.

Israel police arrest 4 in Golan: Four members of the Druze Sect were arrested Monday on charges they had incited the population of the Golan Heights to rebel against Israel's annexation of the Syrian territory, Israeli police said, reports AFP from Jerusalem.

On Syria's Independence Day on April 17 the four suspects organized a meeting of young people from Majdal Shams, the main Druze community in the Golan Heights, "to teach them nationalist songs," police said.

The four who are in their 20s tried to persuade the inhabitants to observe a strike on that day and had distributed nationalist pamphlets, police said, adding copies were later found in their possession.

Grachev named Defence Minister: Russian Army General Pavel Grachev, a veteran of the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, was appointed Defence Minister by President Boris Yeltsin on Monday, the ITAR-Tass news agency reported, says AFP from Moscow.

Yeltsin had personally headed the Russian Defence Ministry since its creation in March.

In a decree, Yeltsin appointed Grachev Defence Minister over Marshal Yevgeny Shaposhnikov, the Commander in Chief of the armed forces of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).

Grachev, 43, was appointed Deputy Premier for Defence Affairs in April and named to head the Russian armed forces on May 7.

18 Haitians drown in Cuba: At least 18 Haitians drowned when their boat sank off Cuba, Cuban officials said Monday, reports AP from Haiti.

Haitian radio reported the arrest of 100 refugees seeking to flee their homeland. The reported sinking and arrests Sunday night came amid a record surge in Haitian boat people straining US Navy and Coast Guard interception.

The boat carried 41 Haitian refugees in Cuba who wanted to return to Haiti, Cuba's official Prensa Latina news agency reported. The craft sank off Maitai point on Cuba's eastern end, killing 18 Haitians, the news agency quoted officials as saying Monday.

Two more were missing Monday, Prensa Latina said in a dispatch monitored in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

Iranian working for Iraq killed: An Iranian working for Iraqi intelligence was killed during a "special operation," Iran charged Monday, reports AFP from Tehran.

Iran's state television identified the victim as Seifollah Soleimani, who it said was in charge of an Iraqi network that carried out attacks in Iran during the Iraq-Iran War, but it did not say where or when he died. It only referred to a "special operation."

Soleimani was responsible "for attacks perpetrated during Friday prayers at Tehran University and against the telecommunications headquarters" in the Iranian capital.

16 killed in Moldova clash
CHISINAU: Sixteen people were killed in Moldova on Monday in the worst fighting for more than month in the breakaway Slavonic region of Trans-Dnestr, the Moldovan interior ministry said today, reports AP.

The ministry said militiamen from the Russian-speaking self-proclaimed Trans-Dnestr "republic" on the East Bank of the river Dnestr, had attacked Moldovan volunteer forces at Corjova near Dubossary.

The Moldovans lost five dead and 25 wounded in the ensuing artillery duel while 10 were killed and 18 wounded on the other side.

Pakistan may buy 20 Mirage 2000 jet fighters from France

ISLAMABAD, May 19: The chief of the French armed forces said Monday that Paris and Islamabad were actively discussing the possibility of an accord on the sale of at least 20 Mirage 2000 jet fighters to Pakistan.

Admiral Jacques Lanxade said Pakistan was also considering the purchase of "two or three" Agosta-type submarines, which would be fitted with new armament systems.

With regards to the Mirage 2000 sale, "the affair could be done quickly, because there is no major obstacle," Lanxade said in an interview with AFP during a visit to Pakistan.

Discussions are "progressing normally" on the sale of about two dozen French jet fighters, on which an agreement was reached in principle early this year in Paris, he said.

The admiral did not comment on how India might react to French sales. New Delhi in the past has lobbied hard to prevent western countries from supplying high technology military equipment to its regional foe Pakistan.

But Lanxade said that during Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's visit to Paris in January, "a certain number of dossiers were open, including the Mirage 2000 and the submarines."

"The problem is to find financial arrangements," said the admiral who met here this week with Sharif, president Ghulam Ishaq Khan and the chiefs of the Pakistan military.

"The French government is ready to make a financial effort, but it has its own limits. It is necessary to find an accord that is compatible with the finances of the two countries," he said.

Lanxade dismissed the reservations expressed by certain newspapers here as to the cost of the Mirage 2000, saying the price was "not far" from those of comparable aircraft.

"It is the payment conditions and the industrial trade-offs that will be determining factors," he said.

different proposals," said the admiral. Lanxade said he was convinced the cooperation established in the 1970's between Pakistani and French submarines would continue.

He said he doubted the United States had decided to disengage itself totally from Pakistan following the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan in 1989 and Washington's suspension of its military assistance of the country in 1990 because of suspicions that Islamabad had a nuclear weapons programme.

The United States continues to sell parts to Islamabad.

France and the United States take very seriously the nuclear problem, Lanxade said, adding however that restrictions on nuclear cooperation between France and Pakistan "did not harm good relations between France and Pakistan."

Lanxade said moreover that there was no fight for influence between Washington and

Paris in the region. "There may be competition between companies, but there is no political competition."

Commenting on the situation in Afghanistan, whose border at the Khyber Pass he had visited earlier in the day, Lanxade said he was sure different countries would continue to fight for influence over the landlocked country.

"The Russians will remain present in the north of central Asia," he said.

The various rebel parties that took over Afghanistan recently should "reach an accord between themselves to form a government of national union to rebuild the country."

On the tension between India and Pakistan, Lanxade, who was in New Delhi in February, praised both sides for avoiding a major clash.

Kim nominated presidential candidate

SEOUL, May 19: An overwhelming majority of governing Democratic Liberal Party on Tuesday nominated its executive chairman, Kim Young-Sam, as its new presidential candidate, reports AP.

Kim, the party's No 2 man after President Roh Tae-Woo, won with the support of 4,418 of the 6,660 voting delegates at a national convention. A total of 2,214 delegates voted for the only other contender who quit the race.

Kim, 65, was the sole contender for the party's nomination after Lee Jong-Chan, a popular Seoul legislator, quit the race, denouncing it as "unfair competition."