

Resignation of Iliescu demanded

BUCHAREST, June 14: Thousands of demonstrators filled university square on Saturday to demand the resignation of President Ion Iliescu and commemorate the second anniversary of a pro-government miners riot, reports AP.

About 2,500 demonstrators blocked traffic in the square shouting, "Down with Iliescu" and "we don't want a Bolshevik president anymore."

Members of the Bucharest University Students League also criticized leaders of the ruling National Salvation Front, claiming they had maintained communist practice and betrayed the December 1989 revolution.

KARACHI, June 14: Mohammad Yusuf Jakhani, 55, Provincial Chief of the National Democratic Party (NDP), has died while being interrogated by law enforcement personnel in Sindh, party sources alleged here, reports AFP.

No comment was available from the government or army sources about the allegations.

"It is shocking and extremely deplorable as Jakhani died during interrogation," said the NDP's national head, Sardar Sherbaz Mazari.

Police in Qandkot in Sindh's Jacobabad district, told Jakhani's relatives on Friday that his body would be

handed over after a post-mortem, Mazari said.

Jakhani was picked up June 7 as part of a military operation against alleged terrorists, bandits and anti-social elements in Sindh.

"We still don't know what were the charges against Jakhani," Mazari said adding, "its a human problem. Its shocking and a matter of grave concern for us."

After he was detained,

Jakhani's mother sent telegrams to the President, Prime Minister and Chief Justice of Sindh, insisting that her son had been framed.

The incident has further intensified criticism of the six-month army-led crackdown on Sindh ordered by Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif late last month.

The military had already come under fire for their alleged involvement in the

killing of nine villagers near Hyderabad, about 135 kilometers (84 miles) north of here.

Authorities originally described the villages as Indian trained terrorists and claimed to have seized a large arms stash, but later they said they were not terrorists.

The opposition has demanded a high-level judicial probe into the army's alleged "excesses" in Sindh.

Meanwhile Pakistan's Prime

Minister Nawaz Sharif will make an official visit to China in October, the Foreign Minister announced Islamabad today.

The announcement followed a meeting between Sharif and Chinese Premier Li Peng in Rio De Janeiro on Saturday, where both leaders are attending the Earth Summit, during which an invitation for the visit was extended.

Li assured Sharif that the development of China's relations with India was not at the cost of Beijing's traditionally close ties with Pakistan, the official Associated Press of Pakistan said.

Minister of state for Foreign Affairs Siddique Kanju said the two leaders reiterated that Sino-Pakistan friendship was a "time-tested, all-weather" relationship, the agency said.

Kanju also said the two countries would further strengthen their relations to enhance regional security and stability.

Sharif, who led his country's delegation to the Earth Summit in Brazil, is to visit Britain from June 16-20 at the invitation of Prime Minister John Major.

Sharif will visit China in October

Sindh NDP chief dies in police custody

JKLF demands "positive response"

JAMMU, India, June 14: The leader of a Kashmir independence movement has in joint letters to the Prime Ministers of India and Pakistan said he expects a "positive response" to a proposed July conference on Kashmir, reports AFP.

Jammu and Kashmir liberation Front (JKLF) Chairman Amanullah Khan said in the letters, dated June 1 and made available to journalists here by JKLF activists, that the conference would seek ways to end the festering dispute over divided Kashmir.

The JKLF announced in Pakistan this week that the

meeting of Kashmiris from the two countries would be held July 1-3 at Rawalkot, in the Poonch district of Pakistan-controlled Kashmir.

Both New Delhi and Islamabad dispute the ownership of Kashmir, the northern third of which is held by Pakistan and the southern two-thirds of which form India's only Muslim majority province.

Khan, who lives in Pakistan, has invited an unspecified number of Kashmiris from India to the conference, and urged Indian Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao and his Pakistani counterpart, Nawaz Sharif, to provide them safe

passage.

The invitees include five JKLF activists jailed in India.

The conference, he added, would show the "practical way to a just equitable solution of Kashmir dispute based on aspirations of the people of the whole state."

India and Pakistan have fought two wars over Kashmir, and Muslim militants are waging a bloody campaign to secede from Indian-held Kashmir. The JKLF stands for a Kashmir independent of both countries, most other groups in the campaign want Indian-administered Kashmir to join Pakistan.



RIO DE JANEIRO: Cuban President Fidel Castro (R) checks his watch on Saturday upon arrival for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. — AFP/UNB photo

Talks on future shape of Czechoslovakia postponed

PRAGUE, June 14: Talks set for Sunday between rival Czech and Slovak leaders on the future of Czechoslovakia were cancelled unexpectedly, reports AP.

The Movement for a Democratic Slovakia announced late Saturday that a planned meeting in Bratislava, the Slovak capital, was being postponed because the party had not finished preparing for it, the CSTK news agency reported.

No new date was set, and the delay could indicate dis-

sension within Slovak ranks on the party's negotiating position.

The planned meeting between Vladimir Meciar, the populist winner of last week's parliamentary elections in Slovakia, and federal Finance Minister Vaclav Klaus was a third attempt at resolving the future shape of Czechoslovakia.

Two earlier rounds of talks have ended in failure.

Klaus of the Civic Democratic Party, which won in the Czech lands, and President Vaclav Havel insist

on a functioning federation ensuring political and economic stability in post-communist central Europe.

Meciar and his movement want more autonomy for the Slovaks, who feel dominated by the Czechs, and more Slovak control over Klaus' economic reforms.

The reforms have hit hardest in Slovakia, the more rural one-third of the country where industry developed under communism is now threatened with closure. Joblessness is almost four times that in the Czech lands.

Santiago threatens protest

MANILA, June 14: The runner-up in last month's presidential election threatened Sunday to lead protests by students if Congress declares Fidel Ramos the winner without investigating fraud allegations, reports AP.

Miriam Defensor Santiago said the congressional committee in simply tallying provincial "certificates of canvass" which they falsified. She said Congress must also review precinct-level returns to verify figures on the provincial tally sheets.

"A proclamation on the basis of falsified (provincial) canvass certificates would be null and void," said Mrs Santiago, a former judge.

On Saturday, Ramos, Mrs Aquino's candidate, received a boost from Imelda Marcos, who finished fifth in the presidential race.

Mrs Marcos said it was apparent Ramos won the election and she urged her followers to him "to ensure the survival of our nation." Her endorsement could reduce the chances of a right-wing attempt to prevent Ramos, a former defence secretary, from taking office.

Gorbachev in Israel

TEL AVIV, June 14: Former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev arrived today on his first visit to Israel, reports AP.

Foreign Minister David Levy greeted Gorbachev, his wife Raisa and seven advisors at the start of a four-day visit.

Gorbachev arrived aboard a private plane belonging to a Jewish millionaire lives in Switzerland, Nissim Gaon.

Off the Record

A royal show of unity

LONDON: Britain's Princess Diana, in her first public appearance since bursting into tears amid controversy about her marriage, chatted with her husband Prince Charles on Saturday in a royal show of unity, reports Reuter.

The couple appeared together along with other members of the royal family on the balcony of Buckingham Palace after attending a glittering parade to celebrate Queen Elizabeth's birthday.

Standing side-by-side to watch a fly-past, the pair appeared slightly uneasy but exchanged a few words and even managed to smile as the cameras clicked.

It was on the same balcony that the heir to the throne and his glamorous young wife enjoyed a romantic kiss after their 1981 wedding, watched by millions of television.

Princess Diana had fully recovered her public poise since bursting into tears under the strain of it all during a visit on Thursday to a cancer hospital. Then, sobbing openly after crowds of well-wishers turned out formal support, the princess scurried back to her car and was whisked away.



The Princess of Wales with her son Prince William.

Her distraught face was pictured next day on the front pages of the popular press, which has given wide play to allegations that the Princess had several times tried to take her life in despair at her "loveless" marriage.

The princess, 30, laughed and chatted with Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother and with her son Harry, even, as they were driven in an open carriage to the trooping the colour — a show of British pomp and circumstance by invited courtiers and royal guards dressed in bearskin hats and red tunics.

The Queen's birthday is actually in April but the official celebration, dating back to the days of George III and carried out in the presence of the Queen, takes place in June.

Saturday's ceremony, attended by Prime Minister John Major and representatives from the commonwealth, went ahead under tight security after a wave of attacks by Irish republican army guerrillas on the capital.

Don't abort, church will help you

NEW YORK: Roman Catholic Cardinal John J. O'Connor joined about 2,500 anti-abortion demonstrators Saturday in a four-hour protest through midtown Manhattan in which 11 counter-demonstrators were arrested, reports AP.

The focal point of the protest, which began with a Roman Catholic Mass and ended in prayer, was a vigil outside a medical clinic where abortions are performed.

Lining the route of the anti-abortion protesters were an estimated 800 abortion rights advocates chanting "Now choice!", waving signs that said: "We will decide" and shouting loud boos at O'Connor, who was under heavy police protection. O'Connor, a critic of abortion, is archbishop of the New York Archdiocese.

As the anti-abortion marchers wended their way through the streets, hundreds of police, some in riot gear, formed a human barricade to separate them from the opposing demonstrators on the sidewalks.

Police Officer Scott Bloch said 11 abortion rights advocates were arrested on disorderly conduct charges; one was also charged with resisting arrest.

'T'd do it again'

PORT STANLEY, Falkland Islands: Margaret Thatcher attended a ceremony in Port Stanley's Christ Church cathedral Saturday to mark the 10th anniversary of the end of Britain's war with Argentina over the Falkland Islands, reports AP.

She and husband Sir Denis Thatcher joined in a children's play performed in honor of their visit.

In a demonstration of an Islamic parable, the youngsters appealed to members of the audience to help them in a prayer to Allah. The Thatchers knelt with the youngsters for the prayer.

The newly ennobled former premier received a warm welcome from hundreds of islanders as she drove into the capital Port Stanley on Friday. Cheering children waved British flags.

"I'd do it again. Look at these children — of course I'd do it again," she told reporters, who asked if she had any regrets about sending Britons to war in 1982 to recapture the British colony from invading Argentinian troops.

Later, she told one of the islanders the war had been fought with a "total sense of purpose."

"These peaceful island, where people only wanted to carry on farming and the way of life here was suddenly, all the silence, all the peace, torn asunder by an invasion."

Earlier Friday, two Royal Air Force Phantom jets had accompanied the former premier's plane into the Mount Pleasant military base, where she and her husband were greeted by the islands' governor, William Fullerton.



BRIEFLY

21 rewarded in Rajiv case:

Twenty-one persons would share the RS 15 lakh reward announced by the government for providing information leading to the arrest of Sivasaran and Subha, most wanted accused in Rajiv Gandhi assassination case, PTI reports from Hyderabad.

The information collected from various places in Madras city led to the Special Investigation Team (SIT) operation in combators and then in Bangalore, where the two committed suicide before police could nab them, the SIT chief DR Karthikeyan told PTI.

"We missed Sivasaran and Subha by a day everywhere," he said.

The reward has been divided into three categories taking into account the quality and type of information provided by the public. While eight of them will be given RS 95,000 each, an equal number will get RS 60,000 each. The remaining five persons will receive RS 52,000 each, he said.

Nepali Congress gets majority:

Nepal's ruling party has won a majority on municipal elections across the country, the election commission said on Wednesday, reports Reuter from Kathmandu.

It said the Nepali Congress Party gained majority in 22 out of 36 town assemblies. The rest were shared by the Unified Marxist and Leninist Party and others.

The elections were held in the last week of May.

The Nepali news agency RSS quoted Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala as saying he was satisfied with the results.

11 Sikhs shot dead in Punjab:

Sikh gunmen armed with AK-47 assault rifles lined up and shot dead 11 members of two Sikh families in a midnight raid in the troubled northern Indian state of Punjab, police said Thursday, AFP reports from Chandigarh.

About a dozen gunmen stormed Kalake Kalan village, some 200 kilometres (125 miles) south of the state capital and dragged the sleeping victims out of their homes, a police spokesman said in Chandigarh.

They assembled the five men and six women in a village square and gunned them down, the spokesman said. All adult members of the two families were killed, but their children were spared.

Police suspected the Wednesday night killings were the handiwork of a faction of the Khalistan Commando Force, one of several Sikh militant groups fighting for a separate homeland called Khalistan (land of the pure) in Punjab.

Lower house okays Bazin:

Haiti's Lower House of parliament voted on Wednesday to approve as the nation's new Prime Minister Marc Bazin, a Conservative economist and critic of toppled President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, reports Reuter from Haiti.

The house voted 44-to-4 in favour of Bazin, with Aristide supporters boycotting the session.

The Senate approved Bazin last week.

Bazin, 60, has the backing of the military and the de facto administration which took power after ousting Aristide in a September 30 coup.

Several steps remain before he can formally take over as Prime Minister and create a new cabinet, but the ratification was his most significant hurdle.

Opposition claims riot in Iran:

An Iranian opposition movement in exile said on Saturday that fresh riots broke out in provincial Iran on Tuesday and at least four people were killed in two days of clashes with the paramilitary revolutionary guards, Reuter reports from Nicosia.

The Baghdad-based Mujahideen Khalq said people shouting "Death to (President Akbar Hoshemi) Raisanjan" set fire to banks, government buildings and military vehicles in Bowkan, 480 km (300 miles) west of Tehran.

No independent confirmation of the report was immediately available from inside Iran. The Mujahideen have sometimes provided accurate information of events inside the country.

A Mujahideen spokesman told Reuter in Nicosia by telephone that residents of Bowkan, in west Azerbaijan province, went on the rampage after revolutionary guardsmen killed two people. He said it was not known why they were killed.

Yeltsin for ethnic harmony:

President Boris Yeltsin, in a message to Russian's millions of Muslims yesterday called for ethnic and religious harmony, Reuter reports from Moscow.

Yeltsin congratulated the country's Islamic population on festivities marking Kuram Bairam (Eid-ul-Azhal). "Russia is a common house for all peoples, irrespective of their nationality and religion," Itar-Tass news agency quoted him as saying.

"Let the festival of Kuram Bairam remind everybody of fraternity, equality and peace," it said Eid-ul-Azha prayer yesterday at Moscow's only mosque was the first Muslim prayer Russian television has shown live.

Muslims make up a majority of the population in Tatarstan and the northern Caucasus.

Tigers kill 4 security men

COLOMBO, June 14: Tamil guerrillas today killed four security personnel in an ambush in eastern Sri Lanka but suffered heavy casualties of their own in the attack, according to a military report here, says AFP.

Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) guerrillas attacked an air force patrol at Morawewa in Trincomalee district with surface mines and machine-gun fire killing two airmen and two paramilitary soldiers, the statement said.

Security forces retaliated and forced the rebels to withdraw with heavy casualties after a 30-minute firefight while troop reinforcements were rushed to the area to locate "fleeing terrorists," the statement added.

The latest casualties brought to 140 the number of security personnel killed since the military launched a major offensive May 28 against LTTE.

Yeltsin will tell his woes to Bush in Washington Summit

MOSCOW, June 14: President Boris Yeltsin will bring his domestic problems with him when he meets this week with President Bush, reports AP.

He will be trying to convince his US hosts that he has only cooled, not frozen, economic reform in Russia. And he may be asked to explain a flare-up in his feud with former Soviet President Mikhail S Gorbachev who was given a hero's welcome in the United States last month despite his profound unpopularity in Russia.

Yeltsin's mission is to secure US help in nailing down 24 billion dollar in Western aid and credits to prevent a social explosion that could endanger Russia's infant democracy and market economy.

But to get that aid, he will need to show that he is still committed to reform and democracy, and able to bring about both amid the confusion of post-Soviet Russia.

"By no means will I allow a retreat on economic reforms," Yeltsin said in one of a series of interviews on the eve of his arrival in Washington on Monday.

In an effort to demonstrate that his goal is to reform rather than to rule Russia, Yeltsin said on May 27 that he would not seek a second five-year presidential term in 1996.

And to help argue the case, Yeltsin is taking with him Vice Premier Yegor Gaidar, the architect of the reforms.

Yeltsin said he hopes his meetings with Bush in Washington and other Western leaders in Munich next month "will finally break the knot" holding back the multibillion-dollar governmental commitment that Yeltsin says will lead to even greater private foreign investment in Russia.

But the Russian president "is going to have some problems," said one of Yeltsin's biggest Western boosters, US Ambassador Bob Strauss. "There should be some tough negotiations," Strauss predicted in a session with reporters a week before the summit.

Western economists are concerned because Yeltsin has felt forced to slow his reforms, which have sent the inflation rate to more than 300 per cent so far this year.

Within the past two weeks, Yeltsin has balked at lifting controls on energy prices and is maintaining subsidies to thousands of state-owned factories and businesses that, in a market economy, would go bankrupt, throwing millions out of work.

To meet rising wage demands, the government is flooding the country with newly printed rubles — a step that could spark inflation and jeopardize the promise of Western credits.

Yeltsin and his aides explain that they are changing their tactics, not their goals. They say they are trying to avoid soaring fuel prices or high unemployment that could cause the widespread unrest that some experts have been predicting since the reforms began last January.

"Today, people still support the reforms, but if we go beyond a critical point, we'll set off a general disaster," Yeltsin said last week.

In another sign of slackening pace of reform, Yeltsin appointed veteran economic manager Vladimir Shumeiko to a post equal to that of the reformist Gaidar.

The appointment of Shumeiko was viewed in part as a concession to the Russian legislature, which has balked at passing key elements of the reform programme, such as allowing widespread decollectivization of land, privatization of industry or bankruptcies for state-owned businesses.

Yeltsin also has been under severe pressure from uniformed military officers. In a concession, he went back on earlier hints he would name a civilian defence minister and instead appointed Gen Pavel Grachev.

Grachev has become a vocal advocate of de-

fense interests, and indicated he would slow some aspects of military reform. He also said he might send troops to defend ethnic Russians who live outside Russia. In another bid for support from officers, Yeltsin announced he was raising military wages by 80 per cent.

A government spokesman, Alexander Ulukayev, has tried to refute Russian press assertions that the policy and personnel changes represent a major shift away from reform.

Social discontent might rise, Ulukayev said this month, "but that is no reason for changing course. It is a reason for compromise, for flexibility in tactical changes, but not in the course as a whole."

Against these huge stakes, the recent sniping between Yeltsin and Gorbachev seems like a small-town political feud. It began shortly after Gorbachev got back from Washington last month and began taking credit for the \$24 billion aid package.

Yeltsin, in so many words, warned Gorbachev not to meddle in domestic politics, and on June 6 someone in the Kremlin stripped the former Soviet leader of the ZIL limousine he had been using since he resigned last December.

Mohamed accuses rivals of making Mogadishu port unsafe

NAIROBI, June 14: Somalia's interim president accused forces loyal to his rival of making the port of Mogadishu unsafe for food distribution to the starving, a radio broadcast said Sunday, reports AP.

The forces hijacked a cargo ship in the third such attack on cargo ships in the port, "proving that no one could guarantee security there," said the broadcast on Radio Mogadishu, which backs interim President Ali Mahdi Mohamed.

The port is vital to an international effort delivering thousands of tons of food to Mogadishu's starving population. More than a million people in and around the city are in need of emergency food aid and hundreds are dying daily, say aid workers.