

## Hong Kong deports 38 Vietnamese

HONG KONG, June 19: Thirty-eight Vietnamese boat people were deported back to their homeland today, some forcibly, as the Hong Kong government began in earnest its drive to empty out crowded refugee camps, reports AFP.

Several of the deportees put up resistance, and had to be dragged by Hong Kong police on to the four-engine Hercules cargo plane bound for Hanoi.

Others, heads bowed, accepted their fate and led their families in.

One little girl, her parents apparently among the resistors, clutched a blanket and walked in alone, flanked by a line of policemen called in to prevent possible altercations.

The deportees — 21 men, seven women, four boys and six girls — had spent the night at a boat people detention centre on an outlying island. Twenty-five had volunteered to leave, Hong Kong officials said.

The 38 had been screened out as non-refugees under the so-called orderly return programme hammered out in May. Eight were criminal offenders who had served time in Hong Kong for crimes such as theft and assault.

The deportation was the first since Hanoi and London hammered out an agreement in May for large-scale repatriations of the more than 54,000 Vietnamese boat people in Hong Kong.

## Palestinian delegates to ME talks meet Arafat

AMMAN, Jordan, June 19: Palestinian delegates to the Middle East peace talks on Thursday defied Israeli laws prohibiting contact with the PLO and met publicly for the first time with PLO chief Yasser Arafat, reports AP.

Under the gaze of reporters and photographers, Arafat embraced each of the 14 negotiators and their 12 advisers as they arrived at the Guest Palace for a meeting. A special bear hug was accorded to Hannan Ashrawi, the delegation's spokeswoman.

Reporters were not allowed to ask any questions, but photographers were given several minutes to take pictures before the meeting started at 7.30 pm (1630 GMT).

The Palestinians had come from the Israeli-occupied territories earlier in the day and seemed unconcerned about the risk they were taking in posing for pictures with the 62-year-old PLO leader.

Israel bars any contact with the Palestine Liberation Organization on the grounds it is a terrorist organization. Israeli peace activists and Palestinians have in the past been jailed for meeting with the PLO.

It was not immediately clear what impact the meeting would have on the Middle East peace talks, launched in Madrid last October. But it highlighted the influence the Palestine Liberation Organization has maintained on the negotiations, despite its physical absence.

As the meeting started, Arafat sat at a round table be-

tween the Palestinian delegation chief, Dr Haidar Abdul-Shafi, a native of occupied Gaza City, and Faisal Hussein, the leading PLO supporter in the West Bank.

Ashrawi and Hussein were the main negotiators with US Secretary of State James A. Baker before the start of the peace talks in October.

At Israel's insistence, they

were excluded from the negotiating team and allowed to serve only as advisers, mainly because they come from Jerusalem.

Israel regards Jerusalem, including the eastern Arab sector which it occupied in 1967, as its capital and refuses to allow the participation of Arabs from the city in the peace talks.

In Jerusalem, Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir's spokesman Ehud Gol would not specify whether Israel would bring charges against the negotiators. He said the meeting was "the latest stage of a series of provocations" by Ashrawi and Hussein, and that "an appropriate response to their behavior will come". He would not elaborate.

## He knows how to forgive

PARIS, June 19: Yasser Arafat's wife Suha, 29, painted a rare intimate portrait of the leader of the Palestine Liberation Organisation, describing him in an interview Thursday as a tough but sensitive man of action, reports AFP.

The 29-year-old Greek orthodox Palestinian said Arafat had "faith to move mountains" and was "a believer, but not a bigot... well-versed in the old and new testaments and the Torah as well as the Quran... and whose closest confidant is a Christian priest," the Palestinian Ibrahim Iyad.

The 62-year-old Arafat, she told the weekly Paris-Match, "is far from being a cruel, merciless man — he knows how to forgive."

On occasions when he is asked to approve the execution of a collaborator, she said, Arafat refuses, saying: "The world now knows he is a traitor. But don't forget that he has a family. If we kill him, his children and grandchildren will hate us as long as they live."

Mrs Arafat, Nee Tawil, said she had travelled everywhere with the PLO leader, but that "ever since we got married, we avoid travelling in the same plane."

"Everything is temporary,"



she said. The only clothes Arafat owns are "five identical uniforms, two khaki ones for winter and three lighter ones for summer," the PLO leader's wife said.

Questioned about Arafat's hirsute look, she said: "Believe me, he is not unshaven — he simply has a light beard."

"I have never seen a man who is... such a fanatic about his clothes and his personal hygiene," she said.

Mrs Arafat said she "does not care" if people call her husband a terrorist, because "men are judged by their times."

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Arafat, who was present at the interview, Paris-Match said, told the reporter afterwards that he had decided to get married after years as a bachelor because he had, "at last, found a woman who will have me — god help her."

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## Off the Record



LONDON: Kevin Maxwell, 33, gives a statement to the press after leaving the city magistrates court on Thursday. — AFP/UNB photo

### \$3.7m Maxwell will

LONDON: Media tycoon Robert Maxwell left two million pounds (3.7 million dollars) to family and friends in his will before he died last November, the Financial Times said Friday, publishing the document in full, reports AFP.

But the paper said the money could well be seized to pay off Maxwell's many creditors, including pensioners of his companies whose money he plundered.

Under the terms of the will Maxwell's widow Elisabeth was to receive 500,000 pounds (930,000 dollars) and three apartments in France.

His secretary and close friend, Jean Baddeley, was to inherit 100,000 pounds. Each of his seven children was to receive 200,000 pounds. He also left 150,000 pounds to his sister and 100,000 US dollars each to a niece and nephew.

Maxwell specified in the document, drawn up in July 1987, and amended in December 1990, that any beneficiary who brought the Maxwell family or his pergamon group "into disrepute" within two years of his death, would be cut out of the will.

Anyone who unsuccessfully challenged the will would have their share cut to just 1,000 pounds (1,850 dollars).

The rest of his personal estate was to go to a variety of causes including the defence of Israel, the eradication of Alzheimer's disease and cancer, young media entrepreneurs and world peace.

### Ban on homosexuals in US military

CANBERRA: The government has reaffirmed its ban on homosexuals in the military, drawing accusations of discrimination Friday from gay-rights and civil liberties groups, reports AP.

"The continuing of the ban on lesbians and gay men in the defence forces is simply blind prejudice and totally unacceptable," said Paul Costello, a spokesman for Gay and Lesbian Rights.

Defense Minister Robert Ray announced the decision Thursday while issuing a policy on "unacceptable sexual behavior" that included sexual harassment and criminal sex offenses.

Ray's statement came the same day Britain said it would no longer prosecute homosexuality as a military crime. British military personnel caught participating in homosexual activity could still be dismissed.

The Australian military reviewed its ban on homosexual activity under pressure from the Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission after a number of cases involving gay military staff.

The policy says the military will consider dismissing a member of the armed forces who is found to be involved in homosexual conduct.

Federal Human Rights Commissioner Brian Burdekin accused the government of maintaining a double standard by banning gays in the military but not other departments.

Costello, of Gay and Lesbian Rights, said the policy conflicted with the International Labor Convention's ban on sexual discrimination in the workplace.

### We all ought to go to his school

WICHITA: From the peasant villages of Russia to the wheat fields of Middle America, Boris Yeltsin has won over the people with his brand of populism. He even stunned the American politicians who were his hosts, reports AP.

"I'd like to keep him a week and make him my campaign manager," Sen. Bob Dole, joked Thursday as Yeltsin departed for Canada after a five-hour visit to Kansas following the summit in Washington.

Dole's fellow Kansas Republican, Sen. Nancy Kassebaum, agreed that American politicians could learn a lot from Yeltsin.

"We were saying we all ought to go to his school," Kassebaum said. "He's a natural. He's got great instincts and won a lot of friends."

Yeltsin arrived Thursday night in Ottawa. He was to address Parliament on Friday, meet with Prime Minister Brian Mulroney and ask for 2.4 billion dollar in aid.

Earlier this week in Washington, Yeltsin addressed Congress, requested aid and was hailed as a world-class statesman for negotiating landmark nuclear missile reductions with President Bush.

Yeltsin seemed to thoroughly enjoy himself, despite the 90°F (32°C) heat and fatigue from a packed schedule, and seemed impressed by what he saw at the farm and a meat-packing plant.

Asked what he'd like to take back from the farm, he responded, "I'd take everything, including the family."

In his speeches, translated from Russian, Yeltsin touched on Kansas' pride in agriculture, their patriotism, desire for peace and down-home friendliness. "There is no way we will ever be even potential adversaries," Yeltsin told an audience at Wichita State University. "No, we are friends. We made it."



## BRIEFLY

**Panama's 4 top officials held:** Four of Panama's top security officials were suspended and placed under arrest for failing to stop protests that marred a visit last week by US President George Bush, reports AFP from Panama City.

Bush was rushed away from a downtown Panama City plaza when US-trained police fired tear gas at nearby demonstrators and it walked over the crowd Bush planned to address and over the podium.

The suspended officials are Intelligence Chief Miguel Nieto, Ricardo Guardia, who heads troops protecting downtown Panama City, Anti-Riot Chief Javier Licon and Edgardo Falcon, a secret service police officer, said Interior Minister Juan Chevalier.

Opposition politicians, members of his own government and the Panamanian press have buried Chevalier and his Security Chief Menalco Solis under a wave of criticism since the botched Bush visit last Thursday.

**Rocket bursts in Japan:** The main engine of Japan's first domestically-developed rocket has burst into flames during a test, forcing a launch-date delay of at least six months, officials of the National Space Development Agency said Friday, AFP reports from Tokyo.

The fire occurred during the final engine combustion test at Tanegashima Space Centre in southern Japan on Thursday, they said.

"I'm afraid the launch of H-2 satellite launching rocket would be delayed for at least six months," one of the officials said.

The LE-7 engine caught fire five seconds after the test began. A fuel leak was the suspected cause, through officials said it would take months to verify.

**Soap Opera meet next week:** Soap opera stars, producers and directors from six nations in Latin America, Asia and Africa will meet in UN next week to discuss how to promote awareness of such global problems as the environment, family planning and women's rights, UN officials said Thursday, AP reports from United Nations.

The soap opera personalities will come from Brazil, India, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan and the Philippines.

They will discuss how popular soap operas can be used to disseminate information on vital issues.

UN officials said the television figures will join a panel discussion with officials on various UN agencies, including the UN Population Fund, the UN Children's Fund, the UN Development Programme, the UN Development Fund for Women, the UN Environment Programme, and the World Health Organization.

**2300-yr-old tomb found in China:** A 2,300-year-old tomb has been excavated in Changsha City, capital of Hunan Province in central China, reports Zinhua from Changsha.

Archaeological workers said that this is the biggest tomb of the early warring states period (475-221 BC) found in Changsha in the last two decades.

The ancient tomb enclosed two outer and two inner coffins. The pit measures 6.1 metres in length and five metres in width. The chamber of the tomb is surrounded by two-step platforms and a passage. As a layer of plaster was inserted between the coffins and the walls, the coffins remain basically intact.

Relics unearthed in the tomb include bronze ware such as mirrors, tripods, stools, kettles and basins, pottery and jade ware, wood figures, bamboo weavings and music instruments.

**Ban on Rodriguez's reelection:** Paraguayan President Andres Rodriguez will boycott a ceremony at which a new constitution barring his reelection is to be promulgated but is not challenging the document, officials said Thursday, reports AFP from Asuncion.

Rodriguez, a 68-year-old army General who led a February 1989 coup that toppled longtime authoritarian ruler Alfredo Stroessner and was later elected President, called the constitutional ban on his re-election an attack on his honour.

"A citizen has been denied his rights," Rodriguez told reporters Thursday. Rodriguez told lawmakers he will not attend Saturday's ceremony to promulgate the constitution, concluded this week by a constituent assembly, according to the head of that assembly, Oscar Faundo.

**Birthday tribute to Suu Kyi:** Australia paid a birthday tribute Friday to imprisoned Nobel Peace Laureate Aung San Suu Kyi, who remains under house arrest in the Maymyar capital Yangon, AFP reports from Canberra.

The tribute was paid in the Parliament's upper house Senate in a motion by all parties and independents that was timed to coincide with the pro-democracy activist's 47th birthday.

The Senate reaffirmed its admiration for her "courage and determination in continuing her resistance to the Maymyar governing regime's repression."

It called on Maymyar ruling State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) to immediately release her to prove the sincerity of its recent tentative steps towards reform.

## Malaysia wants to host post-Earth Summit

KUALA LUMPUR, June 19: Malaysia wants to host a post-Earth Summit conference to ensure that decisions made at Rio De Janeiro on forest conservation would be fulfilled, a Cabinet minister was quoted today as saying, reports AFP.

Primary Industries Minister Lim Keng Yaik, returning from Rio late Thursday, said the conference would attempt to pressure developed countries to increase their forest areas.

Lim said he would propose to the Cabinet that the conference be held in Kuala Lumpur early next year.

He said he had a list of 20 countries which had actively pressed for the decision on the forest principles at the summit.

## US suspects a POW still alive in Stalinist prison

RUSSIA, June 19: American investigators are continuing to look into reports a US POW may be alive in a Stalinist prison, but camp officials insist there are no Americans in the remote Pechora region, reports AP.

"We don't have any Americans here," said Maj. Gen. Leonid Khamluk, chief of the region that comprises roughly 10 labour camps built before and during World War II.

The American investigators arrived in the Pechora area Thursday to probe reports a US POW was still alive. All they found were freshly painted walls, smiling prisoners and officials who insist their search was in vain.

The delegation of two civilians and one military investigator — part of a joint US-Russian commission on POWs — met local officials Thursday and then trekked over rough gravel roads through the Taiga forests to reach Camp No. 5 in the once-closed area known as PL-350.

The delegation travelled to Camp No. 5, 10 kilometres (six miles) from Pechora, after getting word an American pilot was believed to be

held at one of the camps here.

Camp No. 5 and the others are serviced by Pechora, a blue-collar town of 70,000, which is located about 1,500 kilometres (900 miles) northeast of Moscow.

The trip was quickly organized following the disclosure by President Boris Yeltsin that American POWs imprisoned in the Soviet Union might still be on Russian soil.

The delegation intended to keep working Friday before returning to Moscow.

A private American group searching for POWs, the Ark Project, said it believed the man being sought was 1st Lt. Robert Martin who was taken prisoner by North Korea during the Korean War.

The American investigators refused to speak to reporters. They filed from room to room in the prison's dilapidated, three-story administration building, its interior walls freshly painted white, in search of information about the missing American.

Soldiers, inmates and prison officials all said there were no Americans present.

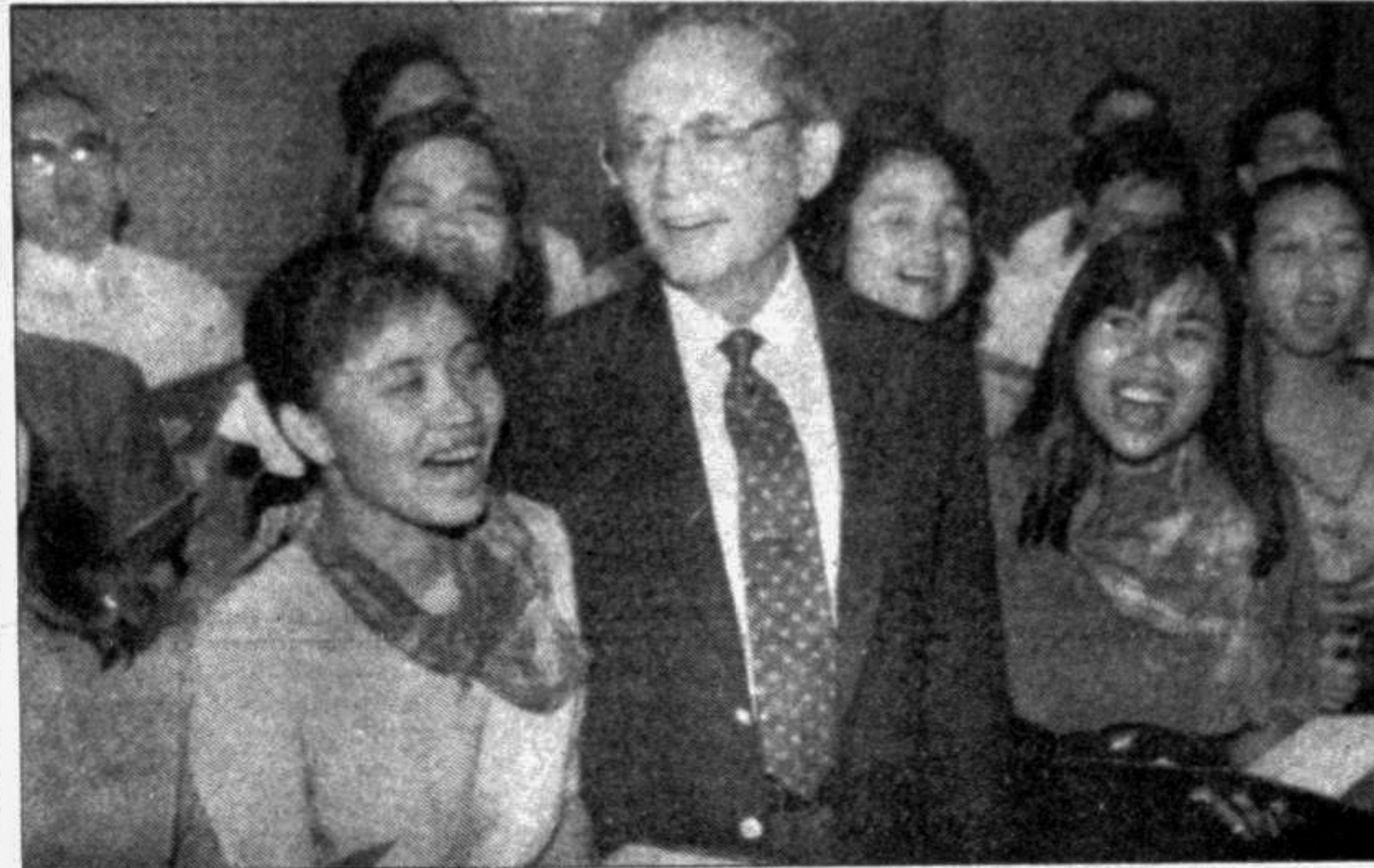
## France to hold referendum on EC treaty

PARIS, June 19: Backers of European unity won a victory Friday when the National Assembly cleared the way for voters to accept or reject a treaty that would give the European Community a common currency and foreign policy, reports AP.

The 388-to-43 vote was a coup for President Francois Mitterrand, a major backer of "European unity" who has pressed hard for French approval of the controversial Treaty of Maastricht.

Ireland held a referendum Thursday on the treaty, and results were expected Friday.

Mitterrand gave into opposition demands for a referendum on the treaty after Danish voters rejected it June 2.



MANILA: President-elect Fidel Ramos (C) sings with the presidential palace choir after celebrating with outgoing President Corason Aquino the second anniversary of the "Kabisig" anti-poverty movement at Malacanang palace Thursday. — AFP/UNB photo

## Azerbaijan intensifies attack

## Emergency in Nagorny-Karabakh

MOSCOW, June 19: The Nagorny-Karabakh government introduced a state of emergency Thursday, while Azerbaijan intensified its offensive to regain lost territory, reports AP.

The Itar-Tass news agency also said the Nagorny-Karabakh parliament sanctioned the start of a guerrilla war against Azerbaijan forces, which were closing in on the regional center of Mardakert.

The week-old Azerbaijani offensive follows the election earlier this month Ebulfez Elchibey as president. The leader of the hawkish Popular Front has pledged to take back all territory lost by his country in four years of fighting with Armenians for control of Nagorny-Karabakh.

Nagorny-Karabakh is a mainly Armenian enclave inside Azerbaijan.

The classes in the past week between revitalized Azerbaijani forces and Armenian militants are some of the heaviest in more than four years of fighting for con-

trol of Nagorny-Karabakh.

The state of emergency called by the enclave's parliament was to last for one month, but no details about it were given.

The Nagorny-Karabakh government also announced a general mobilization, but it was not likely to have much impact since many men in the enclave

are already under arms.

Backed by about 20 tanks and 50 armored personnel carriers, the Azerbaijanis were trying to take Mardakert, according to the Armenian Defense Ministry. The ministry claimed ethnic Russians were fighting on the side of the Azerbaijanis.

Itar-Tass said a group of

Armenian militants had threatened to blow up a hydroelectric dam near Mardakert to flood villages in nearby Azerbaijan. The Nagorny-Karabakh parliament condemned the threat, saying it would harm Armenians as well.

The Interfax news agency quoted a statement by Elchibey in which he appealed to the United Nations, NATO, and the Council for Security and Cooperation in Europe to prevent Armenian aggression against Azerbaijan.

The Armenian Defence Ministry said Armenian forces had retaken the villages of Sykhavend and kazanchi, but about 20 Armenians and some 200 Azerbaijani soldiers were killed during fighting over the past 24 hours.

The ministry also said about 50 Armenians and 200 Azerbaijanis were killed during the past two to three days in the Askeran region of Nagorny-Karabakh. Askeran is a key town that links the Nagorny-Karabakh capital of Stepanakert with the eastern part of the enclave.

## UN Council meet Monday

United Nations, June 19: The UN Security Council has scheduled a meeting for Monday to examine the situation in the disputed enclave of Nagorny-Karabakh, diplomatic sources said Thursday, reports AP.

France is expected to ask the Council at that time to consider sending UN observers to the region, which has been gripped in bloody ethnic conflict for four years.

The Council will consider a report from UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali based on a trip to Nagorny-Karabakh by Francesc Ven-

drell, a ranking UN official.

Sources said Vendrell advocates sending UN observers to the enclave to oversee the delivery of humanitarian aid but believes this cannot be undertaken until a ceasefire is observed.

Armenia has several times asked for UN "blue beret" observers to be dispatched but the council has refused, instead sending two fact-finding missions.

Nagorny-Karabakh is a mainly christian Armenian-populated enclave located inside and administered by Muslim Azerbaijan.

grounds in the previous two days, evidently to put a good face forward to the Americans.

"Our conditions are pretty good anyway," Alexandrov said, managing a half-hearted smile as he cleaned potatoes at a kitchen outside the compound.

Alexandrov, who has one year left on his term, said he has never seen an American during his time at the camp, "but I don't know about the other places."

Most of its residents work in the local timber-cutting or oil exploration industries. The arrival of the delegation stirred skepticism among some people about the true nature of the Americans' visit.

"They didn't really come here to save anybody. This is purely political," said Yuri Kokuashvili, deputy chief of the Pechora police department and an official in charge of security outside the camp.

The POW commission, headed by Russian Gen. Dmitri Volkogonov and former US Ambassador Malcolm Toon.

## 69 arrested in Tibet

BEIJING, June 19: Chinese authorities have arrested at least 69 people involved in Tibetan pro-independence activities in rural areas of the Himalayan region, an organization that monitors Tibetan human rights said Friday, reports AP.