

# India's army asks for \$ 333m additional funds

NEW DELHI, Oct 25 : India's army is asking for additional funds of about 333 million dollar from the government in the face of a severe cash crunch, a newspaper reported Sunday, says AFP.

The funds are needed to service credits for previous purchases of defence equipment, the Pioneer said, adding the army would soon make a presentation to the cabinet to hike its budget.

"Defence preparedness cannot be maintained at the current levels with the money available" would be the theme of the presentation, the daily said.

Army and Defence Ministry spokesmen were unavailable for comment today on the report attributed by the Pioneer to unnamed defence sources.

Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao's government raised defence spending marginally to 6.73 billion dollars in the fiscal year to March 31, 1993, almost half of it going to the million-plus army, the fourth largest in the world.

Taking inflation into account, the allocation marked a decline of six per cent from the last financial year.

But the budget is not large enough to service credits, "leave alone making much-needed new purchases," the Pioneer quoted defence source as saying.

"We know we are not living in a petrodollar country but we are faced with two hostile nations with whom we have fought four wars," a defence ministry source reportedly said.

"And the irony is that our operational directives dictate that we maintain a realistic level of defence preparedness with an unrealistic budget," the source was quoted as saying.

India has fought three wars with Pakistan, the last in 1971, and one with China in 1962 over their disputed border.

Its budgeted defence spending in the current financial year works out to 2.75 per cent of the gross domestic product, a fall from the record 4.06 per cent in 1987-88 and the lowest since the year of the war with China which force India to build up its military strength.



ISLAMABAD: Turkish Prime Minister Suleyman Demirel (R) is welcomed by Pakistani counterpart Nawaz Sharif upon arrival on Saturday for a 2-day official visit. — AFP/UNB photo

# Turkey supports Pak stand on Kashmir

ISLAMABAD, Oct 25 : Turkish Prime Minister Suleyman Demirel on Saturday expressed solidarity with Pakistan's stand on Kashmir while praising efforts towards normalisation of relations with India, the Associated Press of Pakistan said, reports AFP.

Speaking at a dinner after his arrival Saturday for a two-day official visit, Demirel said that the resumption of dialogue between Pakistan and India was an advance for peace in the region, the official agency reported.

Economic cooperation between the two countries should be expanded at public and private level, he said.

"It agree with Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif that the level of cooperation should match the level of our brotherly ties, he said.

Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif said he hoped that the economic cooperation between the two countries would grow as his government had adopted the same policies of liberalization, privatization and deregulation that Turkey had successfully pursued for a long time.

Sharif said the Demirel's visit would provide an ideal opportunity to strengthen existing bilateral relations and take stock of the changes that had taken place recently in their respective regions.

## BRIEFLY

**Anti-racism rally in Brussels:** Thousands of people joined an anti-racism demonstration in Brussels on Saturday, organised by the group youth against racism in Europe, reports AFP.

Most of the protesters were from Belgium and Germany, but people also arrived from the Netherlands, Britain, France, Austria, Sweden, Poland and Czechoslovakia.

According to police, 6,500 people took part in the peaceful protest.

The demonstrators focused on the threat presented by the resurgence of racism in Germany and other countries in central and eastern Europe, but also highlighted the growing influence of extreme right-wing parties in Belgium and France.

**Akihito meets Li, Zemin:** Japan's Emperor Akihito met Premier Li Peng and Communist Party leader Jiang Zemin on Saturday after meeting a group of Chinese scientists to talk about one of his favourite topics — fish, AFP reports from Beijing.

The Emperor had a "cordial and friendly" meeting with Li at the Diaoyutai state guesthouse in which he inquired after China's environmental protection efforts, the official Xinhua news agency said.

General Secretary Jiang later hosted a dinner banquet for Akihito, who arrived Friday for a six-day tour.

The visit is the first ever by a Japanese sovereign to visit China, where memories remain fresh of World War II atrocities committed in the name of Akihito's father, Hirohito.

**Cuba slates US embargo:** Cuba has reacted sharply to a new US law tightening the economic embargo against the island, saying it ushered in "a new era of hostility" with Cuba, AFP reports from Havana.

The reaction came only hours after President George Bush signed the Torricelli bill during a campaign stop in Miami, Florida, home to the large and politically active Cuban exile community in the United States.

The official Cuban news agencies AIN and Prensa Latina, as well as radio and television networks, carried reactions from Cuban economic, social and cultural circles rejecting the bill.

"We will not perish, we will not cede," said the communist party newspaper Granma in Saturday's edition. "Cuba will preserve its conquests in the most difficult conditions."

**3 held in Algeria:** Fifty-three Islamic fundamentalists have been arrested in several operations by the Gendarmerie in western Algeria and east of the capital Algiers, the national Gendarmerie said on Saturday, AFP reports from Algiers.

At Tlemcen in the west, 46 people were arrested, including 23 members of the banned National Salvation Front (FIS), who the authorities said were in possession of explosive, weapons, communications equipment and "subversive material."

The 23 FIS members are accused of attempted assassination and sabotage, possession of weapons of war and fabrication of weapons, and of possessing and reproducing "seditions material."

Twenty-three other people are accused of criminal association and seditious meetings.

**Sharma wants normal Indo-Pak ties:** The President, Dr Shanker Dayal Sharma, Saturday emphasised the need for India and Pakistan to have normal relations and settle all issues through dialogue and peaceful means, PTI reports from New Delhi.

In an informal chat with Pakistani High Commissioner designate Riaz Hussain Khokhar, who presented his credential to the President, Dr Sharma said any other approach went against the logic of geography and culture.

He also stressed on the importance of strengthening the South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation (SAARC) of which both countries are members.

**Quake claims 1 in Georgia:** A strong earthquake rocked Georgia, southern Russia and Armenia Saturday, killing at least one person and destroying dozens of homes in the sparsely populated Caucasus Mountains, AP reports from Georgia.

The tremor registered 6.7 on the Richter scale, according to the US Geological Survey and Swedish seismologists. The epicenter was near the town of Barisakho, 90 kilometers (55 miles) northeast of the Georgian capital of Tbilisi, Georgian officials said.

A 15-year-old boy was killed in Barisakho, and many other people in the town were injured, said Interior Minister spokesman Valiko Gogokashvili. He said several dozen homes were destroyed.

No other casualties or serious damage was reported, but communications with Barisakho and the surrounding area were cut, said Georgian government spokesman Vakhtang Kobaidze.

## US suspends food airlift to Baidoa

NAIROBI, Oct 25: The United States on Sunday temporarily suspended its airlift of food to the starving in the central Somali town of Baidoa after one of its cargo planes was struck by a bullet, reports AP.

Army Lt Col Robert Donnelly, spokesman for the US relief operation, based in Mombasa, Kenya, said Sunday's incident occurred at about 8:15 a.m. (1:55 am EDT) as a US C-130 Hercules was approaching Baidoa's airstrip to land.

"One bullet hit the aircraft," said Donnelly, 43, of Suffern, N.Y. "We don't know how many shots were fired or where the bullet was fired from."

No one was hurt in the incident, he said.

# Homosexuals are voting in a block and support Clinton

NEW YORK, Oct 25 : For the first time since pollsters began surveying homosexuals as a demographic group, gays in this country are voting in a block and they support Democrat Bill Clinton, reports AFP.

Most organizations fighting Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) or for homosexual rights receive federal subsidies and cannot, by law, participate in partisan politics. But that does not mean their leaders cannot express their views.

At an anti-AIDS march in Washington this month act-up activists campaigned for Clinton and in some cases in New York and San Francisco, pro-Clinton ads alternate with Madonna videos. The New York Times has estimated that homosexuals have contributed two million dollars to Democratic coffers.

Part of the reason that gays are supporting the Democrats in droves is that President George Bush's Republican campaign has crusaded for 'family values', seen as an anti-gay code word by the estimated nine to ten million gay voters.

At the July convention in Houston, Texas conservative columnist Pat Buchanan's overtly anti-homosexual remarks in a prime time speech angered gays already disappointed with much money the Bush administration had allocated for AIDS research.

"The Republican convention scared people," said Sandra Lowe of the gay group Lambda Legal. "If Bush wins the election with all this family values campaign, it will be a very dangerous society."

Homosexuals here seem to have reason to be uneasy. They

While most Americans says they oppose all discrimination, anti-gay attacks shot up 31 per cent in big cities last year.

On the day of the presidential vote, several states will have referenda on the ballot backed by powerful religious groups. Oregon voters must decide if homosexuality will be declared "abnormal, wrong, unnatural and perverse". Similar referenda are on the ballot in Colorado and Portland, Maine.

The third major candidate, independent Ross Perot, who has talked mostly about the federal debt, said in May he would not appoint gays to cabinet posts because the controversy would be distracting. An uproar ensued and he backed away from the statement.

In contrast Clinton is the



are more visible now that they are organized and more vulnerable to public hostility.

first presidential candidate to take a position openly in favour of gay rights. He has even declared himself against banning homosexuals from the military and in favour of a federal law making it illegal to discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation in housing, in the work place and in the granting of loans. Even before he had the Democratic nomination wrapped up, Clinton took the possibly risky step of going to homosexual fund-raiser in California, a key state where gays are believed to outnumber blacks.

Raised in Arkansas, a rural state where gay activism is virtually unknown, the Democratic candidate navigated the subject of support for homosexuality delicately, hoping it would not blow up in his face and alienate the so-

called silent majority. He has also said that one of his close friends, whom he has not named, died of AIDS but Clinton opposed legalizing same-sex marriages.

Bush has tried to repair the damage done by Buchanan and other far-right-wingers, ever going so far as occasionally wearing a red ribbon of his suit as a symbol of solidarity with AIDS sufferers. But his supporters have undone any progress he make by distributing videos to local television stations which attack Clinton by linking him to gays.

"I think about 90 per cent (of homosexuals) will vote for Clinton," said Lowe of Lambda Legal.

And the other 10 per cent? "there are always fools", she said.

## 5 Palestinians shot in Gaza

GAZA, Oct 25: Israeli soldiers shot and wounded five Palestinians today when tensions boiled over at the main checkpoint for Gaza Strip workers entering Israel, Arab witnesses said, reports Reuters.

News security measures were already backing up pre-dawn traffic for nearly a kilometre (half a mile) when an Israeli bus driver transporting workers to the Erez checkpoint pulled a gun on one who refused to pay the full fare, the witnesses said.

The incident escalated into protests by hundreds of workers who left their vehicles shouting "Allah U Akbar" (God is Great) and hurling stone at soldiers.

Troops fired, primarily into the air, but five Palestinians were lightly wounded by gunshots, hospitals said.

# ME peace talks resume today US polls won't affect parley

WASHINGTON, Oct 25: Arab and Israeli delegates at Middle East peace talks say the November 3 US presidential vote will not affect the parley, but both sides seem to be bracing for President George Bush's possible defeat, reports AFP.

Democratic candidate Bill Clinton is seen as more pro-Israel than Bush and has accused the president of pressuring Israel so that it would make unilateral concessions.

The seventh round of talks resumes Monday after a week-end break. The negotiations break off again Thursday until November 9, six days after the election.

Both Israelis and Arabs have made discreet contacts with Clinton advisors, with Arabs apparently convinced that a Clinton administration would not pressure Israel to make concessions.

Arab diplomats are split into two schools of thought. Some believe it would be several months before a Clinton victory would have a direct effect on the talks.

Others expect immediate, negative consequences, seeing Clinton as likely to take the Israeli side and to refuse to take up the role of "honest broker" that Bush says his administration plays.

Nabil Shaath, the PLO's official overseeing the talks in Washington, says the United States had been pushing the Israelis and Arabs to make progress, but as the elections draw nearer, the administration will stop pressuring either side.

An Israeli official who asked not to be named said the Arabs, who have lost their ties to the now defunct Soviet Union, worry about a Clinton victory.

But he said it was hard to say if their apprehensions would affect the talks.

Itamar Rabinovich, the head of the Israeli delegation to talks with Syria, said he expected Syria to clarify some points Monday. Israel gave the Syrians a document Thursday containing the first written mention of a possible withdrawal from the Golan Heights and has asked Damascus in exchange to explain its idea of peace.

Israel's objective is to hammer out a joint declaration of common principles, which would be the first document signed by the two countries after spending 44 years in a state of war.

Syria rejected Israel's initiative as insufficient, but said it was encouraged by it. Damascus has demanded Israel pull out of all the territories it occupied in the 1967 Middle East war.

The Palestinians and Israelis have narrowed their differences over Security Council Resolution 242. The land-for-peace resolution which is also an issue in talks on an Israeli withdrawal from West Bank and Gaza Strip.

They have agreed, in compliance with the invitation to the conference when it began in Madrid a year ago, that the resolution would be applied only to negotiations on the final status of the Israeli-occupied territories.

They are currently trying to agree on terms of a five-year transitional period of Palestinian self-rule. The talks on the final status would begin three years into that period.

But first they have to hammer out an agenda for the discussions, which both sides say is within reach.

## Shen returns to United States

SAN FRANCISCO, Oct 25: Chinese democracy activist Shen Tong returned to the United States Saturday after being deported by Chinese authorities who arrested him when he returned home from American exile, reports AP.

"I am very, very grateful to the international pressure" that led to his release earlier in the day, Shen told reporter shortly after arriving on an Air China flight from Beijing.

He said that without such pressure "there would not be this result." He had been held since September 1.

He also said he hoped to return to China "with or without permission."

Earlier, a Chinese Foreign Ministry statement said Shen "confessed his illegal activities involving the establishment of anti-government organizations in China at the instigation and with the support of certain foreign forces."

# Rebels take 4 UN employees hostage in Monrovia

MONROVIA, Oct 25: Rebels reportedly held four United Nations employees hostage as fierce fighting with a West African peacekeeping force near the capital drove tens of thousands of people from their homes, reports AP.

Dozens of civilians caught in the cross-fire were injured and an unknown number were killed, doctors said. An AP photographer saw two corpses on the highway north of Monrovia.

The chief of staff of the West African army, Brig. Victor Malu of Nigeria, said rebels suffered heavy casualties, but refused to discuss his own losses.

Diplomatic sources said the rebels were holding four UN employees hostage at rebel headquarters in Gbarnga. The four — Richard Snellen of Amsterdam and three Liberians whose identities were not immediately known — were accused by the rebels of providing information that the West Africans used to bomb rebel commander Charles Taylor's headquarters.

UN representative Ross Mountain said UN officials were trying to gain the hostages release, but he declined to comment further.

The rebels retreated Saturday under a bombardment of shells, rockets and mortars fired by the peacekeepers.

## Defence minister, 110 military men to be removed in El Salvador

NEW YORK, Oct 25 : El Salvador's defence minister, his deputy and more than 110 other military officers are scheduled to be purged from their posts next month for human rights abuses or other violations, a newspaper reported Sunday, says AP.

A list of officers to be purged was forwarded to President Alfredo Cristiani by a commission set up under peace accords, according to The New York Times, which cited unnamed people familiar with the list.

Cleansing of military ranks was a key element of the UN-brokered peace accords in January, which ended 12 years of civil war between socialist insurgents and US-backed rightist government forces. The war claimed 75,000 lives.

## Mosque battle: Lankan Muslim succumbs to injuries

COLOMBO, Oct 25: A 30-year-old Muslim succumbed to injuries that he suffered when Muslim worshippers and police fought pitched battles after Friday congregational prayers at the Maradana Mosque here, press reports said Sunday, says AFP.

The Sunday Island said that Abdul Samath, one of a dozen Muslim devotees who were wounded Friday when riot squads fired tear-gas to disperse hundreds of rampaging Muslims, died of his injuries on Saturday.

## Elections in Georgia illegal: Gamsakhurdia

MOSCOW, Oct 25 : Ousted Georgian President Zviad Gamsakhurdia said on Saturday that recent elections in Georgia were illegal because they were not called by a national parliament, the agency Itar-Tass said, reports AFP.

"These elections are illegal because parliament alone has the constitutional right to call elections," Gamsakhurdia, who was overthrown in January, said in Grozny, capital of the Chechen republic.

Gamsakhurdia had been in refuge in Grozny for several months, at the invitations of Chechen President Djokar Dudayev.

The Georgian elections on October 11, in which Edward Shevardnadze was elected president, were called by the Georgian State Council, led by Shevardnadze.

The Council, was formed in March to run Georgia until elections were held.

Gamsakhurdia accused Shevardnadze of having prepared and achieved a "criminal revolution," destroyed "glasnost" (openness) and brought back censorship.

In a separate development, Georgian authorities, quoted by Commonwealth of Independent States Television, said 39 Georgian soldiers were being held by Abkhazian separatists in Gudauta, Northern Abkhazia.

## Talks on Cyprus problems in New York today

NICOSIA, Oct 25: Turkish-Cypriot leaders expressed pessimism about UN-sponsored talks on the Cyprus problem, set to resume in New York on Monday, and warned that an imposed solution would sow the seeds of a new war.

Turkish-Cypriot leader Rauf Denktaş and his officials told AFP that the United Nations must reverse its 1964 decision to recognize only the Greek-Cypriot government as the one representing Cyprus.

Until that happens it was not possible to create a Turkish-Greek federation on Cyprus as the UN proposes, Denktaş said in a rare interview granted last week on the Turkish side of the divided island.

## Off the Record

**Japan yet to decide on 'Sex'**

TOKYO: Copies of Madonna's new book "Sex" were halted at Tokyo's Narita airport to determine whether it violates Japan's obscenity standards, customs officials said Saturday, reports AP.

The book, which features nude pictures of the singer and others, went on sale last week in the United States and five European countries. It is not scheduled to be published in Japan until December 1.

Japan has long banned publication of pictures that depict genitals or public hair — male or female. But in recent months, several art publications broke the ban but were allowed to be sold, prompting a national debate over whether a more flexible standard was needed.

A Japanese publisher attempted to bring in two copies of "Sex" using couriers, the customs officials said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

The officials said they would decide what to do with the book in a few days.

Tokyo-based Dohosha has said it would publish the Japanese edition of "Sex" without any revisions.



## Mandela attends wedding — the first of any of his children

JOHANNESBURG: Hundreds of cheering supporters thronged a downtown church Saturday for the wedding of African National Congress leader Nelson Mandela's daughter, reports AP.

The wedding of Zindzi Mandela to Zweli Hlongwane was the first of any of his children the anti-apartheid leader has attended.

He spent 27 years in prison for sabotage and plotting to overthrow the government, gaining his freedom in February 1990.

Mandela, 74, wearing a grey suit, arrived with his 31-year-old daughter. His estranged wife Winnie, the bride's mother, came in a separate car.

The bride wore a traditional white flowing gown with a long train carried by two helpers.

A traditional African ceremony was planned for Sunday at Hlongwane's home, publicist Cathy Findley said.

Mandela has two children from a previous marriage and another daughter with Winnie.



JOHANNESBURG: South African businessman Zweli Hlongwane holds his bride Zindzi Mandela, the daughter of ANC president Nelson Mandela at their wedding ceremony in Johannesburg on Saturday. — AFP/UNB photo