

# India, Malaysia to promote defence cooperation

KUALA LAMPUR, Feb 2: Malaysia and India Tuesday signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to promote defence cooperation that analysts said would pave the way for Kuala Lumpur to buy Russian Mig-29 fighter aircraft, reports AFP.

Malaysian Defence Minister Najib Tun Razak said the memorandum would provide an umbrella for cooperation in maintaining similar aircraft and equipment used by the two countries.

"With this MOU we hope that India, with its long experience and knowledge in defence-related matters will assist Malaysia in areas such as military training, logistical support and possible joint ven-

tures in the defence industry," Najib said.

Indian Defence Minister Sharan Pawar, who signed the MOU with Najib said India had gained considerable experience in defence research which it would be happy to provide Malaysia.

"Although the cold war has ended, fresh tensions have erupted. We need to ensure that these do not impinge adversely on our respective regions," Pawar said.

Najib told reporters that the Malaysian government had not yet decided whether to buy the Mig-29 but defence analysts said the signing of the MOU signalled that a purchase was imminent.

Official sources said that

Malaysia is close to announcing the purchase of 30 Mig-29s and six Mi-24 hind helicopter gunships from Russia in a deal worth more than 500 million US dollars.

The Russian news agency Interfax quoted sources as saying in Moscow in December that Russia had effectively reached an agreement with Malaysia for the sale of up to 30 Mig-29s.

Malaysian armed forces chief Yaacob Mohammed Zain said recently that the government decision whether to buy about 30 of the fighters would depend on whether India was prepared to provide technical expertise.

Yaacob said India was the only Asian country which ex-

tensively used Russian fighters and had adequate supply of spare parts and maintenance expertise.

A Malaysian purchase would give Moscow a significant foothold in the Association of South East Asian Nations profitable market for armaments, analysts said.

Official sources said Russia's European and US competitors were however trying to convince Malaysia that the Mig option was flawed.

They said the United States had offered to sell about 30 F-16 fighter jets to Malaysia "at very competitive prices" while France has reportedly offered to sell an unspecified number of Mirage 2000 Rafale aircraft.



AMMAN: PLO leader Yasser Arafat (L) hugs King Hussein of Jordan after their meeting in the residence of the Palestinian ambassador in Amman on Monday. — AFP/UNB photo

## Arafat arrives in Baghdad

BAGHDAD, Feb 2: Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat arrived in Baghdad on Monday on his first visit since the PLO apologised to Saudi Arabia for backing Iraq in the Gulf War, reports Reuters.

The PLO leader, accompanied by several Tunis-based officials, arrived from Jordan late in the evening for a two-day visit, official sources said.

Journalists were prevented from approaching the guest house where he was staying.

PLO Executive Committee member Mahmoud Abbas, in Saudi Arabia last month on the first visit by a PLO leader since the Gulf War, apologised for his organisation's backing for Iraqi President Saddam Hussein.

The statement sparked widespread anger among many ordinary Palestinians, who still idolise Saddam for his Gulf War attack on Israel.

## Russia dumps huge radioactive waste

OSLO, Feb 2: Russia dumped 191,000 cubic metres of liquid radioactive waste at five different locations in the Barents sea between 1959 and 1991, a Russian minister told an expert conference in Oslo Monday, reports AFP.

Russian Minister for Natural Resources and Environment Valery Rumyantsev said solid radioactive waste was also dumped at eight different places in the Kara sea, east of the Novaya Zemlya archipelago.

Rumyantsev would not disclose the exact locations, but said that two of the Barents sea dumping sites were close to land, while the remaining three were further out at sea.

Russian President Boris Yeltsin in October set up a commission to probe the effects of radioactive pollution on the environment.

Rumyantsev also said the Russians dumped seven nuclear reactors in the Kara sea — one after 1972 when the so-called London convention on dumping became effective.

The reactors were encapsulated in a cement and steel shell before being dropped at sea.

This is to guarantee that they will not leak for at least 500 years, Rumyantsev told the conference.

## 1000 killed in Zaire riots

KINSHASA, Zaire, Feb 2: At least 1,000 people were killed when presidential guards put down riots by army soldiers who refused to accept the new 5-million Zaire notes they were paid with, Zaire's transition government said Monday, reports AP.

Jean Joseph Mukendi, spokesman for Prime Minister Etienne Tshisekedi, told Associated Press "There were at least 1,000 dead. They were mostly soldiers."

Western diplomats earlier said hundreds had died when Mobutu's presidential guard put down a mutiny by regular army troops. And one diplomat, interviewed earlier Monday, said the number of dead could reach 1,000.

Mobutu has accused Tshisekedi of treason, saying he caused the violence by urging soldiers to refuse to accept newly printed 5-million Zaire bank notes. The regular army troops mutinied after shopkeepers refused the notes, and Mobutu sent his special forces.

There was way to confirm the number of deaths. And there was no comment from Mobutu, who remains in his ancestral village of Gbadolite, 1,900 kilometres (1,160 miles) north of the capital. Zairian television, which remains under his control, has released no figures on the number of dead.

Presidential guards barred access Monday to a camp near

Kinshasa's airport, which the diplomat said Mobutu's men had attacked.

In Brussels, Belgian Foreign Minister Willy Claes said at least 300 people were reportedly killed after Mobutu sent in his special forces to suppress the riots. Claes did not specify how many of the dead were soldiers, but added the total could not specify how many of the dead were soldiers, but added the total could be much higher.

Mobutu's troops may have disposed of many bodies, Claes added, speaking in Brussels, Belgium.

The riots began Thursday with soldiers robbing foreigners and looting their homes, but then escalated into a

power struggle between troops loyal to Mobutu and those supporting Zaire's democracy movement.

Zaire's impoverished economy has collapsed and many blame Mobutu, the country's ruler for 27 years. But Mobutu has refused to cede control of the treasury, military or other key institutions to a transitional government he appointed under pressure from the United States, France and other aid donors.

A statement read on Zairian television Monday night on behalf of Mobutu said anyone refusing to accept the new notes would be guilty of treason, and that new 10-million Zaire notes would soon be introduced.

## Fighting delays Somalia's peace talks

MOGADISHU, Feb 2: The start of preliminary peace talks among Somalia's warring factions was delayed Tuesday by a new outbreak of fighting near the southern port of Kismayu, reports AP.

In the latest incident, a US helicopter gunship Monday fired on a Somali vehicle that military officials said was advancing on Belgian troops near Kismayu, where clans continue to fight.

Nine Somalis were reported killed in the fighting, including two found in the destroyed vehicle, said Marine Chief Warrant Officer Virginia Bueno.

The development came as US Secretary of State Warren Christopher said he and UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali agreed it was time for a United Nations force to replace the Americans in Somalia.

The Somali factions talks

were to have begun in Mogadishu on Monday but were delayed by objections from Gen Mohamed Tarrah Aidid, one of the country's principal warlords, a UN spokesman said.

The spokesman, Faouk Mawlawi, said Aidid asked for a suspension because of that he called continued cease-fire violations by a rival, Mohamed Saidhirs.

Hrs. better known as Gen.

Morgan, is a son-in-law of former president Mohammed Siad Barre. He continued to wage war in the south and west of the country after the former dictator fled into exile two years ago.

Mawlawi and US officials said a Belgian military patrol found Morgan's militia engaged in new fighting near Kismayu on Monday with forces of Col Omar Jess, and ally of Aidid's.

## Fierce fighting in Azerbaijan

LONDON, Feb 2: Fierce fighting broke out Monday in the northern part of the Lachin corridor, a strip of Azerbaijan territory linking the disputed enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh with Armenia proper, the Russian RIA news agency reported, says AFP.

The Armenian self-defence force lost two men and suffered eight wounded in the fighting, while Azeri casualties numbered "several dozen," the agency reported from Stepanakert, the capital of Nagorno-Karabakh.

The RIA report, monitored by the BBC here, quoted the Azeri Defence Ministry in Baku as saying that Armenian units had attempted to cross the border with Azerbaijan on Sunday night but had been repelled by defending forces.

## Clinton expands cabinet

WASHINGTON, Feb 2: President Bill Clinton has expanded the size of his cabinet to 21 portfolios, a 50 per cent increase from the 14 members who served with George Bush, reports AFP.

White House Press Secretary Dee Dee Myers Monday confirmed after Clinton's weekend Camp David Cabinet retreat that Vice President Al Gore, chief of staff Thomas "Mack" McLarty, US trade representative Mickey Kantor, Budget Director Leon Panetta, UN ambassador Madeleine Albright, Council of Economic Advisers Cahir Laura D'Andrea Tyson now would take part in cabinet meetings.

The new administration will realise... that a great deal of implementation has taken place already," he told interviewer David Frost.

The United States and its British and French allies renewed attacks on Iraq in January on the grounds that it was flouting UN resolutions adopted after the Gulf War.

Baghdad, seeking to ease more than two years of UN trade sanctions, is keen to repair relations with Washington and show it is complying.



SARAJEVO: A Bosnian Muslim woman is carried away after she was hit by shrapnel in Sarajevo's old town on Monday. The old town and its hillside suburbs have been shelled heavily for several days. — AFP/UNB photo.

## Iraq expects credit from Clinton admn

BAGHDAD, Feb 2: Iraq said on Sunday it expected the new US administration to give it more credit for complying with United Nations resolutions, reports Reuters.

But the top UN Nuclear Inspector in Iraq ended his latest mission saying that Baghdad still had a long way to go to prove it was committed to dismantling its weapons programmes.

Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz said in a British Broadcasting Corporation interview: "The Bush administra-

tion deliberately obscured the degree of implementation of UN resolutions because it wanted to use that as a political tool to destabilise the government of Iraq."

Calling for a new chapter in relations with Washington, he said his government had shown far greater compliance with Gulf War ceasefire terms than former US President George Bush had claimed.

"This question can be discussed bilaterally and within the Security Council in an objective professional manner."

Yugoslavia during the second week of its six-week session. Had it not decided on such an action, the subject of Yugoslavia would have been considered much later in the session, under the general agenda item on human rights violations "in any part of the world."

"The whole world knows what is happening, and we cannot fail to speak to the horrors of the situation in Yugoslavia," Abram said. "Violations occur every day, even away from the battlefield."

"Hundreds and thousands, even millions, of people are affected. People remain in

detention, or are expelled from their homes by force or psychological pressure. Relief supplies are blocked from needy areas. The rights of the majority Albanian population in Kosovo are repressed by Serbian authorities. Rape goes unpunished, disappearances unaccounted for."

And "what is worse," Abram said, "those responsible have shown absolutely no sign of repentance or reform."

He said the nations on the commission — the United Nations' principal human rights watchdog body —

## Off the Record

### She won't take over Elvis' estate

MEMPHIS: Lisa Marie Presley, daughter of the late Elvis Presley, turned 25 Monday but won't take over her father's estate as provided in his will, reports AP.

Lisa Marie Presley is leaving management of Graceland and other parts of Elvis' multimillion dollar estate to Jack Soden, head of Elvis Presley Enterprises Inc.

That arrangement will continue for at least five more years. For the past 15 years, the estate has been managed under a trust that dissolved Monday.

"Nothing will change at Graceland," said Steve Marshall, media coordinator. The estate, worth 4.9 million dollars when Presley died August 16, 1977, is now worth between 50 million dollars and 100 million dollars.

Ms Presley is an aspiring actress, married to musician Danny Keough since 1988 and mother of a son, Benjamin and a daughter, Danielle. They live in the Los Angeles area.

### He couldn't appease mullahs

RAWALPINDI: Murree Brewery has a big marketing problem. It can't sell its brew to most people at home and it can't send it abroad, reports AP.

"Mine is not an easy job," said MP Bhandara, chief executive officer of Murree Brewery Company Ltd.

Murree hasn't had a bumper year for sales since 1945, two years before Pakistan was created as an independent homeland for Indian Muslims in the partition of the subcontinent.

"That year we brewed 2 million gallons of beer," Bhandara said with a hint of nostalgia in his voice. "Since then, we haven't even touched 700,000 gallons of beer."

Prohibition has been in effect since the country's birth. And many Pakistanis say the lack of bars and wine shops as well as easy import regulations have stunted the country's ability to establish a viable tourist industry and attract foreign investment.

Pakistan's secular-minded founding father, Mohammed Ali Jinnah, was known to like an occasional whisky. And during his rule, alcohol could be obtained with a doctor's certificate.

Alcohol was finally banned in 1977 by former Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, who had hoped to silence the vocal religious parties and their violent street protests against his autocratic government. Anyone caught sneaking a nip risked a jail sentence and public flogging, punishments ordained in the Quran, Islam's holy book.

But Bhutto's efforts to appease the mullahs, or Islamic clerics, failed. He was overthrown by the army in 1977 and hanged two years later.

### They 'very much regret'

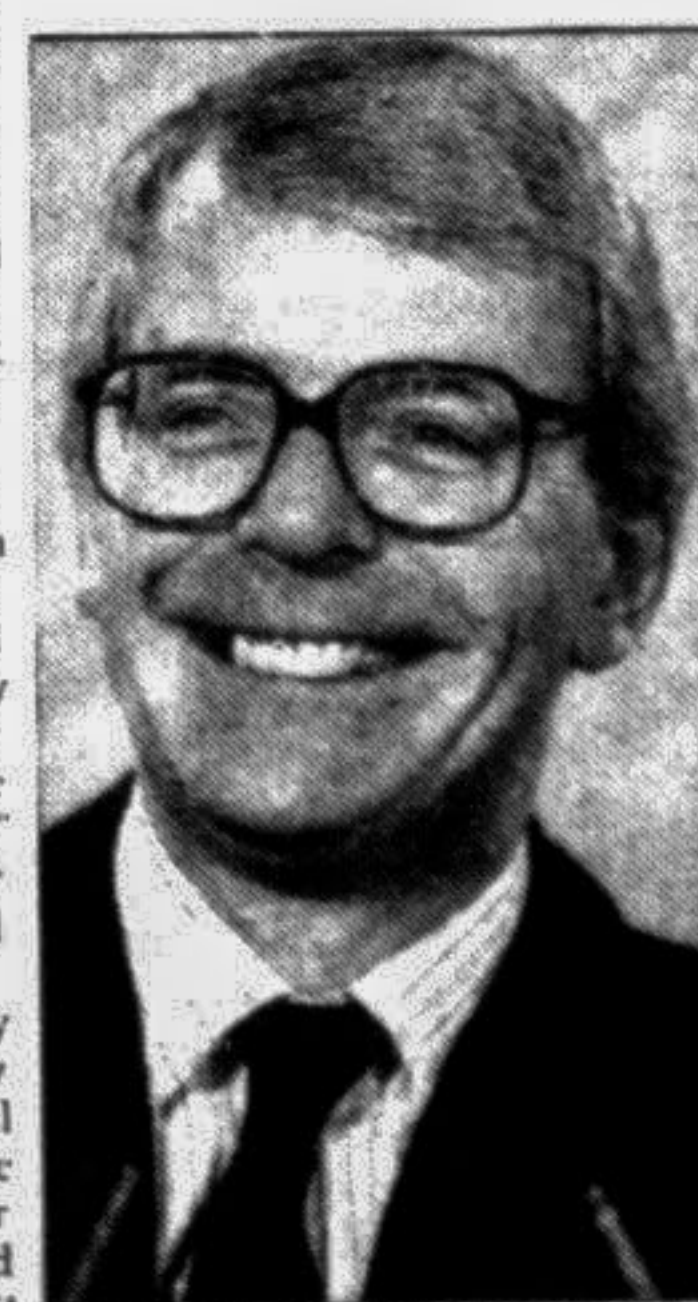
LONDON: A respected left-wing magazine apologized to Prime Minister John Major and a caterer Monday for publishing rumours, which it did not suggest were true, that they had an extramarital affair, reports AP.

Major and Clare Latimer, who sometimes cooks at his Downing Street residence, filed lawsuits last week against the New Statesman and Society and the satirical magazine Scallywag for reporting allegations that they were involved in an affair.

The New Statesman and Society's editors "very much regret that the prime minister and his family and Ms Latimer and her family have been caused any personal distress by the publication of the article," said a letter from their lawyers Bindman and Partners.

"Our clients are very anxious that the totally unblemished personal reputations of the prime minister and Ms Latimer should be clearly and promptly vindicated," it said.

The letter said, however, that the magazine does not accept that the article was defamatory to Major or Ms Latimer. Downing Street referred calls to Major's lawyers, Biddle and Co, who had no immediate comment.



## BRIEFLY

### Former NY chief judge indicted:

The former chief judge of New York state has been indicted on charges he used his power and influence in an extortion scheme against his former lover, says AP from New York.

Sol Wachtler, 62, of Manhasset, NY, was charged Monday with engaging in a year-long campaign of harassment against socialite Joy Silverman, who ended their affair early last year. Wachtler is married.

The bizarre plot included demands for \$20,000, an anonymous letter to federal prosecutors, and attempts by Wachtler to get information about Silverman by posing as a private detective from Houston, the federal indictment said.

It alleged that Wachtler used "his power, influence and resources as chief judge of New York State Court of Appeals to facilitate and promote the extortion scheme."

### Jordan, UK start jt exercise:

Jordanian and British soldiers started joint live-fire exercises Monday in the kingdom's central desert, a senior Jordanian officer said, reports AP from Amman.

The last joint exercise was conducted in November 1992. The officer, who cannot be identified by name under military rules, said at least 150 British soldiers and 600 Jordanian troops were participating in the "Saffron Sands" exercise near Qatrania, 80 kilometres (50 miles) south of Amman.

He refused to give further details, but suggested the drills including parachuting and air cover could last more than three days.

### UN to augment force in Somalia:

The UN force in Somalia will be augmented by 250 more troops and UN military headquarters in the famine-stricken country will be strengthened, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali said Monday, AP reports from United Nations.

The UN chief made the move after being accused by the United States of dragging his feet in replacing the 24,000-member US force with UN peacekeepers.

The Marines arrived December 9, supplemented by 13,000 troops from 21 other nations, to shepherd food and medical deliveries to starving Somalis. Former President Bush had hoped to withdraw the US force January 20, but the United Nations was not able to send in replacements by then.

### Diouf for talks in Zaire:

Senegalese President Abdou Diouf, current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), issued an "urgent appeal" Monday for political dialogue in Zaire and offered to play a role in negotiations, says AFP from Dakar.

The OAU is prepared to contribute (to this) by working for the continuation of the concerted action that the Zaireans themselves have already begun so that the violence gives way to dialogue," he said in a statement released here.

Diouf said he was issuing an "urgent appeal to all Zaire's political leaders to open a frank and sincere dialogue."

His appeal came after an army mutiny over a pay dispute which was violently put down by special troops loyal to Zairean leader Mobutu Sese Seko.

### 3 US missionaries abducted:

Three American missionaries were snatched from a village in southern Panama by armed Colombian guerrillas and taken across the jungle border, officials at their mission in Florida said Monday, reports AP from Miami.

The members of the New Tribes Mission were abducted Sunday night from the village of Pucuro, said Guy Sier, the mission's crisis management director.

## South urges North Korea to rejoin talks

SEOUL, Feb 2: South Korea on Tuesday urged rival North Korea to rejoin negotiations to resolve nuclear and other issues pending between the two countries, reports AP.

Seoul was responding to a North Korean declaration last week that it would continue to boycott inter-Korean dialogue unless Seoul cancels plans to hold joint military exercises with the United States in March.

On January 26, South Korea and the United States announced they will resume annual joint military "Team Spirit" exercises.

## UN to give more prominence to human rights abuse in Y'slavia

GENEVA, Feb 2: The UN Commission on Human Rights decided in Geneva February 1 to give more prominence to the question of human rights violations in the former Yugoslavia, reports USIS.

"Any less treatment of this gravest of today's human tragedies would reflect on our credibility as the world's principal body for the protection of human rights," Ambassador Morris Abram, US permanent representative to the United Nations in Geneva, told the opening of the 1993 session of the 53-member commission.

"The situation in the territory of the former Yugoslavia raises a paramount issue on the human rights agenda of mankind," Abram said. He recalled that the gravity of the rights violations had caused the UN Security Council to establish a commission looking into war crime in Yugoslavia's former republics — the first since the Nuremberg trials that prosecuted World War Two Nazi war criminals.

The Commission on Human Rights decided to examine violations of human rights and other fundamental freedoms in the former

Yugoslavia during the second week of its six-week session. Had it not decided on such an action, the subject of Yugoslavia would have been considered much later in the session, under the general agenda item on human rights violations "in any part of the world."

"The whole world knows what is happening, and we cannot fail to speak to the horrors of the situation in Yugoslavia," Abram said. "Violations occur every day, even away from the battlefield."

"Hundreds and thousands, even millions, of people are affected. People remain in

detention, or are expelled from their homes by force or psychological pressure. Relief supplies are blocked from needy areas. The rights of the majority Albanian population in Kosovo are repressed by Serbian authorities. Rape goes unpunished, disappearances unaccounted for."

And "what is worse," Abram said, "those responsible have shown absolutely no sign of repentance or reform."

He said the nations on the commission — the United Nations' principal human rights watchdog body —

have a "collective responsibility" to protect human rights in the former Yugoslavia, especially as their violation "threatens the peace of Europe and, indeed, perhaps the peace of the world."

The commission has already held two special sessions, in 1992, devoted to violations of human rights in the former Yugoslavia, particularly in Bosnia-Herzegovina since that republic voted to become independent in February 1992.

During the February 1-March 12 session, the commission will also receive a detailed

report by its special rapporteur on violations in the former Yugoslavia, Tadeusz Mazowiecki.

The US delegation to this year's commission will be headed by Ambassador Richard Schifter. Abram is alternate delegation head jointly with Ambassador J. Kenneth Blackwell, US representative to the 1992 commission session.

Schifter was a former assistant secretary of state for human rights and humanitarian affairs, and human rights adviser to President Clinton during his election campaign.

## Afghan forces hit to ignore peace formula

KABUL, Feb 2: Afghan troops have launched an operation to block a strategic route used by a renegade Mujahideen party to attack the capital Kabul, a defence advisory spokesman said on Monday, reports Reuters.

The government forces strike appeared to ignore a peace formula agreed on Sunday in the eastern Afghan town of Jalalabad which was brokered by Saudi and Pakistani envoys.

Troops moved to cut off the old lateband highway from Kabul to the east.