

Thais won't bow to US demand

BANGKOK, May 3 : Thailand is ready to comply with international rules, but could not bow to any "unacceptable" demand by Washington on the issue of intellectual property rights, reports Xinhua.

Thai Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai stressed this on Sunday while talking to local reporters in Naphon Pathom, about 100 kilometers west of Bangkok.

"We will not let ourselves be pressured by unacceptable demands, because we adhere only to international principles," Chuan said, adding that Thailand is willing to comply with US demands if they are "reasonable".

This was one of the Chuan's toughest comments on the Thai-US trade dispute, which could result in retaliatory taxes on Thai exports to the US.

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along with Brazil and India, on its "Priority Foreign Country" (PFC) watch-list.

The three countries are accused of failing to protect US trademarks, patents and copy rights and could be subject to retaliatory trade tariffs.

Washington cited problems of legal enforcement and deficiencies in Thai Patent Law as the main causes of concern over protecting US intellectual property rights in Thailand.

Although the Chuan administration has tried to improve copyright enforcement, the US trade representative suggested it would not be satisfied with Thai steps until there are changes in Thailand's intellectual property rights laws and regulations, Washington said.

"It is our policy to make things conform with the law and we will do so, even if the United States had not requested us to," Chuan said.

Plea for elimination of N-arms by 2010

NEW DELHI, May 3 : Declaration on elimination of nuclear arms has been made public by the Rajiv Gandhi Memorial Initiative for the Advancement of Human Civilization here on Sunday, reports Xinhua.

The signatories of the declaration called for the immediate commencement of a negotiating process aimed at the elimination of all nuclear weapons by international treaty as early as possible, and, in any case, not later than the year 2010, based on a comprehensive verification system that precludes the production of any nuclear weapons.

The Rajiv Gandhi Memorial Initiative for the Advancement of Human Civilization was organised by the Rajiv Gandhi Memorial Foundation on May 1 and 2 and attended by former President of Mexico Miguel De La Madrid Hurtado, former Prime Minister of New Zealand David Lange, former Prime Minister of Nepal K P Bhattacharai, former State Secretary of Russia Guennadi Burbulis and former US Senator Alan Cranston among others.

The declaration commended the Rajiv Gandhi action plan on nuclear arms and called for illegitimacy of any threat or use of nuclear weapons.

It emphasized the need for cessation of any further production of nuclear weapons and weapons-grade fissile materials, including the closure or conversion of nuclear weapons production facilities and test sites.

BRIEFLY

Kuwait, Iraq exchange fire : Kuwaiti border guards returned fire after they came under attack from Iraqi border guards, but nobody was hurt, the Kuwaiti newspaper Al-Anbaa reported Monday, says AFP from Kuwait City.

Iraqi police at the Sanam post fired 20 shots at the UMM Sudeira post on the Kuwaiti side of the border late Friday, but nobody was hurt, the paper said. UN forces patrolling the demilitarized zone refused to comment on the report.

Al-Anbaa also said gunfights involving four Iraqi and Kuwaiti border posts took place on Thursday.

Tributes : Indian film directors, artists, and critics paid glowing tributes to Satyajit Ray, at a seminar organised on the occasion of his 72nd birth anniversary at Nandan, the West Bengal Film Centre, here on Sunday, PTI reports from Calcutta.

Eminent film personalities like Shyam Benegal, Adoor Gopalakrishnan, Girish Nihalani, Soumitra Chatterjee and artist Paritosh Sen spoke on the subject, Satyajit Ray-life and work. The seminar also marked the end of the ten-day observance of Ray's first death anniversary which had begun on April 23, the day Ray died last year after a prolonged illness.

Noted Malayali Film Director, Adoor Gopalakrishnan, described Ray as a trend-setter in Indian films. "Discussion on Indian films should start with Pather Panchali (Ray's first film) and then come others", he said.

Pilot killed in crash at air show: A Korean war-era jet fighter crashed Sunday at an air show, killing the pilot in front of hundreds of thousands of spectators, none of whom were harmed, AFP reports from California.

The F-86 plane crashed and burst into flames just 0.4 kilometer (0.25 mile) in front of a horrified crowd.

The jet had been about to enter a mock dogfight with a Soviet-built mig-15. The crash was the third at the annual air show in the last eight years.

The air show drew nearly one million people on Saturday and Sunday.

27.5 kg drugs seized in Myanmar: A total of 27.554 kilograms of narcotic drugs were seized by anti-drug squads in Myanmar, Xinhua reports from Yangon.

According to official reports here, of the drugs seized, there are 26.454 kilos of opium and 1.1 kilos of heroin.

Seven people including five drug traffickers were arrested under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.

In the first three months of this year, 874 kilos of narcotics including 91 kilos of heroin were captured by the Myanmar authorities.

Filipino Muslim rebels kill policeman

ILIGAN, Philippines, May 3 : Suspected Muslim rebels killed a police officer and blasted an electric transmission tower over the weekend in intensified attacks against the government, officials said Monday, reports AP.

Senior police officer Mateo Maliso was killed Friday as he was watching television at his home in Zamboanga del Sur province, about 800 kilometers (500 miles) southeast of Manila, police said. The gunmen who barged into his house were believed to be members of the Moro National Liberation Front, which has been waging a secessionist war against the government since the early 1970s.

Military brigade chief Col Samuel Dunque said home-made bombs damaged an electric line Saturday.

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