

# China denies missile sale to Pakistan

BEIJING, May 8: China on Friday rejected as "groundless" US claims that it is still delivering surface-to-surface missiles to Pakistan, reports AFP.

The New York Times reported Thursday that Washington had evidence China was still supplying the missiles to Islamabad, breaking a pledge it made a year ago.

The report was "groundless," a Chinese foreign ministry spokesman said.

"China's position to observe the guidelines and parameters of the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) remains unchanged," he added.

The Times, citing an unnamed US official, said satellite photographs of the Pakistani port of Karachi showed Chinese shipments of M-11 missiles had not stopped.

State Department

Spokesman Joe Snyder, while not commenting directly on the report, said the US administration was "deeply concerned" about missile proliferation. "We continue to monitor closely and carefully.... reports suggesting the Chinese are not abiding by their commitments."

The M-11 missile, with a range of 1,000 kilometers (650 miles), could be used to carry nuclear bombs that Pakistan is believed to have developed.

Beijing has always denied selling missiles to Pakistan, with which it has close ties, particularly at the military level.

At the time, the United States said that China was also planning to sell the M-11 missile to Syria, Iran and possibly Libya.

# Indians witness parliamentary, judicial history tomorrow

  

## Opposition move to impeach SC judge

NEW DELHI, May 8: Indians will witness parliamentary and judicial history Monday when MPs take up an impeachment motion against a Supreme Court justice accused of misusing public funds, reports AFP.

It is the first time in India that the holder of a constitutional office goes on trial before parliament, and it has put Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao's ruling Congress (I) Party in a dilemma.

The Congress (I) has still not decided whether or not to back the opposition-sponsored impeachment of Judge V Ramaswami, in the centre of a scandal which has sullied the judiciary.

A powerful section of the party has risen to try and thwart the trial of the judge, who comes from southern

India, from where most Congress MPs also hail, they have urged the party to oppose the impeachment motion.

As the ruling party dithered on the weekend, the opposition mounted pressure on Rao, 71, who also comes from the south.

"It is an awesome occasion," Jaswant Singh of the right wing Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP, Indian Peoples Party) said of the impeachment motion, noting it is the first time parliament plays jury.

He said the Congress, whose support is crucial for the impeachment motion to succeed, should consider the far-reaching implications and extend its backing.

"More than Justice Ramaswami, it is the ruling party which is on trial," said

Jaipal Reddy of the centrist Janata Dal (People's Party), warning that the Congress (I) would stand "exposed" if it sabotaged the motion.

Ramaswami, 64, has stubbornly refused to quit after a committee of three judges found him guilty of being extravagant with public funds when he was chief justice of the Punjab and Haryana High Court from 1987 to 1989.

He faces charges that he was extravagant in buying carpets and other furnishings worth five million rupee (166,666 dollar) from hand-picked dealers for his residence and court.

Money was allegedly paid for things that were never delivered. He reportedly bought 25 silver maces for the court at inflated prices, heedless of

protests from colleagues that the maces were a relic of India's colonial past.

Private calls made on his official home telephone in 23 months cost 910,000 rupee (30,333 dollar). The judge is alleged to have taken money by presenting false bills for car repairs and petrol.

The three-judge inquiry panel mandated by parliament concluded that he was guilty of "intentional and habitual extravagance at the cost of the public exchequer."

The panel said he had brought disrepute to the judiciary and undermined public confidence in the institution, and that his continuing in office would be "prejudicial to the administration of justice."

Ramaswami refused to be examined by the committee,

saying he had no faith in it, questioned its findings and said no judge in India followed a Spartan lifestyle anyway.

In a letter to speaker Shivraj Patil this week, he said the inquiry panel had not tried to find out whether facilities available to other judges were "not in excess" of the yardstick applied by the panel in his case.

The judge said he had, since the scandal broke three years ago, considered resigning "but that would have been a cowardly way out."

He voiced faith that parliament would do justice. "If I am guilty, I deserve no sympathy and it is your constitutional duty to remove me so that the people of the country witness the fall of an errant judge."

# Mufti demands probe into Bombay blasts

NEW DELHI, May 8: The former Home Minister, Mufti Mohammed Sayeed, today demanded a thorough and impartial inquiry by CBI into the Bombay blasts and accused the centre and the Maharashtra government of applying double standards while dealing with the communal riots and violence that followed demolition of the disputed structure in Ayodhya, reports PTI.

Addressing a press conference here Mufti Sayeed who is also the chairman of the Janata Dal Parliamentary Board said the blasts in Bombay clearly have international ramifications and the Maharashtra police is evidently looking at the whole affair within its narrow ambit.

He said in fact there was a nexus between criminals, police and politicians which had brought things to this pass.

# BRIEFLY

**Belgians clash with Somalis:** Belgian troops clashed with up to 200 Somali fighters outside the southern port of Kismayu before dawn Thursday, a UN official said, reports AP from Mogadishu.

A Belgian soldier was wounded in the skirmish, which left an unknown number of Somalis injured or dead, said UN military spokesman Major Dave Stockwell.

US forces transferred control of the military coalition operation to UN forces Tuesday.

Stockwell said from 100 to 200 fighters backing Col. Omar Jess tried to infiltrate Kismayu around 2:30 am and were met just northeast of the city by Belgian troops. After an exchange of gunfire, the Jess supporters withdrew.

**Bomb alert in Russian ministry:** Employees at the Russian Foreign Ministry were evacuated in Moscow Friday following a bomb alert, the Interfax news agency reported, says AFP from Moscow.

An unidentified caller warned that the building had been mined and that a bomb would go off at 1000 GMT.

Bomb disposal teams were on the scene to inspect the building, which some employees refused to leave in defiance of evacuation orders issued by their superiors, Interfax said.

**Colombian rebels call for truce:** The leader of the National Liberation Army Guerrilla Movement has called for a cease-fire with government forces, according to radio reports Friday, says AFP from Santa Fe Bogota.

The guerrilla leader, Spanish priest Manuel Perez, made the proposal to Spanish television, according to Radio Caracol.

The truce could be the first step toward broader peace discussions which Perez suggested be mediated by Spanish Prime Minister Felipe Gonzalez, the report said.

The reports indicated that another major guerrilla group, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, may also join the call for a truce.

**US to cut overseas operations:** The Pentagon will cut back or end operations at 46 additional sites overseas in its 11th round of world-wide reductions, the Defence Department announced Friday, reports AP from Washington.

The changes, due to the cutback in operations because of budget pressures and the end of the Cold War, affect 22 sites in Germany, 10 in South Korea, 10 in the United Kingdom, three in Italy and one in Morocco.

The changes will mean transfers or job cuts for some 6,100 military, 770 US civilian and 865 local positions, the Pentagon said in a statement. The biggest changes include the partial return of US Air Force facilities to Britain at RAF Alconbury, and of US Army facilities at Tauckunen barracks to Germany. The reductions in operations at these two sites alone affect more than 3,400 military jobs, 640 US civilian and 473 local jobs.

**New media instt in Shanghai:** A new mass media institute opened at the Shanghai Foreign Languages Institute Friday, reports Xinhua from Shanghai.

The new institute was launched jointly by the former departments of media and International Journalism of the Shanghai Foreign Languages Institute, and a local English-language newspaper called "Shanghai Students".

The institute now has 200 students and plans to increase its enrollment to 250 a year in 1996. This year it will offer an international advertising major together with the Shanghai-based newspaper Jiefang Daily and the Shanghai Municipal Advertising Company.

**Nepali women rally for pure water:** More than 2,000 Nepalese women, carrying empty water pitchers, protested Friday against government failure to supply clean drinking water for much of the country's population, reports AFP from Kathmandu.

The protestors were from the United Peoples Front (UPF) and Mashal, or flaming torch, the extreme leftist wing of the Nepal Communist Party.

They denounced the government of Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala for failing to control market prices and national law and order.

They also criticised the government for promising to supply enough water to all villages in Nepal, but failing to do so. It has not been able to meet even half the Kathmandu valleys demand for clean drinking water.



Russian President Boris Yeltsin (R) welcomes Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulroney (L) in the Kremlin in Moscow on May 6. In the back Mila Mulroney (L) shakes hands with Naina Yeltsin (R). Brian Mulroney is on a three-day official visit to Russia. — photo AFP/UNB

# Govt crisis forces Rabin to cancel tour

JERUSALEM, May 8: Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin on Friday cancelled a trip abroad to defuse a crisis threatening to bring down his government, reports AFP.

Rabin cancelled a trip to Strasbourg, France planned for Monday over threats by the ultra-orthodox Shas Party to quit the government unless he fires Education Minister Shulamit Aloni, the premier's office said.

Government sources here predict there will be a major reshuffle with Rabin moving Aloni to another ministerial post to placate Shas. Aloni met with Rabin on Thursday and is due to see him again Sunday.

Few people noticed when Aloni declared that Rabin should not have added a traditional Jewish prayer to a

statement in Poland marking the 50th anniversary of the Jewish uprising against the Nazis in the Warsaw ghetto.

But for the orthodox politicians of the Shas Party who sit with Aloni's left-wing Meretz in the coalition government it was the last straw. The United Tora Judaism Party has called a censure motion against the government for Monday in parliament over Aloni.

Shas leader and Interior Minister Aryeh Deri has issued an ultimatum to Rabin: "get rid of that woman by Sunday or else we quit."

An exasperated Rabin moaned Thursday: I can't believe that people who never stop talking about peace can create problems that could break up the coalition and

thereby put an end to the peace process.

The six Shas MPs give Rabin a majority in the 12-seat parliament where Meretz, which urges Israel to hand back the occupied territories for peace, has 12 MPs and Labour 44.

Rabin believes the time is now right to get Aloni out of the ministry that is so far to the orthodox religious movement, government sources say. Meretz is unlikely to leave the coalition at a time when the peace process is finally taking off.

Aloni launched her first government crisis 1st September when she called for the word God to be dropped from a prayers for fallen soldiers.

# Int'l group to observe Lankan polls

COLOMBO, May 8: A group of international observers are expected to be here to observe the May 17 provincial council elections, according to election sources here today, reports Xinhua.

Some members of the group, consisting of eminent persons from Australia, Bangladesh, Canada, Pakistan, France, India, Nepal, UK and USA, have already arrived, the sources said.

They will observe both the conduct of the election and the count as well as other aspects which help to ensure a free and fair poll, according to the sources.

These include aspects of the campaign, media, coverage, observance of provisions on the display of banners, symbols and the impact of the role and functions of different authorities on the free and fair nature of the elections.

# Off the Record

**Close encounter of the bizarre kind**

NEW YORK: A lion clawed and nibbled at a man who climbed into its Bronx Zoo lair but a zookeeper managed to lure the animal away after it began lunging at his neck, reports AP.

Alfredo Reales, 32, who has a history of mental illness, climbed two fences into the enclosure Wednesday on a visit to the zoo with his mother, said police spokeswoman Sgt Tina Mohrmann.

Police told Reales to roll into a ball and stay still while a zookeeper lured one of two lionesses into another part of the exhibit. The second lion clawed him, cutting his head and scratching his back, Mohrmann said.

"The lion pawed the guy's back, nibbling at his trousers, and started going for the neck with his mouth," said Sgt James Cicciotti, one of the officers on zoo patrol.

"It was a little bizarre to watch, a little bit of a helpless feeling," he said.

Reales received at least 19 stitches for scalp cuts.

**Granules to sterilize pigeon**

PARIS: Brigitte Bardot is lobbying France's mayors to adopt an animal rights charter that proposes a tax on dogs and cats, a ban on bullfights and cockfights and a pigeon-sterilization programme, reports AP.

The former actress, now France's foremost animal rights crusader, has sent copies of the charter to hundreds of mayors. Her foundation plans a major lobbying effort and a conference of mayors in Paris next week.

In towns that adopt the charter, "animals no longer would be treated like beasts, but like living beings," Ms Bardot said in a letter.

The Bardot Foundation said the proposed pet tax would help reduce births of unwanted animals.

Other proposals in the charter include sterilization of stray cats, creation of special areas for animals in public parks, and forbidding animal displays at fairs. Pigeon populations would be reduced through distribution of granules that would sterilize them.

# Royal battle for children

CANBERRA: The Australian government has decided to seek the extradition of Malaysian Prince Raja Bahrin Shah for abducting his two children from Australia last July, reports Xinhua.

The decision was made public by Attorney-General Michael Lavarch last night, who said that it was 'the culmination' of the behind-the-scenes diplomatic work by the government, local press reported today.

The decision came a day after Bryan Wickham, who was charged of abduction, was sentenced to 18 months jail for helping the Prince abduct the children.

Lavarch also conceded that any decision of extradition would depend on the Malaysian authorities, because "the request is being made pursuant to our laws."

"The Malaysian authorities will no doubt take the request seriously and give it due consideration," the Attorney-General said.

The abduction drama came last July when the Malaysian Prince took his two children from their mother Jacqueline Gillespie, who was reported to have brought the two children to Australia after the end of her marriage with the Prince.

Gillespie has ever since urged the government to take moves to extradite the Prince and have her two children returned.

However, in a tit-for-tat move, the Prince, according to reports, is seeking legal advice on having Gillespie extradited and tried in Malaysia for allegedly abducting his children to Australia after their marriage ended.

The Malaysian authorities have so far argued that the Prince has custody of the children under an Islamic court. It is believed to be heard to extradite the Malaysian Prince to Australia because there is no extradition treaty between the two countries.

Local media also believe that the government decision would also risk a diplomatic confrontation with Malaysia by intervening the abduction affair.

# Iraq tried to kill Bush?

WASHINGTON, May 8: The US administration has hard evidence that Iraq was behind an assassination attempt against former US President George Bush in Kuwait three weeks ago, the Washington Post reported today, reports AFP.

"We take these allegations very seriously," said White House spokesman George Stephanopoulos, if we determine Iraq was involved in state-sponsored terrorism, the United States will take appropriate action against Iraq.

The paper said that US President Bill Clinton sent a team of secret service and Federal Bureau of Investigation anti-terrorist specialists to



George Bush Kuwait this week to investigate. The move came after the Kuwaiti government last week

announced it had uncovered an Iraqi plot aiming to destabilise the Gulf monarchy which was invaded by Iraq in August 1990.

According to the Kuwaitis, the plot included an assassination bid against Bush during a visit there from April 14 to 16, to mark the allied victory in the Gulf War.

The Washington Post quoted government officials who said that Clinton's closest advisers had not decided how to respond to the assassination attempt.

It said that a US official who favours strong retaliation against Baghdad had uncovered the Iraqi governments connection with the assassination plot.

"I support the European Community", Clinton said. "I support the Maastricht process. I hope it will prevail, but that's, of course up to you."

Rasmussen and Clinton said they had agreed on the progress they want to make before the summit meeting in Tokyo in July on the trade discussions of 108 governments in the Uruguay Round. Clinton said he wants them completed by the end of the year.

Rasmussen said they also agreed on the need to strengthen cooperation and create new jobs.

"It often seems to be the case that we concentrate on trade disputes that divide us rather than on the bonds that unite us," the Danish leader said. "The common ground is far wider."

# 9 more killed in Afghan war

KABUL, May 8: An exchange of artillery fire between Afghan Defence Ministry Troops and a Shite Mujahideen faction killed nine civilians and wounded 30 others, a Kabul hospital doctor reported today, says AFP.

"Last night more than 30 rockets and mortar bombs were fired on northwest Kabul," the military correspondent for the state news agency Bakhtar reported.

Doctors in the emergency ward of Jamhuriat Public Hospital in central Kabul, WHFCH is the closest medical centre to the areas hit, said wounded from Friday night's clashes were still being admitted to the hospital.

"Every time a rocket exploded near our house my nephew cringed into fear, and pointed a finger at his head," said a three-year-old's uncle, holding his arms to heaven in

# Over 2b people in world at risk of Dengue Fever

MANILA, May 8: Crowded cities, ignorance and government neglect are changing the patterns of infection of a potentially fatal mosquito-borne disease in South-East Asia, health experts say, reports IPS.

In the past, Dengue Hemorrhagic Fever — also known as H-Fever — used to affect mostly infants and small children in poor communities where the mosquito population is densest.

But with the region's cities becoming more and more crowded each year, the deadly illness has cut across income and age groups.

Here in Manila, health officials are alarmed at the rising number of Dengue Fever cases even among older children and adults and in posh neighbourhoods.

It has also become a year-round disease. Dengue cases in The Philippines used to peak during and just after the rainy season, which stretches from June to November. January to March are supposedly 'Dengue-free' months but even now, cases are still being reported.

Transmitted by the 'Aedes Aegypti' mosquito that breeds in stagnant water, Dengue's symptoms include the sudden onset of fever, muscle and joint pain, red spots, nose and gum bleeding, and vomiting of coffee-colored matter.

Once victims find blood in the stools or in the vomitus, and suffer what is called dengue shock syndrome, the illness has turned fatal. Dengue Fever is considered one of the fastest spreading diseases in the tropics. More than two billion people, or two out of every five persons in the world, are at risk of infection, and millions of cases occur each year.

Health experts say the proliferation in South-East Asia of cases for Dengue Fever is a result of poor environmental sanitation and urban blight.

In 1987 alone, 600,000 cases were reported in South-East Asia, from only 2,060 in 1967 — a 300-fold increase in just 20 years, according to the World Health Organisation (WHO).

Indonesia's Kompas Daily reported recently that since January 1 Dengue has killed 11 people and infected 48 others in West Timor. Last year, the disease struck 108 people and killed 10 of them in the same province.

A government hospital in Manila, meanwhile, reports that last year, it admitted 1,774 cases of Dengue compared to only 1,488 in 1991. The 300 cases admitted there from October to December 1992 are also double the number of cases for the last quarter of 1991.

According to the hospital's records, 17 of its

patients died of Dengue last year. Its officials are now bracing for the onset of the rainy season, when they expect more severe outbreaks.

Health experts say the best preventive measure against Dengue Fever is the elimination of all possible breeding places of the Aedes Aegypti mosquito. But fogging or spraying will not work, because these only kill adult mosquitoes, not the larvae.

"This will only give people an illusory sense of security," says Dr Enrique Tayang, one of the few Dengue experts in the Philippines. Besides, he adds, insecticides are expensive, potentially toxic to human and plant life and can damage the earth's ozone layer.

High Dengue death rates are also often due to ununiformed doctors. Tayang admits that the disease is "not familiar to many doctors". Some symptoms of Dengue mimic that of other diseases such as measles, rubella, influenza and typhoid.

Monitoring of Dengue cases is also haphazardly done. Indeed, even the WHO's latest figures date back to 1987 because of the lack of sufficient data from health institutions in the region.

The WHO and a Thai University are currently collaborating on the development of an anti-Dengue vaccine. Still, health officials say long-term, sustained and community wide efforts at environmental sanitation and health education can also control Dengue outbreaks.

The US territory of Puerto Rico, for instance, has been able to prevent the spread of Dengue Fever since 1984, largely because of a community-based programme to control the Dengue mosquito.

Puerto Rican Dengue expert Duane Gubler says it aims to make people realise "most transmission occur in and around the home by a mosquito that is there because of their bad habits, that the disease can be prevented but that the ultimate responsibility for prevention and control must be theirs, not the government's".

But Tayang doubts that the same can be done in the Philippines, "we rely on government for almost everything", he says. "We want government to clean our own backyards."

The doctor says environmental sanitation is the community's ultimate check on Dengue Fever. He adds: "The people must sustain the effort. I cannot be a perpetual doleout from the government."

# Sudan rejects demand for separate army

ABUJA, Nigeria, May 8: Peace talks to end Sudan's decade-old civil war soured Friday when the government rejected rebel demands for a separate army and court system in the south, reports AP.

The two sides agreed earlier in the week that Islamic law imposed nationwide by the northern Muslims who dominate the government would apply only to Muslims.

Southerners, mainly animists and Christians, took up arms under renegade Col. John Garang 10 years ago.

On Friday, Garang's Sudan People's Liberation Army proposed giving the southerners control of the primary education system, a decentralized judiciary, separate army and police and some control over foreign affairs.