

## State employees barred from wearing Islamic dress in Algeria

ALGIERS, May 18: Algeria's military-backed government announced Monday a ban on state employees wearing Islamic dress in a further crackdown on Islamic fundamentalism, reports AFP.

## France launches super-speed train

LILLE (France), May 18: President Francois Mitterrand inaugurated France's latest super-speed train line Tuesday, but the triumph was dimmed by disappointment over high prices and postponements in service to London and Brussels, reports AP.

The chisel-nosed Train a Grande Vitesse — TGV or high-speed train — rolled from the Gare du Nord station in Paris across 220 kilometers (136 miles) to the northern city of Lille in 1 hour, 18 minutes with Mitterrand on board.

The christening of the TGV-Nord-Europe has been marred by complaints over huge price hikes and new delays in connecting the line overland to Brussels and to London via the Channel Tunnel.

Disputes between operators and contractors have pushed the scheduled opening of the Channel Tunnel to May 1994. Belgium has meanwhile delayed a high-speed linkup to Lille from 1994 to 1996.

Consumer groups are protesting price hikes and reductions in the number of standard trains. Non-reservation fares at peak times will rise from 178 francs (dfrs 33) one way to 301 francs (dfrs 56.7).

Interior Ministry said government workers could be sacked if caught wearing "clothing emblems or accessories which express in an ostentatious way — membership of an ideological, political or religious current."

The press said the ruling particularly targeted 'Kamis', a long white Islamic garment, and beards favoured by members of the now outlawed Islamic Salvation Front (FIS).

The ban also covers the dress worn by former Afghan veterans which has been imported into Algeria by Muslim fundamentalists.

However, it was unclear whether the ruling also applied to the 'Hijab' garments worn by women, a style of dress introduced into Algeria from the Middle East and criticised in the Media even before Monday's announcement.

The order further bans 'partisan activities' such as political meetings and opinion — sounding at work places, although it says trade union rights are guaranteed.

The government has been fighting a bitter and bloody campaign against Islamic fundamentalists since the military stepped in to cancel elections in January 1992 that the FIS had been poised to win.

Since being banned the FIS had conducted a guerrilla-style campaign against the authorities, provoking a crackdown by the authorities on Islamic activities.

# US looking for new ways to end fighting in Bosnia

WASHINGTON, May 18: The United States is looking for new ways to end the fighting in Bosnia even while rejecting a Russian proposal for a foreign ministers meeting at the United Nations on worldwide peacekeeping operations, reports AP.

The State Department on Monday dismissed the Russian proposal as untimely while Congress is still deciding how much money to commit to UN peacekeeping operations in the Balkans, the Middle East and other world trouble spots.

But Secretary of State Warren M. Christopher has been talking to individual ministers by telephone and may invite some to Washington in his search for ways to settle the ethnic conflict in Bosnia since Bosnian Serbs have rejected a UN peace plan.

Christopher was appearing Tuesday before the House Foreign Affairs Committee to discuss the budget but was likely to face questioning on the Bosnia issue.

Without pronouncing the plan drafted by mediators

Cyrus Vance and Lord Owen dead, State Department officials said Monday there could be other ways to achieve a settlement in the 13-month-old war.

The peace plan would end the fighting and give Serbs more territorial control than they had before the war. But over the weekend, Bosnian Serbs rejected the plan in a referendum, just as their self-styled assembly had earlier.

Christopher, skeptical of the Serbs from the outset even thought their leader, Radovan

Karadzic, had signed the agreement, said this could lead to new opportunities for US-European cooperation to resolve the dispute.

The State Department immediately endorsed the idea of posting monitors at the Serbian border with Bosnia to see if Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic keeps his pledge to stop providing arms and other supplies to Bosnian Serbs.

"The monitors' presence should be effective," department spokesman Richard Boucher said, implying the United States may ask the UN Security Council to arm the monitors.

Boucher said some traffic had crossed the border. But he declined to say whether weapons still were being delivered to the Bosnian Serbs, who have seized some 70 per cent of the former Yugoslav republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Karadzic declared on Sunday that no military or political pressure could stand in the way of a "Greater Serbia."

"Bosnia never existed, and it will never exist," he said. In response, Boucher said: "We support a Bosnian state. We always have." Quickly rejected by the administration was a Russian proposal for a foreign ministers meeting at the United Nations on Friday to discuss peacekeeping operations generally.

"It's not the time for it right now," Boucher said, since Congress is in the midst of deciding how much to spend on peacekeeping and other budget items.



Two soldiers from the Bosnian army's 101st Brigade on patrol in the Hrasno quarter of Sarajevo watching Monday Serb positions in Lukavica, a suburb of the Bosnian capital. The Bosnian army is fighting against both Bosnian Croats and Bosnian Serbs in different parts of Bosnia-Herzegovina. — AFP/UNB photo

## Khmer Rouge accuses US of arming Vietnam, Phnom Penh

BANGKOK, May 18: For the first time in years the Khmer Rouge Monday singled out the United States for a violent attack, accusing it of secretly arming Vietnam and Phnom Penh in a bid to eradicate the Marxist group, reports AFP.

In a radio broadcast monitored here, the Khmer Rouge cited "accurate reports from Phnom Penh, New York, Washington" and "other" unspecified Asian countries revealing a "secret plan" hatched by Washington and "its close allies" to destroy the group.

The aim was to weaken Khmer Rouge forces to make it easier to integrate other resistance factions into the Phnom Penh government, it said.

The Khmer Rouge said the United States came up with the idea after plans for elections to be held this month under the auspices of the United Nations ran into problems.

However, it went on to say the plan was already "well under way" by July 1990, when then Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze and US

Secretary of State James Baker met.

The peace accord on Cambodia, which paved the way for the elections, was not signed until 1991.

A US diplomat here said he was unaware of what meeting the report was referring to, adding the story was a product of Khmer Rouge "imagination". He said Monday's attack on Washington was exceptional.

The Khmer Rouge, saying the May 23-28 election is a ploy to legitimise their foes in the Phnom Penh government, have launched a campaign of violence in a bid to disrupt the polls.

Although criticised along with other western countries in the past, this is the first time the United States has been singled out for such a violent attack in years, observers said.

Ironically, when between 1979 and 1991 the Khmer Rouge were fighting alongside two other resistance groups against the government installed by Vietnam in 1978,

the United States was accused by Phnom Penh of secretly providing the group with indirect aid despite claiming neutrality.

Vietnam invaded the country in late 1978 to oust a genocidal Khmer Rouge regime.

Meanwhile, the Phnom Penh government claimed Tuesday that 800 agents from the Khmer Rouge and its allies have infiltrated the Cambodian capital in order to create chaos during this weekend's UN election.

"Not all of these agents are terrorist troops. Some are commuting psychological warfare, such as spreading rumours," said senior government advisor and Deputy Minister Khieu Kanharith.

Up to 10 people have already been arrested on suspicion of such activities, he said.

"The Khmer Rouge are trying to invite people to demonstrate against the government, to organize some riots inside the city", Khieu Kanharith said.

## 42 Japanese peacekeepers in Maputo

MAPUTO, May 18: Forty-two Japanese soldiers arrived in Maputo Monday to serve in the United Nations Peacekeeping Operation in Mozambique (UNOMOZ), reports AFP.

The total contingent of 48 Japanese soldiers, six of whom arrived as an advance party last Thursday, will be engaged in the port and airport operations in Maputo and Mozambique's second city, Beira.

The UN military presence in Mozambique is now virtually complete. The principal force is made up of five infantry battalions. They have now all arrived and total 4,721 soldiers.

Adding the smaller support units also present, the total number of armed 'blue helmets' comes to just over 5,000 — a figure well short of the expected 7-8,000 UN force.

Bangladesh has sent the largest battalion of 1,320 soldiers who will be protecting the corridor from Malawi to the northern port of Nacala.

The Italian battalion of 1,039 soldiers is guarding the Beira corridor — the road, rail and oil pipeline which runs across central Mozambique from the Zimbabwean border to the deep sea port at Beira.

## Storms kill 43 in China

HONG KONG, May 18: At least 43 people were killed in a series of rainstorms, hailstorms and tornadoes that hit southern China's Guangxi Province over the past few weeks, a report said today, reports AFP.

In addition to the deaths, the natural disasters which began in mid-April also injured more than 400 people in 160 counties in Guangxi, which borders Vietnam, the semi-official China News Service (CNS) said.

More than 1.6 million people were affected by the rainstorms, hailstorms and tornadoes that struck more than 40 per cent of the province, CNS said.

The report said initial investigations showed estimated property damage and economic losses at (21 million dollars.



The Miss Universe contestant from Colombia, introduces herself during the semifinal in Mexico City Monday. The winner of the pageant will be chosen May 21. — AFP/UNB photo

# Demand for punishment of 2 ex-presidents on Police-students clash in Seoul

SEOUL, May 18: Riot police armed with truncheons and shields battled thousands of students Tuesday to block them from marching to the homes of two former presidents to demand a new investigation of a bloody military crackdown, reports AP.

Students protested to mark the anniversary of the 1980 crackdown in southern Kwangju city and to demand that former Presidents Chun Doo-hwan and Roh Tae-woo be punished. The students say they ordered soldiers to shoot civilians. Both former presidents have denied direct involvement.

"Let's punish Chun Doo-hwan and Roh Tae-woo, who are the main culprits of the Kwangju massacre," shouted more than 4,000 students as they marched from the main gate at Seoul's Yonsei University.

As about 1,000 riot police moved in to block the march, hand-to-hand fighting broke out. Students kicked and punched, and police pummeled students with clubs and shields.

There were many injuries, but the number was not immediately available.

An estimated 11,000 riot police were deployed in Seoul

to guard the streets around the homes of the two former presidents, US installations including the US Embassy, and government buildings.

Chun, helped by Roh and other generals, seized power in a coup in December 1979. The coup triggered nationwide protests that lasted for months, leading to a 10-day uprising in Kwangju.

About 200 people were killed and hundreds more wounded in armed clashes between civilians and soldiers in the provincial capital, 260 kilometers (160 miles) south of Seoul.

President Kim Young-sam,

who succeeded Roh in February, becoming South Korea's first civilian president in three decades, has appealed to South Koreans to forgive the two former presidents.

In Kwangju Tuesday, some 30,000 citizens rallied in the city center and thousands of mourners visited a cemetery where victims of the 1980 bloodshed are buried.

"We anxiously hope that the real truth of the incident will be uncovered," said the Rev Kang Sin-suk, leader of a citizens group demanding a new investigation.

## Off the Record

### First Lady's new hairdo

PHILADELPHIA: Suddenly, the main issue is the mane issue, reports AP.

First lady Hillary Rodham Clinton has a new hairdo. She returned to Washington from a weekend trip to New York with her formerly shoulder-length hair cut to just below her ears. The new style is layered on the sides, slightly tousled and swept away from her face.

The White House wasn't saying who wielded the shears.

But the Washington Post said in Tuesday editions the first lady's new hairdo was the work of Frederic Fekkal, a New York-based frenchman who charges 275 dollar a cut and counts among his clients actresses Marla Maples, Sigourney Weaver, Ellen Barkin, Meryl Streep and TV journalist Lesley Stahl.

"I know it's been on all of your minds," Mrs Clinton told a commencement crowd of nearly 30,000 Monday at the University of Pennsylvania.

"It is after all the No 1 issue. I had a friend call me from Japan" after seeing her on TV, the first lady said dryly.

"I told him the truth, that when the president called for sacrifice and asked everybody at the White House to give him a 25 per cent cut. I decided to go for a 50 per cent cut and do my part."

Mrs Clinton, who received an honorary degree and delivered the keynote speech, was wearing a cap and gown. The full effect of the new do was lost under the black mortarboard, but there was no question that it was shorter.

### It's never too late to quit smoking

ORLANDO: It's truly never, ever too late to quit smoking, a study shows, reports AP.

Researchers found that the lucky few who are cured of lung cancer improve their chances dramatically of avoiding new bouts with the disease if they kick the habit.

Lung cancer is notoriously hard to treat. Only about 6 per cent of people with small cell tumors, a common form of the disease, can be cured. However, the latest study found that these survivors are five times more likely to suffer recurrence of their cancer if they keep smoking.

Dr Gary E Richardson, who directed the study, said he remembered as a medical student seeing wards of lung cancer patients who continued to smoke. "Doctors often told them that it was too late to stop," he said.

He said his work shows that to the contrary, "it's never too late to quit".

Richardson conducted his study while at the National Cancer Institute. He now works at Monash Medical Center in Clayton, Australia. He presented his findings Monday at a meeting of the American Society of Clinical Oncology.

### She escapes after being run over by train

WILLINGTON: An 8-year-old girl lay frozen in terror on railroad tracks as a freight train passed over her, missing her by no more than a foot, reports AP.

"Don't tell Mom," were Nicole Bernier's first words to her brother when she got up screaming and crying.

Her only injuries were the bruises she suffered when she fell trying to get out of the way of the 12-car train Sunday afternoon, state police said.

Nicole, who lives near the tracks, said she tripped twice trying to get out of the way of the train. She remembers little of the moments when the train passed over her and thinks she passed out.

"A little bit at the end I woke up. I thought it was going to hit my head because my head was up," she said Monday.

Nicole, her brother, Robert, 10, and a friend had wandered down the tracks when the Central Vermont Railway train suddenly appeared around a bend traveling 40 mph (64 kph).

After the train passed, David said Nicole made no sound. "I thought she was dead," he said. Then, she got up crying and screaming, "Don't tell Mom," he said.

The engineer thought he had hit the child, and radioed a dispatcher to send an ambulance, officials said. The engineer had begun braking when he ran over the girl.

Jacqueline Duguet said she kept her daughter home Monday from school because she was still shaken and tearful.

"The great message here is don't ever play on train tracks," she said.

## Trial of former Soviet coup plotters put off

MOSCOW, May 18: A court Tuesday indefinitely suspended the treason trial of the alleged masterminds of the August 1991 Soviet coup, agreeing with the defendants that Russia's chief prosecutor was biased, reports AP.

Families of the 12 defendants smiled and burst into applause when presiding Judge Anatoly Ukolov read the decision. The defendants themselves, however, showed little reaction.

The three judges said they would formally ask the Supreme Soviet legislature to consider the "serious violations" by Prosecutor-General Valentin Stepankov and his deputy, Yevgeny Lisov, who together wrote a book about the coup, "Kremlin Plot."

The trial is now indefinitely postponed until the Supreme Soviet considers what to do.

## 30 Afghan war veterans arrested in Jordan

AMMAN, May 18: Security authorities have detained at least 30 Muslim fundamentalist veterans of the Afghanistan war as they returned home over the last month in a new crackdown on Muslim militants, security officials said Monday, reports AP.

The officials, speaking on condition of anonymity, gave no details. But Jordanian authorities, determined to prevent Islamic extremism erupting as it has in North Africa, have cracked down on militant fundamentalists in recent years.

The Muslim Brotherhood, one of Jordan's most powerful parties, said at least 13 of the

detainees remain behind bars. It is pressing the government to release them.

Ibrahim Khreisat, a leading Brotherhood official, said all the men were arrested at Amman airport after they arrived from Pakistan.

Brotherhood legislators met with Prime Minister Zeid bin Shaker Saturday to demand the detainees' release. Government officials confirmed that the detainees issue was raised, but gave no details.

Jordanian and Western intelligence officials say that several hundred Jordanians went to Pakistan in 1981, shortly after the Soviet's intervened militarily in Afghanistan.