

## Russia, Ukraine to hold talks on Black Sea Fleet

MOSCOW, May 31: President Boris Yeltsin will meet with Ukrainian President Leonid Kravchuk "sooner or later" to discuss the growing dispute over the Black Sea Fleet, a spokesman said Monday, reports AP.

But Yeltsin aide Anatoly Krasikov indicated there was no rush. Kravchuk, appearing on commonwealth television Sunday night, said he wanted to meet with Yeltsin as soon as possible.

"I would like to have this problem solved peacefully in the interest of the Black Sea Fleet, in the interests of Sevastopol, in the interests of Ukraine and in the interests of Russia", Kravchuk said.

Last week, the tug-of-war over one of the former Soviet navy's crown jewels intensified, with three-quarters of the fleet ships raising Russia's St. Andrew's flag in defiance of

Ukraine. Ukraine on Friday formally protested to Russia about the flag revolt and called on Yeltsin and Kravchuk to settle the dispute in a meeting, possibly in mid-June. Kravchuk repeated that appeal Sunday night.

"Sooner or later it will take place", Krasikov told The Associated Press. "But it should first be prepared by both sides."

Ukraine and Russia have jostled over the fleet since the Soviet collapse in 1991. Yeltsin and Kravchuk agreed last year to assume dual control from the Commonwealth of Independent States. That cooled the dispute while the sides worked on a division agreement to be finished by 1995.

But talks broke down in May, leading to new revolts. Officers have declared a pay strike to protest salary gaps between Russian and Ukrainian

## Truce shattered as Wahdat group battles Afghan troops

KABUL, May 31: Maverick guerillas battled Defence Ministry forces in a battered summer resort outside Kabul today while the capital celebrated the holy Eid-ul-Azha, reports Reuter.

A day after rockets killed two people shopping at a Kabul flour market, President Burhanuddin Rabbani worshipped at the mosque in the presidential palace that he has occupied since last June.

On Sunday the mainly Shi'ite Hezb-I-Wahdat guerillas fought troops loyal to the Islamic government that took power when the communists fell in April 1992, breaking a fragile week-old ceasefire. However, the capital was quiet today and people relaxed as

they prepared to slaughter sheep and goats to celebrate the festival after the fighting moved out to the town of Paghman, a few miles west of Kabul.

Rabbani recounted to his congregation the story of the Prophet Ibrahim (RA), saying his faith had been so great he was prepared to sacrifice his only son for God. As he preached, Defence Ministry soldiers armed with Kalashnikov assault rifles took up positions on the surrounding roofs.

More than 6,000 people have been killed in the city since the guerillas took power, including 1,000 in factional fighting last month.

The television news broadcast what it called a 'fraternal greeting' from Rabbani to his arch-rival Prime Minister-designate Gulbuddin Hekmatyar and said he was welcome in the capital whenever he wanted.

Hekmatyar has yet to keep a pledge to enter Kabul 'within days' after the quarrelling leaders called a permanent ceasefire following three weeks of talks in the eastern city of Jalalabad on May 20.

The rival claimants to power also agreed on a new cabinet and a formula to collect heavy weaponry and to create an environment for elections in September.

Officials said the Hezb-I-

Wahdat, allied with Hekmatyar's radical Hezb-I-Islami fighters, was battling Defence Ministry forces in Paghman. The former summer retreat for Kabul's kings is now devastated by 14 years of civil war.

Hezb-I-Wahdat has accused Defence Ministry forces of opening fire first.

Machinegun fire and artillery rounds echoed around parts of the city and tracer bullet lit up the sky late on Sunday. Some guerilla factions said their men were celebrating the start of Eid-ul-Azha and were not fighting.

The ceasefire has been punctuated from the start by minor skirmishes.

## Off the Record



It's a windy day at Liverpool Cathedral as the Prince and Princess of Wales receive a salute after the Battle of the Atlantic Commemoration service Sunday. — AFP/UNB photo

### Imelda wants to be mother to the nation

MANILA: Former Philippine First Lady Imelda Marcos has had enough of politics and wants to be a "mother" to the nation instead, reports AFP.

Asked in a local television talk show whether she planned to run in senatorial elections in 1995, the widow of deposed dictator Ferdinand Marcos, said: "My natural role first as a woman is to be a mother. I think I have had enough politics."

She recalled the prominent role she played during her husband's 20-year rule, saying: "Once a mother, always a mother. I have been privileged to mother this country for two decades and that's what I hope to do: Mother sectors and groups that need mothering, nurturing and support."

She and her husband fled to Hawaii in 1986 after a popular revolt toppled them from power. Her husband died in exile in 1989 but she was allowed to return to the Philippines in 1991 where she made an unsuccessful bid for the presidency a year later, being beaten by ex-General Fidel Ramos.

Imelda is facing numerous civil and criminal suits accusing her and other Marcos allies of stealing billions of dollars from government coffers during her husband's rule. She served as both governor of the capital and a member of her husband's cabinet.

### He ate more than 10,000 live snakes

BEIJING: A Chinese farmer has stunned his village by eating more than 10,000 live snakes, a newspaper reported, says Reuter.

Li Hongzhong of Cuizhenbao village in the northern province of Liaoning, now 42, began eating snakes 21 years ago and reportedly 'feels miserable' if he doesn't eat at least one every day, according to an edition of the Nanjing Daily seen in Beijing Monday.

"When reporters got to his home to interview him, they saw he was just eating a snake about 60 cm (24 inches) long," the newspaper said.

"The snake's head was in his mouth and its body was twisting violently."

"He also eats rice apart from snakes, but very little," the Nanjing Daily said. "He likes to eat cold-blooded creatures."

### 'Too much democracy leads to homosexuality'

KUALA LUMPUR: Too much democracy leads to homosexuality, moral decay, racial intolerance, economic decline and single-parent families, says Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad, reports Reuter.

"We ... should not be the slave of democracy," Mahathir told a political gathering in Kuala Lumpur on Saturday, reported in Sunday's newspapers.

He accused western countries of double standards and said immigrants to these places and those who professed different religious beliefs were discriminated against.

"They are controlled in the ghettos, oppressed, assaulted and even murdered," he said.

Democracy had become a "religion" in the west and had led to gross moral decay with widespread drug abuse and homosexuality and the growth of single parent families.

Western economies were also suffering because of a lax work ethic, he said.

The collapse of the former Soviet Union had been hailed as a democratic triumph but the reality was genocide in the former Yugoslavia and wars and mass killings in former Soviet republics.

"In Malaysia we accept democracy but we must not be too extreme as ... unlimited freedom is dangerous," Mahathir said.

## BRIEFLY

**French official in Pakistan:** The Secretary General of France's Foreign Ministry arrived Sunday in Pakistan for regular policy talks between the two countries, a diplomatic source said, reports AFP from Islamabad.

Serge Boidevaix is to meet Monday with his Pakistani counterpart, Akram Zaki, for talks on a broad range of international and regional concerns.

The situation in neighbouring India-controlled Kashmir, where a violent campaign is underway to secede India's only Muslim-majority state, disarmament and ways of increasing stability in Asia will be on the agenda, Zaki said as he welcomed the French official.

Boidevaix is set to meet senate president Wasim Sajjad, but will not see President Ghulam Ishaq Khan or Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, who are locked in an increasingly bitter power struggle.

**Israel, Libya begin secret talks:** Israel and Libya have begun secret contacts, Police Minister Moshe Shahal told Israeli radio on Monday, reports AFP from Jerusalem.

"We have established secret contacts with this country and when the situation is right I suppose we shall make them public," he said.

He hoped that the visit by 192 Libyan pilgrims to holy sites in Jerusalem will help improve relations.

"We have nothing against Libya," Shahal said.

The two countries are officially in a state of war and Israeli leaders have repeatedly accused Libya of being used as a base for terrorist organisations.

**Li Peng resting:** Chinese Prime Minister Li Peng is resting on doctor's orders and getting better, Foreign Minister Qian Qichen was quoted as saying Monday reports Reuter from Tokyo.

Kyodo News Service quoted Qian as telling former Japanese Prime Minister Toshiki Kaifu during a meeting in Tokyo.

"I met him before I came to Japan. On doctors orders, he has been taking things quietly. He is devoting himself to treating his illness. He is continuing to get better."

Qian is on an official visit to Japan.

Li has not appeared in public for more than a month.

**16 die in Rwanda grenade blast:** Sixteen people were killed and at least 125 others injured when two grenades exploded in a small market town in western Rwanda on Sunday, state radio reported, says Reuter from Nairobi.

The radio, monitored in Nairobi by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), said the government had launched an inquiry into the attack at Kirambo village in the western Cyanjuru district bordering Zaire.

No group has so far claimed responsibility for the attack. The tiny central African state has for two years been fighting a rebellion by the Rwandan Patriotic Front which has devastated the economy and left thousands homeless.

**Quake rocks Chile:** An earthquake rocked the central coast of Chile Sunday, but caused no injuries or damage, authorities reported, says AP from Santiago.

The Seismological Institute said the tremor hit at 4:30 pm (20:30 GMT) and measured 4.5 on the Richter scale. Its epicenter was off the coast of Zapallar, a resort 220 kilometers (135 miles) north of Santiago.

## Asian govts prefer power to human rights: Amnesty

HONG KONG, May 31: Asian governments seem more pre-occupied with preserving their power than protecting the rights of their people, Amnesty International declared here today, reports AFP.

"Human rights must not be sacrificed for economic and commercial gain in Asian countries," Amnesty's Asia Pacific grouping said in a press statement that followed a weekend meeting in Hong Kong.

The meeting, attended by delegates from 15 countries and territories, was held to express concern over attempts by some Asian governments to undermine internationally recognised standards for human rights.

It took place ahead of the United Nations world conference on human rights in Vienna on June 14-25.

The group said a declaration made by Asian countries in Bangkok last March at a regional preparatory meeting for the Vienna conference showed that governments were "more concerned about protecting themselves against so-called outside interference in their external affairs than taking a constructive position on improving the climate for human rights within their countries."

"Among the Asian countries represented in the Bangkok conference were those where countless cases of prisoners of conscience languish in prison," said.

**200 Muslim militants held in Egypt**

CAIRO, May 31: Egyptian security forces on Sunday detained nearly 200 Muslim militants in a bid to avert disturbances during Monday's Islamic feast of sacrifice, known as Eid ul-Azha, police reported, says AFP.

They said 170 people were taken into custody in the Mediterranean port city of Alexandria on suspicion of belonging to Muslim "extremist" groups.

Another 23 suspects and individuals who had been convicted in absentia were detained in the Al-Warak and Ir-waba districts of Cairo as well as in Oiza.



A protester with a placard depicting a military tank inside an eye while demonstrating in front of the Chinese de facto consulate in Hong Kong Sunday. Nearly 5,000 activists marched on the Xinhua news agency building to mark the fourth anniversary of the bloody suppression of the Tiananmen Square pro-democracy movement in Beijing. — AFP/UNB photo

## Turkish troops attack Kurdish hideouts, kill 50 rebels

ANKARA, May 31: At least 50 Kurdish rebels and three Turkish soldiers were reported killed on Sunday in attacks on guerilla mountain hideouts in east and southeast Turkey, reports Reuter.

The security forces have staged large-scale search and destroy operations against the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) since rebels shot dead 33 soldiers and two civilians last Monday.

"These operations will continue until we completely uproot the PKK," Interior Minister Ismet Sezgin told reporters. These are their last convulsions and they will be finished off within the law.

State television said the casualty toll from Sunday's operations was likely to rise as troops combed the region.

It said 15 PKK fighters were killed in the Karacahennem (black hell) region of Bingol province. The television showed food and cooking utensils left in a wooded valley by guerillas fleeing helicopters and troops firing field guns.

In Bitlis province, security sources said 25 PKK guerillas and two soldiers were killed in running battles after planes and helicopters struck at the Celikli region, where the sources said 800 rebels were believed to be operating.

Troops killed 10 PKK guerillas and captured seven others in the Tendrek mountains in the eastern province of Agri, provincial governor Ismet Metin told reporters.

He said one soldier had been killed in sporadic clashes with PKK militants.

The two criminals were immediately taken to the execution grounds and shot," the newspaper said.

In their first and most lucrative sale, the pair bought a panda skin in central Sichuan province for 3,500 yuan (US 615 dollar).

After shipping it to Guangzhou, they sold it to a middleman for 55,000 yuan (9,650 dollar) who sold it to "law-breaking elements" in Hong Kong for 150,000 yuan (23,600 dollar), the official legal daily said today.

Two other sales through similar channels brought in lower profits before the two were caught delivering their final skin at a Guangzhou seal-carving shop in October, 1989.

The legal daily said at least three of the middlemen who helped the farmers negotiate the deals had already been sentenced, two of them to prison terms of between 10-14 years.

tion indicates that anyone who violates the country's constitutionality should be processed", said its leader Carlos Reynoso.

The OAS, comprised of North American, Latin American and Caribbean nations, could decide to officially condemn Serrano's moves and issue diplomatic trade or other sanctions against Guatemala. The group's permanent council already has issued a resolution calling for immediate restoration of democratic rule.

A source close to the OAS, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said Baena Soares detected a new "sensitivity" on Serrano's part to the potentially damaging effects of trade and other sanctions.

## ROK police raid 2 varsity campuses: 44 arrested

SEOUL, May 31: South Korean police today carried out a pre-dawn raid on two university campuses, detaining 44 alleged student radicals and seizing enough firebombs to fill four trucks, police said, reports AFP.

The government, meanwhile, decided to take firm legal action against those taking part in violent demonstrations, officials said, in the first such move since President Kim Young-Sam took office in February.

Choi Hwan, a prosecution officer in charge of public security, said charges would be pressed against those taking part in illegal violent protests or those attempting to make contact with North Korean students.

Nearly 2,000 riot police mounted the raid on student union offices at Korea and Yonsei University campuses after nearly 50,000 students clashed with police in the streets of Seoul Saturday.

The police detained 44 alleged dissidents, but they failed to arrest Kim Jae-Yong, Chairman of the Korean Federation of University Student Councils (Hanchongnyon), and Kim Byong-Sam, Chairman of

the Hanchongnyon Fatherland Unification Committee on charges of violating the national security law.

The dissident leaders were wanted on charges of violating the draconian security law for allegedly holding illegal telephone conversations with North Korean students early Saturday.

The search and arrest warrants were the first issued against student activists since President Kim took office in February as the first civilian president in three decades.

The demonstrations Saturday turned violent after police attacked unarmed students marching through the streets of Seoul, eyewitnesses said. Later in the day, thousands of students, now armed with steel pipes, battled their way into the neighbourhood of former President Roh Tae-Woo and Chun Doo-Hwan.

But thousands of police in riot gear backed by armoured cars firing tear gas blocked the students from making a "citizens' arrest" of the two, whom they allege ordered the 1980 Kwangju crackdown which left 200 dissidents dead.

Two executed in China for selling panda skins

BEIJING, May 31: Two Chinese farmers were executed on Sunday for selling skins of the endangered giant panda, only about 1,000 of which are still alive in the wild, official news reports said today, says Reuter.

The intermediate people's court in the southern city of Guangzhou sentenced Deng Tianshun and Zhu Xiuying to death for selling three giant panda skins for huge profits between April 1988 and May 1989, the official legal daily said.

The two criminals were immediately taken to the execution grounds and shot," the newspaper said.

In their first and most lucrative sale, the pair bought a panda skin in central Sichuan province for 3,500 yuan (US 615 dollar).

After shipping it to Guangzhou, they sold it to a middleman for 55,000 yuan (9,650 dollar) who sold it to "law-breaking elements" in Hong Kong for 150,000 yuan (23,600 dollar), the official legal daily said today.

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There is just no way an election can be legally justified under the current suspension of the Congress and large portions of the constitution", Herbruger declared.

The College of Lawyers, a national bar association, suggested Serrano could be tried for his action. "The constitu-

## Menchu urges OAS to help restore democracy in Guatemala

GUATEMALA CITY, May 31: Nobel laureate Rigoberta Menchu has called on the Organization of American States to help achieve a negotiated settlement of Guatemala's political crisis and restore democracy, reports AP.

The 1992 peace prize winner said late Sunday after meeting with a visiting OAS delegation that opponents of emergency rule want a "return to constitutional government through legal means".

Menchu, flanked by fellow Quiche Indians in colorful highland dress, said she expected any steps taken by OAS Secretary-General Joao Baena Soares to apply international pressure on the president

could prove influential. Serrano last Tuesday dissolved Congress and the Supreme Court, partially suspended the constitution and began ruling by decree.

Serrano, 48, has been an outspoken supporter of democracy in Central America. But he accused the high court and legislature of corruption, and said he had to act as he did because the country was sliding into anarchy after two weeks of violent protests over declining living standards.

Baena Soares, who was to fly to Washington on Monday, said his meetings with Serrano, opposition leaders and others would provide the basis for a report to OAS foreign minis-

## 3 bomb disposal experts hurt in Bombay

BOMBAY, May 31: Three Bombay police bomb disposal experts were injured when gunpowder from a bomb they were trying to defuse caught fire at a major Bombay railway station today, police said, reports Reuter.

The bomb squad was alerted after two bombs were discovered by employees of the western railway near a ticket booking counter at Churchgate railway station in South Bombay, police said.

"Our men were burnt slightly but there is no problem now," an officer at the city police control room said.

Guatemala, which relies heavily on tourism and textile exports to fuel its economy, already has lost \$50 million in US aid and at least \$31 million from the European Community — and could see preferential tariffs removed.

But while Serrano said Friday that those sanctions were more "moral" than economic in nature, the source said the government had shifted its position.

"After our talks here with the authorities, we got the perception that they are now more conscious of the necessity of not creating a breach with the international community", said the source without elaboration.