Aristide hopes to return home

Haitian PM resigns

PORT-AU-PRINCE, June 9: Haitis interim Premier Marc Bazin resigned Tuesday after the army withdrew its support for him, a day after the political parties that had backed his government walked out, reports AFP.

Bazin, 63 and already shunned by the international community except the Vatican, stepped down after his first legislative backing crumbled, and then the army's blessing — his last pillar of support — was withdrawn.

"Yesterday, I found myself unable to swear in a new government," said Bazin, who has come under increasing international pressure to make way for the reinstatement of ousted President Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

Aristide, a populist priest turned politician, was Haitis first democratically elected president, and was ousted by the army in a September 1991 coup. While he enjoys massive support from Haitis poor majority, he is no favourite of the country's tiny business elite or conservative army.

No successor to Bazin has been announced, though several options for provisional military control and a consensus candidate are reportedly being considered.

In Managua, Aristide left a meeting of the Organization of American States for Washington, though his Ambassador to the OAS said the trip had been planned beforehand and was not linked to Bazin's resignation.

OAS Secretary General Joao Baena Soares said the resignation was "a new opportunity" to resolve the political crisis that has gripped Haiti since Aristide was sent packing.

The resignation came as a bitter pill for Bazin, a former World Bank official who led a centrist coalition to a December 1990 defeat in the presidential race against Aristide.

Reuter said earlier, Haitis ousted President Jean Bertrand Aristide said on Tuesday he hoped he would be able to return to Haiti after Prime Minister Marc Bazin resigns.

Aristide said before heading for the airport after attending an Organisation of American States (OAS) crisis meeting on Haiti that he had asked OAS Secretary General Joao Baena Soares to fly to Prot-Au-Prince

PHNOM PENH: A statue of the Buddha is given a ride to its destination at a wedding ceremony Tuesday through the streets of the capital. Meanwhile, three Malaysian peacekeepers were wounded one seriously, in an attack on their camp in northwest Cambodia. — AFP/UNB photo

Bodies of 23 Pak troops flown to Islamabad

ISLAMABAD, June 9: Bodies of 23 Pakistani soldiers killed while serving as UN peacekeepers in Somalia were flown here Tuesday night from Mogadishu by a special Pakistan air force plane, reports Xinhua.

On arrival at Chaklala Air Base near Islamabad, the bodies were received with full military honours and will soon be sent to their respective homes for burial.

Three lieutenant generals including corps Commander Ghulam Mohammad Malik and a number of senior army officers were present on the occasion.

The 23 soldiers were killed in an attack in the Somali capital Mogadishu last Saturday by the gunmen led by Somali warlord General Mohamed Farah Aideed.

Meanwhile, 38 seriously wounded Pakistani soldiers also arrived here from Mogadishu by another plane.

They were taken straight to the combined military hospital from the air field under the care of army medical teams.

Over 4,000 Pakistani soldiers are stationing in the Somali capital as part of the UN peacekeeping force.

200 Indonesians die during Hajj in Saudi Arabia

JAKARTA, June 9: More than 200 Indonesian Muslim have died during this year's Hajj pilgrimage to Saudi Arabia, mostly because of old age, heart disease, and heat stroke, an official said today, reports AFP.

" As of Wednesday, at least 212 Indonesian pilgrims died while performing the rituals", said Nurma Nurdin of the Hajj division at the Religious Affairs Ministry.

Indonesia's pilgrims this year, totalling 1,22,882, have been returning home since Sunday and the last group will return on July 3, Nurdin said.

Out of 104,861 Indonesian pilgrims last year, 366 died because of the same reasons.

From the total of 81,244 Indonesians who went to Saudi Arabia in 1990, 233 died of health problems while an estimated 600 others were among the 1,400 crushed to death during a stampeded inside a tunnel near Mecca.

The government of Indonesia, orga nizes a yearly pilgrimage package for its citizens.

Objects emitting ultraviolet light detected in sky

WASHINGTON, June 9: A satellite of the US National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) has detected about 400 objects in the sky that emit extreme ultraviolet light, reports Xinhua.

The Extreme Ultra violent Explorer (EUVE) has found helium on Mars, showed volcanic debris above Jupiter, produced a new map of the sky and helped astronomers understand interstellar gas.

Findings by the 214-million-dollar craft, launched by rocket a year ago, were presented at the American Astronomical Society's annual meeting , the Associated Press reported Tuesday.

EUVE the first spacecraft to make a comprehensive search for objects that emit the invisible extreme ultraviolet light, also has found two exploding stars, called Supernovas.

Off the Record

She was not an angel

WINCHESTER (England) : A sex offender escaped a jail sentence on Tuesday after a judge said the eight-year old girl he abused was "not entirely an angel", reports Reuter.

In a case that enraged the girl's family, Karl Gambrill, 21, was given two years probation rather than a jail sentence because the judge said he believed the child to have been sexually experienced.

"The law in this country protects little girls because they do not know what is right and what is wrong. ... However, I have been provided with information which leads me to think she was not entirely an angel herself, said Judge Ian Starforth Hill.

Cambrill, pleaded guilty to attempting unlawful sexual intercourse with the eight-year -old girl, whom he assaulted while baby-sitting for her family.

The sentence infuriated the girl's mother. "How can you say that a man was led on by an eight-year-old girl? You get more for a motoring offence nowadays than you do for abusing a child," she told reporters outside the court in southern England.

The attack took place when Gambrill was 18 years old.

"You were only 18 at the time as opposed to being a man which enables me to pass a lenient sentence," the judge told him.

It can land him fresh controversy

LONDON: British heir to the throne Prince Charles, who as monarch would pledge to uphold and depend the church of England, is to become patron of a university centre promoting Muslim studies, reports Reuter.

Oxford University said on Tuesday the 44-year-old Prince had agreed to become patron of its Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies whose aim is to promote understanding and tolerance between the West and the Islamic world. The decision, seen by some as acknowledging Britain's religiously, diverse society, could land the Prince in fresh controversy as the coronation oath requires the monarch to give exclusive support to the established church of England.

The university said his patronage was "an endorsement of the aims of the centre," the Press Association news agency said it was "an unspoken plea for religious tolerance" by the Prince.

The link with Islam could revive a debate about the prince's suitability for the Crown and whether to reform the old system of an established church headed by a royal "supreme governor."

Opponents of the system say it is out of step with an ecumenical, multi-ethnic society in which only an estimated two per cent of people are practising Anglicans.

Gay-loving C-In-C

WASHINGTON: An air force general is being investigated and could face court martial for poking fun at President Bill Clinton during a speech in The Netherlands, the Pentagon said Tuesday, reports AFP.

Major General Harold Campbell called Clinton a "gay-loving", "pot-smoking", draft-dodging and "womanizing" commander in chief, according to the Washington Post.

The Pentagon would not confirm Campbell's exact words but an official said the post story "got the drift" of it.

The air force feels it is serious charge. It's something that needs to be investigated," said Pentagon spokesman Bob Hall.

Campbell's comments were allegedly made at a local restaurant during an award ceremony for maintenance workers of the Soesterberg air base.

Air force Lieutenant General Dale Thompson travelled to The Netherlands over the weekend to investigate the incident and is expected to report his findings by mid-month, an air force spokesman told the daily.

While civilians may say anything they want about the President of the United States, commissioned officers in the armed forces do not have an automatic right to free speech and under the code of military justice can face a court martial for using "contemptuous words against the President."

Violation of celibacy vow brings tragedy

VATICAN CITY: Pope John Paul, speaking after a series of sex and child molestation scandals that have jolted his church, has said presets who violate their celibacy vow bring tragedy on themselves and their victims, reports Reuter.

"I share your sadness and disappointment when those entrusted with the sacred ministry, fail in their commitment, becoming a cause of public scandal," The Pope told US bishops visiting The Vatican on Tuesday night.

"These failures are tragic for the victims and for the clerics involved", the Pope said. He called for prayers for "all those affected by this misconduct."

The Pope said sex scandals had undermined people's trust in the church and had damaged priestly morale.

BRIEFLY

Delic Bosnian army chief: The Bosnian Presidency on Tuesday appointed a new army chief, replacing Sefer Halilovic at the top of the mainly Muslim Bosnian army , AFP reports from Sarajevo.

The governments top strategic planner Rasim Delic was named to the new post of head of supreme command in a surprise move announced on Sarajevo radio.

Halilovic, 41, a strapping, dark-haired six-footer, has presided over a series of military defeats during which the Bosnian state lost 70 per cent of the former Yugoslav republic to Serb nationalists since Bosnia-Herzegovina become independent in April 1992.

Mother Teresa meets Diana: Nobel Peace prize winner Mother Teresa met Britain's glamorous Princess Diana at her London palace on Tuesday, royal aides said, Reuter reports from London.

The 82-year-old missionary was invited to Daina's London residence, Kensington Palace, for a private meeting during a visit that has taken her to Ireland, Scotland and England

It was the third time the two women have met in the past 18 months. "It was a brief visit. There was no discussion," Mother Teresa told reporters.

Asked if Diana, who has formally separated from future King Prince Charles since their last meeting, had changed, she said: "She was as I know her."

ME talks resume June 15: Participants in the Middle East peace talks have confirmed they will be in Washington to resume talks June 15, the State Department announced Tuesday, AFP reports from Washington.

The Arab, Palestinian and Israeli delegations said they will be in Washington for the multilateral talks, said State Department spokesman Joe Snyder.

No "formal reply" was expected, Snyder said, because no formal invitation was extended to the participants who adjourned talks here on May 13.

5 die in Karachi train mishap: Five children playing on a level crossing were crushed to death by a train in Pakistan's southern city of Karachi on Tuesday, ambulance officials said, Reuter reports from Karachi.

The three girls and two boys, aged between one and 10, were killed instantly by the express train, officials of the private Edhi Ambulance Service said.

Quake jolts Argentine province: A strong earthquake rocked the western Argentine province of San Juan Mendoza Tuesday and no injuries were immediately reported, officials said, AFP reports from San Juan.

The temblor registered six of a maximum 12 on the Mercalli scale, according to the meteorological observatory here, with its epicenter in an unpopulated area at El Tontal hill, 65 kilometers (40 miles) west of this provincial capital, and 960 kilometers (600 miles) northwest of Buenos Aires.

Yeltsin invites deputies to special assembly

MOSCOW, June 9: Russian President Boris Yeltsin sent a telegram to the Russian parliament today inviting Deputies to join a special Kremlin assembly drafting a new constitution, reports Reuter.

A statement by the presidential office, issued by Itar-Tass news agency, suggested that all Deputies were being invited to participate in what would mark a major reorganisation of the assembly. A spokesman was not immediately available to clarify.

Expanding the meeting by an additional 1,033 Deputies a majority of them hostile to Yeltsin's policies, would not seem to increase the President's chances of success.

The constitutional assembly consists of government officials, political parties, tread unionsits and parliamentary Deputies.

AFP adds: Russian parliamentary Speaker Ruslan Khasbulatov was increasingly isolated late Tuesday as an influential splinter group hit out at him for threatening parliaments input into the drafting of a new constitution.

The group of parliamentary leaders went on the offensive in a declaration cited by the Interfax agency as President Boris Yeltsin prepared for a peace meeting with delegates who followed Khasbulatov's lead in boycotting the conference convened to thrash out a text for a post-Soviet constitution.

The eight members of the presidium of the Supreme Soviet — or working parliament — denounced Khasbulatov as authoritarian, and said his polemics ... contradict each other, discredit the Supreme Soviet and create a schism at the heart of society.

The group pledged to bring a constructive parliamentary contribution to allow the participation of Deputies in the debate on the preparation of Russia's new constitution.

Meanwhile, Viktor Stepanov, President of the Russian Federation Republic of Karelia, said Yeltsin would meet late Tuesday with leaders of the republics.

They include some of the 45 delegates who left the Kremlin hall in solidarity with Khasbulatov Saturday after the latter stormed out in protest over Yeltsin's tight control of the conference agenda.

About 700 conference delegates representing Russian regions, parliament, political parties and interest groups continued Tuesday to examine frameworks for the new constitution in five separate commissions.

Both moderate Deputies and representatives of federation states are thought to favour a compromise resolution combining the rival draft constitutions prepared by Yeltsin and parliament.

Meanwhile, however, the commission including Saint Petersburg Mayor Anatoly Sobchak said it was sticking closely to the text prepared by Yeltsin while the commission including Deputy Prime Minister Sergei Chakhrai said it was taking its cue from the parliamentarians' project.

'Iraq still threat to Gulf'

RIYADH, June 9: Iraq still threatens the Gulf region by failing to adhere to UN Security Council resolutions, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) said Tuesday after a meeting here of its foreign ministers, reports AFP.

"The GCC condemns the Iraqi regime for its refusal to apply all the UN resolutions and denounces (Iraqi) threats against Kuwait in a way that endangers the stability and security of the region," it said in a statement.

The six Gulf monarchies — Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates — urged Iraq to cooperate with UN nuclear inspectors and to recognize the Iraq-Kuwait border set by the United Nations in the wake of the January-February 1991 Gulf War.

The statement also called on Iran to find a peaceful solution to its territorial conflict with the United Arab Emirates involving the disputed islands of Abu Musa and the big and little tumbs.

Abu Dhabi offered in April, during a visit by Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati, to resume talks on the islands in the southern Gulf.

On the Middle East peace process, the statement said the six GCC countries exhort the international community to intervene to lead Israel to lift its blockade in the occupied Arab territories and respect the rights of the Palestinians."

While hailing the scheduled resumption of Middle East peace talks next Tuesday in Washington, it urged Isreal to honour UN resolutions calling for it to withdraw from the territories it occupied in 1967 and from Lebanon.

Roof collapse kills 13 in UP

NEW DELHI, June 9: Thirteen people were killed and 51 injured when a roof collapsed during a marriage reception in a village in northern India, the Press Trust of India reported, says AFP.

Russian press under attack

MOSCOW, June 9: Russians fledging freedom of the press is increasingly coming under attack from both supporters and opponents of Boris Yeltsin's government, Russian journalists said here Tuesday, reports AFP

Diluted amnesty for Kurdish guerillas

ANKARA, June 9: Turkey announced a diluted amnesty for Kurdish guerillas on Tuesday despite a surge in violence which has killed 330 people in the past 16 days, reports Reuter.

A government decree said that with immediate effect people who left 'armed bands' of their own would not be prosecuted unless they had committed acts of violence.

An earlier government draft provided for reduced sentences for all Kurdish guerillas who gave themselves up, regardless of their military activities, but this clause was stripped out of the version published on Tuesday.

The decree did not mention the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) by name but said it applied to the emergency rule region in the southeast where a Kurdish revolt has smouldered for nine years.

It was published before the Turkish government heard that the head of the PKK, Abdullah Ocalan, had announced the PKK was resuming all out war against Turkey.

At a news conference in eastern Lebanon, Ocalan said the guerillas considered that the unilateral ceasefire they de[illegible] in March had failed

Chronology of the world's oldest imperial institution

TOKYO, June 9: Following is a chronology of the Japanese Imperial Institution, headed by the Emperor or "Tenno" (heavenly sovereign) and regarded as the world's oldest hereditary monarchy, reports Reuter.

Pre-ancient times — to this day, the palace maintains the imperial family descended from the legendary Emperor Jimmu, the first in a line of 125 monarches (including some women) that stretches down to the current incumbent, Akihito. Jimmu is said to have ruled some 2,700 years ago.

Early ancient period-reliable documents date the imperial family back to Empress Suiko, who ruled from AD 593-628 as a Shamaness. It was then or soon afterwards that Japanese rulers adopted the Chinese writing system and its institutions of government and monarchy.

The title of "Tenno" came into use at this time through Chinese influence. Rulers assumed the chief role of high priest or priestess of the indigenous religion Shinto in keeping with their new divine status.

Ancient period — the imperial institution, based in Kyoto in western Japan, went into decline in the early Heian period (794-1185), and would not regain prestige until the late 19th century. Bureaucrats took over the job of governing, while a clan known as the Fujiwara established itself as hereditary regents ruling in the Emperor's name.

Shogun (warlord) period — the first military government, the Kamakura shogunate, was founded in 1185 and marked the start of hundreds of years of warlord rule. The Emperor remained head of state but only in name.

By the 15th century, the country had fallen into civil war as warlords jostled for supremacy. The imperial palace was destroyed and the imperial family fell on hard economic times that were to last about 70 years.

Some liberal scholars say the family line may have been broken during this unstable period. Male heirs may have been adopted in order to preserve the line.

Feudal period — the first Shogun of the Tokugawa period (1632-1868) restored the prestige of the impoverished imperial family.

At the same time, the Tokugawa Shogun shut Japan off from the outside world and isolated the Emperor. For the next 250 years, no reigning emperor left the imperial palace.

After the arrival of US ships in 1853, Japan was forced to open up to trade. Japanese reformists, anxious to ensure the country did not fall like China under the control of western powers, looked to the Emperor as the basis for a modern state.

Modernisation period — after winning a civil war, reformists swept away the shogunate and restored imperial rule at the beginning of the Meiji period (1868-1912). Emperor Meiji, then 14, was moved to Tokyo and paraded around the country. Until then, few ordinary Japanese outside Kyoto had been aware that an imperial family existed.

After the reformists polished their concept of a monarchy, borrowing from Europe's royal houses, they made the Emperor head of state, chief of the armed forces and high priest of the new state Shinto.

He was designated a living god and by 1910, courtiers had devised volumes of religious court rituals, a curious mixture of ancient and western traditions, designed to keep the Emperor as busy as he was in ancient times.

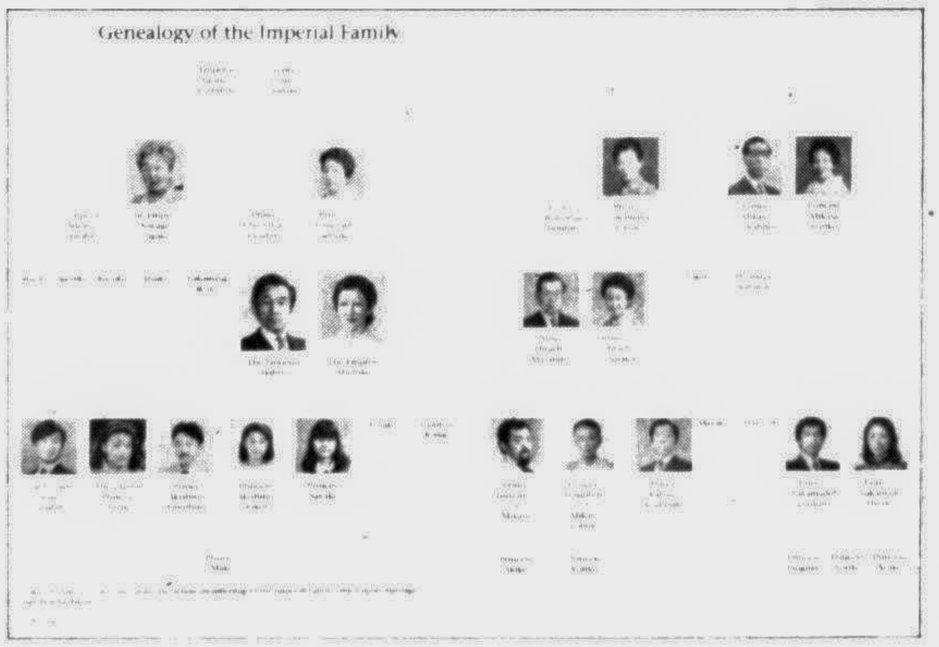
When militarists seized power in 1932, they pushed the cult of Emperor worship to new heights and mobilised the country behind their goal of conquering Asia in the name of then-Emperor Hirohito. In 1941, Japan attacked the US fleet at Pearl Harbour, sparking the Pacific war. After the United States dropped two atomic bombs on Japan, Hirohito overruled military generals and ordered peace.

Post war period Japan was allowed to keep its imperial institution after 1945 but only after radical changes, under the 1947 US-drafted constitution, the Emperor became a symbol of the state with no political power.

Hirohito swapped his military uniform for a suit and made himself visible to the people by touring the country. Despite this apparent openness, however, little is known about the imperial family, whose lives are controlled by conservative courtiers determined to retain an aura of mystique.

Hirohito's heir, now Emperor Akihito, broke some ground along with imperial precedent in 1959 by wedding commoner Michiko Shoda, the daughter of a wealthy industrialist.

Naruhito is expected to attempt a further opening of the cloistered palace after Wednesday, when he weds ex-diplomat Masako Owada, the first career woman to enter the palace.



Lankan Muslim party withdraws from peace body

COLOMBO, June 9: A Shri Lankan Muslim party said on Tuesday it was withdrawing from a peace committee seeking a solution to the islands 10-year-ethnic war, reports Reuter.

"The Shri Lanka Muslim Congress (SLMC) will not attend the parliamentary select committee scheduled for the 10th of this month," its leader, Mohammed Ashraff, said in a statement. Ashraff said his party objected to a draft report presented by the committee in March.

He said the SLMC had presented proposals on devolving power equitably between the Sinhalese Tamil and Muslim communities in the northeast.

"Unfortunately the draft report ... did not include any special mechanism which would erase the fears of the Muslim community of the northeast," the statement said.

It said no one had looked at the problem of settling refugees driven from the north by the Tamil rebels. The liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam often attack Muslim civilians in the northeast to drive them away.

Ashraff said the SLMC would return to the committee if the ruling United National Party government and the main opposition Shri Lankan Freedom Party presented their own proposals for ending the conflict.