

# Ghali-Aziz meet Monday likely Iraq to request for lifting sanctions

UNITED NATIONS, June 17: Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali is likely to hold talks with Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz in Geneva early next week, a UN source said on Wednesday, reports Reuter.

Aziz was said to have requested the meeting last month, before Boutros-Ghali left New York on an extensive trip to Europe and North Africa. The meeting will probably take place on Monday, the source said.

Aziz has made several appearances before the UN Security Council seeking the lifting or easing of sanctions imposed on Iraq in response to its August 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

But the sanctions, which include a ban on the sale of oil,

Iraq's main economic asset, have remained intact.

The council, which reviews the sanctions every 60 days, says Iraq has not yet fully complied with all its Gulf War resolutions, especially those calling for full disclosure and destruction of Baghdad's nuclear, chemical, biological and ballistic missile arsenal.

It is assumed Aziz will again raise the sanctions issue when he sees Boutros-Ghali and that the Secretary-General will urge full compliance with Council resolutions.

Boutros-Ghali has been in Vienna this week for a US human rights conference.

He is due in Kiev, the Ukrainian capital, today and flies to Geneva over the weekend.

# Israel offers to make Golan demilitarized

JERUSALEM, June 17: The Golan Heights would become a demilitarized zone under security arrangements Israel is proposing to Syria at the peace talks in Washington, an Israeli newspaper said Wednesday, reports AFP.

Haaretz said Israel is offering several choices to Syria: — US and Russian troops take up positions on the Golan and in Syria while Israeli troops pull back. Syria would reduce its army by two or three divisions between the current ceasefire line and Damascus.

— A demilitarized zone stretching north of Damascus, with Syrian, Israeli, and UN maintaining only observation posts.

— Israeli troops withdraw five kilometers (three miles) from current positions, where they would remain for 15 years to give both sides time to reach a new compromise depending on the state of their relations.

Israel also wants to protect its water supplies on the Golan, the source of the Banyas River which flows into the Jordan

River. It also wants to have to border with Syria pushed 10 meters (yards) beyond the east bank of Lake Tiberias and two or three kilometers (one to 1.5 miles) from the Jordan River.

Haaretz noted that in August 1992 the United States proposed that US troops take up positions in areas of the Golan evacuated by Israel and that NATO troops or a multinational force flank them.

US Secretary of State Warren Christopher said Tuesday that Washington was willing to give security guarantees for the strategic plateau.

The Golan Heights, where Israel occupies 1,200 square kilometers has 15,000 Jews in 33 settlements, is strategic to both Israel, because it looks over the Galilee, and to Syria, because it control the road to Damascus.

# Arafat accuses Israel of 'genocide'

VIENNA, June 17: Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat launched a violent attack Wednesday to Israel for alleged "genocide" in the occupied territories and accused it of dragging its feet in peace talks, reports AFP.

His remarks, made at a UN human rights conference here, contrasted with optimism expressed by both Palestinians and Israelis for progress at the latest round of Middle East talks that opened in Washington.

The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) chief accused Israel of "war crimes" in the occupied territories, saying killings were legitimised, people detained, deported or starved, and houses demolished.

"We note with regret that the international community refrains from adopting effective measures to end violations committed by the Israeli occupation,"

# Off the Record

## Biscuit to keep dog friendly

COPENHAGEN: Danish postal workers are turning to biscuits to keep dogs friendly after finding high-tech beepers failed to prevent dogbite attacks, reports Reuter.

Joern Svaerke, a Copenhagen postal spokesman, said postal workers, after testing several models, had dumped ear-piercing beepers to keep dogs away. "We don't dare use them. It can be that a dog gets more scared and aggressive," he said.

Postal workers seemed to be turning to traditional methods of keeping a biscuit in their pockets to make canine friends. It may be the best way, Svaerke said.

Bleepers were tested in an effort to curb rise in reported attacks — in 1992, 103 Danish postal workers were bitten, up from 66 in 1989. Postal workers seemed to be reporting more minor attacks rather than that dogs were getting nastier.

## Extraordinary delivery

VANCOUVER: A Canadian woman delivered triplets in an extraordinary way, giving birth first to one baby and then to the other two 45 days later, her doctor said, says AFP.

"Doctors delayed the birth of two of the babies after the first was born prematurely April 30," Doctor Keith Williams of Grace Hospital said.

Williams said, it was the second known case of individual triplets births being delayed over a long period of time. The first case was in the United States where a woman delivered babies 11 days apart.

## A polite kiss

BUENOS AIRES: German supermodel Claudia Schiffer was nipped Wednesday when photographers snapped her stooping to give President Carlos Menem a polite kiss, reports AFP.

Schiffer, 22, was in Buenos Aires for a series of public appearance and press interviews for which she reportedly was charging 17,000 dollars each.

At 1.8 metres (five-feet nine-inches) tall, she dwarfed the President, who is a diminutive 1.62 metres (five-foot three inches).

With photographers and television cameramen packed in for their 55-minute meeting, the President — who has something of a reputation as a playboy — kissed the model politely, if awkwardly.

Menem stood on his tiptoes, and Schiffer hunched over. They kissed, for a second, in a blaze of flashes. Apparently surprised, Schiffer jumped back a step and, in a huff, ordered reporters in German to let her through.

## Now brothel guide

BRUSSELS: Maverick Belgian Parliamentarian Jean-Pierre Van Rossem said Tuesday, "he had published Van Rossem's Sex and Brothel Guide, says Reuter.

There's a sound number of whomongers in parliament... everybody knows that, Van Rossem told Reuters by telephone when asked how he got the idea for the book.

The investigative reporting needed for the book was carried out by three notorious whomongers — including one parliamentarian, Van Rossem said.

He declined to name his colleague but said, "He was not a member of his own party, Rossem — the radial transformers and social fighters for a more honest society (Rossem in Dutch).

Van Rossem, elected to parliament in November 1991 while he was in jail on fraud charges said, "There was no need for him to take part in the research." "My wife is a brothel herself (for me). I don't need to do that kind of thing," he said.

The book, which Van Rossem first planning to call "Guide Michelin" in a reference to the French restaurant and hotel guides, gives information about comfort, service, price quality, hygiene and reception.

## Machine to wash away cholesterol

BRISBANE (Australia): Researchers in Australia have developed a machine which they say can wash away cholesterol, a major cause of heart disease.

It washes cholesterol out of the blood, Dr Bill Cham, principal research fellow at the University of Queensland's Medicine Department and the machine's inventor, told Reuters.

Cham said the Lipid Aphaerests, or fat removal machine had already lowered cholesterol (fat) levels in animals, and tests on people in Australia and the United States would start around the end of the year.

Heart disease is the biggest killer of people in developed countries. Cham said existing drugs prevented clogging of the heart's arteries but there was little evidence that they reduced the build-up of cholesterol in the arteries.

He said it could be six months to one year before clinical tests showed if the machine lowered cholesterol levels, but if they were successful, thousands more patients would be tested.

It would take about five years before the machine became commercially available, Cham said.

The machine, which has been tested on chickens, pigs and cows, uses a type of detergent to remove cholesterol from the blood proteins which carry the fat.

Patients would be attached to the machine, which operates like a kidney dialysis machine, for between 90 minutes and two hours a week in the initial stages of the clinical tests.

## Taylor makes chance for men

BRISBANE (Australia): Organisers of the Miss Australia awards Wednesday invited men to enter after a male lifesaver won one of the qualifying competitions, reports Reuter.

"If enough young men decide to enter the awards we would consider introducing a new category, for instance Mr Oz," said Marcell Thornton, president of the Miss Australia Company, which runs the contest for the Spastic Centres of Australia.

"All males who enter the awards could participate in this category," she said.

In 1986, 13 men entered the awards under a special category for male entrants. The section was won by a soldier, David McEvoy, who was crowned Mr Oz.

Damian Taylor, 24, choked back tears on Tuesday night as he was crowned winner of the Wintersun Quest, beating seven women, on the Queensland gold coast.

For good measure, he took the Miss Charity title too.

Taylor, a Natural Medicine student, originally entered the Wintersun Contest as a joke but got serious after he started to raise money for a telephone counselling service as part of the contest.

# BRIEFLY

## Quran compulsory in Iraqi schools:

Iraq, ruled by the secular Baath Party, has decided to impose compulsory Quran lessons in state schools, the government press reported on June 16, AFP reports from Baghdad.

President Saddam Hussein approved the measure on Tuesday and allocated 105 million dinars (two million dollars on the unofficial market) to the effort, mainly to train teachers.

Some four million pupils study in Iraq's primary and secondary schools. It was not specified if children from the country's one-million strong Christian Community would have to attend the classes. In April Saddam said students should be able to know the Quran by heart and ordered teachers to explain it.

The secular Baath Party has ruled Iraq since 1968. In January it announced plans to seek ties with Islamist factions in Arab countries.

## Floods claim 12 in Russia:

Floodwaters have killed 12 people and left another 100 missing in the Yekaterinburg region of the Urals, Radio Russia said on Wednesday, Reuter reports from Moscow.

It said thousands of people had been left homeless and more than 3,500 had been evacuated. Pioneer camps and leisure facilities in unaffected districts nearby were being emptied to accommodate the victims.

Preliminary estimates said damage to bridges, property, farms and the like had so far amounted to 38 billion roubles. The worst flooding was in the town of Scrov where a dam had burst after heavy rains.

## Sino-British talks end:

A fifth round of Sino-British talks on a dispute over Hong Kong's political future ended in Beijing Wednesday with no agreement, but the two sides were to meet again, AFP reports from Beijing.

"We haven't yet reached agreement," British Ambassador and negotiator Sir Robin McLaren said. He said "the talks proceeded normally," but declined to comment on their quality or substance.

But echoing British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd, McLaren said there was not "an infinite amount of time" to reach a conclusion.

The Hong Kong legislature, which must approve any agreement, is to recess for the summer on July 21.

## Bus mishap takes 26 in Iran:

A head-on collision between two buses killed 26 people and injured 17 in one of Iran's worst ever road accidents, Hamshahri newspaper said, Wednesday, AFP reports from Tehran.

Twenty-four died instantly, including the driver of one of the buses, in the accident on Tuesday near the northeastern city of Mashhad.

Two others were dead on arrival at hospital, and several of the injured were in critical condition.

Police said the buses collided after one swung out to overtake.

## Heavy rainstorm in HK:

"Schools and offices were closed on Wednesday and vehicles got stranded on major highways as up to 200 millimetres (7.87 inches) poured down on Hong Kong in the year's worst rainstorm," AFP says from Hong Kong.

Police reported no injuries or major incidents from the downpour, which marked the first time that the Royal Observatory had issued its "new black cloud" rainstorm warning advising the public to remain indoors.

Seventeen commercial flights into Hong Kong airport were diverted to other airports, including Manila, Taipei and Guangzhou, pending better landing conditions, "Civil Aviation Department said.

## Clinton defends air raids:

President Bill Clinton on Tuesday defended US air raids in Somalia but called on the United Nations to make sure that Sunday's killing of 20 Somali demonstrators by Pakistani peacekeeping troops is not repeated, says Reuter from Washington.

"We had to take appropriate action," Clinton told a news conference, referring to repeated air raids by US aircraft gunships against the forces of Somali Warlord Mohammed Farah Aided since late last week.

The US air raids were in retaliation for the killing of 23 Pakistani troops in an ambush that the United States says was ordered by Aided.

## C'wealth to help establish democracy in Malawi

LONDON, June 17: The Commonwealth on Wednesday offered to help Malawi establish a multi-party democracy following the overwhelming vote to end one-party rule in a referendum in the southern African country, reports Reuter.

Commonwealth Secretary-General Chief Emecka Anyaoku said in a statement, "By their overwhelming support for the principle of multi-party politics, Malawians have underscored (their) belief in political pluralism."

The official Referendum Commission announced that opposition groups fighting to end the 30-year unchallenged rule of life President Kamuzu Banda had won Monday's referendum with 63 per cent of the

# Japan wracked with worries about greying population

TOKYO, June 17: Youth may be one of the keys to stardom in the western world, but among Japan's rising stars is a pair of 102-year-old twins, reports IPS.

In a country wracked with worries about a rapidly greying population, white-haired and toothless Kin and Gin have now become symbols of a rapidly aging Japan, but demographers say the statistics are anything but bright.

According to the Institute of Population Studies of Nihon University, the population of people aged 65 or older reached a record 16.2 million last year — or one person in every 7.7 Japanese.

As of last October, the population ratio of Japanese aged 14 years or younger hit an all-time low of 17.2 per cent.

Nihon University researchers say statistics indicate the trend is irreversible. With a



African National Congress (ANC) supporters chant and wave a placard with slogan at a rally to commemorate the 17th anniversary of June 16 SOWETO school uprisings. —AFP/UNB photo

# Lanka cuts Hema's facilities

COLOMBO, June 17: A fleet of cars used by the household of slain President Ranasinghe Premadasa's flamboyant widow Hema has been taken away along with dozens of her bodyguards, officials said Tuesday, reports AFP.

Seventeen of the 22 cars allocated to Hema Premadasa's household have been sent back to the government departments which owned them, an official at the Presidential Secretariat said, confirming press reports.

Constitutionally, the widow of a Sri Lankan President is equal in rank to a cabinet minister and is entitled to a state bungalow, one limousine, two

other vehicles and a pension.

Observers said the move was apparently an attempt to clip the wings of Premadasa, 57, who has indicated she has political ambitions.

She is currently occupying the sprawling colonial style presidential palace in downtown Colombo Port but is due to move into a newly redecorated government bungalow in the fashionable Stanmore Crescent area.

Premadasa has strongly hinted that she will enter politics, although several key leaders in the ruling United National Party have said that she would have to work her way up like anyone else.

# Economic emergency in Ukraine

KIEV, June 17: Ukrainian President Leonid Kravchuk declared a state of economic emergency in Ukraine on Wednesday and took over direct control of the economy, Ukraine Radio announced, reports AFP.

The decree effectively suspends the parliament's powers to make decisions on economic matters.

It said the decision was aimed at "stabilising industry, halting inflation and accelerating monetary reform."

Prime Minister Leonid Kuchma will head a seven-man special committee to manage the economy during the state of emergency.

The prime minister will have authority over all ministries and state agencies linked to the economy, and the president will control all production, the radio said.

# S Arabia frees 6, Bahrain grants amnesty to 8

WASHINGTON, June 17: Saudi Arabia has freed six political prisoners and Bahrain has granted amnesty to eight, said a human rights group here on Tuesday, reports AFP.

The Saudi decision is an encouraging development, the International Committee for Human Rights in the Gulf and Arabian Peninsula (ICHR-GAP) said in a statement.

ICHR-GAP said the prisoners had been held four years without trial in Saudi Arabia. They were charged with distributing political propaganda and having worked with government opponents and some were tortured.

# France plans to crack down on bogus weddings by aliens

STRASBOURG, (France), June 17: France is preparing to crack down on a growing practice by which illegal aliens enter into bogus marriages to French nationals in order to claim French nationality, reports AFP.

Under new legislation now being debated in parliament, a mayor will be empowered to postpone a wedding and order an enquiry if he has suspicions about the couple. Even if the marriage goes ahead, the foreign spouse will find it much harder to obtain naturalisation.

"The past three years have seen a boom in bogus weddings in which couples never

live together and get divorced as soon as the "alien" has applied for citizenship" said Catherine Champrenaud, the Deputy Public Prosecutor in the eastern French city of Strasbourg.

The practice first employed by pro-Third World activists in the "hippy" heyday of the 1960s had now shed all pretence of idealism and has turned into "a racket combining exploitation, poverty and violence," Champrenaud said.

Ninety per cent of foreigners who contract such marriages were men, she said. Recruiters sought out women in financial difficulties, under-

aged girls and sometimes even mentally-handicapped women or drug abusers with offers of cash if they agreed to go through with the farce. In one case Champrenaud said a group of 20 Moroccans eager to become French had each paid intermediaries between 15,000 and 30,000 francs (2,700 to 5,500 dollars). The women got only 1,000 to 15,000 francs (185 to 2,700 dollars) for their services. The rest was pocketed by the recruiters, Champrenaud said.

Since 4990, Champrenaud said the Strasbourg public prosecutor has ordered 280 police investigations into sus-

# 13 killed as workers feud in Jalpaiguri

SILIGURI, (West Bengal) June 17: At least thirteen people were killed and 30 others received arrow injuries in a clash Tuesday night between two rival unions at the Redbank tea garden under the Banarhat police station in Jalpaiguri district, official sources said here Wednesday, reports PTL.

The sources said that the incident occurred when activists of the Citu-affiliated Chai Kaman Mazdoor Union fought a pitched battle with members of the rival Intuc-affiliated National Union of Plantation workers. Bombs and arrows were used during the fracas. Altogether 30 people were injured, a report from Jalpaiguri said.

Police were also attacked when they reached the spot, the sources said.

pendent on state help. Statistics also indicate that four in five senior citizens living alone are women. Maeda, who says Japanese women generally outlive the men, notes that suicide rates among elderly women are also beginning to rise.

Economists now predict that Japan's prosperity will come to an end in the 21st century because of the heavy financial burden on the public.

With less and less able-bodied salary men and workers to replace the country's retiring workforce, they say Japan may not be able to keep its industries moving as smoothly and as efficiently as before.

Said the Nikkei, Japan's leading financial newspaper, recently: "We have only 14 years before we reach the turning point."