International =

Indian troops accused of human rights abuse

PARIS, June 18: An international human rights organisa tion Thursday accused Indian security forces of routine human rights abuses in the northern Indian state of Kashmir, reports AFP.

In its report, based on eyewitness accounts, the International Federation for the Rights of Man (FIDH) said, "all civilians suspected of ter rorism or helping terrorists were subjected to 'routine torture and cruel or degrading treatment' in Indian army in terrogation centres in Kashmir.

The cases were researched by an FIDH group which visited Pakistan and Pakistani-controlled "Azad Kashmir" in April.

FIDH President Daniel Jacoby told a news conference that the Indian authorities prevented the delegation from visiting Indian-controlled Jammu and Kashmir.

US sides with Israel: Palestinians ognize Israel's annexation of

WASHINGTON, June 18: East Jerusalem and urged all Palestinian accused the United parties to abstain from unilat-States Thursday siding with Israel in Middle East peace eral acts that could increase talks and failing to keep their tensions and cause the negotipromises on the question of ations to fall. Jerusalem, reports AFP.

Deputy chief of the Pales-

tinian delegation Saeb Erakat

faulted Washington for "refu-

sing to get involved in the

of Jerusalem.

basic issues" such as the future

He also said that Washing-

ton was backing off on

implementation of UN Security

Council Resolution 242, which

from the occupied territories.

considers itself bound by ver-

bal and written promises of

the previous administration

including written assurances

to Palestinians at the begin-

ning of the peace process and

on the basis of which we

joined the peace process,"

States dated October 18, 1991

said Washington did not rec-

A letter from the United

calls for Israel to withdraw

Washington "no longer

The Palestinians say the Israelis have done just that by closing off the occupied territories in March, isolating East Jerusalem from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, and by continuing Jewish settlements in the Arab part of Jerusalem, creating an irreversible fait ac-

compli. The Palestinians never accepted Israel's annexation of East Jerusalem after the war in 1967 and have demanded that Palestinian autonomy also ap-

ply to that area. But the Israeli delegation has refused to discuss the question of Jerusalem before negotiations begin on the permanent status of the occupied territories, which would happen during the third year of autonomy.

Elyakim Rubistein, head of the Israeli team negotiating

with the Palestinians, reaffirmed Wednesday his government's position that East Jerusalem is Israeli territory

East Jerusalem not negotiable: Tel Aviv

and, as such, is non-negotiable. "Putting Jerusalem on the negotiating table is the best way to torpedo (the matter) since the positions of both sides are incompatible," an

Israeli officials told AFP. Erakat agreed the chasm was deep, but said the Americas could help to close the gap.

"The Americans say they want to play a role of intermediary, not arbitrator, broker or partner. They refuse to pressure Israel to lift the blockade in the occupied territories or to bridge the gap between us." Erakat said.

The United States is playing a larger role in this round, holding almost daily talks with both the Israeli and Arab participants.

The New York Times said Thursday that by demanding "that everything be put on the table at the start, they

Former Japanese Finance Minister Isutomo Hata is surrounded by reporters outside his

office on Thursday. Hata is a leader of dissident group from the Liberal Democratic Party

Myanmar opposes linking

human rights to aid

he called efforts to impose

outside models of human

rights and said that such con-

cerns must be balanced with

the need of Myanmar and

other states to ensure stability

"It is clear that any attempt

and economic development.

croach on the essential domes

tic jurisdiction of states and to

crode their sovereignty can

only result in confrontation

and spell chaos for the world",

Myanmar was giving priority to

eradicating poverty as well as

developing its border areas

and national races. This, he

said, has allowed them for the

first time to enjoy full political

The minister argued that

hardline views at the UN world to use human rights to en-

But Ohn Cyaw rebuffed what

(Palestinians) threaten to paralyze the talks."

On Wednesday during Israeli-Syrian talks, Israel said it would discuss demilitarizing the Golan Heights if Syria demilitarised certain regions as part of an overall peace agreement, an Israeli source

Secretary of State Warren Christopher said the United States would also provide security guarantees for the Golan Heights to help Israel and Syria reach an agreement for the plateau that Israel seized in the 1967 war.

"This is the question of the day," said Itamar Rabinovich, the chief of the Israeli delegation, who stressed that Israel could not depend on outside guarantees for its security.

In a statement released on Thursday, Christopher said that the United States "will be devoting a great deal of resources this week and in future months" to reaching a durable peace agreement.

- AFP/UNB photo

He echoed the call of other

Asian states at the two-week

conference here for industri-

alised nations to avoid double

standards and moves to use

human rights for political pur

opment assistance with human

rights is to debase those very

rights," the chief Myanmar

diplomat said. "It bears to be

repeated that poverty is a ma-

employment of human rights."

the forefront of resistance to

proposals to strengthen inter-

national policing of human

rights norms with measures

such as the appointment of a

UN High Commissioner.

for obstacle preventing the full

Asian states have been in

"Any attempt to link devel-

US move for wider role in peacekeeping

WASHINGTON, June 18: "President Bill Clinton's ad ministration is drafting new criteria that would provide for a much wider United States military role in UN peacekeeping operations," the Washington Post said today, reports Reuter.

It said "the proposed criteria would allow US forces to plan, train and participate in any United Nations peacekeeping operation that was justified by general US interests."

US participation is now permitted only when its forces are considered, essential to an operation.

The Post quoted, "unidentified officials as saying the requirement had helped block US forces from participations in peacekeeping operations in Cambodia, Lebanon, Kashmir and Cyprus."

"The new criteria are part of a plan yet to be sent to Clinton for approval," the Post

UN needs its own military

LONDON, June 18: British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd said Thursday that the United Nations needed its own military and civilians staff to oversee troop deployments, reports AFP.

While recognising the UN's efforts in Cambodia, Somalia and the former Yugoslavia he said the organisation should be "Realistic about its capacities."

"I believe the United Nations has come to the stage when the Secretary General Boutros Boutros Ghalt also needs a general staff, a core of highly professional military and civilian experts to act as the organisation's nervous system," he said during the annual banquet for foreign diplomats in Britain.

Such a group would be responsible for planning and coordinating rapid troop deployment, he added.

Omar Abdel for ouster of Hosni Mubarak

JERSEY CITY (New Jersey) June 18: An Egyptian Islamic Leader living in the United States since 1990 reiterated Thursday his call for the overthrow of Egyptian President

Hosni Mubarak, reports AFP. At a press conference at his home near Jersey City(New Jersey) Sheikh Omar Abdel Rahman said, 'The removal of the Mubarak regime is a matter that is a must in the Islamic

He did not recommend vio-

Rahman, 55, and blind, called on Washington to end its support for the Egyptian Government, saying, "America is going to be held accountable before the whole world".

He accused Egyptian Authorities of torturing prisoners and Mubarak of lining his pockets.

Press Kuwait to repeal death sentences of 10 Palestinians'

CAIRO, June 18: Jordan urged the Arab League to press Kuwait into repealing death sentences against 10 Palestinians convicted of collaborating with Iraq, sources close to the League said Thursday, reports AFP.

All the Palestinians hold

Jordanian passports. Jordan gave the 21-member Arab League a memorandums saying that the Palestinians were not given "the minimum judicial guarantees required by International law to ensure a fair sentence," one source said

The Kuwaiti security court on Saturday sentence to death 10 Palestinians convicted of collaborating during the 1990-1991 Iraqi occupation of Kuwait.

with the informed consent #

Dr Merson says, "Many na

fective and discriminatory".

Off the Record

Giggle clinic to cheer him up

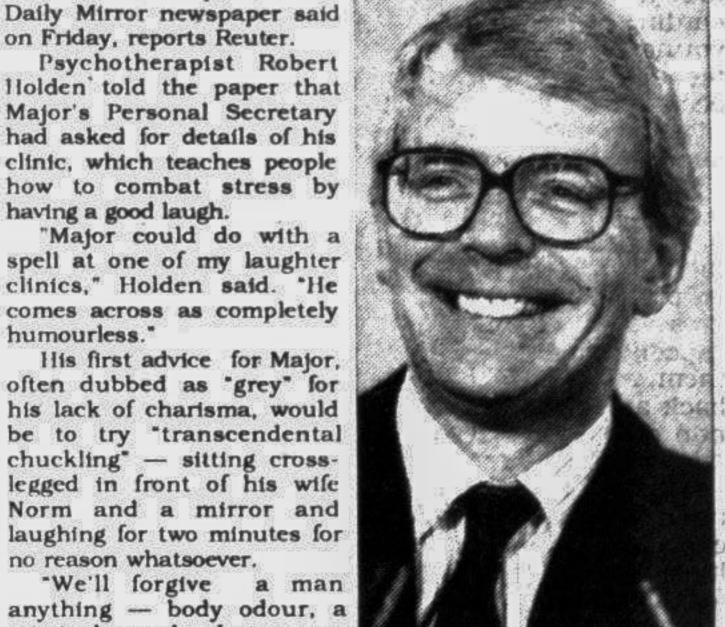
LONDON: British Prime Minister John Major, Whose popularity is at a record low, has turned to a "giggle climic" to: cheer himself up, Britain's

on Friday, reports Reuter. Psychotherapist Robert Holden' told the paper that Major's Personal Secretary had asked for details of his clinic, which teaches people how to combat stress by having a good laugh.

"Major could do with a spell at one of my laughter clinics," Holden said. "He comes across as completely humourless."

His first advice for Major, often dubbed as "grey" for his lack of charisma, would be to try "transcendental chuckling" - sitting crosslegged in front of his wife Norm and a mirror and laughing for two minutes for no reason whatsoever.

-We'll forgive a man anything - body odour, a criminal record — but never a lack of sense of humour," Holden said.



Folic acid can halve congenital defects

LONDON: "A daily dose of Multivitamin tablets including Folic Acid taken by women around the time of conception could almost halve the rate of major congenital abnormalities in babies," a study published in the British Medical Journal said on Friday, says Reuter.

Dr Andrew F Czeizel of the National Institute of Hygiene in Budapest who conducted the controlled trial in Hungary said, "the results could help prevent the cause of birth defects." "It is a major finding because it will be helpful in

preventing Neural Tube defects and congenital abnormalities," he said in a telephone interview. Czeizel analysed 4,156 pregnant women who had been

given Multivitamins including Folic Acid, a form of vitamin B, or who had taken Placebos which have no physiological "The rate of major congenital abnormalities ... ? Was nearly double in the group that received trace elements (Placebos)

compared with the group receiving Multivitamins," the British Medical Journal said in a statement about the report on Friday. Abnormalities classed as major congenital defects include

Cleft Plate, absence of Kidneys and Down's syndrome. "The rate of congenital abnormalities in the trace element

group (67 per 1,000 births) is close to the expected figure for Hungary of 65 per 1,000 births," the Journal said.

According to the study, Neural Tube defects, such as the absence of the skull and brain and spina bipida in which part of the spinal cord is exposed through a gap in the backbone, could also be appreciably reduced by giving Multivitamin supplements.

That's a great tie

WASHINGTON: President Bill Clinton didn't take the shirt off a reporter's back but he did take a Mickey Mouse tie from a journalist after a news conference on Thursday, reports.

In this first televised give: and-take with reporters during the main evening viewing hours in the United States, Clinton admired the garish, red and white tie when he called on Reuter correspondent Gene Gibbons for a question.

"That's a great tie", the President said, chuckling. "I just wish the American people could see this tie".

"Some people believe that that's what the White House press corps is all about, Mr president - Mickey Mouse," the reporter joked.

After the news conference ended, Clinton returned to the White House east room wearing the tie.

"Gene (didn't take) the shirt off his back, but at least the tie off his neck. It's great contribution to us," the President said.

Gibbons had given the necktic to White House spokesman Dee Dee Myers after the press conference ended. Clinton has been trying to patch up an uneasy relationship

with the media. The televised news conference, his third in four days, was part of a well-orchestrated public relations, campaign designed to redefine him and his record.



RUSSIA: A young man dressed as a soldier, tries to pull out a golden tooth from a skull near the town of Kaloge on June 15. This man is part of a group trying to make money out of exhuming remains of German soldiers killed

- AFP/UNB photo

Women be excluded WASHINGTON: A Pentagon panel has recommended that

more combat jobs for women. The Wast ington Post reported on Friday, says Reuter. It said the subpanel of military officers working on ways to

carry out Secretary Les Aspin's policy had recommended that women be excluded from units that accompany ground combat units in war or have a high probability of becoming engaged in combat.

Bosnia, the Persian Gulf, anywhere", the newspaper quoted an unidentified military officer as saying. It said the recommendation was likely to be revised before the Military's final women-in-combat recommendations go to

Brindle, made the recommendation because of "forced intimacy and lack of privacy on the battlefield, traditional western values of men feeling the responsibility to protect

Erakat said.

Deportees' 7th month: Nearly 400 Palestinians Thursday began their seventh month stranded between Lebanese and Israeli army lines, charging that the world had forgotten them, AFP reports from Lebanon.

"We don't expect anything more from anybody, not from our so-called Arab brothers who betrayed us, nor the negotiators (at the Arab-Israeli peace talks) in Washington," said their spokesman, Abdel Aziz Rantissi. "Our fate was not even discussed during the previous

round of peace talks," he said, referring to the ninth round of talks in April-May. "The whole world has forgotten us."

Nor did they expect anything from the 10th round of talks that opened on Tuesday.

Woman killed in Lebanon blast: A PLO officer was badly wounded and a woman was killed when a bomb she handed to him wrapped as a gift in a chocolate box blew up in a South Lebanon refugee camp Thursday security sources said, Reuter reports from Lebanon.

Ali Iskandar, an officer with the Palestine Liberation Organisation's (PLO) mainstream Fatah group, his wife and son were sounded by the blast at his doorstep in Rashidiyeh camp near the port city of Tyre, the sources said.

fied only as Umm Ali The sources could not confirm immediately if the attack was linked to an 18-month-old power struggle between Fatah and the radical Fatah Revolutionary Council (FRC).

The woman's body was severely mutilated. She was identi-

16 Palestinians hurt in clashes: Sixteen Palestinians suffered bullet wounds Thursday in clashes with Israeli soldiers in the occupied Gaza Strip, Palestinian sources said, AFP reports from Jerusalem.

Most were hit in the Shatti and Jabalya refugee camps and in incidents in the town of Gaza, the sources said. According to the same source the Israeli army maintained

a curfew on the Nusscirt camp for the third day running to

carry out searches for wanted Palestinians activists. Elsewhere four fire bombs were thrown at an Israeli bus on the outskirts of Nablus in the West Bank on Thursday evening. But none was hurt, an Israeli military source said.

Hilly Solmon Islands PM: Businessman Francis Billy Hilly became Prime Minister of the Solomon Islands after defeating former prime minister Solomon Mamaloni in a secret parliamentary ballot Friday, the pacific

news agency Pacnews said, AFP reports from Horiana. Governor General Sir George Lepping announced the result outside the steps of parliament. He said the vote was close, but did not give figures.

Hilly, 46, will be sworn in at a public ceremony at the Lawson Tama Stadium and is expected to name his cabinet in the next few days, Pacnews said.

US slates Arafat: The United States on Wednesday accused Palestine Liberation Organisation Chairman Yasser Arafat of "unhelpful and polemical argument on human rights," says Reuter from Washington. Reacting to Arafat's speech to the United Nations world

conference on human rights in Vienna, State Department spokesman Mike Mccurry said, with peace talks underway in Washington, "now is the time for all parties to work towards a comprehensive peace settlement and avoid unhelpful and polemical arguments in international fora." In a written statement, Mccurry also said, the United

States objects strongly to Arafat's charges of a double standard in its policy with respect to human rights." We are proud to be at the forefront of the struggle for

human rights and will continue to exert efforts to promote

Muslim states' appeal to UN: Islamic states urged the United Nations Thursday to denounce "naked Serbian aggression," in Bosnia-Herzegovina and lift a UN arms embargo so that Bosnian Muslims can

A draft declaration circulated at the UN world conference on human rights in Vienna by the 52 nation Organisation of the Islamic Conference [OIC] called for "forceful" action by

Following a dramatic appeal on Tuesday by Bosnian Foreign Minister Haris Silajdzic, the Vienna meeting unanimously adopted a resolution calling on the Security Council to take action to save the people of the besteged Muslim enclave of

in general elections. Suharto appoints 45 members of advisory body

VIENNA, June 18: Myanmar

shrugged off protests Thursday

against its human rights

record and rejected any inter-

ference in its internal affairs or

attempts to link the issue to

development aid, reports AFP.

Gyaw defended his country's

conference on human rights as

about 30 demonstrators stood

in the gallery wearing masks of

detained opposition leader

lier reiterated its call for

Yangon to release Suu Kyi, a

Nobel Peace prize winner ar-

rested in 1989 by the

Myanmar junta that nullified

the opposition's landslide win

Amnesty International ear-

Aung San Suu Kyi.

Foreign Minister U Ohn

JAKARTA, June 18: Indonesian President Suharto appointed today the 45 members of the new Supreme Advisory Council (DPA) which includes 12 former Ministers, and several former Governors and leading religious leaders, reports AFP.

Fresh military strike on LTTE positions

COLOMBO, June 18: Hundreds of heavily-armed government troops backed by an indefinite curfew advanced on rebel positions in northern Shri Lanka today following a fresh military strike in the region, officials said, reports AFP.

However, there were no immediate reports of fighting in the Cheddikulam area in the tary spokesman said.

Troops launched the offensive late Thursday a day after a

The curfew imposed at dawn Thursday was continued for a second day today in operational areas of Vavuniya and large parts of neighbouring Mannar district, the spokesman said, adding he had no further de-The latest military assault

came six days after security forces captured five rebel-held villages in eastern Batticaloa with few casualties. One soldier and at least 12 LTTE rebels were killed in that operation.

The LTTE is leading a violent secessionist campaign in the island's northeast for Shri centrated in the region.

struggle.

HIV transmission through drug injecting, the guidelines rec ommend that in countries where bleach is available to injecting drug users in the community, the distribution of diluted bleach should be allowed in prisons housing injecting drug users. Also where clean

able to drug injectors outside prisons, the authorities should ing material to inmates during On the question of HIV test-

tional AIDS programmes are making encouraging headway in their efforts to prevent new HIV infections and to provide care to people with HIV or AIDS. But these advances in the community now need to be matched by AIDS prevention and care in prisons. Our new guidelines take a realistic ap-

proach to what can and should be done in prisons. If they are used to help formulate prison

queries and submit proposals sprawling Vavuniya district defend themselves, Reuter reports from Vienna or considerations to the which is partly controlled by President on matters related to Liberation Tigers of Tamil the national interest, was made Eclam (LTTE) guerillas, a miliby a presidential decree dated the Security Council to stop the killing in Bosnia. and issued Friday.

of five years ending 1998," said

The appointment of the council's membership, whose task is to reply to presidential

"Membership is for a period

Lanka's minority Tamils con-Thousands have been killed in the LTTE-led independence

WHO recommends reform in prisons to stop spread of AIDS testing should only be allowed the prisoner. Compulsory testing would be "unethical, incl-

syringes and needles are availconsider supplying clean inject-

ing, the guidelines stress that confidential voluntary testing, together with pre-test and posttest counselling, should be available when voluntary testing and counselling is available in the community, however, such

policies, they can make a major contribution to slowing the spread of HIV infection."

second batch of Tamil civilians the decree, a copy of which was fled LTTE-held areas in obtained by AFP Friday. Cheddikulam. Some 130 ctvil-Gorazde. The council will elect one ians have crossed over to mili-The resolution made no mention of lifting the arms emtary-dominated villages in Chairman and four Vice bargo, as the Bosnian government has long demanded. Chairmen. Vavuniya since Saturday.

GENEVA, June 18: The Worcause there is a higher rate ld Health Organization (WHO) is among prisoners than among recommending sweeping reforms in prisons in an effort to control, the spread of AIDS, reports BSS.

human rights objectives."

Guidelines prepared on the basis of a consultation organized by WHO recommend that condoms should be made available to prisoners if any possibility of sexual intercourse exists and that wherever prisoners inject drugs, prison services should consider introducing needle-exchange programmes and providing bleach to clean injecting equipment, if such provisions are made for

the community at large. In all countries, prisons repre ent a significant factor in ransmission of HIV be-

the general population. The consultation reviewed a survey of 55 prisons in 31 countries carried out by the University Institute of Legal Medicine in Geneva for the WHO global programme on AIDS. The survey disclosed that while information on HIV transmission is being provided to prisoners and prison staff in virtually all of the prison systems surveyed,

a significant amount of transmission still occurs. Furthermore, the survey showed that prisons vary widely when it comes to backing up information with preventive measures such as the distribution of condoms.

veyed have no effective mea sures for preventing HIV transmission through drug injecting. Nor do they have specific programmes for women prisoners even though their HIV rates are often higher than those of men. "These important gaps are specifically dealt with by our

The findings also revealed

that most of the prisons sur-

new guideline," says Dr Michael H Merson, Director of the Global Programme on AIDS. "They emphasize the link between prisons and the world outside. Individuals have the right to health care, including preventive care, whether they are incarcerated or not. If prisoners have access to the same effective prevention methods that are available outside

To help prevent sexual transmission in prisons, the

prison, this will benefit every

guidelines recommend that, as well as providing information, prison authorities or medical services should make condoms available to prisoners if any possibility of sexual contact exists. At the same time, aggressive sexual behaviour such as rape or the exploitation of vulnerable prisoners should be combated with adequate staffing, surveillance and disciplinary sanctions, as well as by providing education. The guidelines recommend that more attention should be given to prison health services in all of the systems studied. To deal with the problem of

detention.

during World War II.

women be excluded from some ground war units in which they now serve, despite a call by the US Defence Secretary for

'If you adopted this, you wouldn't have women in Somalia,

Aspin, but reflected Army and Marine resistance to Aspin's The subpanel, haired by Marine Lieutenant Colonel Eugene

women (and) dysfunctional relationships," the Post said.