

Call to dismiss West Bengal govt

NEW DELHI, July 31: A provincial chapter of India's ruling Congress (I) Party today demanded the dismissal of the communist government in the eastern state of West Bengal, saying there was "absolute lawlessness" there, reports UNB.

The Congress (I)'s state unit made the demand to Indian Home Minister Shankarrao Chavan when he flew into Calcutta, capital of West Bengal, the Press Trust of India (PTI) reported.

A Congress delegation told Chavan that "the entire state was burning and absolute lawlessness prevailed" in West Bengal and that "the time was proper to dismiss the left front government", the news agency said.

Communists have been in power in West Bengal, which borders Bangladesh, since June 1977. It is the longest surviving elected communist government in the world.

The Congress (I) is the main opposition party in West Bengal.

West Bengal Congress (I) leaders alleged that police reacted brutally on July 21, killing 12 party supporters and injuring many others during a "totally peaceful" protest against the communist rule in Calcutta.

Chavan is to visit the injured Congress (I) activists in hospitals and later meet West Bengal Chief Minister Jyoti Basu.

Basu's Communist Party of India (Marxist), which controls the West Bengal government, spearheaded a no-confidence motion against Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao's Congress (I) government this week.

The government survived the challenge, defeating the motion by 14 votes.

Mamata Banerjee, a Congress (I) leader from West Bengal, came to parliament on the day of vote Wednesday in a wheelchair, alleging she had been beaten by the Calcutta police on July 21.

Bosnian warring parties working on map

GENEVA, July 31: Bosnia's Muslim-led government, Croats and Serbs got down to the hard part of their new peace plan on Saturday: a map splitting the republic into three ethnic states, reports AP.

The outgunned Bosnian government reluctantly agreed to the partition on Friday and sat down with other negotiators to work on the map.

The division was favoured by ethnic Serbs and Croats, who control nearly all of Bosnia after more than 16 months of civil war that has left between 140,000 and 200,000 dead or missing and the capital, Sarajevo, in ruins.

Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic and Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic, arriving for a fifth day of the latest round of Geneva talks Saturday, said they would discuss maps.

Bosnian Croat chief Mate Boban was expected to meet separately with the two other leaders later Saturday.

European Community mediator Lord Owen remained cautious Saturday, but hoped the maps could be finished by Sunday.

Bosnia's Muslims must get enough space to allow them to house about 2 million of their people who have been forced from their homes by war or "ethnic cleansing," Owen told reporters.

The Muslim area must also be "economically viable," he said.

In that respect, Owen said he believes the Muslims' vital access to the northern Sava River and the Adriatic Sea already has been "achieved" through previous talks.

Meanwhile, most of Bosnia

was calm Saturday after rival commanders ordered a ceasefire that went into effect Friday night.

The hills around Sarajevo were quiet after three weeks of fierce battles and UN officials said other combat areas also were calm.

Izetbegovic told Sarajevo Radio after Friday's accord, "The hardest part of the job still remains. Everything we have achieved so far will be worthless if there is no agreement on the maps."

Battle field and negotiating pressure forced Izetbegovic to drop his opposition to an ethnic partition with only weak powers for central government.

The plan gives few powers to the central government — foreign affairs and international trade — but provides for a central supreme court and constitutional court to arbitrate in disputes between the republics.

The presidency would consist of heads of each of three republics. The chairmanship of the presidency would rotate every four months, with decisions taken by consensus.

In remarks to Belgrade TV, Serb President Slobodan Milosevic emphasized that the republics would be "truly independent."

"Serbs in Bosnia can now sleep well. Their republic has now won complete affirmation," he said. "It is a realistic plan, it is honest and fair."

Milosevic, the region's main powerbroker, has been widely blamed as having started the war.

The plan left many issues unresolved, however, including whether there should be a common currency.

Off the Record

Actress to head NEA

WASHINGTON: Actress Jane Alexander is President Clinton's choice to head the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), reports AP.

Alexander, who has broad backing in the arts community, had been considered a candidate for the post since February. A White House official, speaking on condition of anonymity, confirmed her selection Friday.

She must be confirmed by the Senate.

The NEA this year received \$174.4 million from the government, a small amount by Washington standards. Even so, it has been in the crossfire between critics of government involvement in the arts and defenders of taxpayer subsidies for controversial arts projects.

The 53-year-old actress was nominated for a Tony award this year for her current role on Broadway in "The Sisters Rosensweig." Her contract for that production expires Aug 14.

Offstage, she has been active in political causes, especially those of nuclear disarmament and wildlife conservation.



It is pretty nasty

RIO DE JANEIRO: When the intruder tried to rape a 13-year-old girl at her home in front of her mother, dwellers in the hellish slum known as "God's City" performed justice their own way, reports AP.

Hearing the mother's cries, about 100 neighbours dragged the 40-year-old man from the hotel and beat him with stones and clubs. Someone fired four bullets into his chest. The body was dumped near a highway.

"Yeah, it was pretty nasty," snorted Jose Luiz da Silva, 33, a resident of the slum, days after the July 15 killing. "But he had it coming."

Hysteria over rising crime is spurring vigilantism among poor Brazilians fed up with inadequate police protection and their own struggles to survive in a crumbling economy.

Huge backlogs in the courts, jailbreaks by major crime bosses and police corruption have created "a social climate of kill first, ask questions later," said Marcio Moreira Alves, a political scientist.

In public, Brazilians condemn mob killings. But privately, many say the most extreme measures — even the murder of street children — are justified in fighting rampant crime.

"Those street kids are bandits, and bandits have to die," said Jose Elcio Neves, a construction foreman. "They are a rotten branch that has to be pruned."

Panhandlers get right to beg

NEW YORK: A federal appeals court gave New York panhandlers the same right as charities to beg in the streets, reports AP.

The 2nd US Circuit Court of Appeals concluded Thursday that begging for oneself is tantamount to begging on behalf of other organisations and upheld a federal judge's ruling that struck down a law prohibiting panhandling in public.

"Both solicit the charity of others. The distinction is not a significant one for the first amendment purposes," the court said.

It criticised the New York city police department's treatment of beggars and said they violated the panhandlers' first amendment rights.

The case was prompted by a class-action lawsuit filed by lawyer George Sommers on behalf of beggars.

Call for Islamic appearance

TEHRAN: The head of Iran's judiciary urged government officials on Friday to fire women staff who flouted the Islamic dress code at work, reports Reuter.

"Ministers, directors and head of government offices are duty-bound to ensure that ladies working for them keep an Islamic appearance," Ayatollah Mohammad Yazdi said in a mass prayer sermon broadcast on Tehran radio.

"Women can work, but provided that they abide by Islamic norms. Officials must treat this seriously. If a lady cannot adapt herself a decade after the revolution, she can go and be replaced by another," he said to approving chants of "Allahu Akbar" (God is great).

Ex-ROK minister held

SEOUL, South Korea, July 31: A former Cabinet minister was arrested Saturday in a new government probe of political terror under previous military-backed regimes, reports AP.

Prosecutors said retired Gen Lee Jin-sam, a former sports minister, was charged with ordering terror against opposition leaders while serving as chief of the Defence Intelligence Command in 1985 and 1986.

It was the first major disclosure of political terror by the military, whose affairs had been kept under wraps before President Kim Young-Sam took office in February as South Korea's first president in three decades with no military background.

There have been widespread allegations that Kim's predecessors condoned terror against

Lankan refugees want to leave India by mid-Aug

COLOMBO, July 31: About 6,800 Sri Lankan refugees in Madras, south India, have expressed their willingness to return home next month, reports Xinhua.

The Indian government had informed Sri Lankan authorities about the repatriation of these refugees and arrangements have been made to do the job by mid-August, reports reaching here said today.

These refugees will arrive on board in Indian ship to Trincomalee and Mannar in the eastern province of the island country.

They will be transferred to transit camps in Trincomalee, Vavuniya and Mannar until they are resettled in their former places of residence, rehabilitation authorities sources here said.

Some 30,000 Sri Lankan refugees have returned their homeland by earlier this year.

Daughter writes Deng's memoirs

BEIJING, July 31: The daughter of Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping has written volume one of a biography of him that will appear in bookstores in September, the military newspaper said Saturday, reports AP.

A preview of "My Father, Deng Xiaoping" published in the Liberation Army Daily (Jiefangjun Bao) reveals, among other things, that Deng married three times and never lost a taste for French wine and cheese, developed during six years in France in the 1920s.

The newspaper carried a one and half page interview with the book's editor and brief excerpts that did not disclose any startling information about Deng's dramatic political career, during which he was twice purged by Mao Tse-tung but came back to succeed Mao and undo many of his policies.

The book is written by Deng's youngest daughter, Xiao Rong, who serves as his top aide. She is always at his side during his in frequent public appearances to support him by the arm, shout into his partially deaf ears and translate his slurred and nearly incomprehensible speech.

Deng, who turns 89 on Aug 22, has never written his memoirs and has allowed relatively little to be published in China about his personal life. The Communist Party issued a biography of him in 1988, but it mainly contained well-known information about his six-decade-long career in the Red Army and the party.



GENEVA: General view of the conference room of the peace talks on Bosnia-Herzegovina with clockwise, UN mediator Thorvald Stoltenberg (C), Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic, member of the Bosnian presidency Fikret Abdic, Bosnian Croat leader Mate Boban, Croatian President Franjo Tudjman, Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic, Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic and EC mediator Lord David Owen, at the United Nations building Friday.

Illegal arms export to Iraq

Thatcher, Major to testify

LONDON, July 31: Prime Minister John Major and his predecessor, Margaret Thatcher, will testify before an independent judiciary board investigating illegal British arms exports to Iraq, Panel Chairman Lord Justice Scott said Friday, reports AP.

He said Major would probably give evidence in January and Thatcher, toward the end of this year.

Major is to be quizzed about his three-month stint as foreign secretary in 1989, when, ac-

ording to documents made public earlier this year, Britain was selling Iraq military equipment in violation of an arms embargo.

The panel's public hearings, which began three months ago, have disclosed how ministers and civil servants allowed exports of arms to Iraq over a number of years, in breach of the government guidelines issued in 1984.

This led them regularly to make misleading statements to parliament and the public, according to testimony.

The commission was empowered to investigate after a massive quantity of classified documents on the sales fell into the public domain during the trial late last year of two businessmen accused of arms sales to Iraq.

The trail fell apart when the documents, and testimony from former ministers, showed the government had secretly encouraged the sales and in fact had counseled the defendants company on how to circumvent the restrictions.

China ups defence spending

WASHINGTON, July 31: China has increased defence spending by some 60 per cent in real terms since 1988, and shows no sign of cutting back despite the end of the Cold War, US intelligence experts said Friday, reports AP.

"I think what has happened in China's mind is that they see a far less certain world," following the collapse of the Soviet Union, Central Intelligence Agency Director of East Asian analysis Martin Petersen said.

"They are concerned about the prospects of instability along their northern borders, particularly with some of the new states in central Asia," Petersen told a congressional committee, commenting on the

annual CIA report on the Chinese economy released Friday.

Beijing was also "very concerned about US willingness and commitment to remain fully deployed in East Asia."

"They see our military presence there as perhaps the best guarantee of stability in the region," Petersen told the subcommittee on technology and national security of the joint economic committee.

But cuts in the US defence budget have added "uncertainty to the equation" in China's eyes.

Beijing was also concerned that Japan in the future might translate its economic power into "political, and perhaps military power," Petersen said.

The foreign ministers of China, Japan, Russia and the United States met together for the first time last week at a new regional forum launched by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

Regional security concerns helped explain why Chinese "defence spending since about 1988 has grown something like 60 per cent in real terms" to an estimated 16 to 17 billion dollars last year, with spending focussed on purchasing new equipment such as aircraft and acquiring new technology, Petersen said.

But there were also important domestic political reasons for supporting the People's Liberation Army, which had

BRIEFLY

Malaysian plane crashes: A light aircraft carrying 17 people crashed in the east Malaysian state of Sarawak on Friday, Bernama news agency reported saying that at least one person was believed killed. AFP reports from Kuala Lumpur.

The agency said the Skyvan aircraft, with 15 passengers and two crew members, crashed in a hilly terrain in Long Loyang in Ulu Baram, Miri.

Myanmar troops arrest 33 Thais: Thirty-three Thai villagers were arrested by Myanmar troops in a logging concession area in Myanmar, state-run Thai television reported Friday, AFP says from Bangkok.

The arrest took place near the southern Thai-Myanmar border province of Ranong, some 570 kilometers (350 miles) south of Bangkok, while Thai villagers were working in a concession area granted by Myanmar authorities to the Thai logging firm Chao Phraya Irawaddy Logging Co, the report said.

3 Mongolian guards killed: Three Mongolian border guards have been killed near the Russian border, apparently by killers from Russia, Itar-Tass news agency reported Friday from Ulan-bator, AFP reports from Moscow.

An officer and two soldiers had gone on a 15-day patrol along the border near the Russian town of Znaminsk south of Lake Baikal, the report said quoting General Sandr, the Mongolian border guard commander-in-chief.

13 Nepalese pilgrims die in Tibet: At least 13 Nepalese pilgrims were killed and eight others seriously injured in a truck accident in Tibet early this week, police said Saturday, AFP reports from Kathmandu.

The accident took place in the town of Kanche. The Nepalese pilgrims were aboard a truck going from Taklakot, 340 kilometers (211 miles) northwest of Kathmandu, to Sera village in Tibet, police said.

18 hurt in Turkish blast: Eighteen people, including six foreign tourists, were hurt when a bomb planted in a rubbish exploded in a Turkish resort on Friday, hospital officials said, Reuter reports from Istanbul.

No group immediately claimed responsibility but the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) had threatened to attack tourist sites as part of its nine-year guerrilla war for independence.

Release of Nano demanded: Thousands of supporters of Albania's opposition Socialist Party demonstrated in Tirana on Friday in protest at the arrest of the Party's Chairman, former Prime Minister Fatos Nano, on charges of abuse of power, Reuter reports from Tirana.

About 20,000 people demanding Nano's release and the government's resignation marched on Scanderbeg Square in the centre of the Albanian capital.

Police detained dozens of demonstrators. But there was no violence as police managed to keep the protesters away from a crowd of government supporters.

Guatemala police chief jailed: A Guatemalan court on Friday sentenced a top police chief and four other officers to three years and nine months in jail for violently breaking up a peaceful demonstration, Reuter reports from Guatemala City.

The court said the five officers ordered riot police to beat peasants with their batons when they broke up a march in Guatemala City in July 1992.

During the march around 500 indigenous people were demanding land rights to the Cajola ranch where they lived in northwestern Guatemala. They have since been relocated by the government.

Abiola talks with Dasuki: The unofficial winner of Nigeria's annulled presidential elections, Moshood Abiola, has had talks with the country's top Muslim leader, Ibrahim Dasuki, sources close to the candidate said Friday, AFP reports from Lagos.

Abiola met the Sultan of Sokoto, President of the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (SCIA), at Sokoto on Thursday, the sources said.

No details of the talks were disclosed, but the SCIA has established an 11-member committee to mediate between Abiola, a Muslim millionaire, and President Ibrahim Babangida, an informed source told AFP.

Fundamentalist leader shot dead in Jakarta

JAKARTA, July 31: The leader of an extremist Muslim sect whose offices were raided by Indonesian security forces has died in hospital from gunshot wounds, local newspapers reported today, says Reuter.

Abdul Manan died on Friday, a day after troops and police raided his sect's meeting place in Majalengka in West Java, the newspapers said. Four people were shot dead during the raid, according to earlier reports.

The official Antara news agency and local media have described the Haur Kuning (yellow bamboo) sect as "extremist and fundamentalist."

Antara reported on Friday that earlier in the week sect members had killed a police chief who was visiting their building, stabbing him in the back with a stick.

Vera Demjanjuk vows to see husband

SEVENHILLS, Ohio, July 31: With tears in her eyes, John Demjanjuk's wife pledged Friday to go into exile if necessary to be with her husband while he fights to return to the United States, reports AP.

"I just want to see my husband," Vera Demjanjuk, 67, said in a brief interview at the front door of her suburban Cleveland home. "Our life is short. My health is going down."

The Israeli Supreme Court on Thursday acquitted Demjanjuk, 73, of charges he was the sadistic guard "Ivan the Terrible" at the Treblinka concentration camp in Poland. But it's not clear where he'll go from Israel.

Demjanjuk was stripped of US citizenship in 1981. Mrs Demjanjuk spoke a few moments after hearing her son-in-law, Ed Nishnic, say in a radio interview from Israel that Demjanjuk may seek asylum in Ukraine while he fights to return to the United States.

Mrs Demjanjuk said she hadn't seen her husband since he was sent to his Israeli prison.

"I have to go see my husband, I haven't seen him in three years," she said, crying and holding a hand to her chest.

Ukrainian diplomats in Israel on Friday said John Demjanjuk Jr had asked whether his father could return to his native Ukraine while he questioned his US residency was decided. His lawyers filed a motion in the 6th US Circuit Court of appeals in Cincinnati seeking his immediate return to the United States.

The motion questions the validity of the decision to extradite Demjanjuk and the fairness of barring him from the country while the issue was before the court.

The court scheduled oral arguments on the matter for Tuesday. Mrs Demjanjuk, also a Ukraine native, said she had no

timetable for traveling to see her husband. If he takes refuge in Ukraine, she said, the expense might prevent other family members from visiting him.

"I get my pension and I save my money. I'm probably the only one who can go," she said in broken English.

Mrs Demjanjuk, who once fainted when a television interviewer detailed the charges against her husband and didn't attend a family news conference held Thursday, said she remained hopeful.

"I feel hope the United States will open the door and accept him over here," she said.

Mrs Demjanjuk worked as a cleaning woman after coming to the United States with her husband four decades ago. The family lived quietly until 1977, when Justice Department Nazi hunters opened their case against Demjanjuk.

"I have good hours and bad hours, good hours and then bad hours," she said.



BEIRUT: The children and relatives of Khadijeh Muhsen, a woman killed during Israeli bombardment of south Lebanon, grieve during her funeral in Beirut, Friday.