

## India to reduce defence ties with Russia

NEW DELHI, August 11: India is going to reduce its defence cooperation with Russia to a bare minimum, local newspaper *The Economic Times* reported today, says Xinhua.

This is caused by the recent scrapping of cryogenic rocket engine deal by Russia and also the breakdown of Moscow's authority over its manufacturing units.

The paper said that Russia's inability to stick to the defence credits of 680 million US dollars it advanced to India late last year has forced Indian government to resort to large scale hard currency purchases of spares and equipment from individual companies.

In fact, Indian government has recently purchased spares and equipment of about 100 million US dollars in hard currency from individual manufacturing units in Russia for the army alone. Besides, the government has also resorted to such purchases for the air force and the navy and they are estimated to be worth well over 200 million US dollars.

These developments, which are yet to take final shape, constitute a watershed in the defence ties between the two countries, the paper said.

The three force of India, with a large number of arms of Russian origin, are now scouting for supplies from various western sources.

The Defence Ministry is planning to evolve new methods of raising overseas funds.

Yet, a time of global recession in armament industry and easy suppliers, credit is available from the West, the government feels it should raise resources in such a way that the nascent domestic armament industry should be revitalized, the paper said.



DREAM OF PEACE: Israeli and Palestinian teenagers, draw "the world's longest dream" inside Jerusalem's old city walls on August 10. The subject of the painting is the dream of peace, drawn by hundreds of children on a half kilometre long canvas. The Tower of David is seen in the background. — AFP photo

## PLO, delegates won't raise Jerusalem issue in talks

TUNIS, Aug 11: The PLO and delegates to Middle East peace talks have agreed to postpone raising the thorny issue of Jerusalem despite an earlier row that prompted the negotiators' resignation, Palestinian sources said here Tuesday, reports AFP.

A source close to PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat said the status of Jerusalem — a major bone of contention between the leadership and three Palestinian negotiators — would be discussed in the final stages of the talks with Israel and that the decision had been agreed upon before the Madrid peace conference of October 1991 that launched the entire peace process.

The Palestine Liberation Organization, by donning the cap of pragmatism, wants to give Israel no alternative but to negotiate with it and we figure that most people in the Israeli government as well as in the country are today ripe for such a step, the source said.

His comments came after Nabli Kassis, deputy head of the delegation, said Arafat had hammered out a deal under which the three leaders of his Middle East peace delegation withdrew their resignations, thereby defusing an unprecedented internal crisis.

The trio from the occupied territories resigned at PLO headquarters here on Sunday to protest what they considered Arafat's new moderate stance in a policy document for negotiating interim autonomy from Israel.

But delegation leader Faisal Hussein, spokeswoman Hanan Ashrawi and another deputy, Saeb Erakat, had won assurances that they would not be left in the dark in the future and withdrew their resignations.

Deep divisions opened up between Arafat and the delegates from the territories over the policy document presented to the Americans last week.

The delegates insist it must be included in any area of Palestinian autonomy.

Sources close to Arafat however insisted that the differences between the PLO and the negotiators were strictly "procedural."

"Behind every cloud there's a silver lining," a PLO official told AFP, insisting that the crisis would soon be resolved.

The PLO leadership has renewed its complete confidence in the Palestinian delegates and established with them operational plans for the coming stages of the negotiations with Israel which will be crucial, the PLO representative in Amman, Al-Tayeb Abdel-Rahim, told AFP.

## Debate over future shape of Myanmar govt sharpens

YANGON, Aug 11: Debate over the future shape of Myanmar's government sharpened Wednesday as delegates to a constitutional convention took up a military proposal to introduce a presidential system, reports AP.

Workers' and peasants' representatives at the meeting endorsed the suggestion, first suggested by a representative of the ruling junta in June.

They also endorsed the junta's suggestion to have military representatives in Parliament nominated by the armed forces commander in chief.

On Monday, a delegate spoke out publicly for the first time against the military's proposal.

Speaking on the first day of an open plenary session, Khun Tun Oo, a delegate representing the Shan National League for Democracy, suggested that the country's chief executive be a prime minister, as has been the case under the country's previous constitutions.

"The fact that the prime minister is constantly anxious as he may be deposed at any time through a no-confidence motion is still better than the chief executive becoming a dictator," he told delegates in a speech reported by the state-run media.

While Khun Tun Oo said that only representatives elected by the people should have the right to vote on matters concerning the sovereign powers of the state, he did not explicitly oppose the junta's long-standing demand for a future leading political role.

Nearly 700 delegates — political party representatives, members elected to Parliament in May 1990, ethnic minority members, workers, peasants, civil servants, technocrats and invited guests — have been attending the convention's mostly closed door sessions since January.

Critics of the junta claim the convention is a sham that serves only to delay the transfer of power to the 1990 election winners, who never were allowed to take their parliamentary seats. They say the convention delegates are unrepresentative of the democratic opposition, and note there is no deadline for the group to finish its tasks.



Damir Sarajlic, 2 and 1/2, waits with a brain tumour at Sarajevo's Kosovo hospital on Tuesday to be evacuated by the UN. He has been on the wait list for six months, and as he was admitted in April 1992 is the hospital's favourite. His parents are in Vitez and are unable to visit. — AFP photo

NEW DELHI, Aug 11: A young couple were publicly beheaded in an Indian village when they returned home after eloping and living together for five months, press reports said Wednesday, reports AFP.

Some 250 people mutely watched the beheading of Satish, 21, and his bride Sarita, 20 in the village of Khandarwal, 90 kilometres (54 mile) from here in northern Uttar Pradesh state, the Pioneer and other newspapers said.

An uncle who brought up Sarita swung the axe after elders ruled that the lovers had brought shame on the village by eloping and ordered their execution, the newspapers said.

The couple, who were distantly related, were summoned

## Harijan lovers beheaded for incest

for an explanation by village elders just two hours after they returned. They were killed when they appeared at a square where the elders held court. No one protested.

Satish and Sarita, who belonged to the Harijan or "untouchable" community at the lowest rung of the Hindu caste ladder, were nominally uncle and niece.

Their family accused them of committing incest and justified the killings.

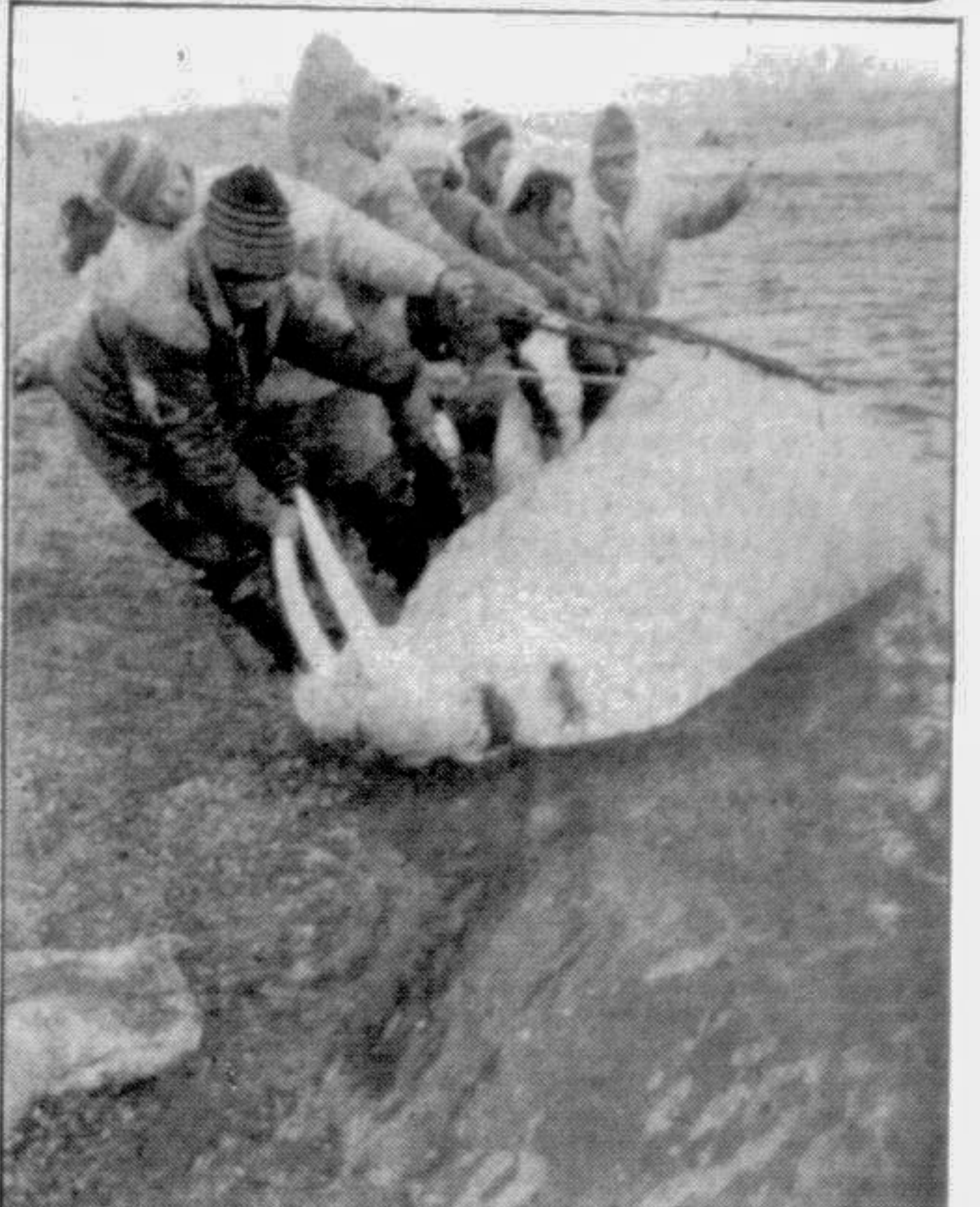
"First an uncle and niece

have the temerity to elope... then they return to the village," the Indian express quoted Sarita's grandmother as saying.

Local police told newspapers the couple had tarnished the village reputation and should not have dared to come back. Their return was seen as an attempt to flaunt their disdain for social norms.

An officer reportedly said the couple's family should not have killed them "so openly" but fed them poison instead.

Ram Dhan, the man who carried out the beheading, ran away to escape arrest. Investigating authorities were confronted with a unified facade of silence maintained by villagers, the Pioneer said.



RUSSIA: A group of local fishermen haul from the sea a walrus that they just captured and killed in the Chukotka region, 90 km east from the Alaskan coast, August 10. The killing of thousands of walrus is their most important source of income as they use the tusks to make carvings and every other part of the animal is used in some way. — AFP photo

## UN invited to supervise Afghan polls

KABUL, Aug 11: The United Nations has been invited to supervise the upcoming Afghan elections, in which women will be allowed to vote, Sottrics Mousouris, personal representative of the UN Secretary-General told journalists in Kabul Tuesday, reports AFP.

"The issue was never raised that women would not get the vote", Mousouris said in answer to a question about women's right to vote.

"My understanding is that women will vote. I heard nothing to the contrary. I take it for granted," he said.

Mousouris, who stayed overnight with a UN team in Kabul Monday during his two-day visit, said the main purpose of his Afghan trip was to discuss the elections and the UN's role.

"There is a consensus among Afghan leaders for general elections and for a UN role, although the question of timing and the modalities of the election have not been agreed on yet," Mousouris said.

In accordance with the Islamabad accord signed in Pakistan last March, Afghan Mujahideen leaders have agreed to hold a constituent assembly election by October.

## Ginsburg second woman justice of US Supreme Court

WASHINGTON, Aug 11: Ruth Bader Ginsburg was sworn in on Tuesday as an associate justice of the US Supreme Court, becoming the second woman to serve on the high bench, reports Reuter.

As President Bill Clinton looked on at a White House east room ceremony, Ginsburg, a 60-year-old former law school professor, took the oath of office from Chief Justice William Rehnquist.

Ginsburg said she would try her best to live up to the confidence Clinton had shown in naming her to replace retired Justice Byron White.

"This was a very important appointment to me," Clinton said in his remarks. "We breathe life into the values that we espouse through our law... There is no one with a deeper appreciation of this fact than Ruth Bader Ginsburg."

## FBI recovers 9 masterpiece paintings

LOS ANGELES, Aug 11: US authorities on Tuesday recovered nine stolen masterpiece paintings valued at more than 9 million dollars and arrested two men suspected in the theft, the FBI said, reports Reuter.

The artwork, stolen in February 1992 from a locked storage compartment in the suburb of Northridge, included works by Pablo Picasso, Marc Chagall, Edgar Degas, Eugene Delacroix, Amedeo Modigliani and other painters, said FBI spokesman Ron Twersky.

"They are all valuable original artworks," Twersky said.

The two suspects were taken into custody peacefully after a joint investigation by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Los Angeles police department.

Peter Mackenzie, 43, was arrested on suspicion of burglary and Alan McArthur, 37, on suspicion of receiving stolen property.

## Off the Record

### Trade ban strands him

CARTAGENA, Colombia: Visting Cuban leader Fidel Castro almost found himself stranded in Colombia on Tuesday after multinational oil companies refused to refuel his official plane.

The companies cited the US ban on trade with Cuba.

A civil aviation official told Reuters that Esso, Mobil and Texaco, the normal suppliers of aviation fuel in Colombia, had all declined to fill up Castro's Russian-made plane and a second Cuban aircraft carrying members of his entourage after they landed in this Caribbean port on Monday night for a two-day visit.

"The Colombian Foreign Minister, Defence Minister and the civil aviation authority had to intervene to solve the problem," the official said. "It was a process of mediation to get around the trade embargo."

To solve the problem, the Colombian fuel company Terpel — which does not normally sell aviation fuel — sent an empty tanker to buy the kerosene from one of the multinational companies and then resold it to the Cuban planes.



## Baby girl immune from all pain

HONG KONG: A baby girl who feels no pain is baffling doctors in Fujian province, the second such case reported in China, the Beijing-owned Hong Kong China News Service reported Wednesday, says AFP.

Doctors were unable to tell why the 15-month-old child was immune from all pain, making it difficult for them to treat the child for any illnesses, the report said.

It added that only two similar cases had been discovered previously in China.

## Pregnancy from direct injection of sperm

WASHINGTON: The world's first twin pregnancy from the direct injection of sperm into eggs obtained for In-Vitro Fertilisation (IVF) was announced Wednesday by the US Genetics and IVF Institute, reports Reuter.

The institute said a woman became pregnant several months ago and she and the twins were doing well. It did not identify them.

This pregnancy is one of the first in the United States from the direct injection of sperm into eggs, also known as Intra-Cytoplasmic Sperm Injection.

The first pregnancies by Intra-Cytoplasmic Sperm Injection occurred several months ago in Belgium.

In-Vitro Fertilisation involves fertilising eggs outside the womb.

## Court frees 17 extremists in Cairo

CAIRO, Aug 11: A military court Tuesday released 17 Islamic extremists and acquitted seven others after they were detained on suspicion of plotting to topple the government, the Egyptian news agency Mena reported, says AFP.

The decision which had immediate effect was made for lack of evidence, the agency quoted the court's public prosecutor as saying.

All were members of a group of 250 Muslim fundamentalists arrested for alleged anti-government activities.

## Proposal to amend US Constitution to stop illegal immigration

LOS ANGELES, Aug 11: California Governor Pete Wilson has declared war on clandestine immigration, pushing for a constitutional amendment that would prevent children of illegal residents born on US territory from automatically acquiring US citizenship, reports AFP.

Wilson, seeking re-election next year in a state mired in recession, says the tide of illegal immigrants is a threat to the quality of life in California and is draining its budgetary resources.

"Federal mandates to illegal immigrants are costing California taxpayers 2.3 billion -- yes billion -- dollars a year,"

Wilson said Monday.

Wilson unveiled a proposal to amend the US Constitution, which now automatically grant citizenship to anyone born on US soil, regardless of whether the parents are in the country illegally.

"Two thirds of all babies born in Los Angeles county public hospitals are born to illegal immigrant parents," he said.

"It's time to amend the Constitution so that citizenship belongs only to the children of legal residents of the United States, not to every child whose mother can make it to an American hospital."

Such an amendment would face a long road and have to be ratified by three-fourths of the states. And Wilson's push has provoked an outcry from defenders of civil liberties.

"It's an outrage," said civil rights leader Irma Rodriguez, saying immigrants are being made scapegoats for the State's economic problems.

American Civil Liberties Union lawyer Silvia Argueta said Wilson's proposal "goes against the grain of what this country is founded on."

But Wilson is counting on political support from the proposal in a state with 9.8 per cent unemployment and an estimated two million illegal immigrants -- half of those in the United States -- among its 32 million inhabitants.

Nationwide, a recent newsweek poll found 60 per cent of those surveyed believe illegal immigration is bad for the country.

"I don't fault people trying to find a better life in our nation," Wilson said.

"It's hard not to admire their courage and determination. But if we ignore the flood of illegal immigration coming to America, we'll erode the quality of life for all of those who live here legally."

"We're forced to cut aid for

the needy, elderly, blind and disabled who legally reside in California because Washington mandates that we spend more than three quarters of a billion dollars a year on emergency medical services for illegal immigrants."

California's border with Mexico has made it a target of illegal immigrants from Latin America, and some 1.2 million people were arrested last year at the border.

But the problem has been accentuated by the arrival of ships operated by smugglers carrying thousands of illegal Chinese immigrants.

Eventhough Wilson is a Republican, the matter has drawn the attention of democrats as well.

President Bill Clinton recently ordered a crackdown on illegal immigration, and Democratic Senator Dianne Feinstein wrote recently in the Los Angeles Times, "Today there are 1.3 million Californians out of work. Families throughout our state face overcrowded schools and a scarcity of affordable houses."

Meanwhile, there are an estimated 1.3 million undocumented immigrants in California.

## China wants US to stop playing policeman

BEIJING, Aug 11: China bitterly accused the United States on Wednesday of trying to play world policeman by shadowing a Chinese cargo ship and said the vessel was now in distress on the high seas, reports AP.

The United States says the ship, the Yinhe or Silver River, is believed to be carrying chemical weapons ingredients to Iran. China says the United States is wrong about the cargo but refuses to say what the ship is carrying.

US actions disrupted the Yinhe's voyage and that it has run out of fuel and water at sea.