

## BRIEFLY

## Heatwave claims 25 in Pakistan

Heatwave has killed at least 25 people in different parts of Pakistan, press reports said yesterday. Xinhua says from Islamabad.

Eleven deaths were reported in Punjab province while 14 lives were claimed in the deserts and dry areas of Sindh province on Saturday.

The twin cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad experienced the hottest day in this summer on Saturday as the temperature rose to 41 degrees centigrade.

## 30 Thais die in Japan

About 30 Thais who went to work in Japan have died in recent months from illness or suicide, according to local newspaper "The Bangkok Post". Xinhua reports from Bangkok.

Most of the dead had paid brokers from 90,000 baht (3,600 US dollars) to 200,000 baht (8,000 US dollars) to get jobs in Japan, but found either no jobs available or only jobs that Japanese do not want, the paper quoted a report to the Thai Labour and Social Welfare Ministry by that embassy in Japan as saying.

They have to live as illegal immigrants, so they were not protected by Japan's labour laws.

## New Yorker writer dead

E J Kahn Jr., one of the New Yorker magazine's most prolific writers, died Saturday of heart failure, a day after he was injured in a car crash. He was 77, AP reports from Holyoke.

Kahn had been a staff writer for 57 of The New Yorker's 69 years, and was well-known for his personality profiles. Another New Yorker writer, John McPhee, once credited Kahn with inventing the modern magazine profile.

Kahn, who had a heart condition, was hospitalised Friday after the car his wife was driving collided with a pickup truck at an intersection. He complained of pain in his side and was taken to Holyoke Hospital.

## Most Singaporeans support lash

Most Singaporeans support the lash as punishment for serious crimes, according to a survey by The Sunday Times, AP reports from Singapore.

A public opinion poll taken at the time American teen Michael Faye was lashed for spray painting cars found that 79 per cent of those surveyed favoured it as a deterrent for such crimes.

The telephone sampling of 705 people chosen to reflect the age, sex, race and housing profile of Singapore's predominantly Chinese population of 3 million was carried out May 4 and 5.

## Road mishap claims 23 in India

Twenty-three members of a wedding party were killed when an improvised tractor-trailer in which they were travelling broke into the path of an express train in north India, state-run TV said yesterday, AP reports from New Delhi.

The accident occurred in the district of Gonda in Uttar Pradesh state on Saturday when the vehicle was trying to negotiate a railway crossing.

## Hungarians vote in final round

A party of former communists now pro-Western and professing democratic ideals, was heavily favoured to retake power as Hungarians voted Sunday in the final round of national elections, AP reports from Budapest, Hungary.

The Socialist Party, successor to the reform wing of the old communist regime, struck a chord with voters by campaigning against painful side effects of post-communist economic reforms, including 22 per cent inflation and 12 per cent unemployment.

Led by Gyula Horn, a former communist foreign minister, the Socialists appear certain to win the most seats in the 386-member parliament after emerging on top in first-round voting May 8 with almost 33 per cent.

## Call to reject fascism

President Oscar Luigi Scalfaro on Saturday called on Italians to reject fascism which he described as "the negation of truth." Reuters reports from Brescia, Italy.

"Fascism was the negation of truth and liberty and there are those who still follow that path, Scalfaro told a crowd gathered to remember a 1974 bomb attack in a square in the northern city of Brescia.

"Truth must be defended even in the presence of those - even those in this square - who do not want the truth."

## Quake hits Japan

A strong earthquake rumbled through central Japan Saturday evening, but there were no immediate reports of injuries or damages, AP reports from Tokyo.

The quake, which was felt most strongly in the cities of Nagoya and Yokkaichi, had a preliminary magnitude reading of 5.3, according to Japan's Central Meteorological Agency.

Roughly 8 million people live in the greater Nagoya area, which is 269 kilometers (168 miles) west of Tokyo. Yokkaichi is just southwest of Nagoya.

## Call for changes in Nepalese govt

KATHMANDU, May 29: Supreme of ruling Nepali Congress (NC) Ganesh man Singh renewed his demand for drastic changes in the party organisation said its government, reports Xinhua.

Singh stressed that the changes were necessary "if the forthcoming general elections were to be won," official daily "The Rising Nepal" reported today.

According to the new constitution adopted in 1990, general elections would be held every 5 years. Nepal conducted its first general elections in May 1991.

The Supreme Made his call again for fundamental changes in ruling NC and its government on Saturday at NC party workers gatherings during his

current tour in Nepal's eastern region

"Biased leaders have to be removed everywhere in order to forestall factionism," he stressed.

This is the third time since April 27 for Singh to openly make the same strong calls in his separate interviews with local press or public speeches.

He said that there was no alternative to the resignation of Prime Minister Koirala for the resolution of the current problems.

"Unless this is done, Singh said, the 36 dissident Congress members of parliament would not support the government during the forthcoming budget session of parliament.

## Heatwave death toll rises to 70 in India

NEW DELHI, May 29: The death-toll from a heatwave in northern India rose to 70 today and temperatures are expected to worsen, reports AFP.

Record temperatures have been beaten in some places, but the monsoons have also hit the southern coast three days ahead of time.

Twenty more people have been reported dead of sunstroke since Friday in the desert state of Rajasthan, where residents in many towns and villages have faced temperatures of up to 49 degrees Celsius (120.2 Fahrenheit), press reports said.

The two-week heat spell in Rajasthan has been described as the worst to hit the state since 1905.

## Arafat may plan to concentrate power in his own hand

TUNIS, May 29: Yasser Arafat is packing the interim Palestinian governing body with his own people, suggesting that he may plan to concentrate power in former Israeli-occupied zones in his own hands, reports AP.

The Palestinian National Authority will have legislative, executive and judicial powers in the newly autonomous Gaza Strip and West Bank town of Jericho under the PLO's autonomy agreement with Israel.

A permanent elected body is to take over in the future. But the 24-member interim council, headed by Arafat, could establish a solid power base for the PLO leader and give him an edge when elections are held.

PLO officials disclosed Sat-

KARACHI, Pakistan, May 29: The Pakistan army accuses a militant ethnic party of running torture chambers, political opponents describe its members as terrorists while supporters venerate its leader as semi-divine, reports Reuters.

Two years after the army was deployed in the commercial capital Karachi to halt mounting violence, the Mohajir National Movement (MQM) is thriving, its support bank virtually unscathed.

Leaders of the MQM, which represents Urdu-speaking immigrants from India, warn of an outburst of popular anger if the army remains in Karachi and surrounding Sind province.

The government insists an army presence is essential to prevent a resurgence of the kidnappings, sabotage and shooting that troops were sent into Sind to quell in May 1992.

The army operation in

## MQM leaders warn of fresh agitation

## Army intensify patrol in Karachi

KARACHI started in June 1992 and the government declared it would be against dacoits (bandits) kidnappers and hard criminals," MQM leader Altaf Hussain told Reuters by telephone from his home in self-imposed exile in London.

"Now everybody knows that it was started to crush the MQM and to violate its leadership as well as to violate Mohajirs in Pakistan," said Hussain, who fled into exile in 1991 and faces dozens of charges, some carrying the death penalty, at home.

The MQM proved in May that it remains a potent, savage and heavily armed force after 32 people were killed and dozens injured in five days of street violence that erupted when police opened fire on an MQM demonstration.

The party called two days of mourning and strikes after two activists were shot dead by the police, and districts of Karachi

where Mohajirs live were overwhelmed by a maelstrom of violence as supporters enforced the strike with Kalashnikovs.

The army, which had quietly withdrawn most patrols, was recalled to restore order. Military trucks mounted with machineguns are once again to be seen in the streets.

"This is a fairly long time already for the army to be deployed," said military spokesman Major-General Khalid Bashir.

"We feel that whatever role or mandate was given to the army has to a large extent been accomplished," he said. "We would like to leave as soon as possible."

Privately army officers say the Karachi administration lacks the authority or the will to maintain the fragile peace if the army were to be withdrawn.

The charismatic Hussain, regarded as a *pir* or Islamic

saint by his followers has built up an almost unassailable vote bank in urban Sind by appealing to fears of discrimination among the mainly lower-middle class Mohajir community.

"The MQM provides jobs for Mohajirs," said one young engineer who lives not far from Hussain's Karachi headquarters. "The MQM wants a balance for native Sindis and Mohajirs."

His elderly father complained that the army was persecuting Mohajirs and not arresting dacoits (bandits) in its crackdown.

"Since Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto called the MQM terrorists, the army has been targeting the MQM," he said.

Army officials said they found 23 torture cells in Karachi last June. The MQM denies the charge and counters by accusing the army of falsely arresting and torturing its supporters.

## Irish Nobel Prize winner refused entry into Manila

MANILA, May 29: An Irish Nobel Prize winner and her companion were refused entry into the Philippines after arriving to attend a conference on Indonesia's annexation of East Timor, reports AP.

Mairiad Maguire, who won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1976, and fellow Irishman Tom Hyland were detained briefly after arriving on a KLM flight Saturday. They were put aboard the airline's return flight to Bangkok, Thailand.

The five-day conference was to have begun next Tuesday at the University of the Philippines but has been placed in doubt after the government moved against the meeting under pressure from Indonesia.

Conference organiser Renato Constantino Jr. said his group will defy the ban and contest the injunction before the Supreme Court and the United Nations Human Rights Commission.

## Chechnya President escapes assassination

MOSCOW, May 29: The President of Russia's breakaway region of Chechnya barely escaped assassination when a huge bomb blew his car off the road and killed two senior aides, Chechen officials said on Saturday, reports Reuters.

Chechen Press Minister Movladi Udugov said a car packed with explosives blew up when a motorcade passed by late on Friday carrying Chechen President Dzhokhar Dudayev and some of his top ministers.

The blast hurled Dudayev's car 10 metres off the road, but he was not hurt. However, Interior Minister Magomed Eldiyev, criminal police chief Said-Ali Batayev and their driver were killed.

## LA protesters support immigrant rights

LOS ANGELES, May 29: At least 8,000 protesters marched on City Hall Saturday in support of immigrant rights, reports AP.

Some waved American flags. Others burned an effigy of Governor Pete Wilson.

The demonstration was peaceful and there were no arrests, said Officer Daniel Wong. Police estimated the crowd at 8,000, but protest organisers said it was nearly twice that number.

"We will continue marching until consciousness is raised to where the rights of immigrants are no longer an issue," said Marta Jacques, spokeswoman for the One-Stop Immigration Center, a non-profit immigrant rights service.

repeated requests by Arafat to sit on the national authority. Ashrawi has established the Palestine Independent Commission for Human Rights, which will lobby for democratic reforms in the Palestinian entity and combat corruption, widespread within the PLO.

Arafat has had extreme difficulty finding qualified people to sit on the authority, and creating a balance between his longtime allies in the exile PLO leadership and Palestinians who endured the 27-year Israeli occupation.

He has also had to accommodate other power centers — such as Palestinian clans, political factions, and secular and religious groups.

PLO sources said Arafat dis-



1976 Nobel Peace Prize winner Mairead Maguire (C) with fellow Irish activist Tom Hyland (L) are escorted back to their plane by Philippine immigration authorities at Manila Airport on Saturday.

## Anti-US march in S Korea

KWANGJU, South Korea, May 29: About 50,000 students staged an angry anti-government, anti-US march Sunday in this southern city, demanding punishment of former leaders who bloodily suppressed a 1980 pro-democracy uprising here, reports AP.

"Kill them" the students screamed, referring to the country's former military-backed presidents, Chun Doo-hwan and Roh Tae-woo. Students seek prosecution of the two ex-leaders for their role in putting down the uprising, which left at least 200 dead.

The protesters blame the United States in part for the 1980 crackdown, saying Washington condoned it. The United States has denied that, but protests in connection with the Kwangju uprising always have a strong anti-American component.

Earlier Sunday, students

burned a huge American flag, setting it afire with a flaming arrow, and the protesters planned later Sunday to march on an American cultural centre that has been the scene of frequent and sometimes violent protests in the past.

Police have said they will block the march 100 meters (yards) from the building. No clashes were immediately reported at Sunday's rally, but the scene was ominous. Some students were seen carrying metal pipes and firebombs. Police, apparently not wanting to inflame passions, stayed out of sight.

The government has warned that violent or illegal demonstrations would result in summary arrest and prosecution — a departure from a previously tolerant attitude toward protesters.

President Kim Young-sam, who took office last year as the

## Yangon rally demands release of Suu Kyi

BANGKOK, May 29: At least seven Myanmar people were arrested on Friday after showing support for a European who staged a protest in Yangon demanding the release of detained democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi, a witness said, reports Reuters.

Thierry Granddier, 25, attracted a curious crowd of more than 100 onlookers on Friday when he unfurled a banner reading "release Aung San Suu Kyi" outside the Sule Pagoda, said Nick Nostiz, a German photographer assigned to film the protest.

He told Reuters that after about 15 minutes men believed to be undercover policemen managed to snatch the banner away from Granddier, a dual Swiss-French national from

leadership, it would be in his interest to put off the elections while he builds a power base. Balloting, therefore, may not be held for at least a year.

The list of appointees disclosed Saturday includes many senior members of Arafat's mainstream Fatah faction, the biggest component of the Palestine Liberation Organisation.

Five other people have been named to the authority but have not been assigned portfolios. The PLO chairman appears to be keeping some seats on the authority vacant as he tries to lure members of other groups to try to make the council more representative.

Key appointments include: — Ahmed Qure'a, the PLO's

## Off the Record

## 'Di and I' — an imaginary romance

LONDON: A novel which includes explicit sex scenes involving Princess Diana and a fictional Hollywood screenwriter has provoked anger among her friends, a newspaper reported on Sunday, says Reuters.

Britain's Sunday Express said the novel, "Di and I" had sparked calls by friends of the Princess for the book's banning.

The book, by US writer Peter Lefcourt, is due for publication next month. It is the story of an imaginary romance between the Princess and a Hollywood screenwriter.

Lefcourt, himself a Hollywood screenwriter, includes graphic sex scenes, including one in Diana's Kensington palace home, the Sunday Express reported under an exclusive tag.

The newspaper quoted Lady Palumbo, who it called a close friend of Diana, saying: "It's horrible, dreadful. The author is cashing in on the Princess and it's really rather disgusting."

It also said romantic novelist Barbara Cartland, Diana's step-grandmother, had demanded a ban on the book, saying: "It's appalling that Diana can be used to sell fiction like this."

Diana has been unflinchingly trailed by the media since she married the heir to Britain's throne, Prince Charles, and throughout the 18-month separation since the marriage collapsed.

## 30 yrs in pitch-black cellar

MOSCOW: Russian police have found a 53-year-old man who has spent the past 30 years squatting in the pitch-black cellar of his mother's house, press reports said Saturday, according to AFP.

The man survived on pieces of food passed to him by his 80-year-old mother through a tiny vent in her house at Saratov, in southeastern Russia.

Police found the man in the cellar by chance when they called on the women to ask her to move out because the boiler was badly damaged and had been belching out smoke for several days.

The man was incapable of walking or speaking and was a virtually a skeleton, Itar-Tass quoted a local paper as saying.

His mother told police her son had been a normal child, but "suddenly stopped speaking. He started avoiding people and then shut himself in the alcove and refused to come out."

## Cops go on drunken rampage

CHICAGO: Two Milwaukee patrolmen in town for a night of fun allegedly went on a drunken rampage, spraying a cardinal's home with gunfire and killing a bar bouncer, police said Saturday, reports AP.

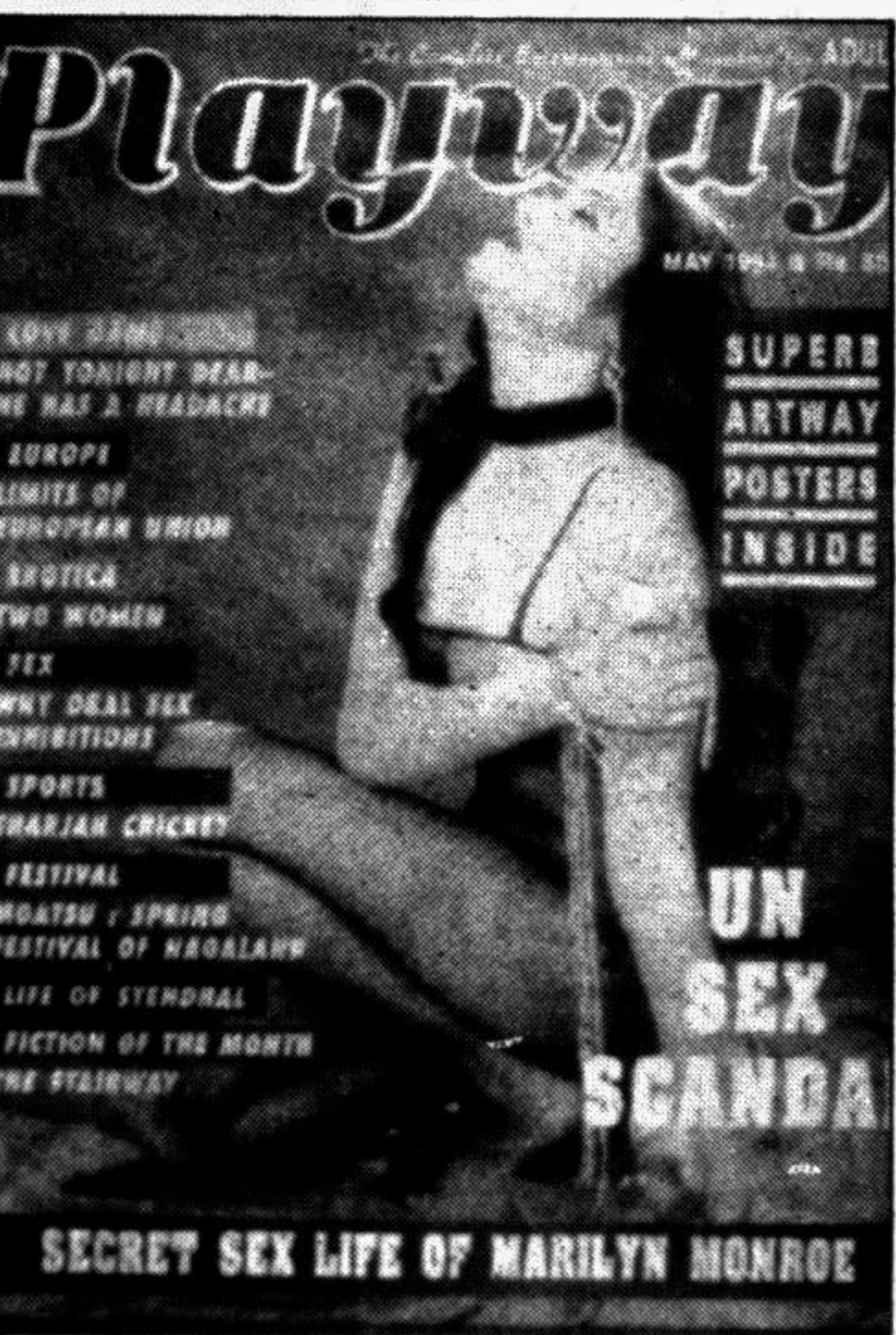
Gabriel Bedoya, 33, was charged with first-degree murder and three counts of felonious discharge of a firearm. John V. Koch, 35, was charged with the same weapons violations and with obstruction of justice.

The two men drove the 145 kilometers (90 miles) to Chicago "for a good time," police Lt. Richard Stevens said. "They were out drinking all night and were under the influence."

Stevens said the men were bar-hopping Friday night when they stopped to fire about 15 shots at a hotel, a condominium and the residence of Cardinal Joseph Bernardin.

Some of the shots went through Bernardin's front door, but no one was injured. The cardinal slept through the incident.

The men then returned to the Dynasty Club Bar. When they tried to leave the bar with a drink, they got into an argument with the bouncer, Julian Rodriguez.



An Indian court has asked "Playway" (pictured) a local clone of "Playboy", to stop publication in an interim ruling on a trademark infringement suit brought by the US adult magazine. Playboy Enterprises Inc, sued publishers of Playway in the Delhi High Court alleging the Indian publication was trying to pass itself off as the original which is not circulated in India.

## Taiwan again offers talks with China

TAIPEI, May 29: Taiwan has again offered to hold talks with rival China on travel safety and compensation for relatives of 24 Taiwanese tourists murdered there in March, reports Reuters.

The Straits Exchange Foundation, which handles Taiwan's links with China in the absence of official ties, said in a statement today it sent a letter to its Chinese counterpart on Friday proposing to hold talks in an unspecified country in early June.

"There is a need to establish a model to handle emergency travel matters... we hope your side will, in a responsible attitude, hold talks as soon as possible," said the letter.