

BRIEFLY

Bihar violence leaves 3 dead: At least three students were killed when police opened fire during a student protest in the northern Indian state of Bihar on Tuesday, the Press Trust of India (PTI) said. Reuter reports from New Delhi.

The students were reported to be objecting to stricter invigilation to prevent cheating during university examinations in Samastipur district and began throwing stones at police near the examination hall.

PTI quoted police sources as saying protesters threw a bomb at a government vehicle and set fire to a railway station. The situation was described as "highly volatile".

Germany, Italy SC member for 2 yrs: Germany and Italy were endorsed Tuesday as non-permanent Security Council members with two-year terms, beginning in 1995, a German spokesman said. Reuter reports from United Nations.

Both countries have lobbied for permanent seats in the Security Council, a decision members may take sometime in 1995 when the council is expected to be enlarged. But Tuesday's nomination had no bearing on their permanent membership.

Germany and Italy were candidates of their regional group of western European states and other nations and will replace Spain and New Zealand on the council next year.

Navy cmdr jailed in Taiwan: A court martial has sentenced a navy commander to life in prison for leaking military secrets to an arms dealer in Taiwan's worst arms-buying scandal, the military reported Wednesday. AP reports from Taipei, Taiwan.

Cmdr. Liao Chih-wei, 37, was the first of eight military officers sentenced in a case that surfaced after the murder last December of Capt. Yin Ching-feng, who supervised the navy's weapons procurement office.

Authorities believe Yin was murdered because he planned to identify colleagues who accepted bribes from arms dealers in exchange for military secrets to benefit their business.

Algerian gunmen kill rector: Gunmen shot and killed a university rector Tuesday as he stepped into his parked car, AP reports from Algiers.

No claim of responsibility was issued, but the killing had the style of assassinations carried out by Islamic extremists against prominent intellectuals.

Salah Djebaili was rector of the University of Science and Technology at Bab Ezzouar, an Algiers suburb. It is the largest university in this North African country.

Spanish General shot dead: Two attackers shot and killed an army brigadier general as he left his home in a Madrid residential area during the Wednesday morning rush hour, news reports said. AP reports from Madrid.

Infantry Brig. Gen. Juan Jose Hernandez Rovira was dead on arrival at a hospital a few steps from where the shooting took place, the private SER radio reported. The radio said a man and a woman carried out the attack.

Police could provide no details about the attack, but it bore the hallmarks of the Basque separatist group ETA, which frequently assassinates military and police personnel.

SC renews operation in Somalia: The Security Council Tuesday, at the instigation of the United States, renewed the 19,000-storied UN operation in Somalia for only four months rather than the six months most members wanted. Reuter reports from United Nations.

A resolution, adopted by a 15-0 unanimous vote, also calls for a review in mid-July of the operation which the United States demanded.

The Clinton administration originally wanted to begin withdrawing troops in four months and cut the renewal to 45 days but was persuaded by council members not to impose such conditions. The four-month renewal was a compromise.

Redman may succeed Djerejian: Charles E. Redman, the American negotiator pressing for peace in Bosnia, is considered the leading choice for another tough US diplomatic assignment — ambassador to Israel. AP reports from Washington.

He would succeed Edward P. Djerejian, who is resigning to become director of a public policy institute at Rice University in Houston, starting in August.

12 die after drinking liquid: Twelve Russians have died in the town of Pavlov Posad, near Moscow, after drinking a liquid that experts are still trying to identify. Russia's Ministry for Emergency Situations said on Tuesday. Reuter reports from Moscow.

It said local hospitals had started receiving patients with symptoms of acute poisoning on Monday night and by Tuesday afternoon 12, including two women, had died.

The ministry said police experts were trying to identify the liquid. Numerous deaths have been reported across Russia in the last two years caused by low-quality alcohol which appeared in street kiosks after the collapse of strict state controls.

Iran plans rally during next year's Hajj

NICOSIA, June 1: Iran's spiritual leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said on Tuesday that Iran planned to hold a political rally during next year's Muslim pilgrimage to Saudi Arabia despite a ban by the Kingdom, reports Reuter.

The Iranian news agency Irna quoted Khamenei as saying that holding the rally "is a very serious issue, and we try to hold this ceremony every year... the ban on the ceremony in one year, will not prevent us from holding the following years." Saudi Arabia and Irna engaged in a war of words this month over a Saudi ban on a planned Iranian rally to denounce the United States and Israel during the annual pilgrimage to Meccah.

Iranian President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani earlier blasted Saudi Arabia for alleged interference in the affairs of other states in the region, including Iraq.

"Saudi Arabia has caused difficulties and obstacles for its neighbours including Iraq. It is not acceptable to us that a larger country in the region should put pressure on another country," Tehran radio quoted Rafsanjani as saying.

"Nevertheless, we are seeking to find ways to resolve disputes between the two countries although we have not yet reached any result," he added.

Rafsanjani, whose country has long been at odds with Saudi Arabia across the Gulf over issues ranging from divergent interpretations of Islam to the policies of the oil producers' body OPEC, did not say which Saudi policy towards Iraq he objected to.

Sudanese govt holds secret talks with rebels

OSLO, June 1: Delegations from the government and rebels in Sudan have been holding secret peace talks in Oslo to try to end their 11-year civil war, a Norwegian newspaper said today, reports Reuter.

The Foreign Ministry declined comment on the report in the daily Vaart Land, linked to Norway's Christian Democratic Party.

Geneva peace talks begin today
Heavy fighting in Bosnia

SARAJEVO, June 1: Fighting between Bosnian Muslims and Serbs has intensified in northern and western Bosnia and both sides have toughened their negotiating positions before planned peace talks in Geneva, reports Reuter.

The upsurge in fighting comes before the rival sides were due to meet in Geneva on Thursday at the invitation of UN Special Envoy Yasushi Akashi to discuss a four-month truce throughout Bosnia.

Muslim-controlled Sarajevo Radio said Serb forces had been pounding the north-eastern town of Gradacac throughout Tuesday.

The town had come under fire from tanks, artillery, mortars and howitzers, and two infantry attacks had been successfully repelled with heavy enemy losses, the Radio said.

The Bosnian Serb Army (BSA) denied taking casualties and blamed the fighting on Muslims who launched an unsuccessful offensive in the area, the Yugoslav news agency Tanjug said.

BSA said the Muslims launched a fierce but abortive attack in central Bosnia, trying to break into the Una and Sana river valleys. Tanjug, quoting BSA sources, said three were killed and wounded on both sides but gave no precise figures.

Prime Minister Haris Silajdzic confirmed that his country would boycott the peace talks unless Serb forces withdrew from a UN exclusion zone around the Muslim town of Gorazde.

In a gloomy assessment of peace prospects, Silajdzic told journalists he doubted the Serbs really wanted a just peace and expressed concern that there were no guarantees to enforce a settlement even if one was agreed.

Silajdzic expressed serious reservations about a four-month ceasefire being proposed by mediators, saying he wanted to link any cessation of hostilities with progress on a permanent solution to the war.

He said the government would prefer a four-to-six-week truce since it would provide enough time for serious exploration of peace options without freezing Serb territorial gains in place.

Muslims and Croats have agreed a federation based on eight cantons in 58 per cent of the country, with the rest going to the Serbs. International mediators have proposed a 51-49 split, giving the federation slightly more than the Serbs.

Silajdzic reiterated that he would be ready to negotiate some adjustments to the federation's 58 per cent demand.

Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic, whose forces hold 70 per cent of Bosnia, also voiced pessimism and accused the Muslims of launching a "major offensive" against the Serbs.

"We are pessimistic (about the outcome of Geneva peace talks) because the Muslims are in favour of war," he told Reuters.

Karadzic insisted on Tuesday that his side would not settle for less territory than the new federation and said Silajdzic's demands were "unreasonable and irresponsible."

The National Democratic Coalition (Nadeco) the alliance of politicians, ex-military officers and pro-democracy groups that issued the call said Abacha failed to relinquish power to Moshood Abiola, winner of the vote last June.

Deadline for power handover to Abiola expires

LAGOS, June 1: Nigeria appeared heading for more pro-democracy protests after a deadline expired on Tuesday for military ruler Sani Abacha to hand power to the winner of an annulled presidential election, reports Reuter.

The paper did not give the name of the diplomat but said he was the embassy's number two, which would mean first secretary Amish Cowell.

It did not say when the decision was taken or why, but added that the move had prompted the British government to order the Iranian Charge D'Affaires in London to leave.

The British Charge D'Affaires Jeffrey James contacted by AFP refused to comment.

Britain's Guardian newspaper reported on Saturday that London had secretly ordered out a high-ranking Iranian diplomat following reports that Iranian intelligence had been in contact with the banned Irish Republican Army (IRA).

Representatives of Azerbaijan, Israel Vakilov (L), and Armenia, Givair Libaridian (R), have a chat during the opening session of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) in Cairo on May 31. The two countries have been fighting for six years over a territorial dispute which has caused more than 20,000 victims.

Manila cancels 10 delegates' visas

MANILA, June 1: Immigration officials in the Philippines served deportation notices on Wednesday against 10 foreigners taking part in a controversial international conference on East Timor, reports Reuter.

Three of the 10 are Australians, two are Portuguese and there is one each from the United States, Canada, the Netherlands, Argentina and India.

Five officials arrived at the University of the Philippines hostel where the delegates are staying to serve orders cancelling their visas and giving notice of a deportation hearing.

The order accused the 10 of violating immigration laws by "engaging in partisan political activities" in defiance of a ban on their participation in the conference, called to highlight human rights abuses in Indonesian-ruled East Timor.

"It is the national policy not to allow foreign nationals to use the Philippines as a venue for any political activity against a friendly nation," it said.

"We are, therefore, ordering the filing of deportation charges for overstaying and for engaging in partisan political activities."

Lawyer Alex Padilla, representing the conference organisers, said the foreigners named in the order had no intention of appearing before an immigration board hearing because the notice did not say when or where it would be held.

"This is an illegal order," he said. "If they had spelled out the time and place they would have complied."

The paper identified them as Hussein Nema, 21, and Nasser Abdul-Hussein, 20.

Al-Seyassah newspaper said the two were assigned to blow up a Kuwait petrol station and a number of border posts.

Officials were not immediately available for comment.

Kuwait has built a security trench and rampart along the 207 km (130 mile) border with Iraq in the first stage of a plan to keep out Iraqi infiltrators.

Iraq invaded Kuwait in August 1990 and occupied the emirate until a US-led coalition forced Iraqi troops out in February 1991.

After the war small groups of Iraqis often crossed the unmarked border to scavenge for arms and equipment left on battlefields.

The second attempt was foiled by the immigration men (officials) of the Abadi border post who arrested two Iraqi intelligence men. They also admitted to having been assigned by Iraqi intelligence to carry out terrorist acts in Kuwait, the English-language daily added.

The defeated candidate was identified as a member of the Bharatiya Janata Party (Indian People's Party), India's main opposition group, which alleged the election had been rigged and demanded an official inquiry into the incident.

had a 14-year affair with Valerie Harkess and her two daughters from a previous marriage, Josephine, and Allison 36.

The family has been living in South Africa since 1977 but the move apparently did not prevent Clark from pursuing the affairs with the trio.

The scandal erupted last weekend when the Harkess family decided to tell all to the British tabloid news of the world.

"I have been bitterly traumatised by people whom, many years ago, I held in affection and trust," Clark said Monday adding that he had no "intention of taking part in any kind of stunt prepared by a national newspaper to enhance its circulation."

But the Harkess family sees the matter otherwise.

The judge, who told the news of the world that he would like to see Clark horse-whipped, said he intends "to set the record straight, not only for my own family's sake but also... at his critical time in what is going on in Britain

Britain urged to forget Tiananmen Square massacre

LONDON, June 1: Britain should forget China's Tiananmen Square massacre and concentrate on business with a country that will become one of the world's big powers, former Prime Minister Edward Heath said Tuesday, reports AFP.

"Let's stop talking about Tiananmen Square... These incidents happen, and that was a bad one... But as far as the future is concerned, I believe they are equally determined it should not happen again," he said, referring to the military crack-down on pro-democracy protesters in Tiananmen Square, Beijing, which took place almost exactly five years ago on June 4, 1989.

Britain was lagging behind others in trade with China, potentially one of the world's most important and economically powerful nations, said the former Tory premier in a lecture at Glasgow University, Scotland, on the theme of Europe and the wider world.

US President Bill Clinton, who last week announced he had ended the link between most-favoured-nation trading status for China and human rights, was forced to drop the connection after protests from American businessmen, said Heath.

And he added: "Try to persuade them, yes — try to threaten them or tell them, no."

Iran declares British diplomat persona non grata

TEHRAN, June 1: Iran has declared a diplomat at the British embassy here "persona non grata" and asked London to recall him, Salam newspaper said here today, reports AFP.

The paper did not give the name of the diplomat but said he was the embassy's number two, which would mean first secretary Amish Cowell.

It did not say when the decision was taken or why, but added that the move had prompted the British government to order the Iranian Charge D'Affaires in London to leave.

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UN resumes food distribution in Kigali

KIGALI, June 1: The United Nations resumed food distribution today to needy civilians in Rwanda's embattled capital Kigali, but other operations remained suspended after a peacekeeper was killed by a shell blast, UN officials said, reports AFP.

All relief operations were halted after Captain Mbaye Diagne of Senegal died from shrapnel wounds Tuesday when a shell landed a metre (yard) from his car.

Deputy UN force commander Brigadier Henry Anyidoho said the rebel Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) had fired the shell, but UN officials said they did not believe that it was a deliberate attack.

UN military spokesman Major Jean-Guy Plante said UN Commander General Romeo Dallaire would meet RPF leader Paul Kagame later Wednesday to discuss guarantees of security for UN troops to resume the evacuation of civilians trapped behind the battle lines.

Plante said UN investigators sent to investigate reports that 500 had been slaughtered last weekend in Kabagali, 60 kilometres (35 miles) south of Kigali, had "concluded that the massacres did not take place based on information we found."

He said initial reports that the UN military observers had come under fire on the way to Kabagali were incorrect. Up to half a million Rwandans, mostly minority Tutsis have been butchered in seven weeks of carnage blamed largely on pro-government Hutu militias and another half million have fled to neighbouring countries.

in which he alludes to his affair with the three women, prompted her to confess to her husband, who was unaware of the affair, and to hire Clifford to protect the family's interests. The diaries, which refer to the three women as "the coven" are soon to be published in South Africa.

Clifford represented the Actress Antonia De Sancha after her affair brought down the former Tory Minister David Mellor. He also represented Bienvendita Buck when she revealed her affair with Sir Peter Harding, the former Chief of the defence staff.

The United States and the Soviet Union aimed hundreds of long-range nuclear missiles at one another during the Cold War.

Britain signed up for the accord in February.

The targeting agreement, signed when President Clinton visited Moscow in January, was intended to end by May 30 the Cold War practice of having missiles ready for immediate launch at targets like Washington and Moscow.

It covered about 3,500 nuclear warheads on each side which would be delivered by land-based and sea-based missiles. Some were based in Ukraine but under Moscow's operation command.

Delaski told reporters that 50 10-warhead MX missiles based in Silos in the United States and all multi-warhead Trident missiles aboard 14 U.S. missile submarines were no longer aimed at targets.

Some 500 older U.S. Trident-3 land-based missiles, which require targets, have now been aimed at empty spots in the world's oceans, she said.

"We have de-targeted all of our strategic nuclear missiles for the first time in almost 35 years. The strategic forces of the United Kingdom have also been de-targeted," Delaski said.

"It emphasises the strengthening of partnership between the U.S. and Russia — a significant milestone which indicates we are no longer nuclear adversaries," she added.

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File picture dated May 30, 1989 of Chinese demonstrators gathering in Tiananmen Square to protest nearby the "Goddess of Democracy" statue which faces Mao Ze Dong's portrait. According to Amnesty International, five years after the crushing of the pro-democracy movement, "thousands" of prisoners remain in jail. — AFP photo

Off the Record

Pistol that killed Lincoln fetches \$70,000

SAN FRANCISCO: A pistol believed carried by John Wilkes Booth the night he shot Abraham Lincoln was sold at auction to Ripley's Believe It or Not for 70,000 dollars, reports AP.

The derringer inscribed "J. Wilkes Booth" was found on the stage of Ford's Theater in Washington on April 15, 1865, the day after Lincoln was shot, said Greg Martin, a consultant who vouched for its authenticity.

"It was not the gun that killed Lincoln," Martin said. "This is at Ford's Theater. This one was found by a stagehand."

The small, short-barreled gun apparently fell to the stage when Booth leaped from the presidential box.

Single, divorced men more likely to suffer health problems

LONDON, June 1: Single and divorced men are more likely to suffer health problems than married males, according to a survey released Wednesday, reports Reuter.

The Which guide to men's health says you live with is just as important to male health as how you live.

"Most health information is targeted at women who are seen as responsible not only for their own health, but for the health of their partners and children, so health advice may not reach men who live alone or with other men," said Dr Steve Carroll, the author of the report.

He added that men also are reluctant to visit a doctor when a health problem develops. They run unnecessary risks because they are badly informed.

He also discovered that men are more prone to commit suicide.

Green tea protection against cancer of esophagus

WASHINGTON: Green tea, the beverage of choice for millions of Asians, may help protect regular drinkers against cancer of the esophagus, according to a new US study, reports AP.

Building on findings that green tea reduced the incidence of esophageal cancer in rats and mice, the scientists studied the records of 902 victims of the disease and 1,552 healthy people in Shanghai and concluded it apparently worked that way on humans, too.

The risks of such contracting such cancer were reduced by 57 per cent for men and 60 per cent for women who neither smoked nor drank alcohol, said the study published Tuesday in the Journal of the National Cancer Institute.

US, Russia 'de-target' nuclear missiles

WASHINGTON, June 1: The United States has stopped aiming its land and sea-based nuclear missiles at the former Soviet Union and other targets around the world for the first time in over three decades, the Defence Department said Tuesday, reports Reuter.

The announcement followed statements by Russian officials Monday that Moscow had also stopped targeting its nuclear missiles at the West in a deal with Washington to lower the nuclear threshold after the Cold War.

Pentagon spokeswoman Kathleen Delaski, calling it a "significant milestone," said the United States, Russia and Britain had "de-targeted" their missiles in a symbolic step because missiles can be quickly re-targeted using computers.

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Former Tory MP at centre of scandal

LONDON, June 1: Former Tory MP Alan Clark is at the center of a scandal here following allegations that he seduced the wife of a South African judge as well as the man's two step daughters, reports AFP.

The Judge, James Harkess, his wife, Valerie, 57, and one of his step-daughters, Josephine, 34, arrived in Britain Tuesday bent on "setting the record straight."

For that, they have hired the well-known publicist Max Clifford, who has already set up several "exclusive interviews" for the family.

Clark, 66, is said to have had a 14-year affair with Valerie Harkess and her two daughters from a previous marriage, Josephine, and Allison 36.

The family has been living in South Africa since 1977 but the move apparently did not prevent Clark from pursuing the affairs with the trio.

The scandal erupted last weekend when the Harkess family decided to tell all to the British tabloid news of the world.

"I have been bitterly traumatised by people whom, many years ago, I held in affection and trust," Clark said Monday adding that he had no "intention of taking part in any kind of stunt prepared by a national newspaper to enhance its circulation."

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