

# Hata to form new cabinet if SDP returns to govt

**TOKYO, June 11:** Japanese Prime Minister Tsutomu Hata is ready to replace all his ministers if the Socialists agree to return to the government, coalition sources told a local newspaper, reports AFP.

The Yomiuri Shimbun, quoting the sources, said Saturday the ruling coalition had unofficially offered the proposal to the Social Democratic Party (SDP) which angrily left the government in April over infighting.

The offer followed SDP leaders' recent remarks that the party might come back to the government if Hata voluntarily stepped down.

The daily said the SDP was divided over the offer, with some members calling for a

general resignation of all the Cabinet members, including Hata.

SDP chairman Tomichi Murayama said: "a general resignation is necessary. We cannot accept only a considerable reshuffle." But some SDP senior officials said the Party should compromise even without Hata's resignation.

On Thursday, the Prime Minister said he had no intention of giving in to opposition demands for his resignation.

The main opposition Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) has strongly threatened to submit a no-confidence motion against Hata, while the Party continued calling for cooperation with the SDP in the move.

# 5 NLD men surrender to Myanmar Junta

**BANGKOK, June 11:** Five pro-democracy Myanmar politicians who won seats in elections four years ago but fled to the jungle after the ruling junta refused to recognise the poll have surrendered. Myanmar's state-run television reported, says Reuters.

The television broadcast, monitored in Bangkok late on Friday, said the five members of Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD) as well as three NLD organisers "realised their mistake and returned to the legal fold" on June 5.

The five politicians, identified as Marpan Sin, Yau Si, Nang Gam, Kyan Maun and Kya Mya, won seats in the May 1990 elections in northern constituencies.

They fled to an area of northern Myanmar under the control of ethnic minority Kachin guerrillas in early 1992. The Kachin Independence Organisation, the strongest of Myanmar's ethnic minority rebel groups, sealed a ceasefire agreement with the junta earlier this year after lengthy negotiations.

The three NLD organisers who surrendered were from northern Myanmar's Sagaing division and were identified as Tin Min Swe, Ba Win and Thein Aung.

The NLD won more than 80 per cent of the seats in the 1990 polls but the junta ignored the result and instead launched a sweeping crackdown on the opposition and dozens of elected politicians and hundreds of dissidents, were imprisoned.

Eight elected NLD members, including Aung San Suu Kyi's cousin Sein Win, fled to southeast Myanmar near the Thai border under control of ethnic minority Karen guerrillas and set up a parallel government in late 1990. Several other NLD politicians fled to India.

# US, ROK agree to seek 'stern' sanctions against DPRK

**SEOUL, June 11:** The United States and South Korea agreed in intensive talks here today to seek 'stern' but phased sanctions against North Korea to "bring it to its senses," reports AFP.

"The ultimate purpose of sanctions should be to...bring it to its senses, rather than punish it...and the door to negotiations should be kept open at each phase of the sanctions," a South Korean statement said.

The statement was issued after US Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs Peter Tarnoff met with President

Kim Young-Sam, Foreign Minister Han Sung-Joo and Deputy Prime Minister Lee Hong-Koo.

The meetings paralleled a similar series by visiting Japanese Foreign Minister Koji Kakizawa, and followed the announcement in Istanbul overnight by US Secretary of State Warren Christopher that Russia had agreed to go along with sanctions.

Tarnoff told journalists at a brief airport press conference after the talks that work had started on a draft sanctions resolution and said he had "every expectation" that it would be passed by the UN Security Council.

"That is certainly our highest priority at the moment," Tarnoff said, adding that he was confident that "China understands the seriousness of the situation."

China, which as a permanent member of the Council has veto powers, has said it wants to see more dialogue rather than risk confrontation over the sanctions with North Korea, which has said they would constitute a declaration of war.

China has declared publicly for a long time that it is in

favour of denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula and we have had many months of consistent exchanges with China.

"I think China understands that we are at a critical moment, and I hope China will find a way to associate itself with international opinion given the seriousness of the situation," he said.

Tarnoff however declined to speculate on the timing for the tabling of a draft resolution, saying only "we are working very actively on draft elements... we will be prepared before very long."

# Hekmatyar for transfer of power to interim govt

**JALALABAD, Afghanistan, June 11:** Afghan Prime Minister Gulbuddin Hekmatyar Friday called for an immediate transfer of power to an interim government to end the country's longest factional fighting, reports AFP.

All the political and faction leaders should sit together and elect an interim government which would declare a ceasefire and collect the heavy weapons from the feuding parties, he told a crowded press conference at an army base in this eastern garrison city.

He said the 18-month term allowed to President Burhanuddin Rabbani under the multi-party Islamabad and Jalalabad accords early last year would expire at the end of this month.

"Rabbani must step down to pave the way for an interim set up on the basis of a consensus among various party leaders and the country's important personalities," he added.

The new government should declare a ceasefire and establish an Afghan army and police force to conduct elections for president and the parliament on a proportional representation system, he said.

"If South Africa can go to polls despite bitter factional feuds and prolong ethnic rivalries, why can't we have elections in Afghanistan," he said.

However, he warned that a disagreement by his rival leader to transfer power to an interim administration would mean that Rabbani wanted continuation of war.

"We are opposed to seeking a military solution to the crisis," he said. However, if the war was thrust on his party, the presidential forces would be defeated. And, the president would be held responsible for the consequent losses, he said.

Answering a question he said some people in the country were spreading fears in Saudi Arabia and other countries about the possibility of a takeover of Afghanistan by fundamentalists or the minority Shiite Muslim parties.

Others were giving the impression that an Islamic government in Afghanistan will



Gulbuddin Hekmatyar



Japanese Emperor Akihito (C) and Empress Michiko (2nd-R) are greeted on Friday by former US President Jimmy Carter and his wife Rosalynn (L) in Atlanta before a luncheon. Akihito, who is visiting the US for 16 days, is scheduled to meet with President Bill Clinton on Monday in Washington. — AFP photo

# Japanese royal couple meets Carter

**ATLANTA, June 11:** Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko of Japan met with former President Jimmy Carter and his wife Rosalynn on Friday, the first day of their goodwill tour of the United States, reports AP.

The royal couple is on a 16-day tour that will take them to 11 US cities in an attempt to promote friendship and goodwill between our two peoples," said Takazu Kuriyama, Japan's ambassador to the United States.

It is the first time a Japanese emperor has visited the United States since Akihito's father, Hirohito, came in 1975. Akihito last visited the United States as crown prince in 1987.

The emperor and empress made no public comments during their first stops in Atlanta, exchanging only simple pleasantries with dignitaries.

# BRIEFLY

## Syrian PM cancels Jordan tour:

Syrian Prime Minister Mahmoud Zohbi called off a visit to Jordan scheduled for today, the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs said, AFP reports from Amman.

"Our Syrian brothers called for a postponement, with a new date to be decided later," Talal Al-Hassan told reporters, without giving a reason.

Zohbi accompanied by Foreign Minister Faruq Al-Shara on a two-day visit, was to co-chair a first session of the two countries joint commission since 1990 with his Jordanian counterpart Abdel Salam Majali.

Jordan, not wanting to be left behind in Middle East peace moves, agreed with Israel on Tuesday to set up a border commission.

## Russian PM returns home:

Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin returned home Friday after five days in Germany for medical treatment and denied rumours he was considering quitting, Itar-Tass news agency said, AFP reports from Moscow.

"There are still forces putting forth such rumours," the agency quoted him as saying adding "they are trying thereby to keep the whole country in a state of tension."

Chernomyrdin, who interrupted his holiday in southern Russia on Sunday to fly to Germany for treatment of kidney stones, will complete his vacation in Moscow, the report said.

## Cyprus President to visit Israel:

Cyprus President Glafco Clerides will pay a three-day unofficial visit to Israel next month during a sailing regatta, Israeli ambassador to Cyprus, Shemi Tazur, announced yesterday at a press conference, Xinhua reports from Nicosia.

The Israeli ambassador said this was the first time a president of the Republic of Cyprus would visit Israel and the Israeli government would use this opportunity to arrange some meetings between President Clerides and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Foreign Minister Shimon Peres.

Tazur also announced that Peres was expected to visit Cyprus in the near future, probably towards the end of July.

## Two die in Chinese boat capsiz:

A festive dragon-boat race ended in tragedy in China's Guangdong Province when one boat capsized, killing two paddlers and leaving 15 missing, an official newspaper reported, Reuters says from Beijing.

Several of the long dragon-shaped boats were racing on a river in Yangdong county on Thursday when poor conditions forced one to capsize, the state-run Yangcheng Evening News of Quanzhou said in editions seen on Saturday in Beijing.

The dragon boaters had been paddling for 20 minutes when high waves, strong winds and violent currents suddenly overturned their boat, pitching all 63 people into the swirling waters," the report said.

## Army officer kills 7 in Sweden:

An army officer opened fire with an assault rifle in a park early Saturday, killing seven people and wounding at least two, AP reports from Stockholm.

The gunman shot people as they walked through a park in Falun, 231 kilometers (144 miles) northwest of Stockholm, police said.

"It was an execution," police spokesman Bertil Jansson said.

The gunman is a second lieutenant at a nearby army garrison. A conscript on guard at the garrison alerted the police at 2:30 am after hearing shots.

## 5 killed in Kashmir violence:

Three militants and two Border Security Force (BSF) jawans were killed and 11 others, seven of them BSF personnel, wounded in continued violence in the last 24 hours in Kashmir valley as security forces sealed off Batmaloo in central Srinagar, PTI reports from Srinagar.

Security forces captured 12 militants in different parts of the valley and foiled an attempt to smuggle explosives into the valley during the period, an official spokesman said here today.

## Syria, Russia sign accords:

Syria and Russia signed 12 accords on military cooperation during a visit by Russian army chief of staff General Mikhail Kolesnikov, Russian sources said Friday, AFP reports from Damascus.

The general met President Hafez Al-Assad and military officials on his visit from June 5 to 8.

The 12 accords were part of the implementation of the overall military agreement signed in April to resume the sale of Russian arms to Syria, after a three-year break, the sources said.

# South Yemen rejects North's ceasefire proposal

**ADEN, June 11:** Leaders of Southern Yemen early today rejected an offer by Yemen's Northern President, Ali Abdullah Saleh, for a new ceasefire in their five-week civil war as fighting raged around the capital Aden, reports AFP.

A spokesman for Southern Yemen's "presidential council" said in a statement here that "only international observers" would be entitled to supervise a truce, a measure demanded by Aden but rejected by Northern Yemen.

Earlier on Friday, a Northern spokesman said President Saleh had presented the United Nations with a proposal for a ceasefire to take effect at midnight on Friday (2100 GMT) in compliance with last week's UN Security Council Resolution 924.

He said the measure included a proposal for charging a special military committee made up of Southern and Northern officers to ensure compliance.

The committee should hold its first meeting at the frontline at Gool, between Sabr and Dar Saad villages, at 11 a.m (0800 GMT) on Saturday, the spokesman said.

The joint military committee was formed under a February accord reached in Jordan and aimed at ending a political crisis between the North and South. But the row erupted into civil war on May 5.

Saleh's Southern rival and former Vice President, Ali Salem Al-Baid, declared independence on May 21, only a year after North and South Yemen merged to form a fragile union.

Two other truces this week have broken down, with each side accusing the other of failing to honour pledges.

Saleh agreed to a ceasefire during talks Thursday with UN envoy Lakhdar Brahimi, but it collapsed around three hours later. A ceasefire for midnight on Monday also broke down hours later.

Brahimi was travelling to Saudi Arabia and Southern Yemen in a further bid to end the bloodshed.

Saleh's spokesman accused Southern "dissident" forces of continued violations by launching heavy air and sea attacks on government forces in Aden and Abyan, inflicting heavy casualties and damage.

"The Yemeni government

told its permanent representative at the United Nations to keep the UN Secretary General, Boutros Boutros Ghali, well informed about all these violations."

In another declaration on Aden television Friday evening, Southern officials said they had recaptured most of the north-eastern oil-producing Chabwa Province from Northern forces after heavy fighting.

Regional Governor Ahmad Farid As-Sarimah said Southern forces, supported by local ethnic groups, were "currently cleaning up pockets of resistance around Al-Ataq," the area's main town and a major military base. It was captured by the North at the end of May.

Fighting continued Friday evening on other fronts around Aden, with the sound of Northern shells and Southern Katusha rockets clearly audible.

Electricity has been cut in several parts of the city, which has been without water for several days.

Military police posts were stopping cars around the city and enlisting all men of fighting age, witnesses said.

# UN envoy plans to visit S Yemen

**DUBAI, June 11:** UN envoy Lakhdar Brahimi said today he planned to go to Southern Yemen in the next day or two to pursue his efforts to end the war between Northern and Southern Yemeni forces, reports Reuters.

Brahimi, speaking by telephone from the Saudi Arabian city of Jeddah, said he would probably go to Southern Yemen's eastern city of Mukalla, where the breakaway Southern state's president, Ali Salem al-Baidh, was staying.

# Heatwave kills 18 in New Delhi

**NEW DELHI, June 11:** Eighteen people died in New Delhi after collapsing under blistering heat, police and press reports said today, reports AFP.

The victims had either been found dead on the streets or brought in an unconscious state to hospitals Friday with symptoms of sun stroke and dehydration, a police spokesman said.

They had no external injuries but confirmation that they had all died from the effects of heat would be available only after autopsies were performed, he said.

# Filipino Muslim rebels raise ransom demand

**ISABELA, Philippines, June 11:** Members of a Muslim extremist group who massacred 15 Christian hostages on southern Basilan Island have raised the ransom demand for others they are still holding captive, the island's governor said Saturday, reports AP.

Gov Gerry Salapuddin told reporters in Isabela, the capital of Basilan, that leaders of the Muslim fundamentalist group Abu Sayyaf were demanding 1 million pesos (37,000 US dollars) for the release of 18 public school teachers, more than double their original demand.

The group has not yet decided on how much to ask for the three others they were holding, Roman Catholic priest Cirilo Nacoroda and two women rural health workers, Salapuddin said.

In Zamboanga City north of Basilan, police said a suspected Abu Sayyaf member was killed late Friday when he tried to escape as he was being driven to a police station.

Lt Cmdr Arthur Alviar, spokesman of the military's southern command, said Abdul Asmad was arrested inside his hotel room after hotel employees called police saying they suspected he was carrying a bomb.

Police found no bomb, but said Asmad carried an Abu Sayyaf identification card saying he was a political officer.

The Abu Sayyaf were responsible for a bombing Sunday in Zamboanga that injured 35 people. The group is also suspected in a bombing Wednesday in the southern city of General Santos that killed three and injured 34.

Salapuddin said he was assured by leaders of the extremist group that the hostages, including the priest, "are safe and sound."

On Wednesday armed members of the group waylaid more than 60 people in a civilian convoy outside Isabela, abducting 37 Christians and then gunning down 15 male hostages. One man escaped the massacre by pretending to be dead.

In Marawi City on the main southern island of Mindanao, some 20,000 people, mostly Muslims, rallied Saturday to call for an end to bloodshed, kidnappings and massacres.

Political warlords, Muslim secessionist rebels, communist insurgents, and bandits operate on Mindanao.

Addressing the crowd, Vice President Joseph Estrada, head of the presidential anti-crime commission, said kidnappings have disrupted the peace and order in our country. Let us wipe out all the kid nappers.

Children hoisted placards saying "Islam will prevail over lawlessness." "We want peace" and "Save our future."

Salapuddin said the spokesman of the Abu Sayyaf group, Barahama Sal, claimed the abduction and killings



South African wardens observe an inmate napping in the prison yard after prisoners rampaged, burning blankets, at Modderbeek prison, east of Johannesburg on Friday. Prisoners received a six-month remission of sentence following widespread rioting in the country's jails that has left two inmates dead. — AFP photo

# Off the Record

## Rushdie appears on satirical TV programme

**LONDON:** Salman Rushdie joked about living under the threat of death when he appeared on a satirical television programme Friday, reports AP.

The late Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini of Iran called for Rushdie's death in 1989 because his novel, "The Satanic Verses," offended Muslims.

Rushdie, who has been in hiding under guard ever since, appeared Friday on "Have I got News for you," a BBC game show in which panel members joke about current events.

When the conversation turned to a cricket official who had fired a team chaplain, Rushdie quipped: "I think there's not much to be said about that. He should be sentenced to death."

"This was your chance to offend another religion, of course," host Angus Deayton said, as Rushdie smiled.

At another point, Rushdie interrupted comedian Donna McPhail to protest that it was his team's turn to answer.

McPhail told him: "Salman, you should get out more. You're becoming anti-social."



## Home minister's car snatched at police chiefs' meeting

**LONDON:** Thieves snatched the bullet-proof car of Britain's interior minister, a government official said on Friday, reports Reuters.

It was the first news that Home Secretary Michael Howard's official car was taken on Wednesday when he visited Wakefield in northern England to address a meeting of police chiefs. Police found the vehicle a day later but all four wheels were gone.

"We will look into the incident and see what lessons can be learned," a Home Office spokesman said.

## Smiles arouse 'satanic lust' in men!

**TEHRAN:** Iranian police have warned women not to smile at strange men or to behave in any other way that may arouse "satanic lust," Jomhuri Islami newspaper reported yesterday, says AFP.

A police statement also urged "women and young girls" to cover up fully when "standing at a window overlooking" a neighbour's house.

"Exposure without the Islamic cover could invite dirty stares from strange men and arouse satanic lust," it said.

"Inappropriate smiles or loose behaviour could also expose them to corruption."

Iran has been ruled by Sharia, or Islamic law, since the 1979 revolution which toppled the pro-western Shah. Under a strict dress code, women must wear the black chador or long raincoats and scarves to conceal their bodies.

Authorities have declared a week-long campaign against "social immodesty and corruption" starting Saturday, the first day of the mourning month of Moharam for the death of Imam Hussein.

In June 1993, the authorities launched a major crackdown and arrested hundreds of women accused of violating the dress code.

## Birthday party for pigs

**LAGOS:** A man in central Nigeria gave two pigs a birthday party for surviving their first year without being stolen by thieves who pinched all his other porkers, the official Nan news agency reported Friday, says AFP.

Soja Dimka, a secondary school teacher at Pankshin in Plateau State, said that he had organised the party at his home last Sunday because the pigs had escaped the villains who were terrorising him.

He spent only 200 naira (nine dollars) on the party, but received a cash gift of 330 naira (15 dollars) and animal feed as gifts for the pigs, Dimka told Nan.