

BRIEFLY

Sao Tome PM dismissed: President Miguel Trovoadá of the tiny African island state of Sao Tome and Principe dismissed Prime Minister Norberto da Costa Alegre on Saturday, a presidential statement was quoted as saying. Reuter reports from Lisbon.

The statement quoted by Portuguese news agency Lusa said Trovoadá took his decision on the basis of the "poor political relationship which has worsened between the president of the republic and the head of the government."

No independent confirmation of the president's move to dismiss the prime minister was immediately available.

Algerian forces kill 10 rebels:

Algerian security forces killed 10 armed Muslim militants wanted for about 40 murders, including the killing last December of a Belgian national and his Algerian wife, the official Algeria news agency APS said on Saturday. Reuter reports from Tunis.

The gang was also wanted for the murder of the nine-year-old daughter, wife, and son, 30, of a retired gendarme who had their throats slit in their home two weeks ago.

The agency said security forces tipped off by local people, raided the militants' hideout in Oued Al Berdi village, some 90 km (55 miles) southeast of Algiers and shot them dead.

Korean War veteran Ju dies:

Vice-Marshal Ju To-il, an anti-Japanese guerrilla and Korean War veteran who rose to become one of North Korea's top military officials, has died aged 75. Pyongyang's official news agency reported. Reuter says from Tokyo.

The Korean Central News Agency (KCNA), monitored in Tokyo on Sunday, said Ju died on Friday after a long illness.

Ju was a senior member of the two bodies that control North Korea's one-million strong standing army, the ruling Workers' Party Central Military Commission and the National Defence Committee.

SA violence leaves 5 dead:

Five blacks were killed early on Saturday in political violence in Tokoza township east of Johannesburg, state television reported. Reuter says from Tokoza.

Police said earlier at least two people had been found shot dead and a resident of the township told reporters three people had been killed.

The killing appeared to be the result of feuding between the African National Congress of President Nelson Mandela and supporters of the Inkatha Freedom Party living immigrant worker hostels in the township.

Bandits kill 20 in Mali:

Mali's Defence Ministry said on Saturday that 20 people died in raids by what it called bandits in the country's barren north. Reuter reports from Bamako.

A statement issued on Friday night said June 28 attack on the village of Kano, on the edge of the Sahara Desert east of Timouktu, killed three women, three children and six men.

One of the assailants was slain in the attack, it added, but gave no details. Raid on Friday on the town of Tenenkou, in Marshland 400 km northeast of Bamako, claimed the lives of seven civilians, it said.

Ex-president of Myanmar dies:

Maung Maung, a Western-educated intellectual who ruled for one month as modern Myanmar's only civilian president in 1988, died of a heart attack Saturday, official sources said. He was 69. AP reports from Yangon.

Maung Maung became president on August 18, 1988, when his predecessor was ousted by student-led pro-democracy demonstrations after only 17 days in office.

Carter civic centre in Japan:

A remote town in southern Japan opened a civic center dedicated to Jimmy Carter Sunday, four days before the former US president plans to visit the town with his wife. AP reports from Tokyo.

About 230 people watched as local and national legislators cut the ribbon on the three-story Jimmy Carter Civic Center, said Kazuhiko Og, a staffer at the center in Konu on the southernmost main island of Kyushu.

Photo and video displays at the center document the presidency and subsequent peace activities of Carter, who is in Japan this week.

Albanian Party protests court ruling:

Macedonia's main ethnic Albanian Party, part of the ruling coalition, has walked out of parliament in protest over a court ruling which it called an attack on the Albanian minority in the former Yugoslav Republic. Reuter reports from Skopje.

The Party of Democratic Prosperity (PDP) announced the move late on Friday night in reaction to a recent court ruling against a group of Albanians accused of forming paramilitary organisations to overthrow the government.

A Skopje court last Monday convicted the group, which included two top Albanian politicians, and gave them stiff sentences of up to eight years.

Jordan-Israeli peace talks soon

AMMAN, July 3: Peace talks between Jordan and Israel will begin in the second half of July though no firm date has been set, Jordan's Information Minister Jawad Anani said Saturday. Reuter reports from Amman.

The talks will be held between officials at Wadi Araba on the Jordan-Israel border north of Aqaba, 350 kilometres (217 miles) south of Amman, the official news agency Petra quoted Anani as saying.

Amman's ambassador to the United States Faysal al-Tarrah, who will lead the Jordanian side at the negotiations, which were decided at a historic agreement signed in Washington on June 7.

Anani said the first round would decide on the mechanism of the subsequent meetings of the three commissions that would discuss questions of a common border, security, water, energy and the environment.

"No date has been fixed for the end of these talks which will go on until the two sides reach agreements guaranteeing Jordanian rights," he added.

Anani said that US Secretary of State Warren Christopher would visit Jordan, also in the second half of July, during a shuttle between Israel and Syria aimed at relaunching peace negotiations on that front.

"Jordan will make its decision after examining the Israeli proposals for this commission," he said.

Seven killed in Baku blast

BAKU, Azerbaijan, July 3: A remote-controlled bomb exploded in a crowded subway car in the Azerbaijani capital of Baku Sunday morning killing at least seven people and injuring more than 75, reports AP.

Hundreds of passengers were evacuated from an underground train tunnel as firemen put out a fire ignited by the explosion, officials said. Service on the metro was disrupted for several hours as workers cleared debris from the tracks.

Dr. Ziya Assadov, chief medical officer at Hospital, No. 5, said seven bodies were recovered from the blast site. He said at least 77 people were treated for injuries suffered in the blast.

About 40 were treated and released, Assadov said. The rest remained hospitalized, with five in critical condition.

Tamil parties fail to unite

COLOMBO, July 3: Unity moves among minority Tamil parties have failed on the eve of nominations to parliamentary polls in Sri Lanka although a common alliance could have made them king-makers, political analysts said Sunday. Reuter reports from AFP.

With the majority Sinhalese community divided between the ruling United National Party (UNP) and the main opposition Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP), Tamils could have been the decisive third force, analysts said.

Tamil groups were preparing to field candidates against each other and file nomination papers from Monday to contest the snap general election called by President Dingiri Banda Wijetunga on August 16.

"It is not only unfortunate but tragic that there is no unity among the Tamil parties," said

Tamil politician Dharamalingam Sidhathan, leader of the People's Liberation Organisation of Tamil Eelam (PLOTE).

The parliamentary ballot is conducted on a system of proportional representation. Bonus seats are allocated to parties which become the largest single group in any of the 26 constituencies.

By going their separate ways, Tamil parties stand to lose the bonus seats which could have given them a greater advantage in the 225-member assembly and strengthened their demands for greater autonomy for the minority community.

"Tamils are losing the race even before it could start. If they were united, they could have won a few more seats and been in a position to call the shots in parliament," an Asian

diplomat said.

Most analysts believe the two main parties, the UNP and the SLFP, could end up without a clear majority in parliament, forcing them to seek a deal with the minority parties. In such a situation, Tamils could have demanded their price.

A small but influential Muslim group, the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress (SLMC), last week decided to support an SLFP-led opposition coalition under an electoral pact.

The ruling UNP had 125 seats in the 225-member legislative assembly which was dissolved last month to clear the way for the August 16 vote to elect a new parliament for a fresh six-year term.

The response of the separatist Tamil group the Liberation Tigers of Tamil

Eelam (LTTE) to the parliamentary elections is not yet clear.

Most of the island's north is under the dominance of the LTTE which is fighting the government to establish a homeland called Eelam in the northern and eastern regions where the two million Tamils are concentrated.

Thousands have died in the LTTE's bitter guerrilla campaign since 1972, the group has opposed previous polls in the north but failed to disrupt a local council election in the eastern region in March this year.

The moderate Tamil party, the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) said it was opposed to holding parliamentary elections in the northern Jaffna peninsula as there could be no free and fair voting in the embattled region.

Off the Record



Former Miss Philippines Ruffa Gutierrez (R) responds at a press conference on July 2. Gutierrez denied rumours that she was stripped of her status as Second Princess to the current Miss World, and reiterated that the Manila Film Festival fiasco has ended her career as a movie star. At left is her lawyer, Felipe Antonio Remollo. —AFP photo

Hot show, cool clothes

PARIS: Thin thugs and giddy boys in taffeta were paraded by haute couture bad boy Jean-Paul Gaultier in his Saturday show of menswear for summer 1995, reports AP.

Going on the lam with Gaultier means getting away from it all in great gangster gear or a chiffon skirt.

As Paris temperatures sizzled, hot news was in cool clothes in a burst of weekend menswear collections.

Gaultier showed in his cramped shop quarters near the Bourse (stock exchange), living up to the crowd's expectations with models playing like tough downtown heavies in zoot suits with upturned wing lapels.

Other styles, practically flying in frills, as well as a show of many skirts, also were a hit, very tongue-in-cheek, of course.

Cross-dressing is no mystery to Gaultier, who also sells clothes for the he-man. But he makes it all great fun for his audience, and more extraordinarily, believably.

Sharp-shouldered suits in tones of green and red lightweight fabrics started the show quietly. The return to shaped shoulders looked like a sharp pointer for menswear-watches, since Gaultier is copied like mad.

Serious clothes turned up in the many long jackets and redingote coats, some fine cotton middle-topped sailor suits (back to the waterfront), as well as dark shirts and well-cut pants.

Skirts and even dresses came trotting down the Gaultier stairs, or clumping in huge platform clogs. More often they were paired with pants, but sometimes not. Iridescent pastel taffeta suits with sharply-cut jackets, frilled and transparent organza shirts and clinging tights had the crowd in a frenzy.

Bicycles careened down the alleys of the Palais Royal gardens for Dries van Noten's finale. Turning more serious than his past laid-back styles, Belgian-born van Noten was more uptown, but with a cool approach for the hot summer.



The Princess of Wales acknowledges the crowd's applause as she arrives on Centre Court at Wimbledon in London, with her son, Prince William, for the Ladies Singles Final between Conchita Martinez of Spain and Martina Navratilova of the US on July 2. — AFP photo

Diana snatches limelight from Charles

LONDON, July 3: Britain's Princess Diana came out of royal semi-retirement on Saturday to watch the women's Wimbledon tennis final, snatching the limelight from her newly-popular husband Charles, reports Reuter.

The heir to the throne has been the centre of royal attention this week after making a televised confession of adultery during his failed 13-year marriage.

One radio sports commentator complained that tabloid royal watchers descended en masse on the championships in south London to scrutinise the Princess, who has lived apart from her husband for 17 months.

But Diana, who has rarely appeared in public since retreating from royal duties last year, was a star attraction on Saturday as she watched champion Martina Navratilova lose her farewell Wimbledon match to Conchita Martinez of Spain.

The princess, 33, watched from the royal box with her son William and left straight after the match.

Major attack on Rwandan police

KIGALI, July 3: Rwandan rebels launched a major offensive early today against a paramilitary police camp in the north of the capital Kigali, reports AFP.

The Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) attacked the Cacyco gendarmerie base at around 4:00 AM (0200 GMT). Violent artillery and small arms exchanges lasted for almost two hours.

Officers in the UN Assistance Mission in Rwanda (UNAMIR) watched the fighting from the Meridien Hotel close to the front line, but they were unable to say whether the rebels had seized the camp.

Meanwhile, mortar fire Kigali ripped into an open market in the government-held center of Kigali Saturday, killing two people and wounding at least 20 others before shoppers could flee.

At least two mortar rounds hit the market at a congested shopping hour, about 10:30 local time. UN military spokesman Major Jean-Guy Plante said by phone from Kigali. He did not know the identities of the casualties.

Plante would not confirm that the mortars were fired by the Tutsi-led Rwandan Patriotic Front, which has captured some two-thirds of the

Bangladesh wants better ties with India: Bhandari

AGARTALA, July 3: The Tripura governor, Romesh Bhandari, yesterday said that the repatriation of the Chakma refugees to Bangladesh would better the relationship between the two countries, reports PTI.

Talking to reporters here at Rajbhawan, the governor said, during his recent visit to Bangladesh in connection with the Chakma problem, he observed that Bangladesh had desire for a better relation with India.

Bhandari expressed his happiness over the second phase of refugee repatriation on July 21. All the 54,000 refugees, now sheltered in six evacuee camps in south Tripura, would be repatriated within a couple of months.

The Bangladesh government had even agreed to take back all the 3,500 unregistered families, lodging in camps, he said.

Indonesia may get uranium from Australia

JAKARTA, July 3: Australian may supply Indonesia with uranium if Jakarta's push towards nuclear power complies with international standards, the Antara news agency today quoted Australian Foreign Minister Gareth Evans as saying, reports Reuter.

"It depends on Indonesia deciding to go down the path of developing nuclear energy and on entering into safeguard agreements and consistency with the Non-Proliferation Treaty," Evans said, according to Antara.

Given such compliance,

US may supply ROK with modern radars

NEW YORK, July 3: The US Defence Department is considering providing South Korea with modern radars to boost its ability to cope with possible North Korean artillery attacks. US News and World Report Magazine said Saturday.

It said that at the urging of Arizona Republican Senator John McCain the Pentagon may soon provide state-of-the-art radars out of army stocks rather than let Seoul acquire them through the usual channels, which could take months.

The Q-36 and Q-37 radars detect mortars and artillery that have been fired, permitting prompt counterattack.

McCain, a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, is just back from a visit to South Korea.

North Korea has been embroiled in a dispute with the international community over its suspected nuclear weapons programme for over a year.

The crisis eased when President Clinton announced the United States had agreed to a third round of high-level talks with the North, scheduled to begin in Geneva on July 8, after Pyongyang gave assurances it intends to freeze its nuclear programme.

AP reports: Five days before the reopening of high-level talks with the United States, North Korea warned Sunday that any renewed push for sanctions over its nuclear programme would be "dangerous."

The United States, along with South Korea and Japan, had been seeking sanctions against North Korea.

"possibly there could be some commercial contract ... for the supply of Australian uranium," Antara quoted Evans as saying after a conference in Jakarta on Saturday.

Evans concluded a two-day visit to Indonesia today at the end of a three-week Australian trade promotion.

Indonesia has said it would go ahead with plans to construct a 1.2 billion dollar nuclear power plant at Mount Muria in central Java, 440 km (270 miles) east of Jakarta despite criticism from environmentalists and activists.

Israeli demonstrators burn portraits of Arafat, Rabin

JERUSALEM, July 3: Tens of thousands of Israelis chanting "death to Arafat" and "Rabin is a traitor" crammed Jerusalem's Zion Square to vent their anger to PLO leader Yasser Arafat's historic homecoming, reports Reuter.

Protesters burned tyres, Palestinian flags and portraits of Arafat and Rabin — both depicted wearing Arab head-dresses.

"With blood and fire we'll expel Rabin," shouted the crowd in a Saturday night protest at Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's peace deal which cleared the way for Arafat's arrival in Gaza.

Several hundred protesters rampaged through Arab neighbourhoods of east Jerusalem,

including alleyways of the walled old city, police said. They hurled stones, smashed windows, damaged cars and clashed with police.

Inside the walls, police kept several dozen from mounting the Jewish temple mount, also the site of two mosques.

Israeli opposition parties said the demonstration was the centerpiece of four days of protests that would culminate in a rally today outside Rabin's weekly cabinet meeting.

"What Arafat truly wants is not an Arab state beside Israel but an Arab state in place of Israel and only this government refuses to see and show what everyone understands," said Benjamin Netanyahu,

leader of the main opposition Likud Party.

He and other leading hard-liners addressed the crowd from a balcony over a stationary shop in Zion Square in Jewish West Jerusalem. It was lined with banners reading: "Death to Arafat," and "the battle in defence of Jerusalem."

It was impossible to measure the crowd's size. A police spokesman refused to give an estimate. Organisers put the crowd at 100,000 or more but several witnesses said no more than 20,000 to 30,000 jammed the city centre, including side streets.

Rabin has said Arafat, like any other Muslim, has the right to pray at Jerusalem,

India not yet ready for an onslaught of porno magazines

NEW DELHI, July 3: India may be shedding years of protectionism, but the country which gave the world the Kama Sutra is "apparently not yet ready for an onslaught of magazines in which women shed their clothes," reports AP.

The arrest of the editor of the glossy adult monthly Fantasy has divided this largely conservative society between those who advocate free circulation of publications featuring nude women and those who want them outlawed.

Author and journalist Khushwant Singh comes clearly down on the side of those who oppose India's obscenity laws and consider them archaic.

"There is so much hypocrisy about obscenity in the country," moaned Singh, who is an editorial advisor to

Fantasy, one of the new publications posing a challenge to the obscenity statutes.

Fantasy, like most other such magazines, features centrefolds and pin-ups of partially-clad Indian women and carries advertisements from persons seeking sex partners.

Scores of other such publications, many crudely printed, in virtually all Indian languages sell like hotcakes on pavements and in railway and bus stations for five rupees (15 cents) to 100 rupees (three dollars).

Singh, whose writings are heavily laced with sexual innuendo, said there should be no curbs on magazines such as Fantasy as long as the Kama Sutra, India's oldest sex manual, could be freely bought in bookstores.

the June 16 arrest of Fantasy editor Vicky Bhargava in the northern city of Allahabad on charges of publishing obscene photographs.

Bhargava, who was freed on bail a day later, said the semi-nude pictures featured in Fantasy and its sister publication Fun were well "within the reasonable limits of decency as permitted by the Indian law."

Not everyone agrees. "Fantasy is an insult to women," said Malvika Pandey, who heads a women's group that has been campaigning for the cancellation of its publishing license.

Kalpna Mehta, a women's activist, said she was not opposed to nudes.

There is no point in being prudish about it," she said. "There are good nudes, good classical nudes. We do not have

problems with that. But if the sex magazines go beyond Erotica, they should be banned."

Sales of the adult magazines are permitted by varied interpretations of the obscenity laws. Some police officers said they do not seize allegedly pornographic literature if there is no display of public hair.

But Playboy and Penthouse still get impounded by customs.

In May, an Indian clone of Playboy was asked to stop publication by a court here after Playboy Enterprises Inc. alleged it was trying to pass it self off as the original.

Playway has a readers' page about their sexual fantasies, articles about sexual and social ills, cartoons relating to sex, interviews, centrefolds and nude and semi-nude pictures,

said Pravin Anand, a lawyer for Playboy.

Editors, activists and police admit that the magazines that show women in various states of undress 'sell because of demand."

"There is great market demand," said Bharat Malik, editor and publisher of Playway which was launched in January and sells some 30,000 copies. "All kinds of people read it, even the old, the women."

"Just as the government is liberalising, the people are also liberalising," said Malik, 30, an economics graduate. He said another magazine which he started in 1992, called "Naughty Boy," had flopped, however.

"There is a lot of sexual awakening," said P.L. Khanna, a sexologist here. "There is a terrific change. Now even

young girls bring their husbands and tell us: please doctor do something. He is not satisfying me."

Anand, the lawyer, said that if Playboy was allowed in India, it would sell in the millions.

"The Indian male has lived a life of suppression and the truth is he likes to read these magazines."

But Prakash Kothari, the country's most-well-known sexologist who writes a column for the magazine "Chastity," said the interest in sex magazines would soon wither away.

Free in Russia to discuss ways to combat crime

MOSCOW, July 3: The head of the US Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) arrived in Moscow for talks on how to combat organised crime in Russia and stop it spreading abroad, reports Reuter.

FBI Director Louis Freeh, on a tour of Central and Eastern Europe flew in late on Saturday for discussions with Russian leaders including Interior Ministry Viktor Yerin and Counter-Intelligence Chief Sergei Stepashin.

The primary purpose of our meetings here in the next few days is to make sure we are better organised than the organised crime people we are fighting, he told reporters on arrival.

Freeh has said Russia's mafia gangs could soon have the power to obtain nuclear arms and sell them.