

## ROK official fired for condoling Kim's death

SEOUL, July 12: A South Korean government official was fired Tuesday for expressing condolences on the death of North Korean leader Kim Il-Sung in a published article, the government said, reports AP.

The incident was part of a larger debate over how the Seoul government should respond to the longtime North Korean leader's death.

Kim, who died Friday at 82, was revered as a godlike figure in the Communist North, but was hated by many in the South for starting the 1950-53 Korean War, which killed at least 2.5 million people on both sides.

The fired official, identified only by his surname Park, was dismissed after the article was published in an internal government newspaper that is distributed to about 200,000 officials.

The Information Ministry said the article, published in the July 11 edition of the tabloid weekly Kukjung Shinmun, expressed "deep condolences" to the North on Kim's death.

The weekly's publisher, Information Ministry official Oh Chung-su, also will be reprimanded in connection with the case, the ministry said.

The steps to discipline the two came after protests from government and governing party officials.

In the National Assembly, lawmakers have been arguing over how to respond officially to the death.

The government said it has no plan to offer condolences or send a delegation to Kim's funeral, scheduled for Sunday. But some opposition members have said it should do so.

## Mediators press warring factions to accept peace plan

# Muslims, Serbs agree to truce

SARAJEVO, July 12: Bosnian Serbs and the Muslim-led government agreed Tuesday to a new ceasefire sought by international mediators pushing a partition plan on the warring parties, reports AP.

As in all other truces in the 27-month war, fighting continued on the main battle fronts despite a recent truce that expired Saturday.

But UN officials sought a new agreement believing that even and ignored truce would demonstrate at least symbolic willingness to find a political solution.

UN special envoy Yasushi Akashi said in Sarajevo that the Bosnian government has already signed the new agreement for a four-week ceasefire while the Bosnian Serbs have given verbal assurance that they would do so.

An earlier report said: Government troops fought Serb-backed Muslim rebels in the northwest on Tuesday, as international mediators pressed for warring sides to accept a partitioning of Bosnia.

The combatants have only seven more days to accept or reject an international peace plan that would give ethnic Serbs 49 per cent of Bosnian territory and a Muslim-Croat federation the rest. Serbs hold more than 70 per cent after 27 months of fighting.

The plan's authors — the United States, Russia, Germany, France and Britain — have warned that rejection would mean tougher international sanctions.

After talks with Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic in Belgrade, Yugoslavia, negotiator Lord Owen of the

European Union and UN envoy Thorvald Stoltenberg conferred Monday in Zagreb with Yasushi Akashi, the top UN official in former Yugoslavia, and President Franjo Tudjman of Croatia.

Akashi was expected in Sarajevo Tuesday to meet Bosnian government leaders before returning to Zagreb. He was seeking agreement from both the Bosnian government and the Bosnian Serbs to extend a cease fire agreement that expired Saturday. His spokesman, Paul Risley, said Akashi now had "agreement in principle" from both sides.

Owen told reporters that Bosnian Serb leaders were now "much more aware" that there was no possibility of being given more time beyond the July 19 deadline for responding on the peace plan.

Leaders of Bosnia's Muslim-led government already recommended that their parliament endorse the proposal.

Despite the deadline, Owen said, the Muslim-Croat federation and Serbs could "make adjustments among themselves," meaning possible exchanges of territory.

Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic is under pressure from Milosevic to accept the partition plan. That could lead to an easing of sanctions that the United Nations imposed on Yugoslavia for fomenting the war that has left 200,000 dead or missing.

Karadzic had talked of swapping territory last week.

Serbia's leaders are convinced that acceptance of the plan is the best guarantee for winning an end to the international sanctions.

## Off the Record



A model of designer Jean-Louis Scherrer presents a new creation on Monday in a preview of the Fall-Winter 94-95 high fashion collections in Paris. —AFP photo

### 'Music, math, goggles help combat loss of memory'

PENSACOLA: Music, math and goggles with flashing lights are part of a "brain brightening" regimen that may help combat the loss of memory associated with ageing, researchers said Monday, reports Reuter.

"It's sort of aerobics for the brain," said Tom Budzynski, a professor at the University of West Florida's Centre for Behavioural Medicine.

Budzynski is leading a study to determine whether mental and sensory stimuli can improve older people's memory by building up neurons and dendrites, the nerve cells and branch-like structures that form the communications network in the brain, which tend to shrivel as people age.

"If you have a stimulating job or a higher level of education, then your cognitive abilities hold up much better as you age," Budzynski told Reuters in a phone interview.

He said his team hoped to duplicate with elderly humans earlier research at the University of California at Berkeley that showed that ageing rats' brains benefited from exercise.

### Freedom Rings: Jewellery for the Divorced

ALBUQUERQUE: Do you take this divorce? I do.

With this ring I — SMASH! — celebrate my freedom.

With a whack of a sledgehammer, Linda Howell reduced her wedding ring to an unrecognisable mess of gold, silver and cubic zirconia, reports AP.

Howell swigged champagne and thought about her plans. Make the mess into a pendant? Earrings? Yes, a pendant.

So much for tradition.

For Howell, a 38-year-old nurse, the ceremony was a cathartic way to start over following her divorce. And it brought jeweller Lynn Peters some business.

Peters is the founder of Freedom Rings: Jewellery for the Divorced, which makes custom jewellery out of wedding rings. Women often select earrings, pendants and bracelets. Men like golf ball markers. The fee range won't take much from those alimony payments.

Peters calls the venture her "artistic contribution to the recycling effort."

Others call it a refreshing way to handle a painful situation. In addition to the re-formed jewellery, smashers get a signed divorce certificate and a mini-reception with champagne and music.

Peters' friends serve as ring and hammer bearers. The hammer is placed in a music box of sorts. When opened, the faint twinkling of "The Wedding March" cascades out of the silk-lined container, which is quickly shut so the smashing can begin.

"It's like a release," said Howell, who split with her husband after a 14-year marriage.

She said receiving the divorce papers in the mail didn't feel like the real thing. "You have a ceremony when you get married, but when you get divorced it's nothing."

### Crusade against pornography

BEIJING: China has closed down dozens of newspapers, magazines and publishing houses in a crusade against pornography and publications of "excessively low taste," an official report said, according to AP.

Some of the publications also leaked state secrets or broke copyright regulations, the Xinhua News Agency reported late Monday, quoting Yu Youxian, head of China's Press and Publication Administration.

Pulp fiction, racy novels and magazines spiced with tales of sex and violence have become increasingly popular in recent years. Some magazine stalls in Beijing even have pornographic magazines from Hong Kong on open display.

## BRIEFLY

**Idol of 'Lord Vishnu' seized:** Border Security Force (BSF) personnel have seized idol of "Lord Vishnu," valued at Rs 30 lakh, while it was being smuggled into West Bengal district of Murshidabad from Bangladesh on Sunday, according to BSF sources, PTI reports from Calcutta.

The idol, which had a tremendous antique value, was made of touch stone. This is the 17th such valuable idols seized by BSF from the area in the last 18 months, the sources said.

The BSF intelligence wing suspected that an international gang was actively involved in smuggling of antiques in the border areas between Bangladesh and Murshidabad district.

**7 Asians found dead in France:** The bodies of an Asian man and six of his children were found in the cellar of their home Monday, police said, AFP reports from Dunkerque.

The 41-year-old man had hanged himself and the children were poisoned, according to early indications from the police investigation. An autopsy has yet to be carried out.

The children ranged in age from 18 months to 18 years. The bodies were found by another one of the man's children, who came from Paris where the mother was staying. The man was identified as Luy Chitau.

**Himachal floods claim 25:** At least 25 people were killed on Monday in flash floods after violent rain near a resort in the northern Indian state of Himachal Pradesh, the Press Trust of India (PTI) reported, AFP says from New Delhi.

About 30 others were missing after the sudden downpour washed away several kiosks as well as four vehicles belonging to tourists at a village about 25 kilometres (15 miles) from the town Kullu, the news agency said.

Authorities have launched a massive rescue operation. PTI said. Seven people who were injured were hospitalised.

**29 die in Chinese bus mishap:** A passenger bus has slid off a ferry crossing the Yangtze River in central China and sunk, leaving 29 people dead and 11 missing, an official report says, AP reports from Beijing.

The bus, carrying 73 passengers, slipped off the front of the ferry crossing the Yangtze River at Yichang, and sank on July 9, the official Xinhua news service reported late Monday.

The report said 34 people were rescued, but 26 were found dead inside the bus when it was lifted from the water the next day. Two other bodies were found elsewhere, and 11 people were still missing, the report said.

**US sub costs exceed budget:** The first Seawolf attack submarine is plagued by cost overruns and construction delays, congressional investigators say, but the Pentagon insists the vessel will join the fleet on schedule, AP reports from Washington.

A report by the General Accounting Office made public Monday said design and construction costs of the nuclear-powered submarine went 56 million dollars over budget last year. And, it said, those are only the latest in a series of cost runups and delays that have made the Seawolf one of the most controversial items in the defense budget.

Both the Pentagon and the Electric Boat Division of General Dynamics Corp, which builds the Seawolf in Groton, Conn, defended the work being done on the first of what President Clinton hopes will be three vessels.

**Protestants make bonfires:** Northern Ireland's Protestants set bonfires ablaze across the province Tuesday in a memorial which security forces fear could fan the flames of sectarian hatred anew after the killing of one of their militants. Reuter reports from Belfast.

Ray Smallwoods, a vocal spokesman for Protestants battling to keep northern Ireland British, was shot dead outside his Lisburn home on Monday by guerrillas from the IRA, who have waged a 25-year to unite the province and the Irish Republic.

**Top UK crimefighters in Moscow:** Top British crimefighters are visiting Moscow this week for talks with their Russian counterparts about curbing organised crime, AP reports from Moscow.

The visit, which comes a week after FBI Director Louis Freeh visited Russia, underscores the West's growing concern over the spread of Russian crime gangs, drug trafficking and the dangers of possible nuclear theft.

Albert Pacey, director general of the United Kingdom's National Criminal Intelligence Service, and David Veness, assistant commissioner of London's Metropolitan Police, arrived in the Russian capital Monday.



President Ben Ali (R) joins hands with PLO chief Yasser Arafat during an official farewell ceremony at the Presidential Palace at Cathago in Tunis on Monday. Arafat is leaving his Tunisian exile in order to live in the self rule areas of Gaza and Jericho. —AFP Photo

## Benazir flays Murtaza

ISLAMABAD, July 12: Pakistan's Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto hit back at her estranged brother Murtaza Bhutto in an interview published yesterday, saying he had always created political problems for the family, reports AP.

"In childhood we played together... but then he grew up to rise against his elder sister," Benazir told the Nation newspaper.

Benazir, 40, a year older than Murtaza, said her brother "has damaged" the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) ever since their father and PPP founder Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was executed in 1979, two years after his overthrow in a military coup.

"Because of the life he chose after the execution of my father we always had worries about him. There was always this apprehension of

PPP getting banned because of his activities," she said.

"His every step caused jitters amongst us, the timing of his every move created problems for us."

Murtaza, who went into exile after former Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was toppled in 1977, masterminded resistance against military ruler General Mohammad Zia-ul-Haq who died in a plane crash in Pakistan in 1988.

During his 16-year self-exile, Murtaza was blamed for the 1981 hijacking of a Pakistani airliner and a series of incidents of alleged sabotage and subversion by his Al-Zulfikar Organisation (AZO).

He returned home after the October 1993 elections, which the PPP won, and secured a seat in the Sindh provincial assembly.

However, he was arrested on his homecoming for cases pending against him but was

released on bail by a court last month.

He has since been addressing political rallies and lasting out at what he calls the Mafia surrounding his sister Benazir Bhutto, in an apparent bid to establish himself as rightful heir to his father.

In the last elections, Murtaza also "tried to damage us," she said.

"Till now he has been anti-PPP and if ever he chooses to become pro-PPP he would have to shed a lot of baggage because we need assets and not liabilities."

Murtaza said in an interview with a foreign radio station that he had serious political differences with his sister and warned that the PPP would split if the row was not resolved.

To make PPP more effective, Murtaza said he would purge it of "those who have hijacked it."

## 2 killed, 29 hurt in Pak blasts

ISLAMABAD, July 12: At least two people were killed and 29 injured in two separate bomb blasts in the second largest Pakistani city of Lahore today, the Associated Press of Pakistan (APP) reported, says AFP.

The official news agency said unidentified assailants targeting a Sunni Muslim religious school hurled a bomb inside a mosque shortly after the dawn prayers, two people died on the spot and 27 were injured in the explosion.

Two more people were injured when a second bomb placed in a garbage depot went off in the city's congested locality. No arrests have been reported.

Earlier three people riding on a motorbike shot dead a minority Shiite community leader in Hasilpur near Lahore late Monday.

Official sources said Syed Murtaza Kazmi, vice president of the Shiite political party Tehreek-i-Jafferia Pakistan (TJP), was sprayed with bullets by unidentified people while he was sitting in his shop late Monday.

## Koirala demands action against dissident MPs

KATHMANDU, July 12: Nepal Prime Minister Grijya Prasad Koirala demanded Monday that harsh disciplinary action be taken against dissident ruling party MPs who played a pivotal role in the government's losing a parliamentary debate, reports AP.

"The absence of the 36 dissidents (Nepali Congress) NC MPs has been the main cause for the downfall of my government," a party source quoted him as saying.

Addressing a gathering of several hundred NC party MPs, activists and intellectuals, Koirala said that he had resigned in a bid to receive a fresh popular mandate and form a new government.

Koirala resigned Sunday as prime minister and asked the King to call fresh elections after losing the vote.

## Myanmar general to meet Suu Kyi

NEW YORK, July 12: A member of the Myanmar military junta has agreed to meet with 1991 Nobel Peace Prize winner and arrested dissident Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, the New York Times reported today, says AP.

"The meeting will take place at an appropriate time" to be decided by the full junta, Lieutenant General Khin Nyunt, head of military intelligence, told the daily in an interview.

"Suu Kyi is not an enemy... in fact, she is the daughter of one of our generals. She is younger than me, and I think

of her like a younger sister," Khin Nyunt said at the Defence Ministry in Yangon.

The daughter of a Myanmar independence hero, Suu Kyi, 49, was placed under house arrest July 20, 1989, for being part of a democratic movement.

In February, she was visited by a US congressman to whom she communicated her willingness to meet with junta leaders and speak on anything except her exile from Myanmar.

The Myanmar military junta's refusal to respond to her offer drew a sharp rebuke

from Washington, which is pressing for political reform in the country.

Noting that the military junta recently signed peace accords with several rebel groups, Khin Nyunt said "we are willing to work hand in hand with the politicians who have opposed us in the past."

Although the 53-year-old general said it was "a little early" to predict when he would meet with the dissident, unidentified diplomats and Myanmar officials told the daily it would not happen before a national constitutional convention recovered in September.

## 1m Indians to be infected with AIDS by 2000

NEW DELHI, July 12: Half of the five million women will be infected by the HIV (human immune deficiency) virus by the turn of the century, according to data collected by the National AIDS Control Organisation (NACO), reports Xinhua.

The data said that the number of AIDS cases would go up to one million by the year 2000.

The first case of AIDS was registered in Bombay in 1987.

## Kuchma favours closer ties with Russia

KIEV, Ukraine, July 12: Leonid Kuchma, a former missile factory director, was declared the upset winner of Ukraine's presidential runoff Monday and promised to turn his country into a bridge between Russia and the West, reports AP.

Kuchma's triumph was not just a personal victory but a gain for Russia as well. He has campaigned on a platform advocating closer relations with Moscow, which is reasserting its influence throughout the former Soviet Union.

The Central Election Commission said Kuchma took more than 52 per cent of the vote compared to 45 per cent for incumbent Leonid Kravchuk. More than 70 per cent of the eligible voters cast ballots.

Precise results were expected by Thursday. Kuchma, 55, will be sworn in July 19 in parliament, officials said.

## 4 widows to contest Lanhan polls

COLOMBO, July 12: Four women widowed by political violence in Sri Lanka, including a former prime minister, have registered for political battle next month, when an anxious nation goes to the polls, reports Reuter.

The four were among hundreds of election candidates registered for the August 16 elections when nominations closed on Monday.

They all represent opposition political parties and have one other thing in common: Their husbands met with violent deaths in a country where political opponents are wiped out by the bullet nearly as often as the ballot.

Former prime minister and opposition leader Sirima Bandarnaike, 78, whose husband was gunned down while prime minister in 1959, hopes to enter Sri Lanka's 10th parliament without a personal contest.

She is nominated on the People's Alliance (PA) national list of candidates, which

## 4 widows to contest Lanhan polls

means she will be automatically given a seat if her party wins enough votes. She is also PA candidate for the presidential election due next November.

Her daughter, Chandrika Kumarnatunga, 49, whose actor politician husband was assassinated in 1988 by suspected left-wing rebels, is the PA's main hope next month. She led the PA to a stunning win in a southern regional poll last May.

Srimani Athulathudali had no intention of entering politics when her husband was shot dead in April last year, but joined the fray after seeing her husband's party, the Democratic United National Front, torn part by infighting.

The front was founded in 1991 by former ruling party ministers Lalith Athulathudali and Ganiini Dissanayake who were disenchanted with former president Ranasinghe Premadasa, himself assassinated last year.

"Lalith has certain policies and dreams for the country and I will try to carry them on," Srimani, who is siding with the PA, told reporters.

The fourth widow, Sarojini Yegeswaran, is representing the minority Tamil community in Colombo. Her husband, leader of the moderate Tamil United Liberation Front, was killed in 1989 by Tamil rebels fighting for a separate state in the north and east.

"My husband died for the Tamil people and my heart breaks to think he may have died in vain. That is why I am continuing his work to fight for the rights of the Tamils," Yegeswaran said.

Tamil rebels have vowed to disrupt polls in northern and eastern areas but no incidents were reported from these areas on Monday.

Premadasa's widow Hema, had wanted to contest the elections on the ruling United National Party ticket. But the party hierarchy decided to leave her out.



Inspector General of Prisons in New Delhi Kiran Bedi (C) dances with women inmates of the maximum security Bihar Jail on Monday after receiving the 1994 Ramon Magsasay award for government service. —AFP photo

## Anti-nuclear demonstration in Taiwan

TAIPEI, July 12: More than 4,000 anti-nuclear activists clashed violently with riot police outside parliament today, as they tried to break through barbed-wire barricades to enter the chamber where lawmakers were reviewing a nuclear project budget, reports AFP.

The activists used a truck to charge at the barricades, trying to break the blockade. Riot police responded by firing water cannons and chemical foam at the protesters, witnesses said.

A dozen police later arrested the truck driver, pulling him out of the cab as activists shouted "release him, release him," and hurled rocks, cans and engine oil at the police.

More than 15 people, including policemen, were reported slightly injured, witnesses said.