

# US-Pakistan agree to expand military ties

WASHINGTON, June 3: Defence officials from the United States and Pakistan said they would expand military cooperation at a meeting this week, the US Defence Department said on Friday, reports Reuter.

The Washington talks marked the first time the US-Pakistan defence consultative group has met since 1990 when the United States froze arms transfers to Pakistan.

Both delegations reviewed the range of military and security issues of mutual interest. They pledged to continue their ongoing efforts to expand military cooperation, the Pentagon said in a statement.

The chief problem between the two countries is a dispute over F-16 jets that Pakistan has paid for but the United States refuses to deliver.

The sale has been blocked since 1990 by a US law, named for its author South

Dakota Republican Senator Larry Pressler which bars arms sales to countries if the president can not certify that they are not developing nuclear weapons.

The US also described its ongoing efforts to encourage a broad-based congressional consensus on the need to revise the Pressler amendment to allow economic and technical assistance, military training and other forms of military cooperation with Pakistan, the Pentagon statement said.

Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto said in Washington last month that Pakistan was not developing nuclear weapons and should either get the warplanes or get its money back. President Bill Clinton said he would try to resolve the impasse.

The statement said the United States agreed to return repairable spare parts to Pakistan.

# Curfew imposed in southern Lanka Foreign govts lift arms embargo on Colombo

COLOMBO, June 3: Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar announced Friday that unnamed foreign governments had lifted an arms embargo on the Colombo government following Tamil rebels resuming their separatist war, reports AFP.

The minister said the government no longer faced obstacles in procuring weapons to fight the rebel Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), which withdrew from guerrilla talks to resume their perils campaign in April.

What was required was not aid, but for the Sri Lankan government to be able to purchase its military needs. This had until recently been blocked by some governments.

Such obstacles have now been eased and several sources hitherto unavailable to Sri Lanka had opened up, a Foreign Ministry statement quoted Kadirgamar as saying.

Western governments had imposed a total ban on arms sales to Sri Lanka and even prohibited the sale of helicopter spare parts to the air force during the previous Colombo regime, which was voted out of power last year.

Since the LTTE escalated its separatist campaign for an independent homeland in the island's northeast, some 317 security personnel and some 351 rebels have been killed, according to military estimates.

Earlier Justice Minister G L

Peiris had announced that several foreign governments had pledged "tangible material" to Colombo in its battle against the LTTE.

Kadirgamar said Colombo would like Western governments to close LTTE offices in their capitals but noted that the laws of those countries did not allow it unless the rebels were involved in criminal activity.

"Many countries were, however, closely studying LTTE links to drug running and this could change things as evidence is gathered on the LTTE's close links with the narcotics trade, Kadirgamar said.

Meanwhile, heavily armed troops were deployed today to enforce an indefinite curfew in southern Sri Lanka where Sinhalese mobs torched Tamil-owned shops amid mounting ethnic tension, local officials said.

Some 1,000 people attacked Tamil shops at the Galle town, 72 miles (112 kilometers) south of here, late Friday despite tight security ahead of today's funeral of a Buddhist monk killed by Tamil rebels, officials said.

"We opened fire in the air and also used a lot of teargas to break up the mobs. They were targeting shops owned by Tamils who control the wholesale business here," a police officer said by telephone.

# BJP to revoke political concessions to Kashmir

NEW DELHI, June 3: The BJP President, LK Advani, asserted that if his party comes to power in the centre it would revoke any political concessions to Kashmir; if given by the present government, reports PTI.

In an interview to Eye Witness, a Door Darshan current affairs programme to be broadcast tomorrow, Advani said any political concession, in the light of the Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao's recent statement in Lok Sabha, would become a principal issue in the forthcoming elections.

He said if his party comes to power at the centre it would seek to revoke Article 370 providing special status to the state of Jammu and Kashmir "as swiftly and as rapidly as possible. We would not like to waste time," Advani said in the interview on the attitude and policies of the BJP if it were to form a government at the centre after the next election.

Asserting that there would be no compromise with militancy and terrorism, he referred to the "some measure of freedom" given to the security forces in Punjab and said his party's policy would be not merely tougher but also more consistent. "You cannot be ambivalent on these issues," he said, according to a release from eye witness.

Promising a tougher Kashmir policy "without kid gloves" the BJP president said his responsibility would be to allay the fears of minorities.

"Certainly it is my responsibility and it is the responsibility of the party and more specifically of the head of the government where we are ruling today. All BJP governments have issued instructions to their administration to ensure that every citizen living in that state is treated equally with justice," he said.

# BRIEFLY

**Carter to visit Philippines:** Former US President Jimmy Carter will visit the Philippines to attend a conference on population, peace and environment issues from June 15 to 17, a Philippine presidential statement said yesterday, AFP reports from Manila.

Philippine President Fidel Ramos will be the guest of honour at the conference, to be held in Manila, the statement said.

**Angolans hail peacekeepers:** Cheering flag-waving crowds lined streets once sowed with mines as UN peacekeepers arrived Friday to help negotiate an end to two decades of civil war in Angola, AP reports from Vice, Angola.

Their arrival was particularly welcome in this militarily strategic northern city, where rebel and government forces are still armed despite a peace accord signed six months ago.

**6 coal miners die in Vietnam:** Six Vietnamese digging illegally for coal have died from burns they suffered when a fire broke out in their mine, a report said Saturday, AP reports from Hanoi.

Two other miners are in critical condition following a May 27 blaze in northern Quang Ninh province, Vietnam's richest region for anthracite coal, the Lao Dong (Labour) trade union newspaper reported.

**US to honour widow of Kai-Shek:** Madame Chiang Kai-Shek, the widow of the late Chinese nationalist leader, will be honoured in Washington next month for her activities during the Second World War, two senators said Friday, AFP reports from Washington.

Republican Senate majority leader Robert Dole and Paul Simon, an Illinois democrat, said they would co-host the Capitol Hill reception on July 28 which is being organised by private citizens.

**Flood claims 22 in China:** Torrential rain in the last week of May in the south China province of Hunan left 22 dead, thousands homeless or marooned and cut transport links, the Wen Hui Bao newspaper reported yesterday, Reuter says from Shanghai.

The heavy rain began on May 25 over seven districts of Hunan, in some places reaching record levels, washing away major roads and cutting supplies of water, electricity, telecommunications and television services, it said.

**Quake rocks Sakhalin again:** An earthquake measuring 4.2 on the open-ended Richter scale rocked the northern area of Russia's Far East island of Sakhalin yesterday but there were no casualties or damage, ITAR-Tass news agency reported, Reuter says from London.

The town of Neftegorsk on the island was devastated by Russia's worst earthquake last Sunday and officials fear the death toll in that may reach 2,000.

**Landslides claim 40 in Mizoram:** Landslides and flash floods have killed 40 people in the northeast Indian state of Mizoram, the Press Trust of India (PTI) reported today, Reuter reports from New Delhi.

It said 793 houses in 123 villages and towns had been destroyed and 2,857 partially destroyed in landslides, most of them in Chhimtui district of the hilly state on the border with Myanmar.

**China detains Wang again:** Veteran Chinese dissident Wang Xizhe was detained again by police and will remain in custody for at least two weeks, according to information obtained yesterday from dissident circles, AFP reports from Beijing.

Wang was detained Friday night in the southern city of Guangzhou, the dissident sources said.

**US-DPRK talks fail to narrow gap:** The top US negotiator called the state of the nuclear talks with North Korea frustrating Saturday, a day after the two sides seemingly struck a barrier in their negotiations, AP reports from Kuala Lumpur.

After Friday's session, both sides had reported their failure to narrow the gap between them. Contacts were to continue later Saturday to determine the next course of action.

**Assam's malaria toll rises to 234:** The number of deaths caused by malaria in Assam state in northeastern India has shot up to 234 with the disease spreading to 18 districts of the state, said the latest report of the Voluntary Health Association of India (VHAI), Xinhua reports from New Delhi.

About one million people have been affected by the disease, VHAI said.

**Fatah supports Arafat to continue peace talks**

TUNIS, June 3: PLO leader Yasser Arafat's mainstream Fatah Organisation on Friday supported his decision to continue peace negotiations with Israel but warned its patience had almost run out, reports AFP.

Prominent Fatah members hinted they would abandon the negotiations and adopt another strategy if Israel failed to meet a July 1 deadline for agreeing the next phase of extending autonomy to the Palestinians in the West Bank.

We are giving Israel a chance to carry out its promises, Nabil Shaath, a member of the Fatah Central Committee and chief Palestinian negotiator, told reporters here.

# Bahrain faces political unrest as oil revenues decline

CAIRO, June 3: The rigid political systems of Persian Gulf kingdoms like the tiny state of Bahrain are facing an unprecedented political opposition as their coffers are depleted by falling oil revenues, reports IPS.

Opposition figures from Bahrain say anti-government protests, which have led to the deaths of at least 12 people in the last five months, will continue unless the regime addresses call for greater democracy.

Mansour Al Jamri, the son of a prominent Shi'ite Muslim Sheikh Abdel Amir Al Jamri arrested in Bahrain last month, says demonstration will continue "as long as the government continues to refuse to conduct a dialogue with those

who call for the restoration of parliament and democracy."

Unrest in Bahrain, an important naval base for the United States and an international offshore banking centre, is sending shudders through the rest of the Gulf where unelected extended families have ruled for generations.

The schism in Bahrain falls along generally sectarian lines where the Shi'ite majority is growing increasingly unhappy with the rule of the Sunni Muslim minority under the leadership of Sheikh Eissa Bin Salman Al-Khalifa.

Bahrain is linked to Saudi Arabia by a causeway and has a population of 600,000. More than 30 per cent are foreigners - Westerners working in the oil business and Asians

giving authorities the right to detain people for up to three years without trial. Sheikh Salam led the Islamic front for the liberation of Bahrain into making a first petition in 1992 calling for the parliament's restoration.

The arrest of Sheikh Abdel Amir Al Jamri, whose name is second on the list of the October petition, prompted further riots in which at least two people were killed.

According to official figures, at least 10 civilians and two policemen have been killed in the last five months in violence that has largely centred on Shi'ite villages around the capital, Manama. Opposition figures based in London put the figure at more than 16.

The Bahraini government

has stressed it will crush the opposition Interior Minister Sheikh Mohammed Bin Khalifa Al Khalifa promised the government-appointed Consultative Council that "acts of violence, sabotage and terrorism will end, and will be crushed."

Khalifa suggested "foreign powers" were behind the uprising that has worried neighbours and their western allies. But in May, he publicly denied that he meant to accuse Iran of involvement in backing the Shi'ites.

Shi'ite leaders insist their is not an anti-Sunni campaign. They deny they are backed by Iran. Saying many of their opponents are Sunnis, secularist "and people of all ideologies."

Interior Ministers from the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) who met in Bahrain last week backed the stiff security measures their host government imposed to deal with the unrest.

But the measures also drew fire from human rights groups like Amnesty International which said in a report at the end of April that the government had arrested 700 people and was holding them as political prisoners.

Since March, the government says it has released 120 detainees, while others have gone on trial on various charges. Among those was merchant Hussein Abbas Abdallah Al-Marhub, 23, who admitted setting fire to a sports club in February.

Interior Ministers from the



PLO leader Yasser Arafat (R) talks to European ambassadors in Tunisia during a meeting in his Tunis office, on Friday, to push for progress in the Middle East peace process. From right to left Ambassador from France, De Bouillane Lacoste, Ambassador from Spain, Arias Salgado, Ambassador Heinz Kunzman from Germany and Ambassador of the European Union, Vander Meulen (L). — AFP/UNB photo

# UNSC shows little support for Ghali's four options

UNITED NATIONS, June 3: Security Council members offered little support on Friday for any of four options on the future of the UN force in Bosnia outlined recently by Secretary General Boutros Boutros Ghali, council members said, reports Reuter.

The private consultations among members marked the start of a Council review of the Bosnia situation which is expected to continue through most of next week if not beyond.

The outcome will be strongly influenced by a meeting in Paris today among the defence minister of 14 Western countries as well as other high level diplomatic discussions during the coming week or so.

Council sources said there was no support during the

consultation for two of Boutros Ghali's options — which the secretary-general himself rejected withdrawing the current 22,400 member UN Protection Force (UNPROFOR) entirely or maintaining the status quo.

But some of the major powers appeared to favour elements of two other options permitting greater use of force possibly through a multinational force not under UN command and perhaps refining UNPROFOR's current mandate.

Boutros Ghali in his report favoured the last option, seeking to draw a clear cut distinction between traditional UN peacekeeping and peacekeeping likely involve offensive operations.

Only Russia a traditional ally of the Serbs which has invariably opposed using force against them was said to have firmly endorsed the secretary general's position.

Britain's Sir David Hannay told reporters have view was widely shared that the situation in Bosnia does not lend itself to the very sharp compartmentalisation in the secretary-general's options.

There was also quite a wide sharing of the view that, although the secretary-general set out several theoretical options very fully he did not provide much guidance on how you got from here to there Hannay said. "And this is a rather important consideration in Bosnia now."

A US official said American ambassador Madeline Albright favoured pursuing elements of two of the options a greater use of force and keeping UN peacekeepers in Bosnia.



US Secretary of Defence William Perry (L) briefs US Vice President Al Gore (2nd-L), US President Bill Clinton (C), Chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff General John Shalikashvili (R), and other officials, Friday in the Oval Office of the White House about developments in Bosnia. — AFP/UNB photo

# Indo-Israeli military ties enhanced

NEW DELHI, June 3: India and Israel have enhanced their military cooperation in the past couple of years with both sides increasing their exchange of visits and discussions in this regard, reports Xinhua.

India's Defence Secretary KA Nambiar visited Israel last month and officials in the Defence Ministry said that the visit indicated New Delhi's seriousness about seeking enhanced defence cooperation with Israel.

During this trip to Israel, Nambiar visited several Israeli defence establishments apart from holding detailed discussions related to areas of cooperation and purchase of defence equipment as projected by the three services and the Defence Research and Development Organisation, Defence Ministry officials said.

# 12 more killed in Karachi violence

KARACHI, June 3: At least 12 people have been killed in clashes between police and militants, while more than 30 vehicles have been torched in this increasingly unstable port city, officials said Saturday, reports AP.

Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto's government and activists from the militant Mohajir Qaumi Movement have waged almost daily gun battles in recent weeks, leaving scores dead and disrupting life throughout Karachi, the country's financial capital.

The latest outburst began late Friday after the security forces raided an MQM office. The group said that police and paramilitary troops broke furniture and verbally abused female workers.

Two policemen were killed and five were seriously injured Saturday when attackers ambushed a police truck in the Karachi Central district, the area worst hit by the violence. A third person was killed Saturday by sniper fire in Karachi East, police added.

# UN sponsored talks on Timor begins

STADTSCHLAINING, Austria, June 3: East Timorese activists, including overseas resistance leader Ramos Horta, today began face-to-face talks with Indonesian officials for the first time to try to ease tensions in East Timor, reports Reuter.

Four days of meetings, sponsored by the United Nations, would not address the troubled territory's political future but gave both sides a chance to get to know each other, UN officials said.

Indonesian delegates said the closed-door informal talks could go some way to improving relations between the two sides, particularly on economic and cultural issues.

# Off the Record

**Sane cannibals**

KIEV: A Ukrainian convicted with his brother of killing and eating an elderly man was sentenced to death by firing squad on Friday, local reporters said, reports Reuter.

Judge Ivan Vyshevetzky said the brothers had beaten up their victim and then chopped his head off with an axe. They cut some flesh from the dismembered corpse, fried it and ate it. The head was displayed in their flat as a trophy.

Anatoly Novikov, 25, was given the death sentence. His brother Andrei, 19, who was under age when they committed the crime in the eastern Ukrainian city of Donetsk, was given 15 years in prison.

Under Ukrainian law convicts who have been certified insane cannot be sentenced to death. The judge commented: "Experts said these men were not mentally ill."

The brothers have one week to appeal against the sentences.

**Seems like a fairy tale**

SANTA CLARA, California: When the handsome mystery man walked out of the hills last week and said he had no idea who he was, it seemed like a fairy tale. On Thursday, police said they think it was, reports AP.

Investigators suspect 23-year-old Larry Rhinehart is no amnesia victim, but a wanted man with plenty to forget.

Rhinehart, whose bewildered appearances on TV drew scores of calls from women who wanted to adopt the good-looking man, is a fugitive, wanted in North Carolina on charges of arson, fraud and jumping bail.

"He's alleged to have burned up a new pickup truck that he owned in order to secure an insurance refund," said Santa Clara police Sgt Mark Kerby.

Dan Nelson, a bounty hunter, said he's been looking for Rhinehart for eight months since he fled after a 4,500 dollars bond was paid.

"This boy's been going all over the country," Nelson said. "Every time we get close to him, he seems to disappear."

The San Jose Mercury-News reported Thursday that another part of Rhinehart's story is under scrutiny.

**World's oldest art!**

A painting of a rhinoceros and another of a bison on the wall of a cave in southeast France are the world's oldest known examples of such art, the Culture Ministry announced Friday, reports AP.

French and British specialists determined that some of the cave art in the Chauvet Grotto, in Pont d'Arc in the Ardeche region, was painted some 30,000 years before our time.

The results of studies on eight samples from the cave "upset accepted notions about the first appearance of art and its development," the ministry said. They are "proof that homo sapiens acquired early on the mastery of drawing, making paintings that were veritable works of art."

Scientists made 12 separate analyses on art from the cave, discovered last December and found that the paintings predated the oldest known cave paintings until now — those in the Cosquer grotto in Marseille, dated at 27,110 years BP (Before Present).

# Thai warplanes attack Vietnam's naval ships

HANOI, June 3: Three Thai warplanes attacked Vietnamese naval ships in this week's skirmish in the Gulf of Thailand in which two Vietnamese sailors were killed, Vietnam said today, reports Reuter.

One Thai fisherman was also killed in the clash on Wednesday, a Foreign Ministry spokesman said in a statement.

Vietnam had asked Thailand, through its embassy in Hanoi, to hand over a Vietnamese sailor wounded in the incident and the bodies of the two men, and to investigate the responsibilities of those who triggered this case, he said. The statement was the first indication that Thai air force planes were used in the clash and that a Thai was

# Russian forces pound Chechen positions

GROZNY, June 3: Russian aviation and artillery pounded Chechen rebel positions south and southeast of the capital Grozny on Saturday as thousands of civilians were evacuated from the region, the ITAR-Tass news agency said, reports AP.

Col. Gen. Nikolai Antoshkin, a front-line Russian air force commander, told the news agency that forces under his command were focusing on clusters of rebel fighters in the foothills of southern Chechnya, and have not targeted a single village or town.

The Interfax news agency, quoting Chechen sources, said Saturday that Russian forces have reached the outskirts of Agishty.