

International

BRIEFLY

9 die as boat sinks in China: A wooden boat carrying 25 job-hunting peasants sank in central China killing nine people and leaving six missing, a Hong Kong newspaper said Monday. AP reports from Hong Kong.

The boat was sailing from Tianmen city in Hubei province on Friday when it sank, throwing the peasants into the water. Wen Wei Po said. It said the peasants hoped to find work in the area.

OIC sends envoy to Afghanistan: The Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) Secretary General, Hamid Algabid, has sent an envoy on a peace mission to Afghanistan, the OIC said Sunday. AFP reports from Jeddah.

It said Ibrahim Baker would hold talks in Islamabad and Peshawar in Pakistan and the Afghan cities of Jalalabad and Kabul on an OIC initiative aimed at convening a meeting of Afghanistan's feuding leaders.

2 troops killed in Colombia: Suspected left-wing guerrillas killed two Colombian government troops and wounded at least five people in an ambush Sunday on a group including the governor of Caldas, police said. AFP reports from Bogota.

Guerrillas of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) ambushed officials including Caldas Governor Ricardo Zapata and Pensiylvania Mayor Carlos Abad in Pueblo Novo, 450 kilometres (280 miles) north of Bogota, police said.

Rabin to meet Chirac, Juppe: Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin arrived in Paris early Monday morning to start a two-day official visit that will include meetings with French President Jacques Chirac and Prime Minister Alain Juppe. AFP reports from Paris.

He is also to meet the Ministers of Defence and Foreign Affairs, Charles Nillon and Herve de Charette.

Quake shakes Philippine island: An earthquake shook the central Philippine island of Samar before dawn yesterday, but there were no reports of casualties or damage, officials said. Reuter reports from Manila.

The quake measured 5.5 on the open-ended Richter scale and its epicentre was located in the sea off the town of Borongan on Samar Island some 600 km (375 miles) south-east of Manila, the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology said.

6 die in Lankan bus crash: A bus carrying pilgrims to a holy city crashed into a roadside shop in southern Sri Lanka early Monday, killing at least six people, police said. AP reports from Colombo.

Forty-four others were injured, many of them seriously. In the accident near Hikkaduwa, 90 kilometres (55 miles) south of Colombo, the capital of Sri Lanka.

US ambassador to quit Beijing: US Ambassador to China Stapleton Roy is to quit Beijing this week before the appointment of a successor, the embassy said yesterday, leaving the post vacant at a time of tense Sino-US ties over the issue of Taiwan. AFP reports from Beijing.

Although Roy's departure was scheduled, the timing could hardly be worse given China's ongoing and highly vitriolic verbal assault on the United States for allowing a visit by Taiwanese President Le Teng-Hui.

Arafat arrives in Cairo: PLO leader Yasser Arafat arrived in Cairo yesterday to discuss the latest Middle East peace moves with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak. Reuter reports from Cairo.

Arafat, who was met at Cairo airport by Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Moussa, did not speak to reporters and was driven straight to Mubarak's presidential palace.

Rains maroon 10,000 in China: Week long torrential rains have flooded crops and marooned tens of thousands of people in central and southern areas of China's southern Guangdong province, the Wen Hui bao newspaper said yesterday. Reuter reports from Shanghai.

In the Wuchuan district, 6,670 hectares (16,500 acres) of farmland were inundated, with losses estimated at 6.46 million yuan (778,000 dollars).

6 POWs handed over to Taliban: The Afghan government handed over six prisoners of war to the rival Taliban militia in advance of peace talks Monday aimed at ending the devastating civil war. AP report from Kabul.

Government minister Sidqi Chakari released the six prisoners Sunday evening at Kabul's Continental Hotel, saying it was a gesture of goodwill in advance of the negotiations. Chakari said about 90 more Taliban prisoners would be released shortly.

Road mishap claims 14 in India: Fourteen members of a marriage party were killed and 12 others injured when the trekker in which they were travelling collided head-on against a truck at Simulia, about 50 kms from Balasore yesterday morning. PTI reports from Balasore.

Police sources said that 11 persons were killed on the spot, while three others succumbed to their injuries on way to the hospital.

US actress Estelle Brody dies: American-born movie actress Estelle Brody, whose screen career started in British silent films in the 1920s before the advent of the talkies, has died in Malta. She was 94. AP reports from London.

London news reports said she died June 3. No cause of death was stated and no details of funeral arrangements were given.

SA anti-apartheid figure dies: Mooroojah Naidoo, a South African anti-apartheid figure who spent 14 years in exile, died June 1 of emphysema at age 75. AP reports from Durban, South Africa.

Known as M. D., he was a lawyer who belonged to the African National Congress, the South African Communist Party, the ANC armed wing spear of the Nation and the African Indian Congress.

Taiwan president returns home: Taiwan President Lee Teng-hui arrived home yesterday from a landmark trip to the United States. Reuter reports from Taipei.

Lee was greeted by senior officials, family members and a phalanx of cameramen after his China Airlines chartered plane landed at Taiwan's International Chiang Kai-Shek Airport.

13 more killed in Karachi

KARACHI, June 12: Thirteen people were killed in the latest surge of violence, including a 3-year-old boy shot dead at a shopping centre close to Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto's private residence, reports AP.

Despite government pleas for peace, police in Karachi reported nine deaths Sunday evening and four more Monday morning.

In one of the Sunday night shootings, gunmen fired indiscriminately at a shopping centre, killing the 3-year-old and critically wounding his parents.

The shooting took place in the upscale Clifton district, about one kilometre less than a mile from Benazir's home.

'Heartless' remarks wound souls of WW-II atomic bomb victims'

NAGASAKI, Japan, June 12: The new mayor of Nagasaki on Monday denounced President Clinton and other US leaders for defending America's use of atomic weapons in World War II, saying their "heartless" comments insulted bomb victims, reports AP.

The remarks set a combative tone for the opening of a five-day international conference on disarmament, being held in one of the two cities ever to suffer an atomic attack.

Nagasaki Mayor Itoh Ito's unusually direct criticism of the United States, in an address opening a United Nations-sponsored disarmament conference in Nagasaki, undid the US-Japan opinion gap in the year of the bombings' 50th anniversary.

Row over 'holy city's' final status
PLO decides to revive Arab local council in Jerusalem

GAZA CITY, June 12: The Palestinian authority today said it was resurrecting the Arab local council in annexed East Jerusalem which was dissolved 28 years ago by Israel, reports AFP.

The decision to set up a local authority comprising members nominated by Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat marked a new challenge to the Jewish state, which has declared the holy city its eternal and undivided capital.

The Palestinian authority has decided to reactivate the Jerusalem Council to resume the work it was doing before the 1967 war, when Israel seized East Jerusalem, the Palestinian agency Wafa said.

Councillors would be answerable to Arafat in his role as head of the PLO's Executive Committee, it added.

"This decision shows how the Palestinian authority has taken to its heart the fate of Jerusalem and its people," Arafat's spokesman Marwan Kanafani told AFP.

"We want to reactivate the council because of the importance and central role of Jerusalem for the Palestinian people."

Israel and the PLO, which want East Jerusalem as the capital of a future Palestinian state, are to discuss the city's future as part of negotiations on the final status of the Palestinian territories to begin by May 1996.

Kanafani said six of the council's original 16 members were still alive and living in the Palestinian territories.

Arafat met them last weekend during a visit to the self-rule enclave of Jericho on the West Bank, the spokesman said.

"We have not yet decided who we are going to name as the other members," he added.

The Mayor of East Jerusalem, Amin Al-Khatib, died in 1994 in Jordan, where he was expelled by Israel several months after the 1967 war.

Justifying the Palestinian decision Wafa said, Israel "promised to protest Palestinian institutions in Jerusalem" when it signed the declaration of principles on autonomy with the PLO in 1993.

At the time, Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres pledged in a secret letter to his Norwegian counterpart to keep existing Palestinian institutions in Jerusalem. Arafat revealed the letter in May 1994.

Palestinian official Hanna Siniora proposed resurrecting the Arab Council at the start of the Intifada — or uprising — against Israeli occupation in 1987, but the PLO rejected the idea because it feared the council would become a tool of Jordan and increase its influence in Jerusalem.

Karens want peace talks with Yangon

MAE SOT, Thailand, June 12: The Karen National Union (KNU) rebel group, which has been fighting for autonomy from Myanmar for nearly half a century, said today it wants preparations for peace talks with Yangon to continue, reports Reuter.

"The KNU sincerely wants to see the peace effort that has already begun to continue rather than to prolong war," the KNU said in a statement signed by its president General Bo Mya.

The KNU has been fighting Yangon for greater autonomy since 1949, a year after Myanmar gained independence from Britain.

It is still fighting Myanmar authorities, although 14 other Myanmar rebel organisations have reached ceasefire agreements with Yangon in recent years.



Israeli border guards arrest two prominent members of Fatah, PLO chief Yasser Arafat's mainstream faction, after beating them up as they led a student demonstration in Al Ram, West Bank Sunday. — AFP/UNB photo

Russia threatens US of ending uranium supply

NEW YORK, June 12: Russia is threatening to end a three-year-old agreement to send 500 metric tons of weapons-grade uranium to the United States in exchange for 12 billion US dollar in cash, The New York Times reported on Monday, reports Reuter.

The bomb-quality uranium was to be diluted, The Times said, to provide electricity for Americans through nuclear power plants.

The uranium would make 30,000 bombs of the strength of the one that destroyed Hiroshima, Japan at the end of World War II and could keep the 109 nuclear power plants in the United States running for about 10 years, the newspaper said.

The Senate Energy Committee is to hold a hearing on Tuesday on aspects of the endangered agreement, the Vice President Al Gore and Russian Prime Minister Viector Chernomyrdin are to discuss it at a meeting in Moscow later this month, according to the newspaper.

Citing federal and private experts, The Times reported efforts to implement the agreement "have been stymied by administrative missteps, disagreements over pricing for the uranium and even trade disputes."

The uranium in the contract represents what the Times calls a substantial "part of Russia's nuclear arsenal, but Moscow is estimated to have 1,200 metric tons of bomb-quality uranium and 170 met-

Aideed ousted from party post

MOGADISHU, June 12: Powerful Somali warlord Mohamed Farah Aideed, who defied UN forces in Mogadishu, has been ousted as chairman of his faction and replaced by his former right-hand man, members of the faction said today, reports Reuter.

A vote against Aideed was taken on Sunday at a special Congress in Mogadishu of the United Somali Congress-Somali National Alliance (USC-SNA), called by Aideed's opponents within the group.

Aideed was replaced by former ally and financier Osman Hassan Ali Atto.

Osmañ Atto attacked Aideed for frustrating efforts to rebuild Somalia and urged the United Nations and aid agencies to return and help the broken Horn of Africa nation.

No-confidence move against Murayama

TOKYO, June 12: Japan's main opposition New Frontier Party (Shinshinto) today submitted a no-confidence motion against Prime Minister Tomichi Murayama's cabinet, parliament officials said, reports AFP.

A vote on the motion is expected during the parliament session ending on Sunday, the officials said, while lawmakers of the three-party ruling coalition said it was certain the motion would be rejected.

The New Frontier Party's top leader, Toshiki Kaifu, said at a news conference in Sendai, northern Japan, that the motion was submitted because of the cabinet's slow response to a massive earthquake in western Japan last January and March's sarin nerve gas attack on the Tokyo subway system.

Kaifu, a former prime minister, also said the Murayama cabinet failed to take appropriate measures to cope with the Japanese currency's sharp appreciation against other currencies.



A rioter hurls a brick at police during clashes in the northern English town of Bradford, United Kingdom Saturday. Police and some 300 youths aged 12 to 20 fought a running battle in the streets overnight Saturday, leaving at least four people injured and shops looted. — AFP/UNB photo

'Pakistan to respond if India deploys Prithvi'

ISLAMABAD, June 12: Foreign Minister Assef Ahmad Ali told parliament on Sunday that Pakistan would respond if India deployed its medium range Prithvi missiles which Islamabad sees as a threat to its security, reports Reuter.

In a speech to the National Assembly (lower house), he also urged India to start a serious dialogue with Pakistan to settle a long standing dispute over the Himalayan region of Kashmir.

Ali said Islamabad assumed the Prithvi missile had been produced to be deployed against Pakistan, with whom India has fought three wars since the two nations became independent from Britain in 1947. Two of the wars have been over Kashmir.

"We will respond and we will do it within the parameters of the (international) Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), the minister said.

Pakistan has bought short range missiles from China, it denies violation of the MTCR an international accord that prohibits the export of missiles with a range of more than 300 km (186 miles) and a payload of more than 400 kg (881 lbs).

President Farooq Leghari said last month that India was pushing Pakistan into a costly and wasteful missile race that put regional peace at risk.

Ruling and opposition parties in the National Assembly passed a unanimous resolution on Sunday condemning last month's burning of a Muslim shrine in the India ruled part of Kashmir.

The resolution also urged the international community to persuade India to agree to a solution of the Kashmir dispute through a UN-mandated plebiscite there.

Off the Record

Mysterious cave woman

NICOSIA, Police in Cyprus have finally identified a mystery foreign woman two months after she was found living naked and malnourished in a remote cave on the Mediterranean island, a spokesman said on Sunday, reports Reuter.

The police spokesman named the woman as Marie Louise Birgitta Henriz from Sweden and said her brother was due to arrive in Cyprus in the next few days. He added that he did not know if she would leave Cyprus soon.

Henriz, in her 40s, has baffled the authorities and frustrated police by refusing to speak since local farmers found her semi-conscious and dehydrated in the Akamas peninsula in April. She had no identity documents with her.

Two weeks ago she left a psychiatric clinic and moved into a Greek orthodox convent which doubles as a sanctuary for cats.

A report in the English-language Cyprus Mail on Sunday said the woman's brother recognised her after reading a report in a Swedish newspaper, and identified her by a tattoo and scars from suicide attempts.

Unique way to clean up prostitution

RIO DE JANEIRO, Brazil: A small town mayor decided the best way to wipe out prostitution was to have the prostitutes clean up the town, reports AP.

Mayor Cesar Romara de Nascimento Lyra, of Agua Preta, closed down his town's red-light district and hired 17 prostitutes as street cleaners.

As street cleaners, the women earn about the equivalent of \$1.25 a month, as well as \$1.33 worth of food staples. Monthly minimum wage in Brazil \$1.10.

As prostitutes, they were earning about \$1.50 per cent.

"We're now free to walk the streets", said 43-year-old Maria de Barros, who was a prostitute for 14 years.

"Even inhuman women talk to us now," she added.

Prostitutes unwilling to clean up left town for big cities, the daily Folha de Sao Paulo reported on Sunday.

Agua Preta, in northeastern Brazil, has about 38,000 residents.

Who is first Columbus or Prince Henry?

LONDON: Scotland's Prince Henry St Clair beat Christopher Columbus by almost 100 years and discovered America first, the nobleman's descendant claims, reports Reuter.

Now Baron St Clair Blönde is looking for 250,000 pounds to rebuild the long ship that the prince is believed to have sailed from Orkney in Scotland to Newport, Rhode Island.

"I can only go by the evidence and I find it very convincing," the Baron told The Times newspaper.

He points to paintings in Prince Henry's chapel that depict vegetation found only in America. An ancient stone found in Westford, Massachusetts bears a carving very like the family coat of arms, he said.

Rao's conditional offer for talks on Kashmir

PARIS, June 13: India is ready for a dialogue on Kashmir with anybody as long as "Kalashnikovs" are left outside, and is deeply concerned over Pakistan's weapons-oriented nuclear programme and lack of international attention to it, the Prime Minister, P V Narasimha Rao said here today, reports PTI.

"My government is ready for a dialogue with anybody as long as the Kalashnikovs are left outside. We are willing to settle for a solution within the framework of the Indian Constitution," the prime minister told the prominent French daily Le Figaro in a wide-ranging interview in which he emphasised that there was no question of going back on the policy of liberalisation.

At the same time, Narasimha Rao said his government was ready to "adjust the policy of liberalisation to avoid hiccups with the market law as well as public opinion."

The prime minister stoutly denied that the recent Congress (I) debacle in polls meant rejection by the people of the new economic policy or that his party was becoming a "bit ossified."

Narasimha Rao in the interview, which was prominently featured on the front page of the popular French daily this morning, asserted that the Congress (I) had always been and remained at the forefront of political changes in India and would continue to do so.

AFP from New Delhi adds: Indian Home Minister S B Chavan said in New Delhi today that legislative elections could be held in Kashmiri four months and that the government was determined to restore democracy to the strife-torn state.

Kashmiri Muslim political and militant groups have called for a boycott of any Indian-organised elections in Kashmir.

141 Kurdish rebels killed

ANKARA, June 12: One hundred and forty-one Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) rebels were killed in military operations in East and south-eastern Anatolia, Turkish interior minister Mahit Mentese said Sunday, reports AFP.

He did not give any toll for government forces involved in the clashes, but the Diyarbakir administrative office, quoted by the Anjolan News Agency Sunday, said five Turkish soldiers died.

The rebels were killed in military operations between June 1 and 10, Mentese said.

During the same period, 168 other Kurdish rebels were arrested, he added in a written statement.