

International

BRIEFLY

Russian, Chechen delegations agree to truce till Friday



PLO leader Yasser Arafat (R) and Turkish President Suleiman Demirel embrace each other during the welcoming ceremony in the Turkish capital on Monday. Arafat arrives in Ankara for a two-day official visit to discuss bilateral relations and the Middle East peace process. The trip marks Arafat sixth official visit to Turkey since 1979. — AFP/UNB photo

Gorbachev blasts Yeltsin: Last

Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev Monday hit out at his successor as leader of Russia Boris Yeltsin over the war to crush separatism in the Caucasus republic of Chechnya, AFP reports from Lisbon.

South Pacific Forum meet ends:

A delegation from the 15 nation South Pacific Forum ended talks on Monday in which the French government said that France would not back down in its decision to resume nuclear tests in the Pacific, AFP reports from Paris.

Khmers kill 8 in Cambodia:

Eight people were killed and another six seriously injured when Khmer Rouge guerrillas shelled areas around the northwestern town of Poipet Tuesday, a Cambodian government soldier said, AFP reports from Poipet, Cambodia.

Diarrhoea claims 37 in Liberia:

An outbreak of severe diarrhoea has struck the crowded Liberian port of Buchanan, killing 37 displaced people, medical charity Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF) said on Monday, Reuter reports from Morivia.

Mild quake shakes Turkey:

A mild earthquake with a preliminary magnitude of 3.8 shook this western Turkish province on Monday, the Antolia news agency said, AP reports from Bursa, Turkey.

Landslides kill 13 in Colombia:

Two landslides unleashed by torrential rains have left at least 13 people dead after sweeping over communities in western Colombia, officials said Monday, AFP reports from Bogota.

Hungarian president reelected:

President Arpad Goncz, a symbol of stability in Hungary's transition from communist rule, was re-elected for a second five-year term by parliament on Monday, Reuter reports from Budapest.

Chinese flood toll crosses 220:

Flooding in China's southern Guangdong province this month has killed 12 people and taken the national toll from flooding since the start of the rainy season to more than 220, officials said, AFP reports from Beijing.

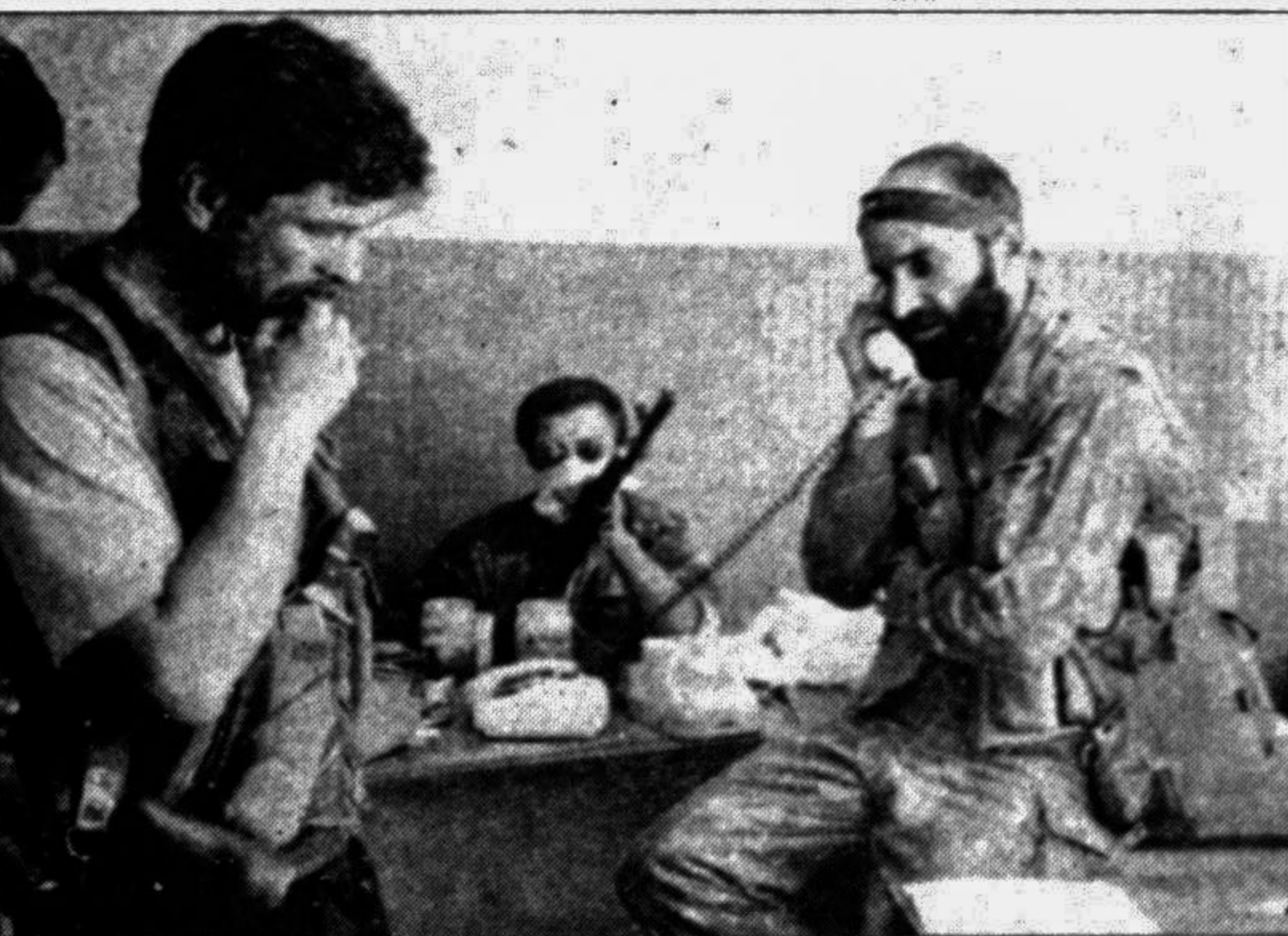
Ghali admits failure of UN Bosnia mission

NEW YORK, June 20: United Nations Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali acknowledged that UN peacekeeping efforts in Bosnia had "not been successful" after an address on the future of international body Monday night, reports Reuter.

US policy driving Gulf giants towards closer ties

NICOSIA, June 20: Seven years after their 1980-88 war, Iran and Iraq remain divided by a sea of differences. But Washington's efforts to isolate the Gulf giants may be driving them closer together, reports AP.

MOSCOW, June 20: Russian and Chechen rebel delegations today agreed to a ceasefire in Chechnya until Friday during peace talks in the separatist capital Grozny, Interfax news agency said, quoting Russian delegate Arkadi Volski, reports AFP.



Chechen rebel commander Shamil Basayev (R) holding last minute negotiations on Monday before leaving a hospital he captured in the Russian city of Budyonnovsk. Basayev released hundreds of hostages, but took 100 others with him as he left in buses for Chechnya under an agreement with the Russian government. — AFP/UNB photo

Baluch, Punjab govts defy Benazir's request

KARACHI, June 20: The regional governments of Baluchistan and Punjab Monday expressed strong reluctance to comply with Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto's request to send reinforcements to assist police and paramilitary forces in the southern port city of Karachi, reports AFP.



Mother Teresa (L) smiles at Cardinal James Hickey (C) and First Lady of the US Hillary Clinton (R) during ceremonies Monday to dedicate a new home for children in Washington, DC. The home, named for Mother Teresa, will provide a residence for children ages new born to three years who are awaiting either adoption or placement with a foster family. — AFP/UNB photo

Iraq still hiding facts on biological arms: UN

UNITED NATIONS, June 20: Iraq is concealing information on its biological weapons programme and will not fully cooperate with UN weapons inspectors unless there are prospects that an economic embargo may be lifted, a report said, says AP.

Arafat urges Israel to free prisoners

ANKARA, June 20: Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat on Monday urged Israel to "keep its promises" to release Palestinian prisoners as part of its peace agreement with the PLO, reports AP.

China has no plan to send envoy back to US

BEIJING, June 20: China has not made any plans to send an ambassador back to the United States, a government spokesman said Tuesday, reports AP.

Tigers accuse army of gross HR violations

COLOMBO, June 20: Tamil Tiger rebels accused the military Tuesday of "gross violations of human rights" during its campaign against them in northern and eastern Sri Lanka, reports AP.

Major accepts French decision on N-test

LONDON, June 20: British Prime Minister John Major said Monday that he "accepts" France's controversial decision to resume nuclear testing despite the storm of protest it provoked around the world, reports AP.

French President Jacques Chirac announced last week that France would resume its nuclear testing programme with a series of eight tests in the south Pacific between September and May next year.

Major said the issue "was not discussed at all" when he met Chirac during a G7 summit meeting of leading industrialised nations in Halifax, Canada, at the weekend.

Off the Record

If only he knew

BEIJING: A police crackdown on a hotel known for prostitution has netted the top Communist Party official in the northeastern city of Anshan, a report said Tuesday, reports AP.

Party secretary Ma Yanli and a group of other officials visited the Orient Hotel for sauna baths, massage and prostitutes, the Xinmen Evening News reported. It did not give any details on arrests.

The hotel in northeastern Liaoning province has had serious problems with prostitution and pornography since it opened last November, the report said.

It said that in mid-May Ma had visited a prostitute there, disregarding party disciplinary regulations and national laws against prostitution.

Bait to marry local women

DUBAI: The United Arab Emirates lent more than 110 million dirhams (30 million dollar) in the first half of this year to encourage its men to marry local women, a daily newspaper said yesterday, reports Reuter.

Quoting the financial report of the government's marriage fund, the Gulf News said it lent the money to 2,411 local men.

The fund, set up UAE President Sheikh Zaid bin Sultan al-Nahayan, grants soft loans to help cover the high cost of local weddings which are often glittering affairs held in expensive hotels with many guests.

Less than a quarter of the UAE's two million people are UAE nationals and local men often marry foreign women.

EU support for safer N-programme in DPRK sought

PARIS, June 20: Japan urged the European Union on Monday to support global efforts for a safer nuclear programme in North Korea, Japanese government spokesman Hiroiyuki Sonoda told a news conference, reports Reuter.

Japanese Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama and Foreign Minister Yohei Kono met French President Jacques Chirac, current EU Chairman, and European Commission President Jacques Santer for regular Japan-EU talks.

Saddam has a history of making both war and peace with Iran when it suits him.

Last year the United States accused Iran of helping Baghdad smuggle petroleum out of Iraq.

From the point of view of the Iraqi regime, Baghdad has more to gain from tension with Iran than from a more relaxed stance, Laith Kubba, a member of the Khoei Foundation, a London-based Iraqi opposition group, said in a telephone interview.

He said Iraq's President Saddam Hussein was looking for a payoff from the United States and other Western countries as well as the Gulf Arab states in exchange for continued hostility toward revolutionary Iran.