BDIFFI



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 AFP/UNB photo since 1979.

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.

Gorbachev who arrived in Lisbon Sunday, told a seminar that the crisis could only be resolved politically and that it should have been forseen. Its not just a military problem, he said. "The conflict in Chechnya involves the whole people, men-women and-children."

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.

The outcome is one that does continue to disappoint us, said delegation leader Gareth Evans, the Australian foreign minister. "The clear French position is to continue the series of tests announced."

Khmers kill 8 in Cambodia: Eight people were killed and another six seriously injured when Khmer Rouge guerillas shelled areas around the northwestern town of Poipet Tuesday, a Cambodian government soldier said, AFP reports from Poipet, Cambodia.

Three people were killed instantly and another five died in hospital after a shell hit the motorcycle-drawn cart in which they were travelling three kilometers (two miles) south of Poipet, the soldier said.

Diarrhoea claims 37 in Liberia: An outbreak of severe diarrhoea has struck the crowded Liberian port of Buchanan, killing 37 displaced people, medical charity Medicians Sans Frontieres (MSF) said on

Monday, Reuter reports from Morivia. Some 200,000 people displaced civil war fighting elsewhere in the West African country are crammed into the

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.

There were no reports of damage or injuries. The epicentre of the quake was 70 kilometres (45 miles) south of Istabul's Kandilli observatory, the agency said

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.

The worst of the disaster was visited on the Andean community of Santa Rosa de Cabal, 370 kilometres west of Bogota, where officials said 10 people were killed. Rescue crews were combing through wrecked buildings and debris searching for survivors.

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.

Goncz received 259 votes in the secret ballot, easily defeating conservative challenger Ference Madl who got 76. Fourteen ballots were spoilt.

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.

According to officials at Guangdong province's flood control headquarters, the towns of Qingyuan and Heyan were worst hit by storms and torrential rains in the first half of June. The region is fed by two tributaries of the Pearl

Russian, Chechen delegations agree to truce till Friday

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.

fax added.

Another Russian delegate, Nikolai Semenov, said the two sides had also agreed details of a gradual withdrawal of Russian troops from Chechnya.

The ceasefire accord was announced as a convoy of Chechen rebels and about 150 volunteers acting as hu-man shields travelled to Chechnya a day after the gunmen freed the last of their approximately 1,500 hostages in Budennovsk, southern Rus-

Russia's Interior Ministry quoted by Interfax said today the hostages had reached Chechnya, but Russian television reported from the neighbouring republic of Dagestan the hostages were held up there.

Earlier Interfax announced Russian and Chechen negotiators had reached agreement over keeping some Russian troops in Chechnya.

"A few detachments of federal troops," will be deployed in three small towns in the south of the breakaway republic, the agency said. The towns will be given

UP plunges into

constitutional

Crisis

20: India's most populous

state, Uttar Pradesh (UP)

plunged into a constitutional

row on Monday as the

speaker of the state assembly

adjourned a lawmakers' ses-

sion before a vote could be

moved to remove him, re-

Dhani Ram Verma defied a

directive from state Governor

Motilal Vora who had asked

the assembly to consider con-

fidence motions aimed at

Verma and at a new govern-

ment sworn in earlier this

of the two-day session of the

House by this unconstitu-

tional government as illegal

and an adjourning the assem-

bly since die," Dhani Ram

jan Samaj Party (BSP), which

formed the new government

after it withdrew support for Verma's Samjwadi (Socialist)

Party, later put forward a new

presiding officer, Barkhu Ram

Verma, elected with support

from the Hindu Bharatiya

The new officer read out a

message from Vora which in-

cluded a call for a vote on

whether Dhani Ram Verma

Major accepts

French decision

on N-test

Prime Minister John Major

said Monday that he "accepts"

France's controversial deci-

sion to resume nuclear testing

despite the storm of protest it

provoked around the world,

sumption of French nuclear

tests is a matter for the

French government and they

have taken that decision, he

told parliament here in reply

to questions from opposition

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

not discussed at all" when he

met Chirac during a G7 sum-

mit meeting of leading indus-

trialised nations in Halifax,

Canada, at the weekend.

Major said the issue "was

French President Jacques

The decision on the re-

reports AFP.

labour deputies.

year.

LONDON, June 20: British

should continue as speaker.

Janata Party (BJP).

The low-caste Hindu Bahu-

Verma told lawmakers.

"I consider the summoning

ports Reuter.

month.

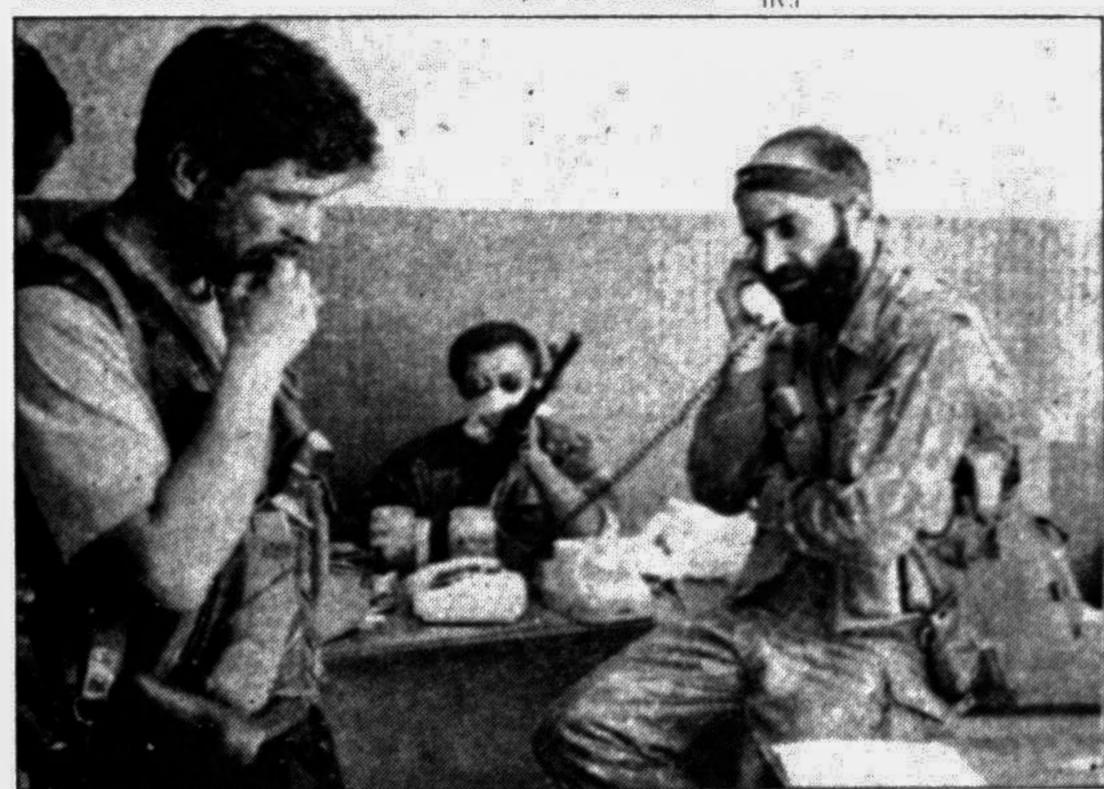
LUCKNOW, India, June

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

infantry brigade in the capital Grozny, controlled by Rusmilitary status and will prevent "terrorist or guerilla acsian troops since mid-Februtivities" by separatists, Interary, it reported. Russian authorities also

Chechen guerilla leader wish to maintain a motorised Shamil Basayev has called fur-

ther for direct talks between Russian President Boris Yeltsin and separatist leader Dzhokhar Dudayev and the unconditional withdrawal of Russian troops from Chech-



Baluch, Punjab govts defy Benazir's request

KARACHI, June 20: The regional governments of Baluchistan and Puniab 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

Benazir said Saturday that paramilitary troops from Puniab, the North-West Frontier Province and Baluchistan would be sent to assist security forces in Sindh province. No numbers or timetable were announced.

The Pakistani government has sought to bolster 38,000 police and paramilitary rangers in the strife-torn port city of Karachi where more than 145 people were killed in violence this month.

"I strongly suggest they negotiate with the opposition rather than add fuel to fire," Zulfiqar Magsi, the Chief Minister of Baluchistan told AFP from Quetta, "It is better to negotiate then pump in

He said Baluchistan had already sent several men to Sindh province and could not spare any more.

A senior Baluchistan offi-

cial reacted even more strongly, saying that security problems were an internal matter for each province.

"We don't ask them for help. They should look after their own affairs. We cannot act like mercenaries there," he

A senior Punjab official Mob-cop clashes over Pak Islamic law: 11 killed

ISLAMABAD, June 20: Eleven people were killed and scores injured in clashes since Sunday between police and militants demanding the application of Islamic Law in the Swatt Valley region of northern Pakistan, sources said today, reports AFP.

Police have sent reinforcements to the area where more demonstrations are expected Tuesday.

Witnesses and Islamic sources said eight people, including a policeman, were killed Monday in Khwazakhela, in the upper valley re-gion of Swatt. The previous day three people were killed near Mingora, a main town in the region which is one of Pakistan's few tourist areas.

said his government too was wary of sending forces to Karachi "We have not made up our

minds to send Punjab police to Karachi because we don't agree with this proposal. But we have not refused them either," the Punjab government official to AFP in Lahore.

A senior Sindh official meanwhile said, "There can be no such thing as a refusal. It is part of our duty to serve wherever we are ordered."

A spokesman for the federal government in Islamabad denied that the two provincial governments had refused to send troops but acknowl edged that some units were under the jurisdiction of the provinces.

Another senior Sindh official said more troops were urgently needs in Karachi to protect government installations which have come under increasing attacks over the past month.

Western analysts and security officials have been critical of the decision to ask for more troops, saying that mater, Cornell University. would not end Karachi's endemic strife. They advocate a political resolution to the violence which has left more than 700 dead this year.

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.

Rolf Ekeus, head of the

UN weapons inspectors, said lraq has largely met UN de-mands to dismantle its chemical and ballistic missile programme and submit to UN monitoring.

But he said "Iraq refused to engage in efforts to resolve. the biological weapons issues." A copy of Ekeus' report to the Security Council was obtained Monday by The Associated Press.

Ekeus has said that Iraq has not accounted for 17 tons of material that could be used to grow germs used in biological warfare.

Tariq Aziz, Iraq's deputy prime minister, told Ekeus that Iraq's only reason for cooperating with the weapons monitors was to press for a lifting of economic sanctions imposed after Iraq's August 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

'If there were no prospects of such reintegration, it would be difficult for Iraq to justify the expense and the effort of such cooperation", the report quoted Aziz as saving.

Aziz urged Ekeus to tell the council that Iraq had met requirements to dismantle its chemical weapons and ballistic missile programmes, the report said. Aziz also asked that the International Atomic Energy Agency state it no longer had concerns regarding

lraq's nuclear programme.

Council resolutions demand the elimination of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction.

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.

The Israeli and PLO negotiators are trying to meet a July 1 target date for agree-ment on the elections and an Isareli troop withdrawal from West Bank towns - phase two of the Israel-PLO autonomy accord.

We are waiting for July 1st, we shall see if they keep their promises or not," Arafat told the official Anatolia news

Arafat's information minister. Yasser Abed-Rabbo, also said in the West Bank on Monday that Israel and the PLO must agree on the release of Palestinian prisoners before they can sign a pact on a pullback of Israeli troops in the West Bank.

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.

The government announced early Saturday it was recalling Ambassador Li Daoyu from Washington for consultations because of the deterioration of China-US relations.

"At this moment we are not considering sending him back," Foreign Ministry spokesman Chen Jian said at a briefing. He refused to elabo-

Chen said the United States was entirely to blame for a "serious setback" in relations, and that China was waiting for Washington to take steps to make amends. He would not specify what measures China expected.

China strongly opposed the US decision to allow Taiwan President Lee Teng-hui make a private visit to the United States this month to attend a reunion at his alma

Beijing has blamed Lee for trying to split Taiwan from China, authorising military exercises that target the mainland and making "malicious"

comments about Beijing. China regards Taiwan as a renegade province with no

sovereignty 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 campaing against them in northern and eastern Sri Lanka, reports AP.

In a statement issued from their London office, the Tigers said that naval gunboats this month attacked vessels carrying Tamil fishermen, killing one and leaving four missing.

Military officials in Colombo dismissed the claim as "false propaganda." Earlier, the military had reported the attacks, saying they were on boats that guerrilla fighters

The rebels also claimed that the military had used tanks and armoured vehicles to destroy houses and crops during an offensive in the north last week, forcing 4,000 civilians to flee. Rebel claims of human

rights abuses can't be confirmed

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

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

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 ex-

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

pensive hotels with many guests.

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 in-

night, reports Reuter. "Where we have not been successful is in Bosnia." Boutros-Ghali said, comparing the operation to successful missions in Cambodia, Haiti, Angola and Macedonia.

he said

ternational body Monday

its interests. Over the past few years There is no political will among the government to conclude a peaceful solution,"

Arab-Israeli peace process.

They are among seven nations the US government has officially labelled "sponsors of international terrorism."

official Islamic Republic News Agency referred to a Tehran-Baghdad alliance as "a nightmare scenario" for the West.

Some observers see Iran and Iraq's professed attempt at reconciliation as little more than a warning to the United

States. Iran's gestures toward Iraq is that Tehran is trying to highlight to Washington the dancialist with the London-based Middle East Economic Digest, said in a telephone interview.

administration formulated its "dual containment" policy targeting Iran and Iraq nearly two years ago, the historic foes have professed a new desire to end their differences. Last month President Clin-

ton imposed a trade embargo on Iran for allegedly pursuing a covert nuclear weapons delegation to Baghdad for talks on improving ties.

reported "positive results" in talks on improving relations. The Iranian news agency

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

tion is expected in Tehran shortly, to be followed by a visit by Velayati to Baghdad. The Iran News daily,

Ministry, said in an editorial June 3 that US pressure had left Iran and Iraq with little choice but "to opt for bettering relations."

that the US embargo has nothing to do with its current quest for reconciliation with

doubt that our side is motivated by a genuine desire to improve relations," Saeed Rajai Khorasani, a member of the Iranian parliament's For-

AFP/UNB photo

rapprochement with Iran to increase pressure on Washington, which opposes a lifting of

"From the point of view of the Iraqi regime, Baghdad has more to gain from tension

laxed stance," Laith Kubba, a member of the Khoie 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.

making both war and peace with Iran when it suits him. Last year the United States accused Iran of helping Bagh-

Tomischi Murayama and Foreign Minister Yohei Kono met French President Jacques President Jacques Santier for

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 pro-

US policy driving Gulf giants towards closer ties "Our negotiations predate with Iran than from a more re-NICOSIA, June 20: Seven vasion of Kuwait, Iran by op-ars after their 1980-88 war, posing the US-sponsored Vahe Petrossian, an Iran spe- Khorram, who led the team, the sanctions, and there is no 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

So far, the visible results are few. But the recent increase in high-profile meetings raises the spectre of a reconciliation between the two countries that Washington considers most dangerous to

both have demonstrated their abilities to undermine US interests - Iraq by threatening oil supplies with its 1990 in-

In a recent dispatch, Iran's

"The main motivation for

Ever since the Clinton

programme. Two weeks later Tehran dispatched an 11-man

Foreign Minister Ali Akbar

has said that an Iraqi delega-

which is close to the Foreign

Officially, Iran maintains

eign Relations Committee, said in a telephone interview from Tehran. Iraq is suffering under UN sanctions imposed after it invaded Kuwait. It may be raising the possibility of a

the embargo.

dad smuggle petroleum out of

Saddam has a history of

gramme in North Korea, Japanese government spokesman Hiroyuki Sonoda told a news conference, reports Reuter Japanese Prime Minister

Chirac, current EU Chairman, and European Commission regular Japan-EU talks.