

BRIEFLY

2 Tajik national guards killed: Unidentified gunmen have killed two Tajik servicemen in the latest in a series of killings of military personnel in this Central Asian state; military sources said yesterday, Reuters reports from Dushanbe.

Two members of President Imomali Rakhmonov's national guard were shot dead on Sunday in the town of Kofirnkhon, 20km (12 miles) east of the Capital Dushanbe. A child was also killed.

Riot claims 2 in Ukraine: At least two people were killed when ethnic Tatars rioted in Ukraine's Crimean peninsula on Sunday, burning down shops and taking a police chief hostage, police said, Reuters reports from Simferopol, Ukraine.

Ukrainian army and national guard units were sent to the eastern port of Feodosia to restore order when the riot erupted after the funeral of two Crimean Tatars killed last week by racketeers.

Hutu militiamen kill 12 in Burundi: Sporadic gunfire was reported in two suburbs of Burundi's capital Sunday, a day after Hutu militiamen killed at least a dozen people in an attack on a Tutsi neighbourhood, AP reports from Nairobi.

There were explosions overnight in the hills overlooking the city and fighting in the Hutu neighbourhood of Kamenge and the Tutsi neighbourhood of Citiboke, a resident of Kamenge said by telephone.

34 more executed in China: Thirty-four drug traffickers were executed in southern China over the weekend, an official report said Monday, AP reports from Beijing.

The executions took place in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, which borders Vietnam, the China Daily reported.

Former US chief justice dies: Warren Burger, the former chief justice of the United States, died on Sunday after a long illness, a supreme court spokeswoman said, Reuters reports from Washington.

He was 87 and the cause of death was congestive heart failure, the spokeswoman said. She said he had been in failing health for the past year.

Fire destroys Pak power station: A huge blaze destroyed a power station in second largest Pakistan city Lahore late Sunday, plunging several million residents into darkness, official sources said, AFP reports from Lahore.

The fire began at a furnace oil store at around dusk.

Russian spy held in Karachi: Pakistani intelligence has arrested a Russian national allegedly on a spying mission in the country, officials and news reports said yesterday, AFP says from Islamabad.

Interior Minister Naseerullah Babar, quoted by the official Associated Press of Pakistan, said an agent of Russian secret service was caught while taking pictures of a sensitive installation in Karachi. No comment was immediately available from the Russian embassy here in Islamabad.

Taiwan appeals for UN membership: President Lee Teng-hui urged the United Nations Monday to find a way to readmit Taiwan as the world body marks its 50th anniversary, AP reports from Taipei.

Lee accused the United Nations of depriving Taiwan's 21 million people of their share in its political, economic, cultural and social activities.

"It is high time the United Nations faces this issue seriously and searches for a solution," Lee said in a message to the world body.

France banned from NZ food fair: France was yesterday banned from Wellington's wine and food festival in protest against its plans to resume nuclear testing in the South Pacific, AFP reports from Wellington.

France was to be the guest country its products displayed in the October festival but has been told it is no longer welcome, and all French products have been banned.

40 Hamasmen held in Gaza: Palestinian police arrested at least 40 Hamas hardliners including five of the organisation's top leaders in a dawn crackdown today after a suicide bombing in the Gaza Strip, AFP reports from Gaza City.

The Islamic resistance movement Hamas said two of its founders — Ibrahim al-Yazuri and Mohammad Shama — were held along with Mahamud Zahar, Sheikh Ahmed Bahr and Sheikh Ahmed Nimr, three of the leading Muslim figures on the strip.

Filipina maid jailed in UAE: A court jailed a 16-year-old Filipina maid for seven years for stabbing to death her employer who raped her, AFP reports from Al-Ain, United Arab Emirates.

Sarah Balabagan was found guilty of manslaughter by the court, which recognised that she had been raped by her Emirati employer, Mohammad Abdallah al-Baloushi. She could have faced the death penalty if she had been found guilty of premeditated murder.

FIS for resuming peace talks: Leaders of the banned Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) have contacted the Algerian government about resuming a dialogue on ending the fundamentalist rebellion, state-run television said Sunday, quoting government sources, AFP reports from Algiers.

It did not identify the Islamic leaders or say how the government responded.

Quake shakes S California: An earthquake measuring 4.9 on the Richter Scale shook large swaths of Southern California before dawn yesterday but there were no immediate reports of major damage or injuries, Reuters reports from Los Angeles.

The quake, which struck at 1:40 am pdt (0840 gmt), was centered about eight miles south-southwest of Castaic, which lies about 35 miles north-northeast of Los Angeles, according to seismologists at the California Institute of Technology.

European leaders slate French plan to resume N-tests

CANNES, France, June 26: European socialist leaders meeting near here Sunday criticized France's decision to resume nuclear tests and urged it to reconsider, reports AFP.

In a resolution put forward by Dutch socialists, the 17 participating countries said: "The decision of the French government to resume testing and to ignore the existing moratorium is an unnecessary blow to the non-proliferation regime."

"The PES (Party of European Socialists) leaders condemn this decision and call upon the French government to change its mind," the statement said.

Bonn decides to send forces in Bosnia to help UN mission

BONN, June 26: Chancellor Helmut Kohl's government decided today to send German military forces, including Tornado fighter planes, to support the UN peacekeeping mission in Bosnia, government sources said, reports Reuters.

Parliament must still approve the deployment, which could send Germans into combat for the first time since World War Two, in a landmark vote set for Friday.

Kohl's cabinet, eager to show solidarity with its European and NATO allies, agreed to provide the fighter jets, transport planes and medical personnel to support the United Nations' new Rapid Reaction Force (RRF) in Bosnia for an unlimited period.

Bonn is counting on the

beefed-up force to sustain the UN humanitarian mission in Bosnia and to prevent a humiliating "blue beret" withdrawal that could unleash a wider Balkan war.

Germany has ruled out sending any ground troops into an area where Nazi soldiers fought during the Second World War.

Some soldiers will serve with international military staff in Italy and Croatia. German medical personnel will work with French forces to operate a field hospital in the Croatian port of Split starting in early August.

Defence Minister Volker Ruehe, who has pushed hard for united Germany to take a more active military role within the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), has said the Tornado could be

deployed to bases in Italy next month.

Leaders of the opposition Social Democratic Party (SPD), traditionally wary of flexing German military muscle abroad, oppose sending the Tornadoes, saying the fighter planes would only escalate Bosnia's ethnic war.

But Kohl's strategists say they are sure the government will win Friday's vote.

NATO has been eager to get the jets, which are equipped with missiles and special radar-jamming equipment that could help knock out Serb anti-aircraft batteries.

The government has been turning up the pressure on the SPD to support the military deployment in order to demonstrate Bonn's international solidarity.

Not only would this display Bonn's loyalty to NATO allies who defended West Germany's freedom during the Cold War, but also exhibit its commitment to forging a common European foreign and security policy, they say.

Some SPD deputies have signalled they will defy their leadership and vote with the centre-right government, which rules with a 10-seats majority in the lower house, the Bundestag.

Kohl, eager to enhance Germany's military profile, has made supporting the United Nations and Bonn's NATO allies in Bosnia a matter of honour.

But he has had to move cautiously given the opposition's objections and divided public opinion about the move.

Thousands barred from voting in Haiti

PORT-AU-PRINCE, June 26: Tens of thousands of voters were prevented from casting ballots Sunday in the first round of Haiti's legislative elections due to severe organisational problems, diplomatic sources said, reports AFP.

The elections the first in Haiti since the reinstatement of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide last October, were marked by numerous irregularities and low voter turnout, observers said.

"Tens of thousands of Haitians could not vote due to serious problems with organisation" in Sunday's balloting, said a diplomatic source, speaking on condition he not be named.

These people should be able to fulfill their electoral responsibility in the second round, of voting on July 23, the source said.

Thatcher supports Major in fight to retain power

WASHINGTON, June 26: Former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher on Sunday tempered her support for her successor John Major as he fights to retain power, offering faint praise and saying he was the best "on offer," reports Reuters.

"You can't just have precisely the kind of leader that you would like. It's a choice between what's on offer," Thatcher said in an interview with a panel of reporters arranged by the Voice of American radio station.

Major resigned from the leadership of the ruling Conservative Party on Thursday, forcing a party election he hoped would shore up his authority.

Tigers attack army post: 13 killed

COLOMBO, June 26: The Tamil Tiger guerrillas today attacked an army post protecting a vital bridge in eastern Sri Lanka, killing five soldiers for the loss of eight of their own men, defence sources said, reports AFP.

Gunmen from the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) attempted to blast the bridge at Kayankerni, but troops beat off the assault after a heavy exchange of fire, a defence official here said.

The latest casualties raised to 365 the number of security personnel killed since the LTTE resumed its separatist war after pulling out of peace talks on April 19, official figures showed.

The military estimate for LTTE losses during the same period rose to 388 rebels killed.



Winners of the Nobel Peace Prize: 1983 winner Lech Walesa, President of Poland, 1987 winner Dr Oscar Arias Sanchez, former President of Costa Rica, 1976 winner Betty Williams of Northern Ireland and 1984 winner, Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu hold hands on Sunday after a forum of Nobel Laureates at the Herbst Theatre, in San Francisco. The Nobel Prize winners are in San Francisco for the 50th anniversary of the signing of the UN Charter after World War II.

Pakistan buying APCs to fight terrorists in Karachi

ISLAMABAD, June 26: Pakistan is buying Armoured Personnel Carriers (APCs) from Turkey for its security forces battling terrorists in the port city of Karachi, Interior Minister Naseerullah Babar told parliament today, reports AFP.

A police official is due to visit Turkey soon to finalise the purchase of an undisclosed number of APCs, Babar said.

He also said Pakistani authorities were consulting with Turkish and French anti-terrorism experts on ways to combat terrorists in Karachi where the death toll in June alone has reached close to 250.

The Interior Minister re-

peated accusations that the Mohair Quami Movement (MQM), which represents Urdu-speaking Muslims who came to Pakistan after the 1947 division of the subcontinent, was behind the violence.

He asked the opposition, which has blamed Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto for worsening the situation in Karachi, to join hands with the government in curbing the terrorism.

Babar also reported that government agencies trying to cut off the flow of illegal arms into Karachi from other parts of the country had made "big" seizures of weapons in recent weeks. He did not elaborate.

Another reports from Karachi adds: Three more

people were killed today, raising the overnight death toll to 35, as group of gunmen and snipers went on a shooting spree in several parts of the city, police and hospital sources said.

Police said two men were shot dead in Karachi's central district and one in the suburban industrial area of Korangi.

Residents and officials said several vehicles were set ablaze by armed men, who also fired on moving vehicles and clashed with paramilitary rangers and police.

At least five shops were looted and set on fire in the central and western parts of the city, which remains largely paralysed by the continuing violence.



The new conservative mayor of Paris Jean Tiberi salutes the members of the city council after his election on Sunday. Tiberi, who got 98 of 163 votes, is the successor of Jacques Chirac, the new French President.

OAU summit begins amid tight security

ADDIS-ABABA, June 26: Leaders of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) opened their 31st summit under tight security here today to tackle issues ranging from civil wars to drought and crushing debt, reports AFP.

Sharpshooters from the security forces have been deployed on the roofs of tall buildings overlooking wide avenues in the Ethiopian capital that have been blocked off for the presidents in their stretch Mercedes limousines, accompanied by motorcycle outriders and wailing police cars.

Uniformed police line the roads as plain-clothes men circulate in unmarked cars, even posing as taxi-drivers.

UNICEF, the United Nations Children's Fund, is lobbying the African government to take better care of the

children of the continent — millions of them undernourished, traumatised by war, lacking education and basic vaccinations but the police are keeping the hungry street urchins of Addis-Ababa well away from the delegates.

The focus at this summit is on civil wars that force millions of people to flee to squalid refugee camps in neighbouring countries.

In Zaire, host to more than a million turbulent Hutu refugees from Rwanda and Burundi, prime minister Kengo Wa Dondo said Saturday that "they must leave, and go back to their countries."

The United Nations is now considering redeploying some of its observers in Rwanda to the Zairean camps, which the governments of Rwanda and Burundi say are launch-pads for cross-border attacks.

Off the Record

TV addict owl!

BEIJING: An owl in the southern Chinese province of Jiangxi likes television so much that he has built a nest in a farmer's house so that he can watch the silver screen every night, the China daily said yesterday, reports Reuters.

One evening in April 1992, the owl flew into the large home of farmer Zhang Liuyou, perched on a beam and started watching the television together with the family, it said.

For the next three weeks, the owl came back, sometimes perching on the dinner table, and became a TV addict.

In spring 1993, the owl built a nest under the eaves of the house where he sleeps during the day and watches the magic box perched on the beams or on the dinner table, the newspaper added.

Now they are proud of it

NEW YORK: Tens of thousands of people, from men dressed as fairies on stilts to Buddhists to police officers, celebrated their homosexuality and mourned losses to AIDS as they marched Sunday in the annual gay pride parade, reports AP.

No arrests were reported in the parade down Fifth Avenue as rumours that marchers might disrobe in front of St. Patrick's Cathedral proved groundless.

One woman did briefly bare her breasts but was not arrested. Two men on a float simulated a sex act but kept their shorts on, they seemed to particularly relish performing in front of about 15 counterdemonstrators, including neo-Nazis shouting "Sieg heil" and giving the Nazi salute.

Some marchers chanted "shame, shame" as they passed the Roman Catholic cathedral, the focus of gay protests because of Cardinal John O'Connor's past condemnations of homosexuality.

But shortly before the parade started, the cardinal delivered a conciliatory sermon at St. Patrick's.

Olympic diving champion Greg Louganis, who made public his homosexuality a year ago and more recently disclosed that he is HIV positive, helped lead the parade as a grand marshal.

Winter not winter in case of pregnancy

ROME: Women are more likely to become pregnant in the fall of winter than in the spring or summer, according to a study by Italian researchers released on Thursday, reports AFP.

Seasons influence fertility because of the changing light and temperature that accompanies them, according to a research team from the University of Cagliari in Sardinia.

The ideal conditions for human conception is 12 hours of light and a minimum temperature of 12 degrees Celsius (54 degrees Fahrenheit). Any variation from that lessens fertility, the researchers found.

The study also found that artificial conception was more likely to be successful in winter than in summer.

US won't become world's policeman: Clinton

SAN FRANCISCO, June 26: President Clinton joining ceremonies today marking the 50th anniversary of the United Nations said he fully backs the world body but cautioned that the United States will not become the "world's policeman," reports Reuters.

Clinton, in an interview with the San Francisco Chronicle published today, complained that critics of the US role in the United Nations, "want it both ways" by trying to limit American involvement but still telling other nations what to do.

"We can't become an isolationist country and we can't dictate every other country's Clinton said. "We can't become the world's policeman."

"It's better of us to be a leader within the framework of the United Nations," he

said, rejecting calls from some Republicans in Congress to curtail the US role and the funding requirements that go with it.

Serb forces shell Sarajevo: 9 killed

SARAJEVO, June 26: Shells, mortars and snipers wreaked havoc in Sarajevo on Sunday killing at least nine people including four children in a series of attacks that also wounded many others, reports AFP.

A source at Sarajevo's main hospital said that three of the children were among six people who died in two simultaneous explosions in the city centre. Another child was killed in a shelling attack on the frontline suburb of Dobrinja while a teenager and a man were shot by snipers.

UN must tackle poverty, halt genocide as destined role

SAN FRANCISCO, June 26: To succeed in the next 50 years, the United Nations must tackle global poverty and stop genocide in Bosnia and other nations, panelists said, reports AP.

To act, however, the world organisation must function in a climate of increasingly fickle public opinion, said UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali.

"The attitudes of states and people change quickly," he warned on Sunday. "By the time conclusions are reached on difficult issues, the tides may have turned."

Boutros-Ghali made the opening remarks at a panel discussion on the future of the United Nations. About 750 people turned out for the fo-

rum to mark the 50th anniversary of the signing of the UN Charter in San Francisco after World War II.

Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan, a New York Democrat and former US ambassador to the United Nations, said the organisation has entered a new era with the demise of the Soviet Union, which he blamed for deliberately undermining policy for the first 50 years.

But he said it will not survive unless it finds a way to deal with Bosnian Serb aggression in the former Yugoslavia.

"If genocide against the Muslims in Bosnia is allowed to successfully go forward, the United Nations won't be here 25 years from now," said

Moynihan, who was on the panel.

His comments touched off a nasty exchange between the senator and Australian UN representative Richard Butler, among about 100 ambassadors and UN officials in the audience. Butler accused

Academy, was greeted with shouts of "No, no!" when he said nations that bear more of a burden in military actions should have a larger say in determining where and when the troops are used.

Later Sunday, Princess Margaret of Great Britain

50th anniversary of UN

Moynihan of ignoring that "one person in five goes to bed starving" and other social obligations.

"Like letting Orientals into your country?" Moynihan said, referring to Australia's restrictive immigration policies.

Olara A Otunnu, a panelist and president of the UN-affiliated International Peace

Academy, was greeted with shouts of "No, no!" when he said nations that bear more of a burden in military actions should have a larger say in determining where and when the troops are used.

Later Sunday, Princess Margaret of Great Britain

joined Polish President Lech Walesa, Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu and former Costa Rican President Arias — all Nobel Peace Prize winners — at an interfaith ceremony at Grace Cathedral.

An international children's choir mixed sacred waters from the Ganges River, the Jordan River, Australia, New Mexico and elsewhere in a

large bowl representing world peace.

California's Episcopal Archbishop William Swing called for the world's great religions to follow the United Nations' example, and meet in San Francisco to sign a religious charter dedicating their faiths to peace and social justice.

Reuters adds, the United Nations celebrated its 50th anniversary on Sunday but praise of its achievements was tempered by criticism of its Bosnia stance and reminders of its parlous financial state.

UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, Polish President Lech Walesa and Britain's Princess Margaret were among the guests of honour at an interfaith service

at San Francisco's Grace Cathedral marking the anniversary of the signing of the UN Charter in San Francisco in 1945.

"The United Nations in its 50 years has spared the world untold suffering. Wars have been prevented. Peace has been built by diplomacy and courage," Boutros-Ghali told a congregation that also included Nobel Peace laureates Archbishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa and Betty Williams of Northern Ireland.

Celebrations were set to culminate today, anniversary of the June 26, 1945, signing, with a ceremony attended by Boutros-Ghali, President Bill Clinton and more than 150 ambassadors to the United Nations.

Manila resumes talks with communists

BRUSSELS, June 26: After an eight-year hiatus, the Philippine government and Communist rebels officially resumed peace talks Monday but a dispute over a jailed rebel leader immediately stalled progress, reports AP.

The rebels said talks would not be starting in earnest until one of their negotiators, a commander of the armed wing of the Communist party, was released to join them in Brussels.

At the formal opening, Howard O. Dee, chairman of the government negotiating panel announced a "unilateral suspension of offensive military operations for the duration of the opening round of formal talks."