Truce between Myanmar junta, Karens fails

BANGKOK, July 1: Fighting has erupted in eastern Myanmar's Kyaha state as a three-month-old ceasefire between Myanmar's military government and an ethnic minority Karenni guerilla ar my collapsed.

Fighting has started in two places, they were synchronised attacks," a Karenni guerilla official told Reuters by telephone from the Thai-Myanmar border.

They've thrown in more than 4,000 troops," he said of the Myanmar's army's push in to the guerilla zone, which lies up against the border with

One battle was taking place on the edge of a Karenni base 15 km from the Thai border and the other clash was at the confluence of two rivers in eastern Kayah state, he said.

At least two Myanmar soldiers had been killed and more than 1,000 civilians had fled into Thailand, said the official, who asked not to be identified.

The Karenni National Progressive Party (KNPP) and Myanmar's ruling State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) signed a ceasefire in March ending a decadelong fight for independence

by the Karenni force. The KNPP said in a state ment earlier this week that Myanmar commanders had ment, reports Reuter. told them before the fighting broke out that their push into the Karenni zone was to prevent Thai loggers from felling

July 2 election. "All the reasons given for moving SLORC troops into KNPP areas are simply fictitious and groundless," the

timber and to secure the fron-

tier in advance of Thailand's

statement said Ethnic cousins of the more numerous Karen, Karenni guerrillas fought alongside British soldiers behind Japanese lines during World War Two.

The KNPP has been fighting for the independence of Kayah state since shortly after Myanmar gained independence from Britain in 1948.

Sudanese urged to defend land against Egyptian conspiracy

KHARTOUM, July 1: Sudanese President Omar Hassan al Bashir has urged his people to be ready to take up arms and defend Sudan against an alleged Egyptian-led conspiracy to overthrow his govern-

More than 300,000 Sudanese, whose country is widely shunned internationally, flocked to a rally on Friday marking the sixth anniversary of Bashir's seizure of power in a coup and the establishment of an Islamic

government . Be ready to defend your land and your honour, Bashir clad in military fatigues, told the emotionally charged

crowd. We will provide arms to very fighter and we will train every fighter, the army gen-

eral said. Bashir said his enemies were meeting in Cairo and inciting Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, who was the target of an assassination attempt in Ethiopia earlier this week, to invade Sudan.

Today Sudan is targeted by a great conspiracy led by Hosni Mubarak to destroy the revolution of national salvation, but we tell them that all the threats will not succeed and all the provocations will not prevent us from raising the banner of God, Bashir

We are fully aware that they are targeting us because we in Sudan have decided to live free of western domination and not to kneel down or bow except to God."

In a reference to a border dispute with Egypt over the Halabib Triangle, he said we have decided to defend our country. We will not give up

AP from Cairo adds, dispelling the growing threats exchanged between Egypt and Sudan, a top adviser to President Hosni Mubarak said Saturday that Egypt does not intend to attack its southern

The remark followed four days of increasingly sharp rhetoric set off when Mubarak accused Sudan of orchestrating the attempt on his life last Monday after he landed in Ethiopia for an African sum-

Mubarak later said he could overthrow Sudan's Islamic fundamentalist, regime in days if he wished, and Sudan issued warnings that Egypt' would "pay dearly" for any aggression.

But in an interview with Egypt television, Osama el-Baz, the chief political adviser to the president, said that Egypt "would not carry out military operations against the Sudan

While the anger between the two sides has largely been confined to rhetoric, several skirmishes have broken out in the disputed border enclave of Halaib, leading to the deaths of three Sudanese troops.

Sudanese leader Lt Gen Omar al-Bashir has reacted to Mubarak's threats by warning that Sudan is readying itself for an attack

"Be ready to defend your land and your honour," he told a rally Friday night in the Khartoum suburb of Hai

Yusef. "We will provide arms for anyone capable of carrying arms. We will train all youth, he said as the crowd cheered "Allahu akbar," a Muslim rallying cry meaning "God is

Port for all Sudan's talk of readiness it would be badly outnumbered in any en counter with Egypt.

Sudan has repeatedly de nied it was behind the attack on Mubarak, but the Egyptian president has persisted in blaming Sheik Hassan Turabi, the Sudanese Islamic leader who is widely regarded as the power behind el-Bashir's government. Mubarak has offered no proof for the assertion.

Police foils bid

to hijack jet

in Moscow

Saturday foiled an attempt by

two men to hijack a passenger

jet flying from eastern Siberia

to Moscow with 174 passen-

gers aboard, officials said, re-

22, boarded the flight from

Yakutsk in eastern Siberia to

Moscow and threatened to

blow the plane up unless they

were paid 1.5 million rubles

[330 dollars], according to

Yevgeny Ryabtsev, a spokes-

man for the Interior Ministry.

plane to land for refueling in

Norilsk, 800 kilometers (500

miles) east of Moscow, where

the money was given to them,

the spokesman said, but they

China rejects

talks with

Taiwan

BEIJING, July 1: China to-

day rejected talks with arch-

rival Taiwan amid growing

tension over a historic visit

by Taiwan President Lee Ten-

g-Hui to the United States,

tions across the Taiwan Stra-

its, which handles Beijing's

relations with Taipei, has su-

ggested postponing routine talks with its Taiwan coun-

terpart, the straits exchange

foundation, the Xinhua news

"It is appropriate to post-

pone routine talks between

leaders of the two non-gov

ernmental organisations since

a series of doings by the Tai-

wan authorities have severely

damaged the basis for stabilis-

ing and developing cross-

straits relations," an associa-

The association for rela-

reports Reuter.

agency said.

demanded more cash.

The pair then ordered the

The two men, aged 17 and

ports AP.

MOSCOW, July 1: Police

US to move away from ABM treaty, resume N-testing

WASHINGTON, July 1 The United States would move away from the Antiballistic Missile Treaty and resume limited nuclear testing under a detence plan proposed Friday by a key Senate committee, reports AP.

The measure would break new ground with provisions that explicitly direct the United States to deploy a national missile defence system at multiple sites by 2003. That would violate the 1972 ABM treaty, at which limited the United States and the then Soviet Union to one national missile defence site

The Senate Armed Services Committee plan amounts to a compromise in terms of defence spending between President Clinton's request and the House defence budget approved in lune. Defence spending under the Senate bill for the fiscal year beginning October 1 would be 264. billion dollars, 7 billion dollar more than Clinton requested and nearly 3 billion dollars less than in the House bill.

The Senate bill would

provide 50 million dollars "to begin preparations for hydronuclear experiments at the Nevada test site," according to a committee release

Senator Strom Thurmond, the committee chairman, said the measure tackles defense concerns in "a responsible. forward-thinking way." He said the strengthening of provisions for a national missile detense system addresses "long-term concerns." Others critcised the measure as a

major policy breach. "The Republican majority seems determined to bring back the Cold War if at all possible by provoking the Russians in every way then can think up, from violating the ABM treaty to renewing nuclear testing," said Sen. Jeff Bingaman, a committee mem-

John Isaacs, president of the Council for a Livable World, an arms control advocacy organization, said the missile detense provisions could disrupt US Russian relations at a time when the two nations are negotiating a revised version of the treaty.

Floods claim 52 in China: Floods and landslips triggered by four days of torrential rain in the southern Chinese province of Hunan have claimed 52 lives, it was reported Saturday, AFP reports from Hong Kong.

The disaster struck the mountainous areas of Changsha, Wangxing, Liuyang and Ningxiang from June 22 to 25, affecting 475,000 people and leaving more than 38,000 marooned, the China-founded Wen Wei Po daily said.

UN mandate in W Sahara extended

The Security Council voted unanimously on Friday to extend the mandate for the UN mission in Western Sahara by three months and said it was committed to holding a referendum on the future of the territory, AP reports from United Nations.

The Polisario Front suspended its participation in UN voter identification earlier this week, claiming that Morocco was improperly adding people to voter lists.

Landslide kills 20 in Malaysia: At least 20 people were killed and 23 injured Friday when a landslide dumped tons of earth on a road leading to Malaysia's only casino, police said, AP reports from Kuala

Health Minister Chua Jui Meng said the dead included a Japanese man, two Filipinos and a 5-month-old baby. He did not give their names.

Honduras UNSC president for July: Ambassador Gerardo Martinez Blanco of Honduras took over on Saturday as president of the Security Council, succeeding Ambassador Detlev Graf Zu Rantazau of Germany, Reuter reports from United Nations.

The post rotates monthly according to the English alphabetical order of the Council's 15-member delegations.

13 to die in Hong Kong: Thirteen people including one from Hong Kong were given death sentences for drug trafficking in southern China's Guangdong province, it was reported yesterday, AFP says from Hong

Another 11 people were given various jail terms including life imprisonment in what was described as the largest drug trafficking case, which involved peddlers from across the border, in Zhaoqing City, the China-funded Ta Kung Pao daily said.

20 kg heroin seized in Australia: Australian police said yesterday they had seized 20 kg [45] lb) of heroin and arrested the 13 Singaporean crew members of a ship where the drugs were found, Reuter reports from Darwin.

Australian federal police said they raided the ship in Darwin harbour in the early hours of the morning, also staging simultaneous raids on houses in Darwin and Sydney.

Palestinian shot dead in WB: An Israeli soldier shot dead a 17-year-old Palestinian who tried to stab him yesterday in the occupied West Bank town of Hebron, witnesses said, AFP reports from Hebron.

Ibrahim Khader Dais, who attacked the soldier near the Jewish quarter called tel Rumeidah, was shot in the abdomen and taken to hospital where he died, doctors said. The soldier was unharmed.

ROK president visits store site: A grim-faced President Kim Young-Sam paid a brief visit yesterday to the site of a Seoul department store which collapsed without warning with a feared death toll of more than 200, Reuter reports from Seoul.

Kim, his administration sorely embarrassed by a series of man made disasters since he took office in February 1993, has yet to make a comment about Thursday's disaster.

UN may end Liberia mission: The Security Council warned Friday that if plans to end its observer mission in Liberia in September if the warring sides do not make substantial progress toward peace, AP reports from United Nations.

The council voted unanimously to extend the mission until September 15, but cautioned that the mandate will not be renewed again unless the Liberian parties establish a ceasefire, separate their forces and create a timetable for disarmament.



A deputy presents some flowers and shakes hands with Russian Prime Minister Victor Chernomyrdin yesterday to congratulate the embattled Prime Minister who just survived the no-confidence vote in the State Duma, the lower house of Parliament.

Chandrika forms war council to help military against LTTE

COLOMBO, July 1: President Chandrika Kumaratunga has set up a council of war mostly comprising retired security chiefs to assist a current military drive against Tamil guerillas, officials said today, reports AFP.

Kumaratunga established the Reserve Affairs Council (RAC) last week to perform an advisory role to security forces fighting the rebel Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), officials said.

In addition to the RAC, she has also ordered the formation of a national auxiliary force, a civil reconstruction and rehabilitation force and civil defence force to help government's war effort, officials said.

The RAC is headed by

SARAJEVO, July 1: An-

other rift has opened between

Paris and Washington over an

elusive solution to Bosnia's 39

month old war and the

Bosnian government cutoff re-

lations with the UN's chief

Balkan envoy, reports Reuter.

Germany's decision to con-

tribute troops and equipment

to the UN mission to Bosnia,

saying their intended presence

evoked had memories of

World War Two's Nazi occu-

with the United States over

Bosnia, went public on Friday

with allegations that the

American military was inten-

A senior French officer

who refused to be identified

but clearly spoke with gov-

ernment approval, com-

France, frequently at odds

Separatist Serbs criticised

former Navy Commander Basil Gunasekera and will also include former Police Chiefs Rudra Rajasingham and Cyril Herath, officials said. The establishment of the

RAC comes amid a series of heavy losses suffered by security forces in the north eastern war zone. In the latest debacle, LTTE rebels destroyed an army camp in the north, killing more than 100 sol-

The LTTE has ordered residents in their main stronghold of northern Jaffna peninsula to put up black flags as rebels mourned the deaths of eight of their cadres killed in the attack on the Mandativu army camp, Tamil sources said.

Meanwhile, a powerful blast rocked Sri Lanka's zoo-

Another Paris-Washington rift

opens over end to Bosnian war

plained that Bosnian govern-

ment forces were receiving US

weapons and training from

government of deliberately

provoking Serb shelling of the

ings that UN troops might be

government and antagonism

towards the Serbs lay behind

the dispute between Paris and

Washington, expressed with

In Washington, the State

Asked at a news briefing if

Department dismissed the

US reserve officers were train-

ing and arming the Bosnian

Muslims spokesman Nicholas

Burns said the allegation is

nonsense, I'm not aware of

any information that would

unusual candour by France.

US support for the Bosnian

capital and reiterated warn-

He accused the Sarajevo

American reserve officers.

pulled out of Bosnia.

charges as nonsense.

logical gardens here Saturday but there were no casualties in the incident, residents and workers said. Police said they had sent a

team to investigate the incident at the Dehiwela zoological gardens following frantic telephone calls from residents in the vicinity.

Workers at the zoo said the explosion occurred when one of the cleaning personnel threw a parcel, believed to contain an explosive device picked up from outside a cage for baboons.

Another report says, a grenade that is believed to have exploded accidentally inside an army truck, killed two soldiers and wounded four in Sri Lanka's embattled east, military sources said to-

lead anybody to that particu-

ernment has not told us offi-

cially in public or in private

anything also in the lines of

this individual. I don't see the

picture of any kind of prob-

western allies deepened and

the Serbs killed four more

people in the besieged capital

the government broke of

with United Nations special

envoy Yasushi Akashi, alleg-

ing appeasement of the Serbs.

minister responsible for rela-

tions with the United Nations

told a local news agency, we

do not speak to Akashi any-

more, Akashi is dead for US.

We won't have anything more

to do with him.

Syrians still not warmed to idea of peace with Israel

Hasan Muratoivic, Bosnia's

As the rift among the

lem with our allies."

He said the French gov-

lar conclusion.

tion official was quoted as Lebanon denies attending ME

BEIRUT; July 1: Lebanon denied today that it had attended multilateral Middle East peace talks with Israel, reports Reuter.

talks with Israel

Israeli radio said on Friday Syria and Lebanon attended recently in Geneva multilateral talks with Israel for the first time in the nearly four years of negotiations.

"Lebanon is still insisting on not participating in any multilateral negotiations as long as no fundamental progress is achieved in the bilateral talks," the Secretary General for Lebanon's Foreign Ministry, Zafer Al-Hassan, told Reuters.

"The news about Lebanon's participation in such a conference is altogether incorrect," Al-Hassan said.

Israel's Foreign Ministry declined comment on the reports broadcast by both Israel radio and Israeli army radio.

Iff the Record

Falcons are safe now

NEW YORK: Perched atop a skyscraper where falcons live, US Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt said Friday that the world's fastest bird is no longer endangered - but the laws that saved it are, reports AP.

"The battle to save the falcon has been won," he announced cheerily, only to follow up with a warning that Congress was messing with Mother Nature by rewriting environmental laws that already work. "The radicals are in charge of Congress."

Babbitt is among environmentalists rallying to support the 1973 Endangered Species Act, under fire by conservatives who hope to revise it extensively in the Republicancontrolled Congress.

Babbitt stood atop the 5-story Bank of New York building, where falcons have nested since 1985, to announce plans to remove the bird from the endangered species list after a 60-day public comment period. The building is now home to a pair of falcons. If removed from the list, the falcon would join eight

species, including the American alligator, that have been declared recovered under the Endangered Species Act.
But Stephen Hoffman, president of Hawkwatch Interna-

tional in Salt Lake City, said he falcon's status should be downgraded to threatened, not taken off the list. The species seems to have trouble multiplying in several

Western states, reproduction overall has leveled off, and taking it off the list would take away funding to follow its progress, he said.

Babbitt wants the falcon off the list to show that environmental laws work well, Hoffman said. The pesticide DDT, now banned was blamed for endan-

gering the falcon by weakening eggs so they smashed or failed to develop. At least 12 falcon nesting pairs are in New York City.

Falcons also are living in Baltimore, Boston, Chattanooga, Tenn., Denver, Phoenix and Seattle. Nearly 1,000 nesting pairs are believed to be in the con-

tinental United States, with another 300 in Alaska and more in Canada and Mexico.

Crown prince, for whom no kingdom exists, weds

LONDON: He is the crown prince of Greece, heir to throne that no longer exists. She, of American and British blood, is heiress to a fortune of millions, reports AP.

They met at a party in New Orleans, fell in love, and were getting married Saturday in London before one of the largest gatherings of royals since Prince Charles married then-Lady Diana Spencer in 1981.

To the great annoyance of many Greeks, the wedding of Crown Prince Pavlos and Marie-Chantal Miller is rekindling debate about a monarchy that was abolished 21 years ago. But Britain loves a royal wedding, even if a kingdom doesn't await the prince. Queen Elizabeth II and Charles were expected among the

1,500 guests as were members of the royal houses of Greece, Spain, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Belgium, Luxembourg, Liechtenstein, France and Italy. Pavlos, 28, is the eldest son of King Constantine of

Greece, who has lived in exile in London since a military coup in 1967 Ms Miller, 26, who was born in London, is the daughter

of American-born millionaire Rober W Miller, who cofounded Duty Free Shoppers Ltd and is chairman of the Search Group, a Hong Kong-based financial holding company involved in real estate investment and development, banking, hotels, shipping and transportation.

Pavlos met Ms Miller at the wedding anniversary party of mutual friends in New Orleans three years ago. "I guess you could call it love at first sight," Pavlos said Friday.

Bravo!

DHANBAD: Courage and presence of mind of two young girls led to the arrest of a member of a gang which came to loot their house at Lodha near Jharia on Thursday, reports

Police said here that the girls, daughter, of a mining spi-dap of the Bharat Cooking Coal Limited, caught hold of the man while he was removing a television. His cronies then attacked the girls with weapons.

Though profusely bleeding the girls managed to pin the man down, while the others, escaped with the loot worth about rupees two lakh.

He was later handed over to the police who are looking

for the other miscreants.

Opposition in Haiti wants polls

PORT-AU-PRINCE, July 1: Accusing President Jean-Bertrand Aristide's government of a coup d'etat at the ballot box, opposition parties called Friday for controversial local and legislative elections to be

Serge Gilles, leader of the socialist National Progressive Revolutionary Party, also called for a new electoral council, which he said was "responsible for the nationwide electoral fiasco.'

1: President Hafez Al Assad sends envoys to talk peace with Israel, but many Syrians have still not warmed to the idea of doing business with the Jewish state, reports AP.

Syrian businessmen worry they will lose out if their Israeli counterparts are allowed to move in Radical Palestinian groups suspect they will be kicked out of the country as part of the deal. And problems with the Israeli-PLO accord hint at future dif-

ficulties Syria could face. "I don't mind the government issuing visas to Israelis,

of the Cham chain of hotels. Not all Syrians take such a

hard-line view, but both Syrians and Israelis remain deeply

of peace will we get in the end?" asked Aidi. Assad has been laying the groundwork for a peace pact

since joining the Middle East Peace overtures have been

omy, and the economic growth rate is a healthy 6 per

year, also stands to benefit.

ernment has been working to "educate' the public on the importance of peace. But some Syrians have been slow to come around.

"People have doubts, and

cause they have suffered for a long time from wars and conflicts" with Israel, said Abdel Hamid Malakani, directorgeneral of the Syrian Cham-

only by Western companies, but also by large Israeli firms, particularly in industries such as construction and tourism.

sad, a member of the minority Alawite sect, could face new challenges from Sunni Muslims who make up the major

Without Israel as an en-

emy, there could be a greater emphasis on internal politics and less tolerance for Assad's iron rule. The president has long

hosted radical Palestinian groups still intent on undermining agreements with Israel But the factions are likely to get booted out as part of any peace agreement. It's not clear

"We only depend on the logistic support of the Syrians and we think we can do without it," said Nayef Hawatmeh

Palestine. The overriding peace issue

Front for the Liberation of

is control of the Golan drawal from the heights, while Israel wants full diplomatic ties and open borders in return for relinquishing the territory.

US military wants govt to ratify Law of the Sea WASHINGTON, July 1

The US military wants the United States to quickly ratify the international treaty on the Law of the Sea to solidify the Navy's ability to move ships more freely around the globe, reports AP

As an example of the treaty's potential value in a crisis, Adm William, A Owens, vice chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, said Friday, sending a six-ship battle group from lapan to the Gulf would take an extra 15 days if US warships were barred from narrow straits around Indonesia.

to be annulled

annulled, reports AP.

Twenty of the 28 parties that contested the elections made a joint announcement.

but doing business with them DAMASCUS, Syria, July is a different matter. I can't do it, said Osmane Aidi, a prominent businessman and owner

pation.

sifying the war.

distrustful of each other after decades of conflict. "The problem is, what sort

talks in 1991.

accompanied by a loosening of the state-controlled econ-

A peace treaty could give the economy a further boost by bringing in badly needed

investments from overseas Tourism, which brought Syria a record 3.5 billion dirs last Information Minister Mohammed Salman said the gov-

nobody can blame them be-

ber of Industry. Businessmen feel they could be pushed aside, not

where they would go, though On the political front, Asthey say they can survive without Syrian support.

leader of the Democratic our land?"

Heights, which Israel captured from Syria in 1967. Syria demands an unconditional with-

"They (Israel) have to re-

turn every inch under their occupation," said Syrian Vice President Abdul Halim Khaddam. "How can we normalise relations when they still hold