

**BRIEFLY**



A UN soldier helps a Muslim refugee woman who arrived alongside with hundreds of other refugees from Banovici, Bosnia, Saturday, after fleeing the besieged town of Srebrenica. The refugees, who searched their missing loved ones in Banovici, have arrived at the UN air base of Tuzla in the desperate hope of finding missing family members or friends. — AFP/UNB photo

**Landslide kills 5 in Bogota:** A landslide caused by heavy rains plowed into a village Saturday, north of Bogota, killing at least five people and wrecking 40 homes, the Red Cross said. At least 23 people were injured. AP reports from Bogota.

About 50 people were missing hours after the landslide hit Fredonia, a town of 35,000 people about 140 miles (225 kilometres) north of the capital.

**Quake rocks northern Japan:** A moderate earthquake rocked large areas of northern Japan early Sunday, but there were no reports of casualties or damage, the Meteorological Agency and police said, AFP reports from Tokyo.

The epicentre of the quake, which struck at 3:39 am (18:39 GMT Saturday), was located 900 kilometres (448 miles) northeast of Tokyo, beneath Kushiro, Hokkaido, the agency said.

**14 die in Burundi violence:** Fourteen people were killed in two separate violent incidents in Burundi, including an attack on students at a university in the capital Bujumbura, state radio reported, Reuter says from Bujumbura.

Eight people were killed in the raid on Kiriri University campus, the radio said in a report on Saturday. Four were students, two were campus staff, and two were attackers killed by security forces. Three students were wounded.

**Quake kills 13 in China:** Thirteen people died when a 5.8 earthquake struck northwest China's Gansu province, the official Xinhua News Agency reported Sunday. AP reports from Beijing.

The quake struck Saturday morning, with its epicentre in Yongdeng County, 90 kilometres (56 miles) north of the provincial capital of Lanzhou, the report said. It had been followed by 62 after shocks, the largest measuring 3.1 by 7:30 am Sunday.

**Bob Hawke marries biographer:** Former Prime Minister Bob Hawke on Sunday married his biographer, leading Australian author Blanche d'Alpuget — but the couple's reception was marred by the sound of aircraft noise. AP reports from Sydney.

Demonstrators protesting noise caused by flights to and from Sydney Airport played loud recordings of aircraft noises outside the restaurant where the wedding reception was held.

**16 die in Vietnam ferry mishap:** At least 16 people drowned after a small ferry was hit by a Vietnamese tanker on the Long An River near Ho Chi Minh city, the Vietnam News Agency (VNA) reported yesterday, says AFP from Hanoi.

According to the report, the collision, which happened at dawn, was caused by the "irresponsibility" of the pilot of the ferry, the "Duc Thanh," which was taking passengers from southern Ben Tre province to Ho Chi Minh city.

**Jazz master Humphrey dies:** Trumpeter Percy Humphrey, whose career spanned the history of traditional New Orleans Jazz, died in New Orleans Saturday. He was 90, AFP reports from New Orleans, Louisiana.

Humphrey made weekly appearances at Preservation Hall until March, when he was forced to stop because of congestive heart failure.

**Typhoon claims 6 in S Korea:** A powerful typhoon killed six people and left 17 other missing Sunday as it overturned ships and swept a bus into the sea. AP reports from Seoul.

Six people died and seven were missing after waves as high as 6 metres (20 feet) carried the bus away in the southern city of Yesou. In another city, two ships collided in high waves some 200 metres (yards) offshore. One person was rescued, but five remained missing.

**Palestinian cop killed in Gaza:** Two gunmen shot and killed a Palestinian police captain yesterday in Shatti refugee camp in the self-rule Gaza Strip, his family said, AFP reports from Gaza Strip.

Amr Salah, 35, was killed in front of his home in the camp, his cousin Mohammed Salah told AFP.

Doctors at the Shiffa Hospital said he has been hit by eight bullets to his head and body. There was no immediate comment from police.

**54 Filipinos waiting on death row:** Fifty-four Filipinos are waiting on death row to be executed but the prisons chief says he doesn't know how to kill them, Reuter reports from Manila.

Senator Ernesto Herrera said yesterday Bureau of Corrections director Vicente Vinarao had written to him, saying he was "at a loss" about how to carry out his job because the Philippines still had no electric and no gas chamber.

**India refutes Pak charges of its role in Karachi violence**

NEW DELHI, July 23: India today categorically refuted Pakistan's charges of New Delhi's involvement in the continuing violence in Karachi and hoped Islamabad would be able to "manage" the situation in the port city, reports PTI.

The External Affairs Minister, Pranab Mukherjee described the charges as "absolutely baseless" when asked to comment on the allegations levelled by the Pakistan President, Feroz Leghari and Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto that Pakistan had "apprehended Indian trained terrorists" in Karachi.

"The alleged involvement of India in the Karachi trouble is absolutely baseless", Mukherjee said in an interview to PTI here.

Mukherjee asserted it was

India's policy not to interfere in the internal affairs of other countries. "We don't poke into the affairs of others (countries)", he said. He, however, hoped that Pakistan "will manage Karachi situation".

Regarding prospect of resumption of the Indo-Pak dialogue stalled since January last year, Mukherjee said New Delhi was still trying to make Islamabad agree for the dialogue.

Stating that India wanted the dialogue to be resumed, Mukherjee regretted that there was "no response" from Pakistan to its offer for talks.

Mukherjee ruled out the possibility of an Indo-Pak summit in the near future saying the required groundwork for such a significant

event was not evident. "For a summit level event there should be first a meeting of minds which is not there now", he said.

Mukherjee categorically said the head of Pakistan's powerful Jamaat-e-Ulema-e-Islam party Maulana Fazlur Rehman was here in the capital of a "private visit". His arrival here on Friday had nothing to do with the efforts to secure the five western hostages in Jammu and Kashmir. The hostages crisis is a matter of great concern for India, he said.

The External Affairs Minister said there has been forward movement in securing support for India from various countries for a permanent seat in the UN Security Council. "I will be lobbying for India's case during all my bi-

lateral visits," Mukherjee said.

On the question of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) to which India is not a signatory, Mukherjee said there has been no pressure on New Delhi to sign this treaty.

Asked whether the continued holding of nuclear tests by France and China would pose hurdles for the ambitious comprehensive test ban treaty (CTBT) proposed to be launched next year, Mukherjee hoped that the nuclear tests were the last tests making it possible for them to join this treaty.

"We hope the CTBT will succeed," he said adding that the nuclear tests vindicated India's stand of the NPT being inadequate.

**Pak forces clear out militants from Gulbahar dist**

KARACHI, July 23: Security forces have cleared out militants from central Karachi's troubled Gulbahar district where officials said a football ground had become a torture centre and its goal posts served as gallows, reports AFP.

Police and administration officials claimed the ground had been used to carry out execution-like killings by shooting or hanging.

In the past four weeks, 35 headless bodies were found in the area, dumped in gunny bags, the officials said.

Gulbahar (season of flowers) was once called Golimar or "shooting range" a name which may suit it more.

Officials said 1,100 paramilitary rangers and police in a pre-dawn siege Friday threw a cordon around the notorious district where

some 150 people had been killed in violence over the past two months.

At least 13 militants were arrested. Officials said six belonged to the opposition Mohajir Quami Movement (MQM), adding that a large number of weapons were also seized.

MQM, which represents the Mohajir community of migrants from India, has been blamed for the wave of violence in Karachi but denies, the accusations and attributes the bloodshed to the government's anti-Mohajir policy and its crackdown against them.

Witnesses said militants barricaded roads and dug trenches in narrow lanes to prevent the troops from entering Gulbahar which has an estimated population of 600,000 people, most on law incomes.

Paramilitary troops arrived in armoured vehicles and took positions on rooftops, and after a brief exchange of gunfire, quickly gained the control, they said.

Officials said the operation was launched after reports that between 70 and 100 terrorist were hiding in Gulbahar.

But residents told AFP that some fled before and during the operation under cover of smoke bombs.

Some 25 people were killed in battles between security forces and militants in similar earlier operations in the city's western suburb of Organgi and eastern industrial zone of Karangi.

Journalists taken to the area saw the security forces removing the makeshift bunkers and filling in trenches.

**China test fires four missiles**

TAIPEI, July 23: China has test fired four missiles in the East China Sea since Friday, the military reported Sunday. A newspaper said one missile landed in a Chinese coastal province, reports AP.

A Taiwanese military statement said China fired two missiles Friday, and another two Saturday during tests scheduled to continue until July 28.

It said one of two missiles launched Friday was found to have landed near the planned test area, and two fired Saturday landed south of the area, which is close to a Taiwanese islet about 70 kilometres (43 miles) from the tests region.

It did not say what happened to the other one fired on Friday. Newspapers said it missed its target. The China Times said it landed in Fujian province on the Chinese coast opposite Taiwan.

**Tibetan official denies reports**

BEIJING, July 23: Most of the Chinese living in Tibet are temporary residents, Tibetan official said in denying international reports that Chinese now outnumber Tibetans in their remote Himalayan homeland, reports AP.

Cering Samzhub, vice chairman of the Tibetan government, told a visiting British official that there are only 18,000 Han Chinese working in Tibet.

He made the comments to Peter Clark of the British Foreign Ministry, the official Xinhua News Agency reported late Saturday.

International human rights groups and Tibetan groups abroad have accused the Chinese government of encouraging China's majority Han Chinese to move to Tibet.

**Cruel father!**

ESTANCIA, New Mexico: A father beheaded his 14-year-old son along a busy interstate as his younger son watched, fled with the boy's head in his van, and then tossed it out the window as police chased him, authorities said Saturday, reports AP.

The father, Eric Star Smith, 34, of Parker Arizona, was captured in Albuquerque early Saturday. A 64-kilometre (40 mile) police chase ended when Smith's van crashed into a retaining wall, authorities said. He faces arraignment Monday on charges of murder and tampering with evidence.

Smith stabbed his son, Eric Star Smith Jr, several times Friday night and decapitated him along a highway near the central New Mexico town of Moriarty.

**Chechnya an independent state: Dudayev**

MOSCOW, July 23: Rebel leader Dzhokhar Dudayev has denounced the latest peace talks in breakaway Chechnya and described his region as an independent state, ITAR-Tass news agency said today, reports Reuter.

"The Chechen Republic is a sovereign independent state and the Chechen nation is a free people," Tass quoted Dudayev as saying in a television statement recorded from a secret studio and broadcast in the rebel region late on Saturday.

Dudayev's comments contrasted strongly with the optimistic message from the talks in Grozny.

"The discussions have not yielded positive results and are unlikely to do so because they have fallen into the

hands of their splitters," Dudayev said. He added: "There is not a force on earth that can break the will of the Chechen people and lead it back into the Russian stable."

Tass said Chechen commanders, speaking on television after Dudayev's statement, said they and their fighters were ready to die for the freedom and independence of Chechnya.

Dudayev, who declared Chechnya independent in 1991, accused Russia of prolonging the crisis in Chechnya rather than looking for peace and said talk that Russia would rebuild the war-shattered region was unrealistic. But other countries might be ready to help, he added.

**Mayhew, Adams hold secret talks in London**

LONDON, July 23: Secret talks took place last week between Britain's Northern Ireland secretary and the leader of Sinn Fein, the political arm of the Irish Republican Army, the government said late on Saturday, reports AFP.

The Northern Ireland office put out a statement late on Saturday confirming a report carried in the Irish weekly Sunday Tribune about the meeting between Sir Patrick Mayhew and Sinn Fein leader Gerry Adams which took place on Tuesday in London.

The northern Ireland office said, "The meeting was held to explore the way forward in the peace process in the light of recent events and it was agreed that in the interests of full and frank exchange the meeting would not be publicised. The government saw this meeting as a constructive way of restating its position."

**Off the Record**



Former Pakistan cricket hero Imran Khan with his British wife Jemima respond to the crowd from the balcony of their Lahore home after their arrival here Saturday. Imran (42) and Jemima (21) flew in from Saudi Arabia after performing 'Umrah' at Makkah. — AFP/UNB photo

**Solitary male found a partner at last**

LONDON: The world's rarest wild bird, the spix's macaw, has found a mate with the help of British scientists and is expected to produce a family to save the species from extinction. The Daily Telegraph reported Saturday, reports AP.

The solitary male macaw, believed to be the last of its kind living wild in the Brazilian rainforest, has formed a relationship with a female of the species — one of some 30 birds living in captivity — released in March by British scientists.

The scientists say it is likely the pair will produce a clutch of eggs later this year, according to The Telegraph.

The pairing was made possible after DNA tests from features were used to check the wild bird was a male, the paper added.

Spix's macaw, a large, blue, long-tailed parrot declined as a result of trapping and the destruction of the Brazilian rainforest.

Until the late 1980s it was thought to be extinct in the wild, but in 1990 scientists found a male in northeastern Brazil. The Telegraph said.

**His experience was real bad**

NEW YORK: The police report said the cabbie drove a man all the way to Michigan and back, only to be given a bad check for the dollars 2,000 fare, reports AP.

Cab driver Jamshed Butt, a native of Lahore, Pakistan, says the saga started on Tuesday at John F. Kennedy International Airport, when a well-dressed man fresh from Bombay, India, hailed his cab.

The man, Eapen Kollal, said he wanted to go to Troy, Michigan, 1,207 kilometres (750 miles) away, to retrieve a checkbook from his wife. Kollal promised to pay the 2,000 dollars fare when they arrived.

"So why did the cab driver believe him?" "He was from India," Butt, 31, said on Saturday, "from my neighbour country."

When they got Troy, they found Kollal's ex-wife.

**Malaysia intends to sell weapons to Bosnia**

KUALA LUMPUR, July 23: Malaysia is willing to sell weapons to Bosnia following the declaration by the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) that the United Nations arms embargo on the Balkan state is invalid, the Sunday Times newspaper in Kuala Lumpur reported, says Reuter.

The paper quoted Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad as saying on Saturday, that Malaysia would also supply more weapons to its force of more than 1,500 peacekeepers in Bosnia.

"Our soldiers are not allowed to have heavy weapons because they don't trust us," Mahathir said.

The OIC declaration was issued after a meeting in Geneva of foreign ministers of eight member countries, including Malaysia, form the OIC contact group.

The others attending the Geneva meeting were Egypt,

Iran, Morocco, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Senegal and Turkey.

Mahathir said the arms embargo imposed by the United Nations violated its own policy.

"Under the UN charter, any country has the rights to defend itself. But while NATO and the UN forbid the supply of arms to all parties, the Serbs are being supplied with weapons and oil to attack the Bosnians," he said.

"They are allowing the slaughtering of Bosnians by the Serbs. I have never seen such injustice in this world," he said.

Asked to comment on the western allies threat of military strikes in Bosnia if the Serbs continued their attacks, Mahathir said it was nothing but lies.

"I will believe it when I see it, I consider them liars," he said.

**Myanmar wants to speed up its entry into int'l community**

BANGKOK, July 23: Myanmar, which lived in proud isolation for decades, now wants to speed its entry into the international community, starting with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), reports AFP.

With opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi, just released from nearly six years of house arrest, Myanmar's military rulers apparently think they have done what they must to gain the world's acceptance.

ASEAN statesmen hailed the release as a vindication of their policy of promoting economic and political ties with the junta over the

protests of western partners who preached isolation as the best means of encouraging change.

But the same statesmen were understood to be reluctant to move too quickly to embrace Myanmar as a full-fledged partner.

While Myanmar Foreign Minister Ohn Gyaw is expected to seek full observer status at the annual ASEAN meeting in Brunei next week, some members had already let it be known that they saw no need to short-cut procedures.

The Burmese "are being quietly told there is no hurry, that next year should be soon

enough," a regional diplomat said.

"The lady" herself — as the junta referred to Aung San Suu Kyi obliquely over the past six years of her detention — has urged potential international partners not to rush into anything.

"I have been released. That is all. Nothing else has changed," she told reporters at her home in Yangon.

At stake for Myanmar is not only increased prestige and credibility but, more importantly, enhanced access to much-needed aid and investment to prop up the economy and perpetuate the junta's hold on power.

For ASEAN, the goal is the greater stability and prosperity in the region at large that would come with closer cooperation among the 10 nations of Southeast Asia and Indochina.

Expansion of ASEAN to include Vietnam and Myanmar, notably, may also appear attractive in that the two states, with their large military establishments, represent potential buffer against a perceived threat from China.

ASEAN currently groups Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand. Vietnam is to be admitted in July, and Myanmar, Cambodia and Laos

have been moving to different degrees, toward membership.

ASEAN has set no timetable, but it has an "understanding and target" to work toward a 10-member grouping "by the turn of the century," Malaysia's Foreign Ministry Secretary-General Ahmad Kamil Jaafar said.

In concrete terms, views differ on whether closer ties with ASEAN will encourage improvements in the human and political rights situation in Myanmar.

According to Philippine Foreign Under-Secretary Rodolfo Severino, "if the goal is to open up Myanmar's econ-

omy ... open up Myanmar's political system, develop pluralistic democracy there, then the only way to do that is to keep them engaged in the world rather than isolating them."

But Zuzetta Liddell, London-based Myanmar rights improvement and for democratic process are very slim despite her (Aung San Suu Kyi's) release, unless there is continued international pressure.

On the other hand, improvements to Myanmar's economy are certain with closer ties, as ASEAN states have consistently stressed commercial links.