

### Industry minister Karunakaran says Rao should quit as party president

NEW DELHI, May 4: An Indian minister said in remarks published today that Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao should quit as president of the ruling party, as battle lines were drawn for a post-polls power struggle, reports AFP.

Industry Minister K Karunakaran told The Times of India newspaper that the Congress (I) will have to find a new chief after the polls which he claimed the 111 years old party would manage to win. Karunakaran, a Congress heavyweight from the southern state of Kerala, said the party was organisationally in a poor state amid the parliamentary ballot as Rao had not been able to devote attention to building the party.

"We will have to find a new party president after the general election," Karunakaran said. Asked if Rao disagreed with the demand, he replied: "The party cannot surrender to

### BJP promoting communalism, says Rao

MUNGER (Bihar), May 4: The Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao today asserted that the Congress would have no truck with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) which, he alleged, was promoting communalism for political gains, reports PTI.

Attacking the BJP for its communal approach to woo the voters, Rao said "we cannot even think of having any agreement with the BJP as its policies are totally unacceptable to us," Rao, however, did not elaborate.

Addressing election meetings here and at Bhagalpur, Rao, who is also the party president, ridiculed the claim of the so-called third force that it could provide a stable government at the centre.

"Some parties have come together on the eve of elections in their desperate bid to come to power," he said adding the mute question was "will they be able to provide a stable government?"

The only party which could provide a stable government and keep the country's unity and integrity intact was his party, Rao said.

### One dies after two years of unconsciousness in Montreal

MONTREAL, May 4: A taxi driver who never regained consciousness after being beaten by police 29 months ago has died, his family said Friday, reports AP.

Richard Barnabe, 41, died in a hospital Thursday evening from internal bleeding, his sister Claudette said.

Barnabe collapsed in a cell in December 1993 after being arrested for leading police on a car chase when they responded to a report of a broken church window.

Barnabe was unconscious when he was admitted to the hospital and remained in a vegetative state until he died.

Four Montreal police officers were convicted of assault causing bodily harm.

In sentences criticized as too lenient by Barnabe's relatives, two officers were given 90 days in prison, another 60 days and the fourth was ordered to perform 180 hours of community work.

### Clashes leave 38 dead in Peru

LIMA, May 4: Clashes between government troops and leftist rebels in the jungles of Central Peru have left about 38 people dead, Peruvian media said Friday, reports AP.

The reports said the clashes between the army and the Sendero Luminoso guerrillas started April 22 in the Rio Ene valley.

The government believes Sendero Luminoso leader Oscar Ramirez Durand, known as Feliciano, is hiding in the jungle area. Durand is the only surviving member of the leadership of the Maoist group who has not been caught by the authorities.

The daily Ojo said about 30 rebels were killed during the clashes, including some killed by their own companions so they would not be captured alive.

Eight soldiers were also reported among those killed in the continuing clashes.

### Chechen rebels free 40 Russian workers

MOSCOW, May 4: Chechen separatists on Friday freed 40 Russian construction workers taken hostage in March during a raid on Grozny, but kept 40 others, the Itar-Tass News Agency reported says Reuter.

The 40 workers were freed after their employer, the Volgogradskstroy Construction Company, intervened on their behalf with Chechen separatist leader Sint He Achkol-martan region where they were being held. Khamid Inalov, the pro-Russian Interior Minister in Grozny, told the agency.

He did not rule out the possibility that the company paid a ransom for the hostages seized on March 6.

## 4 Western hostages sighted in South Kashmir Militants opposed to election kill 3, kidnap 11 villagers

JAMMU, India, May 4: Muslim separatists opposed to Indian-sponsored elections gunned down three Hindus and abducted 11 others from a remote village in strife-torn Kashmir, officials said today, reports AFP.

A group of gunmen raided the Sudhmahadev village some 130 kilometres (81 miles) from here late Friday, ordered the three victims out of their houses and opened fire after lining them up against a wall.

The militants kidnaped 11 other Hindu residents of the hamlet, in Udhampur district, and took away 14,303 rifles belonging to the villagers that had been issued to them for protection against Muslim separatists.

The rebels set fire to 20 houses belonging to Hindus who form India's majority community but who are a minority in Kashmir.

An official spokesman said in this winter capital of Kashmir, India's only Muslim-majority state, that the three slain men were members of the local village "Self-Defence Committee."

Before escaping, the militants pasted a poster on a wall threatening more killings if the predominantly Hindu villagers voted in Indian general elections being held in Kashmir for the first time since 1989.

"The killings and kidnappings were meant to frighten the locals from voting," the spokesman said. "It was clearly the work of Muslim militants who want to sabotage the election process."

No one claimed responsibility for the attack. But officials said it was carried out by either the Harkat ul-Ansar or Hizb ul-Mujahideen.

Another report from Srina-

gar says: Four Western hostages taken by Muslim guerrillas have been sighted in South Kashmir as their abduction entered the 11th month Indian Army and intelligence, sources said today.

The hostages are safe and unharmed and being moved from hideout to hideout by their abductors within a radius of 25 kilometres (15 miles) around the southern Kashmiri town of Anantnag, Brigadier P. S. Bhandra said.

Anantnag, reputed to be a Muslim militant bastion, is located 80 kilometres (48 miles) south of Srinagar, the summer capital of Kashmir.

"Our aim is to know the movement of the hostages and their kidnapers so that we keep our troops away from them to avoid direct confrontation for the safety of the Western hostages," said Bhandra.



Chinese dissident Liu Gang (L) speaks with a reporter as camera men follow Friday in Cambridge, MA, after he was granted permission to stay in the US after he fled his country. Liu escaped from China, in spite of a massive manhunt in Beijing, where he had served six years in prison for pro-reform work. — AFP/UNB photo

## Bosnia's ex-warring parties close to finalising boundary line

SARAJEVO, May 4: Bosnia's former warring parties are close to finalising the course of the boundary line that divides Bosnia into two entities, officials said Friday, reports AP.

At a meeting in Sarajevo, officials from the Muslim-Croat federation and the Serb republic made "substantive progress" in deciding on final changes on the 1,000 kilometre (600 mile) line first agreed under the Dayton peace accords, the spokesman for the NATO-led Implementation Force (IFOR) said.

Major Simon Haselock said the lengthy meeting Thursday, carried out under IFOR auspices, had come very close to finalising the boundary line.

"There are still one or two

sticking points, and there will be another final meeting but we are greatly encouraged and there was champagne being popped in the headquarters last night," Haselock said.

For most of its course, the boundary line follows the route of the old frontlines that were established during the three-and-a-half-year war. The only major changes to the frontlines were made around Sarajevo, in central Bosnia, around the town of Mrkonjic Grad and in southern Bosnia around the town of Mostar.

However when the line was originally drawn, around 400 sites were disputed by the various parties, ranging from deciding whether a well or house should lie in one entity or another to disputes about

the "ownership" of entire villages.

According to Mugdim Cukic, head of the Bosnian negotiating team, the meeting held Thursday, the 26th since NATO began chairing these talks, made significant progress towards resolving the last points of disagreement.

These include the issue of the Sarajevo suburb Dobrinja which is split in two between Muslim and Serbs, the fate of a series of villages in Zvornik, eastern Bosnia, and the future of a handful of villages in northern Bosnia near the Croat-held town of Orasje.

The other side have reduced their requests to a more realistic level. "We have accepted in principle a solution for many locations



Muslims of the Islamic Unity Convention burn an Israeli flag outside the Israeli embassy in Cape Town Friday during a march protesting the Israeli military operation against the Hezbollah movement in Lebanon. Seven policemen were injured in clashes with the demonstrators who were barred from presenting a memorandum to the Israeli ambassador. — AFP/UNB photo

## 'Israel deliberately targeted UN compound in Lebanon'

UNITED NATIONS, May 4: A preliminary report says Israel apparently fired knowingly on a southern Lebanon UN compound after pro-Israeli guerrillas sought refuge in the area, diplomats said Friday. The shelling killed at least 91 refugees, reports AP.

The UN report on the April 18 attack, prepared by Major Gen Frank van Kappen of the Netherlands, has not yet been completed. Israel has been asked to answer a series of questions.

The report says that without contrary evidence from Israel, it would have to conclude the Israeli actions were deliberate, diplomats said.

Israel has been asked, for example, whether it had an aerial drone in the area at the time of the shooting. The drone would give the United Nations a stronger indication if

the Israelis knew exactly what they were firing at.

Israel said its artillery batteries were targeting Hezbollah gunners nearby the compound and the building was hit due to technical problems.

Two or three guerrillas fled into the compound after a Hezbollah unit fired two Katyusha rockets and eight mortar rounds at Israeli targets.

"Israel did not shoot to deliberately kill 100 people in the compound," said Avner Tavori, a spokesman for the Israeli mission.

The report said that the wiving and children of Hezbollah members apparently had sought safety inside the UN compound after Israeli began its air, artillery and sea offensive, diplomats said. The blitz was aimed at stopping the guerrillas from firing rockets into northern Israel.

## Liberian warlord leaves capital, civilians flee

MONROVIA, May 4: In broad daylight, African peace-keeping troops sneaked Roosevelt Johnson out of a besieged army barracks in an armoured convoy and spirited him to the American Embassy, where a helicopter carried him out of the country, reports AP.

The departure of the embattled faction leader on Friday could mean an end to the fighting that began when troops loyal to his rival, Charles Taylor, tried to arrest Johnson on murder charges a month ago.

"We see his departure as a surrender," Taylor told CNN by telephone. "It's a welcome development."

But it was unclear whether Johnson considered it a surrender or whether he planned to return to Monrovia after talks on the six-year-old Liberia crisis that are scheduled for Accra, Ghana, next week.

The flight was the outcome of two days of behind-the-scenes diplomatic efforts involving UN, US and peace-keeping officials who negotiated an April 19 truce only to see it collapse 10 days later. Efforts to revive the truce increase in urgency after Taylor on Thursday vowed an all-out assault on Johnson.

The threat sent thousands of civilians rushing to the port Friday to try to escape by boat and prompted the United States to increase security at its embassy, where fighting Tuesday led to the deaths of three Liberian gunmen shot by US Marines.

Late Thursday, US Ambassador William Milam, UN special envoy Anthony Nyakyl, and leaders of the African peace-keeping army deployed in the city said they had a ceasefire promise from Johnson's side.

## BRIEFLY

**Colombian AG surrenders:** Colombia's Attorney General surrendered to the authorities on Friday a day after the Supreme Court ordered his arrest on drug corruption charges the RCN radio network said. Reuter reports from Bogota.

It said Orlando Vasquez Velasquez turned himself in to the state security police in Bogota. A police spokesman later confirmed Vasquez had surrendered.

**May Day clash kills 3 in Istanbul:** The government filed charges Friday against labour unions that organised May Day celebrations that turned violent, AP reports from Istanbul.

Three people were killed and 65 injured Wednesday when several outlawed leftist groups used the occasion to show their muscle, breaking windows, setting cars on fire and beating plainclothes police officers. Damage at banks, stores and government offices in the march route is estimated at 3 million drs.

**2 Azeris to die for subway bombing:** The Supreme Court of Azerbaijan sentenced two members of an obscure separatist group to death on Friday in a subway bombing two years ago that killed 14 people and injured 50 others, AP reports from Baku.

A remote-controlled bomb under a seat exploded as the train pulled into a crowded Baku metro station on March 19, 1994. Two of the 11 members of the Lezgi separatist group Sadval were charged were sentenced to die Friday and the rest sentenced to 15 years in prison.

**First woman acting PM in Jamaica:** For the first time since this Caribbean nation gained independence in 1962, a woman is running the country — if only temporarily, AP reports from Kingston.

Labour, Welfare and Sport Minister Portia Simpson on Thursday was named acting prime minister until Tuesday, while Prime Minister P J Patterson is on an official visit to the United States. Normally, Deputy Prime Minister Seymour Mullings would be in charge, but he also is out of the country. He left this former British colony April 20 for a trip to Britain, Europe and South Africa.

**Aide to Colombian drug lord faces life term:** A man described as a top aide to a notorious Colombian drug baron could face life in prison for his role in smuggling 10 million dollars worth of cocaine into the United States, AP reports from Newark.

Harold Gonzalez-Gonzalez was convicted Thursday on the single conspiracy charge he faced. The federal jury deliberated about two hours before returning the verdict, following a week-long trial. Gonzalez-Gonzalez is believed to be the highest ranking drug lord prosecuted in New Jersey. He is to be sentenced July 22 by US District Judge Dickinson R Debevoise.

**Current sweeps away 10 divers:** Coast guard officials in southern Japan rescued seven scuba divers Saturday after strong currents swept them away from their boat. Three divers were still missing, AP reports from Tokyo.

The divers failed to return as scheduled to their boat off the southern Japanese island of Amami Oshima, coast guard official Hiroshi Kurikiri said. The divers, who were rescued by helicopter after drifting for four hours, were not hurt, he said.

**Hutu rebels kill one:** Burundi's Hutu rebels launched an attack on Bujumbura overnight, killing one civilian and wounding three, before being repulsed by the country's Tutsi-dominated army, a military officer said yesterday, Reuter reports from Bujumbura.

In a three-hour attack that started shortly before midnight, the rebels attacked the suburbs of Mutanza south, Gishasha and the city's King Khaled Hospital commandant Alfred Ntalowimwe, commander of Bujumbura's 1,600 troops, told Reuters.

**Yeltsin to visit Chechnya May 16:** Russian President Boris Yeltsin will visit the war-torn region of Chechnya on May 16, a senior Russian member of parliament said in Washington Friday, AFP reports from Washington.

Mukhrbek Aushev, deputy head of the state Duma, announced the date of Yeltsin's visit and said the bodies of between 20 and 30 dead Russian soldiers were still being evacuated from Chechnya each day. Yeltsin announced Thursday he would visit Chechnya in mid-May, but officials had declined to name the date.

**New governor of Kerala takes oath:** The Karnataka Governor, Khurshed Alam Khan, who has been given additional charge as Governor of Kerala, took oath of office yesterday. PTI reports from Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala.

He was administered the oath by the acting Chief Justice of the Kerala High Court, Justice K Sreedharan, at a brief ceremony held in the durbar hall of the government secretariat. The Chief Minister, A K Antony, his cabinet colleagues, the leader of the opposition, V S Achuthanandan, the Speaker Tharambil Ramkrishnan and senior official of the state government were present on the occasion.

## Tigers blast power pylons in Trincomalee

COLOMBO, May 4: Tamil Tiger guerrillas blasted power pylons in northeastern Sri Lanka today, cutting off electricity to the region, officials said, reports AP.

The separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) used explosives to bring down two pylons at Thampalaagam in the district of Trincomalee, the officials said.

"The terrorists have damaged the main high-tension power line to Trincomalee," a local official said. "It will be sometime before we can restore the supply."

Earlier last month the Tigers destroyed another high-tension power line, but the authorities were able to make alternate arrangements to provide electricity to Trincomalee. The Tiger guerrillas have

stepped up their attacks against security forces as well as sabotage of public utilities in the east of the country following the military setbacks suffered by them in the northern Jaffna peninsula.

Security forces were Saturday consolidating in areas of the peninsula wrested from the Tigers for the first time in 10 years and nearly 250,000 Tamil civilians have crossed rebel lines and entered government-controlled areas.

The Tigers are leading a protracted campaign for independence in the northern and eastern regions where the two million Tamil minority is concentrated. More than 50,000 people have died in bitter fighting since 1972.

## Nigerian drug traffickers threaten nations around world

MIAMI, May 4: Encouraged by their military government, Nigerian drug traffickers using tens of thousands of "mules" pose an extraordinary and growing global threat, an assistant US secretary of state said Friday, reports AP.

The Nigerian example was the most startling of how drug trafficking — and the political influence it can buy — has become one of the most serious global threats in the Cold War's aftermath, Robert Gelbard said.

Nigerian trafficking organisations have grown under the protection of military ruler Gen. Sani Abacha and the predecessor he ousted, Gen. Ibrahim Babangida, he said. "There is not the slightest question in our minds that Abacha, Babangida, they have not just protected but nourished, nurtured and profited from the organisations", Gel-

bard told a workshop for journalists organised by the Latin American and Caribbean Centre of Florida International University.

Gelbard said that 40-50 per cent of heroin seized in the United States is carried by Nigerians, and now their networks are expanding in Europe.

The inroads made by the Nigerian smugglers, especially through a new route from Brazil to South Africa and on to Europe, have alarmed and prompted promises of cooperation from European governments that previously considered drugs more of an American affair, Gelbard said.

Even Dutch officials are worried, and they should be worried," Gelbard said. In the Netherlands, hashish and marijuana are legal and street sales of heroin are tolerated. US of-

ficials say the Netherlands has become a transit point for South American cocaine and Southwest Asian heroin destined for other European countries.

In South Africa, officials were so concerned at having 30,000 Nigerian passport holders in the country that they have asked the United States for help, said Gelbard.

The latest in a string of much-criticized Nigerian military regimes has become a pariah since the November hanging of political activist and playwright Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other dissidents. But it has not been affected by limited sanctions, including its expulsion from the Commonwealth of Britain and its former colonies.

Asked why the United States did not institute tough

sanctions against Nigeria, Gelbard said Washington had pressed for an embargo but could not get its allies to agree. Nigerian and international human rights groups have long called for Washington to stop buying Nigerian oil. The United States became the biggest importer of Nigerian crude during the Gulf War.

Nations are confronting drug-trafficking organisations that have bigger resources and better transportation, technology and communications than their governments and are not constrained by traditional rules, Gelbard said.

Dealing with transnational crimes, from drug smuggling to car theft and smuggling of aliens, requires international cooperation that might force a new look at what constitutes jurisdiction, he suggested.



British Prime Minister John Major leaves No. 10 Downing Street as Bournemouth school children give a greeting to the Prime Minister Friday. Britain's opposition Labour Party made many gains in local council elections. Repeated at a general election, the results could make Labour leader Tony Blair Prime Minister. AFP/UNB photo