

Bahrain recalls its ambassador to Iran

MANAMA, June 6: Bahrain said today it has recalled its ambassador to Iran as Tehran announced it was withdrawing its diplomat from Manama in a diplomatic flareup between the two countries, the foreign ministry said, reports AFP.

The Iranian ambassador to Bahrain, Javed Turk Abadi, will leave his post next week, said Bahrain's Foreign Minister, Mohammed bin Mubarak Al-Khalifa, in a row after accusations that Tehran backed a plot to topple the government in Manama.

In response, Bahrain has recalled its ambassador to Tehran, Sami Al-Muayad, the official Gulf news agency (GA) quoted Khalifa as saying.

The government of Bahrain believed that diplomatic representation between the two countries should be reduced to Charge d'Affaires, the Iranian ambassador will leave Bahrain next week," he added.

Iran has recalled its ambassador to Bahrain after Manama charged it had uncovered an Iranian-backed plot to topple the government, Tehran Radio said Thursday quoting the Foreign Ministry.

A ministry spokesman told the radio that Iran had recalled its ambassador "as a sign of protest against the accusations of the Bahraini government against the Islamic republic."

Late Wednesday Bahraini state television aired the confessions of six Bahraini Shiite Muslim militants charged with trying to overthrow their government with the help of Iran.

But Iran has strongly rejected the charges first announced in Manama on Monday when the authorities said they had arrested dozens of members of a group called the military wing of Hezbollah-Bahrain.

Netanyahu moves to crush PLO calls for independent state

JERUSALEM, June 6: Israel's prime minister-elect Benjamin Netanyahu moved to crush Palestinian calls for an independent state, following a renewed appeal by President Yasser Arafat at an Arab summit on Wednesday, reports AFP.

"Everyone knows that Netanyahu is opposed to the creation of a Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital," a spokesman for the right-wing Likud leader said.

"Jerusalem will never be divided and will remain united under Israeli sovereignty. No declaration will change that," he said.

Arafat insisted Wednesday at a summit with Jordan and Egypt that his people would soon have a state of their own with Israeli-annexed East Jerusalem as its capital.

"The Palestinian state will be declared very soon with Al-

Quds Al-Sharif as its capital," Arafat said, using an Arabia named for the holy city.

"It is the choice of the Palestinian people and nobody can oppose it," he said after the summit in the Jordanian Red Sea resort of Aqaba with King Hussein and Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak.

During his election campaign, Netanyahu repeatedly accused incumbent Prime Minister Shimon Peres of planning to merge up Jerusalem with the Palestinians.

He also ruled out the creation of an independent Palestinian state at the end of the five-year interim period of autonomy in May 1999.

Nevertheless, Netanyahu on Wednesday praised statements made by Arafat, King Hussein and Mubarak at the Aqaba summit on their commitment to the peace process.

The three Arab leaders said

they preferred to wait for the formation of Netanyahu's cabinet before making judgements on his likely approach to the peace process.

However, they also backed moves to build a united Arab front in case of any threat to peace.

Reuters adds from Aqaba: Arab leaders ended one summit and immediately prepared for another as part of a flurry of widening Arab contacts triggered by the victory of right-winger Benjamin Netanyahu in Israel's election.

The leaders of Egypt, Jordan and the Palestinians, meeting in the Red Sea city of Aqaba on Wednesday, urged the Israeli prime minister-elect to stick to a peace process based on exchanging land for peace with the Arabs.

The three leaders objectively evaluated the results of the Israeli elections and called

for the new Israeli government to continue with the peace process on the principles of the Madrid conference, said a final communiqué after the summit.

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, who has taken a lead in the post-election Arab diplomacy, said another meeting of Arab leaders would take place on Friday night. Diplomats said it would bring together Mubarak, Syrian President Hafez al-Assad and King Fahd of Saudi Arabia.

Meanwhile, Israeli security forces shot dead two Palestinians in separate incidents in Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip overnight, Israeli spokesmen said today.

Before dawn Israeli border police in Ras al-Amoud neighbourhood of Arab East Jerusalem shot dead an Arab who appeared to be reaching for a pistol, police said.

Off the Record

Truly social shrimp

LONDON: Marine biologists said on Wednesday they had found a breed of shrimp that live in colonies like ants or bees with a "queen shrimp" and worker shrimp who defend the colony, reports Reuters.

The shrimp, known as snapping shrimp because they have a claw they use for defence, cooperate in feeding their young and show the same altruistic behaviour as termites, the report in the science journal Nature said.

They are the first marine animals to be found living in social colonies.

"The sponge-dwelling shrimp *synalpheus regalis* lives in colonies that have more than 300 individuals, but that contain only one reproductive female," Emmett Duffy of the college of William and Mary in Gloucester Point, Virginia, and colleagues wrote.

"The distinctive feature of eusociality is the altruistic behaviour of non-breeders, particularly cooperative feeding and defence of young," they said.

Stone-age settlers

quaffed wine with bread!

LONDON: Stone-age settlers in what is now Iran quaffed wine with their olives and bread, 2,000 years earlier than anyone thought, American scientists reported on Wednesday, says Reuters.

The remains of an ancient pot have yielded up traces of a brew that looks suspiciously like Greek Retina, Patrick McGovern of the University of Pennsylvania and colleagues wrote in a letter to the science journal Nature.

They dug up the pot in a late stone-age village in Iran's northern Zagros mountains. It contained traces of grapes and a tree resin commonly used to keep wine from turning into vinegar.

"The jar was produced in about 5400-5000 BC, two thousand years earlier than previous evidence from the earliest civilisation of the near east," they wrote.

"Our new evidence belongs to the period when the first permanent human settlements, based on domesticated plants and animals as well as minor crafts such as pottery-making, were being established."

McGovern's group noted that people spent centuries perfecting wine-growing and making techniques.

Whale's hobby

PORTLAND, Oregon: Keiko the killer whale has a new hobby. Veterinarians prescribed a 32-inch (81-centimetre) television set to help keep him mentally stimulated at the Oregon Coast aquarium when visitors aren't around, reports AP.

So far, the start of the movie "Free Willy" has watched "Blazing Saddles" and "The Lion King". Aquarium President Phyllis Bell said Monday, Keiko didn't show a preference.

There were no plans to show Keiko "Free Willy," Bell said. The television, donated by Newport Electronics and Mitsubishi Electronics America, was put in the staff office, which has a large window to the aquarium.

Aquarium officials will limit Keiko's TV time so he doesn't become addicted. So far Keiko doesn't show any signs of that. "He loses interest," Bell said. "He doesn't just sit there and watch it the whole time. He's not like us."

China to abandon demand for peaceful N-blasts

GENEVA, June 6: China said today it would abandon its demand for so-called "peaceful nuclear explosions" to be allowed as part of a global test ban treaty, reports Reuters.

Sha Zukang, the Chinese ambassador who announced the concession in a speech to the conference on disarmament, said the ban on peaceful blasts should be temporary and the issue should be reconsidered at a treaty review conference generally expected in 10 years.

China's step removes the major obstacle to the 38-member body successfully concluding a Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) by June 28.

Beijing had been alone among the five declared nuclear powers — Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States — in demanding that the pact allow "peaceful" nuclear explosions for scientific purposes.

"Although we still need to be convinced by the various counter arguments, we also recognise the fact that the CTBT negotiations have reached its final stage and in order to facilitate the conclusions of a treaty within the time-frame as planned, the Chinese delegation is now ready to go along with a temporary ban on 'peaceful nuclear explosions,'" Sha said.

"Namely, China can agree to a treaty provision that the possibility of permitting the conduct of peaceful nuclear explosions shall be considered by the review conference of state parties," he added.

Myanmar tightens visa rules for journalists

BANGKOK, June 6: Myanmar's military government has tightened visa requirements for foreign journalists, effective immediately, a Burmese embassy official said today.

The official told Reuters that Myanmar issued an order to all Burmese embassies that all journalists' visas be approved by the Foreign Ministry. Previously, embassies had granted approval unless there were special circumstances.

The visas must be used within seven days of issue, and journalists must have an airline ticket with a fixed arrival and departure date in order to one.

Previously, the 14-day visa was valid for three months on issue. Under the new rules, the visa is still valid for 14 days.

"I don't know why they made these changes, we just heard about them from Yangon," the official said. He did not know how long it would take to get approval from Yangon.

Despite efforts to block journalists from entering the country, many foreign reporters who already had visas went to Myanmar and covered the congress.

For several years the Burmese government has regularly refused visas to journalists.

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While most people in the former Soviet republics appear

BRIEFLY

Chirac, Kohl agree defence policy:

France and Germany agreed on Wednesday to bridge their differences over defence by devising a joint strategic policy and reviewing armaments cooperation and military integration by December. Reuters reports from Dijon.

President Jacques Chirac and Chancellor Helmut Kohl agreed at a Franco-German summit to produce a joint framework for defence setting out their common strategic interests as a basis for future cooperation, a joint statement said. Chirac told a news conference they had cleared up questions that arose when he announced in February a radical overhaul of French defence policy, shifting to an all-professional army by 2002, ending conscription and cutting the arms budget.

Palestinian killed in Gaza:

A Palestinian was killed by Israeli soldiers on Wednesday in the south of the autonomous Gaza Strip, a Palestinian policeman said, AFP reports from Gaza City.

The body of the victim, whose identity was not known, was taken to the hospital in the Palestinian refugee camp of Khan Yunes. Colonel Khaled Abu Ula, the Palestinian head of the joint patrols with the Israeli Army, told AFP. There were no other immediate details on the incident.



Investigators from the International Crime Tribunal for former Yugoslavia look at bodies which were uncovered at a mass grave site, first highlighted by the US as evidence of Serb massacres in the Muslim enclave of Srebrenica, in the village of Nova Kasaba some 65-km southeast of Tuzla on Wednesday. — AFP/UNB photo

UNHCR chief Ogata awarded:

The office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and its head, Sadako Ogata, were awarded the Felix Houphouët-Boigny Peace Prize at UNESCO headquarters in Paris yesterday, AFP reports from Paris.

The prize, established in 1989 after the late President of Ivory Coast's death, was awarded in the presence of Ivory Coast President Henri Konan Bedie, Senegalese President Abdou Diouf, organisation of African Unity Secretary General Salem Ahmed Salem and a special envoy of the Japanese Prime Minister, Yoshiro Mori.

18 Rwandans held for war crimes:

The UN War Crimes Tribunal for Rwanda has in custody 18 Rwandans suspected of engaging in genocidal activity during the massacres that occurred there in 1994, a senior US official said Wednesday, AP reports from Washington.

Three of the 18 have been arraigned at the tribunal headquarters in Arusha, Tanzania, said John Shattuck, assistant secretary of state for human rights. An additional 10 are under detention in Cameroon and are expected to be transferred to Arusha, Shattuck said, speaking to reporters. Five others have been arrested in Europe.

1 held with uranium in Germany:

German police seized 2.7 kilograms (six pounds) of uranium and arrested a 49-year-old Slovak national in Ulm on suspicion of smuggling radioactive material into the country to resell it, officials in Munich announced, AFP reports from Ulm.

The public prosecutor's office in Bavaria's main city said the suspect who was from the Slovak capital Bratislava brought the material into the country on May 29. It was reportedly stored in a bank.

Clash claims 6 in Peru:

Maioist rebels and an army unit guarding an inter-city bus left six bus passengers dead as well as four guerrillas and one army officer, Peru's military reported Wednesday, AFP reports from Lima.

Shining Path guerrillas launched the attack triggering a deadly half-hour skirmish Saturday in the Amazon basin town of Tocachi, in San Martin department, the army said. The dead civilians included at least one child, witnesses said.

22 Moroccans held for rioting:

Moroccan police made 22 arrests on Wednesday after a riot in the northern city of Tangier where hundreds of people set fire to one bank and ransacked another, police sources and eyewitnesses said, Reuters reports from Tangier.

The riot coincided with a general strike, which paralysed much of the country's economic activity. "We have arrested 22 people, including two minors, after they set fire to the Societe Generale Marocaines des Banques and ransacked Banque Populaire," a police spokesman said.

Ciller vows to join Islamists to oust Yilmaz

ISTANBUL, June 6: Battle-lines have been drawn for Thursday's censure debate against Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz, with his coalition ally Tansu Ciller vowing to join the opposition Islamists to bring him down, reports Reuters.

But already the main players are looking past the final vote — set for Saturday and seemingly a foregone conclusion — to the search for a government to replace Yilmaz's short-lived partnership with ex-premier Ciller.

"Let's sort out the censure motion and then do what is needed about the government," sources in Ciller's True Path Party quoted her as telling her MPs at a closed meeting.

Party sources said Ciller's remarks kept the door open to future cooperation with her rival Yilmaz, once the current government falls.

MLAs' revolt throws Karnataka govt into crisis

BANGALORE, June 6: The week old Karnataka ministry, headed by J H Patel today plunged into a crisis in the wake of a revolt launched by a section of the party MLAs, apparently due to denial of ministerial berths, reports PTI.

While four legislators of the ruling party put in their papers last night expressing displeasure over non induction into the ministry, the number of disgruntled legislators who had decided to resign their assembly membership has risen to ten, sources said.

The assembly Speaker, Ranesh Kumar, confirmed that at least ten MLAs had submitted resignation letters.

None of them were in the stipulated format, he added.

The Speaker, however declined to give the names of MLAs, who had submitted their resignation.

2 die in Kashmir as Indian troops fire shell

ISLAMABAD, June 6: Indian troops fired an artillery shell across a military control line in Kashmir, killing two people and wounding five on the Pakistani side of the disputed Himalayan region, Pakistan's official AFP news agency said on Wednesday, reports Reuters.

It said the shell landed on a house at Khawaja Bandi village in the region's Poonch district on Tuesday night.

A man and a baby were killed and two women and three children were wounded, it said.

Tension has run high along the control line between the Indian and Pakistani sectors of Kashmir since a separatist Muslim revolt erupted in early 1990 in two-thirds of Kashmir ruled by New Delhi.

Pakistan rules the remaining third of the region, over which the two countries have fought two of their three wars since their independence from Britain in 1947.

Both sides often accuse each other of border violations.



Former Turkish Prime Minister Tansu Ciller sits next to her close aides Mehmet Golhan (C) and Necmettin Cevheri (L) during a parliament session in Ankara on Wednesday. The Turkish parliament voted down a motion to investigate the sources of income of Islamist party leader Necmettin Erbakan after ordering a probe into alleged corruption of former premier Tansu Ciller. — AFP/UNB photo

Confusion over NATO bid to capture Karadzic

Investigators discover mass graves site in Bosnia

NOVA KASABA, Bosnia, June 6: UN war crimes investigators on Wednesday uncovered the bodies of six civilians who apparently were executed and dumped in a field where American officials have said as many as 2,700 people may be buried, reports AP.

"Basically, what we have here is a minimum of six bodies, one with hands bound with wire, the other with a shoe string," said American forensic specialist John Gerns. All the bodies were in civilian clothing.

The bodies were in various stages of decomposition and Gerns would not speculate on

how long they had been buried. But at least one was covered with large amounts of tissue, indicating that it could have been buried within the past year.

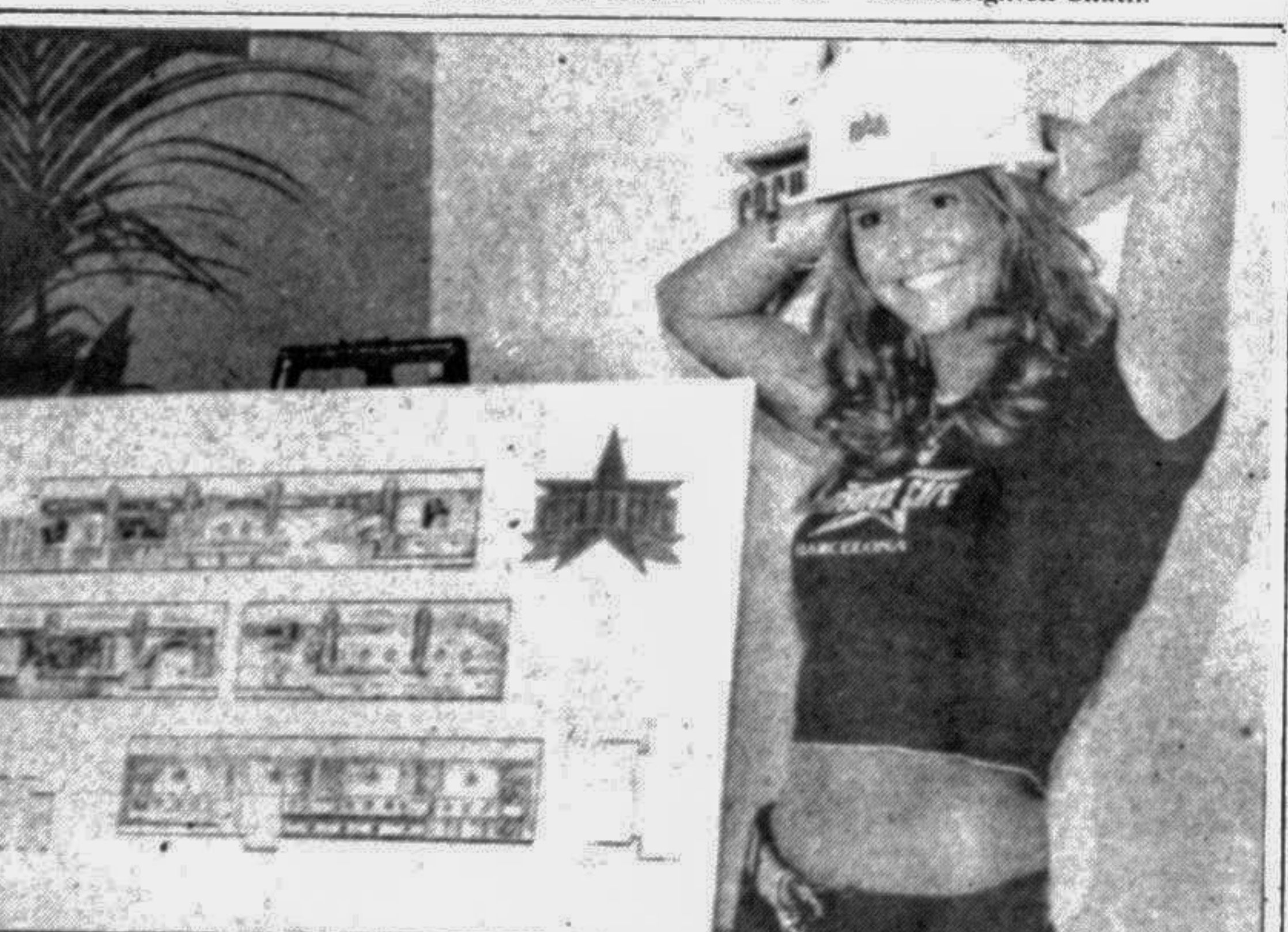
More than 7,000 Muslim men from the UN protected enclave of Srebrenica disappeared after Bosnian Serbs captured it last July. Survivors say they were massacred.

US spy photos have indicated mass graves around Nova Kasaba, about 19 kilometres (12 miles) northwest of Srebrenica, Madeleine Albright, US ambassador to the United Nations told the Security Council last August that as

many as 2,700 people might be buried there.

AP adds: Capturing Bosnian Serb leaders indicted for war crimes probably would require a special operation that NATO forces lack permission to carry out, a deputy NATO commander said Wednesday.

The comment by Lt Gen. Jean Heinrich of France raised questions about the commitment of the international community to arrest Radovan Karadzic and his military leader, Gen. Ratko Mladic. Heinrich is a deputy to NATO's commander in Bosnia, US Adm. Leighton Smith.



Australian top-model Elle McPherson flashes a smile during the presentation of a "Fashion Cafe" in Barcelona, Wednesday. The "Fashion Cafe", run by international top fashion models such as Elle McPherson, German Claudia Schiffer and British Naomi Campbell, is due to open for the public later this September. — AFP/UNB photo

Former Soviet republics warily watching Russian campaign

KIEV, June 6: On a recent train ride through western Ukraine, the piped-in music suddenly switched from Western pop to the Soviet anthem, reports AP.

A few passengers laughed. Others felt uncomfortably silent.

"That was a joke," a Ukrainian professor reassured his daughter.

"Was it?" asked a passing waiter.

These Ukrainians — like tens of millions of people in the former Soviet republics hugging Russia's vast borders — are keeping a nervous eye on the presidential campaign next door. Most are hoping hard that Communist leader Genady Zyuganov doesn't defeat President Boris Yeltsin.

Regardless of how the propaganda painted it, the Soviet "Union" was a Russian creation. Many Russians, nostalgic for the days of Soviet power and

economically scarred by market reforms, are pining for its resurrection.

But few people in the other former republics want a return to the Soviet Union, which collapsed in 1991 with its former components becoming independent nations.

No one can predict what a Communist victory in June 16 elections would bring Russia's neighbours, but speculation is rampant about a return to the uglier aspects of Soviet rule — annexation, labour camps, censorship.

"Boris Yeltsin is the only guarantor of further democratic reforms in all countries of the post-Soviet space," said Georgian President Eduard Shevardnadze.

Zyuganov insists he would not force any of the former republics into a new union. But his rhetoric is rich with the gospel of Russian greatness, and many fear his more hard-

line deputies would waste little time in pushing for more control over former satellites.

"Everyone knows what will happen, but no one wants to talk about it. There will be nationalisation and chaos," said Nurbulat Masanov, a political scientist in Kazakhstan, a former Soviet republic in Central Asia.

This apprehension prompted an unprecedented show of unity among leaders of the Commonwealth of Independent States, the loose coalition of all the former republics except the Baltic states. The leaders last month announced their "firm and unanimous support" for Yeltsin.

Without question, the lesser evil for Ukraine is a Yeltsin victory, said Ukrainian lawmaker Ivan Zayats, deputy head of the nationalist party Rukh.

The only CIS member to express reluctance at support-

ing Yeltsin was Belarus, where President Alexander Lukashenko has championed new alliances with Moscow. Belarusians, eager for salvation from post-Soviet economic woes, have largely supported the moves.

Russia's Communist-led lower house of parliament passed a resolution in March demanding the restoration of the Soviet Union. The vote carried no legal weight but provoked an outcry in the other 14 former Soviet republics.

On Wednesday, the same body voted on whether to demand that Ukraine and Kazakhstan turn over "traditionally Russian territories," but the proposal fell short of the votes needed for passage.

Despite the fears, some leaders in the former Soviet republics are keeping cool about the race, at least officially.

The tiny Baltic states, loath to associate themselves with Moscow, insist that Russian's revived Communism don't pose a threat to their Western-oriented policies and economies.

"The impact of the elections would be the same as on the European Union," Estonian President Lennart Meri said. "Security is indivisible, and Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia are part of Europe."

In former Soviet Central Asia, many people fear that a Zyuganov regime would stimulate the authoritarian tendencies of the region's own leaders.

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