



US Defence Secretary William Perry (L) speaks during a joint press conference with Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic (R) following their talks at the presidency in Sarajevo on Wednesday. —AFP/UNB photo

Yeltsin re-elected president

MOSCOW, July 4: President Boris Yeltsin, father of Russia's reforms, won a resounding election victory over his Communist rival today and headed back to the Kremlin for four more years, reports Reuter.

With 92 per cent of the vote counted from Wednesday's second round run off, electoral officials said Yeltsin had an unassailable lead of 53.55 per cent to 40.55 for Communist challenger Gennady Zyuganov.

"We can say with absolute confidence that Boris Yeltsin has been re-elected for a second term," a Russian television commentator said.

The endorsement of Yeltsin, 65, as supreme leader in the world's biggest country represented a huge personal triumph for the pro-reform president who in the last stages of campaigning was also battling ill health.

The Burly, white-haired former construction engineer,

first elected in June 1991, had urged his people not to allow the Communists back into the Kremlin.

But he was fought every step of the campaign by Zyuganov, a 52-year-old nationalist-leaning Communist, who tapped a deep pool of resentment among millions at the hardships caused by Yeltsin's reforms.

Some analysts said that though Zyuganov had been soundly beaten, to win two fifths of the vote could still be seen as a strong success for a party which five years ago seemed destined for the dustbin of history.

Despite uncertainty over Yeltsin's health as he embarks on four more years in power, his Western backers and financial markets breathed a sigh of relief at the outcome.

Western governments had been nervous at the prospect of the Communists regaining control of Russia and its nu-

clear arsenal and rolling back reforms, despite Zyuganov's denials that he would do so.

President Bill Clinton pra-



Yeltsin picked up votes from supporters of law-and-order advocate Alexander Lebed, who finished a strong third in the first round. Yeltsin had won them over by promoting Lebed, a retired paratroop general, to a top security job in the Kremlin.

The gap grew in Yeltsin's favour mainly because of supporters of Alexander Lebed, said Dmitry Oreshkin, a top analyst for the Central Electoral Commission.

Yeltsin won most districts in the Far East and Siberia and his native Urals region and got more than 70 per cent of the vote in Moscow and St. Petersburg, bedrock of his support. He even carried some areas won by Zyuganov in the June 16 first round.

Zyuganov took areas south of Moscow in the communist "red belt" and in disaffected Siberian mining districts.

Yeltsin was back at work in the Kremlin early today, Itar-Tass news agency said.

Zyuganov avoided reporters' all night and declined substantive comment when finally cornered.

Yeltsin, a former Soviet Politburo member who dumped Communism to preside over democratic reforms in independent Russia, clawed back from new year opinion ratings which had given him less than 10 per cent of the vote.

Meanwhile Boris Yeltsin, re-elected Russian president, reappointed Victor Chernomyrdin as his prime minister today and asked him to form a new government, Itar-Tass news agency said.

President Boris Yeltsin appeared on Russian television today to thank voters for returning him to power and said the elections had been free and fair.

International observers said today that Russia's second round presidential election had been free and fair.

China is a tested, trusted friend of Pakistan: Leghari

ISLAMABAD, July 4: Military cooperation between Pakistan and China has gained "greater significance" since the United States halted arms sales, according to Pakistani President Farooq Leghari, reports AFP.

Leghari made the remarks late Wednesday in a speech to the National Defence College here, in which he also made a veiled warning Pakistan would balk at signing a global nuclear test-ban treaty unless rival India was also committed to it.

In a slap at the United States, which suspended military cooperation with Pakistan in October 1990 in punishment for its nuclear programme, Leghari said: "China is a tested and trusted friend."

"It has extended support to Pakistan in many ways and at

critical times in our history," he said.

"Cooperation with China in the defence and strategic fields has acquired even greater significance in the context of the virtual rupture of our defence relationship with the US."

The remarks came only nine days after Chinese Premier Li Peng met in Beijing with Pakistan's Army Chief of Staff, General Jehangir Karamat, and declared the friendly ties between their two armed forces would continue.

US intelligence has concluded that Pakistan has deployed nuclear-capable Chinese M-11 missiles, the Washington Times newspaper said last month, in a report denied by Pakistan.

Washington also suspects China sold Pakistan specialised ring magnets used in producing nuclear weapons. But it decided against sanctions, after it concluded that top Chinese officials were unaware of the sale, and agreed to stop such technology transfers in the future.

Leghari also gave the clearest signal about Islamabad's stance on the test-ban treaty being negotiated in Geneva, where a deadline has been set for conclusion by the year's end.

Pakistan's signature and adherence to the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) would depend on our confidence that all nuclear-weapon and capable states would join the treaty," he warned.



College seniors pick up leaflets of recruitment guide after a seminar offered by Tokyo metropolitan government Thursday. The recruiting season for students to graduate next spring officially kicked off July 1. —AFP/UNB photo

Israeli PM creates new post for Sharon Netanyahu willing to meet Assad to revive peace talks

WASHINGTON, July 4: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu says he is willing to meet Syrian President Hafez Assad anywhere, even in Damascus, in order to revive the stalled peace process between the two countries, reports AP.

In an appearance on CNN's "Larry King Live," Netanyahu said he would be prepared to make a historic trip to Syria, at any time.

Netanyahu taped the interview early Wednesday for international broadcast.

US-mediated peace talks in Maryland between Israel and Syria broke off in March after a series of suicide bomb attacks in Israel by Arab militants claimed 63 lives.

The prospects for renewing the talks are remote and there is no indication Assad would be willing to meet Netanyahu, anytime soon, Damascus is seething at Netanyahu's vow not to return the Golan Heights, which

Israel captured from Syria in 1967, in return for a peace treaty between the two nations.

Asked by King whether he would be willing to emulate Egyptian leader Anwar Sadat, who in 1977 stunned the world by making the first trip by an Arab leader to Israel, Netanyahu replied: "Yes, the answer is yes."

In the past, Netanyahu has blamed Syria for a series of attacks by Arab guerrillas on Israeli troops in an Israeli occupied zone in southern Lebanon in which dozens of soldiers have died.

In the interview, Netanyahu stressed that his top priority in any eventual talks with the Syrians would be an agreement to prevent further attacks in the buffer zone.

"This is something that I think would be conducive to peace and to a building of trust between Israel and Syria," Netanyahu said.

Netanyahu refused to say

whether he would order the withdrawal of Israeli troops from Hebron — the last West Bank city under Israeli occupation — saying only that he would handle the situation "wisely, I hope, and certainly very carefully."

Under the agreement signed between Israel and the Palestinian Liberation Organisation last fall, the Israeli troops were supposed to pull out from Palestinian areas of the city by March.

Meanwhile Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has created a powerful post in his government for Ariel Sharon, the combative ex-general and champion of Jewish settlers in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Sharon accepted the post that will put him in charge of what was previously called the Energy and Infrastructure Ministry as well as railroads, water and sewage, the radio added.

Int'l confce on AIDS to begin Sunday in Canada with optimism

BOSTON, July 4: The 11th International Conference on AIDS opens Sunday in Canada with something entirely new in the brief history of the epidemic: a barely containable sense of optimism, reports AP.

The euphoric shift in mood is as dramatic — and as surprising — as the scientific breakthroughs that triggered it. For the first time, the idea is beginning to sink in that HIV might not be a death sentence after all.

"People are much more enthusiastic about what we have to offer," said Dr. John G. Bartlett of Johns Hopkins University in Maryland. "We have had an avalanche of new drugs. The perception is that we can much more effectively deal with the virus."

There might even be — and this word is at last being said out loud — the possibility of a

cure.

Moreover, experts see the first glimmer that AIDS can be turned back in the developing world, too, even in places where the new AIDS drugs are too expensive to make much difference. Condom campaigns at last appear to be slowing the spread of the virus in Africa and Asia.

Such changes were virtually unimaginable two years ago when the conference was last held in Yokohama, Japan. The outlook then could hardly have been more bleak. The available AIDS medicines worked poorly, if at all, and nothing much better seemed likely.

But in the last six months the momentum has turned. The news has suddenly become astonishingly good. As 15,000 people gather in Vancouver, British Columbia, from 125 countries to talk about AIDS

almost anything seems possible.

The key discovery is the power of combining AIDS medicines. Alone, none of these drugs does much. Together, they seem to stop the virus cold.

"We now know that the drugs we have can work far better than we had hoped. For many patients, this will be a much more treatable illness," said Dr. Cal Cohen, who treats AIDS at the Harvard Community Health Plan in Boston.

How treatable? More specific evidence is expected at this week's meeting. But many of those on the front lines of AIDS seem to agree with Dr. William Paul, head of the US Office of AIDS research.

"I can imagine that the drug therapies will put us in a position where AIDS becomes

US, European govts urge Al-Faran to free hostages

NEW DELHI, July 4: The US and three European governments appealed Thursday to Kashmiri militants to prove their four Western hostages are still alive, one year after they were abducted while hiking in the Indian Himalayas, reports AP.

There were conflicting accounts of whether the kidnappers belonging to the Al-Faran separatist group had carried out their threat to kill the hostages if India refused to release jailed militants in exchange for their freedom.

"End the uncertainty that causes so much pain to their families and loved ones," said the US Embassy in a statement released also on behalf of Britain, Germany and Norway.

The statement condemned the spate of kidnappings, which began last July 4, as "an assault on free people every-

where."

It said "kidnapping, terrorism and murder are tactics that discredit those who seek a better future for Kashmir and gain nothing for those who employ them."

Releasing the hostages would "aid the cause of peace and reconciliation in Kashmir."

Other recent appeals by the governments and by the hostages' families have been met with silence from Al-Faran.

In Washington, State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns said Wednesday the United States was operating on the assumption that hostages were still alive.

There has been no direct contact with the kidnappers since last November.

In December, the guerrillas claimed the hostages were killed during a raid.

Telecast of adult movies banned Court urges Indian govt to stop 'cultural invasion'

NEW DELHI, July 4: An Indian court has banned the telecast of adult movies on state-owned television and urged the government to stop the "cultural invasion" by foreign channels, newspapers said today, reports AFP.

Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Prem Kumar also said in a ruling on Wednesday that even soap operas and advertisements on television would henceforth need to obtain certificates from the Censor Board.

The judge urged Doordarshan, the Indian television station, to file a report by July 31 detailing its compliance of the court order.

Kumar said "every serial, programme, film, and advertisement" would have to display a "U" certificate from the Censor Board to prove that it was fit for universal viewing. He asked the censors to be

"extra sensitive so that scenes degrading or denigrating women are not presented in any manner and that songs carrying dual meanings catering to the basic instincts are not allowed."

The judge pressed the government to take measures to stop "obscene and vulgar programmes," allegedly beamed by foreign television channels.

The government will have to initiate a clear policy to stop the cultural invasion, he said in a 24-page order in response to a petition by an activist, who alleged that adult movies and serials were flooding television.

Threats to the ageless Indian culture and ethos are not less serious than threats to its political sovereignty and independence, Kumar said.

Kumar's order comes three days after the first adult television channel began.

Off the Record

Nanny controversy

WASHINGTON: Israel's new Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is turning his first official visit to Washington next week into a family trip, and he says it's partly because of his nanny controversy, reports AP.

Asked by CNN talk show host Larry King about the affair, in which Netanyahu's wife Sarah allegedly fired their children's nanny for burning a pot of soup, the prime minister replied that the media blew a purely domestic matter out of proportion because he's a public figure.

"I'll bet that among your worldwide audience there are several thousand maids being fired right now," Netanyahu said. "And they would not make 'Larry King Live'."

When King asked why the newly elected prime minister was bringing his family along on his first official visit to the United States next week, Netanyahu replied:

"Well, for the thing, I don't have a nanny!"

Real crocodile in luggage!

LOS ANGELES: When federal agents stopped Toru Hattori at the airport, it wasn't to admire his luggage, but to rescue a real crocodile inside, authorities said, reports AP.

The croc didn't survive. On Wednesday, US Attorney Noreen Manella announced a three-count indictment against the 39-year-old Japanese citizen. Hattori allegedly told US Customs officials that he wasn't bringing any live animals in from Japan.

But on June 19, agents discovered a live Siamese crocodile inside his checked luggage, a prosecutor said. The reptile can be found in Southeast Asia, mostly in Vietnam. The reptile can survive for days without food or water.

The little crocodile was inside a cloth bag, in a box tapped shut but with airholes punched through one side, prosecutor Patricia Beaman said.

BRIEFLY

Perry arrives in Slovenia: US Defence Secretary William Perry said on Wednesday Slovenia was a strong candidate to be in the first group of ex-communist nations to join an enlarged NATO. Reuter reports from Bled.

Perry, who arrived in Slovenia from Bosnia on the third day of a European tour, said a decision on the enlargement of the 16-member Atlantic alliance could be made at a summit of NATO government leaders in the first half of 1997. "It is my estimate that they would be ready to move ahead with accession at that summit meeting in the first half of 1997," Perry told a news conference in Slovenia's Alpine resort of Bled. He was unable to say what the final outcome would be.

S Korean parliament opens: South Korea's National Assembly opened Thursday after being paralysed for nearly a month in a dispute over April's elections. AP reports from Seoul.

Opposition legislators blocked the scheduled June 5 opening, demanding that the government apologise for what they said was its unfair handling of the legislative elections. Physical clashes and shoving matches occurred several times when ruling party lawmakers, who enjoy a majority, tried in vain to elect a new speaker, the legislature's first order of business.

US to honour King Hussein, Peres: Shimon Peres of Israel and King Hussein of Jordan first met secretly in 1987 in London to draft an agreement they hoped would lead to a comprehensive peace. AP reports from Philadelphia.

They met again clandestinely in 1993 to set the stage for a peace treaty, signed the next year, ending the state of war between the two countries and laying the ground work for economic cooperation. The two men's efforts are being recognised Thursday with the Philadelphia Liberty Medal, an award intended to honor people and groups that demonstrate leadership and vision in the pursuit of conscience or freedom from oppression, ignorance or deprivation.

8 killed in Indian road mishap: Eight persons, including seven from a family, were killed and seven others seriously injured in a collision between a matador and a truck near Ajang village on Dhule-Parola road in Dhule district Wednesday, according to a report reaching Nasik yesterday. PTI reports from Nasik, India.

Hiralal Gupta, hailing from Murtijapur in Akola Taluka, along with his family was proceeding in the matador to Shirdi on a pilgrimage. The deceased have been identified as Sonam Umashankar Gupta, Sharda Gupta, Gajanan Pophale, Santosh Gupta, Swaty Gupta, Sarika Gupta. Four persons died on the spot, while four others succumbed to their injuries on the way to hospital.

11 members of a Pak family killed: Eleven members of a family, including children, were knifed to death by unknown assailants yesterday while they slept in their home, the official Associated Press of Pakistan (APP) news agency reported. AFP says from Islamabad.

Police have launched an investigation into the incident, which took place in a village in the district of Faisalabad in Punjab province.

Store fire kills 8 in Ohio: Eight people were reportedly killed Wednesday when a fire swept through an Ohio fireworks store possibly after children played with fireworks officials said. AFP reports from Washington.

Mathy Cosco spokeswoman for the nearby Cabell Huntington Hospital in West Virginia said there were reports that eight people including several children perished in the accident. The blaze occurred at Ohio river fireworks in Scottown Ohio on the day before the US Independence Day holiday, in advance of which many fireworks are sold.

Sierra Leone army chief replaced: Sierra Leone's new civilian government has replaced the West African country's Chief of Defence Staff and army Chief of Staff, Information Minister George Branda Thomas said on Wednesday. Reuter reports from Freetown.

Chief of Defence Staff Brigadier Joy Turay had been replaced by Colonel Hassan Conteh, currently Director of Military Operations the minister told a news conference.



Republican presidential candidate Bob Dole (R) shakes hand with former US President Ronald Reagan (L) at Reagan's office in Century City Wednesday. Dole met with Reagan during a campaign and book signing visit to Los Angeles. —AFP/UNB photo

China flood death toll rises to 206

HANGZHOU, China July 4: The death toll in China's worst flooding for 50 years rose to 206 today, as the army mobilised hundreds of thousands of troops to cope with devastation that has left millions homeless, reports AFP.

In the Zhejiang, in the southeast, officials reiterated appeals for international aid after confirming that 43 people had been killed and 13 were still missing as the result of severe flooding in northern areas of the province.

Around 6,000 troops had been brought in to cope with the disaster that has already caused damage estimated at 3.75 billion yuan (450 million dollars), said Li Shimin, Deputy Director of the foreign Affairs Department in the provincial capital, Zhejiang.

More than 10 million people have been affected in eastern and southern China after waters began rising Saturday in the provinces of Anhui, Zhejiang, Jiangxi and Guizhou, with some 764,000 people completely cut off.

Thai govt reshuffles cabinet

BANGKOK, July 4: Thai Prime Minister Banham Silpa-archa reshuffled his Cabinet Thursday for the fourth time in his first year in office, reports AP.

The move was necessary to provide ministerial posts to the Prachakorn Thai (Thai Citizens) Party, which pulled out of the ruling coalition in mid-June only to announce Sunday that it was returning to the fold.

Banham's seven-party coalition, which now commands 232 of the 391 seats in the Lower House of Parliament, has suffered from instability since it came to power in a July 1995 election.

Several parties within the coalition are rivals, and factions within the prime minister's own Chart Thai (Thai Nation) Party have pressured him for more power within the government.

Those factions occasionally have threatened to bolt, which would leave Banham's party without a majority in Parliament and force a new election.

'Nepal's foreign policy making China suspicious'

KATHMANDU, July 4: A key opposition leader here said Wednesday Nepal's foreign policy was making China suspicious, particularly with regard to Tibetan refugees, reports AP.

"China is suspicious with the present government because it thinks Nepal is allowing Tibetan refugees sheltered here to carry on anti-China activities as well as their 'free Tibet' movement," said Man Mohan Achikari.

The leader of the Nepal Communist Party-United Marxist and Leninist, the main opposition party, told parliament in Kathmandu that the ruling coalition government should ensure it retains cordial relations with both China and India.

The Himalayan Kingdom should also stick to its non-aligned policy and think more about its involvement in the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), Achikari said.

Bomb explodes in Yangon

YANGON, July 4: A bomb exploded in the centre of the capital under a government-erected billboard denouncing pro-democracy activists, state media said Thursday, reports AP.

A radio and television announcement said the explosion occurred Wednesday afternoon in a park fronting the US Embassy. No casualties or arrests were reported. The bomb went off under a billboard with slogans attacking foreign interference in Myanmar's internal affairs and stooges of foreign elements.

The board had been put up June 9 along with others in Yangon criticising a pro-democracy movement headed by Aung San Suu Kyi. The military-run government also organised mass rallies to attack her