

International

Pak press hails govt's extension of anti-graft drive to army

ISLAMABAD, Apr 27: Pakistan's press Saturday hailed the government's extension of its anti-graft drive to the powerful military...

The Defence Ministry announcement cited no reasons, but reports have said Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif asked Haq to resign following allegations of corruption and kickbacks in defence deals.

The newspapers called for a thorough probe into the charges against Haq in the interest of justice.

The prime minister has taken a bold decision, he must also see it through, stressed the Muslim, demanding an "exhaustive investigation" into the admiral's personal and family assets.

If there is any evidence of his having benefited illegally from his official position then the law must take its due course, it said.

The admiral's dismissal "needs to be seen in the broader context of accountability as well as of civilian control of the armed forces", observed The Nation.

Observers said the admiral's exit in a corruption scandal added to the embarrassment caused by the arrest in the United States earlier this month of an air force officer on charges of heroin smuggling.

Farooq Ahmad Khan, a squadron leader, was caught while allegedly trying to sell two kilograms of heroin he carried with him on a military plane sent to the US to pick up spare parts.

Pakistani Army Chief, General Jehangir Karmat, sounded a note of caution against what he called "media trial" of the services chiefs, in remarks made to The Muslim daily.

Freedom of the press is the best thing that can happen to any democratic society. However, a line must be drawn at some point so that national interest is not jeopardised or compromised, he told the paper.

Fujimori emerges as Peru's man of the moment again

LIMA, Apr 27: President Alberto Fujimori has emerged once again as Peru's man of the moment, riding a surge of popularity following the bold hostage rescue.

Fujimori, already credited with taming economic chaos and quelling the political violence that bloodied the 1980s and early 1990s, is as much a hero as the two commandos killed in Tuesday's raid, which saved 71 of the 72 captives.

It is what Fujimori knows how to do best: Assume his role in difficult moments, wrote commentator Jaime de Althaus, deputy director of the pro-government Expresso newspaper.

Peruvians aren't accustomed to a leader "doing what has to be done," he said.

In a country characterised by vacillation and unreliability, Fujimori is seen by many as a role model — someone to lead

Peruvians to stability and prosperity. But others say the steady success of the Entebbe-style raid will only harden Fujimori's already arbitrary and authoritarian rule.

Friend and foe alike are praising the lightning strike as a masterly move that came out of nowhere and succeeded as no body thought an armed intervention could — perhaps not even Fujimori, despite his claims to the contrary.

Polls show most Peruvians now believe a military rescue was the only solution, in contrast to surveys before the attack that had most saying the opposite — that negotiation was the only way out.

Poet Anthony Cisneros, an observer of Peruvian society and culture, said most Peruvians really believed a rescue was necessary, but doubted that their armed forces could pull it off.



Cuban President Fidel Castro (R) salutes Saturday during the anthems of Cuba and Laos as the Republic of Laos Prime Minister Khamatay Siphandone (L) arrives at the airport of Jose Marti in Havana. The Prime Minister is on a three day visit. — AFP/UNB photo

BRIEFLY

Winnie Mandela wins re-election: Winnie Mandela, controversial former wife of South African President Nelson Mandela, easily won re-election Saturday as leader of the African National Congress (ANC) women's league.

Following several hours of closed-door debate, Mandela was re-elected to a second term by a vote of 656-114 over rival candidate Thandi Modise, who had been the league's vice president.

Hotel fire kills 1 in Thailand: A 30-year-old guest died when he failed to land in a swimming pool after jumping from a burning hotel in downtown Bangkok Sunday, local media reports said.

Radio 100 said Monday Masalake of Sri Lanka leapt from the fourth floor of the New Peninsula Hotel after a blaze erupted in a third story guest room.

11 missing as ship capsizes in ROK: Eleven people were missing after a ship carrying liquefied petroleum gas capsized off the coast of South Korea yesterday.

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Islamic nations slam Taliban threat to destroy Buddha statues: COLOMBO, Apr 27: Islamic countries on Sunday criticised Afghanistan's Taliban rulers who have threatened to destroy two ancient Buddha statues.

Turkish PM to uphold secular traditions: ANKARA, Turkey, Apr 27: Turkey's prime minister has promised to uphold the country's secular traditions.

First 100 days of 2nd term Clinton in good standing with public: WASHINGTON, Apr 27: The first 100 days of President Bill Clinton's second term show him in good standing with the public.

Month-long polls campaign begins in Indonesia: JAKARTA, Apr 27: Indonesian political leaders spread out through the sprawling archipelago today at the start of a month-long general election campaign.

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Turkish PM to uphold secular traditions

ANKARA, Turkey, Apr 27: Turkey's prime minister has promised to uphold the country's secular traditions, heading off a showdown with the country's top generals over his efforts to promote Islam.

Necmettin Erbakan's decision Saturday also appeared aimed at strengthening his ruling coalition, weakened by the defections of two of his ministers who oppose his pro-Islamic stance.

The military-influenced National Security Council had pressed Erbakan during a meeting that lasted more than eight hours to drop his efforts to raise the profile of Islam in Turkey.

The council, made up of military figures and President Suleyman Demirel, said Erbakan had agreed to shut down Islamic-oriented secondary schools, restrict radical Islamic media, and ban Islamic-style clothing.

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Islamic nations slam Taliban threat to destroy Buddha statues

COLOMBO, Apr 27: Islamic countries on Sunday criticised Afghanistan's Taliban rulers who have threatened to destroy two ancient Buddha statues.

The statues, considered to be the world's tallest, are reported to be the tallest of Buddha in the standing position — if they capture the Valley from their Shiite enemies.

Taliban says statues are against the teachings of Islam. In the two-thirds of the country they control, the Taliban rulers have imposed strict Islamic codes.

Pakistan has protected a number of non-Islamic religious sites, said Pakistan's High Commissioner Abdul Haqqani.

Sri Lanka's politically influential Buddhist clergy and Cultural and Religious Affairs Minister Lakshman Jayakody earlier said the demolition of the statues — one of which is over 35 metres high — would be a "treacherous act" where the entire Buddhist world will suffer.

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Tigers kill 21 in E Sri Lanka

COLOMBO, Apr 27: Separatist Tamil rebels attacked a government patrol in eastern Sri Lanka Sunday, killing at least 21 soldiers.

Rebel casualties weren't known in the attack at Polmoddai village in the eastern Trincomalee district, said the official who can't be named under briefing rules.

The area is 250 kilometers (156 miles) northeast of the capital, Colombo.

A large group of rebels had attacked the army foot patrol, but the assault had been repulsed with the help of reinforcements, said the official.

The rebels are fighting for an independent Tamil homeland in Sri Lanka. More than 48,000 people have been killed since the war began in 1983.

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First 100 days of 2nd term Clinton in good standing with public

WASHINGTON, Apr 27: The first 100 days of President Bill Clinton's second term show him in good standing with the public despite a slew of scandals.

Clinton faces a Republican majority in Congress which has hobbled him on everything from the budget to foreign policy.

In 1993, Clinton passed his spending plan in record time. Since then his budget battles twice shut down the government and three months into this year he has yet to get an agreement on his financial plan.

Thursday, the president won a tough fight over the ratification of the chemical weapons convention, which he crusaded

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