

## Pakistan concerned at reports of deployment of Prithvi missiles by India near border

ISLAMABAD, June 4: Pakistan Tuesday expressed deep concern over reports that India has deployed nuclear-capable missiles near the border, reports AFP.

A foreign office statement, quoted by state-run Pakistan Television, said the deployment of medium-range Prithvi missiles "entails a qualitative change in the security environment in South Asia."

The deployment could "trigger a dangerous ballistic arms race in the region," the statement warned.

Pakistan "reserves the right to take necessary measures to safeguard its security," the statement said without elaboration.

In the past Pakistan has drawn the attention of the international community to "India's intentions of deploying the Prithvi missile which can carry weapons of mass destruction," it added.

The statement referred to Tuesday's report in The Washington Post detailing the deployment of the ballistic mis-

siles at a prospective launch site near Pakistan's borders.

The Hong Kong-based Asia Business News Television also reported that the missiles have been moved to a location near Jullunder in the State of Punjab in northwest India in a first operational deployment, it said.

The reports of the missile deployment followed the alleged violation of Pakistani airspace by an Indian Mig-25 reconnaissance plane last month that triggered a strong protest to New Delhi by Islamabad.

The new friction between the neighbours comes ahead of a second round of talks between their foreign secretaries scheduled here for June 19-22 to continue a normalisation dialogue initiated in March.

Pakistan and India have fought three wars since their independence from Britain in 1947, two of them over the Himalayan region of Kashmir, split between the two countries and claimed by both.

Reuters from Washington add: The United States on Tues-

day declared itself in "outright opposition" to the deployment of ballistic missiles by India and Pakistan and said it was working to prevent such a move.

US State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns refused to confirm a published report that New Delhi had recently moved such weapons to a prospective launch site.

The Washington Post, quoting US officials, reported in Tuesday's papers that India's military forces recently moved a handful of medium-range ballistic missiles to a prospective launch site near the Pakistani border, raising fresh concerns in Washington that the two enemies may have entered a provocative phase in their arms race.

"I'm not in a position to confirm whether or not the Prithvi missile has been deployed by India," Burns told a news briefing.

There have been repeated reports that Pakistan obtained M-11 missiles from China.



Former Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres casts his vote in Tel Aviv Tuesday, in the election for his successor as leader of the opposition Labour Party. Peres has not given his open support for any of the four contenders. Expected to take an easy victory is the hawkish Ehud Barak who has the backing of Mrs. Leah Rabin and who is expected to get more the 50 per cent of the votes. — AFP/UNB photo

### Ehud Barak elected Labour leader in Israel

TEL AVIV, June 4: Israel's ex-army chief Ehud Barak swept in as new leader of the opposition Labour Party after elections on Tuesday, according to public television projections, reports AFP.

Barak, a leader of Labour's right wing, obtained 57 per cent of the vote in the ballot to find a successor to Shimon Peres and lead the party into the next national elections due in 2000, the television said.

Most 100,000 of the party's 167,000 members cast their ballots in an election marking the handover of power from the founding fathers of the party and the Jewish state to a new generation of leaders.

Peres, 73, announced that he would not run for reelection as Labour chairman after being defeated a year ago by rightwing nationalist leader Benjamin Netanyahu in Israel's first direct election of a prime minister.

### Technique to deliver genes to cells in heart

WASHINGTON, June 4: Scientists have developed a technique for efficiently delivering genes to almost all the cells in the heart, moving closer to genetically treat heart diseases, reports Xinhua.

Johns Hopkins Medical Institutions said in a news letter that its cardiologists "infected" nearly 100 per cent of the muscle cells of a rabbit heart with a new gene, using a disabled version of a common virus, the adenovirus, as a carrier.

"Our novel delivery system is the first to demonstrate virtually complete transduction of an intact heart and could be adapted to achieve widespread gene transfer in human hearts," said chief researcher John Lawrence.

Using coronary arteries, Hopkins researchers delivered high concentrations of a virus carrying a "reporter" gene — a gene which could be easily located in any cells, then they collected the virus after it had passed through the heart and redelivered it several times.

"Our infection rates more than tripled the most successful previous experiments. We believe that the repeated passes through the heart gave the virus time to overcome structural barriers to its spread," said Lawrence.

To cure heart diseases caused by changes in the function of heart muscle cells, researchers need to modify the characteristics of individual muscle cells. The new technique makes gene therapy a potential way to do that, he said.



Speaker of the US House of Representatives Newt Gingrich (R) greets 17-year-old Ellen Rickerson (C) after ceremonies in which the "Individuals With Disabilities Education Act Amendments" bill was signed at the US Capitol in Washington, DC. The bill, which amends the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act for the first time in over 21 years, eliminates some of the Act's government bureaucracy. — AFP/UNB photo

## BRIEFLY

**Blast kills 68 in China:** A gas explosion at a coal mine in northeastern China has killed 68 people and left one missing, state media reported, AP reports from Beijing.

The May 28 blast was the worst such disaster in 20 years at the mine in Fushun, Liaoning province, the newspaper Yangcheng Evening News said in a report Tuesday seen Wednesday in Beijing. The cause of the explosion was under investigation, it said without providing further details. Each year, thousands of miners die in accidents at Chinese coal mines, despite constant government calls for stricter enforcement of safety standards.

**Indian satellite Insat-2D launched:** India's communication satellite Insat-2D successfully entered into the orbit 1017 seconds after a spectacular lift-off by Europe's Ariane rocket from Kourou in French Guyana yesterday, PTI reports from New Delhi.

The 97th Ariane rocket blasted off from the French Guyana with two communication satellites, Insat-2D and Inmarsat-3F4 at 4.55 IST. Insat-2D, built in India by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) will provide telecommunications throughout India and neighbouring countries.

**12 killed, 200 held in East Timor:** East Timorese activists said Wednesday that 12 people have been killed and more than 200 arrested in the town of Baucaux in the past two days following rebel attacks against Indonesian troops, AP reports from Darwin.

The arrests were part of a major security sweep being carried out by Indonesian forces in the capital Dilo, Baucaux and Los Palos; the Darwin-based East Timor International Support Center (ETISC) said in a statement. Those arrested included primary school teachers and students, the statement said. "There is strong evidence to indicate that close to 2,000 East Timorese might be rounded up all over the territory in the security sweep," the group said.

**Roman ruins found in Spain:** Workers building a runway for Madrid's international airport have unearthed the ruins of what may have been a second-century Roman villa, but the discovery could put the brakes on a planned airport expansion, AP reports from Madrid.

Three building slabs and dozens of pieces of dishes were found, archeologists said Tuesday, possibly the remains of a country villa on a path off a Roman highway that ran through Spain. The ruins were found in the past week 15 kilometres (10 miles) northeast of Madrid in an area that was to have provided gravel for the runway. Digging for the gravel has been suspended while archeologists investigate the site, but work on the nearby runway itself will continue for the moment, said Manuel Onis Oana, spokesman for the government's airport department.

**4 militants gunned down in Egypt:** Security forces gunned down four Muslim militants in southern Egypt in a fierce clash Monday night, Interior Minister Hassan el-Alfi said today, Xinhua reports from Cairo.

The fire exchange occurred in Samalut, Minya 200 kilometres southwest of Cairo, said the minister. The killed, all in their twenties, were identified as members of the Al Gamaa Al Islamiya, or the Islamic Group that has been blamed for a spate of recent assassinations in the south.

**2 labour activists jailed in China:** After a delay of more than six months, a Chinese court has announced it is sentencing two labor activists to 3 and half years in prison, human rights groups said Tuesday, AP reports from Beijing.

Li Wenming, a former magazine staffer, and Guo Baosheng, a philosophy student, were put on trial in November on charges of trying to subvert the government. They had been held in detention since they were arrested in May 1994 for trying to start an independent labour union and distributing an unofficial journal to migrant workers. The trial was delayed twice before it concluded in November, and reporters were not allowed to attend. Afterward, the Shenzhen Intermediate People's Court refused to announce the verdict and sentence.

**Chechen vice premier in Moscow:** Chechnya's first vice premier arrived in Moscow on Tuesday for talks on economic cooperation between the Russian government and the breakaway republic, AP reports from Moscow.

Movladi Udugov is expected to meet with Russian First Deputy Prime Minister Anatoly Chubais and Security Council Secretary Ivan Rybkin. The discussions will focus on customs and banking along with cooperation in the oil sector, Udugov said in an interview with the Interfax news agency. He accused Russian customs officials of imposing a "deliberate blockade."

**Methyl alcohol kills 6 in Ukraine:** Six people died in the eastern Ukrainian city of Severodonetsk last week after drinking fake vodka that contained methyl alcohol, an official said Tuesday, AP reports from Kiev.

A man in a nearby village of Yephphanovka invited five friends to a party where they drank the deadly liquid, Emergencies Ministry spokeswoman Natalya Tsuskhko said.

**Rare disease kills 14 in Malaysia:** Baffled by a rare disease that has killed 14 children on Borneo Island, Malaysia's health ministry has gone to the Internet to ask doctors abroad to help prescribe treatment, AP reports from Kuala Lumpur.

The disease was first detected in Sarawak state on April 14, and local newspapers Tuesday quoted Health Minister Chua Jui Meng as saying local doctors were unable to find a suitable treatment because of lack of knowledge of the disease. He said a bulletin seeking help had been posted on the Internet.

**Russian climber dies on Mt. Lhotse:** The leader of a Russian expedition to Mt. Lhotse, died of exhaustion after he climbed the world's fourth tallest peak, the Nepalese Ministry of Tourism said Tuesday, AP reports from Katmandu.

Vladimir Bachkurov, 44, of Moscow collapsed and died in early hours of May 27 while he was descending from the summit. A day before he had climbed the 8,516 metres (28,102 feet) Mt. Lhotse along with eight other members of his team. But while descending, he became tired and lost his consciousness after reaching at a 8,200 metres (27,066 feet) point. His colleagues gave him oxygen and helped him to descend, but he died.

## US Marines evacuate 1,250 UN, OAU support use of force to reverse coup in Sierra Leone

HARARE, June 4: UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan and the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) gave their implicit support Tuesday to the use of force to reverse the coup in Sierra Leone, reports AFP.

"I think we should do whatever we can to get the coup makers to step down and restore the legitimately elected government of Sierra Leone," Annan told a news conference on the margins of the OAU summit in Harare.

"I have stated quite clearly I hope we can avoid bloodshed, we can avoid fighting, but if this becomes a last-resort option my senses are the member states are prepared to go that route," he said.

Meanwhile, OAU spokesman Ibrahim Dagash said member states of the OAU meeting in closed session had mandated countries in the region to do "anything necessary" to restore ousted President Ahmad Kabbah.

Asked whether they backed the use of force, he said, "That was left for them, the regional countries to decide."

He said the OAU leaders, who were still meeting as he spoke, had "decided unanimously not

to recognise this regime at all," he said.

Asked whether there were expressions of support for Nigeria's action in Sierra Leone, he said: "It was not mentioned because Nigeria did not take an action on its own, it is ECOMOG,

### Lankan troops clash with rebels: 5 killed

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka, June 4: Government troops planning a major offensive clashed with Tamil rebels, leaving at least five people dead, military officials said Wednesday, reports AP.

In one incident, a soldier was killed and eight others were injured by a rebel mortar attack at Omantal and Nedunkerni towns on Tuesday, said Major I N K Dewage, a military spokesman in Colombo, the Sri Lankan capital.

Military warplanes and helicopter gunships then targeted the rebel mortar positions. The guerrilla casualties were not immediately known, Dewage said.

the West African peacekeeping force headed by Nigeria.

Asked whether there was support for ECOMOG's action, he said: "of course."

Meanwhile US marines evacuated more than 1,250 people, including hundreds of children, from Sierra Leone Tuesday in a dramatic helicopter airlift, US officials said.

Desperate to flee the mayhem gripping the capital of Freetown, hundreds of people, bags in hand or on their heads, ran to reach anyone of the 10 helicopters that landed on a beach to ferry them to safety.

The 1,254 people flown offshore to the US helicopter carrier Keasarge raised to 2,516 the number of people taken out in evacuations by the marines Friday, Sunday and Tuesday. They were being flown to Conakry, Guinea.

The evacuation was one of the biggest ever carried out by the US navy, said Captain Jason Johnston, aboard the Keasarge.

Of those taken out Tuesday, 38 were US nationals and about 200 were Britons, said US Navy Captain Greg Ertel. The rest were mostly foreigners, from Ghana, Gambia and Nigeria.



Some of the 1,200 civilians seeking to be evacuated Tuesday from Freetown walk in a street of the West African capital before US Marines carried out a dramatic helicopter airlift to rescue foreigners fleeing fighting between Nigerian troops and combined forces of Sierra Leonean soldiers and rebels. — AFP/UNB photo

## Canadians vote to maintain status quo

By Staff Correspondent

Canadians voted for the status quo on Tuesday, returning Prime Minister Jean Chretien and his Liberal Party to the House of Commons for a second consecutive majority government.

It is an important four years for a country which has struggled to stay united through tough economic times. Unemployment is still high, especially for young people, and consumers have not stimulated the economy as much as the Liberals hoped.

But while some people, especially in the Atlantic provinces, punished the Liberals for breaking their promise to create jobs and scrap taxes, the rest of Canada, or at least the people of Ontario, forgave Chretien for almost losing the country in the 1995 Quebec referendum.

For the past 15 years, no issue has captured Canadians' attention or dulled their senses like the national unity debate. The Progressive Conservatives failed twice to resolve the issue and the Quebec people have had two referendums on independence, the last ending with only a 51 per cent to 49 per cent victory for the federal government.

And it isn't over yet. The Parti Quebecois, the ruling sep-

arist party in Quebec, has already made it clear the province will hold its third referendum on independence during the Liberal's next mandate.

Canadians have given Jean Chretien another crack at national unity, but the question remains whether Chretien will be a saviour or a liability. Chretien is not popular in Quebec and consistently lags behind the charismatic PQ leader Lucien Bouchard and the national Progressive Conservative leader Jean Charest in public opinion polls.

Indeed, Chretien had a difficult race to hold onto his own seat in the House of Commons. He defeated the separatist candidate in his home town of Shawinigan, Que, by only about 1500 votes.

Since the 1995 referendum, the Prime Minister has tread carefully around the issue of national unity. Chretien insisted during the election campaign Quebecers and the rest of Canada wanted to discuss jobs and the future of healthcare rather than national unity.

When his political oppo-

nents reminded Chretien of the close call in 1995, he refused to discuss what would happen in the event of a 'yes' vote in Quebec. Chretien won't have such a luxury during the next question period as the four opposition parties try to define their vision of the country, or countries.

Chretien and his Liberals have also tried to avoid the thorny issue of partition, an idea which makes many Canadian politicians nervous. People argue that if Canada is divisible, then so is the province of Quebec, a proposition which creates many legal pitfalls politicians are eager to avoid.

Formally a taboo subject in Canadian politics, partition has gained popularity inside an outside Quebec since the 1995 referendum, much to the chagrin of separatist leaders. They insist Quebec is indivisible and reject any talk of partition.

However, Quebecers seem more flexible than their leaders. Some towns and cities along the Ontario-Quebec border with strong ties to the civil service and industry have

passed resolutions declaring their intention to remain in Canada.

A poll conducted for the Canadian news agency Southern during the campaign also suggested partition appeals to Quebecers. Those polled seemed to agree sections of the province, including the natural resource rich north of the province, could remain with Canada after a vote for independence.

Before the election, the government did take some small steps to set the ground rules for the next referendum. It asked the Supreme Court of Canada to rule on the legality of Quebec separation. However, Jean Charest says the court has no jurisdiction to rule on the issue and Bloc Quebecois leader Gilles Duceppe says the people of Quebec, not the federal government or the court, will decide the provinces future.

And so a day after the election, little has changed. The Liberals still have a majority and the unenviable task of keeping the country together in spite of pressure from regions and politicians to tear it apart. The year 2000 could signal the beginning of a new chapter in Canada's future, or its end.

## Tribal insurgents kill five in West Tripura

AGARTALA, June 4: At least five persons, including a woman were killed and two others injured when a heavily armed group of insurgents attacked a remote village in the seven-mile point area on the Athamura hill range under the disturbed Teliamura police station in West Tripura district in the early hours today, according to the Home Minister, Samar Chowdhury.

He told PTI that the incident occurred around 0100 hours when the tribal insurgents, yet unidentified, attacked the non-tribal village with sophisticated weapons and opened fire on sleeping villagers.

Five persons died on the spot while two others, including a child, were seriously injured. The two injured were admitted to the Teliamura Hospital.

Army and para-military forces have launched a massive combing operations in the area for the assailants. Chowdhury said. The police found 35 used cartridge shells of AK-47 weapons in the preliminary search, he added.

Senior police officials from Agartala rushed to spot.

This is the first insurgent attack on non-tribals in the seven

mile point area ever since the Teliamura police station area under the Khowal sub-station was brought under the disturbed area act.

There is obviously some motive behind the insurgents choosing to attack nontribal families in the area, we are trying to ascertain the motive, Chowdhury said.

The Leader of the Opposition Congress in the Tripura Assembly, Samir Ranjan Burman demanded immediate dismissal of the left front government, saying it had no moral right to govern the state in view of unabated insurgent violence.

He also accused the United Front government of remaining a silent spectator to the continuing carnage in the state and shielding the state government.

Veteran leftist leader, and another former chief minister, Nripen Chakraborty demanded imposition of president's rule in the state as violence was continuing despite imposition of the disturbed area act in some police station area.

Chakraborty who had been expelled from the CPI (M) politburo said there is no government in the states.

## ROK students want President Kim to quit

SEOUL, South Korea, June 4: Thousands of student protesters in Seoul vowed Wednesday to continue calling for the president's resignation, dashing hopes for a peaceful end to their anti-government demonstrations, reports AP.

But Hanchongryun, the national student organisation, said it will urge members to refrain from violence until Friday out of respect for a policeman killed in a bloody confrontation with students on Monday.

A preliminary autopsy report said that Yoo Ji-woong died after being hit by a police armoured vehicle at a clash near Hanyang University, where thousands of students armed with rocks and metal pipes fought with police.

Students demanding the resignation of President Kim Young-sam have been clashing almost daily with police since Friday. Dozens of police and students have been injured, and 847 students detained.

The students are also demanding to be allowed to hold a rally to celebrate the election of his new leaders. But police have banned the meeting, because Hanchongryun is considered to be sympathetic to North Korea, South Korea's chief enemy.

Meanwhile, police have been investigating the death of Lee Seok, 23, who was taken to

Hanyang University hospital Monday and declared dead on arrival.

It was unclear if Lee had been participating in protests at the university, where some 3,000 militant students have barricaded themselves.

Last summer, a 12-day standoff between police and Hanchongryun members left one police officer dead and more than 1,000 police and students injured. A record 5,597 students were detained.

### Rebels call for 2-day strike in southern India

HYDERABAD, India, June 4: Shops closed and government buses were pulled off the roads Wednesday in southern India after leftist guerrillas called for a two-day strike to protest alleged killing of poor people by the police, reports AP.

Over the last two days, police say the People's War Group has gunned down two people, kidnapped two others, bombed several government offices and burned down a railroad station and a train engine in Andhra Pradesh state.

No violence was immediately reported when the strike began Wednesday.

## Algeria goes to polls today

ALGIERS, June 4: Algerians vote Thursday to elect a national people's assembly that many hope will represent a decisive step away from five years of war against a stubborn Islamist insurgency, reports AFP.

Following three bomb attacks at the start of the week in Algiers that killed more than 20, President Liamine Zeroulou insisted Tuesday that the polls shall go ahead in the "utmost calm."

"These bands of criminals now operating in Algeria are marginalised. The Algerian state has all the means to combat them until they are totally annihilated," he said before heading home Wednesday from an African summit in Zimbabwe.

In a massive show of force, the entire 123, 700-strong armed forces, plus 200,000 local militia, are being deployed across Africa's largest country — leading some analysts to suspect overkill.

"Either it's paranoia, or they want to control everything," one westerner in Algiers said.

But diplomats warn it would be a mistake to think that the vote will in itself end the violence, routinely blamed on scattered Islamic guerrilla cells with no apparent sponsors from overseas.

"It's not going to bring peace any time quickly," a western diplomat said. "But if it is a reasonably honest election, it will be an important step on a long road."

Thirty-nine parties and 7,747 candidates are in the running for the 380-seat legislature that is to last five years.

More than 200 observers from the United Nations, Organisation of African Unity and Arab League will monitor the poll. They are already travelling the country, in closely-guarded convoys.

But three parties matter most in this contest — including the one that has been outlawed in 1992 after it was poised to win the last, aborted legislative election, sparking off the violence.

Carrying the government's banner is the National Democratic Rally (RND), founded just four months ago by Zeroulou loyalists. It favours economic reform and a hard line against those it calls "cowardly terrorists."

Its main rival is the biggest legal Islamist party, the Movement of Society for Peace (ISP), better known by its former name Hamas. Its leader Mahfoud Nahnah is a former imam and fundamentalist who now preaches moderation.

## Mobutu looking for a place to die

HARARE, June 4: South African President Nelson Mandela is trying to help former Zaire and dictator Mobutu Sese Seko find a place to die, but Africa doesn't want him, reports Reuters.

"All the doors have closed for Mobutu. Nobody wants him," a southern African source at the Organisation of African Unity summit in Harare told Reuters yesterday.

He said France, where Mobutu has a luxurious villa, declined to have the ousted President before this month's elections and then said he would not be welcome under the new government.

Mandela told Reuters on Monday he had spoken to African leaders at the summit, including President Gnassingbe Eyadema of Togo, about finding Mobutu "a place to rest."

But he did not say whether he expected to find a home for the man who ruled Zaire — and plundered its treasury — for 32 years.

Mobutu, who is suffering from prostate cancer, fled his Kinshasa capital for Togo as Laurent Kabila's rebel alliance

advanced last month to take over and rename the country the democratic republic of Congo.

He has since moved with his family to Morocco, where he built one of the villas and palaces he scattered around the world.

### Assets worth \$3.5 m found in Swiss banks

Xinhua adds, the Swiss Banking Commission announced yesterday that former Zairian leader Mobutu Sese Seko's assets found in six Swiss banks are only less than 5 million Swiss francs (about 3.5 million US dollars).

The assets including foreign shares, bonds, securities and a safe deposit box have been frozen. The sum of 4,786,570 Swiss francs (about 3.5 million US dollars) is far below the figure of 7.7 billion US dollars which new Zairian authorities led by Laurent Kabila claimed that Mobutu and his family members had transferred to Switzerland.