Mussolini's son Vittorio dead: Vittorio Mussolini, the second son of the Italian fascist leader Benito Mussolini, died at a Rome clinic on Thursday at the age

of 81, his family said, AFP reports from Rome. Vittorio Mussolini had been in hospital for two months. Mussolini, an aviator, fought in 1936 in the Spanish Civil War, then in World War II. After the war, he emigrated to Argentina

but returned to Italy a few years ago. On September 9, 1943 he went on German radio to tell Italians opposed to an armistice concluded the previous day that a fascist state was being set up in northern Italy.

4 killed in Colombian prison riot: A riot and subsequent shootout Thursday between guards and prisoners at a maximum-security prison left at least four inmates dead and

24 wounded, authorities said, AP reports from Bogota. The violence at La Modelo prison occurred after inmates stormed the guard's command centre and stole a gun, ammunition and knives, the national prisons institute said in statement. They took two guards hostage, then freed them and tried to gain access to a cellblock roof, said Miller Rubio, the national prisons spokesman. The shootout with guards lasted for three hours.

4 executed in China for rape, murder: Four people were executed in Beijing for murder, rape and robbery following a sentencing rally for criminals convicted of attacking women, a Chinese newspaper reported Friday, AP

reports from Beijing. Authorities held the rally on June 6 to sentence 12 people found guilty of crimes against women and publicize women's rights, the China Women's News reported. Four of those sentenced were immediately taken to execution grounds and executed, it said.

US fusion energy pioneer dies:

Amasa Stone Bishop, a lifelong environmentalist and an American pioneer in the quest for clean energy from nuclear fusion, has died, his family said Thursday. He was 76, AP

reports from Geneva. Bishop died of pneumonia May 21 at a hospital near his home in the Swiss village of Genolier, said his son, Alan Reid Bishop of Tartegnin, Switzerland. He had suffered from Alzheimer's disease for some years.

In the 1950s, the Cleveland-born Bishop headed the emerging programme on controlled fusion of the US Atomic Energy Commission, seeking an environmentally clean source of nuclear energy.

Uk marines banned from Cyprus: The commander of the Royal Marines has barred the corps from training in Cyprus after three marines were convicted of indecency and fined for stripping in a bar, AP reports from

London. The Defence Ministry confirmed Thursday that the marines' commandant general, Maj. Gen. David Pennefather, made the decision last month, immediately after the incident while marines were training in Cyprus. The story was reported in Thursday's editions of The Sun, Britain's largest-selling daily newspaper.

Russian poet dies during Paris trip: Bulat Okudzhava, a prominent Russian poet, writer, folk singer and bard who was a hero to many Soviet liberals in the 1960s, died Thursday during a trip to Paris, hospital officials said. He was

73, AP reports from Paris. Okudzhava died Thursday evening at Hopital d'Instruction des Armess, a military hospital in the Paris suburb of Clamart, said a doctor who was present at the death. The doctor, who spoke on condition of anonymity, would not give the cause of death. Okudzhava earlier had undergone a serious heart operation in the United States.

Two thieves killed in Congo: An angry mob attacked two alleged criminals Thursday after they had been arrested, burning one to death and burning the body of the other after he had been shot dead, state-run radio

reported, AP says from Kinshasa. 10 The attacks occurred in Kinshasa's Barumbu neighbourhood after soldiers had taken custody of two men accused by

residents of being thieves and rapists. The first victim tried to flee and soldiers opened fire, killing

him. A mob of more than 100 people then torched the man's body. The crowd stopped a second man who had fled from the soldiers, and put a burning tire over his head. He burned to death, the radio reported.

New French PM won't join G-7 summits Newly elected French Premier Lionel Jospin will not attend the upcoming summit in Denver of the Group of Seven most industrialised nations, his office said Thursday, AP reports from Paris.

Aides said Jospin, a Socialist, would not accompany President Jacques Chirac, a conservative, partly because next week's summit begins the day after the premier gives his general policy speech to the National Assembly.

Jospin will, however, accompany Chirac to the European Union summit in Amsterdam earlier in the week.

London office, the rebels said

the Sri Lankan military's latest four-week-old offensive "Was planned jointly with Pakistani

The guerillas quoted inde-

The statement also said:

pendent sources for their claim

"Pakistani officials converged

at Sri Lanka's Anuradhapura

army headquarters immedi-

ately prior to the launch of the

has sent senior military offi-

cers to India, Pakistan and some Western countries for

training. A small group of

American soldiers were in Sri

Lanka recently to train gov-

ernment troops in evacuation

techniques, reconnaissance,

surveillance, radio operations

Pilots from East European

Early this week, more than

states also are known to have

flown Sri Lankan Air Force

1,000 rebels attacked soldiers at

two places 10 miles (16 kilome-

ters) south of the government

front line, destroying an am-

munition dump and a bridge.

The damaged bridge was re-

paired on Wednesday, military

claimed 325 government sol-

week behind government lines.

and field engineering.

planes.

officials said

In the past, the government

but did not identify them.

military officials."

military offensive."

Pakistan seeks UN help to stop India from missile deployment pressure from the international

ISLAMABAD, June 13: Pakistan warned Friday of a ballistic missile race in the region, chastised the international community for its indifference and urged the United Nations to put pressure on India to pull back on its missile programme. reports AP.

Pakistan also announced that the foreign secretaries of India and Pakistan would hold their second round of talks in Islamabad from June 19 to 23.

The warning comes amid reports that India has deployed the long-range Prithvi ballistic missile on its border with Pakistan, making it possible for New Delhi to target the federal capital of Islamabad.

India has denied the reports, but Pakistan's foreign ministry spokesman, Khalid Salim, said Pakistan has a variety of responses from India ranging from denial to ignorance.

"The deployment of the Prithvi missiles is symptomatic of a larger problem, said Salim. "The absence of

community leads to the temptation among the countries with huge indigenous military capability to indulge in provocative actions against smaller neigh-

Pakistan and India have fought three was in the last 50 years, since Britain gave the Asian subcontinent its independence in 1947.

Both countries are believed to have the ability to build nuclear weapons, although both . say they haven't.

India's Prithvi missile is believed to be capable of delivering a nuclear warhead. Pakistan, meanwhile, is said to have acquired M-11 ballistic missiles from China, also capable of carrying a nuclear

Both China and Pakistan has denied the charge. Salim said a seven-year-old

US arms embargo against Pakistan also has contributed to

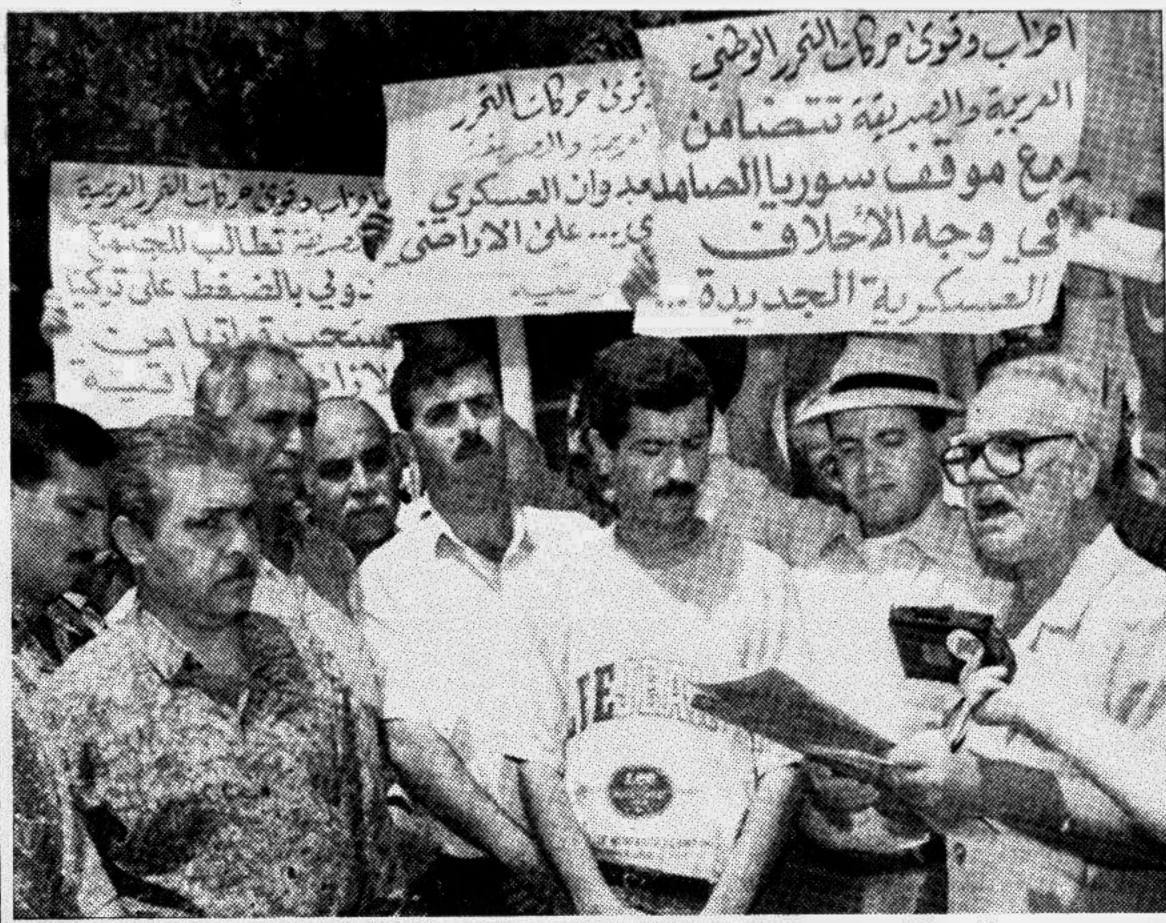
In 1990 Washington cut all military and humanitarian aid to Pakistan because it believed Islamabad had built a nuclear weapon, contrary to US law governing aid distribution.

"We have pointed out to the United States that India appears to have been encouraged by the discriminatory American legislation against Pak-istan that has resulted in a serious military imbalance in the region," said Salim.

Pakistan, he said, has proposed making South Asia a nuclear weapon free zone as well as a zero-missile area "to avert the threat of a ballistic missile race in the region."

India has rejected both. At the next round of foreign secretaries talks next weekend Salim said a whole gambit of issues will be discussed, including the disputed state of Kashmir, the flash point of two earlier wars.

But he warned against expecting "miracles... the issues the military imbalance in the between the two countries are complex and longstanding."



Syrians stage a sit-in in front of the Turkish embassy in Damascus Thursday to protest the Turkish incursion to northern Iraq. The banners hoisted by the protesters read : "The national movements show solidarity with Syria in the face of new military pacts", and "We call on the international body to exert pressure on Turkey to withdraw its - AFP/UNB photo troops from northern Iraq."

# US agrees to pay \$819m UN debt on condition

WASHINGTON, June 13: The United States would pay 819 million dollars in debt it owes to the United Nations under a bipartisan plan passed by a key Senate committee Thursday, reports AFP.

In a 14-4 vote, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee passed a bill that would pay the money over three years on condition that the United Nations undergo a major reform process including budget cuts and accept a cut in future US contribu-

Democratic Senator Joseph Biden said he thought ultimate passage of the measure could "Put an end to the polemic debate we've had on the UN for the last six or seven years."

While the provision still requires passage in the full Senate and House of Representatives, Biden said he discussed it with President Bill Clinton and that he expected Clinton would sign it into law.

While he conceded that some legislators might not like the conditions set on repayment of the UN debt. Biden noted that efforts in recent years to repay the debt had failed.

"We either compromise or we get nothing," Biden said. But Democrat Richard Lugar

opposed the plan, saying the United States needed to pay its debt without placing any conditions on the world body. He said the measure would likely cause "Severe weakening if not bankruptcy" for the United Na-

The United Nations has pegged the total US debt at 1.3 billion dollars.

"I believe this will work but I don't believe it's the right thing to do." said Democrat John Kerry, who nevertheless voted in favour of the bill.

The result will be for us to

lose countries (UN) votes down the road," because of the ill feelings the move will cause other countries, he said.

The Republican chairman of the committee, conservative Jesse Helms, reacted to the Democrats' comments by saying, "I'm getting sick to my stomach.

Helms has been a major opponent of the United Nations and Biden noted that Helms had made a "Very big compromise" by agreeing to pay any of the US debt to the UN.

The conditions to repaying the UN debt include cutting the US share of the UN budget from 25 per cent to 20 per cent within three years, and cutting its share of peacekeeping dues from 31 per cent to 25 per cent. The debt would be paid in a

letter of credit. In New York, UN Secretary General Kofi Annan said that even if Congress eventually enacted the measures envisaged in the reform bill, "it does not mean that it is going to become law in the UN."

# Iraqi guards block UN inspections in 3 sites

UNITED NATIONS, June 13: Armed Iraqi guards have blocked three UN arms inspections, acting on government orders, despite being informed that such action was in violation of UN resolutions, UN offi cials said Thursday, reports

The latest incident's mark an escalation in tensions between Iraq and the United Nations, with the UN Security Council poised to react to last week's Iraqi interference within helicopter operations in

Highlighting the serious na ture of the violations, UN Special Commission Chairman Rolf Ekeus informed the UN Security Council in a letter that "the commission is concerned that a decision has been taken by the government of Iraq to prevent full implementation of the commission's mandate." UNSCOM Deputy Chief

Charles Duelfer told AFP that after making one inspection of a military facility in the Baghdad area on Thursday, armed Iragis at a road checkpoint informed the team that they were not allowed to enter a "sensitive" area.

The inspectors abandoned the mission and attempted to travel to another facility, where they were stopped for the same reason, Duelfer said. Another similar incident

occurred on Tuesday, he added without giving further details. When the Iraqis were told

that such actions were in violation of UN resolutions, they said they had instructions from Tareq Aziz," the Iraqi deputy Prime Minister, another UN-SCOM official said.

Iraqi ambassador Nizar Hamdoon denied that the Iraqi actions signalled a toughened stance by Baghdad.

"It's a provocation by the commission, which is pushing harder, he sad noting that Ekeus was due to be replaced at the end of the month after six years as UNSCOM chief.

#### Indian troops kill 7 rebels

GUWAHATI, India, June 13 Soldiers killed at least seven separatist militants in two clashes in northeast India, police and army officials said today, reports Reuter.

Four tribal guerillas of the National Socialist Council of Nagaland were killed by sol diers at Mokokchung town in the mountainous state of Nagaland near the Myanmar border, authorities said.

Troops killed at least three insurgents, including a woman, of the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA) in Borthekerabari village in the tea and oilrich state of Assam.

Soldiers recovered large quantities of arms and explosives in both incidents, which occurred on Thursday, officials

#### Theft of cables makes ILS inoperative in Calcutta airport

CALCUTTA, June 13: The Instrument Landing System (ILS), which helps aircrafts land safely, became inoperative at the Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose International Airport here since last night due to theft of cables, airport sources said today, reports PTI.

Flights, however, were not affected as landing of planes were monitored on radar with the help of other equipment.

But the inoperative ILS could pose problems to incoming aircrafts during monsoons when visibility would be poor a night, an Airport Authority of India (AAI) spokesman said. The Airport Authority in a letter requested the state Home Secretary, Leena Chakrabarty,

where the theft was occurred,

the sources added.

to strengthen the security at the airport, particularly at the spot

## Egypt tries to renew ME talks

# Violence escalates in Gaza Strip: 3 Palestinians die

JERUSALEM, June 13: Violence erupted in the Gaza Strip Thursday as Egyptian mediator Ossama El-Baz met with Israeli and Palestinian leaders in a new bid to revive their stalled peace process, reports AFP. Three Palestinians were

shot and wounded, two seriously when Jewish settlers opened fire on stonethrowers protesting the inauguration of a memorial to an Israeli soldier killed during fighting in the Gaza Strip last September. Palestinian officials said.

The Israeli army deployed

tanks and armoured vehicles around the site of the fighting, outside the Gush Katif bloc of Jewish settlements in the southern Gaza Strip, and after a couple of hours the troubles subsided, witnesses said.

One Palestinian man died of a heart attack and three were wounded by rubber bullets, two of them seriously during separate clashes with Israeli troops over the alleged expansion of another Jewish settlement at the southern tip of the Gaza Strip. Palestinian officials said

### Tomato bearing message from Allah?

LONDON, June 13: Hundreds of Muslims from all over Britain are making their way to Huddersfield in the western Midlands to have a glimpse of a tomato in which a young girl claims to have found a message from the Allah, reports PTI.

It all started out as a daily kitchen chore to buy salad ingredients, but now the tomato kept in the refrigerator of Noor Mohammand's house at Huddersfield, about 220 kms from here, has almost become a holy relic, gazed with awe by hundreds of Muslims flocking from all over England, "Daily Mail" reported today.

Shaista Javed, Mohammad's 14-year-old daughter, purchased a bag of tomatoes from the local store on Sunday. Mail said. "she chopped two before asking her grandfather, how he

wanted the third done". By his instructions she finally cut the third tomato into half and was stunned at what she found in the two pieces. She

found a message in Arabic

"There is only one God" and on the other half another message saving "Mohammad is his messenger" which form the opening verse of holy 'Kalima.

Shaista, a devout Muslim believes she has witnessed a mir acle. "God made me, buy that tomato and these words are a message from God", she said. Since Sunday, the word of

the miracle find spread fast and hundreds of Muslims from far and wide have visited the house to have a glimpse. Mail said at the moment, the clingfilm is keeping the tomato

fresh, but said it would soon have to be kept in deep freeze if it has to be preserved for some more time. Shaista's mother, believes that her daughter who takes ex-

traordinary care of the elderly was 'Chosen to spread the message of the Allah. A spokesman of the nearby mosque said, "we don't consider it a miracle, but it is certainly a

blessing.

#### LTTE alleges Pakistan's involvement in latest Lankan offensive were killed, including 21 COLOMBO, June 13: Tamil women. The military put the Tiger rebels accused Pakistan rebel death toll at 210. Friday of helping the Sri On Wednesday, the Defence Lankan army plan its latest Ministry said the military had retrieved the bodies of 97 solmilitary campaign to capture a vital highway in the guerilladiers. Another 91 soldiers were controlled north, reports AP. The government denied the wounded in the fighting. But local newspaper quoting allegation, calling it a sign of unidentified military officials desperation by the Liberation reported Friday that 121 sol-Tigers of Tamil Eelam. "We feel diers were killed in the attack we were are quite capable of and more than 387 were hospifighting the LTTE as we have been done for many years," said Brigadier Sarath Munasinghe, talised. the military spokesman. In a statement from their

Recent picture shows two chain-gang prisoners carrying wood destined for a rail road in Myitkyina, Myanmar. Despite international concerns ASEAN members have agreed to admit Cambodia, Myanmar and Laos into the group next July, ignoring calls by Western - AFP/UNB photo countries to isolate military-ruled Yangon.



Palestinian protesters take down the fence around the Israeli settlement of Moraj in Rafah City Thursday. They broke into the land which was confiscated by the Israeli Army to open a road for Jewish settlers of the Moraj settlement in Rafah City. - AFP/UNB photo

#### Indo-Pak FM officials to meet June 19

NEW DELHI, June 13: Senior foreign ministry officials from India and Pakistan will meet in Islamabad for talks from June 19 to 23, India's foreign ministry said today, reports Reuter.

The talks between the neighbours' foreign secretaries, their senior most career diplomats, will follow a rare meeting between their prime ministers in May and an earlier round of the negotiations in March, which ended a tense three-year stand-

"The next round of foreign secretary-level talks will be held in Islamabad from June 19 to 23," a foreign ministry

statement said. Pakistan on Thursday accused India of raising tension ahead of the talks, a charge New Delhi promptly denied.

Pakistani foreign minister Gohar Ayub Khan cited a recent alleged violation of Pakistani airspace, the reported deployment of India medium-range ballistic missiles near the border and a border clash on Tuesday night.

An India foreign ministry In their statement, the rebels spokesman reiterated New Delhi's denial that one of its jet fighters had flown over Pakdiers were killed in a massive rebel counterattack early this istan earlier this month, breaking the sound barrier and rat-They said 60 of their fighters tling windows in Islamabad.

WASHINGTON, June 13: Leaving no room for compromise. President Clinton drew the line Thursday at inviting three new members into NATO next month: Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic, reports

The decision dashed hopes of Romania and Slovenia and put the United States at odds with key allies.

"The United States' position is firm," presidential spokesman Mike McCurry said. Asked if the United States might be overruled, he said, 'That's not likely. Clinton's announcement

represented a switch to US assertiveness after weeks of quiet diplomacy to build a consensus and avoid antagonising allies. By staking out an unambiguous position. Clinton sou-

Clinton admn for inclusion of three new members in NATO ght to shape the outcome of next month's NATO summit in Madrid, where the alliance will open its doors for the first class of new members from former Soviet bloc countries.

Nine of NATO's 16 members have expressed support for admitting Romania and Slovenia in the first wave of new nations. but the United States has argued to hold the line at three. The US stand on important issues usually prevails in NATO. The new members are ex-

pected to join NATO in 1999, the alliance's 50th anniversary. To soften the disappoint ment of Slovenia and Romania, Clinton said the United States would work with them and other interested countries to help prepare them for membership "As I have repeatedly emphasised," Clinton said, "the

first new members should not and will not be the last." In Europe, some allies bristled at the White House announcement.

"We don't agree with this solution," Italian Defence Minister Beniamino Andreatta said at a meeting of defence chiefs in Brussels, Belgium.

British Defence Minister George Robertson said, "The American decision is not necessarily the NATO decision." Yet. he acknowledged that Clinton's announcement was "Pretty significant and will obviously have a big impact on the people

Romanian Foreign Minister Adrian Severin said, "As far as we are concerned we do not share this point of view and we think it is a point of view that

does not support or protect the United States' interests enough in the zone.

We are extremely disappointed," a Slovenian diplomat said in the corridors of NATO. In another sign of US assertiveness, Defence Secretary William Cohen ruled out a European commander for NATO's southern command. "From my

point of view," he said, "The affair is closed." Cohen said one reason Clinton preferred holding the initial group of new NATO members to three was to make it easier to win Senate ratification for a treaty amendment to enlarge

the alliance. McCurry said that NATO consultations on issues such as expansion are helpful. "But at the end of the day when the United States publicly articulates a position, that tends to be way in which things are brought to resolution." Hungary. Poland and the

Czech Republican expressed appreciation at Clinton's decision but expressed hopes the alliance also would embrace other Central and Eastern European nations down the line.

"The door needs to be left open to other countries seeking admission," Hungarian Foreign Ministry spokesman Gabor Szentivanyi said. "Hungary is committed to active participation with those countries that aspire to NATO membership in order to bring them closer to the

alliance. The US position is that there is a clear consensus for admitting Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic but not for

Slovenia and Romania Cohen said that despite the "Impressive progress" of Slovenia and Romania, both "Need more time." Others, however, argue that NATO needs to balance expansion with Slovenia in the Balkans and Romania on the Black Sea.

McCurry said Slovenia needs to improve its military capacity before it joins NATO. Romania needs to make more progress in political reforms and economic liberalisation, he

"This is not to say that they are, you know, lacking," he said. "It's to say that the kind of progress that would then qualify them for membership is something that we clearly hope will evolve, that we will nurture.