## MQM office attacked in Karachi: 5 killed

A Palestinian carries his crying daughter as they escape

an area where Israeli soldiers clashed with stone-throwing

Palestinian youths during a third day of clashes in

Hebron Monday. The Palestinian protests have flared up

again after a few months of calm, due to the stalemate in

BRIFFIY

Cohen visits Gulf leaders: US Defence

Secretary William Cohen visited Gulf leaders and US troops in

Kuwait and Bahrain on Monday telling crewmen of an

American nuclear submarine that they were helping protect half the world's oil supply from Iran and Iraq, Reuter reports

tack ship Key West assigned to the US Fifth Fleet in port at

Fierce fighting kills 18 in Somalia: Eighteen people have been killed and 26 wounded during

factional fighting in the southern Somalia port town of

Kismayo, residents contacted by radio said Monday, AFP

Marehan clan of former dictator Mohamed Siad Barre against

fighters loyal to warlord Siad Hersi "Morgan" of the Marjerten

Argentine FM to visit Britain:

Argentina's foreign minister announced Monday he will visit

Britain next month to discuss relations between the two

countries that have been dominated by the legacy of the

with Britain's new foreign secretary, Robin Cook, in London on

July 23 for talks that would also include economic and trade questions. Britain repelled an Argentine invasion of the south

Atlantic islands in 1982. Almost 1,000 servicemen - mostly

Argentines — died in the 74-day war. Argentina has since vowed

to recover the islands, which they claim were usurped by

2 drug dealers held in Myanmar:

Myanmar military intelligence have arrested an

amphetamines dealer with 10,000 speed pills in the northern

district of Tachilek, the state-run New Light of Myanmar

14,000 amphetamine tablets after a gun battle with two

Burmese men attempting to smuggle them across the border

from Tachilek, the Bangkok Post reported Tuesday. The two

men escaped back to Myanmar and no one was injured in the

three-minute gun battle. Tachilek and Mai Sai, separated by a

small stream, are in the heart of the opium-rich Golden Trian-

gle, the area where the borders of Myanmar Thailand and Laos

Former Indian minister dead: The

former union minister, Harikishan Shashtri who was admitted

to the Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital on June 12 with a brain

haemorrhage, died yesterday morning, family sources said, PTI

was minister for agriculture in the Rajib Gandhi government.

Another skyscraper fire in Delhi:

For the third time in a week, firemen fought a blaze Tuesday in

a high-rise building, and a government report said many of New

Delhi's tall structures are potential death traps, AP reports from

district in Connaught Palace was safely evacuated and no one

was reported injured. Office-goers were just arriving for work

The 12-story Chanderlok building in the capital's business

Shashtri, son of late prime minister Lal Bahadur Shashtri,

Thai police in neighbouring Mai Sai district also seized

Foreign Minister Guido di Tella told reporters he would meet

Falklands War, AP says from United Nations.

Britain in 1833 by diplomatic means.

reported Tuesday, AP reports from Bangkok.

reports from New Delhi. He was 58 years old.

The fighting Sunday and Monday pitted militiamen of the

"What keeps them at bay is you," Cohen told men from the at-

Middle East peace negotiations.

Bahrain.

converge.

New Delhi.

reports from Mogadishu.

group, who control the town.

- AFP/UNB photo

KARACHI, June 17: Unidentified gunmen attacked an office of the Pakistani ethnic Mohajir Qaumi Movement (MQM) here late Monday, killing five activists and injuring three others, police and hospital sources said, reports AFP.

Witnesses said three men opened fire from a car at the MQM office located in city's southern area of Pan Mandi and fled after the shooting. They shot dead four people on the spot injuring four others. One of the injured people died later in the hospital, medi-

cal sources said. The killings raised the death toll to 31 in a new wave of violence in Karachi since Monday

last week The MQM leaders blamed its breakaway group, MQM-Haqiqi, which denied the alle-

gation.

Local officials attribute the violence mainly to rivalry between the mainstream MQM and the rival splinter group.

### Ex- Lankan minister held

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka, June 17: Sri Lankan police have arrested a former Cabinet minister and opposition leader saying he was a threat to peace, lo-cal newspapers said Tuesday, reports AP.

Sirisena Cooray was taken under Emergency Regulations Monday evening on orders by the secretary of defense, the state-owned Daily News re-

Cooray, who quit politics in 1994, was a long time ally of former President Ranasinghe Premadasa.

# monitors as cover for spying

UNITED NATIONS, June 17 Iraq accused the United States on Monday of using the UN weapons inspection programme as a cover for spying on Iraq and threatening the security of Iraqi President Saddam Hus-

sein, reports AP. The allegation came in a letter to the Security Council from Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz, explaining why Iraqi offi-cials blocked UN inspectors from suspected weapons storage

UN officials expressed concern that Saddam has decided to stop cooperating with UN efforts to ensure that he has destroyed all of his high-tech

A number of sanctions were imposed in 1990 after Iraq invaded Kuwait. The Security

Council has refused to lift the sanctions until the inspectors certify that Iraq has destroyed

\_\_\_\_International

Iraq accuses US of using UN arms

its banned weapons systems. In the letter, Aziz said Iraq believed it was in its national interest to cooperate with the inspection programme.

"Therefore, any allegation that Iraq does not cooperate is an allegation, which is based on no logic," Aziz said. "The reason why we pre-

vented the inspection team from entering the two sites are that we have serious concern that the entry into these sites does not aim to implement the mandate (of the inspectors)... but ... as a cover to detect the security systems of Iraq and their personnel and the security of its

leadership," Aziz said. "The members of the Secu-

rity Council are aware of the United States' position towards Iraq and its political leadership," it added.

The letter noted that the chief of the inspection team, Scott Ritter is a US Army colonel.

After delivering the letter to council President Sergey Lavrov of Russia, Iraqi UN Ambassador Nizar Hamdoon said UN inspectors had visited 37 sites since June 3 without inci-

But he said the Iragis drew the line against repeated inspections at a "presidential site" and a Republic Guard headquarters because the UN team had already cleared those sites.

Chief UN weapons inspector Rolf Ekeus plans to brief the Security Council on the latest

standoff Wednesday. Ekeus insists that his inspectors have the right to visit any site they choose under resolutions enacted after the 1991 Gulf War.

But under an agreement last June, Iraq promised the United Nations unrestricted access to sites that did not threaten its territorial and national sovereignty.

The agreement was purposely vague in an effort to resolve a series of standoffs last year between UN inspectors and Iraqi soldiers guarding the

Iraq has from time to time barred inspectors from certain sites considered sensitive. The Iraqis generally backed down after warnings from the coun-

### BJP urges Gujral not to join Samajwadi Party's rally

VEW DELHI, June 17: The Bill today urged the Prime Minister I K Gujral not to attend the proposed June 19 rally of Samajwadi Party at Lucknow being organised by the Defence Minister. Mulayam Singh Yaday, to what it called, subvert the duly-elected government and pave the way for central interference, reports PTI.

By attending the rally, the prime minister will make himself party to this undemocratic and unethical agenda of his defence minister, whose political ambitions are beginning to pose a serious threat to law and order situation in UP and it could lead to grave internal security scenario, the BJP vice president. K Janakrishna Murthy,

told reporters here. He also expressed his party's concern over the manner in

which Yadav and his protege in Lucknow Governor Romesh Bhandari are working in Tendem to create problems for the smooth functioning of the state government.

The BJP leader said that Bhandari has transgressed all limits of Gubernatorial propriety by dispatching letters to the Union Government, seeking an inquiry by a central agency into Mulayam Singh Yadav's allegations that attrocities were being committed against SP workers.

The governor is at liberty to draw the attention of state government to any complaint that he may receive. But he cannot bypass the state government and seek central intervention that too over what is clearly a cheap political ploy by Yadav to shore up his fast-depleting rank and file, Krishnamurthy said.

### Jyoti Basu has no plan to retire

NEW DELHI, June 17: India's best-known communist leader, who has been ruling the state of West Bengal for 20 years, said in remarks published today that he has no plans to retire, reports AFP.

"I will continue to head the (West Bengal) government as long as I can "The Hindustan Times quoted Jyoti Basu as saying in Calcutta the West Bengal capital.

"When I shall feel that I cannot go on any more. I shall call it a day - from the government. not from the party. But that is not time yet.

Basu's comments were apparently aimed at scotching speculation that the veteran politician may step down when his communist government in West Bengal completes 20 years of office on June 20.

Basu, a top leader of the Communist Party of India-Marxist (CPI-M), became Chief Minister of West Bengal, a populous state bordering Bangladesh, on June 21, 1997.

### First-ever Muslim MP of Labour Party may face suspension

LONDON: Britain's first-ever Muslim member of parliament and Pakistani-origin multimillionaire Mohammad Sarwar may face temporary suspension from the ruling Labour Party on charge of sleaze tomorrow, reports PTI.

The three-member committee appointed by the Labour's highest body, the National Executive Committee (NEC), last night submitted its report after completing its inquiry into the episode of the MP allegedly paying 5.000 pounds sterling to a rival candidate during the May

Labour Party spokesman, when approached, refused to divulge what action the committee had proposed to the party disciplinary committee against the erring member of parliament.

general elections.

However, reports suggested that the member could face temporary withdrawal of party whip and temporary suspension from the organisation till police completed investigation into the scandal.

Taliban punish 48

for defying strict

Islamic codes

iban religious police launched a fearsome crackdown in the

Afghan capital, punishing 48

people for defying their strict

Islamic codes, a police official

units patrolling the streets of

this war-weary city beat 14

women, who were out on the

street and apparently not fully

covered in line with the Tal-

to wear Burkhas, long flowing

robes that cover them from

said his forces also beat four

taxi drivers and seven shop

keepers who had served women

unaccompanied by men, a

crime according to the Taliban,

who forbid interaction between

men and women who are not re-

The religious police also ar-

rested 23 men who had trimmed

iban edict that requires men to

grow full beards like the one the

Muslim Prophet Mohammed

their beards contrary to a Tal-

The Taliban require women

A religious police official

In the last 24 hours, police

said Tuesday, reports AP.

iban's Islamic dress code.

head-to-toe.

lated.

KABUL, June 17: The Tal-

#### WASHINGTON, June 17: opments in the Mideast.

With Mideast peace talks at a standstill, the United States should abandon the step-bystep approach to peace set by the 1993 Oslo accord and go for a final settlement that includes Palestinian statehood, a prominent foreign affairs group said Monday, reports AP.

anti-Europe protest.

"The time has come for a change in US policy and for a bold American initiative to induce Israel and the Palestinians to agree on the broad contours of a final settlement," reported a task force commissioned by the Council on Foreign Relations.

Department State spokesman Nicholas Burns said he had not read the report and could not comment on it directly. But he said that the United States would not take a "defeatist" stance toward devel-

"When the times get tough, you don't run, and you don't throw up your hands and think up 16 different policy options to pursue. You stick with what got you to the game. And what got us to the game was the consistency of American mediation. of our objectivity and friendliness with the Palestinians and the Israelis," he said.

As the city plays host to the important EU Amsterdam Summit two of the main participants

of the occasion find themselves the target of humour at an alfresco cafe Monday. Two

locals enjoying a cold beer in the warm sunshine of the capital donned masks of British

Prime Minister Tony Blair and French President Jacques Chirac as props to highlight their

US urged to go for final ME peace

with Palestinian statehood

The year-long study concluded that the situation in the Mideast, with talks going nowhere and hostility between Palestinians and Israelis growing, "has deteriorated to a perilous point" that could easily lead to renewed conflict.

In this context, the United States should abandon its policy of incrementalism — seeking to build mutual trust through step-by-step progress -

and begin an intensive diplomatic effort, culminating in a Washington summit, to get the parties to agree to a new declaration of principles.

- AFP/UNB photo

The task force said those principles should include:

- Assurance that the final status of the Palestinian territories will be statehood in Gaza and most of the West Bank.

- Assurance that the Palestinians state will be demilitarised and that Israel will retain veto power over its ability to form military alliances. Benchmarks for Palestinian measures against terrorism will be implemented.

 Agreement on maximal territorial contiguity for the Palestinian state and minimum relocation of Israeli populations now living in the terri-

#### Kashmir govt to probe media report on western hostages Mahesh Uniyal writes from New Delhi The government of Jammu Harkut-ul-Ansar extremist and Kashmir does not attach group had revealed during inmuch credence to the claim in a terrogation that the hostages local newspaper report that were gunned down by "six memfour Western hostages held by bers of the Ibrahim group, Kashmiri militants since July which is part of the Al Faran. 1995 were gunned down last The militants then closed the opening of the tunnel with year by their captors. The government will howmounds of clay, he had told his ever order an investigation. interrogators. "The official position re-The Excelsior report, later mains unchanged. There is no carried in Delhi newspapers, direct or indirect evidence of said that the captured militant any kind whether they are dead had also told security officials or alive," O.N. Kaul, Informathat an employee of the state tion Adviser to the state govpublic health engineering department was the only other

ernment, told IANS. However, the report will be investigated, The weekend report in the Daily Excelsior published from Jammu, the winter capital of the state, claimed it was based on an eyewitness account of what it called the cold blooded

killing of the two Britons, a German and one U.S. national in the captivity of the Al Faran separatist outfit near a cave in the Kukarnag resort in southern Kashmir. The newspaper said it was told by senior government officials, whom it did not name,

that a captured member of the

ter a few months. - India Abroad News Service

witness and could identify the

"blind tunnel" in which the four

Mangan, U.S. citizen Donald

Hutchings and German na-

tional Dirk Hassert were seized

by Kashmiri extremists while

on a trekking holiday in the

Valley. Their captors had de-

manded the release of their

jailed colleagues in exchange

for the hostages' freedom, but

negotiations and all contact

with authorities broke down af-

Britons Paul Wells and Keith

were shot dead from behind.

# Off the Record

## Tough guy in wrong place

AMSTERDAM: Helmut Kohl is a tough guy to lose, reports

But for a moment Monday, he was mistakenly missing from the European Union summit.

Germany's strapping chancellor was walking through the EU summit site at the Dutch Central Bank en route to a news conference when he found himself surrounded by television cameramen. In the confusion, he and his advisers walked out a secu-

rity exit and into the adjacent neighbourhood. Kohl crossed a bridge over the Amstel River before he and his staff realised they were in the wrong place. They eventually reached another security gate and reentered the compound

without incident. Security has been extremely tight for the summit, and none of the EU leaders has ventured - intentionally, at least - outside the gates.

Asked whether he was lost, Kohl's advisers laughed off the apparent mishap. "Oh, no," they said, "We're just out for a walk."

### Devoted husband

MOSCOW: A Russian military officer saved his wife from committing suicide - then hanged himself in the family bathroom, a news agency said Monday, reports AP.

The officer, identified only as Lt. Yerofeyev, quarreled Sunday with his wife, who then tried to kill herself by slitting her wrists, the Interfax news agency reported.

But the officer saved her and managed to stop the bleeding He then hanged himself in the bathroom, Interfax said quoting military officials who requested anonymity. Yerofeyev, who served as a platoon commander with the 8th

Russian army corps in southern Russia, hadn't received his salary since February. Sergei Ushakov, a spokesman for the Russian chief military

prosecutor's office, confirmed in a telephone interview that Yerofeyev had killed himself but declined to give further de-According to the official statistics, 153 officers killed them-

selves during 1996, and the number of suicides appears to have been on the rise this year. Military officials attribute most of the cases to the victims'

desperation over unpaid wages, which made them unable to support their families.

The cash-strapped Russian government, locked in a cycle of uncollected revenues and unpaid debts, owe wages and pensions to millions of Russians. Many soldiers are among the unpaid.

### Yet, another reason to control hypertension

ARLINGTON, Virginia: In a finding that offers another reason to control high blood pressure, a new federal study suggests a link between hypertension and brain tissue loss, reports AP. The study, reported on in Monday's editions of USA Today, shows that ignoring high systolic blood pressure - the higher of the two numbers in a blood-pressure reading - in middle-age could lead to brain damage and loss of cognitive ability by the early 1970s.

The research on male twins shows that the longer a man lives with above-normal systolic pressure - a normal reading typically is 120 - the more mental declines he exhibits and the

more healthy brain tissue is lost. "There's been a misperception in the medical community that since systolic pressure goes up with age, it's OK to accept a

level above 140," said Teri Manolio of the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute.

## Clinton to consider nat'l apology to black Americans for slavery

slavery — but not compensation for their ancestors' suffering. "It's been so long and we're so many generations removed," he says, reports AP.

when the alarm was raised.

The idea of an apology came from a white Ohio lawmaker who introduced apology legislation in Congress last week, just as Clinton was preparing to unveil his national initiative on race in a speech in San

In a radio interview aired Monday, Clinton said the apology proposal caught him off guard. He said he would think about it because "there's still some unfinished business out there among black and white

think this would be a helpful debate."

Last month, Clinton apologised for the nation to the black men who were unwitting experiment subjects in the government's Tuskegee Syphilis Study, and in January he awarded - 50 years late - the Medal of Honour to seven black World War II soldiers for valor in combat.

But Clinton said he disagrees with the idea of paying reparations to the descendants of slaves, something many black activists have said is needed to begin rectifying more than 200 years of inequality that blacks have experienced.

Clinton said.

"What I think we ought to do instead of reparations is to be repairing," he continued. "That is why I don't want to abandon affirmative action without an effective alternative when there's still so many people living at least with the aftermath of discrimination."

Speaking Monday night to black Democratic supporters, Clinton pitched his plan to engage in an intense examination of racial relations. At stake may be America's ability to stand alone in the world as a multiracial, integrated society, he told the party fund-raiser. "If we can pull this off, the about it till the wheel comes off, there's a chance that the wheel will run off".

"And even if it doesn't, we will never be what we ought to The apology was proposed last week by Rep. Tony Hall, D-

Ohio. He said he suggested it because he found no record of one. "To me, it's a moral issue," Hall said. "We used to count African-Americans as threefifths of a person. They were not treated as people.

"When you've hurt somebody, nothing solves the problem at first like a good, old-fashioned apology," Hall said. "Then we can begin to heal. If you don't which cheered it. He began seeking co-sponsors and immediately found 11, all of them white. Four more lawmakers signed on Monday, Hall said. The bill was sent to the House Judiciary Committee.

Opera stars Placido Domingo (L), Luciano Pavarotti (R) and Italian actress Milly Curlucci

Spanish opera singers Jose Carreras and Placido Domingo will perform together in Modena.

smile as they pose for photographs at the end of a news conference Monday. Pavarotti and

But Hall, too, has declined to embrace reparations, saying that issue has nothing to do with the apology he is seeking. "This has to do with something basic and important," Hall said. "Reparations ought to be discussed later."

US Rep John Conyers has introduced legislation on reparations in every session of Congress since 1989. Each time his proposal, which would cre-

lem is," Conyers told CNN on Monday. "We should probably say thank you to Tony Hall ... who has been courageous enough to pick (the issue) up and put it into the dialogue. I think it's time we should be able to talk about this subject without going ballistic."

— AFP/UNB photo

Slavery was a central theme in the consultations that Clinton made with activists, scholars and other experts in drafting his plan for a national dialogue on race. Their advice was that Clinton first address the lingering wounds of slavery, then try to resolve the array of racial problems that stem from

### Leaders face tough talks as they seek to wrap up treaty for EU expansion AMSTERDAM, June 17: Eu-Eastern and Central Europe,

ropean leaders faced tough talks today as they sought to wrap up a new treaty preparing the EU for expansion, with fierce debate expected over Franco-German proposals to give the Union a defence arm, reports AFP.

After averting a potential crisis Monday by persuading France to sign up to a Germaninspired pact which will enforce fiscal discipline in the future single currency area, the EU moved on to the original agenda for the summit here.

The European Union plans to take in new members from

Now, after 15 months of grinding negotiations. The EU faces a deadline to conclude the Inter-Governmental Conference (IGC) on revising the 1992 Maastricht Treaty, which gave birth to the current EU. The most difficult of the

dozen points still unresolved by the EU leaders concerns ambitious Franco-German proposals for a gradual merger be-tween the EU and the Western European Union (WEU) defence grouping, which would transform what is essentially an economic block into a defence

#### ate a commission to study the WASHINGTON, June 17: say that, the whole issue lingers "I suppose that some would United States will be by far the Americans." feasibility, has died in commit-President Clinton says he will "I think it has to be dealt think that, but it's been so long and lingers." best positioned country ... in the consider extending a national Hall ran his idea past the with," Clinton told the Ameriand we're so many generations 21st century," he said. "If we act "I don't know what the prob-Congressional Black Caucus, apology to black Americans for can Urban Radio Network. "I removed, I don't think that," like we don't have to think