

Rocket attack on Kabul: 6 killed

UN, aid groups appeal for choppers, fuel to rescue Afghan quake-victims

FAISABAD, Afghanistan, June 3: While hundreds of villagers carried their injured on stretchers made of sticks and old clothes, United Nations and aid agencies appealed for more aircraft and fuel to rescue the badly wounded in earthquake-stricken northern Afghanistan, report AP, AFP.

Aid workers said they were concentrating on helping the survivors of Saturday's 6.9-magnitude quake and that it would take weeks to get a clear picture of how many people were killed. Estimates ranged from 2,000 to 5,000.

"We call upon everyone and anyone who can provide us with helicopters to do so now," said Alfredo Witschi-Cestari, the UN coordinator for Afghanistan. "The problem at the moment is not supplies. It's transport. Without additional helicopters we can't hope to help these people," the UN official said.

The world body said in a statement that distribution of food and shelter materials was being held up because the three helicopter currently in use were already too busy ferrying the injured from remote villages to medical centres.

"We would be particularly

grateful if neighbouring countries could come forward and help," said Witschi-Cestari.

Rescuers have reached only 29 villages, or about half of those believed to have been hit hard by the tremor. Of those 12 were destroyed, or very nearly so, said Rupert Colville, a UN spokesman.

In the village of Kol, hundreds of people swarmed a UN helicopter that touched down on Tuesday. They had carried their injured through the winding hillside streets, past crumbled packed-mud houses, on makeshift stretchers.

On Monday and Tuesday, UN helicopters evacuated 50 of the most seriously injured to emergency medical centers. They were working from the dirt airstrip of Faisabad, still littered with the rusting junk of old Soviet tanks and artillery from Afghanistan's decades-long civil war.

Red Cross helicopters have delivered 2 tons of high-protein biscuits, flour and oil to victims in Shari Basurkh, near the quake's epicentre, about 50 km from Faisabad, the provincial capital of Badakhshan. The villages' remoteness,

lack of transportation and landslides that have blocked roads were hampering the aid effort. The United Nations, the Red Cross and other agencies have just three borrowed helicopters delivering medical aid.

The helicopters came from neighbouring Tajikistan, and Colville said he hoped other neighbouring countries would contribute as well. Russia, which has loaned helicopters in previous disasters, said it would consider sending aid.

The lack of aircraft "is undercutting everything we are doing now," Colville said.

He said the agencies needed at least one more cargo plane to deliver supplies that had already been brought into the region after the February disaster. Throughout the quake zone, most of the injured were women, children and the elderly, who had stayed inside their homes while men worked the fields.

Mohammed Karim, who was in Faisabad when the quake hit his village on the outskirts of Shari Basurkh, raced home with four friends, walking the last few hundred meters (yards). They found the village virtually

gone. "We started digging. When we brought the people out they were already dead," said Karim. "We brought the bodies from under the destruction and buried them without an Islamic prayer. We didn't have time."

Most of the injuries were broken limbs, internal and head wounds, said Svante Yngrot, a medical coordinator with the Red Cross. Many of the survivors were still in shock, made worse by a series of aftershocks.

Meanwhile, two opposition rockets slammed into a residential area of the beleaguered Afghan capital killing six people and injuring several others, officials said Wednesday. This was the deadliest rocket attack on the city in almost one year. The rockets came from the direction of the front line, north of Kabul, where the Taliban religious army faces off against its rivals belonging to the northern-based alliance.

Since Taliban troops threw out the former military chief Ahmed Shah Massoud from Kabul in September 1996, the city of barely 750,000 people has been relatively peaceful.

'North Korea may have at least one nuclear weapon'

TOKYO, Jun 3: Japanese defence officials believe North Korea may already have at least one nuclear weapon, a newspaper reported Wednesday, says AP.

The Nihon Keizai business daily carried excerpts of what it described as a Defence Agency internal report citing fears of regional nuclear proliferation after India and Pakistan conducted tests last month. "It's possible that North Korea is in possession of at least one nuclear weapon," the agency report said, according to the paper.

Army chief for end to condemnation of Suharto

JAKARTA, Jun 3: Student protesters shouted "hang Suharto" outside parliament on Wednesday as Indonesia's military chief appealed for a halt to "out of control" condemnation of the ousted president, reports AP.

Suharto, a former army general who turns 77 next Monday, faces growing demands that he surrender riches accumulated during three decades in power.

In a television interview, new President B J Habibie urged Indonesians not to dwell on the country's corrupt past and to focus on economic recovery.

Iran urges India, Pakistan to talk to reduce tension

NEW DELHI, June 3: Iran on Wednesday urged India and Pakistan to talk to reduce tensions created by the nearly dozen nuclear tests they have conducted, striking a conciliatory note after earlier praising Pakistan's "Islamic bomb," reports AP.

"We believe in a nuclear weapons free zone in the region," Iranian Foreign Minister Kamal Kharrazi told reporters after meeting with Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee in the India capital. Kharrazi is the first foreign dignitary to visit the region after India conducted five tests May 11-13 and Pakistan responded two weeks later with what it said were six tests.

A top Indian Foreign Ministry official said India was ready for bilateral talks with Pakistan but found international concerns about the situation in South Asia were exaggerated.

"Life is normal. There is no ground for exaggeration and dramatizing the situation," said Foreign Secretary K Raghunath, who attended Kharrazi's meeting with the Indian Prime Minister. India has said its offer of talks with Pakistan has been on the table for weeks, but neither country has made a serious

effort toward reopening peace negotiations begun under a previous Indian government. Predominantly Hindu India and officially Islamic Pakistan have fought three wars since they won independence from the British rulers 50 years ago, and skirmishes still often break out across their border. Two of the wars were over the control of the disputed northern Himalayan territory of Kashmir.

The Indian foreign secretary said New Delhi sees no need for other countries to get involved in the Kashmiri dispute. There has been speculation that western leaders meeting in Geneva Thursday to discuss how to defuse nuclear tension between India and Pakistan would take up Kashmir as the root of their rivalry.

Iran, Kharrazi said, has been very concerned about developments in South Asia following nuclear tests by India and Pakistan. But he welcomed the Pakistani tests.

"The development of a nuclear bomb by a Muslim country can act as a deterrent for Israel," he said. No Arab country is now believed capable of making a nuclear weapon, while Israel is considered an undeclared nuclear power.

Iran has repeatedly denied US and Israeli allegations that it is close to building a nuclear weapon. Kharrazi has said Iran's nuclear facilities are open to international inspectors.

Kharrazi has said Iran was a signatory to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and supported global disarmament.

Heat wave claims 100 more in India

NEW DELHI, Jun 3: Severe heat claimed another 100 victims, taking the total number of dead this summer to more than a 1,000, according to local news agency reports Wednesday, reports AP.

United News of India reported 100 heat-related deaths Tuesday, most in the southeastern state of Andhra Pradesh and the northeastern state of Bihar.

Temperatures have ranged from 43 to 50 Celsius (110 to 122 Fahrenheit) across India over the past month, making it the hottest summer in 50 years.

The seasonal monsoon rains have already hit the coast of southern India, bringing respite.

Discovery soars on NASA's last voyage to Mir

CAPE CANAVERAL, Florida, Jun 3: Space shuttle Discovery thundered into orbit on NASA's last voyage to Mir, a flight to bring home the seventh and final American to stay aboard the Russian space station, reports AP.

The shuttle and its crew of six took off right on time on Tuesday and soared through a sweltering early-evening sky. "Poyekhali!" shouted commander Charles Precourt, which in Russian means "Off we go."

It was the hottest launch day anyone could remember. The temperature climbed to 97 degrees Fahrenheit (36 degrees Celsius) at one point in the countdown, prompting NASA to keep close watch on the hydraulic systems at the pad, especially the movable walkway. The limit for launching is 99 degrees F (37 degrees C).

Some 8,000 km ahead of Discovery in a 400-m high orbit, Mir's automatic thrusters were firing on cue, keeping the station on an unswerving course. The cosmonauts fixed the steering system Monday, three days after it shut down. Without automatic steering, Mir would have been too shaky for a shuttle docking.

Discovery is scheduled to reach Mir on Thursday and bring NASA astronaut Andrew Thomas back to Earth on June 12 after his four-month station stay.

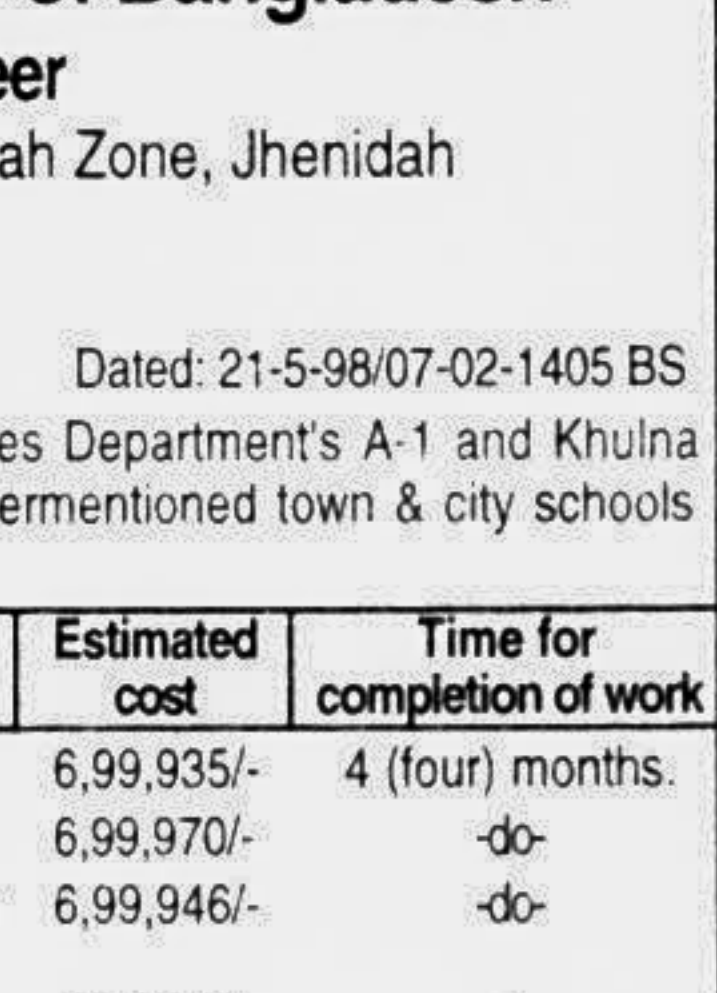
From then on, NASA will concentrate on the international space station; construction will begin in orbit at the end of the year.

The Russians plan to continue flying aboard Mir through 1999, after which they will let it burn up in the atmosphere. Then they, too, will focus all their efforts on the new joint space station.

Mir's three-man crew was reportedly asleep when Discovery blasted off; the space station was flying over Ireland on its 70, 183rd swing around the world. Earlier in the day, Thomas informed flight controllers he'd like some lasagna and Oreo ice cream waiting for him when he gets back.

"Have a smooth ride up the hill and bring Andy back to us," a launch controller told the shuttle crew moments before liftoff.

— AP/UNB photo



Space shuttle Discovery clears the launch tower as it blasts off from pad 39-A on Tuesday, at Kennedy Space Center, Florida, USA. Discovery will dock with Russian space station Mir during its mission.

— AP/UNB photo

170-kg of uranium missing from nuclear plant in Scotland

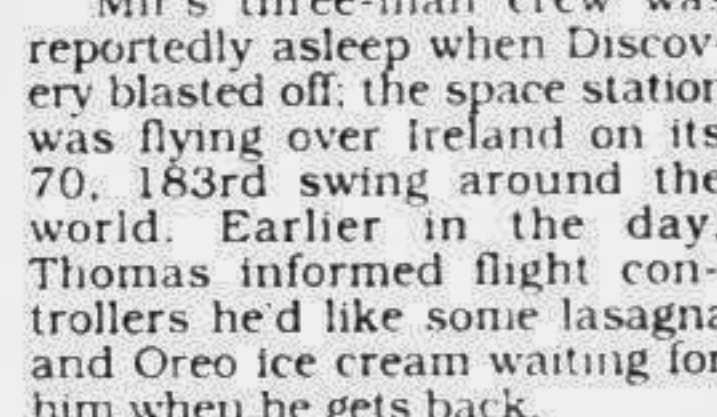
LONDON, Jun 3: Around 170 kilograms of weapons-grade enriched uranium has disappeared from the waste shaft of a nuclear plant in Scotland, according to a report made public Tuesday, reports AFP.

The material enough to make 10 bombs the size of the one that devastated Hiroshima, went missing over a three-year period between 1965-1968, said a newly published internal inventory of the contents of the shaft.

The report by management of the Dounreay Nuclear Plant was made public Tuesday and seized on opponent of the nuclear industry in Scotland.

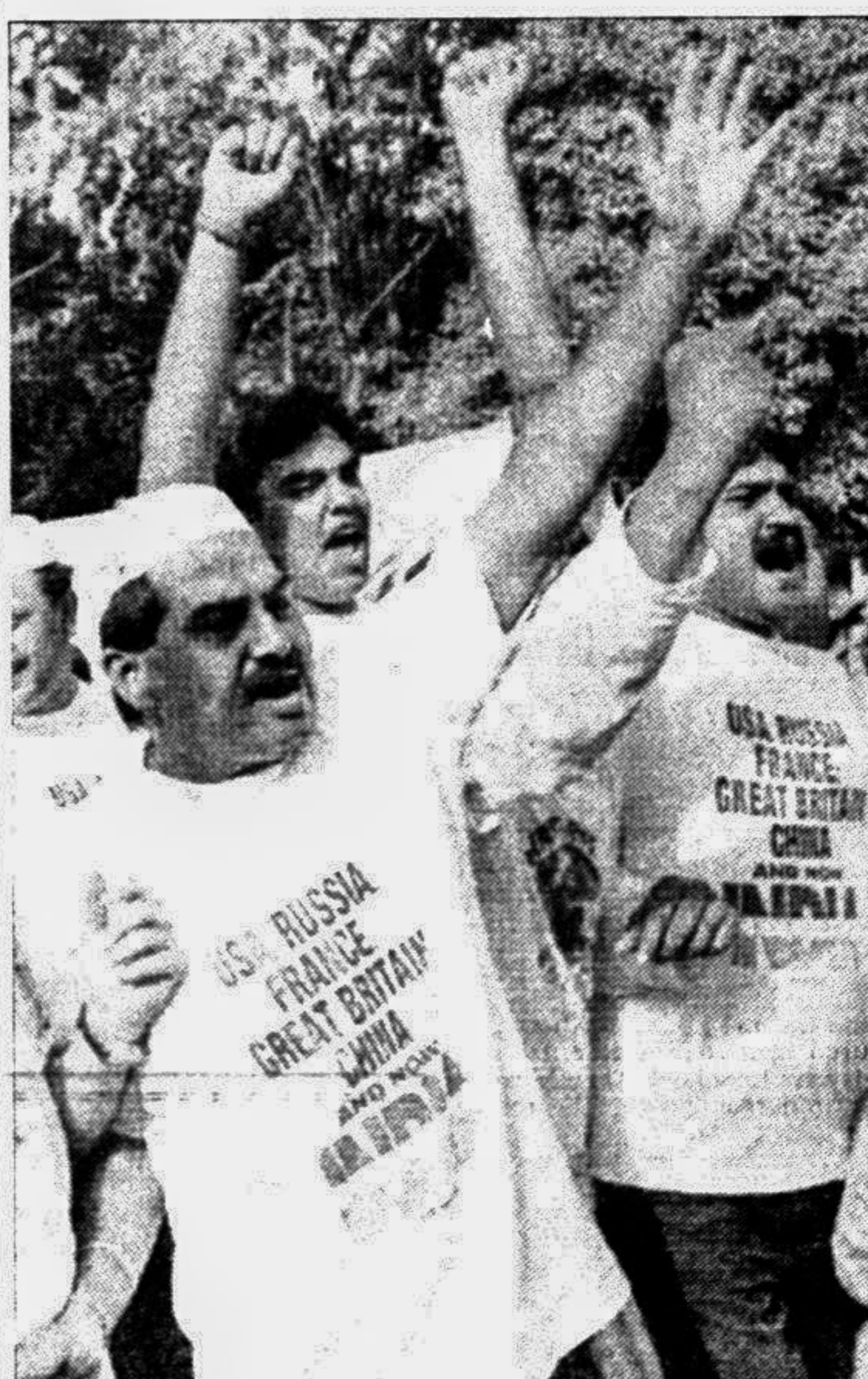
The loss came to light during a study of one of the plant's waste shafts which had been used as a dump. It is now feared the uranium may have found its way into a nuclear arms program.

— AP/UNB photo



Naomi Okada, left, and Takeya Takafuji smile as they show off Japan's latest popular beeper "Lovegety," or matchmaking gadget in Tokyo Tuesday. The palm-size tool, manufactured by Erfolg, a small modem-maker, has been sold more than 400,000 units after hitting the market for 2,980 yen (22 dollars) in February. It sends out three kinds of signals and when someone of the opposite sex carrying the gadget with same setting comes into range, the two machines beep or flash. Then, you can seek your mate.

— AP/UNB photo



Indian Muslims shout slogans in favour of Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's government in New Delhi Tuesday. Representatives of the Muslim community called on Vajpayee to give support after nuclear test.

— AP/UNB photo

Indonesians to elect new president by '99: Habibie

JAKARTA, June 3: President BJ Habibie said in an interview broadcast today that Indonesia would be in a position to elect a new president and vice president (VP) by the end of 1999, reports Reuters.

"Let's say at the end of next year we will then have a new parliament, we will have new members of the People's Assembly, and we will be then in a position to elect a new president and a new vice president," Habibie told CNN.

Habibie did not rule out the prospect he would run for a new term. Asked whether he would run again, he said that if he

brought economic recovery and political reform to Indonesia "as soon as possible," he would consider his main mission accomplished.

He said a draft of new election laws would be ready in August and the laws would be put in place around four months after that, following consultation with parliament and other groups.

There would then be a meeting of the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR), the nation's highest constitutional body, to set a date for general elections, Habibie said.

Review raps CIA for failing to warn of India's N-tests

WASHINGTON, Jun 3: US intelligence failed to warn of India's nuclear weapons tests because of leadership lapses, poor on-the-ground intelligence and failure to pay attention to spy satellite pictures that offered valuable clues, a review panel concluded Tuesday, reports AP.

But a wide-ranging critique of the CIA and other US intelligence agencies stopped short of recommending that anyone be fired or punished. The reviewers noted that no one was killed because of the lapses and con-

cluded that US policy-makers, had they been warned, probably would not have been able to dissuade India from conducting the tests.

The panel's 26-page report found fault with top CIA leadership, including CIA Director George Tenet, with the compartmentalised organisation of US intelligence, and with imagery specialists who left photographic evidence of India's plants "on the cutting room floor."

BRRIEFLY

**Landslides kill 21 in Assam:** At least 21 people died and nine were injured in a landslide after heavy rains in the northeast Indian state of Assam yesterday, morning, police said. Reuters reports from Guwahati.

A police officer told Reuters that the victims were buried by the mudslide in Sandhighat tea estate, 343 kms south of the state capital, Dispur. Rescue workers have recovered 14 dead bodies so far, police said.

**Monica Lewinsky fires her lawyer:** Monica Lewinsky fired lawyer William Ginsburg on Tuesday and hired two seasoned criminal attorneys, as Kenneth Starr pushed for speedy Supreme Court rulings on testimony in the White House sex-and-perjury case. Reuters says from Washington.

Ginsburg, a California-based medical malpractice specialist who has been a media fixture since the scandal broke in January, was replaced by Washingtonians Plato Cacheris and Jacob Stein.

**Virus raises alarm in Taiwan:** A virus that attacks small children particularly hard claimed its 26th victim on Wednesday, and officials closed some nursery schools and kindergartens in central Taiwan in an effort to control it, AP says from Taipei.

The enterovirus 71 virus hits Taiwan each summer. Although there are no firm numbers to compare, the Health Department said this year's outbreak appears to be particularly severe. It said almost 7,500 cases had been reported, but the outbreak appears to have peaked, and that the number of new cases should start dropping.

**6 gets death penalty in Rwanda:** A Rwandan court has convicted and sentenced to death six people for the 1997 killing of four UN human rights monitors, the Rwanda News Agency reported yesterday, AP says from Kigali.

The monitors and their driver — one Briton, one Cambodian and three Rwandans — were ambushed near Cyangugu, 240 kilometres southwest of the capital, Kigali, and on the border with Congo, which the Hutu rebels easily cross. The driver was wounded but survived.

**Drug lab destroyed in Colombia:** Army commandos destroyed a clandestine drug laboratory, seized 500 kg of cocaine and arrested 13 people after a firefight with leftist rebels in southwest Colombia yesterday, Reuters says from Bogota.

Gen Jaime Ernesto Canal, head of the army's 3rd brigade, said the sprawling complex was found in a rural area near the town of Santander De Quilichao in Cauca province.

**17 wedding guests killed in Java:** Seventeen people were killed when a minivan stalled on a level crossing and was hit by a train in central Java, Indonesia, the Jakarta Post reported yesterday. Reuters says from Jakarta. The newspaper said the minivan was taking 18 wedding guests back from a reception on Tuesday afternoon when the train hit it and dragged it more than one km before coming to a halt. The sole survivor was in a critical condition in hospital.

**Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh**  
Office of the Executive Engineer  
Facilities Department, Ministry of Education, Jhenidah Zone, Jhenidah

**Tender Notice**

No 13/Govt Pry: Sch/The Z/FD/97-98 Dated: 21-5-98/07-02-1405 BS

Tenders in Bangladesh Form No 2911 are hereby invited from Facilities Department's A-1 and Khulna Circle's A-2 class enlisted contractors for vertical extension of the undermentioned town & city schools under Govt Primary School Re-construction & Renovation Project.

Name of district	Name of thana	Group No	Name of educational institution	Estimated cost	Time for completion of work
Jhenidah	Sadar	01 (one)	Arappur Govt Pry School	6,99,935/-	4 (four) months.
-do-	-do-	02 (two)	Wazir Ali Govt Pry Sch	6,99,970/-	-do-
Magura	Sadar	03 (three)	Magura No-1 Govt Pry School.	6,99,946/-	-do-
-do-	-do-	04 (four)	Abalpur Govt. Pry School.	6,98,328/-	-do-

Amount of earnest money for each work: Tk 14,000/-  
Price of tender document of each work: Taka 400/- (four hundred) only (Non-refundable).  
Last date & time of purchasing tender document: 09-6-98 up to 5.00 PM.  
Date & time of receiving tender document: 10-6-98 up to 12.30 PM.  
Date & time of opening tender document: 10-6-98 at 12.45 PM.

Tenders/tender documents can be purchased on cash payment of the said amount from the office of the undersigned, Deputy Commissioner, Jhenidah, Executive Engineer of Jessore Zone, Kushtia Zone & Assistant Engineer of Jhenidah & Magura districts and will be received on the said date at the said places. The said amount of earnest money must be submitted with the tender in Pay Order/Bank Draft from any scheduled bank in favour of "Executive Engineer, Facilities Department, Jhenidah Zone, Jhenidah.

**General terms & conditions:**

- Original copy of 1997-98 renewal fee deposit receipt, registration book, up to date Income Tax clearance certificate & VAT registration certificate should be produced at the time of purchasing tender document and attested copy of the said papers should be submitted at the time of submitting tender document. No certificate on VAT will be acceptable.
- Tender submitted at rate more than 5% (five per cent) below the estimated cost will be treated as cancelled outright.
- VAT will be deducted at prescribed rate from all kinds of bills.
- The contractors' firms who have failed to complete work of last financial year within the prescribed time without any satisfactory reason, will be treated as disqualified to participate in this tender.
- Contractor cannot claim any financial benefit for change or cancellation of the name of institutions.
- Other terms & conditions of tender will be available with the tender.

The authority reserves the right to accept or reject any/all tenders without assigning any reason.

**Executive Engineer**  
Facilities Department  
Jhenidah Zone, Jhenidah

DFP-11817-26/5  
G-1245

**Troops kill GIA Algiers unit chief**

ALGIERS, June 3: Algerian security services said Tuesday the chief of the Armed Islamic Group (GIA) unit in Algiers, Mohammed Kebaili, or "Ayachi," had been killed in an army operation in the capital's suburbs, reports AFP.

Kebaili was one of four Islamic militants killed when security services surrounded an apartment in an Algiers suburb before special army units stormed it on Tuesday, an official statement said. It said a woman was among the four militants killed. Two children in the hands of the "terrorist group" also died in the operation along with a security force member, the statement said.

The security forces said they had identified the body of Kebaili.

**Off the Record**

*She claims to be mentally a 'he'*

TOKYO, The Saitama Medical School Ethics Committee has recently approved a multistage sex change for a woman who claims to be mentally a man, committee members said, paving the way for the nation's first legally approved sex change operation, reports Khodo.

The Ethics Committee of the school, which is located north of Tokyo, approved the process for the 20-year-old woman, who lives in northeastern Japan, on the condition that complete mental support measures be provided following the procedure.

The multistage sex change process is expected to take place as early as this summer, the members said, adding that the operations should take about six months to complete.

The Ethics Committee rejected a request in 1996 for sex changes for the woman and another woman, saying that not all criteria for conducting such operations had been set.

But the Japanese society of Psychiatry and Neurology said last year that a sex change operation should be permitted on certain conditions, including the one that a patient undergo psychoanalysis and hormone therapy following the procedure.

According to one estimate, some 2,200 of 7,000 people in Japan are suffering from a desire to live and be accepted as a member of the opposite sex.

Naomi Okada, left, and Takeya Takafuji smile as they show off Japan's latest popular beeper "Lovegety," or matchmaking gadget in Tokyo Tuesday. The palm-size tool, manufactured by Erfolg, a small modem-maker, has been sold more than 400,000 units after hitting the market for 2,980 yen (22 dollars) in February. It sends out three kinds of signals and when someone of the opposite sex carrying the gadget with same setting comes into range, the two machines beep or flash. Then, you can seek your mate.

— AP/UNB photo

**Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh**  
Office of the Executive Engineer, RHD  
Sylhet Road Division, Sylhet  
Phone No. 716339

**Tender Notice**  
No. 50 of Road Division, Sylhet-1997-98

- Tender Notice No: 50 of Sylhet Road Division, 1997-98.
- Name of works: Tender for construction of 3x15.25 metre long simply supported RCC bridge in gap no. 8/1 (Jalalpur Bazar) at 8th KM of Sylhet-Sultanpur-Balagonj Road under Road Division, Sylhet during the year 1997-98.
- Charge to: 266 (Development) Feeder.
- Estimated cost: Tk 1,30,45,099/00
- Earnest money: Tk. 2,60,902/00
- Whom estimate approved: Additional Chief Engineer, RHD, Comilla Zone, Comilla.
- Time allowed: 540 (Five hundred forty) days.
- Name of offices where this tender will be received: 1) Additional Chief Engineer, RHD, Comilla Zone/Dhaka Zone/Chittagong Zone/Rajshahi Zone/Rangpur Zone/Khulna Zone/Bansal Zone. 2) Divisional Commissioner, Sylhet. 3) Superintending Engineer, RHD Road Circle, Sylhet/Monitoring & Evaluation Circle, Dhaka. 4) Executive Engineer, RHD Road Division, Sylhet.
- Name of offices where this tender document will be sold: 1) Divisional Commissioner, Sylhet. 2) Executive Engineer, RHD Road Division, Sylhet/Moulvibazar/Sunamgonj/Hobiganj. 3) Executive Engineer, RHD Planning & Programming Division, Dhaka. 4) Executive Engineer, RHD Planning & Design Division, Dhaka/Comilla/Chittagong/Rajshahi/Rangpur/Khulna/Barisal.
- Date of selling of tender: 15-06-1998 up to office hours.
- Last date & time of receiving tender: 16-06-1998 at 12-30 PM.
- Date & time of opening tender: 18-06-1998 at 12-45 PM.
- Date of lottery: After scrutiny of tenders & approval by higher authority lottery date will be declared by further notice.
- Eligibility of contractors: Under RHD Department "A" to "B" special category contractors.

DFP-12067-31/5  
G-1242

**Md Muzammel Haque**  
Executive Engineer (RHD)  
Road Division, Sylhet.