

International

Sonia seeks govt's assurance

VHP denies constructing Ram temple in Ayodhya

NEW DELHI, Jun 8: Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) Sunday said no temple construction activity was being carried out anywhere near the disputed site at Ayodhya, reports PTI.

In a statement here VHP secretary general Acharya Giriraj Kishore said the Ayodhya temple construction work could be given only in 'amicable and congenial' atmosphere.

Ayodhya temple construction work would go ahead only if the court gives favourable judgement or the government makes suitable laws, he said hoping for a favourable court verdict in this regard.

The Acharya said my statement regarding Ayodhya temple is being misquoted every time when media-persons put the question of Ayodhya temple construction.

Meanwhile, Congress president Sonia Gandhi Sunday asked Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee to assure the country that his government is prepared to uphold the sanctity of the judicial process in the Ayodhya dispute and stop 'Sangh Parivar' controlled or-

ganisations from going ahead with construction of a Ram temple at the disputed site.

In a letter to Vajpayee, she asked him whether the whole issue relating to the dispute had to be resolved through the judicial process which was already underway and was continuing with the endorsement of the Supreme Court or was it open to any party to take recourse to actions which had no judicial sanction.

Sonia said the second point was whether the government was aware that the Vishwa Hindu Parishad or some other organisations controlled by the 'Sangh Parivar' were engaged in activities with the objective of constructing the Ram temple at Ayodhya even before the judicial processes already set in motion were concluded.

If so what steps were being contemplated to stop these activities she queried.

The Congress president said 'the country would like to be assured that your government is prepared to uphold the sanctity of the judicial processes and deal firmly with anyone

who may choose to violate the basic tenets that govern the judicial determination of any issue before a court of law.

"I do hope that you will take cognisance of this matter which deals with an extremely serious and sensitive issue having a direct bearing on the well being of our country. I shall be grateful for an early reply, Sonia said.

In her letter she referred to media reports about preparations being made in various parts of the country to construct a Ram temple at the site where the Babri Masjid structure stood before it was demolished.

Sonia also recalled the statements made by VHP leaders that they were ready to go ahead with the building of the temple within a specified time frame.

She said the tragic trail of events leading to the "shocking" incident on December 6, 1992, and its bloody aftermath were still fresh in the memory of the nation. I am sure you will agree with me that every right thinking citizen in our country would never like a repetition of these unfortunate events."

US envoy hosts surprise meet

Israel makes concession to PA in talks with EU

NEW YORK, Jun 8: Israel and the European Union are holding secret talks with Israel making substantial concessions to the Palestinian Authority. Newsweek international reports in its latest edition, reports AFP.

The magazine without citing a source said Israel had agreed to give Palestinians a seaport and a working airport to prevent the imposition of EU sanctions on products manufactured in Jewish settlements.

Israel has reacted with outrage at the European Commission's recommendation last month that products made in Jewish settlements in the occupied West Bank, Gaza Strip and Golan Heights be denied tariff benefits.

Newsweek says Europe is Israel's biggest market accounting for more than one third of the Jewish state's 15.7 billion dollars in annual exports. Nearly all the exports are duty free.

Reuters adds: The US ambassador to Israel hosted surprise talks on Sunday between senior Israeli and Palestinian peace negotiators. Israeli political

sources said.

The meeting at Ambassador Edwrd Walker's home near Tel Aviv focused on the opening of an airport and industrial zone in Gaza, issues auxiliary to the handover of more West Bank land to the Palestinians under interim peace deals the sources said.

The talks between Israeli Cabinet Secretary Dany Naveh and the Palestinians Saeb Erekat coincided with media speculation that a deal on further Israeli troop withdrawal in the West Bank, an accord that would break a 15 month deadlock, was near.

Naveh and Erekat last met for discussions on the opening of a Palestinian airport in Gaza and other so-called confidence building measures about six weeks ago, at the US ambassador's residence, the sources said.

Both negotiators have also been at the forefront of talks with Washington, the main peace broker between the Israelis and the Palestinians on a key US plan for Israel to relinquish a further 13 per cent of the West Bank.

Diplomatic efforts underway to halt war

Ethiopia, Eritrea accept Libyan peace initiative

TRIPOLI, Jun 8: Ethiopia and Eritrea have accepted a Libyan peace initiative to end an armed conflict which erupted last week, Libyan television reported Sunday night, says AFP.

Last Tuesday, Libyan leader Colonel Moammer Gaddafi proposed sending an African buffer force to the frontier between Ethiopia and Eritrea.

The radio quoted Adoum Togo, deputy secretary-general of the Community of Sahelian-Saharan States (COMESA) as saying that he had travelled to Asmara and Addis Ababa at the request of Gaddafi and that Eritrean President Isais Afewerki and Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi had 'accepted with great relief' the Libyan mediation offer.

The United States and Rwanda are also trying to mediate a settlement to the border conflict opposing Ethiopia and Eritrea.

Earlier AP says: Diplomatic efforts are under way to prevent the border conflict between Eritrea and Ethiopia from exploding into full-scale war, with of-

ficials hoping that Monday's summit of African leaders will produce new ideas for a settlement.

American, Italian, German and British planes ferried more than a thousand foreigners out of harm's way late Saturday and early Sunday after Ethiopia agreed to temporarily halt bombing of a military civilian airport on the outskirts of Asmara.

US Assistant Secretary of State Susan Rice left a meeting of OAU foreign ministers Saturday in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, to return to the United States. Rice is promoting a US-Rwandan peace plan for the two feuding Horn of Africa countries.

The plan includes a call for Eritrea to return to positions held before May 6, when current hostilities reportedly broke out in other words, to withdraw from what Ethiopia considers its territory.

But Eritrea, wedged between northern Ethiopia and the Red Sea, claims it is rightfully occupying territory defined by

boundaries drawn by Italy when it occupied Eritrea in 1885.

African leaders, including the presidents of South Africa, Djibouti, Uganda and Kenya, called Eritrean President Isais Afewerki over the weekend to encourage a negotiated settlement.

Eritrean civilians were hoping to avoid war. Ethiopia's army outnumbered Eritrea's 40,000-strong force by about 3 to 1. Eritrea's tiny air force is no match for Ethiopia's.

In Asmara, Eritreans scanned cloudless blue skies Sunday and listened for the high-pitched whooosh of the Ethiopian MIG-23 fighters that had bombed their capital's airport Friday and Saturday. But none came.

Skirmishes were reported, however, along the two countries' disputed border. Ethiopia said Sunday it had recaptured its border town of Zala Anbessa, 100 km southwest of Asmara, after a daylong battle with Eritrean forces who captured the town last week.

Saudi, UAE leaders assure Sharif of their support

JEDDAH, Saudi Arabia, Jun 8: Pakistan's Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif met Saudi King Fahd Sunday to discuss the situation in the Muslim world after India and Pakistan's rival nuclear arms tests, the official Saudi News Agency SPA reported, reports AFP.

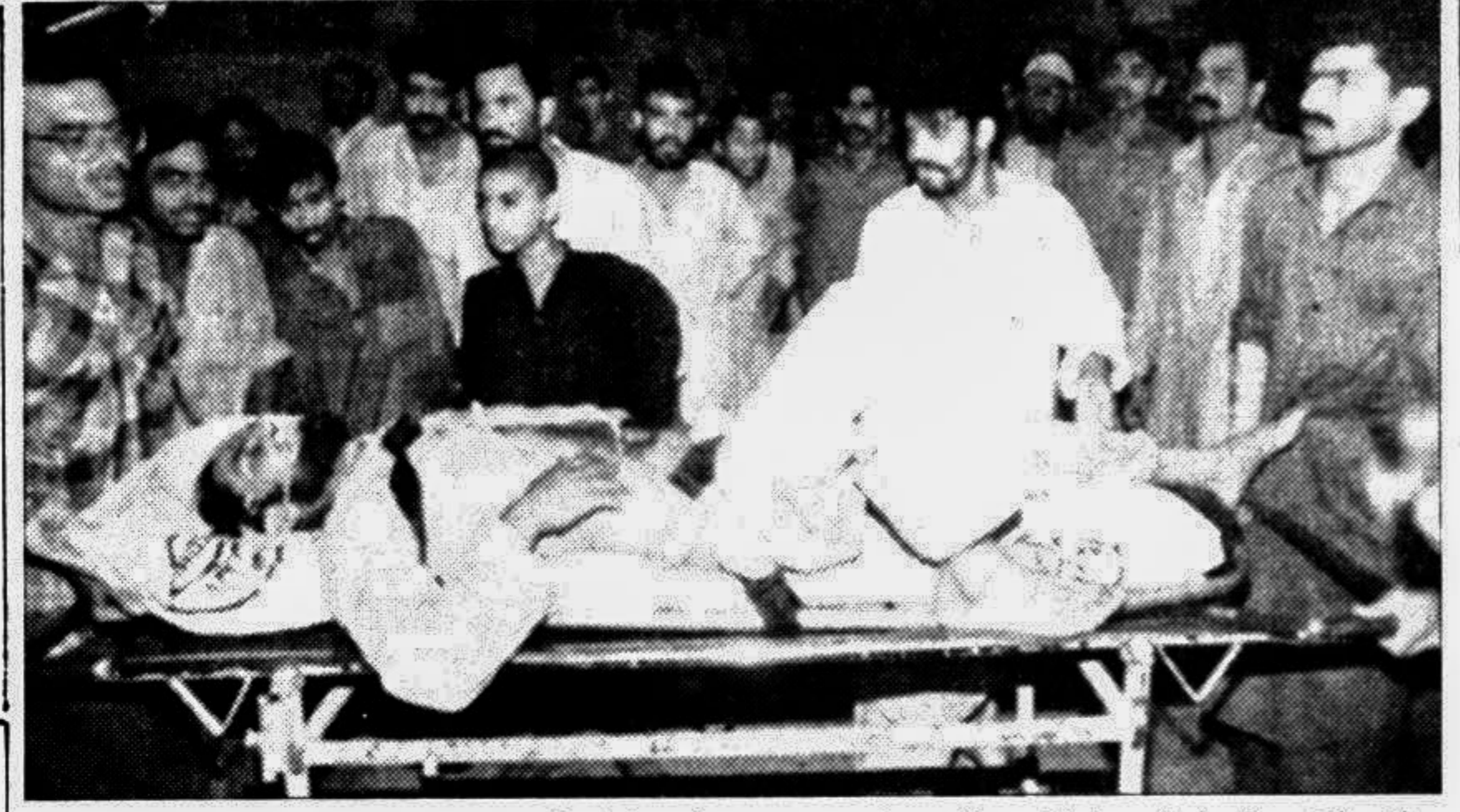
Sharif, accompanied by his oil and finance ministers, Chowdhury Nisar Ali and Sar-taj Aziz met earlier in the day with Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah bin Abdel Aziz shortly after flying in from the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

It was Sharif's first foreign trip after the tests.

Both Saudi Arabia and the UAE have voiced support for Pakistan, a fellow Muslim state, since it carried out nuclear tests last month in retaliation for underground atomic blasts by its neighbour India.

King Fahd told his Cabinet last week that Saudi Arabia "completely understands the point of view of the Pakistani government." Pakistan "is concerned with preserving its security," he said.

But the King urged both Pakistan and India "to show restraint and begin negotiations to establish stability and security in the region."



Medical personnel carry a seriously injured passenger to a Karachi hospital after a bomb exploded on a train outside Sukkur, 120 miles north of Karachi, Sunday killing 26 people. — AP/UNB photo

'US, Europe should take steps to stop Kosovo fighting'

WASHINGTON, Jun 8: With Serbia's leaders "out of control," the United States and Europe should do something to end ethnic fighting in the rebellious Serbian province Kosovo, Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott said. He said he would not rule out the use of American troops, reports AP.

"Kosovo has the potential to become another Bosnia," Lott said Sunday on CNN's "Late Edition." "We cannot allow this slaughter to occur. Once again the Serbians are out of control. Something should be done."

Lott, a Republican from Mississippi, said the United States should "always be reluctant to use military force," but "I'm not saying we should not consider troops if it continues the way it is going."

The comments came as CNN reported that President Bill Clinton has agreed to tougher US policies to deal with fighting in Kosovo, where rebels of an ethnic Albanian majority are pressing for independence. The report said Clinton's national security team was scheduled to meet today to draw up a ban on American investment in Yugoslavia. Serbia is that country's dominant republic.

White House spokesman Josh Silverman said officials are likely to meet at the White House today but said, "No decision has been made."

In London, British Prime Minister Tony Blair telephoned Clinton, and a Blair aide said they agreed to send a "strong message" to Yugoslavia President

Slobodan Milosevic over his government's crackdown in Kosovo. Blair is the current president of the European Union.

His Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, said Milosevic "crossed the threshold" with offenses last week against ethnic Albanians. He refused to say what steps might be expected from the EU or the six-nation Contact Group that monitors Yugoslavia, which includes Russia and the United States.

British newspapers reported that Blair told a Cabinet meeting last week: "The only question that matters is whether you are prepared to use force. And we have to be."

CNN reported Sunday that the United States will join Britain in seeking a resolution from the UN Security Council that would authorise the use of force, if necessary, to ease tensions in Kosovo.

Clinton travels to New York to speak Monday at the United Nations on reducing the narcotics trade and could lobby for a tougher stance during that visit. But Silverman said, "I don't have any indication that's going to be part of his speech."

On Friday, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan issued an unusually strong statement accusing Serbian forces of atrocities in Kosovo. More than 250 people have died there since March 1 in escalating clashes between government forces and the Kosovo Liberation Army, the armed wing of the Albanian independence movement.

'US used nerve gas on defectors of Vietnam War'

WASHINGTON, Jun 8: The US military used nerve gas in a 1970 raid aimed at killing US citizens who defected during the Vietnam War, CNN television and the weekly Time magazine reported Sunday, reports AFP.

A secret special forces unit dropped the nerve gas Sarin, the same agent used in an April 1995 Tokyo subway terrorist attack, on a village in Laos thought to hold American defectors according to the report.

Then-President Richard Nixon's White House approved the use of nerve gas in the mission, dubbed operation "Tailwind" in which the Central Intelligence Agency had a hand, CNN and Time said citing a former chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Suharto lonely, upset even on his birthday

JAKARTA, Jun 8: Indonesia's former president celebrated his 77th birthday today reportedly lonely and upset over allegations that he and his family amassed billions of dollars illegally, reports AP.

The Jakarta Post quoted a Suharto aide as saying few of his old friends and associates have visited him at his home in central Jakarta since he quit office last month. Military personnel guard the house but no longer salute him, said the aide who has worked for Suharto since the 1970s.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh Project Management Unit ADB Assisted 2nd Health and Family Planning Services Project Ministry of Health and Family Welfare 52/3, New Eskaton Road, Dhaka Local Tender Notice

The government of Bangladesh has received a loan from Asian Development Bank towards the cost of 2nd Health and Family Planning Services Project and it is intended that part of the proceeds of this loan will be utilised for procurement of goods and making payment under the contract for which this notice inviting bids is issued. The terms and conditions of the contract and payments thereof from the Asian Development Bank will be subject to in all respects to the terms and conditions of the loan agreement with the bank.

As such sealed local tenders/quotations are hereby invited by the undersigned from the manufacturers/importers/ suppliers for procurement of mechanical item (Air-Coolers) for DGHS, Dhaka.

Tender from suppliers of goods/producer/manufactured strictly in member countries of the Asian Development Bank will only be considered.

1. Tender No. : PD/ADB-2/DGHS/97/572 Date: 1.6.98.
 2. Name of work : Loan No. 1074-BAN(SF); ADB Assisted 2nd Health and Family Planning Services Project — Supply of Mechanical Item (Air-Coolers) including installation, testing & commissioning for DGHS, Dhaka.
 3. Earnest money : 2% of the total quoted amount must be enclosed with each tender in the form of Pay Order/Bank Draft drawn from any scheduled bank of Bangladesh Bank in favour of Project Director, ADB Assisted 2nd Health and Family Planning Services Project.
 4. Cost of tender : Tk 700.00 (Taka seven hundred) only (non-refundable).
 5. Last date for : 17.6.98. selling of tender schedule
 6. Dropping date : 18.6.98 at 12:00 Noon. & time of tender
 7. Opening date : 18.6.98 at 12:15 PM. and time of tender
- Tender must be dropped in the tender box to be kept at PMU Office, ADB Assisted 2nd Health & Family Planning Services Project.
- Tender schedule containing terms and conditions to be obtained from the office of the undersigned only all working days during office hours. Tender schedule will not be sold on the day of opening.
- The authority reserves the right to accept or reject any or all tenders without assigning any reason whatsoever.

DFP-12557-3/6/98 Md Nazrul Islam G-1315 Project Director

BRRIEFLY

Newspaper editor shot in Cambodia: The publisher-editor of the country's most widely-read newspaper — which supports Cambodian strongman Hun Sen — was shot by an unidentified gunman yesterday, AP reports from Phnom Penh.

At least two of six bullets fired struck Thong Uy Pang, 55, in the shoulder while he was standing outside a pagoda, his wife and police said. His bodyguards returned fire. One was hit and so was gunman, who still managed to flee, witnesses said. Yim Phanny his wife said that she thought there was a plot to assassinate her husband but had no idea who was behind it.

10 killed in Mexican gunfight: Ten people were killed in a gunfight between leftist guerrillas and Mexican soldiers in southwestern Guerrero state officials said Sunday, AFP reports from Mexico City.

The clash took place early Sunday in the town of Las Charcas Guerrero secretary general Salgado Gomez said, adding that there were fatalities on both sides. The Defense Ministry confirmed the report adding that there were also five injured and 21 arrested.

Papal envoy arrives in Baghdad: Papal envoy Cardinal Roger Etcheagaray arrived in Iraq Sunday at the head of a Vatican delegation to take part in a Christian congress opening in Baghdad yesterday to press for a lifting of UN sanctions, AFP says from Baghdad.

Etcheagaray, a French cardinal, arrived by road from Amman visibly exhausted and refused to make a statement to journalists.

US, China to hold war games: China and the United States are expected to reach agreement to stage a joint naval exercise next year, their first operation together since World War II, a report said yesterday, AFP reports from Hong Kong.

The proposed coordinated sea rescue operation is set to be agreed during US President Bill Clinton's official visit to China starting June 25, the Hong Kong Standard said.

Algerian pilot seeks asylum in Spain: An Algerian helicopter pilot slipped away during military manoeuvres on Sunday and flew to the Spanish resort island of Ibiza where he requested political asylum officials said, Reuters reports from Madrid.

The Algerian government demanded the immediate return of the 30-year-old army lieutenant, but Spanish authorities said no action would be taken until his case had been fully reviewed.

2 dissidents jailed in Myanmar: Two pro-democracy activists have been sentenced by Myanmar's military regime to 14 years' imprisonment for distributing a letter from a rebel army, AP says from Bangkok.

The pair were handing out copies of the letter, which was addressed to Lt. Gen. Khin Nyunt, the powerful head of military intelligence, during a meeting in late March at the home of Nobel Peace Prize-winner Aung San Suu Kyi.

Philippines eyes electricity from ocean currents

MANILA, Jun 8: The Philippine government has received an offer from Italy to help it harness the sea as an inexpensive source of electrical power, reports AP.

This was disclosed over the weekend by Trade Secretary Cesar Bautista, who said the offer came from the University of Naples.

The offer has received an endorsement from the European Union, which has promised the Philippines a 500,000-dollars grant to finance a feasibility study for the proposed project, he said.

The proposal calls for the construction and operation of power generators that will run on turbines driven by sea currents. The concept is ideal for the Philippines, an archipelago composed of thousands of islands — and plenty of water.

The idea here is to use the water velocity to generate electricity," said Bautista, adding that the turbines are practically "maintenance-free" and thus inexpensive to operate.

Republicans promise fair probe into US tech transfer to China

WASHINGTON, Jun 8: Toning down the rhetoric, Republican leaders promised an even-handed investigation into technology transfers to China and acknowledged they may never know if administration decisions were influenced by political donations, reports AP.

Senate intelligence committee chairman Republican Sen. Richard Shelby said Sunday his panel's inquiry into the China transfers was "going to be broad, (and) it's going to be deep."

But the told "Fox News Sunday" that in the end the waiver allowing Lorai Corp. to launch a satellite from a Chinese rocket may have resulted from "a lot of bad policy, some bad decisions" but not political influences.

Both the Senate and House are investigating whether a Lorai report on the 1996 explosion of a Chinese rocket carrying one of its satellites helped the Chinese improve their military

'Lion King' tops the board at Tony Awards

NEW YORK, Jun 8: The Lion King edged out "Ragtime," winning the 1998 Tony Award for best musical, while "Art" upset "The Beauty Queen of Leenane" for best play of the Broadway season, reports AP.

It was the closest — and most surprising — Tony race in years, with "Art," Yasmin Reza's three-character comedy about the pleasures and perils of friendship, not taking a single prize until its big win Sunday.

The final tally had "The Lion King" with six Tonys, while "Ragtime," "Cabaret" and "The Beauty Queen" followed with four each.

Marie Mullen kisses her 1998 Tony Award for best performance by a leading actress in a play backstage at New York's Radio City Music Hall Sunday evening. Mullen was the leading actress in "The Beauty Queen of Leenane."

—AP/UNB photo

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Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh Office of the Executive Engineer Dhaka PWD Divn No IV 15, Abdul Gani Road, Dhaka Notice Inviting Tender No 372/R of 1997-98

1. Sealed tenders in Bangladesh Form No 2911 are hereby invited from Special Class-I (one) enlisted Contractors/Firms, Class-I (one) enlisted Building Contractors/Firms under PWD, Class-II (two) enlisted Building Contractors/Firms under PWD Dhaka Zone, Dhaka, Class-III (three) enlisted Building Contractors/Firms under Dhaka PWD Circle-II, Dhaka & Class-IV (four) enlisted Building Contractors/Firms under this Division for the undermentioned works and will be received by the undersigned as well as by the Executive Engineer, Dhaka PWD Division No III, Dhaka, Eden Building PWD Division and Medical College PWD Division, Dhaka in their respective office chamber up to 12.00 Noon of 18/6/98 and will be opened on the same day at 12.30 PM in presence of the intending tenderers who may like to remain present. The tender will be in a sealed cover separately for each group superscribing the name of work and group. No tender will be sold to the Contractors/Firms who has no VAT Registration and Tax-Payer Identification Number (TIN).

Group No	Name of work	Estimated cost	Earnest money	Time for completion of work
I)	Special repairing of floor of Studio No 2 at Television Bhaban, Rampura, Dhaka. During the year 1997-98	Tk. 2,55,605/-	Tk. 52000/-	30 (thirty) days
II)	Special repairing of floor of Studio No 3 of Television Bhaban, Rampura, Dhaka. During the year 1997-98	Tk 4,39,458/-	Tk. 78000/-	45 (forty-five) days
III)	Providing Lime terracing on roof (South portion) (Moke up roof) of Extension Building at Rampura Television Centre, Dhaka. During the year 1997-98	Tk. 2,01,303/-	Tk. 41000/-	45 (forty-five) days

3. Earnest money as specified in clause mentioned above duly pledged in Pratrakkha Sanchaypatra or 5-year BD Sanchaypatra or Bonus Sanchaypatra or TC or BD from any scheduled Bank of Bangladesh in favour of the Executive Engineer, Dhaka PWD Division No IV, Dhaka must accompany each tender. Those who have fixed deposit with this dept are entitled to submit tender without depositing earnest money, but they must quote reference to that effect on the body of respective tender at appropriate place of Form No 2911 enclosing certificate from the concerned Executive Engineer with whom the deposit is lying issued not earlier than 90 (ninety) days from the date of receiving of the tender stating the amount of deposit. Balance earnest money beyond the amount of FD shall have to be furnished along with the tender in the same manner as stated above.

4. Contract documents consisting of BD Form No 2911, schedule of items, special terms and conditions etc can be seen and obtained from the office of the undersigned and Executive Engineers mentioned in papa-1 during office hours on all working days on payment of usual charges for each group (non-refundable) per set of notice inviting tender, schedule of items, special terms & conditions etc. (fixed) and a sum of Tk. 25000 (Taka Twenty-five) only for each group (non-refundable) per copy of BD Form No 2911 during office hours on all working days up to 17/6/98. The undersigned reserves the right to reject any or all the tenders without assigning any reason.

DFP-12538-3/6/98 Executive Engineer G-1314 Dhaka PWD Divn No IV, Dhaka