

**Indian Navy begins work on missile**  
*Trishul*

NEW DELHI, July 17: The Indian Navy has begun work on a vertically launched surface to air missile, *Trishul*, with enhanced engagement and quick reaction capability. The Hindustan Times quoted highly placed sources as saying here today, reports Xinhua.

The decision to change the configuration from the existing horizontal configuration was taken after it was found that precious reaction time could be saved in this mode, the paper said.

The new configuration ensures that the missile can be used in surface-to air and anti-missile role in the same position, it added.

*Trishul* missile which has a range of nine kilometers is part of the integrated guided missile programme in India.

The existing version of the missile is under flight trial in the user configuration mode.

The naval version was first tested on June 3. This was the first development flight-test of the missile in a series before it would be offered for user trials, the paper said.



South African President Nelson Mandela, centre, is applauded by his daughter Zinzi, left, and supermodel Naomi Campbell, right, at a special birthday party held near Skukuza in Kruger National Park, Thursday to mark the beginning of year-long celebrations held for Mandela's 80th birthday. — AP/UNB photo

**Russia's last Czar to be buried at St Petersburg**

St PETERSBURG, Russia, July 17: Seeking to heal a national wound, Russia prepared to bury its last czar in a low-key ceremony Friday, the 80th anniversary of his execution at the dawn of the communist era, reports AP.

The remains of Czar Nicholas II were borne home to the old imperial capital Thursday and placed inside the riverfront cathedral where he, his family and servants, will take their places alongside earlier Russian monarchs.

A huge security contingent surrounded the St. Peter and Paul Cathedral in advance of Friday's ceremony, which will bring together President Boris Yeltsin, dozens of the Czar's relatives, diplomats from about 50 countries, and Prince Michael of Kent, who, as a member of the British royal family, is also a distant relative of Russian royalty.

Yeltsin unexpectedly changed his mind Thursday and announced that he would attend the burial, elevating its status to something closer to the grand state ceremony that had once been foreseen.

The Kremlin has reopened long-suppressed chapters of Russian history, stirring fresh debate about the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, the Romanov dynasty that preceded it, and the nature of national guilt and repentance.

**Obuchi promises 6 trillion Yen in tax cuts**  
**Race for premiership of Japan gets heated up**

TOKYO, July 17: Two senior politicians announced their candidacies Friday to replace Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto, who is stepping down after his party suffered a setback in elections that was a referendum on his economic policies, reports AP.

Foreign Minister Keizo Obuchi, a 61-year-old party veteran seen as the favourite of ruling Liberal Democratic Party elders, promised more than 6 trillion yen (dlsr 43.2 billion) in permanent tax cuts.

The cuts will include slashing the top income tax rate to 50 per cent from 65 per cent to boost the economy.

In his policy-speech seeking support for his candidacy, Obuchi also said he would reduce the corporate tax to 40 per cent from 46 per cent and ease the tax burden on middle-income earners.

"We must take the explosion of voter anger seriously," Obuchi told reporters.

The other candidate in the race is former Chief Cabinet Secretary Seiroku Kajiyama. A growing number of reformist lawmakers are throwing their support behind Kajiyama.

Kajiyama has often made controversial, offensive remarks. In 1990, he apologized after saying that prostitutes in Japan and blacks in the United States both "ruin the atmosphere of the neighbourhoods they move into." The remarks provoked an uproar in the United States.

But many junior party members are protesting what they call Obuchi's lack of ideas, saying the country needs strong leadership to revive the stagnant economy.

They also oppose the way Obuchi has gone about securing party support. Before announcing his bid, Obuchi had spent days building up support in the traditional manner of holding closed door meetings with party power brokers.

The younger lawmakers say that secret deals and backroom politicking were exactly what voters were rejecting in the polls last Sunday.

Many expressed support for Kajiyama, 72, a longtime critic

of Hashimoto's economic policies and a champion of big tax cuts.

"We must think about how to save Japan from this critical situation," Kajiyama told supporters at a meeting Friday morning to announce his bid.

The upper house elections was widely seen as a vote against the way the government has managed Japan's economy, which is in the midst of its worst recession since World War II.

Japanese media said a third candidate may also enter the race, possibly Health and Welfare Minister Junichiro Koizumi, an outspoken 56-year-old who is widely seen as one of the party's rising stars.

Having three candidates would probably increase the people's interest," Koizumi told reporters. But he did not say clearly whether he will run.

Former Deputy Prime Minister Yohsei Kono, another possible contender, also reportedly said he would support Kajiyama's candidacy.

While the party had planned to choose its leader by July 21, the date was postponed by three days to give candidates time to explain their views.

**US monument to Luther King will be located on National Mall**

WASHINGTON, July 17: A national monument to slain civil rights leader Martin Luther King (1929-1968) will be located between the Washington Monument and the Capitol Building, under a resolution signed by President Bill Clinton on Thursday, reports Xinhua.

In 1996, Congress authorised the memorial's creation on federal land in Washington. The congressional resolution that Clinton signed Thursday approves an interior department recommendation that the memorial be located in the area on the National Mall, between the Washington monument and the Capitol.

Expenses are to be paid entirely by Alpha Phi Alpha the nation's oldest and largest black fraternity.

Announcing Clinton's action in a speech at the annual convention of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People in Atlanta, Vice President Al Gore said the monument to King would be on the same mall from which he led and moved our nation.

It's about time, Gore was quoted as saying by the Associated Press.

**Chirac urges Assad to work with him for Arab-Israeli peace**

PARIS, July 17: Warning the US-sponsored peace process was near total deadlock, French President Jacques Chirac Thursday urged his Syrian counterpart Hafez Al-Assad to work with him for a just Arab-Israeli peace, reports AFP.

On his first state visit to a western country in 22 years, Assad said after talks with Chirac that the current Israeli government had reduced the peace process to "zero" and Europe had an important role to play in rescuing it.

Relatives of Jewish victims of Nazi persecution meanwhile gathered outside the Syrian embassy to protest the visit, accusing Assad of harbouring wanted Nazi war criminal Alois Brunner.

Disillusioned by Washington's inability to change the tide of regional events since Benjamin Netanyahu was elected Prime Minister in Israel, the trip is the first of a series of uncharacteristic visits

abroad by Assad. Chirac said after two and a half hours of talks with the 67-year-old who has ruled Syria for almost three decades that peace was "possible in the Middle East only with Syria."

He said the peace process was "close to total impasse." The French President renewed his call for the Golan Heights, which Israel annexed in 1981, to be returned to Syria, a move which Syria has been demanding as a condition for peace with its Jewish neighbour.

Chirac also said Lebanon, where Damascus is the main foreign powerbroker and where it maintains 30,000 troops, should be "united, free and sovereign in all its territory." Israel also occupies a buffer zone in South Lebanon.

He defended the principle of "land for peace" which underpinned the Palestinian-Israeli 1993 Oslo self-rule deal but which Netanyahu has chal-

lenged since coming to power two years ago. "Land for peace along with the return to Syria of the Golan Heights," Chirac said, in return, he added, Israel should have "safe and recognised borders and peaceful, confident and normal relations with its neighbours."

Assad said he saw no obstacle between a European effort in the peace process and the efforts undertaken by the United States.

"A just and comprehensive peace is our objective and our strategic choice," Assad said "It is in our interest and the whole region's."

Catherine Colonna, spokeswoman at the Elysee presidential palace, said Chirac asked Assad to meet a French request for the extradition of Brunner, the Nazi war criminal suspected of hiding in Syria under a different name.

**Man appeals to court for right to die in India**

NEW DELHI, July 17: A "totally contented" retired Indian school headteacher has defied his wife by appealing to a court for the right to die reports said today, reports AFP.

The Indian Express said CA Thomas, a Christian in his 70s from the southern Indian state of Kerala, had appealed to the provincial high court for the right to end his life.

Thomas who described himself as a "law abiding citizen and totally contented and fulfilled," told the court that voluntary death was a common practice in ancient India.

According to traditional Hindu practice, the elderly could fast to death in the twilight of their lives if they felt their earthly duties were over. The Express said the Kerala court was investigating the appeal.

Euthanasia is illegal in India and unsuccessful suicide attempts are punishable by law.

Thomas's plea is being opposed by his 72-year-old wife Elamma, who quoted the Bible to The Express in his presence to argue that his wish to die was unchristian.



Argentine President Carlos Menem, left, greets UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan, Thursday, at the Buenos Aires Government House. Annan praised smaller nations Wednesday as indispensable players on the world stage, saying no nation can stand alone against global threats. The speech comes amid pressure from certain corners of the globe — including within Latin America, Asia and Europe — for reforms to allow more nations greater weight in UN decision-making. Annan is on a five nation tour of Latin America. — AP/UNB photo

**Hundreds leave East Timor**

DILI, Indonesia, July 17: Fearing fresh violence and carrying their most prized possessions, hundreds of residents crowded onto a ship Friday and fled conflict-ridden East Timor, reports AP.

In the streets of the territory's tense capital, hundreds of soldiers armed with sticks and rifles patrolled on the 22nd anniversary of Indonesia's annexation of the former Portuguese colony.

Thousands of people have left East Timor in recent days amid worries that pro-independence activists might demonstrate on the anniversary, touching off clashes with security forces. Since last month, soldiers have killed two protesters during rallies.

The turmoil comes during a visit to Indonesia by UN envoy James H. D. Markar, who is trying to broker a solution to the bitter impasse in East Timor.

The resignation in May of authoritarian President Suharto and ensuing democratic change in Indonesia have given new impetus to efforts to negotiate an accord. Still new President BJ Habibie rules out independence in the territory, the fervent hope of many East Timorese.

On Friday, Markar met East Timor's jailed separatist guerrilla leader, Xanana Gusmao, who is serving a 20-year sentence in a Jakarta prison. The UN official was expected to meet Habibie this weekend but he did not say whether he would visit East Timor.

**BRIEFLY**

**2 killed in Bogota:** One police officer and one rebel were killed in the northern town of Manauré Thursday after a leftist guerrilla column ambushed a patrol with explosives, officials said, AFP reports from Bogota.

The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) carried out the attack, in which five other police and one civilian were injured, according to a police spokesman. The two were killed when both sides exchanged gunfire after the ambush.

**Six shot dead in Assam:** At least six persons were shot dead and three others seriously injured by Bodo militants in lower Assam's Dhuri district Thursday night, officials reported in Guwahati, PTI reports from Guwahati.

The incident occurred when the militants fired on a group of people who had gone to Tipkai reserve forest, under Bogbari police station, to collect firewood. Four persons died on the spot, while two others succumbed to their injuries on way to hospital, the sources said adding that all the victims belonged to the minority community. The injured have been admitted to hospital.

**Earthquake strikes island in HK:** An earthquake, registering 6.6 on the Richter Scale has struck islands in the western Pacific Islands, the Hong Kong Observatory said yesterday, AFP reports from Hong Kong.

The epicentre of the earthquake was in the vicinity of Santa Cruz islands about 2,430 kilometres (1,506 miles) west of April in western Samoa. The tremor was recorded by the Hong Kong Observatory at 8:00 pm Thursday (12:07 GMT).

**Floods kill 760 in spring in China:** Floods devastating parts of southern China since spring have killed 760 people and destroyed more than 1.4 million homes, according to an official toll released yesterday, AFP reports from Beijing.

The Xinhua News Agency quoted the Ministry of Civil Affairs as saying more than 70 million people had been "affected" by the floods, which it said have also hit 4.7 million hectares (11.6 million acres) of farm land at a cost to the economy of 47 billion yuan (six billion dollars).

**Noted Greek poetess dead:** Zoe Karelli, one of Greece's most important female poets, died Thursday at her home in the northern city of Thessaloniki at the age of 96, Xinhua reports from Athens.

Karelli's first work was published in 1935, since then, she published 12 poem collections. In her works, she eloquently wove together images of the ancient Greek spirit and Christianity.

**Malaysian naval officer killed in NZ:** A Malaysian naval officer has been killed during a diving exercise in New Zealand, the Royal New Zealand Navy (RNZN) said Friday, AFP reports from Auckland.

The man, named as Lieutenant Commander Arshad Bin Ibrahim was killed on Thursday, and a naval court of inquiry into his death was due to be convened Friday, RNZN said.

**Noted Pak economist dead:** Noted Pakistani economist and former top official of the United Nations Mahbub-ul-Haq died in United Nations on Thursday, PTI reports from United Nations.

Haq, 64, was diagnosed to be suffering from pneumonia after he collapsed about two weeks ago and went into coma a few days earlier. Haq is survived by his wife, a daughter and a son.

**Blast kills one Vietnam:** A man was killed in a southern Vietnamese province when an artillery shell he was sawing through exploded a report said yesterday, AFP says from Hanoi.

Le Minh Chau of Ba Ria Vung Tau province died on the spot when the shell exploded in Tuesday's incident, which also injured five people the Nhan Dan daily reported. Chau was sawing through the shell he had found to extract the explosive material inside, it said.

**PM of NZ threatens to end coalition:** Prime Minister Jenny Shipley Friday warned she would collapse the governing coalition rather than allow instability to persist in coalition partner the New Zealand First party, AP reports from Wellington.

**Saddam vows to shake off economic sanctions on Iraq this year**

BAGHDAD, July 17: President Saddam Hussein vowed Friday to shake off UN economic sanctions on Iraq this year, saying he is prepared to fight Western "conspiracies" that aim to prolong the nation's misery, reports AP.

In a nationally broadcast speech, Saddam said a threatening letter his government sent to the UN Security Council on May 1 "was not a mere outcry of protest but an expression of determination."

The letter said the government will reconsider ties with UN arms monitors overseeing the destruction of Iraq's illegal weapons if the embargo does not end soon.

Saddam did not say what action he will take if the United Nations does not lift its embargo by December. But this is the first time he has set a deadline for their demise. The Security Council is scheduled to review the sanctions in October.

His speech — marking the 1968 coup that brought his Baath party to power — constituted Saddam's strongest remarks against the sanctions this year.

The sanctions, imposed after Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait, have devastated this rich nation's economy by blocking regular sales of oil, its main commodity.

Iraq accuses the United States and Britain of working

to maintain the sanctions, which cannot be lifted until UN inspectors certify that Saddam no longer presides over weapons of mass destruction.

"We tell them, in the name of the great people of Iraq, that they are under great illusion

**No progress yet on hostages taken in Kashmir: Advani**

NEW DELHI, July 17: Four Westerners kidnapped in India's troubled Kashmir state three years ago have been impossible to trace, the Indian interior minister said Friday, reports AP.

"We'll continue to pursue the matter. We have no information. I think it's a distressing situation," Home Minister Lal Krishna Advani told reporters after discussing the kidnappings with US Ambassador Richard Celeste.

Celeste had no public comment. Advani said the ambassador told him American officials had heard nothing since 1995, when Donald Hutchings of Spokane, Washington, Dirk Hasert of Erfurt, Germany, Keith Mangan of Middlesborough, England and Paul Wells of London were kidnapped.

Advani has also recently met with the German and British ambassadors.

and that they should re-read ancient history... meticulously in order to derive lessons which may spare us and spare them the consequences of their evil and malice," Saddam said.

Underneath the bluster and the rhetoric there is fear that Saddam may be preparing for another confrontation with the United Nations, similar to the one earlier this year over Iraq's refusal to open presidential palace to the weapons inspectors.

That crisis was resolved in February, but hopes that it would pave the way for ending the sanctions were dashed after a recent report that Iraqi missile warheads, tested in the United States, contained traces of the deadly VX nerve gas.

Iraq claims it never loaded missiles with VX. If a second round of tests in Europe confirm the US finding, Iraq is likely to lose credibility, making any lifting of sanctions unlikely this year.

But Saddam stressed that "this year... God willing, will be the year and time of virtual erosion of the blockade off Iraq."

Saddam said his government is now more confident than at any other time of its ability to fight "the plight of sanctions, threats, conspiracies and ill-intentioned schemes coming from outside."

**US welcomes Congress' move to waive sanctions on India, Pakistan**

WASHINGTON, July 17: The US administration said Thursday it welcomed a move in Congress to allow the president to temporarily waive sanctions imposed on India and Pakistan after they tested nuclear arms, reports AFP.

"We are seeking authority to waive sanctions," State Department spokesman James Rubin said a day after the Senate adopted a measure that would give the US administration authority to lift trade sanctions on India and Pakistan for 12 months.

"We want authority to waive sanctions so that we would have flexibility in our dealings with India and Pakistan to help us meet our objectives."

The sanctions were automatically triggered under US law after India and Pakistan carried out Nuclear Weapons Tests in May.

Rubin said the move would not end efforts to pressure India and Pakistan to halt their nuclear programmes.

**UN confce okays treaty for creating permanent war crimes tribunal**

ROME, July 17: Over strenuous American opposition, a UN conference on Friday forged a draft treaty for creating the world's first permanent war crimes tribunal, reports AP.

Delegates from 160 countries had until midnight Friday to approve the treaty.

Despite weeks of arm-twisting, the United States failed to block the creation of an independent prosecutor and insert a loophole that could exempt US citizens and soldiers from the court's jurisdiction. The treaty's strongest opponents also included most of Washington's closest allies.

There was no immediate reaction to the document from the United States.

As envisioned in the draft, the international criminal court would bring individuals to justice for genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and aggression.

**Dalai Lama hopeful about dialogue with China**

TAIPEI, July 17: The Dalai Lama, the Tibetan spiritual leader, said his exile government has increased contacts with China in the expectation of reopening dialogue, a newspaper reported Friday, reports AP.

In an interview at Ladakh, a Buddhist region of India's Jammu-Kashmir state, the Dalai Lama told a China Times reporter he has postponed indefinitely a planned visit to Taiwan to avoid provoking China.

"Our contacts with China have increased in the last few months," he was quoted as saying. "We also have expectations of the Chinese government. That's why I announced an indefinite postponement of my trip to Taiwan."

"I really hope to open dialogue with the Chinese government," the Tibetan spiritual leader was quoted as saying.

He said he had consulted Chinese authorities before making his first visit to Taiwan early last year. "I told Beijing clearly that if China is ready to negotiate with us, I could immediately cancel my trip to Taiwan. But there was no response from the Chinese government. So I went."

China has ruled Tibet with military force since a 1950 in-

vasion, and claims Taiwan as a secessionist province. It viewed the Dalai Lama's visit to Taiwan last year as a union of Taiwanese and Tibetan forces trying to break up the motherland. The Dalai Lama was quoted as saying that the Taiwan and Tibet issues should be separated.

During his recent visit to China, US President Bill Clinton urged Chinese President Jiang Zemin to open dialogue with the spiritual leader. But Jiang said one of the preconditions for the talks would be for the Dalai Lama to recognize Taiwan as a province of China.

In the interview with the China Times, the Dalai Lama said he would have to discuss the precondition with his staff before reacting.

He said he believed Clinton's comments on the Tibetan issue in China "will have a positive impact in the long run." Although he does not believe Tibet is a part of China, he said, "we can work together if both sides will benefit from it."

He said he wanted to go to Taiwan only to preach Buddhism and he should not be embroiled in political questions.

"Now this issue has become too complicated, and I must handle it with great care," he said.



Members of the South African Defence Force patrol Ndeveni township just outside Richmond, in the KwaZulu Natal mid-lands province, Thursday, after political violence between the African National Congress (ANC) and the United Democratic Movement (UDM) flared up overnight. — AP/UNB photo