

International

EU ban on oil to Y'slavia takes effect

NATO blows up army HQs in Belgrade



Muslim Congress (I) Party supporters burn an effigy of Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee and regional leader Mulayam Singh Yadav during a demonstration outside New Delhi's Jama Masjid, after the *Jumma* prayers. The demonstrators accused Yadav of blocking the Congress Party's bid for power, after Vajpayee's coalition government fell on April 17, ushering fresh general elections.

— AFP photo

HR abuse during Marcos' 2-yr rule
US judge approves \$150m settlement for victims

HONOLULU, Apr 30: A US federal judge has approved a 150 million dollars settlement of claims of human rights abuses that occurred under the 20-year reign of former Philippine dictator Ferdinand Marcos, reports AP.

However, the settlement approved Thursday doesn't take effect until the Philippine government approves the transfer of the money from a Swiss bank account that holds 590 million dollars in frozen Marcos family assets.

District Court Judge Manuel set a deadline of May 10 for the money to be deposited into an account at First Hawaiian Bank.

The judge, in a temporary order issued in February, pegged final approval on the money being deposited first. But Philippine President Joseph Estrada was told he couldn't release the money until a final settlement was declared, said Birch Bayh, a former US senator representing the president at the hearing.

Each of the claimants will receive about 16,000 dollars each under terms of the settlement, which left open the question of attorney fees.

The plaintiffs were awarded 2 billion dollars in damages by the court, but subsequent negotiations ended in February with

window frames blown out.

Radio Novosti said a policeman and two other people were killed. The Tanjug news agency reported eight injuries in the attacks on Belgrade and an unspecified number of deaths.

The Yugoslav Interior Ministry was targeted for a second time since the airstrikes began on March 24 and witnesses said it also was substantially damaged.

Hours later, dazed soldiers cleaned up the tangle of twisted steel and concrete and firemen stumbled over the debris in front of army headquarters. Stunned onlookers wept.

"They are destroying us, one by one, piece by piece," said Jasminka Radovanovic, 30. "What do they want from us?"

Studio B television, located near the army headquarters, ceased transmitting temporarily.

Missiles also struck the Vraca residential district, less than two kilometres southeast of the army headquarters, damaging two houses and destroying several cars. At least four people, including one woman, were injured. The blasts shattered a water main, flooding the area.

Gaping holes were visible in the army's red, fortress-like twin headquarters buildings. Nearby buildings including the Yugoslav Foreign Ministry and the Serbian government headquarters also were heavily damaged, with holes bashed in their facades and doors and

the air. Tanjug said one person was injured.

Several other targets throughout Yugoslavia were also hit overnight.

It was unclear how the attack would affect Chernomyrdin's mission. The former Russian prime minister was to explore ways of narrowing the gap between NATO and President Slobodan Milosevic on a settlement to the Yugoslav crisis.

The Russian plan calls for a UN-controlled international peacekeeping force in Kosovo.

— AFP photo



A view of the damaged Yugoslav Army headquarters after NATO carried out bombing raids early Friday morning in central Belgrade. Beta news agency reported that the army headquarters was in flames after the explosions adding that buildings including the Yugoslav Foreign Ministry were damaged.

— AFP photo

More than 600,000 ethnic Albanian refugees have fled Kosovo since last month, and hundreds of thousands more are homeless and displaced in the province.

In Macedonia, where 6,000 refugees arrived Thursday, relief workers said a Serb campaign to drive ethnic Albanians from other parts of Serbia is apparently forcing refugees to hike across remote areas where Yugoslav forces have laid mines.

Reuter adds from Brussels: A European Union ban on the supply of oil and oil products to Yugoslavia has taken effect, a European Commission spokesman said today.

"It's in place," spokesman Nigel Gardner said in response to a question.

The ban, agreed by the 15 EU governments last week, was endorsed by the bloc's ministers at a meeting in Luxembourg on Monday.

It is intended to complement NATO's efforts to isolate Yugoslavia and prevent the supply of fuel to President Slobodan Milosevic's military machine.

Eastern European countries seeking EU membership, including three of Yugoslavia's neighbours, Hungary, Bulgaria and Romania, said this week they would join the ban.

Russia said today it would not join an oil embargo imposed by NATO and EU countries against Yugoslavia despite Western warnings.

9 of family massacred in Kashmir

SRINAGAR, India, Apr 30: Kashmiri separatist rebels have massacred nine members of a Muslim family as six other people died in overnight clashes in the troubled Himalayan state, police said today, reports AP.

Police in Srinagar said masked gunmen raided a home in the frontier district of Kupwara on Thursday night and shot dead nine members of a family including two women and a teenage girl.

Three other relatives of Abdul Aham Ganai, a paid informant of the police in Kashmir, were seriously injured in the attack, officials said.

None of Kashmir's two dozen Muslim separatist groups has claimed responsibility for the massacre of Ganai's family in the village of Krishnpora Nagri, some 100 kilometres (62 miles) north of Srinagar.

Top Indian model shot dead in Delhi pub

NEW DELHI, Apr 30: A leading Indian model and television celebrity was killed in an early morning shootout today in one of New Delhi's upmarket pubs, the police said today, reports AFP.

Fashion model Jessica Lal was hit by a bullet in the head after a man fired twice with a pistol after he was refused a drink at the posh "Tamarind Court" bar and restaurant early this morning.

The 34-year-old model, who was also a well-known event manager, died instantly as the bullet pierced her brain, hospital sources here said.

The killer escaped, the police said.

Estrada holds secret meeting with Anwar's wife

MANILA, Apr 30: Philippine President Joseph Estrada has held a secret meeting with Wan Azizah Wan Ismail, the wife of jailed former Malaysian deputy premier Anwar Ibrahim, sources said today, reports AFP.

The meeting took place at the presidential place late Thursday, hours after Estrada said he had not received a formal request for a meeting with Azizah. Azizah and her daughter Nurul Izzah were secretly taken from their hotel to the place to avoid media attention, sources said. "We believe the condition of Anwar was discussed, although I can't give any further details," a source said, adding the meeting took only 30 minutes.

Azizah is due to fly back to Kuala Lumpur later today. She arrived Wednesday as a guest of former president Corazon Aquino. The Malaysian government had warned Azizah against arranging an audience with Estrada, saying this could affect relations between the two countries.

However, Estrada has maintained that the Philippines is a "free country" and that there was nothing wrong if it was done privately.



Chen Ing-hou, the creator of the Chernobyl virus, is all smile while explaining the making of the deadly virus.

Estimates vary widely, but authorities have said Chernobyl hit hundreds of thousands of computers in South Korea, Turkey and China and tens of thousands in India and Bangladesh and the Middle East.

Less widespread than the e-mail replication virus called Melissa which swamped Internet servers around the world in April, Chernobyl and its variants are far more vicious.

Chernobyl/CIH employs a "specifying" technique that clogs up a computer's hard disk storage system, effectively crashing most systems and in many cases making restart impossible.

Though popularly dubbed Chernobyl because it strikes on the April 26 anniversary of the Soviet nuclear disaster in 1986, it is known to experts as CIH.

Colleagues said Chen had

— AFP photo

Taiwan police questioning IT expert on Chernobyl virus

TAIPEI, Apr 30: Taiwan police today were questioning a computer expert who media reports said had boasted of creating the Chernobyl virus that recently wrought global havoc, reports Reuter.

Police said 24-year-old Chen Ing-hau had not been charged and their investigation had only begun.

Chen was being questioned in Taipei on suspicion of intentionally spreading a computer virus, a crime that carries a possible three-year prison term.

Authorities said Chen graduated from Taipei's Tatung Institute of Technology in 1998 with an information engineering degree and has since been undergoing Taiwan's mandatory two-year military service.

Reports said Chen's school had known about his alleged involvement with the virus for a year.

Former classmates and instructors said he had boasted of creating the Chernobyl virus and warned friends not to download it into their computers.

Though popularly dubbed Chernobyl because it strikes on the April 26 anniversary of the Soviet nuclear disaster in 1986, it is known to experts as CIH.

Colleagues said Chen had

acknowledged using his own initials in naming the virus, according to the media reports.

Some reports said Chen had been reprimanded quietly by his institute a year ago but not further disciplined, prompting an Internet debate about Taiwan's vigilance against cyber-crime.

Chernobyl/CIH is one of the most damaging viruses of recent years, having crippled thousands of millions of computers worldwide starting on Monday — particularly in developing countries where anti-virus defences are weak.

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— AFP photo

BJP meets today to decide on alliance for snap polls

NEW DELHI, Apr 30: Indian caretaker Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee's Hindu-nationalist party will meet here this weekend to plan strategies for the upcoming general elections, the party said today, reports AFP.

The 11-member BJP national executive will meet for two days beginning Saturday to decide on the alliances it will forge for the mid-term polls, it said.

Vajpayee resigned on April 17 after his coalition government lost a legislative show of strength by a single vote in the deeply divided lower house of parliament.

President KR Narayanan dissolved the 545-member house on April 26 and ordered snap elections, the third since 1996, after the opposition led by the Congress Party failed to assemble and alternative coalition government.

The independent Election Commission will decide the

poll dates after an all-party meeting scheduled for Monday.

"The BJP executive ... is likely to retain all the political groups which supported the government during the confidence vote as its poll partners," a senior party leader said.

He said the national executive would also discuss forging closer ties with groups that extended unexpected support to Vajpayee's multi-party government during the confidence vote.

"With most of the allies deciding to continue with the BJP, the party will not find it difficult to draw up a common election programme," he said, adding the meeting would also discuss issues such as seat-sharing.

The Press Trust of India said the meeting was further expected to pass a resolution detailing the developments which had led to the fall of the Vajpayee government and the machinations of the opposition.

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The BJP wants elections as early as June to capitalize on voters' irritation with the political instability, while the Congress and other opposition parties have said the polls should be held in September.

Outgoing Home Minister Lal Krishna Advani said on Thursday the snap polls could prove to be a "blessing" for the BJP.

The present political crisis leading to a mid-term poll could be a blessing as it would give an opportunity to the voter to think what kind of a government he would want in the next election," Advani said.

Firing a broadside at the Congress, Advani told a business conference here that the opposition had ousted Vajpayee's 13-month-old government because of its growing achievements.

Some of them broke through a police escort and punched one of Ocalan's lawyers as he walked into the building. The police brought in more officers after the incident.

The court on Thursday combined several ongoing cases against Ocalan, leader of a Kurdish group fighting for an autonomous state in southeast Turkey.

The protesters, some draped in Turkish flags and others carrying framed pictures of dead relatives, shouted anti-Ocalan slogans.

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