

International



A demonstrator (C) speaks to follow protesters while being guarded by security officials during a demonstration in front of the Jakarta elections committee yesterday. Some 30 activists from the People Democratic Party (PRD), one of the 48 parties involved in the election, demanded the committee check the election results for evidence of fraud in several sub-districts.

— AFP photo

Indo-Pak war to benefit US: Chinese paper

BELJING, June 12: Fighting between India and Pakistan over Kashmir would benefit the United States regardless of the outcome, an editorial in a newspaper published by China's military said today, reports AFP.

The article in the *Jiefang Jun Pao* described the United States as "sitting on a hill watching the tigers fight," waiting to reap the benefits of their conflict.

Where the United States is concerned, the present South Asia strategy is to control India and Pakistan, maintain the balance of power in South Asia and use India to contain China," writer Ding Zengyi said.

The Indo-Pakistan conflict was not just a territorial dispute but also one where the superpowers lurked in the background, he said in the article.

South Asia had been an important region in the global strategies of the United States and the former Soviet Union during the Cold War days, and a flashpoint when the United States and the Soviet Union competed with each other, it

added.

In the present India-Pakistan armed clash over Kashmir, it would be hard to avoid a scenario where both parties are losers again," it said.

"This would result in a weakened Pakistan and a limited India for the US," it added.

"As long as the exchange of fire between India and Pakistan does not turn into a nuclear war, it would benefit the United States," South Asia strategic

scholar, Ding added.

As China shares its western borders with India and Pakistan, the conflict over Kashmir would affect China's security and the stability in the surrounding areas, he said.

On Friday, China's top legislator Li Peng at a meeting with Pakistan's Foreign Minister Sartaj Aziz who was on a one-day visit, urged both countries to exercise restraint and resolve their conflict through peaceful means.

India's Foreign Minister Jaswant Singh is due to visit China from June 14 to 16. The Kashmir issue is expected to top the agenda.

Gaddafi to visit S Africa

JOHANNESBURG, June 12: Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi, on his first trip abroad since sanctions against his country were lifted in April, visits South Africa from Sunday as President Nelson Mandela's last official guest, reports Reuters.

Gaddafi, fighting for a diplomatic profile after a decade of international isolation following the suspected Libyan bombing of an American airliner in 1988, is expected also to try to mediate a ceasefire in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Iraq fires on US, UK planes in no-fly zone

BAGHDAD, June 12: Iraqi anti-aircraft batteries opened fire on US and British warplanes patrolling the no-fly zone over southern Iraq Friday, an army spokesman said, reports AFP.

"Ten formations of enemy warplanes coming from Kuwait and Saudi Arabia... carried out 32 sorties over the provinces of Basra, Misan, Muthanna, Dhi-Qar and Qadisiya," the spokesman told the official news agency INA.

"They fled under fire from anti-aircraft gunners," he said.

Baghdad said a civilian died in US and British air raids on the no-fly zone over northern Iraq on Tuesday, the first reported civilian casualty from the near daily air raids since May 12, when 12 Iraqis were killed.

On Wednesday, US warplanes attacked Iraqi military command and control facilities near Mosul, northern Iraq, after coalition planes came under anti-aircraft fire, the US military said in a statement.

On the agenda were the UN

Security Council requirements for lifting sanctions against Libya. The sanctions, which include an arms and air embargo, were suspended April 5 when Libya turned over two suspects wanted for the 1988 bombing of a Pan Am jetliner that exploded over Lockerbie, Scotland, killing 270 people.

In testimony to Congress earlier this week, Assistant Secretary of State Martin Indyk said that with the possibility of a trial of the two Libyan suspects, "We are a critical step closer" to achieving a measure of justice for the families of the victims of Pan Am flight 103.

But in an indication of the touchiness of the subject, UN in-house television didn't photograph the initial greetings of the ambassadors, as is common practice at the United Nations.

UN officials said UNTV didn't get permission from all parties to tape.

The meeting, with Libyan Ambassador Abuzeid Omar Dorda and Deputy US Ambassador Peter Burleigh, marks the first official high-level contact between the United States and Libya since diplomatic relations were severed 18 years ago, US officials said.

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