

India, China hold talks on border dispute

SRINAGAR, India, Aug. 2: Indian and Chinese military officials have held secret talks to defuse tensions created by China's construction of a road in a disputed border area, reports AFP.

China test-fires long-range missile Level-two military alert in southeast region

BEIJING, Aug. 2: China Monday successfully test-fired a new type of long-range ground-to-ground missile within its territory, the state Xinhua news agency reported, reports AFP.

Haotian renewed Beijing's longstanding threat to use force against Taiwan if it tried to go its separate way. The powerful Central Military Commission ordered the alert, one step above normal readiness, in southeast Fujian province after Taiwan's semi-official Straits Exchange Foundation (SEF) backed Taiwan President Lee Teng-hui's call for "state-to-state" ties, the Sing Tao Daily said, citing unnamed sources in Beijing.

PLA forces in the southeastern region were "still undergoing mobilization." Citing unnamed sources, the daily said "the advanced fighter aircrafts have recently been shifted (from airport to airport)" but it said it was not clear how long they would remain at their new posts.

Lee's stance was reiterated in a letter from the SEF to China's Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Strait (ARATS), the channel through which the two sides communicate in the absence of official ties. ARATS rejected the letter, saying it "seriously violated" the One China principle which the two sides adhere to.



Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) troops march back to their barracks in Shanghai yesterday. China has ordered a level-two military alert for PLA forces on the coast along the Taiwan Strait as a row with Taiwan continued to rumble. — AFP photo

Russia wants to rebuild ties with Israel Yeltsin tells Barak during talks

MOSCOW, Aug. 2: President Boris Yeltsin discussed the Middle East peace process with Ehud Barak on Monday, saying Moscow wanted to improve ties with Israel and do business with its new premier, reports AFP.

Barak raised Moscow's ties with Iran and Iraq -- seen as a security threat to the Jewish state -- during the talks with Yeltsin, the Kremlin's chief foreign policy advisor Sergei Prikhodko told Interfax.

Analysts linked Barak's first visit to Moscow, his first since taking over as Israel's premier last month, to a recent trip to the Russian capital by regional rival President Hafez al-Assad of Syria.

Indian army chief sees more Kargil-like situations

WASHINGTON, Aug. 2: Indian Army Chief General VP Malik has said that emergence of more 'Kargil-like' situations could not be ruled out and added that fighting was continuing on the Line of Control (LOC) even after all Pakistani intruders had been evicted, reports PTI.

Sri Lanka seeks int'l help to combat Tamil Tigers

COLOMBO, Aug. 2: The Sri Lankan government on Monday appealed for foreign support to combat Tamil Tiger rebels blamed for the internationally condemned slaying of a peace advocate in the country, reports AFP.

Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar who met Colombo-based diplomats later told reporters he was seeking intelligence sharing with other countries but there was no request for direct military aid.

Canada and Britain were also tightening laws to curb rebel activities. Kadirgamar, a member of Sri Lanka's minority Tamil community, made an impassioned appeal to Tamils abroad to stop funding the guerrillas.

Algeria to hold referendum on peace plan Sept 16

ALGIERS, Aug. 2: Algeria will hold a referendum September 16 on a peace plan put forward by President Abdelaziz Bouteflika with a view to ending a seven-year Islamic insurgency, Bouteflika's office announced Sunday, reports AP.

Speaking at the start of talks in the Kremlin, Yeltsin said Russia wanted "to rebuild Russia-Israeli ties," Interfax reported.

Israeli officials in Jerusalem said Barak hoped to obtain clarifications on the intentions of Assad, whose country plays a key role in regional security.

Peace talks between Damascus and Israel are deadlocked over the issue of the return of the strategic Golan Heights on the Israeli-Syrian border. Syria is demanding that Israel return the whole of the strategic Heights, which it occupied in 1967 and annexed in 1981, before it will conclude a peace treaty.



South Korean volunteers and marines rescue civilians from a flooded village in Munsan, some 50 Km north of Seoul, yesterday. Some 28 civilians, including soldiers, have died and some are still missing in torrential rains. — AFP photo

Computer failure on Mir space station

MOSCOW, Aug. 2: A computer failure on the Mir space station's steering system has forced the crew to switch to a back-up system, mission control in Korolev, near Moscow, said Monday, reports AFP.

We are not saying that our ties were bad or insufficient. No, we were always side-by-side on the issue of resolving the Middle East," said Yeltsin. But this resolution was proceeding too softly," he said.

Two weeks later police conducted a controlled explosion on a home-made bomb placed outside a city synagogue, sparking fears that anti-Semitic sentiment in Russia was on the rise.

Asked if he had ever passed secrets to China, Lee responded: "No, I never have done that and I have no intention of doing that."

Diana Fund donates \$4.86m for war victims

LONDON, Aug. 2: The memorial fund named after the late Princess Diana announced today grants totalling nearly three million pounds (\$4.86 million) to help war victims in countries ranging from Rwanda to Bosnia, reports Reuters.

Scientist Lee denies giving secrets to China

WASHINGTON, Aug. 2: A scientist fired for allegedly handing over US nuclear warhead secrets to China insisted on American television Sunday he had not done "anything wrong," reports AFP.

According to CBS, the US government is preparing to prosecute Lee for mishandling computer files without evidence showing that the information subsequently got into the wrong hands.

Explaining Lee's firing, Energy Secretary Bill Richardson told CBS on the same program: "This individual massively violated our security procedures at Los Alamos."

Monica injured in car accident

Monica Lewinsky suffered only scrapes and bruises when her sport utility vehicle overturned on a freeway, the California Highway Patrol said, AP reports from Ventura, reports AFP.

Taliban capture Charikar city, Bagram base

ISLAMABAD, Aug. 2: Taliban forces captured the key northern city of Charikar after heavy fighting with troops loyal to opposition commander Ahmad Shah Masood, independent and Afghan sources said Monday, reports AFP.

Rebels kill 17 in Colombia: Entire area flattened

BOGOTA, Aug. 2: Leftist rebels attacking a rural police station over the weekend flattened an entire downtown area, killing eight civilians as they fired wildly with homemade missiles, reports AP.

Indonesia delays polls results again

JAKARTA, Aug. 2: Bugged down in bureaucratic bickering, the Indonesian Election Commission failed again Monday to release long-delayed results from the country's most open parliamentary ballot in 44 years, reports AP.

Bomb blast kills 10 soldiers in Algeria

Ten soldiers were killed and five were injured in a bomb attack on Sunday at Batna, 430 kilometres southeast of Algiers, the daily El Watan reported, AFP says from Algiers.

7 key leaders quit MQM

KARACHI, Aug. 2: The Muttahida Quami Movement (MQM), which dominates politics in Pakistan's biggest city, Karachi, has splintered with the resignation of seven key leaders, party sources said Monday, reports AFP.

US plane crash leaves 4 dead

A single-engine plane crashed in a cornfield just after takeoff, killing four of the five people aboard, authorities said, AP reports from North Lima, Ohio.

Strong earthquake rocks Chile

A strong earthquake rocked central Chile and its capital Sunday night, measuring between four and five on the Mercalli scale, Chile's National Emergency Office said, AFP reports from Santiago.

Two Chinese dissidents jailed for subversion

BEIJING, Aug. 2: A Beijing court Monday sentenced two members of the outlawed China Democracy Party (CDP) to jail terms of eight and nine years for attempting to subvert state power, dissident sources said, reports AFP.