

Pakistan urges Indian PM to join peace efforts

ISLAMABAD, Feb 8: Pakistan yesterday urged India to review and reappraise its hostility towards Pakistan and asked Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee to join Islamabad's Military Ruler Gen. Pervez Musharraf's efforts for peace in the region, reports PTI.

Hackers attack Yahoo

SAN FRANCISCO, Feb 8: Internet giant Yahoo stumbled Monday when hackers staged an attack that disrupted the enormous search engine and Web portal for almost three hours, a company spokeswoman said, reports AFP.

Israel launches air strikes in Lebanon: 3 power stations hit

BEIRUT, Feb 8: Israeli warplanes struck a guerrilla stronghold and power stations across Lebanon early today in retaliation for Hezbollah attacks that killed five Israeli soldiers in the past two weeks.

Their injuries were caused by flying glass and debris. Some houses in the area cracked and shop shutters were blown off. A key Hezbollah position at Al-Asceera, another Baalbek area, was hit by two missiles, but damage could not be ascertained because the area was immediately cordoned off by Lebanese security police and Hezbollah officials.

The impacts blew out windows and doors of apartments in Baalbek as jets roared over the Shi'ite Muslim-populated city, also home to world-famous Roman ruins. Soon after the second sortie, ground gunners opened up with an anti-aircraft fire on the raiding jets.

tacks on three power plants in Lebanon were in response to "the severe escalation in the activities of Hezbollah and other organisations in south Lebanon." Tuesday's raids came hours after Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak's Security Cabinet ordered a "harsh military response," according to a senior Israeli official who spoke on condition of anonymity.



A firefighter speaks on his radio next to the wreckage of the Deir Nbuuh power station yesterday. Israeli aircraft knocked out three power stations in Lebanon, plunging town and villages into darkness and injuring 18 civilians in retaliation for guerrilla attacks on Israeli troops in the south.



Indonesian President Abdurrahman Wahid (L) shakes hands with Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee prior to their talks at the Hyderabad House yesterday following a welcoming ceremony at the presidential palace in New Delhi. Wahid is on a two-day official visit to India, as part of a larger world tour.

Wahid begins India visit

NEW DELHI, Feb 8: Indonesian President Abdurrahman Wahid began a two-day state visit to India today, saying he would continue to press for the resignation of security minister and former military chief General Wiranto, reports AFP.

Wiranto hits back over rights abuse charges

JAKARTA, Feb 8: Indonesia's former military chief General Wiranto has broken a week-long silence to hit back at a national human rights panel which implicated him in atrocities in East Timor, reports AFP.

Lanka steps up security after bus bomb attacks

COLOMBO, Feb 8: Sri Lanka has heightened already tight security on public transport after a spate of parcel bomb attacks against buses, officials said today, reports AFP.

Both blasts on Monday were in the district of Monaragala, 254 km east of here, police said, adding the number of casualties would have been higher if not for a mechanical failure in one of the buses.

Police spokesman said, "A total of 51 people wounded in the first bus and in the second blast there are no casualties." One of those wounded died in hospital, police said.

Three civilians, soldier killed in Aceh

BANDA ACEH, Indonesia, Feb 8: At least three civilians and a soldier were killed in the latest bout of violence in Indonesia's rebellious Aceh province, security authorities said today, reports AFP.

Briton arrested for trying to buy military goods for Pakistan

BOSTON, Feb 8: A 33-year-old British man appeared in court here Monday to face charges that he tried to smuggle military goods into Pakistan, reports AFP.

Jonathan Reynolds was arrested here Saturday. Prosecutors claim he came to Boston from Bangkok, where he resides, to wrap up a deal to ship to Pakistan night vision goggles and plans for the C-130 military aircraft.

According to an affidavit filed by US Customs Service, Special Agent Richard Krueger, Reynolds attempted to obtain and ship the goggles and aircraft plans to Pakistan through third-party companies in other countries without the required export licenses.

Thailand arrests six Myanmar soldiers

BANGKOK, Feb 8: Thai troops were on high alert along the Myanmar border today after a squad of armed Yangon soldiers was arrested by a Thai patrol, reports AFP.

The six Myanmar troops were detained after trading into western Thailand at Nam Pleng Din district, Mae Hong Son province, on Thursday, the military said.

The criminal complaint against him said that in a series of secretly recorded phone conversations with an undercover officer, Reynolds confirmed that he acted as a purchasing agent for Pakistani concerns and was seeking assistance in obtaining and shipping military goods to Pakistan.

E Timor leaders arrive in KL:

East Timorese leaders Jose Alexandre Gusmao and Jose Ramos Horta arrived in the Malaysian capital late Monday, the last stop of their Asian tour to open diplomatic relations and secure financial aid for their homeland, AP reports from Kuala Lumpur.

Troops kill LTTE leader:

Government soldiers shot and killed a prominent Tamil rebel leader in the northern town of Jaffna after an informant tipped them off about his whereabouts, a defence ministry spokesman said Tuesday, AP reports from Colombo.

Kumaran, who uses only one name, was shot from close range when he tried to escape after being stopped at an army check post on Monday, defence spokesman Colonel Ranjith Witanana said. Witanana said troops in the former rebel capital, about 300 kilometers (186 miles) north of Colombo, had received information that Kumaran would be in the area. Soldiers then set up road blocks and challenged him as he approached.

Explosion in Russian apartment kills nine

MOSCOW, Feb 8: At least nine people were killed and 10 injured in a suspected gas explosion today at an apartment block in Khabarovsk, in Russia's Far East, NTV television reported.

Japanese opposition ends parliament boycott

TOKYO, Feb 8: Japanese opposition parties today abandoned an unprecedented 11-day parliamentary boycott after being promised a bigger say in debates, officials said, reports AFP.

The main opposition Democratic Party of Japan accepted a compromise offered by House of Representatives Speaker Soichiro Ito to break the deadlock, said party spokesman Nobuhiko Imaizumi.

The Liberal Party and Buddhist-backed Komeito party, enacted the law February 2 in spite of the boycott. Obuchi welcomed the deal. "I am delighted," he told Japanese reporters at his official residence, according to Jiji Press news agency. "If they appear (in the Diet to ask questions) I will answer."

Two small planes collide over Los Angeles: 4 dead

LOS ANGELES, Feb 8: Two small planes collided over Los Angeles and dropped out of the clear, sunny sky Monday, one of them crashing in flames on a golf course. All four people aboard were killed, reports AP.

Lift sanctions or face consequences North Korea warns US

SEOUL, Feb 8: North Korea today warned the United States to lift economic sanctions against the Stalinist regime or face the "consequences" of extending North Korea's economic isolation, reports AFP.

The improvement of relations cannot go with economic sanctions. If the US truly wants dialogue and improved relations with the DPRK, it should take all-inclusive, full and practical steps to lift the sanctions," it said.

The paper said the lifting of US sanctions was Pyongyang's right, not a gift, and stressed that above all else North Korea cherished its independence and sovereignty and would not be beholden to Washington. "It will be a great miscalculation if the US thinks that it can frighten us or isolate and stifle our socialism through economic pressure," it said.



With a snow-capped terrain talking the background Russian soldiers ride on a tank towards a new position near the village of Vedenov, in southern Chechnya on Monday. Russian forces over the weekend killed hundreds of Chechen rebels who were fleeing Grozny and running for cover towards the southern mountains, according to reports.

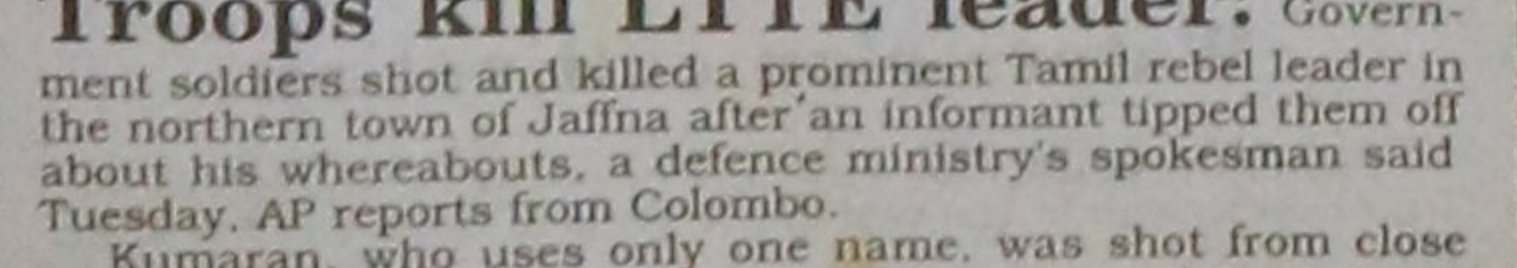
BRIEFLY



East Timorese independent leader Xanana Gusmao (L) is welcomed by Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad at the latter's office in Putrajaya yesterday.



East Timorese leaders Jose Alexandre Gusmao and Jose Ramos Horta arrived in the Malaysian capital late Monday, the last stop of their Asian tour to open diplomatic relations and secure financial aid for their homeland, AP reports from Kuala Lumpur.



Gusmao, widely known as "Xanana," was the leader of the East Timorese armed resistance group and jailed by Indonesian authorities for seven years. Ramos Horta shared the 1996 Nobel Peace Prize for his years of activism for independence. Gusmao and Ramos Horta were met at the airport by senior officials from Malaysia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and driven in a motorcade with police escort to a downtown hotel.