

Fiji army reopens talks with rebels

SUVA, June 14: Fiji's military said today talks with coup leader George Speight to end the country's political crisis were "back on track" despite his demand for a far-reaching amnesty for him and his supporters, reports AFP.

Military spokesman Colonel Filipo Tarakinikini told the media he could not divulge any details and would not confirm who was involved in discussions.

However martial law commander Commodore Voreqe Bainimarama spent part of Wednesday at the home of the former vice president, Ratu Josefa Iloilo, and Speight sent a new list of demands to that meeting.

Speight refused to attend as the talks were held near a barricade where soldiers Monday opened fire on his car, without hitting anyone.

Tarakinikini said the talks were "all encompassing" focusing on all the issues connected to this crisis.

He said the army would still not accept the "George Speight team" on an interim government.

Speight and a small group of armed men took over parliament on May 19, seizing Fiji's first ethnic Indian prime minister, Mahendra Chaudhry, his cabinet and government in the name of ethnic Fijians who represent Indian business success and political power.

Tarakinikini confirmed he saw the hostages Sunday.

Asked if they were okay he replied: "What is okay, being held under the point of a gun for 27 days? How okay is that?"

Speight and six men were originally offered an amnesty covering the events of May 19 only. But on Wednesday the coup leader demanded an extension in a nine-point submission sent to Iloilo's talks.

Point three read: "President by Decree offer Amnesty for ALL from 19/5 to the day of release of hostages." The last three words were underlined.

Security lapse

Los Alamos lab suspends six

WASHINGTON, June 14: The Los Alamos National Laboratory has suspended six employees as the FBI intensified its investigation into the disappearance from the lab of two computer hard drives loaded with nuclear secrets, reports Reuters.

Energy Secretary Bill Richardson, under fire from Republicans for insufficient security at the laboratory, launched a bipartisan probe on Tuesday into the loss.

He said espionage was not suspected, but vowed to take disciplinary action against those responsible.

Republicans said Richardson was ultimately to blame.

An Energy Department official said six managers at the lab were put on paid leave for failing to immediately report the disappearance of the hard drives when it was discovered May 7.

The managers said they were unable to get back into the vault where the hard drives were kept until May 24, when the facility reopened after wildfires that caused over \$300 million in damage.

Coming up empty-handed after an intensive search, the managers notified the laboratory's security chief on May 31, and a day later word was passed to Washington.

Richardson said he was outraged by the incident.

"I will not tolerate security lapses and I'm outraged at what happened," he said in a written statement, announcing his appointment of former Tennessee Republican Sen. Howard Baker and ex-Indiana Democratic Representative Lee Hamilton to perform a "thorough investigation and assessment" of the loss.

Russian media magnate arrested

MOSCOW, June 14: Russian media magnate Vladimir Gusinsky, whose outlets have been sharply critical of President Vladimir Putin, has been arrested, the federal prosecutor's office said Tuesday.

Gusinsky, 47, was arrested "in connection with a criminal case which the prosecutor's office has opened," the Interfax news agency quoted the prosecutor's office as saying.

The private NTV television station owned by Gusinsky interrupted its evening newscast to announce the arrest.

Gusinsky had been invited to the prosecutor's general's office at 5:00 p.m. (1900 BST) for questioning over a minor weapons charge, the NTV presenter said.

"Two hours later, a judge came to the people who were waiting for Gusinsky to say he had been arrested," the presenter said. It was not immediately clear where he was being detained.

According to the prosecutor's office, Gusinsky was detained on suspicion of "massive theft ... abuse of confidence, abuse of office and swindling" notably concerning 10 million dollars' (euros) worth of state property. Interfax quoted prosecutors as saying.

The surprise arrest follows a May 11 raid by hundreds of armed tax police on the headquarters of his Media-MOST holding, which includes the national NTV television station, radio Echo Moscow and the Sverdnyaya daily newspaper.

The raid was denounced at home and abroad as a direct attack on media freedoms.

International
Summit raises hopes of peace for Korea

SEOUL, June 14: North and South Korea discussed groundbreaking measures to ease hostility on Wednesday as a historic visit to Pyongyang by the South's president raised international hopes for permanent peace on the Korean peninsula, reports AFP.

The two sides discussed opening representative offices in each other's capital as President Kim Dae-Jung started a second day of talks with top North Korean officials, South Korean officials said.

The president has already proposed setting up a hotline between himself and the North's leader Kim Jong-Il.

But opening representative offices would symbolise the first official recognition of each other. Kim Jong-Il did not attend the morning meeting. The North's de facto head of state, Kim Yong-Nam, chairman of the Standing Committee of the Supreme People's Assembly, led the delegation.

The talks went ahead as the North highlighted the importance of the occasion for hopes of bringing together millions of Koreans who have had no news of relatives since the division.

Many South Koreans cried around special screens set up in shopping malls to show the summit. Students put South

and North Korean flags at universities across the country, ignoring threats of prosecution for spreading North Korean propaganda.

The new warmth between North and South Korea, who have been on a continual conflict footing since the war, also reached the capitals of the major powers.

The United States expressed hope that the Kims could now reduce regional tensions.

"I think the fact that the two leaders are meeting is extraordinarily important as far as direct contact and discussions between North and South Korea," White House spokesman Joe Lockhart said in Washington. "We were heartened to see the warm welcome that President Kim received."

State Department spokesman Philip Reeker said: "We are hopeful that this summit will represent the beginning of a process which will lead to a fundamental reduction of tensions."

Washington has a keen interest in the talks as it has 37,000 troops bolstering South Korea's security and is concerned over the threat from Pyongyang's missile program.

UN Secretary General Kofi Annan saluted the "vision and wisdom" of the North and South Korean leaders and also hoped their summit would be a turning point towards peace.

"The secretary general wholeheartedly welcomes the historic inter-Korean summit which began today in Pyongyang," Annan's spokesman said Tuesday.

China, North Korea's last major communist ally, hailed the summit as a "major event" on Tuesday.

"We hope this meeting will have positive results and lead to the improvement of relations between the two sides of the Korean Peninsula and safeguard peace and stability there," said a foreign ministry spokesman in Beijing.



A North Korean boy (L) shows South Korean President Kim Dae-Jung (2nd R), Kim Dae-Jung's wife Lee Hee-Ho (3rd from R) and North Korean Kim Yong-Nam (R), Chairman of the Standing Committee of the Supreme People's Assembly, his calligraphy reading "Reunited Motherland" yesterday. Kim Dae-Jung is now in North Korea's capital city of Pyongyang for a 3-day visit for an historic summit meeting between the divided nations.

— AFP photo



Palestinian Leader Yasser Arafat (L) speaks to Bashar Assad, son of late Syrian President Hafez al-Assad, at the presidential palace in Damascus on Tuesday. Arafat was in Damascus for the funeral of the late president.

— AFP photo

Suharto's family willing to give back money: Wahid

JAKARTA, June 14: Talks were under way between the Indonesian government and the family of former president Suharto over a possible handover of any ill-gotten wealth, a top prosecutor said today, reports AFP.

But Attorney General Marzuki Darusman insisted that legal proceedings against Suharto would continue despite the talks.

"It has nothing to do with the legal process," said Darusman who has pledged to bring Suharto to trial on corruption and abuse of power charges before August 10.

He said several meetings on the handover had been held in the past weeks between Mines

and Energy Minister Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and Suharto's businesswoman daughter Siti Hardiyanti Rukmana.

The aim of the talks is to look into the possibility of Suharto returning what the government and others have suspected of having been channelled overseas ... or those that can be found in Indonesia," the attorney general said.

President Abdurrahman Wahid has said that Suharto should face trial, but if he were found guilty, he would be pardoned considering his past service to the state.

Wahid said in the United States on Tuesday that Suharto's family was willing to sur-

render their wealth to the state -- but in return they demanded that the former leader be spared from prosecution.

The president, quoted by the state Antara news agency, said they had made the demand because both the Suharto family and his lawyers feared that Suharto might end up behind bars.

"If it was up to me, I would issue such a guarantee as soon as I have come home from my overseas trip," Wahid said, repeating his pledge to pardon Suharto.

Tesseny was already in Eritrean hands during the latest round of the two-year-old war before reverting to Eritrean control late last month.

Ethiopia claims recapture of Eritrean town

ADDIS ABABA, June 14: Ethiopia announced today that its forces had recaptured the western Eritrean town of Tesseny, which lies close to the Sudanese border, as the result of a counter-offensive launched in response to Eritrean attacks, reports AFP.

"As a result of its highly successful counter-offensive on the western front, the heroic Ethiopian defence forces have recaptured Tesseny for the second time," said a statement issued by the office of the Ethiopian government spokesperson.

Tesseny had already been in Eritrean hands during the latest round of the two-year-old war before reverting to Eritrean control late last month.

The election-year bill met little resistance from lawmakers anxious to flash their defence credentials, sailing through the Senate after two days of sporadic debate and few controversial amendments.

It includes a 3.7 per cent pay raise, provides pharmacy access for all Medicare-eligible military retirees and boosts enlistment and re-enlistment bonuses in an effort to help recruitment.

The Senate rejected 83-15 an attempt by Democratic Sen. Paul Wellstone of Minnesota to impose an across-the-board \$1 billion cut on weapons procurement accounts and transfer the

US Senate approves \$ 288 b military spending bill

WASHINGTON, June 14: The US Senate on Tuesday easily approved a politically popular \$288 billion defence spending bill that would raise military pay, improve health benefits and bolster efforts to recruit and retain troops, reports Reuters.

The bill, approved 95-3, provides \$3.1 billion more than sought by President Clinton and boosts fiscal 2001 spending by nearly \$20 billion over last year.

It provides \$58 billion for new weapons procurement, but shifts development funds for one of the Pentagon's biggest weapons programmes ever, the \$200 billion Joint Strike Fighter — into an ongoing demonstration programme until the plane makes sufficient technological progress.

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The Senate rejected 83-15 an attempt by Democratic Sen. Paul Wellstone of Minnesota to impose an across-the-board \$1 billion cut on weapons procurement accounts and transfer the

funds to Title 1 education programmes for poor children.

"This is a matter of priority," Wellstone said. "We should do better by these children."

The Senate also rejected 65-

32 an attempt by democrats Tom Harkin of Iowa and Barbara Boxer of California to cut funds for the military to lease nine executive jets for admirals and generals.

World military spending on the rise

STOCKHOLM, June 14: World military expenditure increased 2.1 per cent in 1999 after a long period of decline that largely coincided with the post-Cold War period, SIPRI said in its annual report published today, reports AFP.

Spending totalled some 780 billion dollars, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute said.

The 1999 rise is largely the result of increases in major spender countries, including the US, which accounted for 36 per cent of the rise, followed by Japan and France which represented seven per cent each.

Here is a table of the top 15 spenders in 1999, in billions of dollars:

Country	1999	1998	Share of world military spending
1. US	259.9	256.1	36 per cent
2. Japan	51.2	51.3	7
3. France	46.8	45.5	5
4. Germany	39.5	39.0	4
5. Britain	31.8	32.6	3
6. Italy	23.5	23.1	3
7. Russia	22.4	18.1	3
8. China	18.4	16.9	2
9. South Korea	15.0	15.2	2
10. Saudi Arabia	14.5	16.4	1
11. Brazil	14.3	10.9	1
12. India	10.2	9.3	1
13. Turkey	9.6	8.1	1
14. Taiwan	9.3	10.6	1
15. Spain	8.7	8.4	1

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Office of the Executive Engineer (R&H)

Workshop Division, Santahar, Bogra

R&H Tender Invitation Notice

1. Tender notice no.	:	44 (forty-four) 1999-2000.
2. Name of work	:	Supply of spare parts for China Road Roller (4-Cylinder) (Model-3 Y8/12) of different Road Divisions under (R&H) Workshop Division, Santahar, Bogra during 1999-2000 financial year.
3. Estimated cost	:	As per schedule.
4. Earnest money	:	2% (two per cent) of the estimated cost to be deposited through any one of Bank Draft/Pay Order/CD etc. encashable at Sonali Bank, Adamdighi Branch in favour of "Executive Engineer (R&H), Workshop Division, Santahar, Bogra."
5. Time limit for completion of work	:	25 (twenty-five) days from the date of issuing work order.
6. Eligibility of tenderer	:	(R&H) Directorate's 'A' to 'C' general class & Workshop Circle, Bogra's 'D' general class & Workshop Division, Santahar, Bogra's 'E' general class contractors.
7. Offices where tender to be sold from	:	Executive Engineer (R&H), Workshop Division, Santahar/Rajshahi/Ferry Division, Bogra/Sub-Divisional Engineer (R&H), Workshop Sub-Division, Santahar, Bogra.
8. Offices where tender to be received at	:	Superintending Engineer (R&H), Workshop Circle, Bogra/Executive Engineer (R&H), Workshop Division, Santahar, Bogra/Rajshahi/Ferry Division, Bogra.
9. Last date of selling tender		