

## International

# Tribal rebels warn Delhi to respond to peace overtures or face insurgency

OKING, India, June 19 : A separatist tribal guerrilla group in northeast India urged the central government today to respond to peace overtures or face a resumption of a 50-year-old insurgency in the region, reports AFP.

The National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN), fighting for an independent tribal homeland in Nagaland state, threatened to return to arms unless New Delhi formalised a ceasefire agreement and lifted a ban outlawing the organisation.

The lifting of the ban on the NSCN apart, we want the proposed ceasefire agreement to be extended to all tribal Naga in-

habited areas of the northeast, so that our people can move freely without being harassed by Indian soldiers," NSCN leader Kitovi Zimoni told AFP.

"Otherwise, we shall be forced to review our decision for a ceasefire," Zimoni said in an interview at the group's mobile headquarters, known as Oking in eastern Nagaland.

The NSCN announced a unilateral ceasefire in April, but has yet to sign an agreement with the government formalising a temporary halt to the insurgency that has claimed an estimated 50,000 lives since independence in 1947.

"We want New Delhi to adopt

a sincere approach in solving the Naga political problem," Zimoni said.

"This is the first chance for the Indian government this new millennium to hammer out a peaceful settlement to the 52-year-old insurgency movement in Nagaland."

"If the government fails to avail itself of the peace offer, will not hesitate to take their own decisions and things might take a turn for the worse."

Zimoni said the NSCN had launched a consultation process with the Naga people to seek a consensus on how peace talks should be handled.

"The opinion poll will be

conducted by the tribal councils and we shall abide by the verdict," Zimoni said.

"In 1951, there was a plebiscite and more than 99 per cent of the Nagas opted for sovereignty. So the question of compromising on the issue of sovereignty does not arise," he added.

"If the government adopts a 'sincere approach' to peace talks, Zimoni said other separatist groups in the northeast region might follow the NSCN lead in declaring a ceasefire.

"So this is a very important phase for the government to hold talks sincerely with us and pave the way for other groups to see reason."

## ROK students clash with police at US bombing range

MAEYANGRI, South Korea, June 19 : About 100 South Korean students clashed with riot police here today as US military planes resumed firing exercises at a disputed bombing range.

The US military has suspended practice bombing operations at the Koon-Ni range, about 80 km south of Seoul, as a goodwill gesture for last week's landmark Korean summit.

Disturbances erupted as soon as the first strafing exercise was seen to start.

Students kicked police as they tried to break in through the main entrance to the range. About 1,000 riot police held them at bay, witnesses said.

However, the Press Trust of India news agency quoted a se-

# Blasts kill 2 in Delhi

NEW DELHI, June 19 : The double bomb explosion in one of the capital's busiest market places near the ancient Red Fort was the fourth attack this year in the heart of New Delhi, raising questions about the level of security and the identities of the bombers, reports AFP.

An 8-year-old girl and a man were killed and 11 people were injured Sunday night when the explosions went off within five minutes of each other, ripping through the bus terminal and bazaar opposite the 17th century tourist landmark, the Red Fort.

No one claimed responsibility for the blasts. In the past, police have blamed explosions in the capital on Islamic militants fighting a separatist war in Kashmir since 1989.

However, the Press Trust of India news agency quoted a se-

niior New Delhi police official as saying Monday the types of explosive used were similar to a Jan. 3 bomb in a train at the nearby old Delhi railway station that injured 20 people. At that time, police said they suspected a group based in western Uttar Pradesh state, and the unidentified official told PTI the same group was suspected in Sunday's attack.

"We are surprised at this sudden appearance of serial blasts," New Delhi's north district police chief, Mukund Upadhye, was quoted as telling the Times of India on Monday. "But it may have been an effort to send out some kind of warning signal with Independence Day coming up."

In most years, bomb explosions increase as August 15, Independence Day, approaches. Buses and trains are com-

mon targets for bombs, which are common in the capital. In addition to separatist groups in many states, criminal gangs and private militias use bombs.

The Sunday blasts are the fourth attack this year — and the 12th in three years — specifically in the old "Walled City" area of the capital, inhabited mostly by Muslims. The walls were built by Mughal emperors, who ruled from Delhi from the 14th-19th centuries.

A quick getaway is also possible from the area, as it is within 2 km of two railway stations, and the Kashmir Gate interstate bus terminal is nearby.

The first explosion Sunday went off at a bus information counter covered with empty mango crates dumped by the shopkeepers and handcart fruit sellers who crowd the area.

## Huge built-in advantage for ruling party in polls

Zimbabwe polls begin Saturday with tension running high

HARARE, June 19 : Zimbabwe is ruled by President Robert Mugabe, who has virtually sole power as executive president under a constitution agreed with the British before independence in 1980 and amended multiple times since then, reports AFP.

In the 150-seat parliament, to be elected this weekend, Mugabe's Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) has a huge built-in advantage because the president appoints 30 of the MPs.

This means that ZANU-PF need win only 46 of the 120 contested seats to retain its majority in the unicameral house, while the opposition must win 76 to gain power.

ZANU-PF had 147 seats in the last parliament, with three small parties holding one each.

The speaker must be a current or former MP -- in the last parliament the speaker was brought in from outside the house.

Mugabe rules with two vice presidents, both drawn from parliament, but who retain voting rights in the House.

There is no prime minister. In the outgoing government, three of 21 ministers are women.

ZANU-PF is fielding about 16 women candidates at the weekend, and the main opposition party, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), seven.

If the combined opposition win 51 seats in the elections,

they could block further amendments to the constitution, which must be passed by a two-thirds majority.

The more than five million voters among Zimbabwe's 12.5 million people must be at least 18. Election is a first-past-the-post system -- there are no second rounds, and no form of proportional representation.

Meanwhile, more than five million Zimbabweans go to the polls at the weekend to elect a new parliament after months of political violence which has left at least 30 people dead and hundreds injured.

Most of the victims have been supporters of the opposition, led by the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC).

The MDC, set up in September last year, is headed by Morgan Tsvangirai, the secretary general of the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU).

The party's supporters include urban intellectuals, impoverished black Zimbabweans tired of years of economic hardship, and prosperous white farmers who have seen around 1,500 of their farms invaded by squatters since February.

Those occupations began after President Robert Mugabe, who has held power since independence 20 years ago, suffered a humiliating defeat in a referendum which would have allowed him to seize white-owned land without having to compensate the owners.

He is to study history of art at university, but plans to take a year out after leaving Eton, Britain's top public school, where he is doing his final exams.

He fended off questions about girlfriends and a possible future career in the services, and admitted feeling "uncomfortable" with public attention.

"We really know very little about him," noted the Daily Telegraph's royal correspondent Robert Hardman.

"But what we do know is that he is a remarkably self-assured young man who given all that he's been through, has really emerged better than anyone could have expected."

William Arthur Philip Louis Windsor was born on June 21, 1982 at St Mary's Hospital, west London. A year later he was on his first royal tour as Charles and Diana vowed Australia and New Zealand.

Brother Harry was born on September 15, 1984.

As they grew up however, in the background was their parents' increasingly strained marriage.

## William: A king-in-waiting

LONDON, June 19 : Caught between two worlds, son of one of the most ill-matched royal couples for centuries and fated to be king, Prince William celebrates his 18th birthday Wednesday under an intense spotlight, reports AFP.

As he gains adulthood, he is arguably the world's most eligible bachelor, heir to the most glamorous job around and a billion-pound fortune.

His life is an open book: birth to first faltering footsteps to the school exams he is now taking and, most poignantly of all, the funeral of his mother three years ago.

Tall and blond, he has the looks of his cover-girl mother, Princess Diana, and the duffness of father Prince Charles.

In a rare written interview with Britain's Press Association for his 18th, William was like any other teenager.

He likes dancing, but does not go clubbing often. He prefers action films, team sports, a wide range of books but no particular author, and "being with my friends."

He is to study history of art at university, but plans to take a year out after leaving Eton, Britain's top public school, where he is doing his final exams.

"We do not want wheat but need money. Negotiations between the Pakistani and the US officials in this connection are underway."

Islamabad signed the deal in 1989 and paid for the jets but the delivery was cancelled as part of a 1990 US arms embargo over Pakistan's nuclear programme.

The United States agreed to refund the money in late 1998 when Pakistan's economy nosedived amid international sanctions over its nuclear tests following similar detonations by arch-rival India in May that year.

## Pakistan wants cash, not wheat as refund for F-16s

ISLAMABAD, June 19 : Debt-ridden Pakistan has told the United States it wants hard cash rather than wheat as a refund of some 80 million dollars for a cancelled fighter jet deal, reports AFP.

Finance Minister Shaukat Aziz said Washington had promised 30 million dollars worth of wheat this year and another 50 million next year as the outstanding refund for a 140-million-dollar deal to buy 28 F-16 fighters.

The country does not need to buy the 30-million-dollar worth of commodity from the US," Aziz was quoted as saying.

## Mass prison breakout mounts tension in Solomon Islands

SYDNEY, June 18 : Solomon Islands police were combing the capital Honiara for almost 100 escaped prisoners after a mass breakout from the central prison on Sunday, Australian officials said today, reports AFP.

The entire prison population of 90 to 100 inmates either escaped or were released by over-worked prison staff, heightening tensions in the capital where an uneasy truce was still holding Monday after the coup two weeks ago.

The escapes include about 20 members of the Isatabu Freedom Movement (IFM) who were on remand for charges related to the ethnic violence that led up to the coup by the rival

spate of lawlessness including car thefts and robberies attributed to unruly elements.

The breakout came after a series of lawlessness including car thefts and robberies attributed to unruly elements.

According to locals, the attack was revenge for the June 10 murder of 12 rich landlords by around 150 armed men, believed to be landless farmers, in Bihar's Nawada district.

The eastern state has for three decades been engaged in a seemingly endless cycle of tit-for-tat caste murders.

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## 2nd hostage crisis hits Fiji as soldiers seize police station

### Speight softens anti-Indian stance

SUVA, June 19 : Three soldiers seized a Suva police station today, fuelling reports of splits in the Fiji military as talks resumed to end the country's month-old coup crisis, reports AFP.

At least six shots were fired and one policeman was wounded when the soldiers raided the Nabua police station where an ethnic Indian soldier, Private Henry Ali, was subsequently resolved, the statement said.

Leutenant Colonel Meli Saubulinauay, chief staff officer on duty, negotiated with the gunmen "and the matter was subsequently resolved," the statement said.

Ali, who was not hurt because the attackers could not find his cell, was later taken with the three gunmen to the Fiji military headquarters at the Queen Elizabeth Barracks.

Waqaonovono is of Lau descent, the same group of islands as President Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara who was forced to step down for martial law after the coup.

Security sources have told AFP that the Waqaonovono killing, and other incidents involving soldiers serving overseas, have caused severe strain within the military.

Chaudhary was elected on a landslide a year ago to run the country for a five-year term. Ethnic Indians make up 41 percent of the country's population.

Speight's coup attempt has found some support in Fiji's indigenous community, where there is widespread resentment at comparative ethnic Indian business success.

Martial law spokesman Colonel Filipo Tarakinikin has denied a split in the military, saying it was representative of all indigenous villages and districts in Fiji.

The military, in a statement, said three armed men stormed the police station and took several people hostage.

The statement gave no reasons for the assault, but security sources told AFP it was related to the March 22 death of Private Anare Waqaonovono, 20, who was shot in the back while serving with United Nations peacekeepers in South Lan-

ban.

Private Henry Ali, a Fiji-Indian with a Samoan mother, who has been accused of the

Tesseny lies about 110 km north of the two countries' common border and close to the Sudanese frontier.

Salome said the Ethiopian forces had pulled back to "positions where they can defend themselves and liberated Ethiopian territories on the western front."

She did not specify the new location of the forces that had twice occupied Tesseny since the conflict resumed on May 12.

No talk of ransom for 21 hostages in Philippines

Eritrean town

ADDIS ABABA, June 19 : Ethiopia said its forces had withdrawn from the western Eritrean town of Tesseny this morning. It was a political decision, government spokeswoman Salome Tadesse said, reports AFP.

Tesseny lies about 110 km north of the two countries' common border and close to the Sudanese frontier.

She did not specify the new location of the forces that had twice occupied Tesseny since the conflict resumed on May 12.

No talk of ransom for 21 hostages in Philippines

MANILA, June 19 : There has been no talk of paying ransom for the release of 21 mostly foreign hostages held by the Muslim extremist Abu Sayyaf group in the southern Philippines, a government official said today, reports AFP.

"We are not moving toward any payment of ransom. We're not talking about ransom. The official policy of the government remains: no ransom will be paid," Press Secretary Ricardo Puno told reporters.

Asked about the kidnappers were seeking a million dollars for each hostage, Puno said "there have been no specific demands made by any party purporting to speak for the Abu Sayyaf and there is certainly no demand on the table."

"We continue to negotiate but we do not talk about ransom," he said.

Vultures circle over Mori

TOKYO, June 19 : The vultures are already circling over Japanese Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori as he heads into June 25 elections with a crumbling support rate, analysts say.

Top members of his faction-ridden Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), the monolith that has held power with just one 10-month break since 1955, are ready to attack in the event of a debacle.

Reformists and traditionalists are pitted against each other in the fight, experts say.

"Tebhaga" movement

hero Hemanta

Ghosal dead

CALCUTTA, June 19 : Freedom Fighter and leading Communist leader Hemanta Ghosal died in a government hospital here yesterday after protracted illness. He was 84, reports PTI.

Ghosal is survived by his wife, a son and a daughter, CPI-M party sources said.

West Bengal Chief Minister Jyoti Basu, Left Front Chairman Sallan Das Gupta and