

## 200 bombs seized in West Bengal

CALCUTTA, Aug 1: In a major haul, 200 bombs were seized from a house after one accidentally exploded at Tilja village in South 24 Pargana district, SP A K Malwal said, reports BSS.

Local people rushed to the house after hearing the sound of the explosion and later informed the police, Malwal said. After reaching the spot, police found four injured men and a cache of 200 bombs.

The victims sustained minor injuries in the explosion, he said.

## Nepalese PM in India for security talks

NEW DELHI, Aug 1: India's concerns about Pakistani intelligence agents operating in neighboring Nepal will be settled during talks this week, Nepalese Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala said Tuesday, reports AP.

The two countries have a unique relationship under a 1950 treaty that allows citizens to cross the border without travel documents. But relations were damaged last year when India says Pakistanis took advantage of lax security at the Katmandu International Airport to hijack an Indian Airlines passenger plane to Afghanistan.

Pakistan has rejected India's identification of the hijackers, who have not been found.

Indian Airlines stopped flights to Nepal for many months, and resumed them only after Nepal had strengthened security at the airport and new rules were issued, requiring air travelers between the two countries to carry travel documents.

India has called upon Nepal to halt activities by Pakistani intelligence agents. Asked about the concerns after his ceremonial welcome at the presidential palace in New Delhi on Tuesday, Koirala said they "will be settled as we are talking with Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee on it."

## Anwar accuses chief justice of being biased

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 1: In an angry exchange with the country's top judge, jailed politician Anwar Ibrahim on Tuesday accused Chief Justice Eusoff Chin of being biased and close to Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad, reports UNB.

"With all that I know of you, subservient to the prime minister, and now beholden to him, I am apprehensive of your impartiality on this appeal," Anwar said during a Federal Court hearing of his appeal to force Mahathir to testify in his sodomy trial.

Eusoff rejected a plea by Anwar to step out of the three-judge bench hearing the case and replace himself by another judge.

"We are being tolerant," he told Anwar. "Your intention is to attack me personally."

Anwar was arguing his own case just three days before a high Court was scheduled to deliver a verdict in his yearlong sodomy case. In case the Federal Court overturned an earlier decision and rule that Mahathir must testify, it could reopen the sodomy trial and delay the verdict.

If it upholds High Court Judge Arifin Jaka's ruling that Mahathir's testimony was not relevant, then Arifin would go ahead and pronounce a verdict on Friday on whether Anwar sodomized his former family driver.

In April, Arifin ended a six-month effort by the defense to subpoena Mahathir, forcing his lawyers to approach the appellate court, and now, the three-judge bench in the Federal Court.

## Newspaper publisher jailed in Iran

TEHRAN, Aug 1: Tehran's press court sentenced the publisher of the banned reformist daily Arya to a four-month jail term and a ban on further press activities, newspapers reported today, reports AFP.

Hamid Reza Zohdi was found guilty of "provoking public opinion, publishing malicious lies, insulting the state, eroding the regime of the Islamic Republic and (printing) anti-state propaganda."

Zohdi's family told AFP that the court had not yet formally notified him of the verdict but expected it to do so by the end of the week.

In addition to the jail term, the court also ordered a cash fine and the revocation of Zohdi's publication licence, papers said.

Arya was one of 19 publications, almost all pro-reform papers that back President Mohammad Khatami, banned in a sweeping crackdown by the conservative courts after reformers won control of parliament in February.

It was considered one of the most open of the newspapers which initially flourished after Khatami's election in 1997.

Mehdi Karabi, the new speaker of parliament, on Monday blasted the "illegal and arbitrary" closures in a meeting with his guild of journalists.

But judiciary chief Ayatollah Mahmud Hashemi Shahroudi has rejected calls from parliament to stop shutting down newspapers, telling deputies in June that Iran's courts are independent of political manoeuvring.

## Speight charged with minor crimes

Treason investigation on

SUVA, Aug 1: Rebel leader George Speight has been charged with crimes related to a wave of civil unrest in Fiji which followed his coup in May, police said Tuesday, reports AP.

The charges — against Speight and a small group of key advisers — did not include treason, although an investigation into that charge was still underway, Assistant Police Commissioner Moses Driver said.

"Speight has been charged with minor charges only but we are of course investigating the major crime of treason," Driver told The Associated Press.

The charges also fell outside an amnesty period granted between the time rebel gunmen stormed Parliament on May 19 and the date that the last of their dozens of hostages were released on July 13, Driver said.

"We have seen the extent of the desecration and destruction of the facilities of the finest institution in the country," Driver told parliamentary staff who were cleaning the complex.

"It is a national disgrace. It

is difficult to believe that so many people can inflict so much damage and bring so much pain to the rest of the country."

The announcement came a day after scores of rebel supporters, many with black eyes and bandaged wounds, were hauled into court as prosecutors pressed the first charges stemming from the coup.

Speight's lawyer said Monday he wanted the rebel leader brought before the court as soon as possible.

Speight had earlier threatened a new campaign of civil unrest unless the new Cabinet was stacked with his supporters. The military said it was also investigating allegations that he threatened President Ratu Josefa Iloilo, a treasonable offense which carries a maximum penalty of death.



Philippines Ambassador Leonides Caday screams in pain as he is evacuated from the site of a huge bomb blast in central Jakarta yesterday. The ambassador was entering his official residence in a car when the blast occurred.

— AFP photo

## Blast at Philippine envoy's house in Jakarta: One killed

JAKARTA, Aug 1: A huge bomb explosion tore into the front of the residence of the Philippine ambassador in Jakarta today, killing at least one person instantly and injuring 21, including the ambassador, reports AFP.

Parts of a body were strewn on the ground in front of the residence while a badly burned embassy security guard lay on the devastated lawn, most of his clothes blown off.

Edi Supriyadi, an official of the Jakarta municipal municipality told reporters soon after the explosion that at least three people had died.

But four hours later the death toll remained unclear with police and hospitals confirming they had found only one body, that of a woman who had been shopping at a pavement kiosk.

The security guard, who eye-

witnesses thought was dead, was alive but in critical condition in a coma, with burns covering most of his body, doctors said.

The ambassador, Leonides Caday, suffered severe facial and leg injuries. He was in a car entering the residence when the bomb went off, Jakarta Police Inspector General Nurfaizi said.

Nurfaizi said the bomb was planted in front of the gate and detonated when the ambassador's car approached. He appealed to witnesses to come forward.

"It was a very powerful bomb, you can see the damage," he said, adding that a special task force will be set up to probe the explosion.

Philippine Vice-President Gloria Arroyo condemned the bombing as "a senseless terrorist act that will achieve nothing for its perpetrators."

Indonesian President Abdurrahman Wahid deplored the blast, which he linked to the Muslim insurgency in the southern Philippines.

"This, I think, is related to the problems in the southern Philippines, maybe related to the kidnapping in Jolo or the problem of the MILF," Wahid said.

But the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), the main Muslim separatist group in the Philippines, denied that it was behind the attack.

The ambassador was being treated for two broken thigh bones and facial injuries but his life was not in danger, the acting director of the Cipto Mangunkusumo state hospital, I. Chamsyah, said.

Caday was later moved on a stretcher, one bloodied hand hanging from the side, to the private Medistra hospital.

## 3 killed in Philippine explosion

DAVAO, Philippines, Aug 1: Three people were killed and 36 others wounded when a bomb ripped through a carnival in the southern Philippine island of Mindanao, police said today, reports AFP.

An unidentified man threw a bomb late Monday at the packed GM Jumping Horse carnival near the municipal health office of Monkayo town, about 100 kilometres from here.

Two people were killed on the spot, while a third victim died due to loss of blood after being taken to hospital.

Thirty-six others were hurt by shrapnel and a stampede following the blast, according to regional police spokesman Captain Matthew Baccay.

No one has claimed responsibility for the attack, but the military said investigators were not ruling out involvement of either communist rebels or Muslim separatist guerrillas. Both groups operate in Mindanao.

## Barak survives confidence vote

JERUSALEM, Aug 1: Israel's besieged Prime Minister Ehud Barak scraped through a no-confidence motion that could have toppled his government on Monday only hours after the right-wing's unprecedented victory in presidential elections, reports AFP.

But Barak, limping along without a coalition for three weeks, faced mounting calls even within his own party for early elections, a move that could set back peacemaking with the Palestinians for months.

The announcement came a day after scores of rebel supporters, many with black eyes and bandaged wounds, were hauled into court as prosecutors pressed the first charges stemming from the coup.

In a nail-biting vote Monday, 50 MPs voted for the censure motion lodged by the biggest right-wing opposition party Likud in protest at Barak's "concessions" to the Palestinians at the failed Camp David summit. Another 50 voted against and eight abstained.

The bill, if passed by the required absolute majority of 61 members of the 120-seat parliament, would have forced elections to be held in 90 days, three years ahead of schedule.

It followed parliament's shock election of little-known Likud MP Moshe Katsav to the largely symbolic post of president, a major upset for Barak who had backed Shimon Peres, the former Labour prime minister and Nobel peace prize winner.

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