

'India planning mission to moon'

PTI, Dehradun

India is contemplating a move to send its first satellite mission to moon, Dr APJ Abdul Kalam, scientific advisor to the government, indicated here yesterday.

"We have placed several satellites into orbit successfully. I think we will do it (sending satellite to moon) also," Dr Kalam told PTI.

The Bharat Ratna awardee was replying to a question whether India would send its satellite mission to moon after the recent launch of the GSIV.

Referring to his millennium vision: 2020, he said the time is not far when India will also become a developed nation.

Dream, dream, dream: dream transforms into thought. And thoughts result in action, the father of the Indian missile systems said.

He said over 500 experts from all over the country were working towards completing an action-oriented plan to place India in the category of the developed nations in the next two years.

Putin to visit China twice this year

AFP, Moscow

Russian President Vladimir Putin will visit China twice before the end of the year, Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov said yesterday at the start of talks with his Chinese counterpart Jiang Jiexian, news agencies reported.

Ivanov declined to give precise details of the visits, but Putin is scheduled to attend a summit of the "Shanghai Five" group of nations in Shanghai on June 15.

The Russian foreign minister said Sunday that Putin would "visit China twice" during 2001. Interfax reported, but the timing of a subsequent visit is not yet known.

The Shanghai Five comprises China and the four former Soviet republics with which it shares a border -- Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Tajikistan.

Israelis, Palestinians have agreed to ceasefire: Mubarak

AFP, Cairo

Israel and the Palestinians have reached an agreement aimed at ending seven months of violence and resuming moribund peace negotiations, the Egyptian and Israeli leadership said.

"The Israelis and Palestinians have agreed to a ceasefire, on both sides," Mubarak told reporters, citing a letter he had received from Israel's hardline Prime Minister Ariel Sharon.

However, Mubarak did not say when a truce would take effect and both Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Mussa and his Israeli counterpart Shimon Peres stopped short of announcing a ceasefire agreement.

Peres, who delivered Sharon's message to Mubarak, said Israel and the Palestinians reached an "agreement on how to handle the situation" after seven months of violence that has left almost 500 people dead, mostly Palestinians.

In the short-term, Peres said Israel would take "immediate and unconditional steps" to ease life for more than two million Palestinians submitted to an economic blockade for months and punitive Israeli military measures.

Both sides also agreed that the violence, which continued unabated yesterday, claiming the life of a Palestinian in a car-bomb blast, had to stop before the peace talks could resume, he said.

Mussa said that "direct talks are under way between Palestinians and

Israelis for a ceasefire agreement, followed by measures opening the way for a resumption of negotiations."

Mubarak said such negotiations would resume four weeks after a ceasefire takes effect.

Peres was quoted by Israeli military radio in Jerusalem as saying any ceasefire with the Palestinians has last two to three months before new peace talks begin.

For their part, the Palestinians have proposed that talks start after four weeks without fighting, the radio added. It also quoted Peres as saying that nothing had been signed between Israelis and Palestinians.

If one eventually takes hold, it would be the first ceasefire in the Palestinian uprising or intifada which erupted on September 28, and would come as a surprise given Arab antipathy toward Sharon.

The two sides made verbal pledges to end the violence at a Palestinian-Israeli summit in the Egyptian resort of Sharm el-Sheikh on October 17, presided over by then US president Bill Clinton.

But they never took effect, as each side blamed the other for causing the violence.

Mubarak's announcement came after mortar bombs hit Sunday the Kfar Darom and Neve Dakalim settlements in the Gaza Strip, in spite of measures taken by Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat to prevent such attacks.



Lebanese Red Cross and civilian defence members carry the body of Yacub Melhem Nabaa, an 18-year-old Lebanese shepherd, who was instantly killed when an Israeli bomb exploded in a field north of Marjayoun yesterday in the formerly occupied border zone of southern Lebanon. Police said Nabaa had found the bomb in the field and was holding it when it exploded.



More than 20,000 supporters of Indonesian President Abdurrahman Wahid (inset) pray during a peaceful rally in Jakarta yesterday. The mass prayer was held a day ahead of a parliamentary session that is widely expected to set the stage for the embattled president's impeachment.

Wahid appeals to followers for calm

Over 20,000 supporters attend mass prayers in Jakarta

AFP, Jakarta

President Abdurrahman Wahid appealed to his followers yesterday to avoid violence at a mass prayer rally of more than 20,000 supporters on the eve of a parliamentary session that is widely expected to set the stage for his impeachment.

"We come here for goodness and not to cause damage. Hopefully there will be improvements for this country," Wahid said in a brief speech to his supporters packing the sprawling eastern parking lot venue at the Senayan sports complex here.

Wahid told attendees of the event, organised by the country's largest Muslim organisation Nahdlatul Ulama -- which he headed for 15 years until he became president in October 1999 -- to return home peacefully after the rally.

"You should all not do anything

that will bring disadvantage to us all ... Do not act rashly by damaging assets of any organisation, whether Islamic organisations or non-Islam based organisations ... because they all are our brothers," the country's first democratically-elected president said.

Along with the thousands of latecomers who could not enter the venue after the prayers started, the participants boarded their respective vehicles and left for home or transportation terminals peacefully after the event ended some three hours after it was started at 7:15 am.

Several convoys of buses were escorted by police as they went through the city's main arteries.

Most of the participants were from other regions of Java and Sumatra.

person on the fringes of the rally, shortly after it began, police said.

Only a few stragglers remained at the parking lot, which was littered with newspapers, crumpled leaflets and empty food and drink containers.

The presence in Jakarta of thousands of Wahid supporters, including hardliners who have vowed to defend him to the death and threatened to occupy parliament to prevent it issuing a second censure motion Monday, had sparked fears of violence.

"Do not be influenced and do not disturb the state event tomorrow," the chief organiser of the rally, Manarul Hidayat said in his opening speech.

Wahid's response to a second censure fails to appease legislators, a special impeachment session of the national assembly could be convened by August.

Parliament has accused the Wahid of involvement in two multi-million dollar financial scandals, which the president has denied.

In addition, MPs accuse the ailing and near-blind president of incompetent leadership of a country grappling with violent separatist and communal unrest as well as economic decline.

During Sunday's event police assisted by NU's civilian guard corps Banser assured security at the venue while soldiers and police remained on standby outside or in the grounds of the sports complex, with five police armoured cars parked nearby.

Armoured vehicles, soldiers and policemen were also on guard at the nearby parliamentary complex, and near the Merdeka palace and at the huge National Monument Square facing it.

12 injured in grenade attack in Assam

AFP, Gauhati

Twelve people were wounded in a grenade blast triggered by suspected separatist guerrillas in India's northeastern state of Assam, officials said Sunday.

All those injured in the attack late Saturday night belonged to Assam chief minister Prafulla Kumar Mahanta's ruling Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) party, a police spokesman said.

Police suspect the grenade was thrown by militants belonging to the outlawed United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA).

"Some 20 party workers were sitting in the office when the blast took place throwing us all over the place," Prafulla Bora, one of the injured workers said.

"The grenade was most probably lobbed from either a car or a motorcycle," he added.

"The party office where the blast took place is less than 300 metres (yards) from chief minister Mahanta's heavily guarded residence, the police spokesman said.

"The situation is serious," Assam police chief Hare Krishna Deka told journalists.

Assam is due to hold provincial elections on May 10.

Govt urges Tamil rebels not to squander chance for peace

XINHUA, Colombo

The Sri Lankan government has repeated its call to separatist Tamil Tiger rebels to engage honestly and swiftly in commencing peace negotiations with the government and not to squander valuable opportunity for peace in the country.

In a statement issued Saturday night by the Ministry of Information and Media on halting of four-month unilateral ceasefire declared by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) rebels last week, the govern-

ment reiterated its readiness to start talks with the Tiger rebels as early as possible and urged the rebels not to lose the chance for peace.

The government accused the LTTE rebels of violating their unilateral ceasefire on more than 224 occasions during the past four months.

"It has been the Government's view that this was not a genuine unilateral ceasefire but rather a unilateral effort at international deception," the statement said.

During a recent visit of

Norwegian Ambassador Jon Westborg to Wanni, the LTTE headquarters in the north of the country, the rebels have failed to finalise a document concerning humanitarian measures to be implemented as a foundation on which negotiations can take place.

"The latest action of the LTTE fully justifies the government's decision not to reciprocate its unilateral ceasefire. The LTTE has once again proved that it cannot be trusted on the issue of a genuine ceasefire," said the statement.

Taiwan to launch 'stealth' missile boats

AFP, Taipei

Taiwan's navy hopes to put into service its first locally designed "stealth" missile boats in the middle of next year to counter China's growing military threat, a report said yesterday.

Under the "Kuanghua 6 project" the navy plans to build a fleet of 30 such boats, which are intended to replace the 50-tonne Seagull class missile boats, the Liberty Times said.

The new ships "are outfitted with advanced surveillance and fire control systems, radars and data links, which would plug the boats into the combat control systems of both the navy and the air force," the

paper said. And like the French-built Lafayette class frigates, the new missile boats are sleek and painted with a coating to reduce radar deflection.

"In addition to the new technology which would hide (the ship) and deceive the enemy, the boats can locate enemy positions through information supplied by the navy or the air force while its radar was shut off," the paper said.

Measuring 114 feet in length, the stealth boats are able to cruise to up to 800 miles with a maximum speed of 34 knots.

The prototype of the 150-tonne boat to be armed with four

Hsiungfeng II ship-to-ship missiles is expected to make its debut early next year, the paper said.

It said the boats may also be armed with Hsiungfeng III super-sonic anti-ship missiles, which local arms researchers said would be able to match the SS-N-22 Sunburn ship-to-ship missiles which arm China's two Russia-built Sovremenny (Modern) class destroyers.

Taiwan's navy will see its combat capability boosted after Washington's new arms package to the island, including eight diesel-powered submarines, four Kidd class destroyers and 12 P-3C submarine-hunting aircraft.

Director James Cameron second space tourist?

AFP, Moscow

Russia is set to pursue a lucrative new business in space tourism despite US misgivings about Saturday's first, in which US businessman Dennis Tito realised the dream of a lifetime for a cool 20 million.

Negotiations are in progress with a second potential amateur space traveller, Russian space agency director Yuriy Koptev announced.

Unconfirmed media reports from the United States say it could be Oscar-winning movie director James Cameron, director of "Titanic".

"The mission with Tito aboard "opens a new page in space research and will enable us to send not just cosmonauts into orbit," Koptev stressed.

After weeks of irritation between the Russians and NASA, 60-year-old tycoon Tito finally blasted off from the Baikonur space centre in the former Soviet republic of Kazakhstan aboard a Soyuz craft en route for the International Space Station.

Tito paid the Russians 20 million dollars, a sum received with joy by their cash-strapped space agency, whose budget is 20 times smaller than NASA's.

US considering shift in nuclear targets

REUTERS, Washington

The United States is considering major changes in America's nuclear posture, such as slashing the number of strategic warheads, taking most B-52 and B-2 bombers out of the nuclear force and shifting some targets from Russia to China, the Washington Post reported yesterday.

The Post, quoting administration officials and independent experts, said the proposed changes had grown out of the inter-agency review of nuclear strategy and weaponry ordered by Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld.

It said the Pentagon was ready to cut the number of strategic warheads from about 7,500 to below 2,500 if President George W Bush changes the formal guidance on what nuclear forces are needed to meet the declining threat from Russia, the smaller but growing challenge from China, and the limited danger posed by nations such as Iraq, North Korea and Iran.

On Friday, a White House official said Bush would begin consulting skeptical US allies next week on his controversial plans for a missile defence system. He plans to give a speech in Washington Tuesday in

which he will link deployment of a defense shield for the United States and its allies with reductions in the US nuclear arsenal.

Bush was not expected to include specifics in his speech, the Post said, but it quoted other officials familiar with the inter-agency review.

During his campaign, Bush promised to develop and deploy a missile defence to guard against rogue nuclear launches and other attacks, as well as reducing US nuclear weapons to "the lowest possible number consistent with our national security."

The Post said the Air Force may absorb major changes, such as switching most B-2 and B-52 bombers to conventional missions. This was proposed in 1997, when the Clinton administration discussed reducing to 2,500 warheads.

In addition, the Air Force may lower the readiness of its 50 MX "peacekeeper" intercontinental ballistic missiles, each carrying 10 warheads, the Post said.

They are scheduled to be withdrawn by 2007 under the second Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, or START II. The US Navy also may reduce its fleet of Trident ballistic missile submarines from 18 to as few as 10.

'Fujimori fled Peru with \$1b'

REUTERS, Lima

Disgraced former president Alberto Fujimori may have fled Peru with \$1 billion in cash, securities and gold bars stolen from the central bank, a top legislator was quoted as saying on Saturday.

David Waisman, head of a congressional commission probing graft under Fujimori's decade-long rule, which ended in November, said the former president and his fugitive ex-spy chief Vladimiro Montesinos may have each run their own corruption network, worth a total of \$2 billion.

"Of course, there are officials implicated in this robbery: Fujimori could not have snatched gold bars from the central bank by himself," Waisman told El Peruano newspaper.

"I can't give any more details because we are treating this case as highly confidential at present," he added.

Another member of the commission, Congressman Luis Chang Ching, told Reuters that Waisman's statements were strictly personal and the investigation had not yet discussed this information.

Fujimori fled to Tokyo last November at the height of a scandal sparked by a video of Montesinos offering a bribe to an opposition legislator. In an unprecedented move, he was promptly fired by Congress as "morally unfit" to rule.

**Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh**  
 Department of Supply & Inspection  
 48, Motijheel Commercial Area, Dhaka-1000

**Disposal Notice**

The Director of Supply & Inspection, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Dhaka invites the tender for disposal of the following condemned machineries & others unserviceable stores "AS IS WHERE IS BASIS". No tender schedule will be sold on the date of submission & opening of the tender.

Sl No	Description of stores	Value of tender (non-refundable)	Time & date of submission of tender
1.	S-Disposal/25/99-2000 (VTB) Various condemned machineries & other unserviceable stores of Bangladesh Television. Details will be shown in the tender schedule.	Tk. 175/-	At 11:00 AM on 07-5-2001
2.	S-Disposal/29/99-2000 (Films Archive) 5 (Five) Condemned Aircircular of Bangladesh Films Archive, Dhaka.	Tk. 100/-	-Do- -Do-

**Tender copy obtainable from this offices**

- Director of Supply & Inspection, 48, Motijheel Commercial Area, Dhaka.
- Dy. Director of Supply & Inspection (Shipping), BGO Building Agrabad, Chittagong.
- Asstt. Director of Supply & Inspection (Shipping), 51/1, Farajipara, Khulna.

**Abul Kalam Azad**  
 Asstt. Director (Disposal)  
 For Director of Supply & Inspection.

DFP-10613-23/4  
 G-783



Holidaymakers walk along a street decorated with a flower carpet using petals from tulips during a flower festival at Tokyo's shopping district Ginza yesterday, the Greenery Day. Petals of 210,000 tulips made the 130-metre-long flower carpet.

**Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh**  
 Office of the Executive Engineer  
 PWD Division-II, Rajshahi

**Tender Notice**  
**No-24(twenty-four) of 2000-2001 Eng**

Tenders in sealed cover are hereby invited in Bangladesh Form No-2911 from undermentioned approved contractors of PWD for the undermentioned works. The tender will be received by the undersigned as well as by the Executive Engineer, PWD Divn-I, Rajshahi/Natore/Naogaon/Pabna and Sub-Divisional Engineer, PWD Sub-Division, Nawabganj up to 12-00 Noon of 9-5-2001 Eng in the tender box kept for the purpose in the room of their respective offices and will be opened by them on the same date at 12-15 PM in presence of the tenderer who may like to remain present.

Earnest money must accompany with each tender in BD/SDR/PO or CD in favour of the undersigned from any scheduled bank of Bangladesh. Tender documents can be seen and obtained from the office of the undersigned as well as by the Executive Engineer, PWD Divn-I, Rajshahi/Natore/Naogaon/Pabna and Sub-Divisional Engineer, PWD Sub-Division-II/E/M-2, Rajshahi/Nawabganj on payment of fixed usual charges (non-refundable) during office hours up to 8.5.2001 Eng.

Sl No.	Name of work	Estimated cost	Earnest money	Eligibility of contractors
1.	Providing sanitary and water supply arrangement of S.S.C vocational training centre attached to T.T.C at Rajshahi during-2000-2001 Eng.	Tk 3,46,047/-	Tk 6,921/-	All classes sanitary of approved contractors of PWD except class-III.

**Md Abu Eahia Sarker**  
 Executive Engineer  
 PWD Division-II, Rajshahi  
 Phone No: 772350

DFP-10325-19/4  
 G-747