THE WORLD

The Daily Star

Only graduates for Pak polls

AFP, Islamabad

The Pakistani Supreme Court yesterday upheld President Pervez Musharraf's ban on non-university graduates from contesting elections, rejecting challenges led by a normally pro-government party.

"For reasons to be recorded later, the bench has unanimously dismissed these petitions." an order by Chief Justice Sheikh Riaz Ahmed stated.

Opponents say the ban eliminates 99 per cent of Pakistanis from contesting elections set for October 10. the country's first parliamentary polls since the military took over almost three years ago.

The challenge was mounted by several parties led by a normally pro-government faction of the divided Pakistan Muslim League known as PML-Q.

The June 22 decree states that "a person shall not be qualified to be elected or chosen as a member of parliament or a provincial assembly unless he is at least a graduate possessing a bachelor degree in any discipline.

First woman premier in South Korea

AFP, Seoul

South Korean President Kim Dae-Jung yesterday appointed a woman as prime minister and sacked the defence minister in a reshuffle aimed at rallying his weakened administration.

Chang Sang replaced the outgoing prime minister, Lee Han-Dong. Chang currently heads the Ehwa Women's University.

It was the first time in South Korea that a woman has been made premier President Kim named Lee Jun. a former chairman of the defence ministry's reform committee, to replace Kim Dong-Shin who faced flak for a naval skirmish with North Korea in which five South Korean soldiers were killed.

Other ministries affected by the reshuffle include justice, culture and tourism, information and communication, health and welfare as well as maritime affairs and fisheries.

The shake-up, which affected six out of 19 portfolios of the cabinet and that of prime minister, came as Kim Dae-Jung was seeking a way out of the current political quagmire.

Two of his three sons have been arrested on graft charges and the naval clash dealt a blow to his much-touted Sunshine Policy of reconciliation with the communist North, which earned him the Nobel Peace Prize in 2000.

"The president has taken in reform-minded figures armed with expertise in order to enhance stability and efficiency of the state administration in line with people's wish." his spokesman Park Jie-Won said

"Defence Minister Kim Dong-Shin had expressed the wish to hold himself responsible for the Yellow Sea skirmish in order to avoid further controversy that hurts the morale of the military," he said

The opposition Grand National Party (GNP) and conservative news media denounced the military for failing to go all the way and sink a North Korean patrol boat in retreat after the boat opened fire on a South Korean warship

Military authorities said the navy had had to hold back to avoid escalation of the incident.

The reshuffle also came after both the ruling and opposition parties called for a politically neutral cabinet to enhance fairness in the December presidential poll.

Chang, 62, a career academic and educator with little experience in politics, is considered to be a non-partisan figure

"President Kim appointed a woman as his prime minister as women's roles in this country will take on greater importance than ever in the 21st century," his spokesman Park said.

"The president believes the new prime minister will lead the cabinet well as she is not only a scholar and educator but also management-minded as the head of a university." he said.

But the cabinet shake-up drew criticism from the opposition GNP, which branded the prime minister nominee as "supine."

It raised issue with the returning of an one-time justice minister, Kim Jung-Kil, to his old post and the retention of Lee Keun-Shik as government administration minister.

These are two key posts involved in managing elections.

2 rebel leaders among 7 killed in Kashmir

of Srinagar, India Kashmir's sum-

"The encounter erupted when

Ahmed hailed from

Pakistan-based Lashkar and

Muzaffarabad, the capital of the

Pakistani zone of Kashmir.

the army intercepted a group of

Jaish militants, and asked them to

mer capital, police said.

Bilal."

he officer said.

AFP, Srinagar

Two senior commanders of frontline Islamic guerrilla organisations were among 13 people killed in Indianadministered Kashmir, police said yesterday.

In southern Kashmir, Indian forces early Thursday gunned down a senior commander of the dominant Lashkar-e-Taiba Islamic militant group, a police spokesman said in the state's winter capital. Jammu.

The spokesman said Sarfaraz Rathore, Lashkar's chief commander of the southern frontier district of Poonch, was killed in a firefight in the remote region, some 240 kilometres (150 miles) from Jammu

"Rathore's killing is a major setback to Lashkar in Poonch, where it is responsible for attacking Indian army camps in the recent past," the spokesman said.

Meanwhile, police in the northern city of Srinagar said Bilal Ahmed, alias Mehmood Bhai, self-styled district commander of Jaish-ement in New Delhi in December last Mohammad, was shot dead overvear

The attack triggered a tense military stand-off between nuclear-The commander was killed in a three-hour battle in the village of armed India and Pakistan, which Krumbhore near Handwara townhave massed more than a million ship, 85 kilometers (50 miles) north troops on their common borders. In separate incidents in the

village of Sogam in the same district, two Indian army soldiers and two rebels were killed in a clash late Wednesday, a police spokesman said.

surrender," a police officer said, adding that the rebels instead Two other soldiers were injured opened fire, wounding two soldiers. in the gunbattle.

"The army returned fire, killing Separately, in the west-central district of Poonch, a soldier and a A number of the rebels managed rebel were killed in a battle early to escape under cover of darkness, Thursday, police said.

And suspected militants stormed into a marriage ceremony in the village of Palhalan in northern Baramulla district Thursday and opened fire at a former rebel now working with security forces, killing him on the spot.

China on said yesterday that it was

"(Iraq's) sovereignty and territo-

rial integrity should be completely

respected," foreign ministry spokes-

man Liu Jianchao said at a press

"We maintain that in dealing with

state-to-state relations we should

abide by the UN Charter and norms

governing international relations

We are opposed to the willful threat

Liu's comment came after US

Bush said that the world would

be a safer place once Saddam had

been overthrown, adding that he

was personally engaged in "al

aspects" of planning to achieve that

US plans

for Iraq

AFP, Beijing

briefing.

Jaish have been banned as terrorist organisations by the United States, India and Pakistan following a daring attack on the national parlia-China against

Indian MP arrested in Tamil Nadu

AFP. Tamil Nadu

Police in India's southern state of Tamil Nadu yesterday arrested national parliament member and federal government ally MK Vaiko under a tough anti-terror law for supporting Sri Lanka's Tamil separatist guerrillas

Some 3,000 of Vaiko's supporters in Tamil Nadu were rounded up ahead of the arrest, which took place immediately he stepped off a flight from India's western commercial hub of Bombay.

Another 250 members of the MDMK party, which Vaiko heads, were detained when they tried to march on the airport at Madras to welcome him, police and witnesses said. A police official said Vaiko would

be taken to "a facility some eight hours drive away' At the airport, Vaiko told report-

ers he would not be cowed down by the "fascist" Tamil Nadu government.

"We will use people's power to fight this fascist regime. We will not

2 die as Maoists

attack village

in Nepal

AFP, Kathmandu

be cowed down by the repression unleashed by this regime," Waiko

He also appealed to his party cadres to keep calm and not to

resort to violence. "The MDMK protest against the arrests will be peaceful. We will do nothing to upset normal life," said Vaiko

Vaiko is a member of India's national parliament and his MDMK party is a partner of Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee's ruling coalition government.

The Tamil Nadu government invoked the Prevention of Terrorism Act (POTA) Tuesday in convincing a court to issue a non-bailable arrest warrant for Vaiko for making a speech in the state on June 29 supporting Sri Lanka's Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE).

On Wednesday, Vaiko told reporters in Bombay soon after his arrival from the United States that he would legally challenge the warrant issued against him.

A woman passes by uprooted trees in Berlin yesterday. Seven people died in a storm that uprooted trees and damaged cars in Berlin, police and witnesses said.

Freak storm kills 7 in Germany

emergency services personnel more than 2,000 calls for assistance

Weather forecasters had predicted strong winds late Wednesday but nobody had expected a storm of such dimensions, one that officials were calling the worst in 30 years.

falling trees as a tornado swept

opposed to US plans to oust Iraqi adult organiser were injured at the President Saddam Hussein, argusame spot, where around 150 ing that the Middle Eastern country's youths had set up camp for the sovereignty should not be violated.

"The storm was terrifying, Berlin has not seen one like it for decades," said the city-state's Interior Minister Erhart Koerting.

One man was killed by a falling tree in Reinickendorf, and an 18year-old man was killed in Potsdam n the state of Brandenburg when a tree fell on him as he sought shelter, local government officials said.

or use of force," he said. In the town of Storkow a 45-yearold cyclist, also seeking shelter President George W. Bush vowed under a tree during the storm, was Monday to use "all tools" at his killed by falling branches. disposal to remove Saddam.

In Seelow, a 25-year-old driver was killed when a tree fell on his car while four other occupants of the car, including a child, were badly hurt.

Temperatures plunged from 32 to 14 degrees Celcius in less than an hour.

goal. The Bush administration has repeatedly threatened to topple Saddam's regime, which it accuses of developing weapons of mass destruction

The New York Times reported recently that a top secret US military document has outlined a massive, three-pronged attack on Iraq by land, sea and air with as many as 250,000 troops and hundreds of warplanes

While reie ng any plans to us force to topple Saddam, Liu said

Iraq had a commitment to obey

instructions from the United

Army officer

warns of

AFP, Tel Aviv

eruption in

West Bank

Nations

Bush comes under fire

US approach to AIDS epidemic blasted as timid, penny-pinching

AFP, Barcelona, Spain

conference.

several years or hedged with condi- Thompson said the Bush admin-

AFP, Berlin At least seven people were killed and several others injured when a

arge lake southwest of the German capital At least 12 other children and an

streets clung to telegraph poles as worked overtime responding to in the area

Falling trees were to blame for many of the deaths and injuries, which included a number of children camping in the outskirts of Berlin.

ged 14 and 16 who were killed by through their camping area on Wannsee island, a popular spot at a

freak storm with winds of more than 150 kilometres (90 miles) an hour lashed Berlin and surrounding areas overnight, police said yester-People in the German capital's

Among the dead were two boys

descended on a village in western Nepal and killed two men after torturing them, officials said yesterday

Some 1,000 Maoist rebels

An official in the home ministry said the guerrillas surrounded the village of Shumshergunj in Banke district, some 398 kilometres southwest of Kathmandu, late Tuesday and snatched two men as they were eating dinner at home.

"In front of the villagers they hacked their bodies with axes and kukuris (small curved knives traditional to Nepal)," the official said.

"Then they shot them dead and burned down their houses.'

Six other villagers were seriously injured after being shot in the crossfire, the official said. They were being treated at a local hospital.

Officials said the Maoists likely suspected the two men - identified as Sohan Lal Yadav and Moti Tamauli - were informants to government forces in the insurgencywracked district.

14 Colombian soldiers die in FARC fight

AFP, Bogota

Fourteen Colombian soldiers were killed during an assault on a FARC rebel mountain camp 350 kilometres (220 miles) northeast of here, a military spokesman said.

The guerrillas also sustained "numerous casualties" in the battle that took place Wednesday in the Guican township, at 4,000 meters (13,100 feet) altitude in the Andes mountains, said the spokesman.

The fighting broke out on the fifth day of a military putsch in the Guican mountains to flush members of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia from their highaltitude stronghold.

The remoteness of the area, the rough terrain and prevailing bad weather made the military operation very difficult at first, the spokesman said, adding that the battle was over but the campaign against the guerrillas was ongoing.

The death toll in Guican is one the military's highest since the FARC launched a major campaign of violence after President Andres Pastrana broke off peace talks in February, three years after they began, claiming the rebels had no inclination to peace

President George W Bush was given a roasting yesterday at the International AIDS Conference. where his approach to the global AIDS epidemic was attacked as timid and penny-pinching.

Graca Machel, wife of former South African president Nelson Mandela and a veteran campaigner for African issues, said the United States' financial contribution to the war against AIDS fell far short of what was needed.

"The United States claims to be the leader of the globe today," she told a press conference. "To be a leader, you have to show by example that you meet your responsibiliannounced by the White House. ties and your obligations."

Only four rich countries - Norway, Denmark, the Netherlands and Sweden - have met a pledge made 30 years ago to commit development aid equal to 0.7 per cent of their annual gross domestic prod-

dollar promise remain confused. US "(Only) these ones are really officials here said they were unsure exemplary," Machel told a press whether it was staggered over

The UN has set a target of pro-

viding an additional 10 billion dollars US Secretary of Health Tommy a year by 2005, from all sources, to Thompson on Tuesday declared that the United States had earhelp fight AIDS and the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) in marked virtually a guarter of the 2.1 poorer countries. So far, less than a billion funds so far committed to the third of that has been mustered. Global Fund. AIDS militants. meanwhile.

This is "far more than any other nation," he said, urging "all other nations - particularly European nations" to follow suit.

But in a counter-blast to this, the It singled out the United States' British charity Oxfam said on contribution to the Global Fund to Wednesday the biggest contribu-Fight AIDS. Tuberculosis and tors, in terms of percentage of gross Malaria, saying it should kick in 1.2 national product (GNP) were two European nations - the Netherlands billion dollars a year to the new fund rather than the 500 million dollars and Sweden, which have promised 118 million dollars and 58 million And the declaration accused the dollars

That was more than five times, in equivalent terms, than the United States' commitment.

However, other countries are produce cheap copies of patented even more miserly, said Oxfam, singling out among others Australia, Greece, New Zealand and Portugal which it said had yet to offer a cent to the Global Fund

istration's plans were to boost spending on HIV/AIDS from 14.2 billion dollars per year in 2001 to more than 16 billion dollars for fiscal 2003

"That includes a doubling in international HIV/AIDS funding over the same period." he said.

US government officials said that about 15-20 per cent of the annual US spending on HIV/AIDS went on prevention and treatment programmes abroad. The rest was devoted to domestic spending, including big scientific research projects at the National Institutes of Health (NIH). The largest US AIDS lobby, AIDS

Action, said yesterday it was worried that Bush and Congress had "shifted the federal government's focus on AIDS from domestic to international", to the detriment of people with HIV and AIDS at home. The 14th International AIDS

Conference winds up on Friday, to closing ceremonies attended by Mandela and former US president Bill Clinton.

Pressure mounted on the Israeli government yesterday to loosen its grip on the West Bank after senior army officers warned their new commander the occupied cities are a powder keq.

Israel reoccupied seven of the West Bank's eight major urban centres three weeks ago, with only the isolated desert town of Jericho not retaken, although it remains under tight Israeli blockade.

Israeli public television said top army officers had pressed General Moshe Yahalon Wednesday for a partial withdrawal, saying weeks of curfews had left the occupied towns on the "verge of a volcanic eruption."

The hawkish new army boss himself a former head of the central command which includes the West Bank, took office Tuesday, succeeding General Shaul Mofaz.

Mofaz, also a right-winger, said earlier this month that the reoccupation would continue for "a long period ... at least several months echoing comments by hardline Prime Minister Ariel Sharon.

The Israeli daily Haaretz quoted a senior defence official as saying that Israel plans to loosen its grip where the security threat is deemed to have dropped sufficiently, saying the army's presence is necessary but not sustainable in the long-term.

Israel has said its troops, which swarmed into the region after two suicide bombings and an attack on a West Bank settlement killed 31 Israelis, could stay in the region until Palestinian elections are held.

Israeli officials have said they are examining ways of relieving the dire conditions in the West Bank, where hundreds of thousands of Palestinians live under curfews that are lifted from time to time for a few hours.

Indian safeguard against nuclear, bio-chemical attack developed

the 62nd nation to do so.

chemical or germ weapons

weapons

maintained their propaganda bar-

rage against Bush, issuing a decla-

ration to "indict" the United States

White House of siding with pharma-

ceutical giants by threatening

developing countries that want to

Details about the 500-million-

for "inhumanity'

anti-HIV drugs.

AFP, New Delhi

India's military scientists yesterday said they have developed safeguards against nuclear, biological and chemical attacks but asserted they have not violated any international convention during their experiments.

The experts, tinkering with nuclear isotopes and substances used in germ warfare, also revealed that the Indian army is to train sections of its 1.3-millionstrong combat formations in methods of withstanding a nuclear attack.

"We have tested some biological and chemical agents." said R.V. Swamy, chief controller of India's Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), an umbrella organisation for 51 military laboratories.

strategic package, which includes "We do not produce biological a mobile nuclear shelter that could weapons but in order to produce safeguards against them we need house 30 personnel for up to four substances in small amounts and days, to the private sector for mass production for the Indian army. no convention stops us from doing

that," Swamy, India's chief military "Many of these items are under scientist, told a news conference. production and have been already India in 1992 signed the introduced in the army, which is Chemical Weapons Convention doing training in nuclear warfare and ratified it in 1996, becoming now," the scientist said.

India conducted a series of The accord gives New Delhi nuclear blasts in May 1998, attractprotection against the publication ing tit-for-tat tests from neighbourof details of its armoury of chemical ing arch-rival Pakistan, but New Delhi says its doctrine centred around a no-first-use policy.

DRDO chief Swamy, flanked by his top scientists, also said defence Military tensions between the two rivals, who have fought three researchers had developed a series of 26 items to help the army wars since their independence in detect and respond to either a 1947, spiralled in December when Muslim militants attacked the nuclear blast or an attack with Indian parliament, which New Swamy said the DRDO had Delhi blamed on a plot hatched in transferred technology for the Islamabad.

chalking out a timetable for a series of joint exercises as part of a bilateral agreement to boost military-tomilitary contacts, an official said vesterday "There is a genuine interest from

AFP. New Delhi

the US side for such contacts in view of the present disturbed situation in our (South Asian) region." Indian Air Force chief spokesman Rajesh Dhingra told a news conference.

"They also visualise terrorism from air, ground and sea ... there is a convergence of interest between the United States and India," the spokesman said

Dhingra said the two sides were firming up plans for five joint exercises between the airforce and ground troops of the two countries, adding the first of the series was slated to be held by the end of October in Alaska.

"It is an air transport exercise which will also involve para-drops

and contingency squadron activity," Dhingra said, adding the Indian air force was likely to send its aircraft to join the US-led exercises, which have been code-named "Cape

Barcelona yesterday.

joint military exercise

The official said the second such airforce exercise is slated to be held by year's end in the US territory of Guam in the Pacific Ocean, and added the two sides would hold their third exercise, again in Alaska, next year

out a mammoth joint forces exercise on rescue and relief operation and a fifth such joint mission would also be held, the spokesman said, adding that the dates for the two separate events were being worked out.

In May, India and the United States conducted a joint training exercise of special forces near the northern Indian city of Agra, in the first war games between the countries in 39 years.

"Besides the exercises planned, the upcoming Alaska exercises.

India and the United States are Hope.

Krishnaswamy was briefed on American air bombings carried out in Afghanistan, he said, adding that The countries were also working

gunshin

the Indian air force chief, a fighter jet pilot, also tried out a US helicopter India's relations with the United States had transformed in recent years following decades of mistrust

PHOTO: AFP Graca Machel, wife of former South African President Nelson Mandela, speaks to journalists during the XIV International AIDS Conference in India, US plan series of

there are a number of exchanges

between the militaries," Dhingra

said, adding an Indian airforce

instructor was currently training US

cises were firmed up during Indian

airforce chief S. Krishnaswamy's

recent visit to the United States.

He said details of the joint exer-

During his 10-day visit,

during which India had forged close

A six-member US Air Force

delegation, led by General William

Begert, chief of the US Air Force

Pacific Command, met Indian

officials recently to begin planning

links with the former Soviet Union.

airforce military pilots.