NEWS

Alaska wildfire forces hundreds to flee

Hundreds of people -- including about 200 workers at the state's largest gold mine -- fled a wildfire in Alaska's interior and headed toward Fairbanks.

The evacuations were ordered Wednesday afternoon as the winds picked up and the 225,000-acre blaze threatened cabins and clusters

Firefighters and state troopers went door-to-door and telephoned homes, telling residents to pack their belongings and head for Fairbanks, 30 miles to the south.

Fire officials said the fire was not a threat to Fairbanks, Alaska's second-largest city, with a population of 29,000. The big concern there is dense smoke, which is prompting people with respiratory problems to consider going farther south, said Brett Ricker, a Fairbanks-based spokeswoman with the state Division of Forestry.

"It looks prehistoric here, like a wasteland because it's so smoky," she said Thursday. "The sun is a neon orange ball in the sky, and the skylookslike mud.

About 200 workers at the Fort Knox gold mine north of Fairbanks were among those evacuated, but mine officials said Thursday they were resuming operations with a small crew of 15.

'It's a little better than we thought yesterday. The fires are a little bit farther north," said John Wild, general manager of mine owner Fairbanks Gold Mining Inc.

The American Red Cross set up a shelter for displaced residents at a Fairbanks high school. Animals Iohnson, a spok including chickens, reindeer and fighting the fire.

nine pregnant pigs were taken to the state fairgrounds. Sled dogs were taken to a fenced baseball park and the homes of local mushers, said Jeanne Olson, manager of the borough animal control.

Chatanika Lodge owner Ron Franklin refused to leave, even though vintage clothes, guns and furs and mining memorabilia were being taken down from the walls in case the place burned.

"I'm sticking here," he said. "I built this place. This is 32 years of my

There were 61 active fires Thursday in Alaska, where 331 fires have burned more than 1.1 million acres so far this year.

In Reno, Nev., meanwhile, smoke from wildfires 10 miles to the west cloaked high-rise casinos Thursday.

The complex of four fires crept up o subdivisions near the California levada line, but no evacuations were ordered. The largest of the fires consumed at least 850 acres of igebrush and scrub pines.

In Arizona, firefighters reinforced lines to keep a 43,000-acre fire away from three mountain

The lightning-caused fire was about four miles away from Payson, a community of about 14,000 about 70 miles northeast of Phoenix. The vildfire was spreading away from Payson and the smaller towns of Strawberry and Pine.

Seventeen buildings, including homes, barns and sheds, were considered threatened by the fire. All the people in the area had voluntarily left by Wednesday, said Mike Johnson, a spokesman for the crew

Held militants

FROM PAGE 1 Abdur Rahman, students of Barguna Alia Madrasa. Waliullah was identified as chief regional coordinator and Mustafa Hassan as local coordinator of the

Police sources said all the 33 arrestees identified themselves as members of Islamic Mujahid Party (IMP). A list of 50 cadres with secret code numbers was recovered from them. The arrestees mostly gave

Syed Shafiqul Islam, officer-incharge of Barguna Sadar Police Station, said it was yet to be confirmed if the arrestees are linked to the IMIB of Bangla Bhai or any other militant

Sources in security agencies seek-inganonymity however said they have sufficient evidences of the arrestees'

links to the Jamaat-e-Islami. Among the arrestees, Masumbillah was identified as

Salauddin is younger brother of a district Jamaat leader, Saidul Islam is son of the district Jamaat chief and Shahidul Islam is a brother of district BNP leader Fariduddin Forkan, and is involved with Jamaat politics, they

Jamaat-backed Islami Chhatra Shibir,

People of remote Shialia area under Barguna Sadar Upazila caught the 33 cadres from local Ahmed Master Bari Mosque and handed them over to police on Wednesday. Theywere taking arms training.

Jasimuddin of Shialia, a madrasa teacher at Mohammadpur in Dhaka, is also believed to have links to the

Meanwhile, security sources also reported on June 17 similar training programmes of Islamic militants at Hafezia Madrasa at Barguna. This led to an abrupt stop of the programme and the Madrasa authorities denied any connection with it.

Bangla Bhai men

FROM PAGE 1 murdered in the morning of June 30. A Rajshahi police official quoting witnesses said Abdul Kuddus of Kathalbaria along with other masked men kidnapped Yasin from his cousin's house and beat him to death at a madrasa in Kudapara.

Sources said Iswardi police picked up the three on suspicion from Snigdha Boarding at 1:20am on July 1. They registered at the hotel at 11:00pm on June 30,11 hours after

The militants were released from the police station at around 2:00pm on July 1 after Pabna district Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) Secretary Habibur Rahman Tota and local Jamaat-e Islami leader Amzad Hossain in a meeting with police officials secured the release. The meeting took place at a police official's residence in Iswardi, sources said.

Officer-in-Charge of Iswardi Police Station Azimuddin told that they had let the arrestees go under custody of BNP leader Habibur Rahman, as there was no allegation against them.

Habibur Rahman Tota claimed the three belong to BNP and told Prothom Alo that he negotiated their release following instructions of Deputy Minister for Land Affairs Ruhul Kuddus Talukdar Dulu.

Superintendent of Police in Pabna Khurshid Hossain told The Daily Star that the OC had the judicial authority to take such decision.

Rajshahi SP Masud Mia said Yasin was a member of outlawed Purbo Banglar Communist Party and was wanted by the law enforcers in connection with two murders. He was not accused in any criminal case, but some arrested outlaws · informed police of his involvement in those murders, the SP added.

Replying to a query on the safety of Rashid, Soleman and Mithu who are the next targets according to a hit list by JMJB, SP Masud said they too had been searching for Rashid and the other two, but to no avail.

Local sources, however, claimed the three still stay at their homes, as was Yasin before being killed by the

Meanwhile, forensic experts of Rajshahi Medical College Hospital said autopsy report suggests that Yasin died of 'excessive torture'. "His body bore nearly two dozen strokes of lethal weapons and many of his bones were badly fractured," said a

60pc votes cast

There were simply too many instances of false voting and other interference that prevent us from calling this event free and fair," the statement cited Kalimullah as say-

An observer of Bamasop, Babul Audhikary, told The Daily Star he found supporters of the ruling alliance candidate active in front of a magistrate and plainclothesmen inside the polling centre at Bangladesh Institute of Ceramics, all of whom were sharing lunch packets

among themselves. "When I wanted to know his name, the magistrate said it was not

required," Babul said. False balloting was a dominant feature of the election, said Bangladesh Human Rights Commission (BHRC) in a press statement signed by its Director

The BHRC observers found environment at the polling centres peaceful, free of violence, but reported a thin turnout of voters. They found no queue of voters at Ispahani College centre in Moghbazar where only 20 percent of

the votes were cast until 1:00pm. The number of ruling alliance supporters far surpassed that of genuine voters in and around most of the centres, the statement said, adding genuine voters were far less

in number than the votes cast. Not more than 35 percent voters took part in the election, it noted.

The commission asked the government to retake the by-polls, as voters' presence was less than 40 percent. It also recommended introduction of voter identity card immediately, revision of election laws and codes, and empowerment of the Election Commission.

Legal battle

preparing for the legal battle on behalf of the government.

The HC ordered the government on Tuesday to deploy necessary numbers of army personnel at each of the 103 polling centres in Ramna-Tejgaon constituency. Although 314 troops were called out, they were on the move mostly on the roads outside the polling centres and did not mount guard

Acting Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Safiur Rahman observed that the court order was violated as the army was not deployed at polling centres. "I hope legal action will be taken against the guilty," he said in an instant reaction to the court order

By-poll to the Dhaka-10 constituency ran into legal roadblocks as Mannan went to the HC seeking the election symbol kula (winnowing fan) after he was denied it by the returning officer.

Barrister Rokanuddin Mahmud, who moved for allocation of kula to Mannan and centre-to-centre army deployment, will work as one of the counsels for the Bikalpa Dhara candidate to challenge the validity of the much-talked-about election

On when the counsels will go to the HC, Rokanuddin told The Daily Star yesterday that they were examining the election and would go to court once the preparation is com-

Sources said the legal challenge might come on Sunday or Monday, as the main opposition Awami League enforces a dawn-to-dusk

Tuesday's HC order on army deployment came after Mannan and three other candidates Abu Saleh Mohammad Kibria, Mazharul Islam and Abu Hamidur Reza Khan filed a writ petition with the court on June 27 for army presence at all polling centres.

In its order, the HC directed the home secretary, defence secretary, principal staff officer of the armed forces division and principal secretary to the prime minister to deploy the army at each polling centre.

The accountability of the respondents was called into question and contempt of court arises, as the HC order was not followed, Rokanuddin said.

Mannan's lawyers also consider filing cases with the election tribunal for allegations including beating-up and intimidation of innan's polling agents, polling centre capture and false balloting.

Two additional attorneys general have been instructed to move the HC if Mannan's lawyers file a contempt petition. Once the rule is issued, the respondents will employ lawyers of their choice.

Sources said the Attorney neral's Office remained alert on Thursday for a possible legal battle, fearing any candidate might go to court seeking to stay the election.

Contacted by phone, the family of Attorney General Hassan Ariff said he would not talk about the

Fruit trader

FROM PAGE 1

dragged him from the rickshaw and stabbed twice in the left chest and took away the money. One of his relatives brought Kalu to Dhaka Medical College Hospital, where he died at 11:00am.

Hena Rani filed a case with Sutrapur Police Station accusing three people of killing her husband.

Villagers beat

FROM PAGE 12 of the JMJB cadres and their leader Bangla Bhai. They also staged a demonstration in the city yesterday evening to protest the killing of

Yasin Ali Mridha, Maria union AL publicity secretary, was kidnapped and later murdered in front of Kudapara madrasa by JMJB cadres

People and police of the northwestern region apprehend a backlash against continued tortures and killings by the JMJB men.

Law change soon

FROM PAGE 12

firewood in their kilns although the government directed them to limit the kiln emissions for its harmful effects on human health.

They hoped the proposed legislation would compel the owners to ensure required height for the exhaust chimneys. It would also put a complete ban on use of wood in

Most of the 8,000 brick manufacturing units run without valid licence and violate environmental laws. More than 2,000 kilns, which encircle Dhaka, are believed to be the major contributors to air pollution in the capital, official sources

To inform brick-kiln owners of the provisions of law related to brickfields, all deputy commissioners have been instructed to sit with the brick-kiln owners before they go into production in the upcoming seasons, they added.

Besides, the government will launch massive campaign to create awareness on environmental impact of brickfields

Quake kills 18

district near the Iranian border at 1:30 a.m. (1830 GMT).

Residents wailed as bodies were pulled from the rubble in Yigincal, where all the 18 dead were found, Anatolian said. It said there had already been several aftershocks. Work is continuing on clearing away the rubble. There is also dam-

age in other villages, but there are only slight injuries there," the offi-The first television pictures from the scene showed emergency workers carrying the injured into an

ambulance while locals looked on

amid devastated one-storey houses. The remote Dogubayazit area is a destination for adventurous travel-ers who come to visit Mount Ararat and palace ruins on a hill near the main district town.

The Red Crescent aid organisation said it had sent 500 tents and 500 blankets to the area along with two mobile kitchens, Anatolian Agri Governor Huseyin Yavuzdemir told CNN Turk television he did not think the death toll would rise, because it was summer Many northeasterners move to homes in the mountains in summer months to escape the heat.

"The search and rescue is finished... There is no one in the rubble. These are not buildings that can withstand earthquakes, they are made of earth and stone. Some of the houses are made of concrete and those are fine, "Yavuzdemir said.

and locals spent the night outside, Earthquakes are common in

The weather in the area was mild

Turkey, which is criss-crossed by geological fault lines.

Nine people were killed and dozens injured when a quake of the same magnitude hit Erzurum province in eastern Turkey in March. A massive quake in August 1999 killed some 18,000 people in an industrial area of northwestern Turkey.

Fertiliser, machines

production of organic fertilisers at all the 12,500 agricultural blocks and doubling of public sector seed production capability from hardly 20 percent now to 40 percent next year are also among the steps to slash farminput cost.

speaking as chief guest at a booklaunching ceremony in the capital yesterday The Forum for Information Dissemination on Agriculture

(FIDA) in cooperation with crop science multinational company Syngenta Bangladesh Limited organised the function at the National Press Club for launching the book titled, 'Windows of Agriculture in Bangladesh.' The book, a compilation of 12 write-ups on core agricultural issues in the country, is the second in series since 2002 published under the 'FIDA-Syngenta Fellowship Programme.'

Minister of State for Agriculture

and journalists who contributed

"In Andhra State of India, farmers are charged only 0.29 rupee per unit of electricity consumed for irrigation purpose while commercial power rate is 3.50 rupees per unit," Anwar mentioned, explaining how farming and farmers' inter-

ests are protected across the world. The minister said soil fertility in the country has declined to a dangerous level partly because of imbalanced application of chemical fertilisers, "In mid-80s, prices of urea and non-urea fertilisers (TSP, DAP, MP) were at par but later on prices of non-subsidised fertilisers (TSP, DAP, MP) soured to such a level that farmers went for applying too heavy doses of subsidised urea, greatly harming the nutrient balance in soil."

Anwar pointed out non-formal sectors now meet about 80 percent of the seed requirements in the country and their qualities are not guaranteed. The government will now provide as much funds as required to raise quality seed production capability of the state-run BADC and DAE from 20 percent now

poor farmers with low-cost homegrown farm machinery free of cost.

The minister stressed minimising the widening yield-gap of different varieties of paddy at the BRRI and at farmers' level. Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir

marketing and strong farmers

unions or farmers co-operatives. If we fail to make farming profitable for the farmers, we'll not be able to achieve the millennium develop-

IRRI Liaison Scientist in Bangladesh Dr Hamid Mia, Dr Abdur Razzak and Jahangir Alam of the BARC, DAE Director General Tarik Hasan and BARI Director General Abdus Sattar also spoke. BADC Chairman Md Ismail, Director Mokhlesir Rahman and former principal of Haji Danesh Agriculture College Md Yasin Ali and many other scientists, academics and researchers were present.

The minister said this while

Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir was the special guest at the ceremony.

The function was attended by,

among others, heads, directors and scientists of different NARS (national agricultural research system) bodies including Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council (BARC), Bangladesh Agricultural Research Institute (BARI). Bangladesh Rice Research Institute (BRRI) and representatives from International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) and Bangladesh Agricultural Development Corporation (BADC)

articles for the book. Syngenta Managing Director come address and FIDA General Secretary Reaz Ahmad conducted the programme chaired by Editor of the book Dr M Golam Rahman.

The agriculture minister noted that Bangladeshi farmers make the highest expenditure on irrigation in the entire south and southeastern Asia. They spend 56 percent of the cost of paddy production on irrigation against only 26 percent in Thailand, 17 percent in India and six

to 40 percent next year.

The government will also provide

underscored better agricultural

Probe on into Biman's

bill, bearing the same serial number and charged to the same customer, give different billable weights. In some cases, copies of the same document bearing the same airway bill number name different cargo operators -- a practice quite alien to the industry and reflect the extent of deceit committed by the small-time

One of the airway bills in question, numbered 997-8897-2520, dated May 17 last and charged to M/s Dhaka Trade International, shows a 228kg consignment in five pieces was handled by Darwish Murad Clearing and Shipping Services. Yet another copy of the same bill but dated May 18 shows that M/s Tour Care Travel and Cargo handled 2,880kg involving 25 pieces for the same client. The first copy of the document charges Dh4,455 and the second Dh54,855 on the same

DETECTION

In a letter dated June 23 last, Biman's finance manager in Dubai first pointed out the discrepancy to Biman's controller of accounts and hinted such frauds might have been taking place for quite some time.

He wrote: "Kindly be informed that on receipt of sales report for the month of May 04 on June 15, 2004, regional manager, Dubai informed that cargo sales revenue seems much less than the total cargo handled for the same month and advised me to re-check that the cargo sales figure is correct.

"Accordingly, I re-checked all the airway bills in my office and also visited airport office and checked our airway bills with cargo manifest kept at airport and found weight discrepancy and accordingly raised short collection letter to the GSA and realised AED 1,16,987.35 (Tk 18.54 lakh) involved as short collection for the months of April and May, 04.

"Please note that it took from

June 15, 2004 to June 21, 2004 for preliminary re-check of airway bills and cargo manifest from January 03, 2004 will raise final short deposit on receipt of all the cargo manifest kept at the airport office. However, we have asked the GSA to deposit AED 2.50 lakh (Tk 39.62 lakh) for discrepancy during that period. After final checking amount will be settled

with GSA," the letter read. It said the detection led them to re-check previous airway bills with the cargo manifests kept at the airport and identify previous dis-crepancies, which will be realised

accordingly. Biman's Dubai Station Manager Kazi Akhtar admitted to The Daily Star that a high-powered investigation team is currently in Dubai to look into the scandal. "We've detected the weight discrepancies after checking the cargo manifests. We have bank guarantees of the GSA. In case of forgery, we can claim the amount from them," the newly

appointed station manager said. Other sources in Dubai confirmed they have checked the shipments of 2003 and 2004 and detected discrepancies amounting to around Tk 1 crore.

Sources at civil aviation and tourism ministry said, based on the probe report, legal actions and other measures will be decided. Biman's Regional Manager in

Dubai Khwaja Jonaid who has recently been called back told The Daily Star the onus of detecting the fraud lies with Biman officials in Dhaka, as they receive both the audit coupon sent from Dubai as well as the second and the third coupons showing the actual volume of goods dispatched. By comparing the coupons, it

should have been easy for the head office to detect any anomalies in documents and the actual weight of cargo," Jonaid noted.

UN officials stunned to find refugee camp emptied in Sudan

CHICAGO TRIBUNE

Sudanese government officials emptied a camp of thousands of refugees hours before UN Secretary General Kofi Annan was to arrive here Thursday, preventing him from meeting some of the hardest-hit victims of the humanitarian crisis in the prov-

4,000 people here as of 5:00pm yester-day," UN spokesman Fred Eckhard said as he gazed upon the empty camp at Mashtel. "Now, as you can see, no one is here. I can't imagine they spontaneously moved." The forced removal came a day

There may have been 3,000 to

after Sudanese officials promised Secretary of State Colin Powell that humanitarian aid workers would have unrestricted access to Darfur and agreed to other U.S. demands to avoid possible UN sanctions.

Sudanese officials acknowledged they had moved the refugees, but said itwas for their own good.

"We didn't move them because of the secretary general's visit," said Anwar Ibrahim, the state minister for Darfur. "It is because we were trying our best to help them." As many as 30,000 people have

died and I million more have been driven from their homes by a scorched-earth campaign carried out by pro-government Arab militias. The militias, called the Janjaweed, were recruited to wipe out a rebel insurrection that began 16 months ago, but they have unleashed their fury on civilians who belong to the same tribes as the rebels. On Wednesday, Powell warned the

to create a safe environment so that refugees can return to their homes. The United States is circulating a draft resolution at the United Nations calling for an arms embargo and travel restrictions on Janjaweed leaders, and possibly Sudanese officials, if the government does not fulfill its promises to end the crisis.

government to rein in the militias and

On Thursday, Annan, along with UN and Sudanese officials, arrived in the province to get a firsthand look at the plight of the displaced. At the Zam Zam refugee camp, Annan talked with tribal elders. Senior

Sudanese officials listened to every Ahmed Noor Mohammed, one of the elders, was asked if women were being abused in the camp. He rattled

offalongsentence in Arabic. "Some women face some difficulties. Masked men, even soldiers ... Annan's translator began. Before he could finish the sentence. Sudanese government minders and officials cut him off, saying he had translated it

RAB swings

FROM PAGE 12

Superintendent of Police in Sylhet Mustafa Kamal at an opinion exchange meeting with reporters yesterday said, "All steps will be taken to keep law and order situa-

tion under control here." Calling for cooperation from all, SP said, "We want to keep the holy

place free of terrorist activities. SP Kamal took over the office after it remained vacant for over a month since SP Shahadat Hossain was suspended three days after the grenade attack at Hazrat Shahialal Shrine on May 21. Three people were killed and 70 injured in the attack including Bangladesh-born British High Commissioner Anwarullah

Rajshahi Zone Deputy Commissioner Abdur Rahim was appointed as SP of Sylhet at first but soon was replaced by Habiganj SP

Mostafa Kamal. Marlon Brando

FROM PAGE 12 later professed not to know what

had happened to the award. In more recent years, Brando's brilliance as an actor was overshadowed by his eccentric reclusiveness, the turmoil in his family life and financial disputes.

Christian Brando, his son by his first wife, Welsh actress Anna Kashfi, was sentenced to 10 years in prison for the 1990 murder of his half-sister Cheyenne's boyfriend. Cheyenne later committed suicide, in 1995, at the age of 25. Brando, who was paid a then-

staggering \$14 million for his walk-

on performance in 1978's "Superman," remained enmeshed in legal disputes over money up until his final weeks. He poured millions into Tetiaroa, a South Seas atoll he bought in 1966 and where he spent much of the 1980s living out a boyhood fascina-

Movies, he said, he made only for the money. "Acting is an empty and useless profession," he said. Still, Brando inspired a generation of beatniks and rebel actors,

shooting of "Mutiny on the Bounty.

tion with Tahiti rekindled during the

Harris

including James Dean.

FROM PAGE 1 poling centre, the prime minister's adviser asserted, "The government acted in line with the High Court directive and we have evidence of

"As the returning officer and all

the presiding officers have certified the voting as fair, there can't be any doubt about it," he maintained. repeatedly called on the United

Guardians weary

abric that was not easily available in

The English medium schools spiked all fees last year when inance Minister M Saifur Rahman mentioned that the private schools would be brought under the tax net. But the government did not impose the tax back then.

Some disgruntled guardians of the students of Scholastica and Bangladesh International Tutorial (BIT) held press conferences last month to accuse the management of the institutions of 'irrational hikes in fees and other charges'.

As Scholastica did not budge from its stand, the guardians went to court, seeking to eliminate 'irregularities'. The guardians pleaded for a court order to ensure good stan-dards of education and congenial academic atmosphere.

DEFENCE AND BLAME A forum of guardians of Scholastica students continues to argue that the school raised enrolment fees for Play Group and Nursery by 50 percent to Tk 15,000 from Tk 10,000. luition fees for Play Group are Tk 1,650 and Tk 3,600 for Class II a

Scholastica Chairperson Yasmeen Murshed, defending her position, says: "We did not increase annual enrolment fees by 50 percent as the guardians say. The rise was 25 percent from Tk 12,000 to Tk

The Forum of BIT Students' Guardians at a press conference alleged that the BIT hiked its tuition

Rina Rahman, convenor of the forum, said the annual tuition fee for Class IV to Class VIII which was Tk 6,000 in 1998 has gradually climbed to Tk 15,000 in 2003 and Tk 18,000 in 2004.

BIT Principal Lubna Chowdhury refuting the guardians' allegation said the school raised the tuition fee by 10 percent every two years, which she thinks quite reasonable compared to the yearly price spiral of essentials.

Rasheda K Chowdhury, director of the Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE), an education watchdog, observes that many English medium schools posing as mainstream schools cannot provide proper education. "The management of these schools turned educa-

tion into a commodity." "The government should monitor the activities of these schools and oversee the curriculum to uphold the values-norms and cultural

heritage of our country," she says. A senior education ministry official, asking not to be named, said the government considers framing a law to discipline English medium

"A committee is working to that end and every English medium school will be required to register with the authorities concerned for operation," the official said. The previous government also announced that such a committee was formed to formulate a guide-

Athens student, told AFP

effort, everything is possible

greatest success in its history.

aking place in Oporto.

Prime Minister Costas

Our team, the team of all Greeks,

Karamanlis publicly congratulated

the players in a written statement.

today made the dream come true. It

proved that when there is faith,

methodical work and collective

qualification for the final is the

In a first for Greece, municipali-

ties across the country had put up

giant screens in central squares,

some of them even on beaches, so

people could watch the match

into disarray. Some cinemas simply

dumped Hollywood-blockhusters

and showed the football instead.

The game threw all schedules

Ukrainian Eurovision song

contest winner Ruslana, who is

The national football team's

Greece sizzle in ecstasy

Athenians assembled there less than an hour after the match was over. As many as 100,000 assembled in

the Salonica, Greece's secondbiggest town, local police told AFP. Once the goal went in, champagne bottles were tossed into the air and some ecstatic fans kissed the asphalt. Street sellers flogging Greek flags to the celebrating crowds ran out of merchandise in a matter of

minutes. "I just can't believe it. Huge crowds poured out on the streets as soon as the final whistle blew," said engineer Costas Rantzos, 34, from the northern city of Drama which was immediately awash with celebrations, just like any other city and village throughout the nation,

according to television pictures.

And optimism was sky-high for

the final, a rematch of the opening

match of the tournament in which the Greeks announced their intent to surprise with a 2-1 victory over the stunned Portuguese. "We won against them once, so

why shouldn't we do it again?" Rantzos said. "The victory will be good adver-

currently on tour in Greece, moved her show in the western city of Ioannina 90 minutes ahead of schedule in order not to overlap with And a village in southern Greece

even postponed for a day the tradi-Olympics," Georgia Kasme, an patron-saint.

6 killed in car bomb

Kurdish separatist rebels called off a truce, accusing Turkish forces of trying to wipe them out. Clashes in Turkey's southeast have since sharply increased.

Those killed and wounded were pedestrians on their way to work, he "According to the information we have, the bomb which exploded in a car soon after the governor's car

passed by was remote-controlled," Interior Ministry Abdulkadir Aksu told Anatolia news agency.
"As a result of this explosion, the car which contained the bomb was torn apart, two cars nearby were damaged and there is also damage

to the windows and body of the

governor's car," he said.

This attack is aimed at disrurbing the atmosphere of peace, order and security in our country. But everyone should stay assured that the atmosphere of peace will continue," he added. Four Kurdish rights activists and

former members of parliament,

recently released from prison, also

condemned Friday's attack in a statement sent to AFP. "We condemn the attack... and extend our condolences to the victims," said the statement issued by Leyna Zana and three other former MPs released last month after 10 years in jail for alleged links with the PKK, pending an appeal of

their case. The PKK, a marxist group, led a 15-year armed campaign for selfrule in Turkey's southeast until 1999 when it announced a unilateral truce following the capture of its leader Abdulah Ocalan. The fighting had left some 37,000 dead, most of them Kurds.

On June 1 the group cancelled its truce, saying it had become meaningless because of what it said were annihilation operations" by Turkish security forces against its fighters. The latest attack by suspected

rebels killed three Turkish soldiers and wounded another three when rebels set off a mine on a road in Van province on Monday. A year ago, Kurdish rebels attempted to ambush another

Turkish governor, this time on a

mountain road in Tunceli province.

Iwo soldiers in the leading escort vehicle were killed in the exchange The Turkish government has States to intervene against forme PKK rebels entrenched in mountainous bases in northern Iraq, but Washington, which has included the group on its terrorist list, has

declined to do so, citing more pressing security concerns in Iraq. Turkey which maintains its own army observation teams in northern Iraq to track the rebels has in the past carried out search-and-destroy operations on the Iraqi side of the

Rockets hammer

occupying forces.

FROM PAGE 12 the Iraqi judge Two Turkish hostages were freed by guerrillas, apparently after promising to stop working for the U.S.

pickup truck as makeshift aunchpads to fire rockets that hit the two hotels used by foreigners and Iraqi officiais, witnesses said. Guards outside the Baghdad Hotel said three people had been wounded. No one was hurt at the

Ishtar Sheraton Hotel by a rocket

that struck the 10th floor.

Insurgents used a bus and a

Nearby, police found a pickup truck flipped on its side with 17 rocket launchers and a crude firing mechanism inside. Police said they believed three rockets had been A similar mechanism was found

on the bus, which burst into flames

near the Sheraton in Firdaws

Square, where American troops and Iraqis hauled down Saddam's statue on April 9, 2003. U.S. and Iraqi forces have been on alert for any spectacular attacks to disrupt the handover to an interim government, which

earlier than planned. Two US Marines died in Iraq, the US military said yesterday, reporting that one was killed in action and the other died from wounds received the previous day near the restive city

occurred on Monday, two days

Jordan is ready to become the first Arab country to send peace-keepers to Iraq, if the new government requests it, King Abdullah told the BBC on Thursday, Iraqi leaders have previously said they do not want troops from any of Iraq's neighbours.

(AFP and Reuters)-