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Fighters defy truce calls

YATER, Lebanon — Israeli gunners struck Southern Lebanon with howitzer barrages yesterday after Shi'ite Muslim guerillas ignored calls for a truce and fired heavy weapons against Israel. The flare-up shattered an overnight lull and scared thousands of fleeing villagers who were planning to return home to Kafra and Yater and other neighbouring villages facing Israel's self-styled security zone.

Security sources said the rebels fired mortars and Katyusha rockets, although Israeli Army and other sources in the Jewish state denied the rockets had been used.

UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali directed his top peacekeeping official, Marrack Goulding, and Assistant Secretary-General Kofi Annan to fly to Lebanon and Syria to try to defuse the violence.

The Lebanese Army held a meeting with senior representatives of the Hezbollah, or Party of God, and the pro-Syrian Amal movement in the port city of Sidon, provincial capital of South Lebanon.

Security sources said a decision was reached to pull out an estimated 1,000 militiamen the two groups had dispatched to the Kafra-Yater battle front on Wednesday, when Israel invaded the two villages to curb Katyusha attacks.

The sources, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said the Army pledged to allow the returnees to pass through its checkpoints un-molested.

Security sources in the Israeli-held enclave earlier said the first Katyusha rocket was fired at mid-day (1000 GMT), and 11 others followed at 10 to 15-minute intervals.

Insisting on not being identified, the sources said some of the projectiles landed in Israel's northern Galilee panhandle. Others crashed in the security zone.

Israeli gunners opened up with 155mm howitzers that targeted villages around the market town of Nabatieh. That was in indication they believed the firing from that area, where the Hezbollah is known to have bases.

Peace teams leave for US

AMMAN — Jordanian and Palestinian negotiators left for Washington yesterday to take part in a new round of Middle East peace talks opening next week.

Hanan Ashrawi, the Palestinians' spokeswoman, said her team will demand a halt in Jewish settlement activities in the Occupied Territories before entering into substantial negotiations on interim self-rule arrangements for Palestinians.

"The cessation of settlements is a prerequisite for the success of negotiations," Mrs. Ashrawi told reporters before boarding the New York-bound Royal Jordanian flight.

Both the United States and Israel insist that the peace talks should focus on interim self-government arrangements for the 1.7 million Palestinians of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

But Mrs. Ashrawi said that "in order to start serious work on the transitional phase and on the agenda items, we have to resolve two basic issues: settlements and human rights violations."

Minister to visit Japan

MUSCAT — Maqbool bin Ali Sultan, Minister of Commerce and Industry, will leave on an official visit to Japan on March 1 at the invitation of the Ministry of International Trade and Industry of Japan.

The Minister will study trends related to different development programmes and will visit several establishments like Japan Agency for International Cooperation and Organisation for Export and Import Promotions.

The Minister will be accompanied by Abdullah bin Ali Ba Kathir, Director General of Fisheries at the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, Mr. Khaleefa bin Mubarak al Hinai, Advisor at the office of Ministry of Petroleum and Minerals, Salim bin Nasser al Ismaili, Executive Director of Rusayl Industrial Estate and Akram bin Hassan al Marzaa, Assistant Director of Office of Minister for Conferences and Committees Affairs.

1992 - the Year of Industry

On other pages

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BUSINESS TIMES
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Weather

Clear to partly cloudy skies will prevail over the Sultanate with some haze.

Wind: Northeasterly light to moderate during the day and southwesterly light at night along the coastal areas. Light southerlies over the interior.

Sea Conditions: Slight to moderate with a maximum wave height of 1.25 metres.

Muscat Area: Temperature maximum 26C, minimum 18C. Humidity: 40-75 per cent.

Tides: High 1:21 p.m., Low 6:50 p.m. High 12:44 a.m.

Salalah Area: Temperature maximum 28C, minimum 19C. Humidity 30-70 per cent.

Tides: High 1:04 p.m., low 5:34 p.m. High 11:45 p.m.

Temperatures recorded in other cities: Abu Dhabi 27, Dubai 23, Riyadh 23, Jeddah 27, Bahrain 19, Kuwait 19, Doha 20, Cairo 20, Karachi 25, Bombay 29, Paris 04 and London 07.

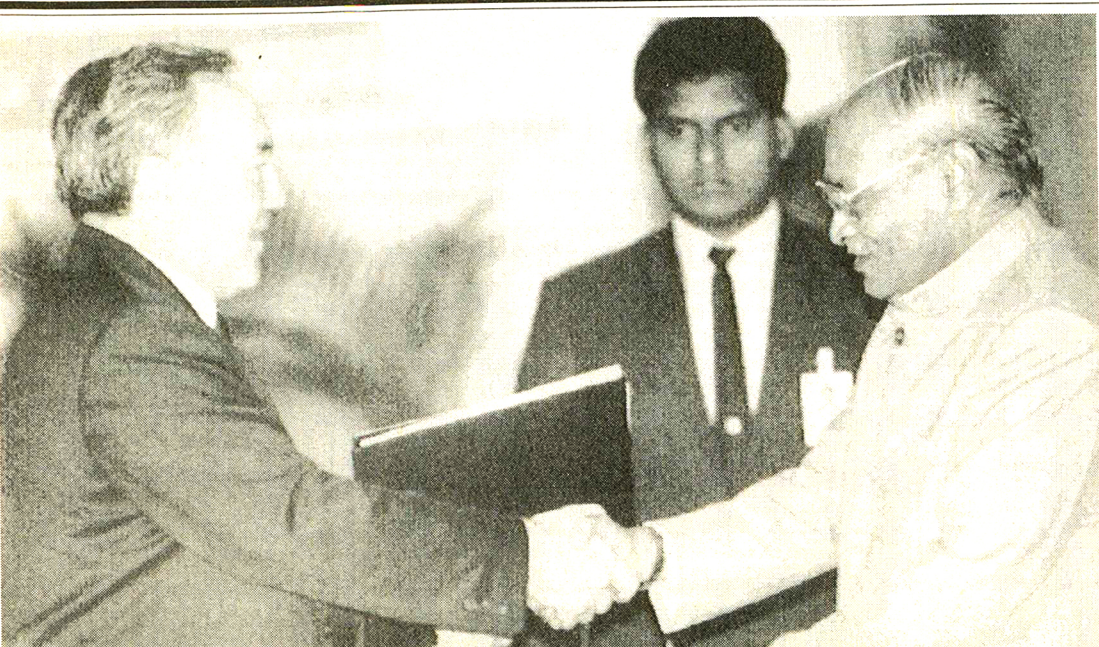
TEMP	MAX	MIN
Seeb	25	17
Mina Qaboos	26	18
Buraimi	28	10
Khasab	23	19
Ibri	25	11
Nizwa	29	15
Sohar	24	12
Saiq	16	05
Sur	26	20
Masirah	26	17
Thumrait	28	08
Mina Raysut	27	15
Qairoon Hairiti	23	12
Haima	27	11
Marmul	29	09
Fahud	30	11
Al-Halanyat	29	20
Mad'ha	23	13

Ties between Oman and Egypt hailed

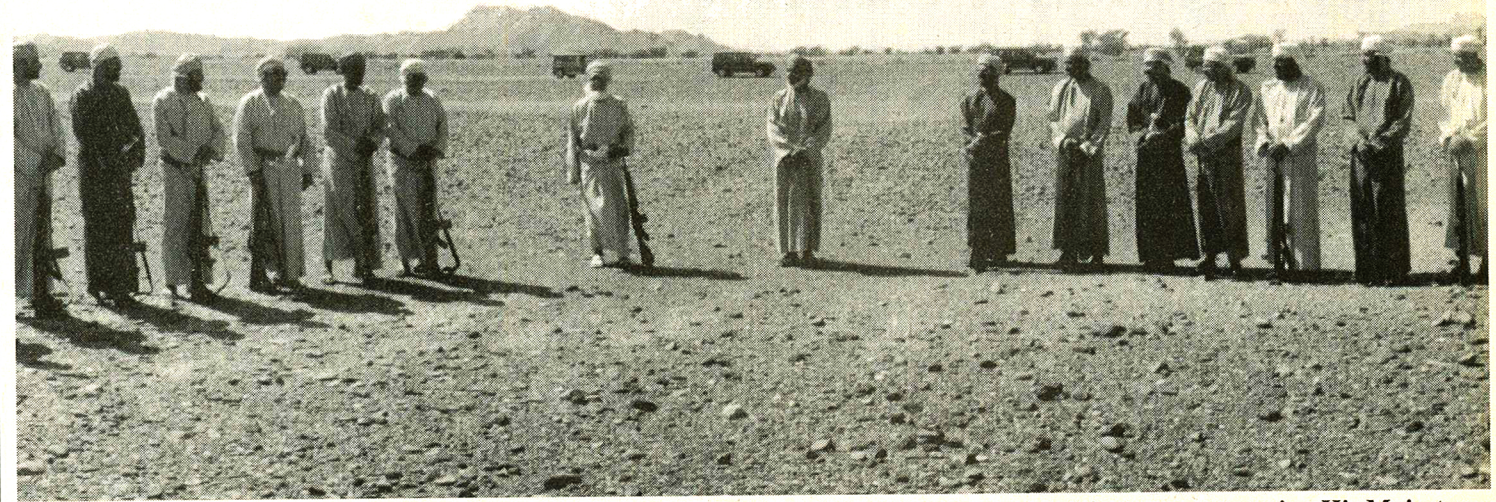
CAIRO — Dr. Mahmoud Sharif, Egyptian Minister of Local Administration, has paid tribute to the special relationship that exists between Egypt and the Sultanate of Oman at all levels, as well as relations between Egypt and the Arab Gulf states.

In a statement, Dr. Mahmoud Sharif welcomed the Sultanate's participation in the meetings of the Arab Cities Organisation's permanent office, currently being held in Cairo to discuss the problems faced by Arab cities.

He noted that Arab cities needed to cooperate in one important area, which was environmental pollution. In this connection, it was essential to make use of the scientific expertise available in the Arab world. — ONA



NEW DELHI — Indian Prime Minister Narasimha Rao (R) shakes hands with Kazakhstan's President Nursultan Nazarbayev after signing agreements in New Delhi yesterday. Nazarbayev is in India for his first overseas trip since the breakup of the Soviet Union. — Reuter wire photo.



His Majesty Sultan Qaboos is pictured here in a file photo with some of the Ministers and Advisors accompanying His Majesty on the triumphant 'Meet the People' tour, which entered its thirteenth day yesterday. His Majesty is now camping in the desert. — Picture by Mohamed Mustafa

Missile kills 20 in Karabakh

MOSCOW — Azerbaijani and Armenian forces battled for control of the Nagorno-Karabakh enclave yesterday and more than 20 people were killed in a missile attack, news agencies reported.

It was the largest death toll since the Foreign Ministers of the two countries agreed on Thursday for the need for a ceasefire in the four-year-old conflict that has claimed more than 1,000 lives.

Also yesterday, two soldiers of the armed forces of the Commonwealth of Independent States and three Azerbaijani militants were killed when the Azerbaijani gunmen tried to force the soldiers to give up their weapons, Moscow Radio reported.

Vozgen Sarkisyan, the Defence Minister of Armenia, said Azerbaijani militants launched a missile attack against the mainly Armenian area of Askeransky inside Nagorno-Karabakh, killing more than 20 people.

There were also reports of clashes in the Kubatlynsky region. — AP

FIS warns of violence in case of ban

ALGIERS — Algeria's Muslim party said yesterday its supporters could turn to violence if the authorities dissolved their party.

The Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) in a statement to Reuters after the quietest Muslim weekend for several weeks, said: "The crisis, which everyone wants to find a way out of, cannot be resolved other than by rapid recourse to serious political dialogue, before violence becomes an alternative for those whom (the authorities) want to liquidate and marginalise."

The Interior Ministry is taking legal steps to ban the party, accusing it of multiple violations of the law.

The military-backed rulers have blamed the FIS for clashes with security forces in which at least 50 people were killed and 300 wounded earlier this month.

Most of the casualties were demonstrators protesting against the cancellation of elections which the FIS was set to win.

"The FIS calls for a halt to the project for destroying it because its destruction will have very serious consequences," the FIS statement said.

It was signed by Abderazzak Rajjam, one of the few remaining FIS officials still at liberty. He is in charge of the FIS Information Committee.

Threat

Student supporters of the FIS disrupted courses and examinations at Algerian Universities yesterday and in one case threatened to throw petrol bombs, Algiers radio said.

The unrest affected universities in Blida, Constantine, Annaba, Setif and at Bab Ezzouar Campus in Algiers, it said.

"Students threatened to use Molotov cocktails (petrol bombs) if examinations went ahead," at Bab Ezzouar, it added.

University officials there decided to call in riot police and go ahead with examinations, it said.

Only a minority of the country's 250,000 students have joined a wave of pro-FIS protests but they have already forced the closure of both campuses at Blida University, some 50 km (30 miles) south of the capital.

The latest FIS statement accused the authorities of "physically and psychologically torturing" its militants before taking them to camps and prisons.

The authorities say they are holding 5,000 men without charge in two internment camps set up deep in the Sahara under a state of emergency declared on February 9. Hundreds of others have appeared in court and scores have been jailed.

The FIS says a total of 14,000 people, including children, women and old men, were arrested in a single week, between February 6 and 13. — Reuter

Message from Havel

MUSCAT — His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said has received a written message from Vaclav Havel, President of Czechoslovakia.

The message was delivered to the Deputy Prime Minister for Legal Affairs, His Highness Sayyid Fahad bin Mahmood al Said, when he received the head of the Presidential Court, Karl Schwartzzenberg, at his office yesterday.

The Czech envoy conveyed President Havel's best wishes to His Majesty the Sultan and the Omani people. Bilateral relations and matters of common interest were also discussed. — ONA

Kazakhstan visitor

MUSCAT — His Highness Sayyid Fahad bin Mahmood al-Said, Deputy Prime Minister for Legal Affairs, received former Deputy Soviet Prime Minister, Professor Vladimir Scherbakov, in his office yesterday. Scherbakov is currently Chairman of the State Authority for the Encouragement of Privatisation and Foreign Investment.

Professor Scherbakov conveyed the greetings of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan to His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said and paid tribute to the Sultanate's policy of strengthening bilateral ties with his country and other friendly states.

The meeting was attended by Alexander Patsev, the Russian Ambassador to the Sultanate. — ONA

Cables

MUSCAT — His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said has sent a cable of congratulations to Sheikh Jaber al-Ahmed al-Sabah, the Emir of Kuwait on the occasion of Kuwait's National Day.

His Majesty wished the Emir health and happiness and the Kuwaiti people prosperity and peace. — ONA

MUSCAT — His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said has received a cable from Sheikh Khalifa bin Hamed al Thani, Emir of Qatar, in reply to His Majesty's cable of congratulations on the occasion of the Emir's accession.



MUSCAT — Hammad bin Hamad Al Ghafri, Secretary-General for Administrative and Financial Affairs of Sultan Qaboos University, yesterday opened the fourth Arab Gulf states exhibition of University books, being held at the University. — Times' photo

China will comply with missile pact

BEIJING — China announced yesterday it would comply with international guidelines on the sale of missiles and technology as part of a deal to repay the United States for lifting some sanctions imposed on Beijing last June.

Washington said it was lifting the sanctions, which were imposed because of evidence Beijing was supplying missiles to Syria and Pakistan.

The sanctions covered US exports of high-speed computers and workstations, the transfer of missile technology and export of US satellites.

"Upon the effective lifting of the above three sanctions by the US Government, China will act in accordance with the existing Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) guidelines and parameters in its exports of missiles and missile technology," a Foreign Ministry spokesman said in a statement.

The spokesman said Beijing had a "prudent and responsible" attitude toward arms transfers, insisting that they be used only for legitimate self-defence and not undermine the stability of the regions involved.

US officials have long sought China's acceptance of the MTCR guideline, which covers the sale of medium-range missiles and certain missile technology.

Beijing set the removal of the sanctions as a condition for MTCR acceptance during a visit by US Secretary of State James Baker last November.

China also promised Baker it would take steps to sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty

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SOUTH ASIA

China, India for tie-ups in management, administration

BEIJING — China, which is pursuing speedy economic reforms, would like to share experiences and cooperation with India in the fields of management, administration and training, Chinese Vice-Premier Wu Xueqian has said.

China would also like to learn from India's "highly reputed" civil services, Wu on Friday told India's Minister of State for Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, Margaret Alva, here on a visit.

Alva called on Wu after signing a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with executive Vice-Minister of Personnel Cheng Lianchang.

The MOU provides for cooperation between India and China in civil services, personnel management and public administration, through exchanges of professionals and experts, institutional cooperation and exchange of materials.

Vice-Premier Wu set the context for such cooperation by

saying China was concentrating its efforts on emerging as a middle income world power by the end of this decade and would like to learn from other countries.

China is not only inviting foreign investments into its special economic zones and new development areas, it is also trying to open up the backward areas in the interior and needs to build up its own management and administration.

Vice-Minister Zhijian, who also held talks with Alva, said China aimed to trim its administrative personnel and infuse a sense of responsibility.

Already since 1989, about 19 per cent of the staff strength has been reduced and by 1995, the cut would go up to 25 per cent at all levels of administration, he said.

The two sides agreed that a group of Indian civil service experts would visit China soon, to be followed by a Chinese visit to India to understand each other's functioning.

Alva said the two sides would work out fresh programmes from

year to year on exchanges and training and that India's current cooperation programmes with the South Asian and African countries could also be extended to include China.

Alva had visited the industrial port city of Tianjin, south east of Beijing on Thursday and found that with huge investments from Japan, the United States and Europe pouring in, there was need for training of middle-management cadre.

The Chinese side was keen to see that not only labour but management in joint ventures should be made up of Chinese nationals, she observed.

Alva explained to the Chinese side India's efforts at economic liberalisation and structural changes and spoke of vast scope for trade and commercial exchanges with China especially after the resumption of border trade and the reopening of consulates in Bombay and Shanghai. — PTI

Kazakhstan sees no threat of Islamic fundamentalism

NEW DELHI — Kazakhstan sees no threat of an Islamic fundamentalism Bloc emerging in the five central Asian republics of the erstwhile Soviet Union and posing threats to a secular India, Kazakhstan President Nursultan A. Nazarbayev said yesterday.

Addressing a press conference here, Nazarbayev said the central republics with a majority of Muslim population were eager to revitalise ties with India, Iran, Turkey and Pakistan because of traditional old ties but this did not imply emergence of fundamentalism in the region.

Replying to wide-ranging questions, he said his country was in favour of maintaining cooperation with India in the field of defence and would like its nuclear scientists to work in cooperation with the Indian scientists for peaceful use of nuclear energy.

Nazarbayev said India was dependent on the republics of the erstwhile Soviet Union for the supply of

defence equipment and spares. This required a collective decision of the commonwealth of independent States, he said.

India and Kazakhstan signed five agreements incorporating a declaration of basic principles governing bilateral relations, establishment of diplomatic ties and cooperation in the fields of arts, education, mass media, sports, trade, economic relations and science and technology.

Kazakhstan, Nazarbayev said, abhorred all forms of extremism and felt that cooperation with India in various fields would help in strengthening secular bonds.

Nazarbayev said he saw no threat from Islamic fundamentalism in Kazakhstan.

If such a state does succeed, it will take us back several centuries," he said.

His country would also like to benefit from India's experience in running a mixed economy, Nazarbayev said.

Replying to a question, he said a dozen of defence industries were located in Kazakhstan.

Cooperation with India in this field would benefit the defence industry in the Commonwealth of Independent States which was facing a crisis, Nazarbayev said.

He felt such a cooperation would help the defence industry in switching over to civilian uses in the long run.

Nazarbayev said the question of controlling the nuclear "manpower" in the republics of the erstwhile Soviet Union was a "thorny issue".

Kazakhstan's nuclear threat perception evolved on the nuclear arsenal in possession of Russia, China and the United States, he said.

Nazarbayev said he believed in the principle of parity and Kazakhstan would be prepared to destroy its nuclear arsenal provided the U.S. Russia and China agreed to follow a similar course.

Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao, and Nazarbayev signed a dec-

laration of basic principles and directives of inter-governmental relations between the two countries.

External Affairs Minister, Madhavsinh Solanki, and his Kazakhstan counterpart, T. Suleymenov, signed three agreements, including protocols on establishment of diplomatic relations at the embassy level and establishment of consular relations and cooperation in the spheres of culture, arts, education, mass media and sports. The minister of state for commerce, P. Chidambaram, and his Kazakhstan counterpart, M.S. Abishev, signed a framework agreement on cooperation in trade, economic cooperation and science and technology.

Nazarbayev, who chose India for his first visit abroad after Kazakhstan proclaimed independence two months back, will also visit Pakistan before flying back home.

Nazarbayev said he had briefed Indian Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao about agreements among the former Soviet republics to control

nuclear weapons. Kazakhstan has a large part of the former Soviet nuclear arsenal on its soil.

"We have signed a document with Russia, Byelorussia and Ukraine on the use of our nuclear weapons, so that we use them on the basis of consensus," he said.

Kazakhstan was also a signatory to a document on nuclear non-proliferation, Nazarbayev said.

"We will do everything we can to stop proliferation," he said.

Nazarbayev said his visit to India, his first overseas tour since Kazakhstan became an independent state two months ago, was prompted by a shared interest in fostering secular democracy and nuclear non-proliferation. Kazakhstan, with a population composed of Russians, Ukrainians, Germans and Muslims, has so far declined to follow five other former Soviet republics which this week joined Iran, Pakistan and Turkey in their Economic Cooperation Organisation. —PTI/Reuters

Star TV, BBC justify Indian concern over Pak 'misuse' of Asiasat

NEW DELHI — The anti-India tirade launched by Pakistan television appears to have put them into trouble with two world TV Networks contemplating action against it for tampering with their programme on the situation in Jammu and Kashmir.

According to official sources here, the stand taken by the Star TV Network and BBC World News Service justified the concern voiced by India over the alleged misuse by Pakistan of its transponder on the Asiasat satellite.

The Pakistan TV has been often charged with virtually launching an information war over the skies by beaming inflammatory and communal news broadcasts which is reaching thousands of homes in India thanks to the Cable TV explosion.

Both the Hong-Kong based Star TV and the BBC have shot off letters to the PTV Corporation demanding that it cease its infringing activities with immediate effect.

According to the letters, PTV had on February 17 via its transponder on the Asiasat illegally picked up the BBC programme on J and K available on the Star TV service and re-broadcast it after tampering.

The Star TV has sought a written undertaking from the PTV that it would refrain from engaging in such infringing activities and illegally lifting their programmes.

The Network has given time

upto February 26 for the undertaking, failing which it would take necessary action.

The BBC Network in its letter said the use of the broadcast is illegal and must cease immediately. It warned of pursuing all legal means to prevent further broadcasts.

According to a visiting Star TV official, Steve Moss, the concern expressed by India over the tactics adopted by PTV was quite understandable.

A strategy is already being chalked out by the information and broadcasting here to tackle the "intrusion" of Pakistan TV in the country through the Asiasat and the adverse propaganda blitz, the sources said.

As part of the plan, work on installing nine new high power transmitters in the broader areas of four northern states is being speeded up to counter the propaganda.

High priority is being given to extension of Radio and TV services in the border areas of northern India until the services of Instat 2A are available later this year to widen the reach of the Doordarshan programmes to cover the entire sub-continent, the sources added.

Besides transmitting Indian TV programmes, the feasibility of the high power TV transmitters to "block" the inflammatory broadcasts are being studied, the sources said. — PTI



Palkhi days are here again: Or so the BEST suggested, in this morchha that left the Wadala bus depot recently for Shivaji Park, to heighten fuel-saving consciousness in Bombay.

BJP to raise Bofors in budget session

NEW DELHI — The Bharatiya Janata Party would raise the issue of Bofors, price rise and increasing menace of terrorism in the budget session of parliament beginning tomorrow.

The party would demand that the Government should probe the latest allegations concerning the Bofors gun deal pertaining to the late Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and also on the new economic policies of the government, party sources said.

The BJP parliamentary party would be meeting under the leadership of party stalwart L.K. Advani tomorrow to finalise the strategy to be adopted in parliament and perform its role as the major opposition party, the sources said.

The party would demand that the government reconsider its nuclear policy in view of the recent statements by Pakistani and American leaders that Pakistan has developed the capability of making a nuclear weapon, the sources added. — PTI

6 bodies to meet in Amritsar

BHATINDA — Six Sikh organisations, including the Badal and Mann factions of the Akali Dal, which boycotted the elections in the northern Indian state of Punjab, will meet in Amritsar on February 28 to discuss the post-poll situation and finalise their next course of action.

A spokesman of the organisations told newsmen in Bhatinda in Punjab yesterday the meeting would be attended by second rank leaders in the absence of the top leaders, such as P.S. Badal, S.S. Mann and Manjit Singh, president of the All India Sikh Students Federation, who are under detention.

Manjit Singh, who is lodged in the central jail here, has appointed Jasbir Singh Ghuman, acting president of the federation till his release. — PTI

Sweeping measures to abate Indian pollution

NEW DELHI — Sweeping pollution control measures, including introduction of an "environmental audit" for industries, phasing out harmful pesticides and strict control on vehicular emissions, are detailed in the national policy on pollution abatement announced by India.

A separate notification on environmental audit is being issued by the Federal Indian Government tomorrow, Environment Minister Kamal Nath said, announcing the policy at a press conference here Friday night.

The policy spells out the government's commitment on abatement of pollution for preventing deterioration of the environment. A mix of legislation, regulations, fiscal incentives, voluntary agreements and education programmes are the broad features of the policy.

Nath said emphasis was on the long future and on increased use of regulations and development and application of financial incentives.

Referring to fiscal measures for pollution abatement, Kamal Nath said while regulatory measures re-

mained essential for effectiveness of the policy, new approaches for considering market choices would be introduced.

The aim is to give industries and consumers clear signals about the cost of using environmental and natural resources. The expectation is that market oriented price mechanisms would influence behaviour to avoid excessive use of natural resources, he said.

The Minister said there were at present several fiscal incentives for installation of pollution control equipment and for shifting polluting industries from congested areas. The items for which excise and customs rebate were allowed would be reviewed, he said.

This would stimulate the advancement of abatement technologies and create increased demands for products, Kamal Nath said.

Economic instruments would be investigated to encourage the shift from curative to preventive measures, internalise the costs of pollution and conserve resources particularly water, he said. — PTI

UNHCR to discuss refugee problem with Myanmar

DHAKA — The United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) is likely to initiate talks soon with Myanmar to stop the influx of Muslim refugees from that country into Bangladesh, a top UNHCR official has said.

UNHCR chief Sadako Ogata would soon discuss the issue with UN Secretary-General Boutros Ghali and begin talks with Yangon's military junta, the officer-in-charge of UNHCR in Bangladesh, S.S. Wijeratne told on Friday. Wijeratne said the UNHCR would send out an appeal to the international community very soon for assistance to the Myanmar refugees on the basis of an assessment by UNHCR's technical committee.

Wijeratne, who visited some of the refugees' camps in Bangladesh's southeastern Cox's Bazar district a few days ago, said the sit-

5 bandits, hostage killed in S. Pakistan

KARACHI — Five bandit kidnappers and one hostage have been killed in gun battles in southern Pakistan, police said yesterday.

Two bandits were killed when

one of six people they kidnapped from a coalmine at Khanoot on Friday snatched a gun and opened fire near their hill hideout in central Sindh, police said.

One hostage died in the shooting, but the rest fled and alerted police who attacked the hideout. Three more bandits died in the ensuing gun battle on Friday.



Sultanate of Oman

Ministry of Posts, Telegraphs & Telephones General Telecommunications Organization

NOTICE NO. 13/92

TENDER NO. 6/92

SUPPLY INSTALLATION AND COMMISSIONING OF A CROSS-CONNECT BASED INTELLIGENT DATA NETWORK

General Telecommunications Organisation (GTO), P O BOX 3789, Ruwi, hereby gives notice of **Tender No. 6/92 for the supply installation and commissioning of a cross-connect based intelligent data network** as per the requirements laid down in the GTO tender specifications.

Interested parties are invited to submit their tender offers comprising of technical and price proposals as indicated in the tender documents.

Tender documents may be collected from Department of Contracts & Procurement of the Directorate General of Strategic Planning & Projects, first floor room No. 32, from **23rd February, 1992 to 25th February 1992.**

A non refundable cost of RO 100/- for the tender document shall be paid at the Directorate General of Finance, third floor room No. 22 of GTO main building at Al Khuwair.

Sealed offers should be addressed in the name of **H.E. The President GTO and submitted to the Department of Contracts & Procurement of the Directorate General of Strategic Planning & Projects.**

The last date for submission of the tender offers is at or before **10.00 hours of 11th April, 1992.**



WORLD CUP SPECIAL



Richardson nursing injured finger



Richardson ... 'I don't mind the pain.'

MELBOURNE, Australia — West Indies captain Richie Richardson is nursing a persistent finger injury on the eve of his team's opening match of the World Cup cricket tournament.

The West Indies faces Pakistan at the Melbourne Cricket ground today and Richardson abandoned a net session yesterday, fearing he may aggravate damage to his left ring finger.

Richardson broke the finger three weeks ago during a domestic match in Antigua and hurt it again in a match against the New South Wales state team.

Richardson said he planned to play against Pakistan despite the injury.

"I was feeling vibration when I was batting today, so I decided to stop," he said. "I don't mind the pain and I can cope with it, so I'll play. 'I'll just work on it with some ice between now and tomorrow and then have it bandaged up just before the match starts.'"

The West Indies played

poorly in a triangular series against Australia and India earlier in the summer but Richardson said the return to the Caribbean had refreshed his men.

"The guys are very enthusiastic and we feel very positive," Richardson said.

"Once we get our attitude right, I think we have a very good chance of winning the tournament."

Pakistan has been in Australia for more than three weeks, playing six warm-up matches. The team took a break yesterday skipping practice completely.

Team manager Intikhab Alam said his men needed a rest.

"We thought we had a good three-hour session yesterday and would relax a little bit before the game," Intikhab said. "The boys are all fit and we have no worries at all."

The West Indies beat Pakistan 2-0 in a one-day series in Pakistan last October and Richardson said he was confident his men could make a flying start in the competition.

"I fancy ourselves against them, especially since we beat them last time in Pakistan," Richardson said.

Neither team will finalise its lineup until shortly before the match starts.

Provisional teams: West Indies: Richie Richardson (captain), Curtly Ambrose, Anderson Cummins, Roger Harper, Desmond Haynes, Carl Hooper, Brian Lara, Gus Logie, Malcolm Marshall, Patrick Patterson, Phil Simmons, David Williams.

Pakistan: Imran Khan (captain), Ijaz Ahmed, Mushtaq Ahmed, Wasim Akram, Zahid Fazal, Inzamam-ul-Haq, Wasim Haider, Aaqib Javed, Moin Khan, Salim Malik, Javed Mahmood, Rameez Raja. - AP



Gavin Larsen of New Zealand rolls on the pitch after caught-and-bowling Australian Steve Waugh for 38 while Kiwi captain Martin Crowe (L) moves in as New Zealand upset cup holders Australia by 37-runs in the cricket World Cup. David Boon of Australia is pictured at right. — Reuter wire photo

Pull up your gloves, De Silva tells his lads

NEW PLYMOUTH — Sri Lankan cricket captain Aravinda de Silva called on his batsmen to spearhead the team's bid to reach the semifinals of the World Cup for the first time.

Sri Lanka opens its World Cup campaign against Zimbabwe at Pukekura park today.

"Much will depend on our batting. We must set reasonable totals when we bat first," de Silva said.

"It's important that we get some outdoor practice. We need time outdoors," De Silva said.

The Sri Lankan captain said he was pleased with the form of his team's bowlers.

"They improved rapidly on our tour of Pakistan where they learned a lot," he said.

"We've got a young side but there's some exciting players. We want to start with a win and our aim is a semifinal berth."

Zimbabwe captain David



Aravinda de Silva ... 'we can beat anyone'

Houghton said his side had nothing to lose and everything to gain.

"We are the rank outsiders. Realistically, we haven't got a chance of winning the cup. But we're here and I believe we can cause one or two upsets along the way."

Houghton said one-day cricket was a great leveller.

"If we can field well, bowl well, take our catches and bat well, we can beat anyone," he said. "Every side we play are better than us but we must rate ourselves as having a chance against anyone." — AP

Ratnayake ruled out

NEW PLYMOUTH — Sri Lanka's leading pace bowler, Ramesh Ratnayake, is to miss their first World Cup Cricket match against Zimbabwe at Pukekura Park today.

Ratnayake dislocated his shoulder in a recent warm-up game in Australia, and Sri Lanka have decided they do not want to risk aggravating the injury, team manager Ranjit Fernando said yesterday.

"The doctors felt he would be okay in about five days (after the injury)," Fernando said.

"It is unlikely that he would be fit to bowl tomorrow but we are hoping he'll be fit to play against New Zealand next week at Hamilton," he added.

The loss of Ratnayake, Sri Lanka's leading wicket-taker, is a considerable blow for the side who see victory over tournament long-shots Zimbabwe as a springboard to further success.



Ramesh Ratnayake... ..shoulder dislocation

Former captain Arjuna Ranatunga is set to become the first Sri Lankan to play in 100 one-day international today. - Reuter

Trumpeting the Cup

AUCKLAND — Nearly 30,000 toy trumpets yesterday signalled a noisy start to the fifth World Cup Cricket tournament.

The trumpets were given to spectators as they arrived at Eden Park for the opening match of the nine-nation tournament between co-hosts New Zealand and Australia at Eden Park.

The fans enthusiastically blew the plastic trumpets as a procession of colourful floats representing each of the competing nations paraded around the ground.

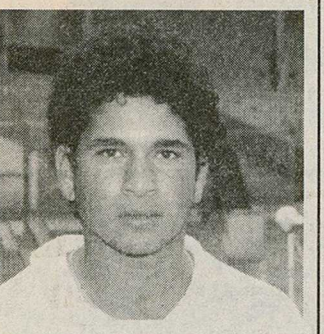
In contrast to the gale-force winds which swept over Auckland on Friday, cutting power to "ousands of homes, uprooting trees and ripping off roofs, Eden Park was bathed in sunshine. The opening ceremony featured vocalists and a flypast by vintage aircraft including tiger moths and World War II Harvards.

One of the biggest cheers from the crowd was for New Zealand cricketer Bert Sutcliffe as he rode into Eden Park on the New Zealand float.

Then vast portions of the crowd rose to their feet as one of New Zealand's all-time greats, Sir Richard Hadlee, was chauffeured onto the ground in the back of a 1930 Packard convertible.

"The atmosphere is unbelievable down here," Handley said. The float representing South Africa also earned a huge cheer from the crowd. — AP

IMRAN ALL SET TO BEARD THE LI-



Tendulkar...the youngest and the youngest

NEW PLYMOUTH — John Traicos made his first-class cricket debut when the beatles were top of the pop music charts and many of his current rivals were not even born.

At 44, Zimbabwe span bowler Traicos is the oldest player competing in the nine-nation World Cup, which starts.

More than 25 years after making his debut, Traicos will face players young enough to be his sons during the World Cup.

India's Sachin Tendulkar, 18, is the youngest player in the tournament.

Traicos was a member of the south African team that beat Australia 4-0 in a Test series in 1970 and then was expelled from international cricket for 22 years.

Born in Egypt to Greek parents, he now play for South Africa's northern neighbour and has lived most of his life in Zimbabwe. Teammates say they are astounded by Traicos' dedication.

"He is quite remarkable," said Zimbabwe captain Dave Houghton. "It is regular for him to be bowling for an hour to one stump when the rest of us have gone. And he is still one of the best gully fieldsmen around."



Traicos...the eldest



MELBOURNE — Imran Khan could hold the key to one of the most intriguing matches of the World Cup when Pakistan meet former one-day kings West Indies at the Melbourne cricket ground today.

Although nearing 40, the dark and brooding all-rounder with the film star looks still has the ability with either bat or ball to turn a match around.

Having played in all four previous World Cups, Imran tops the list of wicket-takers with 27 victims at an average of just under 15 apiece.

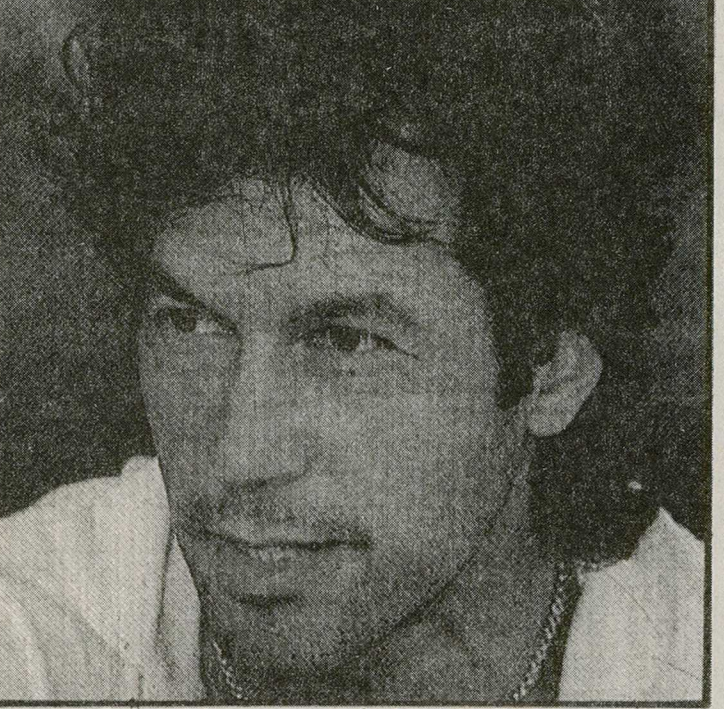
He is, however, disarmingly modest about his bowling ability these days.

"I am more of a batting all-rounder now. As a bowler I have lot a lot of pace, the deliveries are a bit rusty," he said.

But while his pace may have decreased, his guile has not.

Much more will depend on Imran's bowling that originally anticipated following the massive blow of losing main paceman Waqar Younis with a stress fracture in his back only days before the tournament started.

But Pakistan still have another dangerous fast bowler in Wasim



Imran Khan ... more of a batting all-rounder

Akram, who has the ability to swing the ball either way at great pace.

Pakistan last November lost a three-match limited overs series 2-0, with one game tied, against that West Indies, who then went to Australia and failed to qualify for the final of the Triangular World Series competition.

But the West Indians have returned feeling lessons have been learnt from their recent venture here and are confident about their prospects of lifting the cup they won on the first two occasions it was staged, in 1975 and 1979.

Richie Richardson leads the West Indians in their attempt to restore one-day pride, and he will have been encouraged by the form his side showed in Thursday's emphatic 77-run win over New South Wales in a warm-up match.

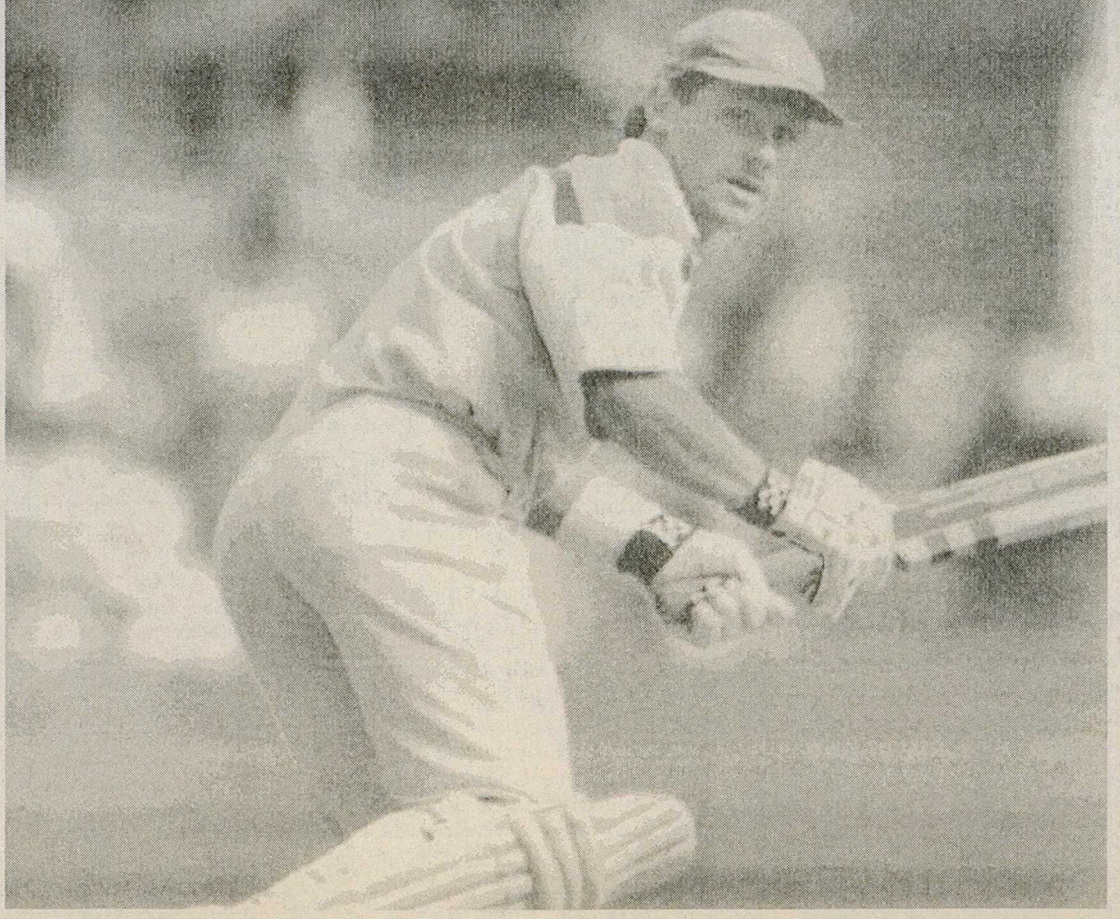
Richardson's undefeated 80 hinted at an improvement in his own form, while an innings of 71 by talented 22-year-old Brian Lara may have earned himself a spot in today's game.

Especially impressive was pace bowler Winston Benjamin with two wickets, but more importantly conceding only eight runs in six overs.

West Indies' pacemen have often been criticised for being unable to bowl within the stricter confines of the laws of one-day cricket, conceding large amounts of extras which have sometimes cost them the game.

They cannot afford any such luxury in the next five weeks.

Pakistan and the West Indies start joint third-favourites behind Australia and England for the Crystal Globe trophy.



English batsman Robin Smith plays a shot to third man during his innings of 91 in the World Cup match against India, held in Perth, Australia, yesterday. England won the match by 9 runs. — Reuter wire photo

Semi-finals : Springboks' minimum Cup target

BRISBANE — South Africa's cricket team has made a spot in the semifinals its minimum target as it prepares to play in a World Cup tournament for the first time.

South Africa is an unknown quantity at the start of the nine-nation tournament — a result of its 22 years of isolation.

Key players Brian McMillan and Mark Rushmere said on Friday that the team members believed they had to ability to at least make the semifinals.

"We are going for the semifinals and if we get there anything can happen," said batsman Rushmere. "They guys are all feeling very positive and we have nothing to lose."

Allrounder McMillan said the mood of the players was upbeat.

"We expect to do fairly well and we'll surprise a few teams," McMillan said. "Making the semifinals is the initial target."

Though South African team lacks international experience, McMillan doesn't believe that is necessarily a major setback.

"We know more about most of the teams we will be playing than they know about us," he said. "The other teams do have an ad-

vantage in that we will be making a big step up from domestic cricket, but a lot of our blokes have some overseas experience."

McMillan, a right-arm fast-medium bowler and capable batsman, has himself played for Warwickshire in the English county championship.

He said the South Africans were more enthusiastic than apprehensive about their return to the international arena.

"Our blokes are fairly excited," he said. "This is the ultimate and everyone is positive and looking forward to the challenge."

McMillan said the team was trying to ignore the expectations of the cricket-crazy South African public.

"The people back home expect us to do well, but we are not thinking about that," he said. "That is their problem. Not ours."

McMillan said the South African team had been warmly welcomed throughout Australia.

"In a way, it makes us realise what we've been missing," he said. "It is a pity we didn't get back into international cricket a lot sooner."

McMillan said the team had moulded into a good unit, typified by a

fighting spirit.

"We always play with great drive and determination," he said. "We are never lethargic and always fight — that's one of the main characteristics of the team."

McMillan said there had been no discontent in the squad over the controversial omission of veterans Clive Rice and Jimmy Cook.

"The selectors named the best team and that is it," he said. "This is the best team — a team for the present and a team for the future."

Rushmere said the South Africans had quickly adjusted to the more bouncy Australian wicket and the white limited-overs ball, which swings noticeably.

"We are all comfortable with the conditions and have adjusted well," he said.

All the South Africans are slightly nervous about their first match of the World Cup — a contest against defending champion Australia in front of a sellout crowd at the Sydney cricket ground on Wednesday.

"We'll be nervous, but it is a matter of controlling those nerves," Rushmere said. "It is certainly a

big game to start with."

McMillan said it was up to the South African to shut out the crowd and the occasion.

"It will get to us initially, but once the first ball is bowled it has to become just another match," he said. - AP

Procter's concern

BRISBANE — South Africa's cricket coach Mike Procter is concerned about some of his batsmen lacking match practice after a World Cup warm-up against Queensland was abandoned for a second time yesterday.

"It has really thrown us out," said Procter, who elected to stay indoors to watch the New Zealand-Australia opening cup match on television with his team. "Our fielding and our bowling looks in top shape but I must admit I am a little concerned with the batting at the moment. Procter said.

"We have had plenty of time in the nets since we got here but it's not the same as time in the middle against different attacks," Procter said. — Reuter

