

Easy rider



Two-year-old **Fiona Cohen** learns to ride her tricycle with her mother **Christine** Monday at Research Park. **Cohen** said they decided to ride at the park because it was too hard for **Fiona** to ride on dirt roads

ANTHONY DISALVO/THE BATTALION

# NATO bombs strike hospital

## Yugoslav capital faces second blackout as air campaign escalates

BELGRADE, Yugoslavia (AP) — NATO missiles killed at least 16 people when they smashed into a hospital and a retirement home Monday in Yugoslavia, Serb officials said amid growing concern about civilian casualties from the alliance's bombing campaign.

The alliance acknowledged striking a military barracks and an ammunition storage area in the area around Surdulica, 220 miles south-east of Belgrade, but would not confirm hitting the civilian sites and the reports of casualties.

Condemning the "murdering of civilians" in Serbia, President Slobodan Milosevic said the latest attacks endangered fragile peace efforts, which continue this week with talks with the Finnish president. Russia's Balkans envoy also announced plans to meet again this week with Milosevic.

The Yugoslav government

reiterated that it accepts principles set forth by the Group of Eight major powers for ending the Kosovo conflict. But Milosevic's latest statement still fell short of Western demands for the makeup of a peacekeeping force in Kosovo.

Alliance officials insisted there will be "no negotiations" with Belgrade, which they said must halt the violence in Kosovo, withdraw its forces from the province and allow NATO troops into Kosovo to police the peace for ethnic Albanians.

In Washington, National Security Council spokesperson Michael Hammer expressed skepticism that Milosevic is serious about peace.

"Everybody's wondering whether we're on the edge of a breakthrough," Hammer said. "I think it's a bit premature."

The European Union on Monday also demanded Milosevic translate his words into action and show an "unambiguous and verifiable" commitment to a Western plan for Kosovo.

NATO, despite being put on the defensive again over its targeting practices, pressed ahead

with its escalated air campaign. In Kosovo, U.S. A-10 "Warthog" jets struck Serb forces clashing with ethnic Albanian rebels in the hills along the Albanian border.

Belgrade, the Yugoslav capital, suffered another blackout Monday evening shortly after air-raid sirens signaled a new round of NATO attacks. The private Beta news agency reported two transformer stations outside Belgrade had been struck for the second time in less than a week, causing the outage.

Western journalists taken to Surdulica by Serb authorities saw a scene of devastation, with 11 bodies lying under sheets outside the shattered medical complex and four others, those of elderly women, on stretchers in front of the retirement home. A human hand was visible, protruding from the rubble.

Rescue workers were still pulling bodies from the rubble at midafternoon, more than a dozen hours after the attack. Survivors told of four blasts shortly after a plane passed over the complex on the city's outskirts, just after midnight.

Kosovo roundup

May 31 Major NATO attacks



**Military action**  
 On Sunday, missiles slammed into a bridge crowded with shoppers heading to the central Serbian town of Krusevac, killing at least 11 people and sending several cars plunging into the Morava River.  
 In Surdulica, Tanjug, the Yugoslav service said three missiles hit the same area for patients with lung diseases, killing six. Two more missiles hit a retirement home next door, killing five people, it said.  
 Source: NATO

# India agrees to Kashmir talks

KARGIL, India (AP) — India agreed Monday to hold talks with Pakistan over Kashmir, after six days of Indian airstrikes on the hideouts of Islamic militants in the disputed frontier region.

There was no letup in the Indian offensive despite the planned talks, and Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee pledged Monday to keep fighting until the guerrillas are driven out — something military officials say could take weeks.

India accuses Pakistan of backing guerrillas who seized positions on 17,000-foot mountains in India-controlled territory earlier this month. Pakistan strenuously denies the charge.

India and Pakistan appeared to have responded to growing international worry over hostilities between the two nuclear-armed nations. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and British Foreign Minister Robin Cook spoke with their Indian counterpart, Jaswant Singh, over the weekend to express concern over the fighting.

Last year, India and Pakistan detonated nuclear devices, raising the stakes of any confrontation. Both are working on delivery systems for nuclear warheads.

Vajpayee's agreement to the talks came three days after a proposal made by his Pakistani counterpart, Nawaz Sharif, to send Foreign Minister Sartaj Aziz to India for

talks. Pakistan was expected to suggest dates for talks.

The airstrikes in Kashmir are unlikely to be intensified, but fighting on the ground likely will be. Indian infantry troops are already locked in close-quarters combat in many places to flush out hundreds of guerrillas.

India said Monday the guerrillas are heavily armed, with machine guns, rockets and Stinger missiles to shoot down Indian aircraft. However, the government claimed the area occupied by the guerrillas was shrinking.

"It is a matter of time that we will be able to remove them from these areas," defense Minister George Fernandes said.

# Congress to consider tax changes

WASHINGTON (AP) — Americans increasingly perplexed by the country's complex tax laws may find little relief in sight: one out of every five bills introduced in Congress this year would tinker with the tax code, and President Clinton himself is proposing 131 changes.

Even the Internal Revenue Service is starting to feel the strain of 6,493 tax law changes since 1986.

The worry is that more tinkering could divert precious resources and slow the IRS' transformation into a more taxpayer-friendly agency.

"You add all these things up and the IRS can't handle it," Rep. Amo Houghton, R-N.Y., chair of the House Ways and Means subcommittee that oversees the agency, said.

Val Oveson, the IRS national taxpayer advocate, said rapid-fire changes make it difficult to interpret laws, draft forms, program already-overloaded computers and train employees. As a result, taxpayers have a harder time understanding the rules and getting the right answers from the agency.

"Failing to understand the law results in frustration at both ends," Oveson told a con-

gressional committee recently. "Don't change the tax laws so much."

But there is little sign that Congress and the White House are listening.

Clinton, for example, proposed 28 new specific tax cuts in his budget for fiscal 2000, including credits for care of disabled elderly and the newborn and 73 ways to raise revenue.

**"Failing to understand the law results in frustration at both ends. Don't change the tax laws so much."**

— Val Oveson  
 IRS national taxpayer advocate

Lawmakers from both parties have dozens of bills providing tax relief for almost every imaginable constituency.

The IRS says about 20 percent of all bills introduced so far this year in the Republican-controlled Congress would have some im-

act on the tax code. That compares with about 15 percent in 1993-94, the last time Democrats controlled the House and Senate.

Last week, Republican Sens. Paul Coverdell of Georgia and Susan Collins of Maine introduced a proposal allowing teachers to deduct up to \$250 a year for their out-of-pocket classroom expenses, such as supplies and instructional aids.

For Coverdell, the bill has a key political purpose: Teacher unions oppose separate legislation he proposed to allow tax-free IRA-like accounts to pay private school costs, but many average teachers like the \$250 deduction idea.

"As long as we are confronted with the tax code we have, I will be among those trying to find ways to relieve pressure on the working people of this country," Coverdell said. "We just have to live with the fact that we have a very complicated tax code."

Because these tax changes often are targeted for political reasons at the middle class, they frequently are phased out for higher-income taxpayers. That means the IRS must produce a way for taxpayers to figure out if the break applies to them, and then taxpayers have to do the calculations.

# 2 government Websites vandalized by hackers

WASHINGTON (AP) — Computer hackers attacked two more government sites on the Internet on Monday and left a taunting note promising to vandalize more federal computers because of a related FBI investigation.

Hackers from different organizations defaced a Web page early Monday within the Interior Department and a site run by a federal supercomputer laboratory in Idaho Falls, Idaho, claiming "it's our turn to hit them where it hurts."

"These are the perils of open government," Stephanie Hanna, an Interior spokesperson, said. "We try to make as much of the materials of the Interior Department as open and available as possible. The consequence of that is, those who choose to do damaging things can do that."

Last week, hackers claiming to be from another group defaced the Web-

site for the U.S. Senate, causing it to be taken offline until the weekend.

The FBI also was forced to shut down its own Internet site last week after hackers launched an electronic attack against it. It remained inaccessible Monday, along with the Website of its National Infrastructure Protection Center, which helps investigate computer crimes.

Messages left at the attacked sites suggest they were vandalized by a group of hackers against what was said to be the FBI's harassment of specific hate groups, including the group that was accused of breaking into the White House last month.

The FBI confirmed it executed a search warrant last week in Texas related to an investigation into allegations of computer intrusion, including one search at the home of a prominent hacker in Houston.

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