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# WORLD

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THE BATTALION

Thursday, April 6,

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## Boris Yeltsin retires, receives pension card

MOSCOW (AP) — Former President Boris Yeltsin officially became a retiree Wednesday, receiving his pensioner's card — and a promise that his pension will be paid on time, something his own administration was largely unable to do.

"I think [the government] will not be ashamed over any delays with pension payments that existed in the past," the head of the Russian Pension Foundation, Mikhail Zurabov, told Yeltsin.

Zurabov spoke as he handed him the card at the government-owned Gorky-9 country residence where Yeltsin lives.

"We will confidently pay pensions to all retirees, including you," Zurabov said in footage broadcast on Russia's main television channels. The TV report did not give the amount of the pension.

During Yeltsin's nine years in power, Russia's state workers and retirees routinely received their pay months late, as the cash-strapped government struggled to collect enough revenues to cover

even most basic expenditures.

The payment delays contributed to Russians' wide dislike of their former president.

Yeltsin, 69, will get a pension that is lavish by Russian standards — the average monthly pension now is about \$17.50.

Shortly after Yeltsin resigned Dec. 31 and named then-Premier Vladimir Putin as his successor, Putin signed a decree setting Yeltsin's pension at 75 percent of his presidential salary, giving him the use of one of the



YELTSIN

state-owned country residences for life, and allowing him to finance a corps of aides out of the government budget.

Putin became president after winning elections March 26.

Yeltsin smiled and appeared healthy Wednesday.

"Even in this pensioner's post I will serve Russia," Yeltsin said, "with as much strength as I've got."

*"Even in this pensioner's post I will serve Russia with as much strength as I've got."*

## Brazil's leader seeks justice

Brazil's landless leader seeks justice

The retrial of Jose Rainha, Brazil's most visible landless leader Monday, nearly three years after he was convicted of killing a

in a botched attempt to take over a farm. Land ownership in Brazil is skewed, with the most affluent 10 percent of the population owning 90 percent of the land.

Rainha's group, the Landless Rural Workers Movement, promotes land invasions to redress the fact that most of the land in Brazil is owned by a small, elite portion of the population.

Rainha was sentenced to 26 1/2 years in prison but in Brazil, anyone sentenced to more than 20 years is automatically granted a retrial.



Jose Rainha



Source: Compiled from AP wire reports

## Turkish parliament rejects bill

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) — Turkey's parliament rejected a bill to extend President Suleyman Demirel's term in office today, a serious blow to the 10-month-old government pushed hard for the re-election of the 76-old president.

Only 303 deputies voted in favor of the constitutional reform while 400 legislators voted against. It was the first time the government would seek a vote or withdraw the bill.

The vote was a setback for Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit, who has argued that Demirel's re-election was necessary for stability in the country.

The result was expected to cause serious political bickering among cabinet members. Many apparently viewed Demirel as the symbol of immobility in Turkish politics and favored other candidates.

Ecevit feared that dissenting cabinet members could hamper the government's economic reform program and much-needed political reforms on the road toward membership in the European Union.

The constitutional reform would reduce the president's term from seven to five years, but would allow for a second term. A new president must be elected by May 16.

Presidents are elected by parliament and in theory fill a largely ceremonial post, however the presidency has become the power broker in several governments and yourself arrested, have you ever been arrested, be strip searched, be strip searched and held without speaking for hours, Amanda Prewitt said she was arrested during a protest week despite their earlier withdrawal of support, causing serious strains on the coalition.

Ecevit called on deputies to cast their secret votes in support of Demirel's re-election. His move aimed at 100 deputies of the opposition parties who voted against the president's re-election during a protest week despite their earlier withdrawal of support, causing serious strains on the coalition.

"The honorary status of president has been overshadowed," Ecevit said. "This contradiction must be corrected."

Ecevit said as many as 406 deputies, including members of the center-right opposition True Path Party, had backed the proposal. The government alone has 351 seats.

The prime minister's call was met with a warning by Parliament speaker Yildirim Akbulut that he would cancel the voting if deputies did not vote openly, in violation of a constitutional requirement for secret voting.

Ecevit wants to prevent further bickering among his coalition members over Demirel's successor. He said he could hamper the government's economic reform package and needed political stability on the road toward membership in the European Union.

Demirel has failed to draw support from deputies who say they are linked to one person and that it is time for him to retire from politics.

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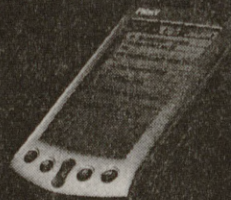
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