

UNDRO seeks \$137m for Iraqi refugees

GENEVA, Apr 6: The UN Disaster Relief Office (UNDRO) appealed for 137 million dollars on Friday for refugees fleeing Iraq, reports Reuters.

UNDRO has acted as coordinator of a regional plan to care for refugees during the Gulf crisis. Before the allies drove Iraq out of Kuwait it set up a 175-million-dollar contingency plan to handle 400,000 possible refugees.

It has spent 38 million dollars of that amount and said in its appeal on Friday that the balance was now urgently needed.

Repression of civilians in Iraq condemned

UNITED NATIONS, April 6: The Security Council on Friday condemned the repression of civilians in Iraq especially Kurds and demanded that Baghdad allow humanitarian organisations immediate access to all those in need, reports Reuters.

The vote which responds to a world-wide outcry, was 10 in favour and three against with two abstentions.

AIDS medicine produced in Bulgaria

SOFIA, Apr 6: Bulgarian medical scientists announced here Thursday that they have successfully produced an AIDS medicine, reports Xinhua.

The drug, named as Tias, is an injection that can effectively prevent the AIDS virus from proliferating in human bodies, said a report of Bulgaria's BTA news Agency.

Clinical tests showed that after Tias is injected, AIDS virus temporarily vanishes in the patients' blood, and the ailment can be gradually cured.

Tias' exerts no side effect to human bodies. It has been proved for the past 20 years both on animals and on the scientists themselves, the report said.

Bulgarian medical experts considered the success of Tias a turning point in aids therapy and have provided the drug to international medical institutions for appraisal.

'Big Five' to deploy troops on Iraq-Kuwait border

Baghdad to accept UN mission in Kurdistan

NICOSIA, April 6: Iraq said on Friday it was ready to receive a United Nations mission to its Kurdistan region, scene of a failed revolt against President Saddam Hussein's forces, reports Reuters.

The official Iraqi news agency said Baghdad had told the UN General Assembly it was willing to accept such a visit to autonomous Kurdistan.

Earlier on Friday Iraq offered an amnesty to all Kurds who took part in the rebellion except those who committed murder, rape and looting during acts of riots and treason.

Hundreds of thousands are fleeing to Iran and Turkey for fear of reprisals and Damascus based Kurdish rebels dismissed the amnesty announcement as a "sick joke".

The agency monitored by the British Broadcasting Corporation, said any UN mission should not include representatives of countries which joined the Gulf war alliance led by Washington and which drove Iraqis troops from Kuwait.

Iraq's ambassador to Belgium, Zaid Haidar, said a delegation would be well received by Baghdad.

We have asked the highest international levels to verify with a delegation what is happening, he told a Belgian television reporter.

France, Britain and the United States pressed the UN Security Council to adopt a resolution on Friday demanding that Iraq stop its military onslaught against the Kurds.

Fleeing Kurds have accused Saddam's forces of genocide, a NATO meeting in Brussels condemned massive violations of human rights.



AMMAN, (Jordan): A Muslim women holds up a Quran in a protest April 5, against UN Security Council Resolution 687 which imposed tough ceasefire conditions for the Gulf war upon Iraq. — Photo AFP/UNB

France met with the UN Secretary-General Friday and accepted in principle a plan to deploy military contingents to join troops from some 30 other countries to monitor the border, the sources said.

It would be the first time in UN history that soldiers from the five countries will work side by side to keep the peace. A similar project following the Korean War was rejected because of the hostile mood of the cold war.

UN Chief Javier Perez de Cuellar is expected to present

the Security Council Saturday with a plan for deploying the Security Forces in compliance with the ceasefire resolution passed Wednesday.

According to initial reports 300 military observers with logistical support from some 2,000 staff will be deployed in a demilitarized zone to divide Iraq and Kuwait. According to a ceasefire formula adopted Wednesday by the Security Council the zone will reach 10 kilometers (six miles) inside Iraq and five kilometers (three miles) inside Kuwait.

UN official have already discussed the plan with the 21 countries which regularly join in UN peace-keeping operations plus Thailand, Greece and Turkey.

The creation of the Iraq-Kuwait Observer Mission (UNIKOM) depends on Iraq's acceptance of the conditions set down Wednesday by Security Council Resolution 687 formalizing the ceasefire.

Danielle Mitterrand

Meanwhile, France's First Lady, Danielle Mitterrand, appealed to the world on Friday to save Iraq Kurds and urged French Trainers to lead overland convoys carrying aid for refugees driven from Iraq.

The wife of President Francois Mitterrand said the code of non-interference in a nation's internal affairs was irrelevant when a people was being exterminated.

"If you lived next door to someone who had lost his mind and was massacring his daughter, what would you do?" She demanded at a news conference.

"When a people is being massacred there is no such thing as interference."

Danielle Mitterrand 66 is careful to limit her forays into politics to avoid embarrassing her husband.

But France, Britain and the United States, arguing that the situation in Iraq has stirred world wide concern and is no longer a purely internal matter, pressed the Security Council on Friday to adopt a resolution insisting Iraq stop repression.

The French leader's wife, a determined campaigner for the Kurdish cause in her role as president of the human rights group France liberties appealed for cash contributions from the public which could be swiftly funnelled to Kurdish refugees.

She called on French lorry and train drivers to organise convoys to Turkey and invited others to join in saying moving aid overland would be more effective than airlifts.

New UN body on Gulf truce

UNITED NATIONS, Apr 6: UN Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar has decided to set up a coordinating group for the implementation of Security Council Resolution 687 on formal Gulf cease-fire, reports Xinhua.

In accordance with the responsibilities entrusted to him in Security Council Resolution 687, the Secretary-General has decided to establish an inter-departmental coordinating group of senior United Nations officials to supervise and direct the implementation of the various provisions of the resolution, + Francois Giuliani, spokesman for the UN Chief, told reporters at the noon briefing Thursday.

The nine-member group consists of senior officials including the Secretary-General's Chef De Cabinet Virendra Dayal and a number of Under-Secretaries-General.

In the absence of the Secretary-General, the spokesman said, Dayal will chair the coordinating group.

Resolution 687, adopted Wednesday, puts a series of tough conditions in Iraq for a formal cease-fire in the Gulf.

Under the resolution, Iraq has to, among other things, respect the international border defined by Iraq and Kuwait in 1963, destroy all chemical and biological weapons and ballistic missiles with a range of more than 150 kilometers and pay war reparation out of its oil export income.

The resolution gives the Secretary-General a role in demarcating the Iraq-Kuwaiti border, deploying a UN observer unit on the border, ensuring the destruction of the weapons, returning by Iraq of Kuwaiti property and other aspects concerning the implementation of the resolution.

Polls in five Indian states in May

NEW DELHI, Apr 6: Five states and one union territory in India are likely to go in for assembly polls simultaneously with the May-end Lok Sabha (Lower House of Parliament) elections after dissolution of Kerala State Assembly and the expected dissolution of Haryana State Assembly, reports Xinhua.

The Election Commission has already decided to conduct assembly polls in the southern state of Tamil Nadu, the eastern state of West Bengal, the northern state of Uttar Pradesh and Union territory of Pondicherry.

In the northwestern state of Haryana, following the union cabinet's endorsement Friday of Governor Dhanik Lal Mandal's recommendation to dissolve the state assembly and place it under President's Rule, the presidential proclamation is expected on Monday.

Since the new Lok Sabha is to be constituted on June 6, it was decided that the presidential proclamation should be issued only on Monday to obviate any possibility of violating the provisions of the constitution which stipulates that such proclamation must be placed before parliament within 60 days.

Governor Mandal had sent his report to the President following disqualification of three ruling Janata Dal (Socialist) members of legislative assembly which reduced the newly-installed Chautala Ministry to a minority. Chautala is the second son of Deputy Prime Minister Devi Lal.

Kerala was the fifth state to go for concurrent assembly polls when Governor Be Rajaiah accepted Friday the state cabinet's recommendation to dissolve the house, which was constituted on March 25, 1987.

However, Chief Election Commissioner T N Seshan told the Press Trust of India today that a decision on holding election in Haryana and Kerala states would be taken only after receipt of official information about the status of the legislative assemblies there.

South African Blacks agree to peace talks

JOHANNESBURG, Apr 6: South Africa's most powerful black politicians agreed to hold surprise peace talks today in a fresh attempt to end brutal factional warfare threatening to wreck reforms of apartheid, reports Reuters.

African National Congress leader Nelson Mandela and his rival Zulu chief Mangosuthu Buthe were expected to try to shore up a two-month-old peace plan which has failed to stop their fighting for control of the country's townships.

Off the Record

Gorby's charity

MOSCOW: President Mikhail Gorbachev turns almost all additional payments received by him while in office over to charities, the Komsomolskaya Pravda newspaper said Thursday quoting figures released by Gorbachev's financial service, reports TASS.

Author's fees for publications in the USSR and abroad are also donated to charity. These fees totalled one million rubles and about a million USA dollars in 1990.

His prizes are likewise funnelled into charity work. For instance, the Noble Peace Prize and Fungi Prize, the combined sum of which amounted to 1,167,000 dollars were spent, according to the President's wishes, on the purchase of equipment for medical institutions.

The Soviet President carries on his tradition today, too.



'Dallas' to say good-bye May 3

LOS ANGELES: "Dallas" the long-running Television Soap Opera that kept viewers on the edge of their couches for 13 years with a series of nail-biting cliffhangers, will end its 13-year run on May 3. CBS television said on Thursday, reports Reuters.

Network spokeswoman Nancy Carr said the decision to take "Dallas" off the air was made "in the last month or so".

"It was a programming decision," she said, adding she did not know if falling ratings for the former number-one rated show had anything to do with it.

Jess Sagansky, President of the CBS Entertainment Division, said the show had "turned the traditional one-hour dramatic format on its ear" when it debuted on April 2, 1978, and had "made a major mark on American television."

"Dallas" chronicled the lives of the oil-rich Ewing family of Dallas, Texas, focusing on the battle between the dastardly J.R. Ewing, portrayed by Larry Hagman, and his honest, upright, younger brother, played by Patrick Duffy.

It inspired a series of nighttime soap operas, all of which developed huge followings during the 1980s, including "Dynasty", "Knot's Landing" and "Falcon Crest" only "Knot's Landing", a spin-off of "Dallas" remains in production.

"Dallas" was the second-longest-running dramatic series in the history of US television, behind the Western "Gunsmoke".

Salt can be dangerous

LONDON, Apr 6: Three separate studies published Friday found that people who reduce their salt intake can lower their blood pressure even more than with drug treatment, reports Reuters.

And the researchers estimated that if people over 50 years of age cut their salt intake by three grams a day, strokes would be reduced by 22 per cent and ischaemic heart disease — caused by a lack of blood flowing to the heart — by 16 per cent.

If processed food manufacturers cut the amount of salt used in their products, the number of strokes would be cut by 39 per cent and ischaemic heart disease by 30 per cent, they said.

Although doctors have long surmised that diets low in salt might reduce blood pressure, previous studies on such a link have been weak and contradictory.

Kashmiris put off march

ISLAMABAD, Apr 6: Kashmir militants, seeking more support for their separatist fight against India, said on Thursday they had put off a protest march on the frontier until after talks with the Pakistani authorities on Sunday, reports Reuters.

Thousands of militants, protesting at the lack of Pakistani backing for the uprising in Indian Kashmir, stopped 20 km (12 miles) from the border on Wednesday after receiving an invitation for talks from Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif.

Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) Chairman Amanullah Khan said a delegation of leading militants had met "some important" people in the Pakistan government who promised sympathetic consideration of their demands.

"We have given them until 7th April to accept our demands," he said. If they were not met, the march would resume on Monday when the Lower House of Pakistan's Parliament was due to hold a debate on Kashmir.

The unarmed militants began a march on Wednesday from the Pakistan-ruled Azad (free) Kashmir capital of Muzaffargarh to the Chakothi frontier post 55 km (35 miles) away, which they said they would cross even if it meant death.

Bhattarai gets astrologers' nod

KATHMANDU, April 6: Some 5,000 supporters chose an auspicious moment Friday to launch the Prime Minister's bid for victory in Nepal's first western-style polls for three decades, reports Reuters.

Senior astrologers in the world's only officially Hindu State advised Prime Minister Krishna Prasad Bhattarai that the stars favoured 10 am (0415 GMT) for his procession to the Kathmandu district election office to file his candidacy papers.

Bhattarai, leader of the Nepali Congress Party which swept the last multi-party polls in 1959, will contest one of five Kathmandu constituencies in the May 12 elections for a new 205-seat Assembly.

He heads an interim government of ex-dissidents who took office last April after mass protests forced King Birendra to surrender his absolute powers and scrap a system of non-party elected councils subject to the monarchy.

King Birendra's father, King Mahendra, ended Nepal's last experiment with multi-party democracy after 21 months, arresting Bhattarai and other Nepali Congress leaders on charges of reducing the Himalayan kingdom to chaos.

King Birendra formally declared himself a British-style constitutional monarch last November.

The centrist Nepali Congress plans to contest all 205 seats in the new assembly.

Its main junior partner in a fractious coalition, the Communist Party of Nepal, is to fight for 188 seats.

The two other main contenders are both called the National Democratic Party (NDP) and are made up of pro-monarchist politicians who served under the old regime.

The NDP (Thapa) will put up 175 candidates and the NDP (Chand) will field 145.

BRIEFLY

Filipino guerillas kill 7: Communist guerillas killed seven government men and wounded two others in a midday ambush near this northern city Friday, the local Police Chief said in Laos, reports AFP.

Two policemen, two soldiers and three militiamen were killed when about 30 guerillas of the communist New People's Army (NPA) ambushed their jeep in Sarrao town, superintendent Jose Dalumpines said adding that the guerillas fled with the slain soldiers' firearms.

The ambush occurred shortly after a clash between government forces and NPA guerillas just outside the town he said.

British supplies for Kurds: British aircraft are to take part in a Mercy Mission dropping supplies to Kurdish refugees fleeing from Saddam Hussein's military onslaught in Iraq, a government spokesman said in London Friday, reports AFP.

The joint US and British mission to send supplies of food, medical and other equipment to the refugees was announced in London and California late Friday.

A government spokesman in London said: "We have been in close contact with the American government. We fully support their decision to mount an airlift to relieve the suffering of the refugees in Iraq."

"We have offered facilities, aircraft and supplies to take part in this relief operation."

7 blasts in Manchester: Seven bomb blasts ripped through a shopping district in the northern English city of Manchester early on Friday, causing damage and fires but no injuries, police and firemen said in Manchester, reports Reuters.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility but shopping areas in Northern Ireland have been a favourite target of the Irish Republican Army (IRA), which is fighting to oust Britain from the province.

In recent years so-called animal liberationists, opposed to the sale of furs, have placed firebombs in department stores across Britain.

Pakistani held in KL: Malaysian police have arrested a Pakistani in connection with last month's hijacking of a Singapore Airlines jet, Malaysian newspapers reported Saturday in Kuala Lumpur, reports Reuters.

They quoted police as saying the man, in his 40s, was detained last Tuesday in the capital, Kuala Lumpur, and is being questioned.

Police declined comment on the newspaper reports.

Singapore Commandos stormed the hijacked Airbus on March 27 and shot dead four Pakistani hijackers to free 123 passengers and crew.

Iraqi embassy sieged: Armed police surrounded Iraq's Embassy in London Friday after about 20 people protesting against Iraqi President Saddam Hussein occupied the building, Reuters reports from London.

A police spokeswoman said the demonstrators appeared to be Kurds. It was not known if any staff were in the embassy.

They appear to have taken over, shouting and throwing documents from the building, the spokeswoman said.

Kaifu back home: Japanese Prime Minister Toshiki Kaifu returned in Tokyo Saturday after a one-day summit with US President George Bush in the US west coast resort of Newport beach, reports AFP from Tokyo.

During the talks, the two leaders reported progress in easing bilateral trade tensions and reaffirmed the strength of the US-Japan partnership.

Bush also thanked Japan for its financial support to the US-led Allied war effort in the Gulf.

Benazir's plea to remove Sindh govt

KARACHI, April 6: Former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto's Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Friday demanded the removal of the Sindh Provincial Government for allegedly kidnapping legislators, reports AFP.

A resolution calling for the dismissal of the Sindh Government was adopted during the PPP's Central Executive Committee meeting Thursday in Larkana, Ms Bhutto's hometown, officials said.

Expressing grave concern over the recent abductions of PPP Members of the Sindh Assembly, the party said that kidnapping was an offence dealt with under Federal Law and when that law is violated

the Federal Government is responsible for upholding the law.

The PPP has alleged that Sindh Chief Minister Jam Sadiq Ali was behind the kidnappings.

All has denied the allegations as baseless and made a counter charge that the PPP staged the abductions.

"If a Provincial Government, instead of ensuring that the law is upheld, resorts to violating it by kidnapping Legislators, then the government has ceased to function", the PPP resolution said.

The PPP had alleged that the Provincial Government kidnapped five legislators prior to Senate elections in March.

The oppositions, led by Ms Bhutto, had boycotted National Assembly sessions for 18 days to protest the kidnappings.

The government and the opposition reached an understanding Tuesday to set up a six-member joint committee to investigate the charges.

But the Chief Minister of the southern province has refused to cooperate with the committee and has challenged its validity.

Six politicians quit Shekhar's party

NEW DELHI, Apr 6: Six politicians from Prime Minister Chandra Shekhar's ruling Janata Dal (Socialist) Party today announced that they had decided to quit the party, report AFP.

All six told reporters later that they were joining the opposition Congress (I) party of former Premier Rajiv Gandhi.

Five of them were ministers in the government of the tiny northern state of Haryana, headed by Chief Minister Om Prakash Chautala, the controversial politician and son of Deputy Prime Minister Devi Lal.

The five are: Dharam Vir Singh, Narvir Singh, Surender Singh, Hassan Mohammad and Chaudhary Shiv Lal.

Earlier officials here said the federal cabinet has decided to recommend to Indian President Ramaswamy Venkataraman that he dismiss the Haryana government of Chautala, who is also national General Secretary of the ruling party.



THIMPHU, (Bhutan): Bangladesh National Day, which also marked Twentieth Anniversary of Bangladesh's independence, was celebrated in a befitting manner here on March 26. Photo shows Bhutanese Foreign Minister Dawa Tsering cutting the ceremonial cake at the National Day Reception hosted by Bangladesh Ambassador Syed Muazzem Ali and Mrs. Ali. Besides host and hostess, Bhutanese Minister for Communication and Social Services Dr. T. Tobgyel and Minister for Trade and Industries Mr. Om Pradhan are also seen in the practice.