

Prince Aga Khan to oversee UN relief work in Iraq, Kuwait

UNITED NATIONS, Apr 10: Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan was named to oversee UN humanitarian operations in Iraq and Kuwait and on Iraq's borders with Turkey and Iran, where hundreds of thousands of refugees have fled, reports Reuter.

Sadruddin, 58, is a former UN High Commissioner for Refugees and until December was coordinator of UN aid and economic programmes for war-ravaged Afghanistan.

The UN also announced that Eric Suy, a former Director General of the UN office in Geneva, would head a fact-finding mission to the Kurdish region of Northern Iraq to report on the plight of the population.

Two writers win 'Pulitzer Prize'

NEW YORK, Apr 10: Two of America's most distinguished writers John Updike and Neil Simon won the Pulitzer Prizes for fiction and drama on Tuesday, reports Reuter.

Updike won for his novel 'Rabbit at rest' and Simon for his play Lost in Yonkers now on Broadway.

The Des Moines register newspaper won the Pulitzer prize for public service for a series which told the story of a woman who had been raped, using the woman's name.

The series by Jane Schorer prompted widespread reconsideration of traditional media practice of concealing the identity of rape victims.

The prizes are the highest awards given annually for American Journalism and the Arts.

Formal declaration of truce delayed

UN to send 1,440 observers to Iraq-Kuwait border

UNITED NATIONS, Apr 10: The Security Council unanimously approved plans on Tuesday to send a 1,440-man UN observer unit to patrol a demilitarised zone on either side of the Iraq-Kuwait border, reports Reuter.

To be known as the United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission (UNI-KOM), its task will be to deter violations of the boundary and observe any potentially hostile action by one side or the other.

The council acted even though it delayed, probably until Wednesday, the declaration of a formal ceasefire between Iraq and the United States-led coalition that drove it out of Kuwait at the end of February after a seven-month occupation.

Iraq's Foreign Minister last Saturday informed the council that Baghdad accepted a Resolution calling for the scrapping of its weapons of mass destruction, earmarking part of its oil revenues for war reparations and establishing the demilitarised zone along the Iraq-Kuwait border.

Another report says: The Security Council appeared likely on Tuesday to delay the formal declaration of a Gulf war ceasefire because it had not yet received the text of a decree by Iraq's National Assembly accepting the council's terms.

British and United States diplomats said council members approved the wording of a letter to Iraq saying its Foreign Minister had given irrevocable and unqualified acceptance of a tough council resolution set-

ting ceasefire terms, and that a ceasefire "is therefore now effective."

But the council was still awaiting a copy of the National Assembly document, also referred to in the letter to be sent to Iraqi UN ambassador Abdul Amir al-Anbari.

Council members disclosed

the hitch as they arrived for closed-door consultations to give final approval for the letter.

The hitch appeared to be only technical, but was sufficient to delay for perhaps 24 hours the despatch of the letter declaring the existence of a ceasefire.

The ceasefire, when eventually declared, will replace an informal cessation of hostilities that has been in effect since the end of February between Iraq and the United States-led Alliance that forced it from Kuwait.

Iraqi Foreign Minister Ahmed Hussein last Saturday

sent a note to the council filled with objections to the UN ceasefire Resolution, number 687, which calls for the scrapping of Baghdad's weapons of mass destruction and earmarking part of its oil revenues for war reparations.

But it concluded in the penultimate paragraph that Iraq "has no choice but to accept this resolution."

The response to be sent by Council President Paul Norderaeme of Belgium says the paragraph "contains official notification of the acceptance, irrevocable and without qualifying conditions by Iraq of Resolution 687 (1991) in accordance with paragraph 33 of that Resolution."

It adds that "this was confirmed to me during my meeting with you (Anbari), on April 8," while also noting that Iraq's National Assembly accepted the Resolution on April 6.

It is this document that the council is still waiting to see and get translated.

The final paragraph of the Council President's letter reads: "The members of the Security Council have, lastly, asked me to note that the conditions established in paragraph 33 of Resolution 687 (1991) have now been met and that the formal ceasefire referred to in paragraph 33 of that Resolution is therefore now effective."

Paragraph 33 of Resolution 687, adopted on April 3, "declares that, upon official notification by Iraq to the Secretary General and to the Security Council of its acceptance of the provision above a formal ceasefire is effective between Iraq and Kuwait and the member states cooperating with Kuwait in accordance with Resolution 678 (1990)."

Off the Record

Dilip to help Imran Khan's project

KARACHI: The legendary Indian film star Dilip Kumar will attend fund-raising dinners for a million dollar cancer hospital to be built in Lahore city, reports AFP.

Imran Khan, skipper of Pakistan's cricket team, who is campaigning for the hospital, told a Press conference here Tuesday that the dinners will be held in Karachi and Lahore on April 26 and 27.

He said that Mr. Kumar, who is very popular in Pakistan, accepted an invitation to attend, saying the dinners were for a noble cause.

He said Pakistani Prime Nawaz Sharif would lay the foundation stone for the hospital, for which 40 million rupees (1.8 million dollars) have already been collected.



Mixed marriages popular in USSR

MOSCOW: The USSR is a multinational country where the percentage of mixed marriages is a major prof of the interrelation between its peoples, reports IAN.

Mixed marriages constitute a large percentage of marriages in the USSR. It is the mixed families that suffer most from inter-ethnic conflicts that have been fanned up lately.

According to the 1989 census, the share of mixed families differs in different constituent republics and types of settlements.

Mixed families constitute a third of urban families in Moldova, the Ukraine, Byelorussia and Latvia. In the countryside the largest number of mixed families live in Kazakhstan and Latvia.

In 1988, the percentage of Russian men who married women of other nationalities was 16 per cent of the total number of people of that nationality who got married. Russian women 17.2 Ukrainian men 33.4, Ukrainian women 33.5, Turkmenian men 9, Turkmenian women 3.9, Tatar men 40.9, Tatar women 42.2 Lithuanian men 12.4 and Lithuanian women 12.3 per cent.

Pak opposition ends boycott of Assembly

ISLAMABAD, Apr 10: Pakistan's opposition, led by former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, signed Tuesday an accord to end its boycott of the National Assembly after the government agreed to their demands, officials said, reports AFP.

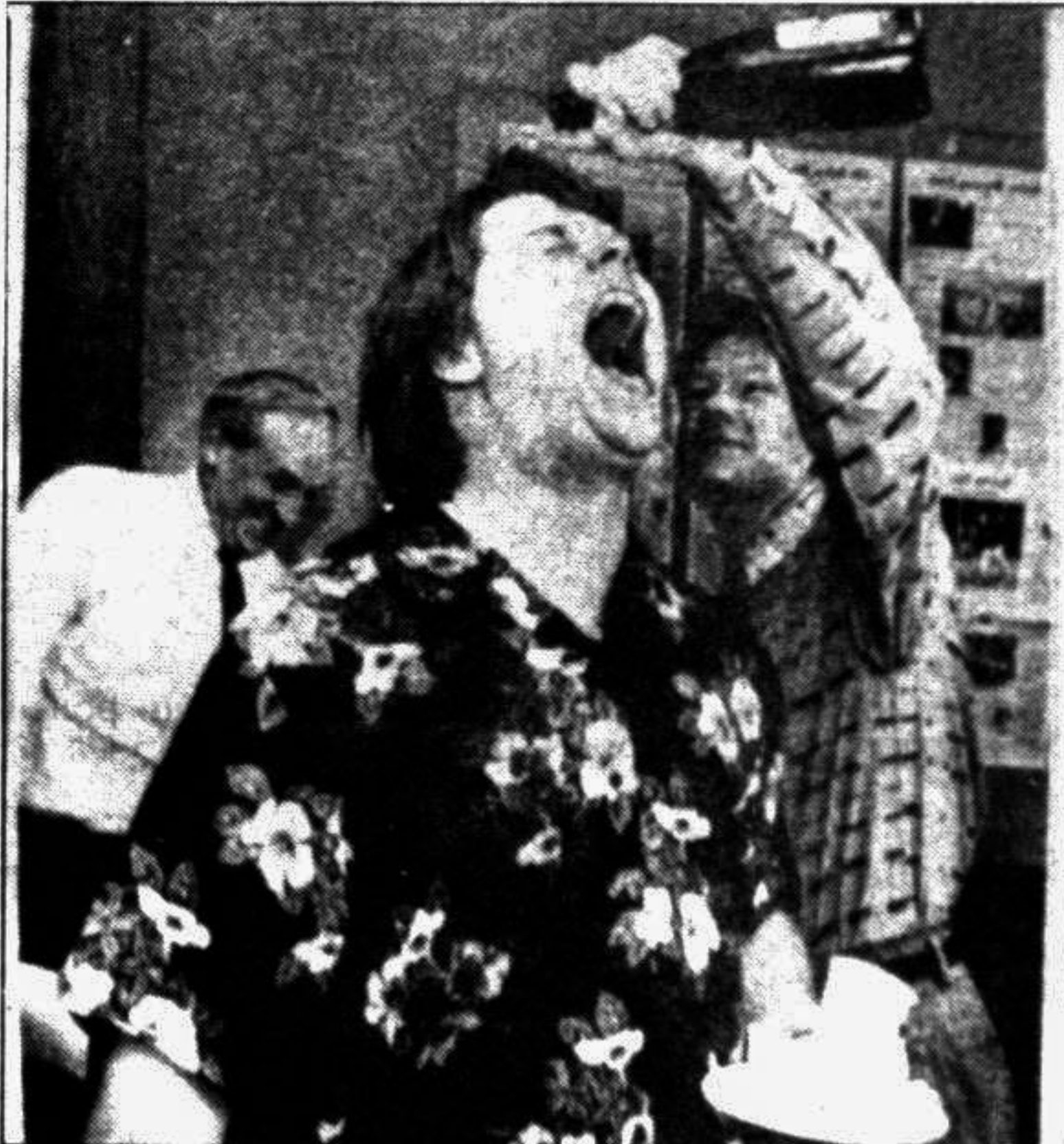
The accord was signed by the representatives of opposition People's Democratic Alliance and the government at the parliament building in the presence of newsmen.

The government agreed to appoint a joint six-member committee to investigate the allegations of Ms Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party (PPP) that some of its provincial assembly members in Sindh had been kidnapped by the government prior to the Senate elections in March.

Another committee will be set up to study practices in the Pakistan Parliament and in other parliamentary democracies regarding the attendance of members involved in court trials during Parliament sessions.

The two sides also agreed that a third opposition demand concerning Senate elections be taken up after deliberations by the joint six-member committee.

The opposition has been boycotting the assembly session since February.



DALLAS: Dallas Morning News photographer William Snyder is doused in champagne by Tom Kessler, art section editor, after Snyder won the Pulitzer Prize for feature photography for photos of ill and orphaned children in Romania. Executive Editor Bill Evans looks on from the background.

A Pulitzer delight

NEW YORK: Neil Simon calls his "lost in Yonkers" winner of the 1991 Pulitzer Prize for drama, "a special play" one that achieves more of the goals the playwright sets when he begins a work, reports AP.

"It seemed to hit on almost all cylinders," Simon said Tuesday in a telephone interview from Hawaii, where he was on vacation. "In almost every other play, you always feel you've missed someplace somewhere along the line. But not with this one."

"Lost in Yonkers," a family play about a strong-willed matriarch and the effect she has on her children and grandchildren, particularly a sweet, simple-minded daughter named Bella, opened on Broadway in February. The play stars Irene Worth as the grandmother and Mercedes Ruehl as Bella.

The Pulitzer is Simon's first in a Broadway career that began 30 years ago with "Come Blow your Horn" and has included such big hits as "Barefoot in the Park," "The Odd Couple," "The Sunshine Boys" and "Brighton Beach Memoirs." He won a Tony Award for best play in 1985 for "Biloxi Blues."

"I'm genuinely thrilled. I've been in the business for a long time and have had a lot of good things happen to me. After a while, one tends to get blasé about some things, but this is not one of them. I'm truly appreciative, and it's nice that it's this play."

Kashmiri Muslim militia chief held for kidnapping

SRINAGAR, Apr 10: The chief of the Kashmiri Muslim militia which kidnapped two Swedish engineers last month has been arrested, police said Wednesday, reports AP.

Babar Baddar, the head of the Muslim Janbaz or Martyr's Force, was picked up Tuesday during an army search on the outskirts of Srinagar, police officials said.

He did not resist arrest and is being interrogated, said the officials, who cannot be identified under briefing rules.

The Muslim Martyr's Force claimed responsibility for the March 31 kidnapping of Johan Jansson and Oile Loman, who were working on a hydroelectric project under construction near the ceasefire line with Pakistan.

The Swedish Embassy published an appeal through Indian news agencies to release the engineers.

Violence and other uniaul acts should not be used as tools in the fight for obser-

vance of human rights," the statement said.

The kidnappers have said action was aimed at drawing international attention to alleged atrocities by security forces in the Kashmir valley.

They have threatened to kill the hostages if India does not allow human rights teams from Amnesty International and the United Nations to visit the valley. The kidnappers set a deadline of 2 p.m. (0830 GMT) Saturday.

The government has said private visits by Amnesty teams are allowed, but they cannot conduct investigations.

It was the first time foreigners have fallen victim to the Muslim struggle for independence of Kashmir from Hindu-majority India. The campaign erupted into violence in December 1989 and at least 2,000 people have been killed since then.

BRIEFLY

Epidemics spread in Iraq: Widespread starvation and epidemic disease is spreading through Baghdad and southern Iraq, two US doctors who toured the area said on Tuesday in Boston, reports Reuter.

Doctors H Jack Geiger and Jonathan Fine, the President and Executive Director of Physicians for Human Rights, said they saw the makings of a health disaster "of immense proportions" during a five-day visit to Karbala, Najaf, Hella and Baghdad.

The doctors toured General, Pediatric and Maternity Hospitals and interviewed physicians, health officials, representatives of relief agencies and patients.

S. Africa to demolish apartheid: South Africa's government has set the stage for demolishing the last pillars of apartheid, but a planned transition to democracy is still under threat from chronic warfare in black townships, reports Reuter from Johannesburg.

As police in armoured trucks patrolled squatter settlements in Kaitleong near Johannesburg, where 15 people have been killed since Sunday, the ruling National Party published a draft bill to end 43 years of race segregation.

Human rights monitoring groups say up to 600 people have died in political violence in South Africa this year. The toll since a nationwide black uprising began in 1984 is about 10,000.

Egypt rejects Israel's proposal: Egypt rejected Israel's proposal for separate negotiations with Arab governments on Middle East peace, the leading state-owned newspaper Al-Ahram reported in Cairo, says AP.

The newspaper, which the government of President Hosni Mubarak often uses for making policy statements, said in its first Wednesday edition that Egypt still views an international peace conference to be the proper political framework for settling the Arab-Israeli problem.

The rejection came on the eve of a visit to Cairo by U. S. Secretary of State James Baker. It also followed talks in Cairo between Mubarak and Syrian Foreign Minister Farouk al-Sharaa.

Mubarak is currently in Libya for talks with leader Moammar Gadhafi.

4 newsmen missing in Iraq: Four Western journalists were still unaccounted for Tuesday after entering northern Iraq, where government troops launched a powerful offensive last month against Kurdish rebel forces, reports AP from New York.

Three were last seen March 27 in the northern Iraqi city of Kirkuk: Frank Smyth, a stringer on assignment for CBS Radio News and the Village Voice newspaper; Alain Bui, a French photographer with Gamma-Liaison; and Gad Gross, a German photographer on assignment for Newsweek.

Also unaccounted for is Nick Delcassa, a freelance cameraman on assignment for the British Broadcasting Corp. The BBC News Department in London said it had not heard from him in about two weeks.

Albanian House to be boycotted: The opposition on Tuesday said it would boycott the first session of Albania's new multiparty parliament if communist authorities did not produce those responsible for the shooting death of one of its officials, AP reports from Tirana.

Gramoz Pashko, one of the Democratic Party's two leaders, also again refused Communist offers to form a coalition government in the wake of elections that gave the Communists an overwhelming victory.

The boycott threat was made a week after Arabin Broci, a Democratic Party leader in Shkoder, was shot to death during political unrest in the city 60 kilometers (40 miles) north of Tirana.

Strong quake in Peru: The third strong earthquake to hit Peru in five days shook central jungle towns early Tuesday, the Peruvian Geophysical Institute said in Lima there were no immediate reports of injuries or damage, says AP.

The quake registered 5.5 on the Richter scale and was centered near the highland jungle town of Puerto Bermudez, on the Amazon river 210 miles (330 kms) northeast of Lima.

The Institute said the quake took place at 1:03 a. m. (0603 GMT) and was felt up to 250 miles (400 kilometers) away.

Shuttle diplomacy on Afghan issue: A U. N. Envoy has begun shuttle diplomacy between Afghanistan's President Najibullah and Afghan rebel leaders in Pakistan, US spokesman Francis Gulliani said Tuesday in New York, reports AP.

Ebnon Seven, the personal representative of U. N. Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar, met with Pakistani Foreign Minister Akram Zaik and Afghan rebel leaders in Islamabad before leaving for Kabul, Gulliani said.



The First Lady as Marie Antoinette: With the president at the Inaugural Ball in 1981 (left), as a starlet in her Hollywood days

Nancy's 'unauthorised biography' trash, fiction: Barbara Bush

LOS ANGELES, Apr 10: Former President Ronald Reagan says a new book about his wife contains lies that "clearly exceed the bounds of decency," reports AP.

And First Lady Barbara Bush said Tuesday that she thinks the racy new biography about her predecessor, Nancy Reagan, is "trash and fiction".

Kitty Kelley's book, "Nancy Reagan: The Unauthorised Biography," hit bookstores Monday, along with a lengthy love affair with Frank Sinatra.

When asked Sunday about the book before a church service in Bel-Air, Reagan said, "I don't think a church would be the proper place to use the word I would have to use in discussing that".

Reagan's spokesman had said the former president would have nothing to say about the book, which sold briskly on its first day. On Monday, Reagan issued a statement.

"Over the course of three decades in public life, books by the dozen have been written about my family and me. I have generally refrained from reading them and have withheld comment."

"While I am accustomed to reports that stray from the truth, the flagrant and absurd falsehoods cited in a recently published book clearly exceed the bounds of decency," Reagan said. "They are patently untrue — everything from the allegation of marijuana use to marital infidelity to my failure to be present at the

birth of my daughter, Patti. Many of my friends have urged me to issue a point-by-point denial of the book's many outrages," Reagan said. To do so would, I feel, provide legitimacy to a book that has no basis in fact and serves no decent purpose. "I have an abiding faith that the American people will judge this book for what it really is: sensationalism whose sole purpose is enriching its author and publisher. Neither I, nor my wife Nancy intend to have any further comment on this matter," Reagan said.

Asked if she had read the book, Mrs. Bush said she hadn't and didn't intend to. But she said the book's assertion that she gave Mrs. Reagan a sprayed white vine wreath one Christmas

Baltic states issues

US asks for political solution

WASHINGTON, Apr 10: The United States said Tuesday the future of the Soviet republics must be resolved in a peaceful and democratic fashion if they are to be accepted as legitimate, reports AP.

"The future of the Soviet republics is an issue for the peoples involved to decide," said State Department

Spokesman Richard Boucher. "It's a complex question."

"We hope it will be resolved democratically and on the basis of peaceful political discussion. Only that kind of process will be fully legitimate and accepted by all parties," he added.

The mountainous Trans-Caucasian republic of Georgia declared independence from

the Soviet Union on Tuesday, the fourth republic to do so in open challenge to President Mikhail Gorbachev.

The parliamentary decision was based on the results of a March 31 republican referendum in which over 90 per cent of voters approved secession and re-establishment of the Georgian Democratic Republic created in May 1926.

The republic had earlier refused to organize a referendum on the future of the Union, called by Gorbachev.

The United States has always avoided taking a position on independence for the Soviet republics, with the exception of Lithuania, Estonia and Latvia. Washington has never recognized the Soviet's 1940 annexation of those three Baltic republics.

"The USSR consisted of a number of republics when we established relations in 1933, including Georgia. We did not then, and do not now, question their status as constituent parts of the Soviet Union," the State Department said.

"Nor do we contest the incorporation of other, non-Baltic European territories into the USSR following World War II," Boucher said.

"We do not, however, recognize the forcible incorporation of the Baltic states by the USSR," he added, referring to Moldavia, which was ceded by Romania to the Soviet Union after the War.

Leila Kabir to fight Advani

NEW DELHI, Apr 10: The estranged wife of a prominent Indian politician challenged political leaders Tuesday to prove their secular ideals by backing her to fight Hindu Nationalist leader Lal Krishna Advani in a May general election, reports Reuter.

Jayati Leila Kabir announced she would contest Advani's constituency in the Indian Capital to rally voters against his Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) campaign to build a temple to the Hindu God-King Lord Rama on the site of a 16th century mosque.

"My slogan will be 'by all means make a temple for Rama, but don't make fools of

the people.' Kabir told a news conference, denouncing the temple campaign as a diversion from issues such as widespread poverty and India's 70 billion Dollar foreign debt.

Kabir, 54, is legally separated from her husband, former Cabinet Minister George Fernandes of the Janata Dal Party.

She said she had asked Janata Dal and Rajiv Gandhi's Congress Party to back her as an independent to unite the anti-BJP vote, but they had not replied yet.

Asked why they should stand down for her, she said: "All these parties are forever saying 'in the interests of the nation.' Now they will be put to

the test."

At least 2,000 people have died in the past 18 months in Hindu-Muslim riots sparked by the campaign to build the temple in the northern holy town of Ayodhya.

Hindu militants say Muslim invaders razed a temple on Lord Rama's birth place to build the mosque.

Three-quarters of India's 850 million people are Hindu and 120 million are Muslim.

Kabir said she was putting herself forward because her mother was Hindu and her father a Muslim, while she had worked as a nurse among the poor. Half of India's population live below the poverty line.