

# Pan Am jet bombing Libya wants UN court intervention

BRUSSELS, Mar 4: Libya asked the International Court of Justice on Tuesday to intervene to prevent escalation of a conflict with Britain and the United States over the 1988 bombing of a Pan Am jet. Libya's Ambassador to Brussels said, reports Reuters.

Ambassador Mohamed Sharaf Eddine el Fattouri told Reuters he had delivered a complaint to the court in the Hague on Tuesday afternoon asking it to rule on the dispute.

The United States and Britain, supported by the United Nations Security Council, have threatened unspecified reprisals against Libya if it refuses to hand over two Libyans accused of bombing the airliner.

A total of 270 people died when the Pan Am jet crashed over the Scottish town of Lockerbie.

"Libya decided today to submit the conflict ... to the International Court of Justice," said Fattouri, who is also ambassador to the Hague.

"Libya is asking the court to take necessary and rapid measures," he said.

The International Court of Justice, the UN's main legal body, acts as a world court, responsible for settling disputes between governments, in line with international law. Its judgements are in the

ory legally binding although some rulings have been ignored in the past. If the findings are breached a government can ask the UN Security Council to act.

Since 1946 the court, which has 15 judges, has handled 52 cases ranging from disputes over land and shipping rights to sovereignty.

Analysts said the Libyan complaint was likely to come under the remit of the court, which is not allowed to interfere in a country's internal affairs.

In London, a foreign office spokesman described the Libyan complaint to the court as "extraordinary".

He said Britain would cooperate if the court decided to consider the application, but it would also continue to press in the Security Council for Libya to hand over the two men accused of the bombing.

The Security Council resolution also supports French demands for Libyan cooperation in its investigation of Libyan suspects in the 1989 bombing of a French UTA airliner over Niger.

Libyan leader Colonel Muammar Gaddafi said on Monday he had no authority to hand over the two suspects wanted for the Lockerbie bombing and any decision would have to be made by the general people's congress.

# Israel rejects Palestinian autonomy plan

WASHINGTON, Mar 4: Palestinian delegates to the Middle East peace conference presented Tuesday an autonomy plan for the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip that includes elections this year and halt to Jewish settlements, drawing an immediate rejection from Israel, reports AFP.

The 16-page plan, which Palestinian spokeswoman Hanan Ashrawi called a "historical document," envisions elections to choose a 180-seat Palestinian assembly before September 29, or "one month before the first anniversary of the beginning of the peace process", last year in Madrid.

Ashrawi said "Practical measures" such as the withdrawal of Israeli troops from certain heavily populated areas

and the lifting censorship would be implemented by July 31, adding that election for Palestinian representatives cannot take place "under occupation".

The plan, submitted as a counter-proposal to an Israeli working document on the second-to-last day of the fourth round of the bilateral peace talks, was immediately rejected by the Israeli delegation.

Yossef Ben Aharon, one of the Israeli delegation leaders, dismissed the Palestinian blueprint as "futile and unnecessary".

"It demonstrates the persistent attempt by the Palestinians to focus on issues of state and self-determination rather than discuss interim self-government in the territories," Aharon said.

He added that the document presented by Israel contains all the ingredients of statehood but the word state.

The Israeli working document presented last week, which is entitled "ideas for a peaceful coexistence" in the occupied territories, proposed a transfer of some administrative powers to the Palestinians. But it appeared to be a step backward compared to the autonomy proposals contained in the 1978 Camp David peace accords, which call for a partial withdrawal from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip by the Israeli military.

Nor did the Israeli document bring up a May 1989 proposal by Israel for elections of Palestinian representatives. That proposal was developed by Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir and Yitzhak Rabin, who

was Defence Minister at the time and is now leader of the opposition labour party.

The Palestinians have blasted the Israeli plan, saying it was "impossible to envision coexistence between the occupier and the occupied." It said the Israeli proposals sought to turn Palestinians into "civil servants of the occupation."

Ashrawi said the Palestinian proposal aimed to have an "autonomous Palestinian government" installed by October 29 at the latest.

In a communique, the Palestinian delegation said its plan called for a "halt to all settlement activities, the protection of the Palestinian people and the exercise of fundamental rights such as freedom of speech and assembly."



MOSCOW: Former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev (R) toasts former Japanese Prime Minister Nakasone (L) as Russian leader Alexander Rutskoi stands in the background during the opening of the Gorbachev Foundation in Moscow. —AFP/UNB photo

## Indo-Maldives regular shipping, air links soon

NEW DELHI, Mar 4: India yesterday decided to gift a Rs 10-crore vocational training centre to the Maldives and committed itself to meeting all educational and training requirements of the people of the island nation, reports PTI.

India agreed to take these major initiatives at the two-day Indo-Maldives Joint Commission meeting which concluded here yesterday.

The two countries also agreed to take steps to establish regular shipping and air links.

India decided to organise a trade exhibition in the Maldives whose channel of trade at present is via Singapore. India accounts for a mere four per cent of Maldives' imports.

## Violence flares again in Bosnia capital

SARAJEVO, Yugoslavia, Mar 4: Violence flared in the Bosnia-Herzegovina capital Sarajevo but subsided early today after leaders of the warring Muslim and Serbian communities agreed to joint peacekeeping patrols, reports AFP.

Bosnia President Alija Izetbegovic, a Muslim, had earlier warned that armed Serbs were approaching the capital and told Muslims to prepare to defend themselves.

Izetbegovic and Karadzic agreed on joint patrols by troops of the Serbian dominated army and local police.

General Milutin Kukanjac, local head of the Serbian dominated federal army also attended the meeting. He later told reporters that joint pa-

## Tigers kill 7 soldiers in Lanka

COLOMBO, Mar 4: Dozens of heavily armed Tamil guerrillas stormed an army bunker in eastern Sri Lanka Wednesday, killing seven soldiers and seriously wounding 13, official sources here said, reports AFP.

The guerrillas believed to be from the rebel Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), attacked the military position in Jakkura in Welloys region early today with small arms grenades and mortars, the sources said.

The surprise attack came as security forces in neighbouring Vavuniya district kept up psychological pressure on the LTTE by carrying out a series of manoeuvres using newly acquired military hardware.

# BRIEFLY

**Honecker leaves hospital:** Former East German leader Erich Honecker left an elite Moscow hospital on Tuesday and returned to his refuge in the Chilean Embassy. Chile's government said his health was "totally satisfactory," reports AP from Moscow.

The report from Santiago contradicted accounts that the 79-year-old Honecker was suffering from cancer when he entered the Botkin Clinic on Feb 24.

Dr Alexander Borodulin, the clinic's medical director, refused to comment on Honecker's health.

However, the Chilean foreign ministry said in a statement that he is suffering from "widespread arteriosclerosis."

**11 die in Tunisian jails:** Torture has become routine in Tunisian prisons where at least 11 people have died in the past year following the government's repression of the Islamic opposition, Amnesty International said on Wednesday, Reuters reports from London.

The human rights group said at least 8,000 suspected members of the Islamic organisation Al-Nahda, which the government has accused of plotting to overthrow the state, have been arrested in the past 18 months.

Many were held illegally, cut off for weeks or months from contact with the outside world. Worse still many were tortured viciously, London-based Amnesty said in a report.

Amnesty, which said it had received more than 200 reports of torture from former detainees, families, doctors and eyewitnesses, said it had the "overwhelming impression that the government itself is condoning these widespread human rights violations".

**Ramadan in S Arabia begins:** The Muslim holy fasting month of Ramadan begins Wednesday, officials in five Gulf states announced Tuesday, reports AFP from Manama.

Religious officials in Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and Kuwait said the crescent moon announcing the beginning of Ramadan had been sighted.

**UN team escapes blast:** A UN-led peace delegation to the Somali capital narrowly escaped an explosion Tuesday seconds after witnessing the signing of a ceasefire agreement by interim president Ali Mahdi Mohamed, reports AFP.

At least one person was killed when an explosion demolished a wall outside a house converted into a makeshift hospital barely 100 metres (yards) from the President's headquarters.

It was the 17th blast to rock the northern sector of Mogadishu — controlled by the President — on Tuesday.

One person was killed and 33 wounded in earlier blasts, hospital official Mohamed Ahmed Mohamed said.

Ali Mahdi, who said he would honour the ceasefire but expressed doubts about the intentions of his rival, General Mogadishu, under Aidid's control.

**Ruling party wins Cameroon polls:** State radio said Cameroon's ruling party had won the country's first multi-party election for 28 years but the Interior Minister said the final result was not yet known, reports Reuters from Yaounde.

The Minister, Gilbert Andzè Tsoungui, told reporters on Tuesday that President Paul Biya's Cameroon People's Democratic Movement (CPDM) had so far won 89 parliamentary seats — two short of an absolute majority.

Tsoungui told a press conference that 166 of the 180 seats had been declared.

Earlier, state radio said the CPDM had won 94 seats with all results announced. The Muslim-dominated National Union for Democracy and Progress (UNDP) was a strong second, with 63 seats in the national assembly.

## Koreas again fail to agree on N-facilities

SEOUL, Mar 4: North and South Korea failed again today to agree on inspection procedures for nuclear facilities in the two countries, but agreed to continue discussions on Friday, a Seoul spokesman said, reports Reuters.

"Today's talks lasted more than four hours but the two sides have yet to resolve a lot of differences," the spokesman said. Details of the talks in the border Hamlet of Panmunjom, the second in as many days, were not given.

South Korea and its allies fear North Korea, the world's last remaining hardline Stalinist state, is stalling while it either compels weapons development or hides unacceptable facilities.

# Bush-Yeltsin summit June 16

WASHINGTON, Mar 4: President Bush announced Tuesday that he and Russian President Boris N Yeltsin will begin their first formal summit meeting June 16 in Washington, reports AP.

He said they'll try to use the two-day meeting to establish

new momentum toward eliminating additional thousands of strategic nuclear warheads.

Speculation in the capital was that Bush would press the Senate to ratify the pending Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) before the June summit and that he and Yeltsin would formally set a subsequent goal of reducing each nation's arsenal to 2,500 to 4,500 such warheads.

Bush and Yeltsin emphasized their mutual friendship and respect after a three-hour meeting at Camp David, Md. on February 1. But the Russian president also cautioned that, "if the reform in Russia goes under, the Cold War is going to turn into a hot war."

At the June meeting, the two leaders are expected to try to move toward agreement on the broad disarmament goals each has recently outlined.

Yeltsin and other leaders of former Soviet republics are scheduled to meet in Kiev

March 20. US officials are hoping the leaders of Russia, Ukraine, Belarus and Kazakhstan — the four states with strategic nuclear weapons — will pledge to adhere to the reductions in the pending START agreement.

The republics' leaders have generally agreed that the new Commonwealth of Independent States should exercise joint control over nuclear weapons left by the former Soviet Union.

If the four republics sign a START pledge, said a Senate source, the Bush administration would probably press the Senate to ratify the treaty, which calls for reducing strategic nuclear forces to 8,000 to 9,000 warheads each.

Less clear was what the United States could offer Yeltsin in economic aid.

The summit will take place less than a month before the opposition Democrat Party

selects its candidate for the campaign in which the recession looks like a dominant issue.

That left open the question of whether Bush would feel able to offer a substantial commitment of US foreign aid.



George Bush



Boris Yeltsin

# Bush beats Buchanan in three primaries by wide margins

WASHINGTON, Mar 4: President Bush won all three republican primaries on Tuesday but felt the continuing sting of economic protest as democratic voters lifted Bill Clinton alongside Paul Tsongas as co-leaders of their nomination race, reports Reuters.

Bush beat Arch-conservative rival Patrick Buchanan by wide margins in Georgia, Maryland and Colorado. But a hard-core dissident bloc of sullen voters — about one in three — lined up against the president in all three states just as they had in New Hampshire two weeks ago.

The Democrats stirred more excitement in preference votes that took in seven states in all, finally igniting Arkansas governor Clinton's sputtering candidacy but giving Tsongas some laurels as well and throwing former California

governor Jerry Brown into the mix for good measure.

Clinton, dogged by allegations about his sex life and military draft record, won Georgia, the first battle of his native south, even more handily than expected — 57 per cent to 24 per cent for Tsongas, with the other three democrats far back, with 99 per cent of the vote counted.

Clinton was also making a strong run in Colorado — but so was the lightly regarded Brown — in a tight race where the vote-count ran into the wee hours today.

With 78 per cent of the Colorado vote counted, Clinton had 28 per cent. Brown had 28 per cent, Tsongas had 25 per cent and the race was simply too close to call.

But Tsongas, the victor in New Hampshire and Maine

Washington state and Tiny Idaho.

Those theoretically gave the fifth member of the democratic field, Senator Bob Kerrey of Nebraska, a last chance to win something on Tuesday. But Tsongas led the polls in Washington state and Kerrey's chances did not look good either place.

In all, the biggest single-day's vote yet taken in the 1992 presidential primary season seemed to leave Clinton poised for a big thrust but Tsongas strong as well in next week's "super Tuesday" vote in 11 states.

Southern states comprise about half that total but Tsongas will win his native Massachusetts and could score well in Florida, Hawaii and elsewhere to keep things competitive.

The new life in the demo-

cratic race finally gave that equal billing with the punch-and-judy brawl between Bush and right-wing rival Buchanan, an "America first" firebrand who gave Bush fits in New Hampshire two weeks ago and was at it again on Tuesday.

The President won everywhere but still failed to get the twin political monkeys of Buchanan and a recession-driven protest vote off his back — as witness the post-vote boasting of a feisty Buchanan, who roared to cheering supporters in a voice made hoarse by nonstop campaigning in Georgia. "We can win this nomination we can win."

In Georgia, the only state where the cash-poor Buchanan really met Bush head-on, the president won by 64 per cent to 36 per cent.

# Off the Record

## Gorby to tell his life story

LONDON: Former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev has agreed to tell his life story to a British television company, producers said on Tuesday, reports Reuters.



Filming of a four million-dollar, four-hour programme is planned to start this summer while Gorbachev is on holiday, probably by the Black Sea.

"Gorbachev agreed to speak on everything personal and political," John Cairns, executive producer of the Independent Production Company Directors International, told a news conference.

The series will include extensive interviews with Gorbachev, tracing his development from childhood in a farming community during the Stalin era.

Due to be shown in 1993, the series will also include interviews with world leaders, Gorbachev's wife Raisa and other members of his family. Cairns said he hoped to sell the programme to European and American television companies.

Cairns declined to say how much Gorbachev would be paid for the series but said payment will be made to the Gorbachev Foundation, a Moscow-based research body.

Gorbachev, now living in a three-room Moscow flat, complained in British television interview last week he found it hard to make ends meet on a state pension.

## She is grateful as husband loses

WEST PLAM BEACH, Fla: Kitty Dukakis, training to become a counselor for drug and alcohol abusers, said she's grateful her husband lost the 1988 presidential race, reports AP.

"I would not have been able to get sober had Michael been elected president," she told some 200 former alcohol and drug addicts and health professionals in a speech at a health center Monday. "I could not have faced being in that spotlight."

Dukakis, the former three-term Massachusetts governor, has joined his wife on a crusade for universal health care, including coverage for substance abuse.

Mrs Dukakis, 55, was addicted to diet pills and alcohol and suffers from manic depression.

## Stallone's award made Lang a target of ridicule

PARIS: Did the Minister of Culture go too far in honouring Sylvester Stallone for excellence in the arts? Absolutely, huff some French commentators. Others condemn such carping as snobbery, reports AP.

Stallone was named an officer of the Order of Arts and Letters on February 21 at a ceremony presided over by Culture Minister Jack Lang.

The star of "Rocky" and "Rambo" was the third Hollywood luminary to be honoured by Lang this year, following Martin Scorsese and Oliver Stone. Warren Beatty became the fourth Monday night.

But it was Stallone's award that made Lang a target of ridicule. The satirical weekly La Canard Enchaîné ran a cartoon showing Lang, waving some medals, clutched in the fist of a giant Rambo.

Bernard Pivot, a nationally known literary critic, described the award as ridiculous and said Stallone represented the worst of American cinema.

But Lang, who began his tenure in 1981 with a crusade against American "cultural imperialism," has found some defenders.

Producer-director Gerard Oury, in Tuesday's edition of the Paris daily Le Figaro, said Stallone was a "very cultivated, very intelligent man" who fully deserved the honour and should be spared "these stupid, systematic attacks."

"They're confusing the actor with the roles he plays," Oury said of Stallone's detractors. "He plays brutes, but he's far from being an imbecile. There are imbeciles right here in France."



## Centenarian twin enraptures Japan

NAGOYA, Japan: Kin and Gin, silver-haired identical twin sisters, have enraptured Japan just by sitting on cushions and laughing in a TV ad, reports AP.

And by surviving, faculties intact, for a century. Despite the reputation Japan shares with other Asian countries for revering the aged, the elderly seldom gain the respect accorded to sports stars and pop singers.

But the popularity of Kin and Gin shows a growing nostalgia for the traditional Japan of close-knit, extended families.

The sisters were born on August 1, 1892, but say they're already 100 years old because babies then were considered a year old at birth.

Now the mirthful kimono-clad great-grandmothers appear on TV almost daily. Last week they released their first cassette recording — adding their own "ha ha's" (yes, yes) to a collection of nursery songs sung by toddlers.

Kin, whose name means gold, and Gin, or silver, laugh off questions about their secret for longevity.

"When you get to be 100, your head's no good anymore," said Gin, who enjoys watching legislative proceedings on television.

"That's right. No good at all," said Kin, a pro wrestling fan. Japanese have the world's longest average life expectancy: 81.8 years for women and 75.8 years for men. Centenarians are not rare — the government counted 3,625 last year — but 99-year-old twins are.

## 30 killed as trains collide in Russia

MOSCOW, Mar 4: A speeding express and a freight train collided and caught fire near marshland west of Moscow on Tuesday killing at least 27 people, reports from the crash site said, reports Reuters.

Latvian radio, quoting Russian rescue workers, said 26 bodies were found at the crash site near the town of Neldidvo. Another died in hospital of his wounds.

Russian television, in its report on the crash of the overnight Riga-Moscow express and the freight train, put the death toll at "about 30". Many others were in hospital.