

Kabul gives UN envoy list of nominees Peace talks on Afghan crisis in April likely

KABUL, Mar 16: Afghan President Najibullah on Sunday gave a United Nations envoy a list of his nominees for forthcoming peace talks, the state media said, reports Reuter. Najibullah's list, handed to special envoy Benon Sevan, included "candidates from the (ruling) Watan (homeland) Party and political allies, social figures, tribal and national figures, non-party members, clergy and intellectuals," state-run television said. Sevan's talks in Kabul focused on 150 Afghans the United Nations plans to invite for talks on ending the 13-year-old conflict and forming an interim government that could hold elections, diplomatic sources said. The UN envoy also met Prime Minister Fazal Haq Khaliquyar on Sunday, Kabul radio said. On Saturday he met some key ministers of Khaliquyar's cabinet. Sevan wants the talks to begin in either Vienna or Geneva in April — the 14th anniversary of the Marxist revolution in Kabul that heralded the beginning of the civil war. For nearly three years, the UN envoy has shuttled between New York, Islamabad, Tehran, Moscow and Kabul trying to find common ground among the warring Afghan factions. Pakistan's decision to back UN plans for a negotiated end to the war gave a major boost to the process in January, but Sevan has so far failed to recruit hardliner groups among the Islamic guerrillas.

Thai fighters ordered to down Myanmar planes

BANGKOK, Mar 16: Thai jet fighters were ordered today to attack any Myanmar aircraft which crossed into Thai air space in pursuit of Karen ethnic guerrillas, reports Reuter. Thai officers also said their artillery had opened fire over the weekend to push back 200 Myanmar infantrymen who had crossed the border to attack a major Karen base from the rear. A dozen Myanmar soldiers were believed killed by Thai artillery and mortars during the weekend bombardment, but only six bodies were found on Sunday when Thai troops moved in. The army has ordered the immediate retaliation by fighter plane for any aerial vio-

lation of Thai territory," Colonel Niphan Sirpaibul, commander of a task force responsible for border security, told Reuters by telephone. Niphan said the Myanmar had urged the Thai army to pull back from the border to avoid casualties when Myanmar planes attacked Kaw Moo Ra, the Karen base only six km from the Thai town of Mae Sot. "I laughed my heart out after I received that funny warning from my Myanmar counterpart in the Myanmar town of Myawadi," the Colonel said. "He ordered us to withdraw from our own territory." He said any attack against Kaw Moo Ra by air meant Thai air space would be violated by at least one km because of the way the river Moel curved around the riverside military camp. Kaw Moo Ra and the Karen headquarters at Manerplaw, 150 km to the north, have come under intensified ground attack in recent days, with strategic sleeping dog hill, just north of the Manerplaw front line, falling to Myanmar forces. Radio Yangon said on Sunday night that 155 Karen rebels had been killed in the battle for the hill. Myanmar troops also captured the hill in a strong dry-season offensive in 1989 but were unable to hold it. Yangon said 19 of its soldiers had been killed. Thai border patrol officers

2-day ultimatum to Moldovan rebels

MOSCOW, Mar 16: The Moldovan government on Sunday gave separatist rebels an ultimatum to hand in their guns within two days after nine people were killed in fresh clashes, reports Reuter. In a radio address aimed at the Russian-speaking minority in Eastern Moldova, the government said the rebels had 48 hours from 6 pm (1500 GMT) on Sunday to surrender their weapons. "If you do not, the republic's law-enforcement bodies will take all necessary measures to defend its citizens, regardless of their nationality (ethnic group) from lawlessness," it said. "It is still not too late to put an end to this senseless war. It is not too late to demonstrate your good sense and civic responsibility," it said. The interior ministry said three Moldovan policemen were killed overnight in clashes with military of the Dnestr republic, declared by separatists on the East bank of the Dnestr river. Two Dnestr guardsmen, three Russian Cossacks and a civilian woman were killed in a separate clash, it said. The nine deaths took the toll in the Moldovan conflict to 22 this month. The interior ministry said in the second clash, which took place on the road between the two main separatist strongholds, Dubossary and Tiraspol, rebels had tried to shield themselves behind a bus carrying tourists from Ukraine.

BRIEFLY

Palestinians barred from meeting: An Israeli mayor, citing security reasons, has barred Palestinian from gathering at a junction in his town where they wait for work. ITIM news agency said on Sunday, Reuter reports from Jerusalem.

It quoted Giora Lev, Mayor of Petah Tikva, as saying in a letter to the police: "I, as the mayor, am obligated to defend residents ... if the existing situation continues, we could find ourselves with a serious situation of a terrorist attack." In many Israeli towns and cities Palestinians from the occupied territories gather at certain junctions to wait for contractors to offer them casual work. ITIM said Lev told police that within a week he would fence off the spot where Palestinian gathered daily to seek work.

Jamaican PM to resign: Jamaican Prime Minister Michael Manley announced in a national broadcast Monday that he would resign March 28 due to poor health, Reuter Monday reports from Kingston.

Manley, 67, said his ruling People's National Party would meet March 28 to select a new party leader. Manley's decision to step down had been rumoured throughout the Caribbean nation since his latest bout with pneumonia. He had previously undergone five major surgeries in recent years.

Cocktail leaves 12 dead: Twelve people died this weekend after drinking a cocktail laced with heroin and cocaine at an unlicensed Caracas nightclub, the Health Ministry said, AFP reports from Caracas.

Another 30 people have been hospitalised, officials said. All those who died were between 24 and 40 years of age, and all but one were men, police said.

Iran got N-arms from Kazakhstan: Iran has obtained Nuclear arms from the former Soviet Republic of Kazakhstan, the German magazine Stern reports, AFP says from Bonn.

German "intelligence services reports" say Iran has two nuclear warheads and medium range missiles, Stern says in the article to be published Thursday.

But the Iranian government does not have the codes to make the warheads or the missile launchers operational, Stern said.

Some "nuclear experts" think Iran could use the nuclear warheads for research to produce their own warheads, Stern said.

Former Egyptian army chief held: General Saadeddine Al-Shazli, a former Egyptian Chief-of-Staff arrested Saturday upon his return from 14 years in exile, is being held in military prison, The Al-Ahram newspaper said, Monday, AFP reports from Cairo.

Shazli, 70, was arrested here by army intelligence units upon his voluntary return from Algeria. He had been sentenced in absentia to three years' hard labour by a military court in 1983 for "divulging state secrets" on the October 1973 Arab-Israeli war which were published in Algeria and banned in Egypt.

Shazli was chief-of-staff during the 1973 Arab-Israeli war and is considered the architect of the Egyptian advance across the Suez Canal in that conflict.

Russian FM in Beijing: Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev arrived in China Monday for a two-day visit, Xinhua news agency said, reports AFP from Beijing.

Kozyrev was to have talks later with China's Foreign Minister Qian Qichen, who has just returned from a European tour which included visits to European Community headquarters in Brussels, Britain and Germany.

Chinese Foreign Ministry officials said last week that Kozyrev would be discussing "the development of bilateral relations and international issues that concern both sides." Kozyrev will have talks tomorrow with Prime Minister Li Peng before leaving for South Korea and subsequently Japan, officials said.

\$16m seized from Noriega: Panama has confiscated 16 million dollars and 171 properties from deposed leader General Manuel Noriega over the past two years, the government said Sunday, AFP reports from Panama City.

The Controller General's office said in a statement that the seized properties included apartments, automobiles, tourist resorts, farms, warehouses and aircraft. Noriega, who was ousted in a US invasion in December 1989, is currently on trial in Miami, Florida on drug and racketeering charges.



INDIA: A girl is overcome with emotion after Sikh separatists killed her father in Ludhiana. Four Sikh militants raked people with gunfire on March 14, killing 20 in one of Punjab's worse incidents this year. —APP/UNB photo

G M Syed freed on parole

KARACHI, Mar 16: Detained separatist leader G M Syed was released on parole for ten days here Sunday to attend the burial of his daughter, the official Associated Press of Pakistan (APP) said, reports AFP.

Syed, 89, was placed under house arrest after he vowed to struggle for an independent Sindh, now a Pakistani province, in a public speech given on his birthday here January 17.

After his release, the head of the Jyve Sindh Movement left for his ancestral village of Sann to attend the last rites of his daughter, Sahma Syed, APP said.

Pakistani authorities had said Syed would be prosecuted for sedition, but trial proceedings were unable to start when police failed to produce him before a special anti-terrorism court here February 26.

Whites divided over power-sharing

JOHANNESBURG, Mar 16: Whites in South Africa, one day before Tuesday's historic referendum, were deeply divided over whether to accept power-sharing with blacks or retreat back to apartheid, reports Reuter.

The National Party of President F.W. de Klerk, architect of a reform plan for power-sharing with 27 million voteless blacks, made last minute appeals to the 3.3 million whites to turn in a solid "yes" vote on Tuesday.

De Klerk says he is sure he will win the single-question poll — and by a good margin. But newspapers and political analysts predicted a close result and some said the "no" vote backed by the right-wing Conservative Party (CP) could win a majority.

"An unexpected surge of opposition to President FW de Klerk threatens hopes of a 'yes' majority" the Sunday Times newspaper said.

If that happens, de Klerk, 55, will resign and the CP, which wants a return to the apartheid system of racial separation that he has been dismantling over the past two years, will almost certainly come to the fore. Whites will be asked to vote "yes" or "no" to a single question: "Do you support continuation of the reform process which the state president began on February 2nd, 1990, and which is aimed at a new constitution through negotiation?"

The NP's Secretary-General, Stoffel Van der Merwe, told reporters he was braced for a loss in much of Transvaal and orange free state provinces. But he said he was satisfied

with how a two-week campaign across the country, at a cost of millions of dollars, he had gone.

Party officials believe they will win the cape and natal provinces easily. But apathy and abstentions, especially in Johannesburg's affluent white suburbs, could cost them crucial swing votes.

Some political analysts believe de Klerk may have underestimated whites' confusion and their concern over violent crime and the worst recession in 40 years.

While they may not find apartheid morally palatable, they fear black majority rule and giving up long-guarded privileges, both camps have been playing on white fears of 27 million restive blacks and township violence which has claimed 11,000 lives since 1984 and more than 250 over

the past three weeks.

De Klerk has issued warnings of black anger boiling over and economic collapse if international sanctions return with apartheid and his talks with blacks on a non-racial constitution are halted.

He sought to reassure voters on Sunday night, telling them on state television that he would only agree to a constitution that included checks and balances.

"A new South Africa will offer security," he said. The CP and other rightist groups say he is selling out South Africa to Black communists.

That message struck a note with eight retired army and police generals, including the former head of state security, who issued a statement on Sunday vowing to vote "no" because of the threat of a communist takeover.

Iraq won't repudiate building weapons

WASHINGTON, Mar 16: Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz said in an interview published today that Iraq would not repudiate its right to build weapons of mass destruction, reports Reuter.

He made his comments to the Washington Post after meetings last week at the United Nations which has accused Iraq of refusing to comply with demands for elimination of its chemical, biological, nuclear and missile programmes.

US and British officials have refused to rule out the use of military force if Iraq continues to resist the demands.



TURKEY: A man is extracted alive from the ruins of a six floor building after being buried for 31 hours following the powerful March 13 earthquake. —APP/UNB photo

Lankan FP starts protest march

COLOMBO, Mar 16: Thousands of Sri Lankans began a 180-km protest march against the government today, reports Reuter.

Police said about 10,000 people started out from the capital Colombo and organisers said they expected to reach their destination — the holy town of Kataragama — on April 2.

The marchers are mainly supporters of the opposition Sri Lanka Freedom Party. They are protesting against the government's failure to end a war against Tamil rebels in the north-east and about the disappearance of thousands of people believed to have been killed either by security forces or pro-government death squads.

"This is a peaceful protest against the government. It will be a silent march which will focus on certain issues," said acting opposition leader Anura Bandaranaike.

Pindi plans to mount guns on trains

KARACHI, Mar 16: Pakistan security forces plan to mount machineguns on passenger trains running through troubled Sind province after a spate of bandit attacks, railway officials said today, reports Reuter.

Guns will be fixed on the engine and at the back of each train to protect passengers from bandits who halt trains in remote areas of the southern province to rob and kidnap people for ransom, the officials said.

The decision follows an attack on an express near Hyderabad last Friday when a gang fired a rocket at the engine and raked the carriages with gunfire.

Armenia-Azerbaijan accord on truce in Nagorny-Karabakh

MOSCOW, Mar 16: Armenian and Azerbaijani negotiators reached agreement Sunday in Tehran on a draft cease-fire for war-torn Nagorny-Karabakh, a report said, reports AP.

Iran's foreign minister said the accord is "a very good opportunity" to end the 4-year-old conflict in the region.

The reported agreement comes amid a flurry of efforts to lessen fighting in Nagorny-Karabakh, where numerous cease-fire agreements have collapsed during the conflict that has claimed over 1,000 lives.

But the bloodshed continued in the disputed region and ethnic disputes also flared elsewhere in the former Soviet Union.

The worst outbreak was in Moldova, where officials said Sunday at least 21 people were killed between police officers and Slav separatists in the breakaway Trans-Dniester republic. The Kishinev government issued an ultimatum, telling the separatists to lay down their arms within 48 hours or face use of force.

A tense standoff continued in Georgia between supporters of the ousted President Zviad Gamsakhurdia and the ruling State Council.

In Nagorny-Karabakh, Armenian militants shelled scores of villages Saturday night and Sunday morning, said an Azerbaijani Popular Front official, Oktay Gasimov. He said at least 10 people were injured in Saturday's ar-

tillery attack on the Azerbaijani town of Shusha. The Armenians had captured eight villages during the past two days, seven of them near the Azerbaijani town of Agdam, east of Nagorny-Karabakh, Gasimov said.

The shelling came just hours before Armenian and Azerbaijani officials reached a draft cease-fire agreement in two-day talks in the Iranian capital of Tehran, Iran's official IRNA news agency reported.

Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati told reporters the text of the agreement would be published after approval by the heads of state of the two countries.

He said the draft proposes a cease-fire, an exchange of prisoners and corpses of those killed in action and efforts to lift economic sanctions of Armenia and other regions.

Cambodia's SNC meets

PHNOM PENH, Mar 16: Cambodia's Supreme National Council (SNC) met today for the first time under supervision of the UN peacekeeping mission amid concerns that it is important, reports AFP.

The SNC was missing two of its most important members, Khmer Rouge leader Kieu Samphan and Funcinpec leader Prince Norodom Ranariddh.

But that is usual. The SNC has had its full complement on only one occasion despite meeting half a dozen times this year. Prince Ranariddh is most frequently missing, choosing instead to be represented by his father, Prince Norodom Sihanouk, who is supposed to be the neutral chairman.

night in the village of Roga, 57 kilometers (35 miles) north of Kishinev. No Moldovan confirmation of the report was available.

The fighting in Trans-Dniester continued through Sunday, extending to other areas including the town of Grigoriopol.

Early Sunday, separatists invaded an army base in Tiraspol, seizing 1,321 Kalashnikov automatic guns, 1 million cartridges, 1,300 hand grenades, 255 pistols and 30 rocket-propelled grenades, government officials said.

Trans-Dniester is populated mostly by Slavs who want to secede from Moldova, which has a strong ethnic Romanian majority.