

**BRIEFLY**

**Sihanouk arrives in N Korea :** Cambodian Prince Norodom Sihanouk arrived in Pyongyang from Beijing Sunday to attend ceremonies marking the 80th birthday of North Korean President Kim Il Sung on Wednesday, the Korean central news agency reported, AFP reports from Tokyo.

In a dispatch monitored here the official agency said Prince Sihanouk was greeted at airport by Vice-President Li Long-Ok and Foreign Minister Kim Yong-Nam.

**Peru congress leaders freed :** Troops keeping congressional leaders under house arrest since President Alberto Fujimori seized authoritarian powers have withdrawn, Peruvian Senate President Felipe Osterling said Saturday, AFP reports from Lima.

Osterling, who along with Chamber of Deputies President Roberto Ramirez De Villar has been under house arrest since Fujimori dissolved congress and suspended constitutional rights Sunday, said the soldiers placed outside his home were withdrawn Saturday.

The apparent lifting of the house arrest has not been announced officially by Fujimori's new emergency government.

Osterling left his house and went to the parliament building, surrounded by troops and tanks, but was prevented from entering. Along with other legislators he then tried to stage a demonstration in a downtown Lima plaza but troops and police broke it up.

**Three killed as bridge collapses :** Rescue workers on Saturday found the bodies of three people who died when a bridge collapsed due to flooding in and around this Adriatic city, police and news reports said, AP reports from Pescara.

The victims were driving in two separate cars over a bridge outside the city. The bridge collapsed under pressure of floodwaters from the Tavo River, which had swollen following days of heavy rainfall, news reports said. Another four people were rescued after their car fell into the water.

The flooding caused hundreds of billions of lire (hundreds of millions of dollars) in damage in Pescara and the surrounding area, the Italian news agency ANSA reported.

Landslides and fallen bridges blocked numerous roads and flooded factories. About 100 fishing boats were severely damaged after they were carried into sea by the raging Pescara River.

**Arafat meets Mubarak :** PLO leader Yasser Arafat gave a bearhug to Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak on Saturday and said he was rapidly recovering from a plane crash, AP reports from Tunis.

Their meeting was held despite doctors prescribing "total rest" for Arafat to recuperate from bruises and an eye injury suffered in the accident Tuesday in the Libyan desert, PLO sources said.

"I feel great," a waving, smiling Arafat told photographers and reporters as he began 20 minutes of talks with the Egyptian leader.

PLO and Egyptian officials did not reveal the content of the talks, but Arafat has previously thanked Egypt for aiding the search for his downed plane.

**Mitterrand off to Turkey :** French President Francois Mitterrand leaves Monday for a two-day visit to Turkey, the first by a French head of state since Charles De Gaulle in 1968, AFP reports from Paris.

Mitterrand will be accompanied by five cabinet members including Foreign Minister Roland Dumas, as well as a delegation of French businessmen in a visit aimed primarily at strengthening bilateral ties.

He is scheduled for talks with President Turgut Ozal on Monday, when he will also meet with Prime Minister Suleiman Demirel, Deputy Prime Minister Erdal Inonu.

**Emergency in Sicily :** The government declared a state of emergency Saturday in the region of Sicily's mount Etna as lava from the erupting volcano threatened a nearby village, AFP reports from Rome.

Troops and civil defence teams were working desperately to save the village of Zafferana Etnea as the flow of molten rock advanced to just a few hundred metres (yards) away.

The government decision clears the way for an operation to try to brake or divert the flow, naval explosives experts were expected to arrive on the Mediterranean island to try to redirect the magma.

Meanwhile some 200 civil defence workers backed up by army teams using 22 heavy earthmoving vehicles worked to erect a new barrier after the lava Thursday broke through two other embankments set up to protect the village.

**PPP blames govt for students' clash**

KARACHI, Apr 12: The opposition Pakistan People's Party (PPP) accused the government on Saturday of involvement in a clash between students in which a villager was killed, reports AFP.

The clash took place Thursday near Larkana, 500 kilometers (312 miles) north of Karachi, during an observance of the death anniversary of Bhutto's father and PPP founder, former Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto.

Officials have blamed 'rival student groups' for the incident, which involved light arms.

But the PPP's central executive, in a resolution, condemned the so-called Umranj group for attempting to disrupt the gathering at Garhi Khuda Baksh, where Bhutto's father is buried.

In particular it blamed Brigadier Imtiaz, Director of Pakistan's Federal Intelligence Bureau, saying he was "the responsible hand" behind the Umranj group.

"This is part of a dirty tricks campaign launched by the present government against the PPP," the resolution said.

This is not the first time that a political party has pointed an accusing finger at Pakistan's intelligence agencies.

The Mohajir Qaumi movement, representing Urdu-speaking migrants from India, has on many occasions blamed intelligence agencies for plotting to kill its leader Altaf Hussain and other top brass.

Bhutto herself had held "quasi-military intervention" responsible for the dismissal of her government on August 6, 1990.

since January 1 in one of the bloodiest starts to any year since the conflict erupted in 1969.

AP adds: The IRA, in a statement to media in Belfast, Northern Ireland, said one of its units planted the bomb in the financial district.

"This attack is a direct consequence of Britain's illegal occupation of Irish territory and attacks such as this will continue so long as Britain persists in that occupation," the statement said.

The statement made no mention of the bombing of the Staples Corner junction in northwest London, which caused one slight injury.

The IRA said it regretted the deaths and injuries in the financial district bombing and blamed police for failing to act promptly after receiving a 25-minute warning. Churchill-

Coleman called the warning hopelessly "inadequate" and said it gave the wrong location.

All the victims were trapped in damaged buildings or hit by debris. The dead were a 15-year-old girl, a man in his 20s and a third person whose body was discovered Saturday.

"This was deliberate attempt by the IRA to impose their views in the debate over the future of Northern Ireland," Home Secretary Kenneth Baker. The Cabinet member responsible for law and order, said on BBC radio.

Sinn Fein, the IRA's political wing, lost its only seat in Parliament to the moderate Social Democratic and Labor Party in Thursday's elections.

"When it comes to the ballot box... the IRA gets defeated, so they resort to terrorism," Baker said.

**Four CIS states fail to reach consensus on START**

MOSCOW, Apr 12: The four CIS states with strategic nuclear weapons on their territory failed to agree Saturday to respect the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START), because of a new disagreement between Russia and Ukraine, officials said, reports AFP.

Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev, who attended the talks between Ukraine, Russia, Kazakhstan and Belarus, said Ukraine was demanding that the four states, rather than just Russia, should all be recognised as the parties to the treaty along with the United States.

Meanwhile, the Itar-Tass news agency said the president of the Russian Parliament issued a statement calling for the immediate setting-up of Russian armed forces.

Last month President Boris Yeltsin, who has been striving to maintain united armed forces under the aegis of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), announced the creation of a Russian Defence Ministry, but his so far held off from actually creating separate armed forces.

The parliament statement said that the Russian stance on unified armed forces had met incomprehension from certain other member-states of the CIS.

This was a clear reference to Ukraine, the second biggest of the former Soviet republics after Russia.

START was signed by the now defunct Soviet Union and the United States in January 1991. Since the collapse of the union late last year most western countries have recognised Russia as the legitimate heir to the country's international treaty obligations.

Kozyrev told a press conference after the four republic meeting broke up: "We must all agree that there should be

only one nuclear state in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). Otherwise there will be a radical geostrategic change in the world, he said, noting that the number of avowed nuclear states would suddenly jump from the present five to eight.

Another Russian negotiator agreed, saying that if the four countries were all recognised as signatories to the START treaty, it would mean remodeling the world set-up."

Russia cannot follow that path, he said.

The aim of Saturday's meeting had been to reach agreement between the four nuclear-armed republics on how to implement cuts of about one third in their respective strategic arsenals.

Russia currently holds about 17,000 nuclear warheads, Ukraine 4,300, Kazakhstan 1,600 and Belarus 1,200.

Under the START treaty the ex-Soviet Union was committed to reducing the number of its strategic weapon warheads to 7,000.

Ukrainian Foreign Minister Anatoly Zlenko described the talks as tense and said his country's parliament was to discuss its demand to be a co-signatory of the treaty.

He reiterated Ukraine's desire to conclude the START treaty as soon as possible so as to carry on with the elimination of nuclear weapons.

The Kazakh Foreign Minister, Tulcay Suleimenov, said the meeting had made steps forward but there was more work needed to achieve the signing of an agreement.

We do not want to be a nuclear state, he said.

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**Assam Maoist rebels kill 10 soldiers**

GUWHATI, India, Apr 12: Maoist rebels killed 10 Indian soldiers with a bomb in the northeastern state of Assam in their first major strike since resuming a war for independence, officials said today, reports Reuter.

They said 13 soldiers were injured, seven very seriously, when the bomb destroyed their truck as it crossed a bridge near the central village of Sonkuria on Saturday night.

Intelligence sources said they believed guerrillas trained in Pakistan were to blame.

It was the biggest death toll in a single incident since the army was sent into Assam last year on a successful campaign against the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA), which accuses New Delhi of exploiting the state's rich resources of tea and oil.

In January the rebel leadership agreed to a cease-fire and on terms for peace talks with the government that excluded their goal of an independent state.

Talks were due to start by the end of March but at the last minute headline leaders balked at other terms which

included laying down arms before discussions started.

That led to a split in ULFA. Moderates began handing over their weapons this week, saying they would start peace talks with New Delhi and the state government.

Simultaneously the army launched a fresh campaign against the hardliners, especially in their stronghold in Nalbari district.

On Saturday evening three trucks packed with troops were returning to barracks from village searches. As the first crossed the bridge, a huge blast destroyed it. Officials said the bomb was triggered by remote control, the first time ULFA is known to have used such a device.

Intelligence officials, who declined to be identified, said they had been told by surrendering moderates that a hand-picked group of 25 ULFA hardliners was taken to Pakistan for explosives training last September.

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**Kinnock likely to resign today**

LONDON, Apr 12: Neil Kinnock, who led the opposition Labour Party to a new and humiliating defeat in Thursday's general election, is expected to resign his post on Monday, British Sunday newspaper said, reports AFP.

Several papers said Kinnock would be replaced by the popular John Smith, the party's spokesman on economic affairs.

Thursday's defeat was the fourth consecutive one for Labour, and the second under Kinnock's leadership.

It was all the more humiliating in that it came as Britain was in the worst economic recession since the 1930s, and when Labour was slightly ahead in most opinion polls.

Many observers have blamed Kinnock's poor image among much of the electorate for the defeat.

Independent Television news said the party could convene a special congress in a few months to formally elect their new leader. A Mori opinion poll published by the Sunday Times concluded that 53 per cent of Britons would prefer to see Smith leading the Labour Party.

The economic spokesman, who is 54, is supported by most of his colleagues in the party's "shadow cabinet" and most trade union leaders, the press reports said.

The pro-Labour Sunday Mirror said the party's number two, Roy Hattersley, would also step down. He was expected to be replaced by Margaret Beckett.

Major whose Conservatives defied predictions to win a fourth consecutive term in Thursday's General election mixed experience with fresh faces to implement his vision of a classless society at ease with itself.

Echoing Major's words, a close aide said "now he has a mandate from the people and his own team I think we will see a Prime Minister more at ease with himself."