

Fresh fighting breaks out in Bosnia despite ceasefire

SARAJEVO (Bosnia-Herzegovina), Apr 13: Sporadic fighting broke out in Sarajevo and other areas of Bosnia-Herzegovina early Monday despite a ceasefire agreement among warring Muslims, Serbs and Croats, reports AP.

Shooting started about two hours after the midnight truce deadline in Sarajevo, with traces visible and the sound of machine guns and automatic weapons echoing through the night.

Fighting continued Monday morning in three southwestern districts about 10 kilometres (six miles) from the city centre: Mojiljo, Bobrinja and Ali Pasha Brdo.

The Belgrade-based Tanjug news agency reported explosions and heavy infantry fire near the Sarajevo airport, which was being shut down Monday morning.

Sarajevo radio reported that sporadic fighting continued around Bosnia, the worst apparently in the town of Foca, about 50 kilometres (30 miles) southeast of Sarajevo.

The old Muslim part of the town was set ablaze in fighting between Serbs and Muslims, the radio said. Its reporter criticised the federal army for not moving to stop the fighting.

The report said there were people dead and wounded in Foca, but did not specify how many. The information could not be independently confirmed.

Radio said two other trouble spots — Visegrad, located east of Sarajevo, and Mostar, to the west — were reported calm.

Tanjug said sporadic gunfire and tension also persisted in Capljina, Stolac and Zvornik. The United Nations' special envoy to Yugoslavia, former US Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, was being dispatched to Bosnia in an effort to calm the situation.

Bosnia has steadily slid toward war since the dominant Muslims and Croats voted for independence Feb 29. Slavic Muslims make up more than 40 per cent of the population and Croats comprise about 17 per cent.

Serbs, a third of the population, oppose it. More than 150 people have died and thousands have fled their homes in fighting. Warfare escalated last week after the European Community and the United States recognised Bosnia.

Serb militias have attacked Bosnian towns, apparently aiming to carve a swath of Serb-held territories, in an action similar to their strategy in the bloody war in Croatia. Croatian forces also are fighting for territory.



Japanese Emperor Akihito greets former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev (L) at the entrance of the Akasaka Palace in Tokyo Monday. Gorbachev, accompanied by his wife Raisa, is in Tokyo on a 11-day private visit. — AFP/UNB photo

Gaddafi firm not to hand over suspects to UK, US

NICOSIA, Apr 13: With United Nations sanctions against his country just over two days away, Libyan Leader Moamer Gaddafi on Sunday maintained his refusal to hand over to the United States and Britain two men wanted on aircraft bombing charges, reports AFP.

Gaddafi, who met Sunday with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak on the crisis, once again told reporters in Tripoli that he had put forward new proposals on resolving the dispute over two men who are alleged to cause the mid-air explosion of two airliners, which left 440 people dead in 1988 and 1989.

The Libyan leader brushed off fears of a new US military assault on Libya like one that occurred in 1986, and repeated an earlier suggestion that the two men could hand themselves over to a neutral state of their own accord, Jana news agency said in a dispatch monitored here.

Colonel Gaddafi has consistently maintained that directly handing over the men, who are wanted by US British and French judicial authorities, would infringe on Libya's sovereignty.

The Libyan leader also said that the UN sanctions, due to come into force on Wednesday, would involve no loss what so ever for Libya. We will shoulder our responsibilities on that score, he told reporters in Tripoli after Mubarak's departure.

In Rabat, meanwhile, an Arab League committee seeking to defuse the crisis ended a meeting without making any progress, Arab diplomats said in the Moroccan capital.

Sources close to the Arab League delegations said they had dropped a plan to seek a new delay for the implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution. The meeting was attended by Libyan Foreign Minister Ibrahim Al-Bishari.

In Cairo the Middle East news agency quoted Mubarak as saying on his return home that Egypt had done everything possible to avoid military action against Libya.

Mubarak also said Gaddafi had repeated his acceptance of United Nations Security Council Resolution 731 and had informed the UN Secretary General of his decision.

The UN embargo is to be implemented unless Libya hands over the two suspects for trial in either the United States or Britain. A French

judge also wants to question them over the UTA bombing.

The Libyan position in the Lockerbie case was clear and legal, Gaddafi told reporters, while repeating that there could be no question of infringing Libyan sovereignty or violating international law.

The Libyan leader also said that his country did not fear a new Military attack, which would have absolutely no point for the United States.

On Sunday the Libyan authorities said the anniversary of the attack today would be a day of national mourning.

Jana news agency said all air, maritime and land traffic to and from Libya that is normally carried out by local and foreign companies would be suspended for 24 hours from midnight (2200 GMT) today.

Troops, rebels clash in Philippines: 28 killed

MANILA, Apr 13: Communist rebels and government soldiers fought a day-long battle near a mountain resort and 28 of the combatants were slain, the military said Monday, reports AP.

The dead in Sunday's fighting included a badly wounded army lieutenant who ordered his fellow soldiers to fall back and called in artillery fire on his own position to cover their retreat, the military said.

Brig Gen Emiliano Templo said 19 government soldiers were killed and about 20 other troops were wounded in the fighting near Sagada, a mountain resort 270 kilometers north of Manila. He said the bodies of nine rebels were found by reinforcements.

The Department of Tourism has been encouraging Filipino and foreign tourists to visit Sagada because of its spectacular mountain scenery, extensive caverns and scenic rice-growing terraces carved on the steep slopes by tribesmen centuries ago.

The New People's Army, armed wing of the outlawed Communist Party of the Philippines, has been waging a 24-year insurgency to establish a Marxist state.

2 FIS leaders charged with anti-state activities

ALGERIA, Apr 13: The two top leaders of the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) have been charged with inciting armed rebellion against the state, setting up illegal armed militias and calling for sabotage, the military court announced Sunday, reports AFP.

FIS leader Abassi Madani and his Deputy Ali Belhadj, who are being held at a military prison in Blida some 50 kilometers south of here, were also charged with calling for fratricidal clashes and the distribution of leaflets liable to undermine state authority.

Belhadj, an Muslim imam, has also been charged with kidnapping law and order officers.

Winnie Mandela denies charges

JOHANNESBURG (South Africa), Apr 13: Winnie Mandela on Monday denied accusations from one of the co-defendants in her kidnap and assault trial that she viciously beat four young men, one of whom was later found dead, reports AP.

In a statement released by her lawyer, the wife of African National Congress president Nelson Mandela said the allegations by her former driver, John Morgan, were false.

News reports Monday speculated that the continuing row involving Mandela, who was convicted in the case last year and sentenced to six years in prison, would prompt her husband and the ANC to force her out of public life.

China-ROK ties likely

BEIJING, Apr 13: The Chinese and South Korean Foreign Ministers met here today for talks on international and regional issues, officials said, reports AP.

The talks were expected to include the possibility of setting up formal diplomatic relations for the first time. The two were on opposite sides in the Korean War (1950-1953).

South Korean Foreign Minister Lee Sang-Ok met his Chinese counterpart Qian Qichen within the context of an annual meeting of the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), which opens here tomorrow.

Lee, the first South Korean Foreign Minister ever to visit Beijing, was chairman of last year's ESCAP session held in Seoul.

The two ministers exchanged views on ESCAP and also discussed the international and regional situation, the officials said, without providing further details.

The absence of formal ties has not prevented commerce between China and South Korea from booming, with two-way trade expected to hit 10 billion dollar this year. Lee arrived here yesterday.

Iraq still has Scud missiles

NEW YORK, Apr 13: CIA Director Robert Gates says Iraq has hundreds of Scud missiles hidden away and would be able to reconstitute its biological-weapons programme in a matter of weeks, reports AP.

UN resolutions ending the Gulf War required that Iraq destroy its Scuds and dismantle its programme to develop weapons of mass destruction.

Gates, in an interview with the weekly newsmagazine Time, said Iraqi President Saddam Hussein "has a couple of hundred Scud missiles hidden."

UN inspectors have found and uncovered enough of Saddam's nuclear weapons programme that it would take "several years" for him to get that programme effectively going again, Gates said.

But he added that Iraq's biological weapons programme "could be reconstituted in weeks."

The Time issue carrying the Gates interview hit newsstands Monday.

Off the Record

Death in California gas chamber is classy

SAN QUENTIN, Calif: Barbara Graham wore high heels and scoffed at a guards advice to take a deep breath. Caryl Chessman went smiling, gassed 15 seconds before a reprieve was phoned in, reports AP.

The last person to die in California's gas chamber, police killer Aaron Mitchell, fought to the end, struggling with guards and shouting that he was Jesus.

Twenty-five years later, Robert Alton Harris is scheduled to die April 21 at San Quentin State Penitentiary.

Harris would be the 195 the person executed in the green chamber and the first to be put to death in California since the 1976 US Supreme Court ruling allowing states to resume use of the death penalty.

Harris, 39, was convicted of abducting and killing two 16-year-old San Diego boys in 1978 to get their car for a bank robbery that netted him \$3,000. Police said he taunted one boy, telling him to "quit crying and die like a man."

Since the gas chamber opened in 1938, 190 men and four women have died inside its metal walls. Graham and Chessman are among the most famous.

Chessman was a kidnapper and sex offender who spend more than 12 years on death row, winning delays on eight execution dates.

Witnesses said he went to his death smiling. Graham, dubbed by the media "Babe the Party Girl," was executed in 1955 for the murder of an elderly woman. Her two accomplices also were put to death.

"She was a classy gal," San Francisco Examiner reporter Ed Montgomery wrote. "She walked to the gas chamber with high heels on."

"A lieutenant said to her," when you hear the pellets drop, breathe deep and it will be easier that way," she said to him. "How the hell do you know?"

Money, food, land robbed by the dead

BEIJING: Dead people in China are robbing the living of resources, money and even food, an official newspaper said today, reports Reuters.

The money spent on funerals for the seven million people who die in China each year could build 14,000 schools. The Farmers Daily said in a report headlined "the dead eat the living."

The wood used in the coffins could build 1.7 million houses, it said.

And the land used for burial grounds could, if planted with crops, feed four million people for a year.

"Why do the dead loot the living like this?" The newspaper asked.

It blamed traditional, feudal ideas and criticised those who treat their parents poorly while they are alive only to make a tremendous fuss once they are dead.

"This has become a very serious social problem," the newspaper said.

Medieval times are back again!

SURREY, Albania: On some afternoons, the men of the village can relax, have a smoke and chat, reports AP.

Not the women. One day, while men took their ease under a warm sun, Sabire Troksi plunged her hands into a trough of scalding water and vigorously scaped a shirt with a large bar of soap.

Everyone is suffering from the economic catastrophe in this small Balkan country, but the burden is heaviest on women.

Living standards have plummeted in the confusing time since Albania abandoned Satanism and began moving toward democracy.

Most of the people in Europe's poorest country are on relief, which leaves the men with considerable free time in the patriarchal, predominantly Muslim society.

Women's lives, in contrast, are filled with chores and worry.

"Life is becoming unbearable for them," said Fatos Tarifa, a socialist at Tirana University.

In addition to cooking and cleaning, Troksi collects wood for heat, milks the cow and collects the family rations of food provided by foreign relief agencies.

Women who hold jobs have a double work load because few men help out at home.

Brigades of women can be seen working in the fields.

"Without mechanization, they are returning to medieval times," said Diana Culi, head of a new government office for women and president of the Forum of Albanian Women.

Terminator promotes youth fitness

INDIANAPOLIS: Arnold Schwarzenegger did push-ups and ran a sack race over the weekend to promote youth fitness, reports AP.

The star of the "Terminator" movies was in Indianapolis on Saturday as Chairman of the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports. He's stopped in 43 states to promote fitness, and his goal is all 50, reports AP.

"I'm a strong believer in the squeaky wheels get the grease, so those organizations that make the most noise and are the most obnoxious out there and protest the most are the ones that will get things done," he said.

29 killed in weekend violence

Sikhs reject ceasefire offer

TALWANDI SABO (INDIA), Apr 13: Sikh rebels on Monday spurned a government deadline to surrender and vowed to carry on the fight for an independent homeland, saying it was every Sikh's "pious duty," reports AP.

"The Sikhs will rule," chanted about 40,000 Sikhs in a monotonous drone as they heralded the Sikh new year of Baisakhi at Sunday midnight (1830 gm) inside a 300-year-old shrine.

Troops laid siege of the Dandama Sahib shrine, fearing violence by the hundreds of gun-wielding militants who had sneaked inside.

A government deadline for surrender and amnesty ended Monday. But the offer was considered a formality because the militants were neither expected to give up arms nor be intimidated by the security forces.

AFP reports from New Delhi: Twenty-nine people died in weekend separatist violence in Punjab, as the northern Indian state's high-profile police chief said some 100 militants would surrender.

Among the 29 slain were four Sikh militants shot dead by security men in two separate incidents late Saturday when separatists ambushed police patrols in Punjab's Batala and Kapurthala districts, the Press Trust of India (PTI) said.

Three troopers also died in the firefights, PTI said, adding that six other Sikh separatists were killed either in inter-tribe feud or in encounters with police officers in the frontier state bordering Pakistan.

The remaining 16 people killed in the bloody weekend violence were civilians, PTI said, a day after 25 people were reported killed separately in Punjab.



BEIJING: German Environment Minister Dr Klaus Töpel (R) shakes hands with Chinese president for Nuclear Safety Zhu Rongji after signing a nuclear agreement Sunday. The agreement allows for the exchange of information, ideas and personnel between the two countries regarding nuclear safety. State Councillor Song Jian is in the centre. — AFP/UNB photo

Members of council to run Afghanistan named

ISLAMABAD, Apr 13: Former bureaucrats, ex-ministers and exiled intellectuals are likely to form the council this month that will run Afghanistan until an interim government can be installed in Kabul, according to lists released by the resistance Sunday, reports AFP.

Under a UN plan unveiled in Geneva by Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali on Friday, the curtain will finally be drawn on Afghanistan's 13-year civil war when a 15-member council replaces the Soviet-installed government of President Najibullah.

The council, which all sides in the conflict have agreed to form, will fill the country's political vacuum until

an interim government is formed to conduct elections in the war-torn country.

But while UN officials have been keeping proposed names for the council a closely guarded secret, stressing that intensive discussions were continuing on its eventual shape, two pro-resistance news services Sunday made public lists featuring names of 15 possible participants.

Both agencies are close to the camps of hardliners who refused to comply with UN mediator Benon Sevan's request to provide a list of candidates they consider acceptable for the council.

UN sources here described the names listed as realistic, but insisted that no final decision had been made.

Adjustments could be made on the basis of the names suggested on the list, one UN official said.

Boutros-Ghali has said the composition of what he called the pre-transitional council and its tenure would be announced soon.

Among the people on the lists released by the agencies were:

Abdul Sattar Secrat, minister for justice under the monarch, currently teaching in Ummul Qira University, Mecca, Saudi Arabia.

Ashgar, intellectual and former professor at Kabul University, Inayatullah Iblagh, lawyer and former parliamentary deputy, currently a professor at Kuwait University.

Hashim Mojaddedi, relative of Sibghatullah Mojaddedi. Kamal Hashim, urologist, doctor and former professor at Kabul University.

Ibrahim Azeem, doctor, who served as health minister during the Daud regime.

Abdul Hakim Katwazi served as police commander under Shah.

Abdul Jabbar Basit, former justice ministry official who worked as professor in Peshawar University after fleeing the communist coup.

Now in Washington working for Voice of America.

Akhtar Mahmud Bakhtari, German educated bureaucrat who headed interior ministry police under Daud. Now teaching in Germany.

Shamsuddin Majorrooh, ex-Kabul University professor and former justice minister.

Yaqoob Laali, engineer who served as minister for social affairs under Shah.

Mohammad Yusuf, served as Shah's prime minister in 1962.

Abdul Wakil, former agriculture minister under the monarchy.

Yahya Nauroze, ex-general who defected from the Afghan army to become chief of staff in the Peshawar-based resistance government.

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BRIEFLY

Volcanic eruption leaves 3 dead:

The eruption of the Cerro Negro volcano near the western town of Leon has left three people dead and was intensifying Sunday, as local residents complained of eye and stomach problems due to air and water pollution, officials said Sunday, AFP reports from Nicaragua.

The volcano, some 15 kilometers (10 miles) from Leon, erupted Friday, and by Sunday volcanic ash was falling on other towns in western Nicaragua, the most heavily populated part of the country and the main agricultural area, including Esteli, Madriz, Somotillo and Jinotega.

The eruption is forecast to last several weeks, and experts said that it could begin to affect the capital in the next few days.

US warning to Iraq:

Washington would react if Iraq carried out threats to attack UN aerial missions over its territory, President George Bush's assistant on National Security Affairs Brent Scowcroft said Sunday, AFP reports from Washington.

"We will take it very seriously if Iraqi anti-aircraft guns shoot at US U-2 planes carrying out UN aerial reconnaissance missions over its territory," Scowcroft said in an interview on NBC television.

They will not get away with anything. He also said that Washington is talking with our allies about Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's very ominous preparations against the Kurds, including the installation of surface-to-air missiles in the north, he said.

Quake jolts northern Europe:

The strongest earthquake in two centuries jolted northern Europe early Monday, injuring 21 people in Germany and collapsing several houses, police said. One person died of a heart attack, AP reports from Berlin.

The earthquake register between 5.5 and 5.8 on the Richter scale, according to preliminary readings, said Professor Ludwig Ahrhorer of the Seismographic Institute of the University of Cologne. Its epicenter was near the Dutch city of Maastricht, near the German and Belgian borders, he said.

The shock was felt hundreds of miles (kms) away in Brussels, Belgium, throughout much of Germany and in northern France. Police switchboards were flooded with calls from alarmed people shaken awake by the tremor.

Australia resumes aid to Vietnam:

Australia is resuming its aid programme for Vietnam after a break of almost 13 years, AP reports from Canberra.

Treasurer John Dawkins and Industry Minister John Button were to inform Vietnamese Prime Minister Vo Van Kiet of the decision in Hanoi on Monday.

Australia is offering Vietnam a four-year programme worth 100 million dollars (\$175 million), Trade and Overseas Development Minister John Kerin said Sunday.

Australia suspended aid in 1979, the year after Vietnam invaded Cambodia, and said it would not resume until Vietnam withdrew its forces.

Genscher in Georgia:

German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher arrived Sunday in the Georgian capital Tbilisi to establish diplomatic relations between Germany and Georgia, AFP reports from Moscow.

Genscher was greeted by Georgia's acting president, former Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze.

The two men will have talks on bilateral cooperation and German and to the former Soviet republic, the Itar Tass news agency said.

Genscher is to meet a number of political and religious figures during his stay, it added.

Polish peasants occupy Agri Ministry:

Nearly 200 angry peasants occupied the Agriculture Ministry in the Polish capital of Warsaw for the fourth day running Sunday in protest at the expropriation of farmers unable to pay their debts, AFP reports from Warsaw.

The protesters are members of the recently-created Samobrona (Self-defence) Peasants Union.

All our meeting with ministry officials have been fruitless, Samobrona Chairman Andrzej Lepper told AFP. He said the protesters were now waiting for negotiations at government level.

On Saturday two other peasant unions, rural solidarity and the ex-communist Kzkiro, signed a joint statement by which Agriculture Minister Gabriel Janowski called on the banks to halt their seizures of debtors property.