

Peacekeeping chief takes tough line with Khmer Rouge

PHNOM PENH, July 23: The head of the UN peacekeeping operation in Cambodia Yasushi Akashi took a tough line with the Khmer Rouge today as more reports of ceasefire violations reached the capital, reports AFP.

In the last two days, fighting between Khmer Rouge and Phnom Penh government forces was reported in central, northern and southern Cambodia, with at least eight civilians killed and 11 injured, according to a UN spokesman.

"Unfortunately the present ceasefire violations continue to increase in number and seriousness," Akashi said as he convened a meeting of the Supreme National Council (SNC), which groups the leaders of the four Cambodian factions under UN supervision.

"The nature of these actions points to a deliberate policy of terror against ordinary Cambodians," he said.

The nominal leader of the Khmer Rouge, Khieu Samphan, looked on as Akashi read his

criticism, then read a statement of his own reiterating that the radical faction would not go along with the peace plan until the Phnom Penh government was dismantled.

The UN mechanism for dealing with ceasefire violations, the mixed military working group, has broken down because the Khmer Rouge have not sent a representative for the last seven weeks, Akashi said.

"This raises fundamental questions about their commitment to the ceasefire as a whole," he said.

SNC Chairman Prince Norodom Sihanouk pleaded with the Khmer Rouge to send a representative to such UN bodies.

Akashi also read out the text of this week's UN Security Council resolution, which threatens to withhold international development aid to the faction if it continues refusing to cooperate with UN peacekeepers.

Israeli plans not enough to solve settlement crisis : PLO

TUNIS, July 23: The PLO leadership ended a three-day strategy meeting on Wednesday saying Israel's plans to reduce settlement activity in the occupied territories were not enough and calling for a halt to all settlements, reports Reuters.

They urged the United States to keep up pressure on the new Israeli government by withholding billions of dollars it wants in loan guarantees.

"It is not enough. What is needed is a genuine and complete stopping of settlements, and not part of them," Abdallah Hourani of the Palestine Liberation Organisation's executive committee told Reuters after the meeting.

"The stopping of settle-

ments, including in the Jerusalem area, is a fundamental question for us," he added. "Palestinians are not ready to make a difference between what Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin calls political and security settlements," Hourani said.

He said the US administration should keep pressuring the Israeli government through the loan guarantees to obtain a complete halt to the settlements.

Hourani was speaking after an expanded meeting of the Palestinian leaders attended by members of the PLO executive committee, leaders of PLO factions and Sheikh Abdelhamid Al-Sayeh, Speaker of the

Palestinian National Council, the parliament in exile. A final official statement is expected to be issued on Thursday, PLO sources said.

Hourani said the Palestinians were not prepared to be pawns in a political game.

"We are not ready to play the role of the weak party in the negotiations on which pressures will be put in order to reach an artificial agreement for the success of the US elections, he said.

Asked about the PLO's response to Rabin's peace overtures, Hourani said: "We want concrete evidence. There is now a bigger responsibility on Rabin's government which has to show its credibility by

demonstrating that its choice of peace during the elections campaign is not only propaganda."

Hourani spelled out three points which he said were a test of Rabin's intention:

—stopping repression in the occupied territories, —freezing settlements and —granting self-rule for Palestinians after legislative elections.

Rabin cannot continue the policy of repression in the occupied territories, and the best test will be the interim period with self-rule after legislative election for Palestinians from the occupied territories, including Jerusalem, Hourani said.



CAIRO: President Hosni Mubarak (L) and US Secretary of State James Baker shake hands after a press conference on Wednesday, during which they reviewed the situation in the Middle East in the light of Tuesday's Mubarak Rabin summit. — AFP/UNB photo

Baker-Assad talks end

LATAKIA, Syria, July 23: US Secretary of State James Baker ended talks with Syrian President Hafez Al-Assad on the future of the Middle East peace process, official Syrian sources reported Thursday, says AFP.

The discussions late Wednesday lasted more than four hours in Kardaha the northwestern town where Assad was raised and where he attended funeral services this week for his mother, the Syrian news agency Sana reported.

They focused on "the peace process in the Middle East in the light of the latest developments in the region," Sana said, without providing details.

The agency said the talks were also attended on the Syrian side by Vice President Abdel Halim Khaddam, Foreign Minister Faruk Al-Shareh and Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Nasser Kaddur.

Baker is seeking to persuade Arab leaders to match what he considers is a new Israeli desire for peace.

Off the Record

Formal appearance after formal separation

LONDON: The Duchess of York joined her husband Prince Andrew and other Royals on Wednesday evening for the couple's first appearance together at a grand public occasion since they announced their split four months ago, reports AFP.



The Duchess's appearance at the reception at Hampton court palace to mark the three hundred anniversary of the foundation of courts, the Queen's bankers, was expected to fuel speculation about the future of her marriage to the Queen's second son.

Buckingham palace denied Wednesday that the situation had changed since March, saying talks initiated by the Duchess's lawyers about a formal separation were continuing.

A palace spokesman said the banquet, attended by more than 200 guests, was not an official royal engagement.

Since the separation announcement, the Duchess, popularly known as "Fergie", has not attended any public engagements and instead has attended events organised by charities in which she is involved, in a semi-private capacity.

On Wednesday night, the eve of their sixth wedding anniversary, the Yorks were smiling and appeared relaxed.

Quayle will reluctantly support daughter's abortion

WASHINGTON: Vice President Dan Quayle, a staunch opponent of abortion, said on Wednesday he would reluctantly support his own daughter if she became pregnant and chose to have an abortion, reports Reuters.

Quayle was asked by talk show host Larry King for his reaction to a hypothetical situation in which his daughter were to become pregnant.

"Obviously, I would counsel her and talk to her and support her on whatever decision she'd make," the vice president said in a television interview on the Cable News Network (CNN) "Larry King Live" programme.

Asked if he would support his daughter if she opted for abortion, he added: "I'd support my daughter. I'd hope that she wouldn't make that decision."

First contact with the Americas

MADRID: Cuban President Fidel Castro arrived here early Thursday to attend a summit bringing together Latin American leaders with those of Spain and Portugal, reports AFP.

Castro, who arrived in his customary military uniform, made no statement on arrival here.

The latest summit comes as Spain is hosting celebrations of the 50th anniversary of Europe's first contacts with the Americas.

He considers himself Jackson's husband

LOS ANGELES: A man already accused of stalking Janet Jackson was charged on Wednesday with sending letters containing death threats against the pop singer, her brother Michael Jackson and President George Bush, reports Reuters.

Frank Paul Jones, 33, who is alleged to have told authorities he considers himself Jackson's husband, was charged in a one-count indictment, assistant US attorney Gregory Jessner said.

He was arrested on June 22 in the driveway of the gated Jackson family compound in the Los Angeles suburb of Encino and was jailed on state anti-stalking charge.

Jones is alleged to have sent Jackson up to 40 letters in which he threatened her, her boyfriend Rene Elizondo, pop superstar Michael Jackson, Bush and film director John Singleton, director of "Boyz n the Hood", FBI agent Richard Palactos said in an affidavit.

In one of the letters signed "you husband," Jones wrote he would get rid of anyone who stood in the way of him meeting with her, according to the complaint.

"I will do everything in my power to destroy them," he is alleged to have stated.

The affidavit accuses Jones of writing another letter in which he complained about Jackson's failure to respond and warned: "If they do not arrest me or solve my problem I'm gonna (going to) attempt to kill President George Bush."

"I will resort to violence, to (draw) attention to my problem," Jones is alleged to have written in another letter. "I'll commit mass murder at a Michael Jackson concert if necessary in an attempt to murder Michael."

Jones was previously arrested on May 22 as he attempted to enter the White House grounds in Washington, according to the FBI agent's statement.



BRIEFLY

ANC ready to talk with govt: African National Congress (ANC) leader Nelson Mandela said in Tehran Wednesday the ANC was ready to resume negotiations with the South African government if it showed "goodwill," state television reported, says AFP.

Mandela described South African President Frederik de Klerk as a "racist" but said the ANC was willing to resume talks with Pretoria "if it showed goodwill."

"We want a new government which would conform with our culture, language and religion," Mandela said in talks with the diplomatic corps at the Iranian Foreign Ministry.

The ANC withdrew from constitutional negotiations with Pretoria after the Boipatong massacre of 45 Blacks on June 17.

Jailed for abusing trust: A London cab driver who abused the trust of a Spanish student passenger, raping her twice, was jailed for eight years on Wednesday, reports Reuters from London.

You were in a position of trust, Judge Henry Plamer said sentencing Frank Welton, 25, for raping the 22-year-old woman.

"People who use London black taxi cabs are entitled to expect a safe ride and you abused that trust in a most dreadful way," Welton said the woman consented, as had other passengers.

A spokesman for London's licensed drivers, who can spend years in training, said it was the first known case of rape by a driver of one of the capital's historic black cabs.

LA Judge delays Rodney's suit: A judge on Wednesday delayed a lawsuit against the city by Rodney King until courts finish hearing all of the cases stemming from his beating by police officers, reports AP from Los Angeles.

A city attorney said negotiations are continuing in an effort to settle the lawsuit before trial.

King is seeking 83 million dollar in damages. The City Attorney reportedly proposed a 6 million dollar settlement, but the City Council refused to approve it.

Senior Assistant City Attorney Thomas Hokinson said after a Wednesday meeting with US District Judge John G Davies that the judge had agreed to put the civil case on hold.

Palestinian shot dead: A Palestinian was killed by gunfire late Wednesday in a clash with Israeli troops at Gemtin, in the north of the occupied West Bank, army sources said, reports AFP from Jerusalem.

Mahmoud Abu Hassan, described as a leader of the Black Panther organisation in the region, was hit as he and two other Palestinians clashed with a border patrol. His companions succeeded in escaping.

Hassan was sought by the army in connection with the killing of a number of Palestinians suspected of "collaborating" with the Israeli authorities, the source said.

Hrawi to meet Baker: President Elias Hrawi headed for Bekaa Valley where he was expected to meet US Secretary of State James A Baker later Thursday, Foreign Ministry sources said, reports AP from Beirut.

Baker, currently touring Middle Eastern capitals to give new momentum to the peace talks, would be the most senior US official to go to Lebanon since 1983.

Lebanon has been officially off limits for US citizens because of a wave of kidnappings and mass killings of Americans and other Westerners in the 1980s.

The Lebanese Foreign Ministry sources stopped short of saying Hrawi would definitely meet Baker, but they said such a meeting "probably" would take place either at the Lebanese-Syrian border or at Hrawi's home in Zahleh.

New virus of AIDS discovered: Scientists say they have discovered a virus that may be the cause of AIDS symptoms in people who are not infected by either of the known AIDS viruses, reports AP from Calif.

More than two dozen cases of people who had AIDS symptoms but tested negative for the viruses HIV-1 and HIV-2 have surfaced in recent days. Wednesday's announcement was the first public report of a specific virus that could be a possible cause.

Dr Sudhir Gupta, an immunologist at the University of California at Irvine, said the virus is "strongly associated" with the AIDS-like condition in at least nine people who lack HIV-1 and HIV-2.

That does not prove it is a new cause of AIDS or even the cause of a new AIDS-like condition, but scientists want to investigate the possibilities, he said at a news conference.

He said he is reasonably certain the virus is not a mutant form of HIV-1 or HIV-2 because it is quite different.

IPI protests takeover of Ivestia

LONDON, July 23: The International Press Institute (IPI) protested to Russian President Boris Yeltsin Wednesday about the Russian Parliament's decision to take over the newspaper Ivestia, reports AFP.

The organisation of journalists, editors and publishers from non-communist countries sent a letter from its London office to Yeltsin, deploring the decision taken last Friday. Ivestia has been independent since its journalists took it over after the failed conservative coup last August.

Special body to weed out corruption from NY police dept

NEW YORK, July 23: Drug dealing, rape and murder - the New York police department has been rife with criminal charges against its own and has appointed a special commission to weed out the corrupt elements, reports AFP.

With 28,948 law enforcement officers there are bound to be a few bad apples, but the Daily Newsday recently reported that the federal authorities were investigating at least 10 of the city's 75 police stations.

The newspaper said that officers in Manhattan, Queens and Brooklyn were suspected of extorting money from businesses for protection, accepting bribes to watch people's houses, selling drugs and checking out places for burglars to hit.

Those reports were officially denied but the city has announced that a special independent panel had been set up with unusually

extensive powers, including the authority to subpoena witnesses, hear testimony under oath and send cases to court.

Such extreme measures have not been taken since the 1970s when a commission headed by Wallstreet lawyer Whitman Knapp uncovered an organized ring of corruption within the New York police department.

"It is imperative that the people of our city have total confidence in the integrity of our police department," said former Deputy Mayor Milton Mollen who was appointed to head the commission.

But apparently that confidence will be hard won.

A Gallup poll last week showed that 53 per cent of New Yorkers believed the police were often involved in drug trafficking and 12 per cent said they personally knew of incidents of

Afghanistan providing arms to Kashmiris

ABU DHABI, July 23: Afghanistan is providing arms and training to Kashmiri guerrillas fighting for secession from India, according to the chief minister in the Pakistani administered part of Kashmir.

"Of course they are helping us," Mohammed Abdul Gayoum told the United Arab Emirates (UAE) weekly magazine Al-Shuruq in an interview obtained by AFP ahead of its publication on Thursday.

"The Mujahideen are providing training to Kashmiris who go there. Kashmiris also get weapons. The weapons have not been provided

through me, but I am sure many Kashmiri fighters are getting arms from Afghanistan."

Mandela gets honorary doctorate

NICOSIA, July 23: Tehran University on Wednesday conferred an honorary doctorate on Nelson Mandela, the first non-Iranian so honoured by the Islamic Republic, Tehran television reported, says AP.

The broadcast, monitored in Nicosia, said the political science degree recognized Mandela's struggle for blacks in South Africa, and his fight against racism.

It was the first honorary degree awarded to a non-Iranian since the 1979 Islamic revolution, the television reported.

supported by the people of Afghanistan, Punjab and other border areas." He urged Gulf states and Egypt, India's main commercial partners, to boycott New Delhi to press it to accept a settlement of the problem.

Israeli planes raid Hezbollah hideouts

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The raid took place two days after an Israeli soldier was killed and five were wounded in two attacks in south Lebanon by the Iranian-backed Hezbollah, or Party of God.

corruption. News reports over the past few months seem to confirm that view, beginning with the arrest in May of six members of the Brooklyn police force on charges they were taking drugs they seized or bought from dealers and selling them on Long Island, residential district north of Manhattan.

The roving dealers allegedly carried out their operations in broad daylight using their patrol cars and used their profits to live far beyond the means of typical city cop.

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