

# UN sends APCs to remove mines in Bosnia

ZAGREB, Aug 16: UN peacekeepers are sending armoured vehicles and mine-clearers to unblock a road bridge in Bosnia where mines have halted a United Nations relief convoy, a UN spokesman said today, reports Reuters.

"They have decided to send three French APCs (armoured personnel carriers) from Sarajevo to this bridge with some mine-clearing people to get the mines out," said Ron Redmond, spokesman for the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

The mine-clearers were due to arrive early this afternoon to enable the relief column to return to Sarajevo.

The convoy — which braved shooting to get aid into the besieged town of Gorazde — came to a halt in open country on Saturday evening when they were unable to cross the road bridge about 15 km (nine miles) north of Gorazde.

At that time, the convoy believed the bridge was mined by Muslim forces, but by this morning it became less clear



Some 3,500 Bosnians, held prisoners by Serbs in a former farm-house, look at the camera on Friday. — AFP/UNB photo

whether Bosnians or Serbs were behind the holdup, Redmond said.

Earlier today, another UNHCR official said an order to remove the mines had been given to the forces which laid them.

But after failing to find liaison officers from either side and ascertain who should remove the mines, the UN decided to send reinforcements from the Bosnian capital to clear the bridge.

AFP adds: Artillery battles raged in and around the Bosnian capital overnight. Sarajevo said Sunday, while Belgrade television spoke of artillery and infantry fighting in a dozen of Bosnia-Herzegovina's towns.

Artillery and sniper fire left four wounded in Sarajevo and its suburbs said the city's radio, which reported severe fighting in the Nedzarici and Novo Sarajevo suburbs.

Belgrade television said Muslim-Croat forces attacked Serb artillery positions in the Nedzarici, Kukavica and Ilidza

suburbs. Radio Sarajevo launched an appeal for blood donors and said that water and electricity supplies were short in the city, with certain areas going without during the day to give priority to hospitals.

The towns of Bihac, Bosanska Krupa and Velika Kladusa, in the West, came under attack from Serb mortar fire, the radio said.

Meanwhile, the Belgrade-based Tanjug news agency reported fighting between Serb and Muslim-Croat forces in southern Bosnia in Capljina, Stolac, Mostar and Nevesinje.

Serb units retook positions in the Trebinje region conquered by Croats in recent days, Tanjug said.

Reuters says, the New York Times said on Saturday that one of its correspondents in Yugoslavia had left Bosnia after Serb authorities told him they could not guarantee his safety, and the State Department said it was outraged at what it called his expulsion.

## Off the Record



TAIPEI: Some of the fifty nine Taiwan beauties in swimsuits pose for photographers during the semi-finals of the 1992 Miss Republic of China contest held in Taipei, August 15. The 59 beat 45 others in the last preliminary round. — AFP/UNB photo

### Former Queen Mary now a tourist attraction

LONG BEACH: The Queen Mary, a former ocean liner now permanently berthed as a tourist attraction, is so rusty it could sink, studies show. But disagreements over who should fix it have delayed repairs, reports AP.

E.D. Allen, a harbor engineer, said Friday the city's Harbour Department, which oversees the Queen Mary, has not arranged repairs because it does not consider the corrosion serious.

Walt Disney Co., which has operated tours, restaurants, shops and convention services on the ship under a lease with the city since 1988, considers it safe, said spokeswoman Jennifer Blazey.

Disney is scheduled to stop operating the attraction at the end of the year.

But in a 1990 report, a city port engineer, Edward C. Bermender, warned, "The situation is critical! The time for discussion has run out."

Bermender said the hull could leak, trapping tourists below decks. He recommended that bulkheads removed more than 20 years ago be restored to prevent it from sinking. Bulkheads divide the hull into watertight compartments.

A more recent study by Rados International Corp., a naval architectural and engineering firm, said the Queen Mary needs \$27 million in repairs, including \$12 million to replace bulkheads.

### The environmental President

WASHINGTON: President George Bush, trailing in the polls, wants to polish up his tarnished image on the environment, reports Reuters.

But key advisers to Democratic challenger Bill Clinton say any attempt by Bush to reclaim his self-proclaimed title as "the environmental president" will fall on deaf ears.

Bush's top ecology aides will address next week's Republican convention to help reverse the White House's negative "green" record, but admit they have few new weapons.

White House and State Department sources said the Bush campaign was reluctant to play up the environmental issues too much because that could backfire and cost probusiness votes.

"I'd be surprised if they tried to make it a top issue," said Pollster Vice Fingerhut. "The environment is going to be a rough sell. People just don't believe them."

Michael Deland, who heads the White House council on environmental quality, said he will highlight Bush's successes, such as the 1990 Clean Air Act and a moratorium on oil drilling in coastal regions in his speech to the Republican convention.

No new policy initiatives were planned now, although the White House would focus on market incentive as a tool to promote environmental protection in a second term.

### I enjoy writing about sex

BOMBAY: Novelist Shobha De's steamy novels have brought a new genre of fiction to India, where nudity in public and even in movies is uncommon and where women are expected to be modest and demure, reports AP.

"I enjoy writing about sex," said Mrs. De, reclining on a couch in a penthouse overlooking the Arabian Sea. "At a party, I watch couples and try to figure out what they'd do in the car, while undressing... I find it all very intriguing."

Mrs. De is an anomaly in this conservative and often puritanical Hindu-dominated country. Most Indian authors write about poverty, caste, heat and dust. Mrs. De, a former fashion model and editor of gossip magazines, sets her novels amid the skyscrapers of Bombay, describing the gambols of film stars, industrialists and the idle rich.

Her three books have made Mrs. De, a 44-year-old mother of four, one of the country's best-selling novelists. But she's getting tired of her reputation as just a sex writer.

"Serious and erotic are not mutually exclusive," she said. "Nobody wants to accept this other India — the India of glamour and glitz. I don't think my books are that shocking in today's context — I mean we're in the '90s aren't we?"

The social dilemmas of women caught in oppressive relationships is a common theme of her books. "The average woman reader sees and goes beyond the sex in the books. It's only the men who are fixated on the skin scenes," said Mrs. De.

## Rao hints at representative govt in Kashmir at the earliest

NEW DELHI, Aug 16: The Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao, has said that it is difficult to fix a time-frame for holding elections in Jammu and Kashmir but the centre is keen to have a representative government in the state at the earliest, reports PTI.

The timing for holding elections in the state will be decided "keeping in view the law and order situation and the revival of political activity in the state", he said.

It is difficult to fix a time-frame in the present situation for holding elections in Kashmir, the Prime Minister said in an interview to be published in a forthcoming book.

Rao said government was

keen to create favourable conditions for holding the elections at the earliest so that a representative government could be installed.

Rao answered questions on the securities scam, the economy, pressure from the US and other pressing issues during the interview to Ali Siddiqui for the Book Saviour of India. The 251-page pictorial publication is being released by the Human Resources Development Minister, Arjun Singh on August 21.

The Prime Minister said government was not treating the problem in Punjab and Kashmir merely as a law and order one. With the successful conduct of election the politi-

cal process has been revived in Punjab and effort is being made to do so in Kashmir as well, Rao said.

He said every effort was being made to wean away the misguided elements from the path of violence. At the same time firm action has to be taken by security forces against acts of terrorism.

The security forces were also maintaining a constant vigil on the border and the line of actual control with Pakistan to plug the inflow of weapons and subversive elements from Pakistan into India.

The Prime Minister said the continued aiding and abetting of terrorism in Punjab and

Kashmir by Pakistan and incidents such as the attacks on Indian diplomats were "serious hindrances" to improving Indo-Pak relations.

"However, it is important that the lines of communication at the highest levels be kept open. We are neighbours, it is but natural for us to have problems. Statesmanship lies in trying to resolve these problems through peaceful means, and continuous dialogue," he said.

Asked what the government was doing on the multi-core securities scam, the Prime Minister said, "We have taken a very tough stand from the moment the scam came to light."

## Israel offers UAV to India

NEW DELHI, Aug 16: Israel has offered India unmanned Air Vehicle (UAV) for gathering real-time intelligence data over enemy territory, the Press Trust of India (PTI) reported today, says Xinhua.

Sources of the Defence Ministry were quoted in the PTI report as saying that the offer was made during a recent visit to Delhi by a team of Israeli experts from Malat, a subsidiary of the state-owned Israel aircraft industries.

The UAV systems offered included the third-generation long endurance multi-role UAV 'scorcher' and multi-purpose tactical UAV 'ranger', they said.

Unmanned air vehicles are used to reduce the risk for pilots, allowing for close surveil-

lance of high threat areas and alerting the commander instantly to new battlefield developments, according to experts.

The defence sources said the offer of the UAV will lead to bilateral cooperation to bolster India's indigenous programme for developing such reconnaissance aircraft.

They also said defence cooperation with Israel will be beneficial for both the countries in the emerging new world.

It is noted that offer of the reconnaissance aircraft and the discussion on defence cooperation are taking place just seven months after the establishment of full-fledged diplomatic relations.

Meanwhile, the Information and Broadcasting Ministry of India is proposing a bill to remove a three-decade ban on publication of foreign journals in India.

The government is also consulting with the Press Trust of India and the United News of India on lifting the ban.

The Finance Ministry has suggested that the policy on foreign journals and news agencies be reviewed, keeping in mind the economic liberalisation.

But the suggestion met firm opposition from the Press Council of India, representative of the Indian press.

The policy on foreign journals and news agencies was made in 1955.

## Ramos sacks police chief

MANILA, Aug 16: President Fidel Ramos has fired his Chief of Police Cesar Nazareno amidst allegations linking police officers to corruption and other criminal activities, newspapers reported here Sunday, says AFP.

Police spokesman confirmed that Nazareno's Deputy, Raul Imperial, had taken over as acting Director-General of the 40,000-strong Philippine National Police. But they declined to confirm that Nazareno had been sacked.

The reports said Nazareno was fired at the end of a three-hour meeting with Ramos on Saturday during which they discussed allegations of police corruption, including alleged links between high-ranking officers an illegal gambling and kidnapping gangs.

## Bush reluctant to involve US ground troops in Bosnia

HOUSTON, Aug 16: President George Bush said in remarks prepared for broadcast today that he is wary of committing US ground troops to Bosnia and that the United States cannot be the world's policeman, reports Reuters.

France, Spain and Turkey offered on Friday to send a total of 1,600 troops and officers to Bosnia under a UN resolution that authorised military force in order to deliver urgent food and medicine to the troubled territory.

But the United States said for the time being it would not involve American troops in a multinational force — one with possibly 100,000 troops — to protect a relief corridor in Bosnia from Serbian assault.

In an interview taped earlier this week for broadcast today on ABC Television's "This Week with David Brinkley," Bush said his reluctance to involve ground troops was be-

cause it is difficult to see what their mission would be.

"I don't want to commit a soldier to battle unless I know that we've got the wherewithal for them to win and win fast, and that I can see who that soldier's going to get out of there with his head high, his country backing him," Bush said, according to excerpts of the interview released by ABC here, site of the August 17-20 Republican National Convention.

Bush has come under fire from Democrat Bill Clinton and some Democrats in Congress for not taking more aggressive action to stop Serbia's assault on Bosnia-Herzegovina. Particularly the Serb bombardment of the Bosnian capital Sarajevo and its detention in camps of Bosnian civilians.

But American public opinion polls have generally backed up Bush in his argument that he does not want to see US

troops bogged down in a situation similar to the Vietnam War.

The President differed with former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, who has urged the United States to show leadership on Bosnia because of the moral issue of preventing Serbian detention camps from turning into another holocaust.

Bush said "there may be other things we can do" instead of deploying troops but he did not go into specifics. Air strikes against Serbian positions around Sarajevo have been mentioned as a possibility.

Asked if the United States could be the world's policeman and deploy troops every time a part of the world heats up, Bush said: "We're not going to be that. We can't be that. We're going to be the moral inspiration of the world."

## Serb authorities forcing Muslims to sign away property

TRNOPOLJE, Bosnia, Aug 16: Muslims say Serb authorities in northern Bosnia are forcing them to sign away their property and emigrate in exchange for being set free from notorious internment camps, reports Reuters.

At the Trnopolje camp, a former school field, I saw the latest batch of 100 or so prisoners marching away on Saturday with a few spare belongings contained in carrier bags.

"They let us go only after we signed papers giving up our houses and land and promising to emigrate." 39-year-old Vahida told Reuters as she walked with the group after collecting her brother.

"We were born here. We didn't want to leave, but we've been given no choice," she

said. This is but one part of the horrific war involving Serbs, Croats and Muslims and "ethnic cleansing," the enforced removal of minorities to create ethnically homogeneous areas.

The Trnopolje camp, a few kilometres (miles) from Prijedor, is one of several centres which have been opened up to the Red Cross and journalists after a rash of publicity in which some camps were alleged to be concentration camps.

This camp originally held some 3,500 inmates, but prisoners said on Saturday that about 1,000 had been freed in the past few days after signing property renunciation and emigration papers.

Those who remained have erected makeshift tents from plastic sheeting and parts of the metal fencing which caged in the prisoners until it was removed five days ago.

Most prisoners at this centre are Muslims from Kozarac, a community to the north which once numbered 24,000 inhabitants.

The prisoners were all men and a many had no idea where their women and children fled after Kozarac was destroyed in May by Serbs controlling Bosnia's Krajina region.

"More than 6,000 houses were burned. Serbs are moving into those which are not," said a prisoner named Halil. "Kozarac doesn't exist any more." Basic Eniz, 53, said he was

separated from his wife and five of his seven children and has no idea where they were although he believed they had fled the country.

"Only those who are willing to emigrate and give away all their property are released. Everything is burned and I have nothing left anyway. All we have are the clothes we are wearing," Eniz said.

Many prisoners said they were not treated badly at the camp but all complained of undernourishment and dysentery.

The prisoners had no proper toilets. Most defecated on the ground a few metres (yards) from their tents. There were faces everywhere. They said they got only one meal a day.

The food consisted of a tiny piece of fatty meat, stewed in unseasoned and unsalted water without bread.

Ibrahim Barsic, 82, was so weak that he was unable to stand. He lay on a dirty blanket under plastic sheeting.

Some prisoners spoke of torture and killings at another nearby camp at Keratan, where some of the Trnopolje detainees had first been interned.

One internee said some 240 people had died as a result of beatings, torture, shootings and disease.

Some had been tortured by piercing the tongue with wire. In one incident two men were forced at gunpoint to bite off each others testicles, the internees said.

No independent confirmation of such allegations was available and second-reports of atrocities are commonplace.

The local branch of the Red Cross is present in the camp but prisoners said it was important that international officials register the prisoners before any more killings take place.

In Banja Luka, the main city of the region, I saw several hundred Muslims, many of whom said they had signed away their property board buses and trucks with the intention of emigrating.

Some said they paid a Croat "organiser" 500 German marks for a seat on the bus with a promise of being taken to Austria or Germany where they had relatives.