

# Pak SC summons Beg to answer contempt of court charges

ISLAMABAD, Feb 14: The Supreme Court on Saturday summoned a former army chief to answer contempt of court charges over a statement which rocked Pakistan's judiciary, reports Reuter.

Press reports quoted General Mirza Aslam Beg as saying he got the country's highest court reverse a decision in 1988 which would have restored Prime Minister Muhammad Khan Junejo after his dismissal by military ruler General Zia-ul-Haq.

The court summoned the retired General to appear on February 20. Beg became Pakistan's most powerful man when he was appointed Chief of the Army Staff after Zia died in a mysterious plane crash in August 1988, ending 11 years of military rule.

His statement at the Press Club in Lahore on February 4 created a storm of controversy, including calls for an inquiry into the role of the judiciary in Pakistan's chequered history. Zia dismissed the govern-

ment of Junejo, his hand-picked Premier, in May, 1988, dissolved the National Assembly and provincial assemblies and ordered fresh elections. Zia's successor, President Ghulam Ishaq Khan, set elections for October while a challenge to Junejo's dismissal was still pending before the Supreme Court.

Beg quoted by local newspapers, said he sent a message telling the court not to restore Junejo's government and to allow the elections to go ahead. "Elections had been promised to the people and I ensured that they were held," he said.

In a subsequent statement, Beg denied that he got the court reverse its decision. But he said he conveyed to the court that "We had given a solemn pledge to the nation that elections to the National Assembly would be held according to the schedule."

Saifullah, a minister in Junejo's cabinet, said his lawyer told him four years ago what Beg was now saying.

# Saddam wants to open dialogue with Clinton

BAGHDAD, Feb 14: President Saddam Hussein told a US visitor that he wants to open a dialogue with President Clinton and a "new relationship" with Washington, the official Iraqi News Agency reported Sunday, reports AP.

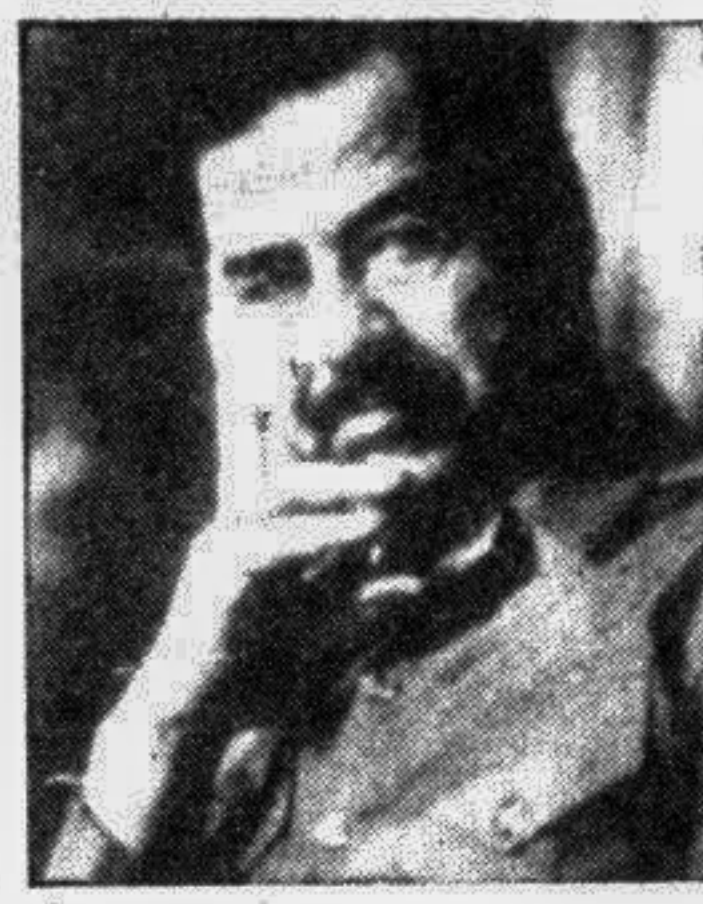
"I believe that the president of the biggest country in the world... needs to try wisdom, and not weapons," INA quoted Saddam as saying late Saturday in a meeting with Ramsey Clark, a peace activist and former US Attorney General.

"Is he ready to listen to the viewpoint of Iraq?" Saddam was quoted as saying.

"If he is ready, I simply believe that we can pave the way for building new relations based on mutual respect... regardless of what had happened," INA quoted Saddam as saying.

It was the first time that Saddam himself has asked for a dialogue with Clinton, who took office Jan 20. Previous overtures have come from government officials and the state-run media.

Clark, making his third trip to Baghdad since the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990, was not immediately available to confirm or comment on the INA account.



A US-led coalition drove out the occupying Iraqi troops in the 1991 Gulf War. Washington has since drawn a hard line at lifting UN sanctions against Iraq until Baghdad complies with all resolutions stemming from the conflict, particularly

destroying weapons of mass destruction and stopping persecution of minorities.

Clinton has thus far maintained the Bush administration's hard-line against Baghdad, which desperately needs an end to the sanctions to sell oil and rebuild its war-battered economy.

Saddam praised what he called Clinton's "anti-war past," an apparent reference to Clinton's opposition as a student to the Vietnam War.

Saddam's conversation with Clark was a major news item here. The Iraq television anchorman spent 70 minutes reading an account of what transpired at the meeting.

Clark, a leading US anti-war activist, served the Johnson administration as attorney general from 1967-68. He opposed the Vietnam War, the Gulf War, and US military actions against Panama, Grenada and Libya.

He denounced the bombing raids ordered on Iraq last month to enforce "no-fly zones" over northern and southern Iraq.

# Mandela denies power-sharing deal with govt

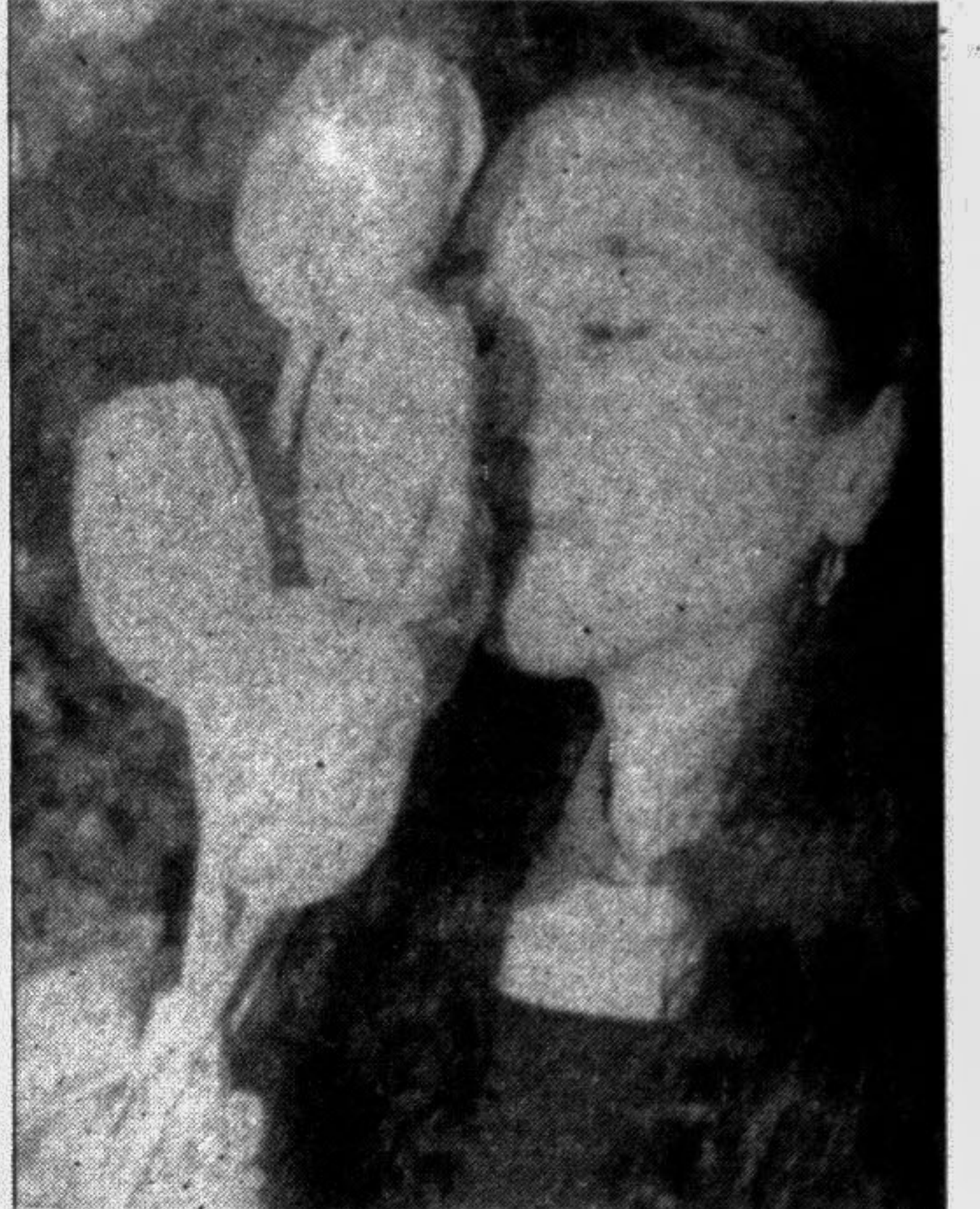
JOHANNESBURG, Feb 14: African National Congress (ANC) leader Nelson Mandela late Saturday denied his organisation had agreed to share power with the government for five years after the country's first democratic elections, reports AFP.

"I wish to categorically deny the statement made in the press that the ANC had agreed to power-sharing until the year 1999," he said at a banquet in Johannesburg's Lenasia suburb.

He was responding to newspaper reports Saturday that the government and the ANC had struck a deal during talks this week that a government of national unity-representing all parties with more than five to 10 per cent of the vote would remain in power for five years after elections.

"Let me dispel all rumours that there have been any secret deals or pacts with the government. These rumours are devoid of any truth and are mischievous in the extreme" he said.

Newspapers quoted Deputy Minister of Constitutional Development Fanus Schoeman as saying: "It's not a possibility, it's a fact."



TAIPEI: A prospective buyer smells tulips from a special Valentine's day package offer Sunday. The package includes a bouquet and a bottle of French perfume at the lovely price of 100 US dollars. — AFP/UNB Photo

# GHALI ARRIVES IN JAPAN TODAY

Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali arrives in Japan on Monday to seek Tokyo's backing of his ideas on strengthening the world body and its global peace-keeping activities, reports Reuter from Tokyo.

For Prime Minister Kiichi Miyazawa, Boutros-Ghali's five-day visit offers a chance to advance Japan's bid for a permanent seat on the UN Security Council.

Boutros Ghali is to meet Prime Minister Kiichi Miyazawa, Foreign Minister Michio Watanabe and Emperor Akihito as well as deliver three policy speeches and officially open the new headquarters of the United Nations University in Tokyo.

As his January trip of Germany, Boutros-Ghali's visit to Japan takes place amid speculation that the world body soon take steps to reflect and international power balance radically changed from the late 1940s when the UN was founded.

# 10 Armenian fighters killed

Ten Armenian fighters were killed Friday night in the northern part of Nagorno-Karabakh, an Armenian-majority enclave in Azerbaijan, the Nagorno-Karabakh parliamentary press office announced on Saturday, reports AFP from Yerevan.

It said the Armenians had captured the village of Getavan and were fighting hard around the village of Aterk, in the Amrdakert region in the northern part of Nagorno-Karabakh.

The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict began in February 1988 and has resulted in more than 3,000 deaths.

# Sudanese FM dismissed

Sudanese leader Omar Hasan Al-Bashir dismissed Foreign Minister Ali Sahloul on Saturday, Sudanese radio said, reports Reuter from Cairo.

The report, monitored by the British Broadcasting Corporation, gave no explanation for the move. It said Bashir issued a resolution "relieving Sahloul of his post as Minister of Foreign Affairs" and a decree replacing him with Hussein Suleiman Abu Saleh, who was Foreign Minister for several months in 1988.

Sahloul has been appointed to the post of Ambassador at the Foreign Minister with the status of minister, the radio said.

# Arab League meets tomorrow

The Arab League will meet in emergency session on Tuesday, at the permanent delegates level, to review rising violence in the Israeli-occupied territories, League sources said Saturday, reports AFP from Cairo.

Secretary-General Esmat Abdel Meguid, in a statement to reporters, slammed Israeli practices against the Palestinians, notably in the Gaza Strip.

Such measures "are unacceptable and do not enhance efforts for peace," he told reporters ahead of the meeting, which was called by the Palestine Liberation Organization.

Israeli soldiers killed 12 Palestinians and wounded dozens of others in a week marked by escalating violence in the Gaza Strip.

# Return of deportees

UN council formula not enough: Jordan

DAMASCUS, Feb 14: Jordan said on Saturday a five-point UN Security Council formula aimed at solving the crisis over 396 Palestinian deportees was not enough and called for the return of all those expelled, reports Reuter.

But Jordanian Foreign Minister Kamel Abu Jaber refused after talks with Syrian leaders to say whether the return of all the deportees was a precondition demanded by Arabs to resume 15-month-old Arab-Israeli peace talks, stalled after Israel's December 17 expulsion of 415 Palestinians.

Tutu, who won the prize in 1984 for his peaceful opposition to South Africa's apartheid regime, was the first to seven Nobel laureates including Tibet's spiritual leader the Dalai Lama, to reach Thailand.

The other six are scheduled to arrive on Monday and Tuesday.

# UN to take over command of int'l troops in Somalia within weeks

MOGADISHU, Feb 14: The United Nations could take over command of international forces in Somalia within weeks, according to a UN spokesman, reports AP.

UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali mentioned weeks without giving a specified time. Farouk Mawlawi, spokesman for the United Nations Operations in Somalia, said Saturday.

The UN Security Council would have to give the international troops permission to use force to maintain order. Such rules of engagement would be unprecedented for a UN peacekeeping force.

Council approval is expected when it takes up the issue next week, Mawlawi said.

The comments came as military officials expressed increasing confidence the 2-month-old Operation Restore Hope could be handed over to UN command. The mission has quelled most clan violence to allow relief shipments to millions of people nationwide.

The international force continued to face gunfire and seize weapons, however. Shootouts, with Somalis left two Somalis wounded, and Italian troops sweeping through a Mogadishu neighbourhood uncovered arms including more than 100 grenades, 12,000 detonators and four missiles.

A US Marine helicopter crashed on an airfield in Baledogle, injuring the four crewmen aboard, officials said Sunday.

The CH-53D Sea Stallion, of Marine Helicopter Squadron 363, was on a routine training flight when it crashed Saturday night in Baledogle, 65 miles (105 kilometers) northwest of Mogadishu.

Damage to the aircraft and the cause of the accident were under investigation, a US military statement said. No one was hurt on the ground.

If the Security Council approves use of force under UN command in Somalia and other procedures go smoothly, most of the 19,000 American troops and support personnel could head home before May, said Marine Col. Fred Peck, a US military spokesman. Coalition forces from 22 other nations number 14,000. Officials are proposing a UN-led force of about 20,000 troops, including at least 3,000 Americans.

Meanwhile, Italian forces at dawn raided a neighbourhood in northeast Mogadishu, finding weapons under bags of rice, blankets and furniture in homes and shops, said Army Capt. Ed Loomis, another US military spokesman.

The stashes include 25 rifles, 22 heavy weapons, 103 hand grenades, 12,000 electronic detonators, 26 artillery and mortar shells, two TOW missiles and two Milan missiles, and four rocket-propelled grenades, he said.



ARLINGTON, Virginia: US Vice President Al Gore (R) his wife Tipper (C) met Britain's Prince Charles on Saturday at the Gore's home. Prince Charles visited Williamsburg Va earlier in the day and was joined by US President Bill Clinton for dinner. — AFP/UNB Photo

# Charles wins American welcome

WILLIAMSBURG, Virginia, Feb 14: Prince Charles, heckled at home over the embarrassing "Camillagate" scandal, won arousing American welcome on Saturday in his first overseas trip since the official collapse of his marriage, reports Reuter.

Speaking to a 10,000-strong audience in this southern colonial town, the heir to the British throne broke from his prepared speech in a visible show of joy at the impromptu cheers and thumping claps that greeted his appearance.

"I'm very touched, if I might say so," Charles said, soaking up the cheers at the College of William and Mary.

"All I can say is that it's wonderful to come to Virginia and receive such an incredibly warm and encouraging welcome. Thank you very much indeed."

# Pak mediator prevails upon Afghan factions to stop fire

KABUL, Feb 14: A Pakistani peace mediator has won a ceasefire agreement from the Afghan government and its dissident guerrilla foe the Hezb-i-Islami after more than three weeks of fighting in the capital Kabul, a spokesman said today, reports Reuter.

Hezb-i-Islami and the government have both agreed to hold fire to facilitate our peace mission," said Khalid Khawaja, spokesman for retired Pakistani Lieutenant-General Hamid Gul.

The truce, agreed late on Saturday, has no time limit and the peace brokers hope to negotiate a permanent ceasefire soon, Khawaja said.

The city was at its quietest since the battles between government forces and the Hezb-i-Islami of radical leader Gulbuddin Hekmatyar erupted 27 days ago. Hundreds of people have been killed and more than 5,000 injured in the fighting.

No rocket or artillery fire was heard overnight or this morning and residents ventured into the streets to take advantage of the lull.

A few bursts of machine gun fire erupted, but this was not unusual in a city patrolled by thousands of armed men from the various Mujahideen parties that took power from the former Communist government in Kabul last April.

"There have been a few violations but they were mistakes or by people who did not know about the ceasefire," Khawaja said.

Gul, who led Pakistani military intelligence throughout much of the 14-year Afghan War and directed the Mujahideen parties in their fight, left today for Hekmatyar's headquarters at Charasyab, south of Kabul for more talks.

He met President Burhanuddin Rabbani on Saturday. Hekmatyar is fighting to unseat Rabbani, accusing him of rigging his election last December.

# Move to revive CP in Russia

RUSSIA, Feb 14: More than 1,000 Communists greeted the leaders of the failed 1991 hard-line coup with a standing ovation Saturday at a meeting aimed at reviving the discredited Communist Party, reports AP.

"We have survived our president goes abroad and says that communism is dead in Russia but the communist movement is becoming stronger," proclaimed Ivan Yakushin, a communal farm chairman. The stage was decorated with a white bust of Lenin.

Despite the fanfare, the Communist Party is no longer regarded as a major political movement in Russia. The party's membership dwindled in the last years of Soviet power.

# Tutu arrives in Bangkok

BANGKOK, Feb 14: South Africa's archbishop Desmond Tutu arrived here on a pre-dawn flight today to join an unprecedented campaign by Nobel Peace Prize winners for the release of Mayanmars' imprisoned pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi, reports AFP.

Tutu, who won the prize in 1984 for his peaceful opposition to South Africa's apartheid regime, was the first to seven Nobel laureates including Tibet's spiritual leader the Dalai Lama, to reach Thailand. The other six are scheduled to arrive on Monday and Tuesday.

# Second Bosnian city promises to block aid shipments

SARAJEVO (Bosnia-Herzegovina), Feb 14: Distribution centers were quiet as a second city promised to join Sarajevo and reject aid shipments, further fraying relations between the government and relief agencies struggling to end the suffering in Bosnia, reports AP.

The United Nations cancelled aid flights into the capital, where fighting raged Saturday around the airport and shells battered the city center. A UN official said trucks would only deliver relief for two more days, and that some of the donated food was already spoiling.

UN and Western officials condemned the decision to impose a virtual hunger strike on Sarajevo. Bosnian leaders apparently took the extreme move to protest what they call inadequate international efforts to end the ethnic bloodshed in the former Yugoslav republic.

Sarajevo officials, backed by the Bosnian government, said Friday they would not distribute donated food until besieged Bosnians in the east are fed. Fighting and Serb soldiers have blocked UN convoys from reaching several towns in eastern Bosnia for months. International aid officials, however, promised to try again to reach eastern areas and said a truck convoy would head for the town of Cerska on Sunday.

Bosnian radio said 166 people have starved recently in Cerska, which has been isolated since the war began last spring. But Bosnian reports of mass starvation have been disputed by UN officials in the past.

The Bosnian army, meanwhile, told the United Nations that warplanes from Serbia were flying combat missions against the eastern Bosnian town of Srebrenica, and that 56 people had been killed and 118 wounded in the past month.

There was no independent confirmation. A no-fly zone was declared over Bosnia last October, but there are no enforcement provisions. Officials in Tuzla, 80 kilometers (50 miles) northeast of the capital, Saturday said future aid to the town would be blocked to show solidarity with the tens of thousands of hungry Bosnians under Serb siege across the republic, said UN spokesman Sergio Apollonio in Zagreb, Croatia.

Tuzla has become a haven for thousands of Muslim refugees from eastern Bosnia. More than 18,000 people have died and more than 1 million have lost their homes since Serbs went to war against Muslims and Croats who seceded from Serb-dominated Yugoslavia nearly one year ago. Harsh economic sanctions against Yugoslavia for backing the rebels have not ended the war, and a peace plan proposed by international mediators is foundering.

In other developments Saturday, — Tanjung and other media in Serbia said troops in Croatia continued their drive against rebels in the Serb-held enclave of Krajina. Croat troops launched the offensive to recapture Krajina, the center of the Serb rebellion in Croatia on Jan 22 after a year's uneasy peace.

US special envoy Reginald Bartholomew said his talks with Russian officials on the war in Bosnia went well. Bartholomew did not say whether he won Russian support for US proposals that include tighter sanctions against Serbia.

# Saudi Arabia deports 71 AIDS-infected workers

JEDDAH, Feb 14: Saudi Arabia deported 71 African workers who were infected with the AIDS virus, a newspaper reported Saturday, says AP.

The Jeddah-based Arabic daily Al-Madinah said the expelled workers came to Saudi Arabia from African countries to work as drivers, labourers and house maids.

It did not specify the nationality of the workers, who were expelled Friday. Saudi Arabia and the rest of the conservative Gulf countries have reported few AIDS cases. Foreign workers seeking work in oil-rich Saudi Arabia must be declared free of the deadly disease to get entry visas.

Al-Madinah said a medical

checkup usually ordered by passport authorities for foreign workers arriving in the kingdom showed the Africans were infected with the HIV virus, which causes AIDS.

The Ministry of Health which was immediately notified, informed the sponsors of the workers who turned them into the police authorities," the paper said.

The Gulf region has at least 6 million foreign workers, mostly Asians. The workers must have sponsors who are nationals of the country to get regular residence permits.

AIDS attack the body's immune system, leaving victims susceptible to infections and cancers.

# SLA man killed in rocket attack

MARJAYUN (Lebanon), Feb 14: A militiaman from the Israeli-backed South Lebanon Army (SLA) was killed Saturday and nine others wounded in an attack in an Israeli buffer zone claimed by the pro-Iranian Shiite Hezbollah movement, reports AFP.

Four of the men were seriously wounded when a rocket slammed into their command vehicle near an SLA position in Aailman-Shumariyeh, in Israel's self-declared "security zone" of south Lebanon.

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