

# UN inspectors find Iraqi N-arms programmes

BAGHDAD, Feb 22: A team of 13 UN weapons inspectors postponed its departure from Iraq for the second time in three days Monday amid reports it had made a major find in Iraq's hidden armaments programmes, reports AP.

Team leader Patrice Palanque would not give details of the findings. Other UN sources said that to confirm the probable discovery, which could be linked to either ballistic or nuclear capabilities, the team would need more experts.

Another team of 23 weapons inspectors landed at Habaniya military airport Monday and headed toward Baghdad to join Palanque's team.

A senior Iraqi official said he was surprised at the spurt in UN activities during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, which began Monday.

"They will visit declared and undeclared sites," said Husam Mohammadamin, the chief Iraqi coordinator working with the UN teams.

Mohammadamin said he had not received any request to fly UN aircraft over Baghdad.

Earlier reports said the inspectors might test Iraq compliance with UN resolutions by asking to fly helicopters over Baghdad, a city of 4 million people. Until now, the Iraqis have banned flights over the capital, but the inspectors have not sought to challenge the ban.

The inspectors want to survey two secret sites in Baghdad where they believe Saddam Hussein's government designed missiles to carry nuclear warheads.

The second team that landed at Habaniya is led by Nikita Smidovich, a senior official of the United Nations Special Commission charged with finding and destroying Iraq's weapons of mass destruction.

# 'India's refusal to sign NPT won't affect ties' Kohl for bilateral solution to Kashmir problem

NEW DELHI, Feb 22: German Chancellor Helmut Kohl asked India and Pakistan today to enter into an early dialogue to end their dispute over Kashmir, where Muslim militants are waging a bloody separatist campaign, reports AFP.

Kohl also expressed support for the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) at a press conference here, but indicated that India's refusal to sign it would not affect its relations with Germany.

The chancellor, whose four-day visit ends today said one of the most urgent agenda in world politics was a peaceful settlement between India and Pakistan over Kashmir.

"Both Pakistan and India should move towards each other and find a new path for the future, he added. "We are convinced this is important for a solution to the Kashmir problem."

However Kohl said he was not in a position to offer "any good office" on the resolution of the Kashmir row which has been the cause of two of the three wars between India and Pakistan.

"We want a bilateral solution, he said, adding that the 1972 India-Pakistan accord — which calls for a peaceful resolution of conflict — could be a basis for resolving the issue.

Kashmir is held in part by India and Pakistan, and both dispute its ownership. Muslim militants are waging a campaign for secession in Indian Kashmir. New Delhi accuses Pakistan of arming the guerrillas.

Kohl who touched on a variety of subjects in his 75-minute press conference, also reiterated Germany's support for the NPT. Nuclear Non-Proliferation is of enormous importance... we have to make a worldwide effort (to stem the danger), he said, adding however that he respected the Indian position.

Indo-German relations need not suffer at all for this reason, I would not want this to happen, Kohl said.

India, which exploded a nuclear device in 1974, but says it has no nuclear weapons, has adamantly refused to sign the NPT, calling it discriminatory between the nuclear haves and have-nots.

The Chancellor also called for an immediate halt to fighting in the former Yugoslavia, and denied reports that his country was arming the warring factions in Croatia.

The shooting should stop as quickly as possible.... Germany does not deliver any arms, does not supply any arms to warring factions. We are totally free of any kind of bias towards one or any republic, he said.

Kohl, who is on his third trip to India, called for reforms in the United Nations, but denied his country was pushing to become a permanent member of the Security Council.

Germany's joining the Security Council as a permanent member was not a top priority, he said.

Kohl, who is on an Asian tour that will take him to Singapore, Indonesia, Japan and South Korea, praised India's economic liberalisation and said Germany hoped to become the prime investor in India.



RIO-DE-JANEIRO: A tourist films three samba dancers during a Carnival dance Saturday. Rio Carnival began February 18 and will run through February 23. —AFP/UNB photo

## The oldest woman owes her long life to smile

ARLES, FRANCE: Jeanne Calment, believed to be the world's oldest citizen, celebrated her 118th birthday on Sunday signing and laughing in an old people's home in Arles, southern France, reports Reuter.

Deaf, almost blind and confined to a wheelchair, Calment still has a vivid memory and a sense of humour.

"I owe my long life to my smile. I believe I will die laughing," she told reporters.

Calment, who met the painter Vincent Van Gogh in her youth, gave up smoking last year and no longer drinks her daily glass of port. At the age of 100, she still bicycled through Arles.

The Guinness Book of Records lists her as the world's oldest living person.

She celebrated her birthday by signing comical songs for fellow residents of the Maison de Retraite du Lac and allowing a brief photo-call. Justice Minister Michel Vauzelle was among the wellwishers who visited her.

"The past is very long, so long that it's hard to remember everything," she said.

## Clinton coughs thru' radio address

WASHINGTON: President Clinton coughed, rasped and wheezed through a five-minute radio address Saturday, but the White House said it was nothing hot tea and lemon couldn't cure, reports AP.

"He has a cold," said deputy White House press secretary Lorraine Voles. "It's nothing really serious, just a cold."

Clinton coughed repeatedly as he defended his 500 billion dollar economic recovery plan, calling on the critics of the spending cuts it contains to come up with better alternatives.

At one point, the president stopped entirely apparently to take a sip of water.

"Excuse me," he said.

Clinton had problems with his voice throughout last year's presidential campaign. The condition was said to be tied to too much speechmaking, allergies and esophageal reflux, a form of heartburn.

Three days after the election, Clinton asked spokesman George Stephanopoulos to make a key announcement because his voice was in rough shape.

Clinton's voice has fluctuated from normal to raspy ever since.

Traveling to Chillicothe, Ohio, on Friday to pitch his economic plan, Clinton jogged miles through a park in icy temperatures.

Voles said the President wasn't receiving any special medical treatment for his latest bout with hoarseness.



# BRIEFLY

**Bus mishap claims 12 in Yangon:** A bus carrying public services trainees overturned and caught fire near Yangon, killing 12 trainees and injuring 19, the official Working People's Daily reported Monday, says AP from Rangoon.

The bus was trying to overtake a car when it ran off the road Sunday evening near Hlegu, 20 miles (32 kilometres) north of the capital, the report said. All those killed were women.

The bus was taking 43 trainees to the Central Institute of Public Services, 20 miles (32 kilometres) further to the north.

**US marine kills Somali:** A US marine shot dead a Somali man who pulled a knife and threatened workers upgrading Mogadishu's airport on Saturday, the US military command said, reports Reuter from Mogadishu.

Spokesman Fred Peck said the man was among a group of about 20 Somalis who approached the US-contracted labourers and told them to stop working.

When the workers' foreman refused to comply, the man pulled out a knife and made threatening movements, at which point he was shot dead by a marine guard nearby.

The rest of the group fled and US forces were investigating the incident, Peck told reporters.

**4 die as copter crashes in Serbia:** A Yugoslav army helicopter crashed late Sunday in eastern Serbia, near the Bulgarian border, killing all four occupants, the army press service announced, reports AFP from Belgrade.

The helicopter was on an "official mission" when it came down on mount Midzor, 250 kilometres (160 miles) south-east of Belgrade, the press service said without further details.

The four casualties were all army officers.

**4 Palestinians hurt in WB:** A 12-month-old baby and her mother were wounded by rubber bullets Sunday during clashes between the army and stone-throwers and two other Palestinians were also injured, Palestinian and Israeli sources said, reports AFP from Jerusalem.

Little Maisa Ayman El-Fitayan was hit by a stray rubber bullet and lost an eye as her mother carried her through the centre of Nablus, on the occupied West Bank, where soldiers opened fire on Palestinian youths.

The baby and the mother were taken to the town's Rashidiye hospital.

A 20-year-old woman passer by was also struck by a rubber bullet and taken to hospital with an arm injury, Palestinian and Israeli military sources said.

**8 killed as rebels, troops clash in Nicaragua**

NICARAGUA, Feb 21: Eight people were killed, including four former contra rebels, during fighting with the Nicaraguan army this week, an interior ministry spokesman said on Saturday, reports Reuter.

This brings to 70 the death toll from battles being fought in the northern part of the country, the spokesman said.

Since last December, the Nicaraguan military has been attempting to stop attacks by a group of soldiers comprising both former contras and supporter of the former Sandinista regime in the remote region.

The latest casualties came in three hours of fighting on Thursday in the village of El Guabo, 160 kms (96 miles) north of the capital, said the spokesman who asked not to be identified.

**200 Russians fighting against Bosnian Muslims**

MOSCOW, Feb 22: About 200 Russians are fighting with Bosnian Serbs against Muslim forces in former Yugoslavia, Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) television said on Sunday, reports Reuter.

The television showed some of the Russian soldiers, saying they came from St Petersburg. It said unnamed private firms in Russia were organising the recruitment of the men and sending them into battle.

"According to our information, there are about 200 Russians in the armed forces of the Bosnian Serbs," it said.

**UNSC set to establish war crimes tribunal in Bosnia**

UNITED NATIONS, Feb 22: For the first time in its history, the UN Security Council today set to establish a war crimes tribunal, to try those accused of human rights violations in the former Yugoslavia, reports AFP.

The proposal for the tribunal, prepared at France's urging, is expected to be adopted unanimously. The international tribunal would be the first since the notorious trials at Tokyo and Nuremberg, Germany after the allied victory in World War II.

But unlike the tribunals which heard those war crimes trials nearly 50 years ago, today's vote would create a truly international court as a way to punish, and perhaps prevent, war crimes.

Part of the tribunal's objective so to restore the rule of law in a region where abominable wartime human rights abuses are being committed, according to the proposal's backers.

Nearly all of the former Yugoslavia's many ethnic groups have been accused of human rights violations since 1991. But witnesses and the weight of available information puts responsibility for the worst abuses at the Serbs' doorstep.

In the preamble to the draft resolution to create the tribunal, the Security Council is expected to set out that both the people who order human rights abuses, as defined by the Geneva conventions of August 12, 1949, and those who carry out those orders, are personally responsible for the actions.

The tribunal's jurisdiction will be over all of the former Yugoslavia. Non-aligned countries, worried about the fate of Muslims in Bosnia-Herzegovina, had wanted the court to concentrate on that country but the council expanded the jurisdiction in order not to single out Bosnia.

UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali is to formulate concrete proposals on how the tribunal will be made operational and give that information to the Security Council within 60 days.

The panel must then vote formally to establish the tribunal based on Boutros-Ghali's recommendations and ask it to begin work.

French and Italian jurists, along with experts picked by the conference on security and cooperation in Europe, already have set proposals to the UN Secretariat, where a working group on the court is in the process of being formed.

The resolution's text must be adopted within the framework of chapter 7 of the UN charter, which allows the Security Council to make decisions that are binding on all UN member states.

Another possibility was to create the court through an international treaty, but that was judged to be too unwieldy, since the mere process of having dozens of states ratify an international treaty could take considerable time.

In UN Security Council debates last week, Brazil and China argued that creating an international tribunal should not create a precedent giving the Security Council jurisdiction over future, possibly similar situations.

A panel of French legal scholars, formed by French Foreign Minister Roland Dumas, argued that the council could act within the framework of the UN charter's chapter 7 because the Yugoslav crisis constituted a threat to peace and international security.

The French jurists recommended creating a tribunal of 15 judges and ruled out the use of capital punishment.

At one point, the plan had been to include the creation of the tribunal in a lengthy resolution that would stem from a peace plan for the region.

But that idea too was scrapped because of objections by UN negotiator Cyrus Vance and EC representative Lord Owen, who feared the tribunal would be dropped to satisfy the demands of Serbs, or others, who, fearing prosecution might demand immunity as the price of peace.



NEW DELHI: German Chancellor Helmut Kohl (R) is greeted by Sonia Gandhi, Italian born wife of slain former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi at her residence in New Delhi on Saturday. —AFP/UNB photo

# Beg charged with contempt of court

RAWALPINDI, Feb 22: The Pakistan Supreme Court today formally charged an ex-army chief with contempt of court for saying he sent a message of advice to the highest court in 1988, reports Reuter.

The court brought the charge after retired general Mirza Aslam Beg refused to cooperate on the second day of a preliminary hearing.

Local newspapers reported that in a speech to the Lahore Press Club this month, Beg said that as chief of army staff he influenced the court in 1988 to reverse a decision that would have restored Prime Minister Mohammad Khan Junejo after his dismissal by then military ruler General Mohammad Zia-Ul-Haq.

In a dramatic courtroom outburst, Beg sacked his lawyers, demanded to address the three-judge bench which he accused of insulting him the day before and then threatened to boycott the proceedings when his request was refused.

"We command you to stay here, you can't withdraw," Chief Justice Mohammad Afzal Zullah told Beg when the general picked up his bag and appeared to be leaving the courtroom.

Zullah then issued formal charges of contempt of court to the retired general, once Pakistan's most powerful man, for the remarks early this month that have rocked the judiciary.

Beg said in a written statement today that he did not persuade the court in 1988 to reverse its decision but confirmed that he conveyed a message to it that elections set for later that year, after Junejo's dismissal, should go ahead.

Beg's statement has created a storm of controversy, including calls for his trial for alleged misuse of his office to influence the court.

He was appointed chief of army staff after Zia died in a mysterious plane crash in August 1988, ending 11 years of military rule.

Zia dismissed the government of Junejo, his hand-picked prime minister, in May 1988, dissolved the National Assembly and provincial assemblies and ordered fresh elections.

# Ramadan begins in 5 Arab countries

DUBAI, Feb 22: Saudi Arabia and four other Gulf Arab countries said on Sunday they would mark the start of the Ramadan today after the sighting of the new moon, reports Reuter.

Oman was the first of them to declare the start of the holy month of the Islamic lunar calendar, the Oman news agency said.

It said the crescent moon was seen by people in the capital Muscat and a number of the Sultanate's princes.

The Qatar news agency said the committee charged with sighting the new moon had also announced that Ramadan would start on Monday.

# Christopher has received Arab commitment to resume ME talks

RIYADH, Feb 22: US Secretary of State Warren Christopher has secured a commitment from Arab states for his peace drive to revive stalled Middle East peace talks before heading today for Israel, reports AFP.

Christopher was Sunday in Saudi Arabia where he had talks with King Fahd before a trip to Kuwait on the last leg of visits to the Arab capitals of Cairo, Amman and Damascus.

On arrival from Damascus the Secretary of State said: "One thing has been very clear as I have made the stop at three important capitals, is the determination on the part of all parties that there be a reinvigoration, a reactivation of the peace process."

"If the intentions of the parties are any indications... it's clear that there is a strong determination on the part of the parties that this peace process should be restarted."

Arab-Israeli peace talks have been crippled since December when Israel expelled to Lebanon 415 Palestinian Muslim fundamentalist suspects. Washington wants the negotiations to resume in April, after the Muslim fasting month. Christopher apparently received the strongest Arab commitment in Syria, where he said President Hafez Al-Assad has an independent desire to move ahead with the peace process.

But he has yet to meet Palestinian peace negotiators in Jerusalem.

"Frankly, I've been encouraged by our substantive discussions," Christopher said after talks with Assad during which he stressed Washington's desire to have a "full partner" role in the peace process.

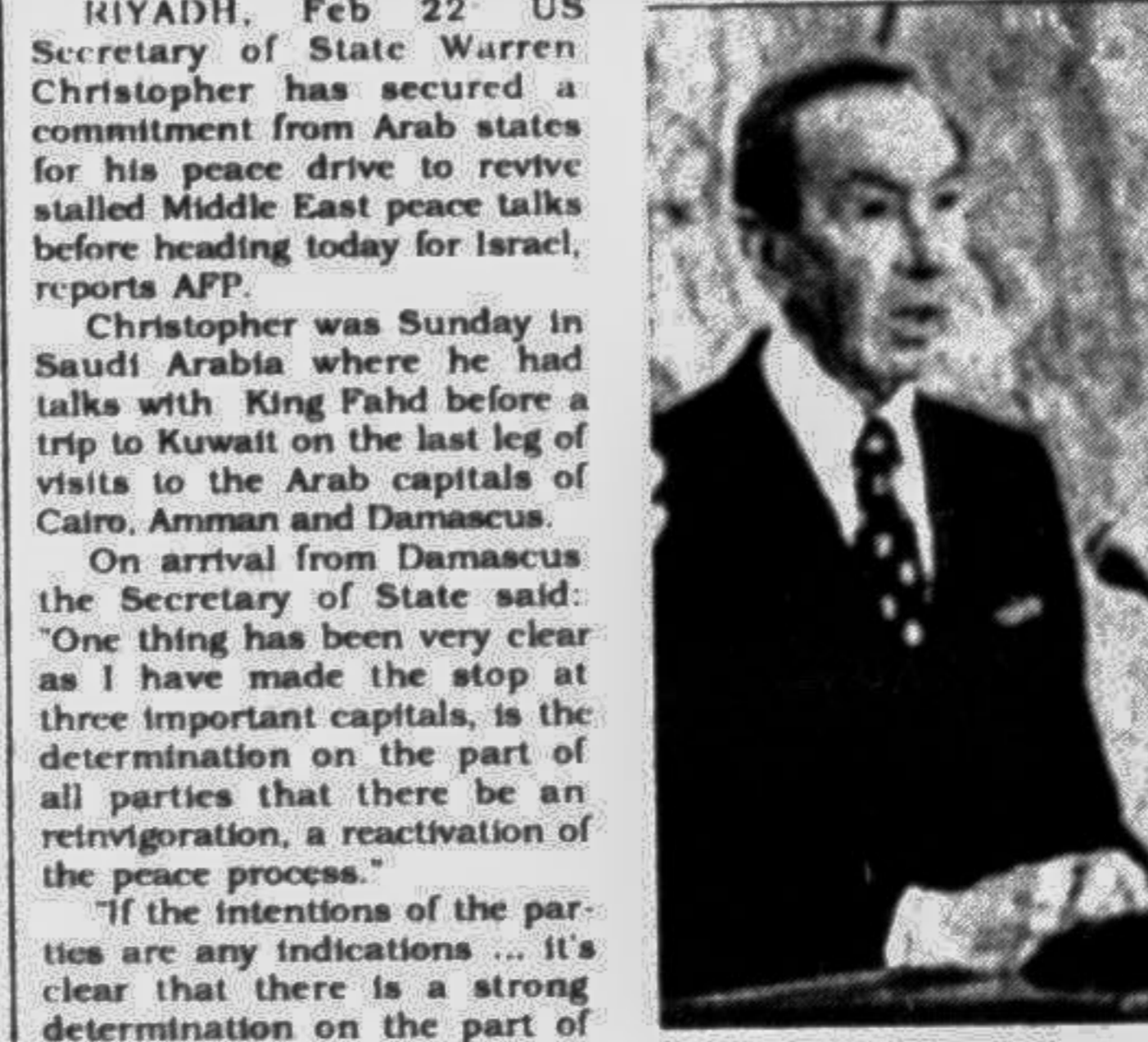
# Lankan troops overrun 2 LTTE bases

COLOMBO, Feb 22: Government troops overran two Tamil guerrilla base and killed an unspecified number of rebels during a major operation in northeastern Sri Lanka, a military spokesman said today, reports AFP.

Dozens of Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) guerrillas fled after one of their main hideouts in the Kuchchaveli jungles in Trincomalee district came under intense fire from security forces Sunday, the spokesman said.

Tigers got a beating after heavy resistance initially, they withdrew from the camp. Our information is that several Tigers were killed. Our troops did not suffer casualties, the spokesman said.

LTTE guerrillas also abandoned another camp in the face of the army advance in the area Sunday.



# Rafsanjani tells Major Death sentence against Rushdie irrevocable

TEHRAN, Feb 22: Iranian President Ali Akbar Rafsanjani has told British Prime Minister John Major that the death sentence against author Salman Rushdie is irrevocable, the Iranian news agency reported Saturday, says AFP.

Rafsanjani charge d'affaires Gholam Reza Ansari delivered the seven-page message to Foreign Office minister Douglas Hogg during a meeting in London on Thursday.

It said the edict "was confirmed by all schools of Islam" and "there was no way it could be lifted."

A foreign office statement after the meeting said it was "deeply disturbed" over the confirmation of the Fatwa, a religious edict, describing it as an "outrageous infringement of Rushdie's rights and a violation of international law".

Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini issued the death sentence against Rushdie four years ago for allegedly blaspheming Islam in his novel "The Satanic Verses."

# Clash leaves 15 dead in Lima

LIMA, Feb 22: Five soldiers and 10 suspected drug traffickers were killed in a clash in Cache province, a coca growing region of Peru, the military announced Sunday, reports AFP.

The fighting occurred Saturday near San Martin, which lies 750 kilometers (465 miles) north of Lima in a coca growing area where there is a high level of drug trafficking activity, the military said.

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# NPA rebels kill mayor, police chief in Philippines

MANILA, Feb 22: Communist guerrillas have assassinated the mayor and the police chief of a northern Philippine town, the presidential palace said here today, reports AFP.

Alfredo Carnacan, the mayor of the Hinterland town of Adams, and senior police officer Wilfredo Banaga were attacked by about 20 New People's Army (NPA) guerrillas late Sunday while he was in a palace statement said.

The mayor's wife and one of Banaga's bodyguards sustained gunshot wounds.