

# Clinton urges North Korea to reverse decision on NPT

WASHINGTON, Mar 16: President Clinton said Monday he was "very concerned and very discouraged" that North Korea had decided to withdraw from an international treaty designed to curb the spread of nuclear weapons, reports AP.

Clinton urged the Pyongyang government to reconsider. "There are several weeks ahead when North Korea might reverse its decisions and I hope they will do so," Clinton said at a news conference.

Clinton's comments echoed the State Department's on Friday after North Korea announced it would withdraw from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

## US storm toll rises to 149

WASHINGTON, Mar 16: The mammoth weekend storm that cut a wide swath from Cuba to Canada left 149 people dead, with dozens more missing on high seas or in wind-whipped snowdrifts, officials said today, reports AP.

Helicopters were scanning the seas for survivors after a cargo vessel sank in 20-meter (60-foot) waves off Nova Scotia overnight. One person was confirmed dead and 32 were missing from the gold bond conveyer, whose crew was mostly from Hong Kong.

Sixteen other seamen were missing off the Florida coast.

Rescue teams searched in snow drifts up to five meters (16 feet) in the great smoky mountains in north Carolina.

Proliferation Treaty. Governments withdrawing from the agreement are bound by its terms for a 90-day transition period.

Clinton called on North Korea to use that period to reconsider and to reverse its decision to ban inspectors of the International Atomic Energy Agency from monitoring North Korea's nuclear programmes.

Clinton said only the inspectors could determine the progress of North Korea in developing nuclear weapons, and he refused to give the US assessment of North Korea's programme.

Former Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger told a congressional committee last week that he believed North Korea had nuclear weapons.

At the State Department, Secretary of State Warren Christopher said the North Korean announcement was "matter of great concern to us" but he added that the administration has not given up on the possibility of North Korea's return to the treaty.

He also urged a renewal of peace talks between North and South Korea.

Speaking during a picture-taking session with Spain's Foreign Minister Javier Solana, Christopher also reaffirmed that US-South Korean military exercises that began last week should not be cause for alarm in Pyongyang.

"If they would look at it with an objective eye, they would see that there was nothing that needed to cause them apprehension," Christopher said.

# Rabin offers withdrawal from part of Golan

WASHINGTON, Mar 16: Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, declaring he was ready for "compromise," offered Monday after a meeting with President Clinton to surrender part of the Golan Heights to Syria, reports AP.

But Rabin said Israel would not negotiate a pullback in the strategic territory without knowing Syria's peace terms.

Clinton endorsed Rabin's demand. He said peace must include open borders and full diplomatic relations. He pledged to maintain Israel's military edge over the Arabs as an inducement to a compromise settlement.

The statement after a 3 1/2 hour Oval Office meeting sets the stage for a resumption of Arab-Israeli talks here April 20.

The Palestinians have refused to attend, demanding that Israel immediately repatriate 396 deportees forced into Lebanon in mid-December on suspicion of promoting terrorism against Israel.

The issue, and Palestinian allegations of Israeli human rights violations on the West Bank and in Gaza did not figure prominently in the meeting, US officials said afterward. They added that 75 minutes were spent by Clinton and Rabin without their aides present.

Rabin and Secretary of State Warren M. Christopher agreed on Feb. 1 that 101 of the Palestinians would be taken back immediately and the others by the end of the year. Clinton said that framework was the right approach, indicating he was not pressuring

Israel to yield.

Rabin urged the Palestinians to drop their threatened boycott. He also served notice on militant groups that by violence and terror, no one will make us run.

Clinton said "those who

seek to divert the peace process will find zero tolerance here."

Outside the White House gates, a young man shouted, Rabin is not a Jew, he is an Arab. Clinton told reporters at a joint news conference Rabin was prepared to take risks for peace, and Rabin confirmed it.

We made it clear that we accept the principle of the withdrawal of the armed forces of Israel on the Golan Heights to a secure and recognized boundary, Rabin said.

But we will not enter negotiations on the dimension of the withdrawal without knowing what kind of peace Syria offers us. He asked, for instance, whether it would involve an exchange of embassies and a normalization of relations.

Before we know that why do I have to say how much will we withdraw? Rabin told a reporter.

Clinton sketched a more aggressive role for the US administration in the negotiations, which began 16 months ago. He said the United States had to be a partner and a mediator.

He did not directly call for an Israeli withdrawal from the Golan heights, but said he would welcome compliance with UN Security Council resolutions calling for withdrawal from territory Israel won from the Arabs in the 1967 Six-Day war.

Senior White House and State Department officials, insisting on anonymity, said Clinton believed that applied to the Israeli-Syrian front as well on the West Bank and Gaza.

Earlier, Clinton said he had found a lot of reasons to be hopeful about chances for peace in the Middle East and that there was a real shot at getting the negotiations, which were suspended in mid-December, back on track.



WASHINGTON: US President Bill Clinton (R) glances at Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin during a joint press conference held at the White House March 15. — AFP/UNB photo

## Off the Record

### Sexist Toyota campaign

SYDNEY: Australia's women's groups reacted angrily yesterday to full-page newspaper advertisements using a naked pregnant woman to launch a new wide-bodied car and called on Japanese car maker Toyota to drop the campaign, reports Reuter.

"Selling a motor car has nothing to do with a pregnant female body," Parliamentarian Margaret Reynolds told reporters.

The advertisement, carried in metropolitan dailies, shows the distended abdomen of a woman with the message: "There's nowhere more comfortable than inside a wide body."

Reynolds, a Labour Senator, said her office had been inundated with calls from women complaining that the campaign was blatantly sexist.

### 'Jack the Stripper' recalls 'Jack the Ripper'

LONDON: A British sex attacker dubbed 'Jack the Stripper' who preyed on prostitutes in an English coastal town was jailed for 12 years on Monday, reports Reuter.

The court in Plymouth, southwest England, heard that 26-year-old Nicholas Harding, a trainee shop manager, waged an eight-month "campaign of terror" in which he raped and tried to strangle one of his victims. Two others were stripped, bound with tape and dumped in isolated areas, the court was told.

Judge William Taylor, passing sentence, said "I am in no doubt that you pose a significant danger to women."

The nickname "Jack the Stripper" recalls Britain's most famous serial killer, "Jack the Ripper," who prowled the streets of London in the 1890 and was never caught.

### Nude Diana dropped from TV documentary

LONDON: Cartoons depicting a nude Princess Diana have been dropped from a British television documentary after an outcry among royalists who said the drawings were an affront to public decency, reports Reuter.

The artists' impressions of the estranged wife of heir to the throne Prince Charles in various states of undress were commissioned for "Diana Unclothed," a documentary due to be broadcast yesterday about the princess's sex appeal.

A spokesman for Channel Four television said on Monday that senior executives had decided that cartoons of the princess in the nude were considered "inappropriate and unnecessary" to get over the message of the programme. But the spokeswoman said one brief cartoon sequence of the 31-year-old princess doing a striptease to her underwear would still be broadcast.

## BRIEFLY

**Miyazawa to visit Clinton Apr 16:** Japanese Prime Minister Kiichi Miyazawa will visit President Clinton on April 16 for a meeting and working lunch, the White House announced on Monday, reports AP from Washington.

It will be Clinton's first meeting as president with the Japanese prime minister. Among issues on the agenda will be preparations for the economic summit this July in Tokyo of the worlds seven largest industrialised democracies, and various "global, regional and bilateral issues," the White House said in a statement.

"The president looks forward to the visit of the prime minister and to strengthening our partnership with Japan as we address these issues," the statement said.

**Militants kill cop in Egypt:** Suspected Muslim militants shot dead an Egyptian plain clothed policeman on Monday during a raid with speedboats and helicopters on an island hide-out in the middle of the river Nile, security sources said, reports Reuter from Egypt.

Two suspected militants were wounded in the operation near the town of Al-Badari, a fundamentalist stronghold about 300 km (180 miles) south of Cairo, the sources added. Police arrested about 150 people for questioning.

In a separate incident, railway guards in the Cairo-Aswan train found a suitcase containing four home-made bombs, the sources said.

They made the discovery near the town of Abu Tig but the passenger carrying the bombs escaped, they added.

**Lightning claims 5 in Indonesia:** A lightning bolt struck and killed five people aboard a boat in the Indonesian province of Lampung in southern Sumatra, the Berita Buana Daily said here Tuesday, reports AFP from Jakarta.

The lightning struck a river ferry which was berthing in Gunung Tapa village along the Tulang Bawang river in northern Lampung Saturday, killing five people on the deck and severely burning two others, the daily said.

**Avalanches kill 36 in Pakistan:** Walls of snow rumbled down the mountains of northern Pakistan on Monday, burying at least 36 people and injuring 16 others, authorities said, reports AP from Mingora.

The avalanches crushed dozens of adobe homes in two villages and wiped out cattle herds and water mills, they said.

Authorities said they had little information about the disasters because the regions are remote and communications poor.

But they said at least 23 were killed and 9 others injured in the village of Badhat Serai in Swat district. Thirteen other people died and seven others were injured when an avalanche struck a village near the town of Chitral.

**Naipaul wins UK literary prize:** Trinidad-born author V S Naipaul won Britain's biggest literary prize on Monday, a new award worth 30,000 pounds (42,960 dollar) to add to his string of accolades from the arts world, reports Reuter from London.

Naipaul, 60, received the British literature prize at an awards ceremony in London.

The prize that has been given to me could have been given to many others, but my luck pleases me, he said.

### UN operation in Somalia to cost \$ 1.5b a year

UNITED NATIONS, Mar 16: The planned UN operation in Somalia will cost more than 1.5 billion dollars a year, UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali said in a report published Monday, reports AP.

The planned UN force, which Boutros-Ghali hopes will gradually replace the current US-led force, with command switching May 1, would cost 1.55 billion dollars for 12 months, the Secretary General said.

The force, which requires authorization from the Security Council, would include 20,000 soldiers, 8,000 logistics workers and about 2,900 civilian staffers.

# Old Bolshevik battle-cry echoes thru' Russian Congress

MOSCOW, Mar 16: The resounding defeat inflicted on President Boris Yeltsin by the Congress of People's Deputies has left Russia apparently still prisoner of its Soviet past, reports AP.

The forces which lost the power struggle in 1990 and 1991 have taken their revenge at this congress, said conservative deputy Leonid Gurevich.

The old Bolshevik battle-cry of "all power to the Soviets" echoed through the congress on several occasions during its four-day session, illustrating to the point of caricature the conservative forces return to political and institutional power.

The humiliations heaped on Yeltsin have also marked the failure of his presidency of the

Russian federation — the only Russian institution not associated with the Soviet era — when confronted by a congress whose legitimacy is, by contrast, anchored in the country's Soviet past.

The head of Russia's constitutional commission warned Monday that the worst aspects of the Soviet system had surfaced at last week's acrimonious congress.

The characteristics of the Soviet system: traditionalism, conservatism, xenophobia and a lack of intellectual vigour, dominated the four-day meeting, Oleg Rumintsev said.

The forces which led to disintegration came right to the surface, he told a press conference. Russian journalist and west-

ern observers believe the defeat has left Yeltsin with a stark choice: bow to congress and see his economic reform programme halted, or cash in some of the political capital earned in his election as President in June 1991 and tackle congress head-on.

Yeltsin has already issued veiled threats of action if congress continues to frustrate his attempts at compromise in the constitutional power struggle between himself and the conservative-dominated legislature over who runs the country.

On Monday he again warned congress that it had "embarked on the road to violation of the constitution." However, the parliamentary debates have cruelly exposed

Yeltsin's lack of a political base, as neither he nor his supporters appear able to influence, let alone control, the legislature.

While parliamentary Speaker Ruslan Kasbulatov has led the opposition to Yeltsin's government, pro-reform elements, including the centrist civic union courted by Yeltsin since last summer, have been conspicuously silent.

Diplomats are worried that this political weakness has been accompanied by a lack of control by the executive over the wheels of government, and in particular over an administration confounded by contradictory decrees and laws.

Yeltsin admits himself that the decisions he has taken since the summer have only

been applied in half of Russia. The national power struggle is mirrored at regional level in this vast country of some 88 discrete administrative entities, whose Kremlin-appointed heads are locked in a bitter struggle with the local Soviets, or councils.

But if the central administration's hold on the levers of power is weak, that of the local Soviets, held by leaders who have broken with the "democratic centralism" and allegiance to the "centre" of the communist era, appear to have lost none of their effectiveness.

They know that they have a common interest to defend — their own, said one Western diplomat in reference to the corruption and looting of state



KARACHI: A para-military truck patrols the streets of Karachi after a bomb blast incident in the central jail March 15. — AFP/UNB photo

## Another Muslim enclave falls to Serbs in eastern Bosnia

SARAJEVO, Mar 16: Serb forces backed by armour seized another Muslim enclave in eastern Bosnia, then rumbled after fighters desperately defending the village's fleeing civilians, reports AP.

The UN commander in Bosnia, French Gen. Philippe Morillon, confirmed Monday in an interview via ham radio that Konjevic Polje had fallen to Serb forces.

Many Muslims from Konjevic Polje were headed southward to Srebrenica, another Muslim enclave, where a UN official said up to 40 people a day were already dying for lack of shelter from the cold and snow.

Bosnian radio reported that 12,000 new refugees arrived in Srebrenica Monday and that the town was being shelled.

But Morillon said Monday he convinced Bosnian Serbs to agree to a conditional ceasefire in Srebrenica.

The Bosnian Serb military said in a statement that a corridor would be opened to allow aid into Srebrenica and the

evacuation of wounded — two of Morillon's chief demands.

It was not immediately clear if that offer was conditional on the Serbs' earlier demand that Morillon leave Srebrenica. The UN commander had refused earlier requests to leave, insisting he would stay in the suffering city

### Ghali deplors Bombay blasts

UNITED NATIONS, Mar 16: Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali expressed sadness Monday over recent violence in Bombay, India, that has left more than 300 people dead, including a UN employee, reports Reuter.

The Secretary General deplors what happened in these explosions and regrets the loss of life, a UN spokesman said. "He trusts that the government of India will be able to cope with this difficult situation and reestablish peace in the country."

### Fidel Castro reelected

MEXICO CITY, Mar 16: The new Parliament on Monday unanimously approved Fidel Castro to continue as president of Cuba and retained his



HAVANA: Cuban President Fidel Castro drops his vote in the ballot box. — AFP/UNB photo

younger brother, Raul, as the regime's No. 2 man, reports AP.

Reports from the Cuban news agency Prensa Latina and the official Mexican agency Notimex said the vote was unanimous by the 578 deputies present. The 589-member national legislature is heavily dominated by Communists.

It also elected five vice presidents and 23 other members of the Council of State, the country's highest executive body.

Castro, who was elected to a five-year term, has ruled Cuba since his Communist revolution forced dictator Fulgencio Batista to flee on Jan 1.

Castro was one of 589 unopposed candidates in National Assembly elections on Feb 24, the first elections ever submitted to a popular vote under Castro. All candidates were Communist Party members or supported the party line.

## 70 more New York Post workers fired

NEW YORK, Mar 16: The chaos deepened at the New York Post on Monday as its new buyer fired 70 people, then rehired most of them, settling off more uncertainty over the future of the nation's oldest daily newspaper, reports AP.

Unrest over Abraham Hirschfeld's action prevented the 192-year-old paper from publishing Monday, the first time it failed to publish since a citywide newspaper strike in 1978.

Publication resumed with Tuesday's edition, which started rolling off the presses late Monday with a front page given over to a woodcut of founder Alexander crying.

Inside was a column by Jack Newfield, whom Hirschfeld fired, that compared the new ownership to the Marx Brothers version of the Hitler-Stalin pact.

The Post also carried several bylined stories about Hirschfeld all derogatory — including one headlined, "Who Is This Nut?"

Hirschfeld told the Associated Press that if Government Mario Cuomo

came forward with a new group of investors, he would consider stepping out of the picture.

"The best thing I would like is to buy the building, not the Post," said Hirschfeld, 74, a real estate investor. "I don't know anything about newspapers."

Cuomo said at a news conference that he and Economic Development Commissioner Vincent Teso were getting calls from people interested in helping. He wouldn't reveal any names.

"Who knows, who this guy, what's going to happen tomorrow?" said Barry Lipton, president of the Newspaper Guild of New York. The union said the firings violated its contract.

The union was one of the groups that met with Hirschfeld and got him to agree to rehire all but one of the 50 Guild members fired in the morning, according to Murray Weiss, the paper's associate metro editor.

There were also 20 managers and non-union employees fired and it was not immediately known whether they were being rehired.

## Honasan to resume armed struggle if talks fail

MANILA, Mar 16: A leader of coup attempts against former President Corason Aquino said Tuesday he would return to the underground and resume armed struggle if peace talks with the new government fail, reports AP.

Former army Lt Col Gregorio Honasan said his group, the Revolutionary Alliance of the Masses, did not renounce violence but merely "suspended military operations" when it agreed to enter negotiations with President Fidel Ramos to end rebellion in the military.

"I will go underground if we lose hope in the peace process," Honasan said. "But we are forward-looking. We are trying our very best to make it succeed."

Honasan and Ramos played

major roles in the 1986 military mutiny that unseated the "people power revolution" that toppled the late President Ferdinand Marcos and propelled Mrs Aquino to office.

But Honasan turned against Mrs Aquino and led at least three of the seven coup attempts against her.

In a meeting with foreign reporters, Honasan said the talks would collapse if the Ramos government is insincere and does not make a "deliberate attempt" to address the problems that caused social unrest.

He said his group proposed that the talks center on establishing "good government, electoral reforms, nationalistic economic policies, social reforms and military reforms."

### Deng healthy, leads regular life, says daughter

BEIJING, Mar 16: China's paramount leader Deng Xiaoping, 88, is very healthy and leads a regular life, his daughter said, reports Reuter.

State Radio used the comments of the daughter, identified as Xiao Rong, as its lead item on the morning bulletin today.

The People's Daily put her comments on the front page in a prominent box.

The daughter, who is the elder Deng's secretary, is usually known as Deng Rong. It was unclear why she was given the surname Xiao in the news reports.