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US, NATO allies okay operation in Bosnia

BRUSSELS, Apr 2: The United States and its NATO allies said Friday they are ready to enforce a UN-imposed no-fly zone over Bosnia-Herzegovina, reports AP.

Ambassadors of the 16 nations of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization approved the operation in a special session called to act on a request by the United Nations to enforce a no-fly zone over Bosnia in the coming weeks.

NATO Secretary-General Manfred Woerner said after the meeting that the NATO ambassadors have expressed "NATO's readiness to support the implementation" of the UN no-fly enforcement resolution.

Woerner told reporters he will "immediately inform UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros Ghali of NATO's decision."

It will mark the first time the alliance has mounted an operation outside its territory. The alliance was formed in 1949 to contain Soviet expansionism in Europe.

Woerner, who spoke briefly to reporters after the meeting, refused to give details of the plans. But he said the allies would be ready to enforce the edict "promptly and within the time span indicated by the United Nations."

The UN Security Council on Wednesday authorized NATO warplanes to shoot down aircraft violating the flight ban, but ruled out pre-emptive strikes on Serb airfields.

The resolution will take effect in seven days but allow another week for final preparations by the United Nations and NATO.

Contingency planning calls for NATO to use 50 to 100 warplanes to enforce the air cap, which was imposed last October.

The United States, Britain, France and the Netherlands are expected to supply most of the weapons.

The German government, paralyzed by a constitutional conflict over its international military role, voted Friday to help enforce the no-fly zone.

The country's pacifist post-war constitution has been interpreted as restricting the German military to defending NATO territory and to UN humanitarian missions. The government opted to let the Supreme Court decide the issue.

In contingency plans sent to the United Nations, NATO said it planned to enforce the no-fly zone by flying alongside planes violating the edict and ordering them to return to their bases; escorting them out of the zone; and as last resort, firing on violators.

NATO intends to run the operation under Italian Lt. Gen. Giuseppe Degli Innocenti, commander of the allied tactical air force at Vicenza in northeastern Italy.

Bosnia's Serbs have been accused of continuing their flights over Bosnia, and of rejecting a UN peace plan while they try to consolidate territorial gains.

The Muslim-led government of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croats already have accepted the peace plan.

Serbs now control 70 per cent of Bosnia, and they have balked at accepting a map giving them only 43 per cent of the republic's territory.

Bosnian Serbs blocked a UN effort to deliver food and medicine to Srebrenica on Friday and evacuate Muslims from the eastern town.

Serbs, who surround the town, refused to allow passage of both empty vehicles and others carrying aid supplies. Serbs said they objected to a UN evacuation plan.

A cease-fire generally held for a fifth day across Bosnia-Herzegovina. In southern Bosnia, the self-proclaimed

Joint collaboration plan Bangladesh firms may set up jute mills in Lanka

Star Report

A number of Bangladeshi firms, both in the public and private sectors, have offered to re-locate their jute mills in Sri Lanka on the basis of joint ventures, Finance Minister M. Saifur Rahman said on Friday.

"We have even offered them deferred payment plus a 3-year guaranteed supply of raw materials on constant price levels," Rahman told newsmen on his arrival at the Zia International Airport from Colombo.

The Finance Minister led a delegation, which included the Secretary, Ministry of Jute, at the 2-day third session of the Bangladesh-Sri Lanka Joint Commission on Economic Cooperation.

During his stay at the Sri Lanka capital the minister called on President Ranasinghe Premadasa, Prime Minister

D.B. Wijetunge and other members of the Sri Lankan cabinet.

Rahman noted that the Sri Lanka President expressed his eagerness to attend the upcoming SAARC Summit in Dhaka, scheduled for April 10 and 11, and added that the Sri Lanka Head of State would arrive in the capital on April 8.

President Premadasa also hoped that the South Asian Preferential Trade Agreement (SAPTA) could be signed soon which would help boost bilateral trade between the two SAARC members, Rahman said.

The Joint Economic Commission (JEC) session concluded in Colombo on March 31 with the signing of the agreed minutes between the two

Govt to start land survey in CHT soon

The government will soon start the land survey of the hill districts of Rangamati, Khagrachhari and Bandarban, reports UNB.

This was decided at a meeting of the Council Committee on Chittagong Hill Tracts here yesterday with Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia in the chair.

The meeting, held at the International Conference Centre (ICC), also reviewed the subjects which are yet to be transferred to the three hill district councils.

It observed that the recent visit of the Prime Minister to the hill tracts has created enthusiasm among the local and foreign tourists and directed the Parjatan Corporation to take immediate steps towards expansion of tourism to the hill resorts, including Rangamati and Kaptai.

A report of the committee headed by the Cabinet Secretary to activate the Special Affairs Division that deals with CHT affairs was also reviewed at the meeting.

Irrigation Minister M



French Prime Minister Edouard Balladur (right) leaves the first council of ministers yesterday accompanied by Alain Juppe, Foreign Minister. — AFP photo

Balladur's move to free central bank, privatise cos

PARIS, Apr 2: Premier Edouard Balladur took his first steps Friday to right the French economy and put the new conservative government's stamp on it, moving to free the central bank from the government's grasp and privatize state concerns, reports AP.

But Balladur, speaking at his first Cabinet meeting, said world trade talks were "the most urgent" economic dossier.

The 45-minute Cabinet meeting, the first since Balladur was appointed Monday, marked the formal opening of an awkward period of "cohabitation" between the conservative premier and Socialist President Francois Mitterrand.

A landslide rightist victory in Sunday's legislative elections has left Mitterrand, whose term ends in 1995, isolated.

No intention to float political party: Kamal

The convenor of Democratic Forum, Dr Kamal Hossain, scotched the speculation that the formation of a 62-member preparatory committee by him for the grand conference constituted a big step towards floating a new party.

Talking to UNB at his law chamber in Motijheel yesterday he made it crystal clear that the proposed national conference aimed at deliberating on major problems afflicting our national life and prescribing their solutions.

He said, "The whole exercise is furthest from floating a new political party or, as has been suggested by some, from representing a third force."

"It is, at best, purported to represent the mainstream of national politics geared to achieving welfare of the people," he added.

Dr Kamal stated preparatory committees have either been formed or are being formed in the districts to discuss the issues at stake before the nation and to mobilising public opinion in support of the grand national conference.

Giving details of the planned national conference, he said representatives of all sectors of national life including teachers, students, doctors, engineers, lawyers, journalists, representatives of labour unions and farming community and of course, political parties except those which are identified as anti-liberation forces will be invited to attend it and apply their mind to problems facing the country.

He likened the country to a mother and said, "my mother

Clinton-Yeltsin summit begins today

MOSCOW, Apr 2: President Boris Yeltsin had a telephone conversation with his US counterpart Bill Clinton early today, focusing on the agenda of their summit meeting in Vancouver Saturday, an official statement said here, reports AFP.

The two leaders plan to discuss "concrete questions of economic and trade cooperation" as well as review the situation in world trouble spots during their two-day meeting in the Western Canadian city, it added.

Yeltsin was leaving Moscow at 10:30 pm (1800 GMT) for Magadan in the Russian far east where he was to stop over for a few hours on his way to Vancouver, the statement said.

NEWS BRIEFS

37-member Mahila Parishad committee
 The Bangladesh Mahila Parishad has constituted a 37-member central committee for the year 1993-95 with poet Sufia Kamal and Ayesha Khana as President and General Secretary of the parishad. The two-day 8th national convention of the parishad ended here today, reports BSS.

Two killed in car mishap
 JESSORE, Apr 2: Two persons were killed and 3 injured when a private car with a family dashed a roadside tree and twisted at Rakkhali, 16 km west on Jessore-Benapole highway today. The victims were Rahmatullah Sardar (60) and Sharmeen (7), father and daughter of Abdur Rahim, an official of Sonali Bank who was injured along with wife Ferdous and minor son Arif, reports UNB.

One gets life-term for killing lover
 SATKHIRA, Apr 2: A man was sentenced to life imprisonment for killing his lover in a judgement awarded here on Wednesday. The convict Wazed Moral of Talata in Sadar thana was also fined Tk 5,000 and in default to suffer a year more RI. According to the prosecution the accused killed Laki Rani Das of the same village on December 7, 1988 by poisoning. They were having an affair at the time of the killing, reports UNB.

Goods train derails
 LALMONIRHAT, Apr 2: Train services through Lalmonirhat were disrupted today (Friday) following derailment of a goods train near Lalmonirhat station, railway sources said. The Lalmonirhat-bound "down goods train" from Burirhat derailed between Aditarni and Lalmonirhat stations at about 1 am today leaving its guard wounded and damaging one kilometre railway track, reports UNB.

Sacking of Madhya Pradesh govt illegal, says HC

NEW DELHI, Apr 2: A court ruled Friday that Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao overstepped the constitution when he dismissed a state government run by Hindu nationalists, reports AP.

The unprecedented decision by the Madhya Pradesh High Court is an embarrassment for Rao's embattled government.

It also is an unexpected victory for the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party, whose governments were sacked in four states last December.

Rao dismissed them and the state legislators after Hindu fanatics demolished the Babri Mosque in Ayodhya December 6, an action supported by the Bharatiya Janata party. The destruction sparked nation-wide Hindu-Muslim riots that left more than 1,200 people dead in December.

Although sacking of state administrations by federal government is not uncommon in India, it is the first time a High Court, the highest court in a state, has challenged such an act.

Rao's government has two weeks to appeal the ruling to the Supreme Court, the country's highest court.

Lata Krishnamurthy, a constitutional lawyer, said the ruling could renew demands

30 Indian Muslim leaders blame Pakistan for Bombay blasts
 BOMBAY, Apr 2: More than 30 prominent Indian Muslims denounced Pakistan and its "local agents" today for the string of explosions which killed some 300 people here last month, reports AFP.

The leaders said the March 12 blasts were the work of "anti-national and anti-human elements, who carried out the nefarious anti-Indian design of

by the Bharatiya Janata party, the largest opposition party, for Rao to quit.

"A high court decision itself is very good grounds for the opposition to ask for the government's dismissal," she said.

After the mosque's demolition, Rao discharged the government of four states run by the Hindu party — Uttar Pradesh where Ayodhya is located, Madhya Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh and Rajasthan.

Petitions also have been filed against the dismissal in the other three states.

PTI adds: The BJP President, Dr Murli Manohar Joshi, today demanded immediate mid-term poll to the Lok Sabha in the wake of the verdict of Jabalpur Bench of the Madhya Pradesh High Court quashing the dismissal of the Sunder Lal Patwa government in December last.

Dr Joshi told PTI that the court verdict had not only ex-

Strike cripples Kashmir

JAMMU (India), Apr 2: A strike called by Muslim guerrillas to protest the murder of a heart surgeon crippled the Kashmir Valley today, as 15 people died in violence linked to a separatist campaign, officials said, reports AFP.

Shops and businesses closed their shutters in response to the shutdown called by the outlawed Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF), one of the dominant Muslim guerrilla groups fighting to secede Kashmir from India.

Government offices reported poor attendance, the officials said.

The rebels fought running battles with Indian security forces during the strike using grenades and automatic weapons, in Srinagar, the summer capital of Kashmir state, the officials said here.

An official spokesman said five militants and 10 civilians were killed and four Indian soldiers were injured across the valley in violence linked to the bloody separatist campaign. But he gave no details.

Partial interest on agri loans to be waived

By Inam Ahmed

The government has taken an initiative to waive part of the interests on agricultural loans of the co-operative farmers, according to concerned sources.

The move came following a public commitment by Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia July last year to write-off agricultural loans including interest

upto Taka 5000 of the co-operative farmers.

However, the initiative, after none months of the commitment, concerns only interests and not the principal amount.

According to sources, the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (LGRD) had proposed that the Finance Ministry write off half of the interests on co-operative farmers' loans. It also proposed that the farmers get five years time to repay the principal loan and the rest of the interests.

The proposal is now under scrutiny at the Finance Ministry and an outcome is expected by next month.

Meanwhile, it has been roughly estimated that the financial involvement for the measure may need some Taka 4600 crore. There are now over 5000 co-operative associations, according to an estimate.

According to sources, the

Milam suggests cut in agri subsidy

RAJSHAHI, Apr 2: The US Ambassador to Bangladesh William B Milam has said that democracy would not flourish in the country without a viable economy, reports BSS.

He stressed the need for strengthening the national economy through the system of free economy.

Milam suggested reduction of subsidy in agriculture and industry and proper implementation.

Murders, road accidents up in March

By Farid Ahmed

Crime and violence in the capital last month have increased alarmingly.

Murders doubled and road accidents increased in the city during March compared to the previous two months — January and February this year.

Five persons were murdered and 19 killed in road accidents in January and nine people were murdered and 25 fell victim to reckless driving in February where as 14 were murdered and 29 killed in road accidents in March.

During the year 1992, the highest number of murders, 15 were recorded in June.

However, a total of 54 people were killed in the Dhaka metropolitan area in different crime incidents such as murders, suicides and road accidents in March while 44 were reported in February.

A senior police officer who preferred anonymity pointed out that due to increasing rate of crime incidents, investigation was lagging behind.

Besides, frequent mugging, robbery, clash and other violent incidents kept all the city

shot dead by unidentified gunmen in his bed room at his Mohammadpur residence on March 9. The detective branch was entrusted with the investigation.

Concerned investigators confirmed that it was a pre-planned murder but no significant headway was made in the investigation so far.

Sanjida Akhter Bipa, 11, a student of class six, was allegedly murdered by her mother and one Tareq who reportedly had an extramarital relationship with the lady.

An air hostess Salma Islam allegedly killed her maid servant Shehali, 15, in her Mirpur

Tough measures to realise dues Ctg T&T likely to snap 10000 telephone lines

From Nurul Alam

CHITTAGONG, Apr 2: Telephone and Telegraph authorities here in its move to realise outstanding revenues are likely to cut off about ten thousand telephone connections in 15 districts.

Official sources here said, already about 2000 telephone connections had been snapped in Chittagong during a special drive launched last month. Many important offices also came under this stringent measures for failure to clear off their telephone bills, officials said.

The outstanding revenues against the defaulter subscribers here including former

MPs, Upazila Chairmen and other private individuals' offices, amounted to around Taka 20 crore, official sources added.

In Chittagong City alone about Taka six to seven crores remained unrealised, sources said.

Officials informed that the disconnection drive began at the instruction of the higher authorities in a bid to augment the revenue earning.

Besides, the authorities are planning to lodge certificate cases against those defaulter subscribers. The T&T authorities reportedly decided not to

Al Baraka Bank to continue operation in Bangladesh

By Staff Correspondent

Al Baraka Bank Bangladesh Ltd in a statement Friday said that it would continue its normal operation in the country despite the decision of Al Baraka International Bank, London to close down.

"Al Baraka Bangladesh Ltd is a joint venture bank established in Bangladesh which is operating on Islamic Shariah as a separate bank and supervised and monitored by Bangladesh Bank," the statement said.

"It has no connection with Al Baraka International Bank Ltd, London," it went on to say. The statement said that lo-

Monthly Roundup

dwellers in tension during the last month despite increased police vigil. The police officer further said, "it happens every year during the month of Ramadan."

Observers felt that many of the murders last month were sensational and sadistic.

A 62-year-old businessman Khandker Shamsul Haque was

cant headway was made in the investigation so far.

Sanjida Akhter Bipa, 11, a student of class six, was allegedly murdered by her mother and one Tareq who reportedly had an extramarital relationship with the lady.

An air hostess Salma Islam allegedly killed her maid servant Shehali, 15, in her Mirpur