

## India to step up security measures at airports

NEW DELHI, Apr 29: India will initiate a series of measures, including setting up a new aviation security force, to increase security at airports and prevent hijackings, Civil Aviation Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad said on Wednesday, reports Reuter.

Four domestic Indian Airlines flights have been hijacked this year and the ministry has been asked to set up new security measures within three months, Azad said in parliament.

In the latest incident, the lone hijacker of a Delhi-Srinagar flight was shot and killed on Sunday, about eleven hours after he had taken over the aircraft and demanded to be flown to Pakistan or Afghanistan.

The plane was grounded in

Amritsar, in northern India, while authorities negotiated with the hijacker. Paramilitary commandos stormed the plane an hour after midnight and released the other passengers and crew unharmed.

Azad said the ministry will make a detailed report on the Japanese which allowed the hijacker to board the aircraft in New Delhi with two pistols.

Police said he had hidden the weapons in crutches and in the bandages of his plastered right leg.

They said four security officers, responsible for X-raying luggage and body-searching passengers had been suspended from duty.

"The special aviation force will be highly trained," Azad said.

## NATO to tighten naval blockade Ghali against action in Bosnia without UN coordination

UNITED NATIONS, Apr 29: Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali made clear on Wednesday he did not want the United States or any other country to take unilateral military action in Bosnia-Herzegovina without UN Coordination, reports Reuter.

"I hope that any kind of intervention will be done in coordination with the United Nations," he told reporters.

"It is very important that the United Nations maintain the coordination of any kind of operation in the former Yugoslavia," he added.

The UN chief avoided saying whether he approved or disapproved of air strikes against Bosnian Serb positions, an option being reviewed by President Bill Clinton.

In Brussels last week he appeared to favour continued negotiations rather than military intervention, saying that he thought an international peace plan, rejected by Bosnian Serbs, still stood a chance of being implemented.

The United States also believes that no further UN Security Council resolution is necessary to use military force

and that Resolution 770, adopted August 13, would suffice.

But some European envoys said they would insist on another resolution since 770 was aimed at guarding humanitarian convoys on the ground and not military strikes to stop Serbs offensives.

Resolution 770 allows states to take "all measures necessary" to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance to Sarajevo and wherever needed in other parts of Bosnia.

Clinton has been reviewing his options on Bosnia. On

Monday he insisted the world must act to end the bloodshed and he hoped to announce new steps against Bosnian Serbs within the "next several days".

But most diplomats believe any announcement will wait until Secretary of State Warren Christopher consults with European allies.

Another report from Brussels says: NATO allies agreed on Wednesday to tighten the naval blockade of former Yugoslavia, allowing western warships to enter coastal waters to enforce tougher UN sanctions, alliance sources said.

## Libya asks OIC to help lift UN air embargo

KARACHI, Apr 29: Libya's Foreign Minister Omar Al-Muntasir asked Islamic countries meeting here to help lift the UN air embargo on his country during the pilgrimage season, saying Libyans could no longer go to the Mecca by camel, reports AFP.

Al-Muntasir said Libya had asked Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) foreign ministers meeting in Karachi to pass a resolution to help lift a UN air embargo on Libya during the remaining one month of the Islamic pilgrimage season to Muslim holy

places in Mecca and Medina. The UN resolutions have been in force for more than one year because Libya refuses to release two suspects in the 1988 bombing of a Pan-Am airliner over Lockerbie, Scotland for trial in the United States or Britain.

"We are seeking a resolution from the OIC so that the organization... will manage to open a corridor for pilgrimage between Libya and Saudi Arabia," he said.

Asked by Pakistani journalists why Libyans could not make the trip by road or ship, Al-Muntasir shot back "do you want us to go by camel as we did centuries ago, or walking?"

Al-Muntasir said nearly 1,000 people have been killed in Libya in the past year in road and air accidents because of the UN air embargo.

"They have to use the crowded road to Tunis which is not designed for such heavy traffic," he said.

## OIC condemns Babri Mosque demolition

KARACHI, Apr 29: Islamic countries have condemned last December's destruction by Hindu zealots of the Babri Mosque in Ayodhya, India, a Pakistani foreign ministry spokesman said here Wednesday, reports AFP.

## Israel to allow 5000 Palestinians to settle permanently in WB, Gaza

JERUSALEM, Apr 29: Israel is ready to allow 5,000 Palestinians living abroad to settle with their families in the occupied territories this year as a gesture to boost the peace talks, official sources said today, reports AFP.

The 5,000 many of them women and children, have until now been granted only three-month summer visitors' permits for the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

But from this year they could stay permanently, the sources said, provided in the coming days "progress is made in talks with the Palestinian delegation."

A ninth round of Middle East peace talks opened in Washington on Tuesday.

Israel has announced that 30 long-term Palestinian deportees can also return home as the first of what is expected to be a series of gestures.

Israel radio said Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin was also prepared to hand over tax collecting in the territories to the Palestinians before an autonomy agreement is reached. Palestinians have bitterly resented paying taxes to the occupying power.

The Israeli delegation to the peace negotiations would also propose to the Palestinians to take administrative and budgetary control for education, health, tourism, and employment services in the autonomy framework.

The Israelis have also worked out plans to allow the Palestinians to set up a 4,000-strong armed police force, the radio said.

Police Minister Moshe Shahal said Wednesday: "The policeman will take care of all civil and criminal affairs concerning the Palestinians population of the territories."

## Sino-British talks end without progress

BEIJING, Apr 29: The second round of Sino-British talks on how to conduct Hong Kong's 1994 and 1995 elections ended Thursday with no announcement of any progress in resolving the dispute, reports AP.

Sir Robin McLaren, Britain's ambassador to China, and Vice Foreign Minister Jiang Zhenhu, met for about two hours, their shortest meeting in the two rounds of talks that began last week.

"We have had a full morning's work and we have finished our discussions for this round," McLaren said when he returned to the British Embassy on the Diaoyutai State Guesthouse.

From the outset, both sides declined to comment on whether any progress was made or give any other details about their discussions.

The two sides will meet again at an evening banquet at the British Embassy, McLaren said.

He added that a joint statement would be issued

later Thursday with dates for the third round.

In Hong Kong, Gov. Chris Patten warned Wednesday that time was running out for finding an acceptable arrangement for conducting Hong Kong's elections in 1994 and 1995, the last under British rule.

Patten, the British-appointed governor, enraged China last October when he proposed expanding voter participation. China fears doing so would result in more liberal democrats being elected, and would feed demands for more democracy on the mainland.

The terms of the legislative and executive council members elected in 1994 and 1995 will extend beyond 1997, when Hong Kong returns to Chinese rule. China has threatened to replace both bodies if it doesn't like the election procedure.

Patten has delayed submitting his democratic reform plan to the Hong Kong legislature for approval while the Sino-British talks are continuing.

## 2,000 Kashmiri policemen refuse to resume work

NEW DELHI, Apr 29: Some 2,000 Kashmiri policemen disarmed by the Indian army refused to resume work in Srinagar today to press for the arrest of an officer they hold responsible for a Muslim constable's death, reports AFP.

"They are out but they have not joined duty," said K R Menon, Operations Deputy Chief of the Border Security Force (BSF), the Indian paramilitary unit blamed for last week's death of Kashmiri constable Riaz Ahmad.

A Kashmiri administration official spokesman said that only police wireless operators had returned to their posts.

Menon said BSF men were

guarding armories where weapons of the disarmed policemen have been dumped by the army after an operation early Wednesday ended a six-day takeover of Srinagar's police headquarters by the protesting officers.

The protesters were confined to barracks after the army crackdown. They were subsequently released and ordered to resume work.

The Kashmir government spokesman, however, said some 1,000 of the disarmed policemen were being interrogated by the army and the BSF in connection with their strike which led to the siege of police headquarters.

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Singer David Dixon (R) poses for a photographer during the final rehearsal of \$3m Australian production of Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber's "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat" in Sydney yesterday. Sir Andrews most performed work will open in Sydney tomorrow. — AFP/UNB photo

## Couple goes to court to claim kiss in famed photo

PARIS: A retired couple took photographer Robert Doisneau to court Wednesday, claiming he stole a moment of youthful passion in a famed photo of two lovers embracing on a Paris street 43 years ago, reports AP.

The civil trial before the Paris Correctional Court should determine whether the legendary photographer violated the privacy of the plaintiffs, Denise and Jean-Louis Lavergne. It may also forever shatter the powerful mystique of anonymity surrounding the couple in the 1950 photo, "Le Baiser de l'Hotel de Ville" (The Kiss at City Hall).

The Laverignes, retired printers in their 60s, insist that they are the couple captured in the spontaneous, passionate Kiss amid a crowd of indifferent strollers outside Paris City Hall.

One of the world's best-known photographs, the black-and-white shot has been reproduced on posters, postcards and T-shirts and is studied as an example of the photographer's art.

Though the Laverignes seek 500,000 francs (dfrs 100,000) in damages, they claim that the bigger issue is recognition of their young love — even though Doisneau claims he used actors.

The court will also decide the case of Francoise Borne, who claims to be the actress. She is suing Doisneau for 100,000 francs (dfrs 20,000) and a percentage of the sales.

Ms. Borne says she would have remained anonymous, but that the claims made by the Laverignes made her assert her own case. Her reported male partner refuses to get involved. The Laverignes believe that they were shopping near the city hall, buying goods to set up house, when the photo was taken. They married three months later.

## Thailand's newest newly-weds

BANGKOK: Thailand's newest newly weds, crocodiles play an archaic, are "getting acquainted" at their new home in a pond in northern pitchit province, an official there said today, reports AFP.

Bridegroom patch and bride play were "married" on Wednesday by Agriculture Minister Nipon Promphan at a ceremony attended by hundreds of local people in the province, some 350 kilometers (220 miles) north of Bangkok, the official said.

Ploy, the 16-year-old, 3.5 meter (11.6 foot) bride was brought to the ceremony from Thailand's largest crocodile farm in Samut Prakan province just south of the capital. She was escorted by provincial governor Paitoon Sunthornwipat.

Waiting for her was the 60-year-old, 4.4 meter (14.5-foot) patch, accompanied by Pitchit provincial governor Adirek Uthaipon.

In keeping with Thai custom, patch also brought a crocodile-sized dowry for play consisting of three Buddha statues, three big baskets of pomelo fruit, which symbolized gold, and three large baskets of green mangoes, representing emerald, the official said.

## Diana had eating disorder during ill marriage to Charles

LONDON: Britain's Princess Diana on Tuesday spoke publicly of the anguish of people who suffer eating disorders before exceptionally attending the same official banquet with her estranged husband Prince Charles, reports AFP.

Anorexia and bulimia, she stressed before an audience of 400 international experts, had their roots in childhood and adolescence and could obscure the sufferer's real problems.

Diana is said to have suffered similar eating disorders during her unhappy marriage to the Prince of Wales. The royal couple, whose separation was announced in December, attended a dinner in honour of visiting Portuguese President Mario Soares, seated at the same table but

## Pakistan wants to improve ties with US

ISLAMABAD, Apr 29: Pakistan's caretaker Prime Minister Balikh Sher Mazari told the US ambassador on Wednesday that Islamabad wanted to transform soured ties with Washington to the old "trust and confidence" between allies, reports Reuter.

Ambassador John Monjo also heard Mazari assuring him that his administration would continue the "market friendly" economic policies of his sacked predecessor Nawaz Sharif and hold free and fair elections on the promised date of July 14.

Relations between the United States and Pakistan have soured since Washington stopped all military and new economic aid to Islamabad

## China-Taiwan accords to open a new chapter of relations

SINGAPORE, Apr 29: China and Taiwan signed historic formal agreements today that both sides said would open a new chapter of relations after more than four decades of enmity, reports Reuter.

"The bridge we have built is a milestone for orderly exchanges and future relations between the two sides, chief Taiwanese delegate Koo Chen-Fu, head of the semi-official straits exchange foundation, told reporters.

One of the four facts, signed in Singapore at the end of the highest-level contact between communist China and nationalist Taiwan since the end of the Chinese civil war in 1949, launched a formal channel for talks between the two old adversaries.

Other agreements charted directions for future economic and cultural cooperation, and specified ways to verify each other's documents and deliver registered mail from each side.

This meeting was a historic moment in relations between the two sides. It was very important for the future development of relations, said Wang Daohan, Chairman of China's association for relations across the Taiwan Strait.

In a signing ceremony televised to Taiwan, Koo and Wang swapped their seats in a gesture of cooperation and exchanged signed documents and champagne toasts.

The two semi-official bodies, set up to handle relations in the absence of official ties, left differences over economic

issues out of the joint statement.

The talks scheduled to end on Wednesday, were extended a day after the two sides failed to bridge differences on some issues — particularly demands by Taiwan for protection of investment in China and by Beijing for direct air and sea links.

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Koo, a close associate of Taiwanese President Lee Teng-Hui and a member of the ruling nationalist party's top policy-making committee, said it was impossible to agree on

everything in the first round of talks.

Establishing a systematic channel of communications and reaching consensus on principles for resolving problems was a good foundation for better future relations, he said.

This indeed is the opening of a new chapter in the exchanges between both sides of the Taiwan Straits, Koo said.

A western diplomat said the establishment of a framework for dialogue would contribute to healing wounds left from four decades of cold war confrontation.

The agreements call for a working-level meeting of the semi-official bodies every three months and a meeting at the Secretary-General level every six months, alternately in

## Gas explosion kills 13 in Turkey

UMRANIYE, Turkey Apr 29: Thirteen people were killed and some 20 missing Wednesday after an explosion of methane gas at a garbage dump in this Istanbul suburb buried slum dwellings in an avalanche of rubbish, officials said, reports AFP.

Some 1,500 firemen and army rescue workers aided by helicopters were digging through the trash in search of those buried beneath a 25-meter (75-foot) thick layer of garbage that covered a dozen shacks, rescuers said.

By nightfall, the rescuers said they had found 12 dead bodies and pulled 11 survivors from the smoking heap, one of whom died later in hospital.

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