

International

Indian troops accused of human rights abuse

PARIS, June 18: An international human rights organisation Thursday accused Indian security forces of routine human rights abuses in the northern Indian state of Kashmir, reports AFP.

East Jerusalem not negotiable: Tel Aviv US sides with Israel: Palestinians

WASHINGTON, June 18: Palestinian accused the United States Thursday siding with Israel in Middle East peace talks and failing to keep their promises on the question of Jerusalem, reports AFP.

ognize Israel's annexation of East Jerusalem and urged all parties to abstain from unilateral acts that could increase tensions and cause the negotiations to fall.

with the Palestinians, reaffirmed Wednesday his government's position that East Jerusalem is Israeli territory and, as such, is non-negotiable.

(Palestinians) threaten to paralyze the talks." On Wednesday during Israeli-Syrian talks, Israel said it would discuss demilitarizing the Golan Heights if Syria demilitarised certain regions as part of an overall peace agreement, an Israeli source said.

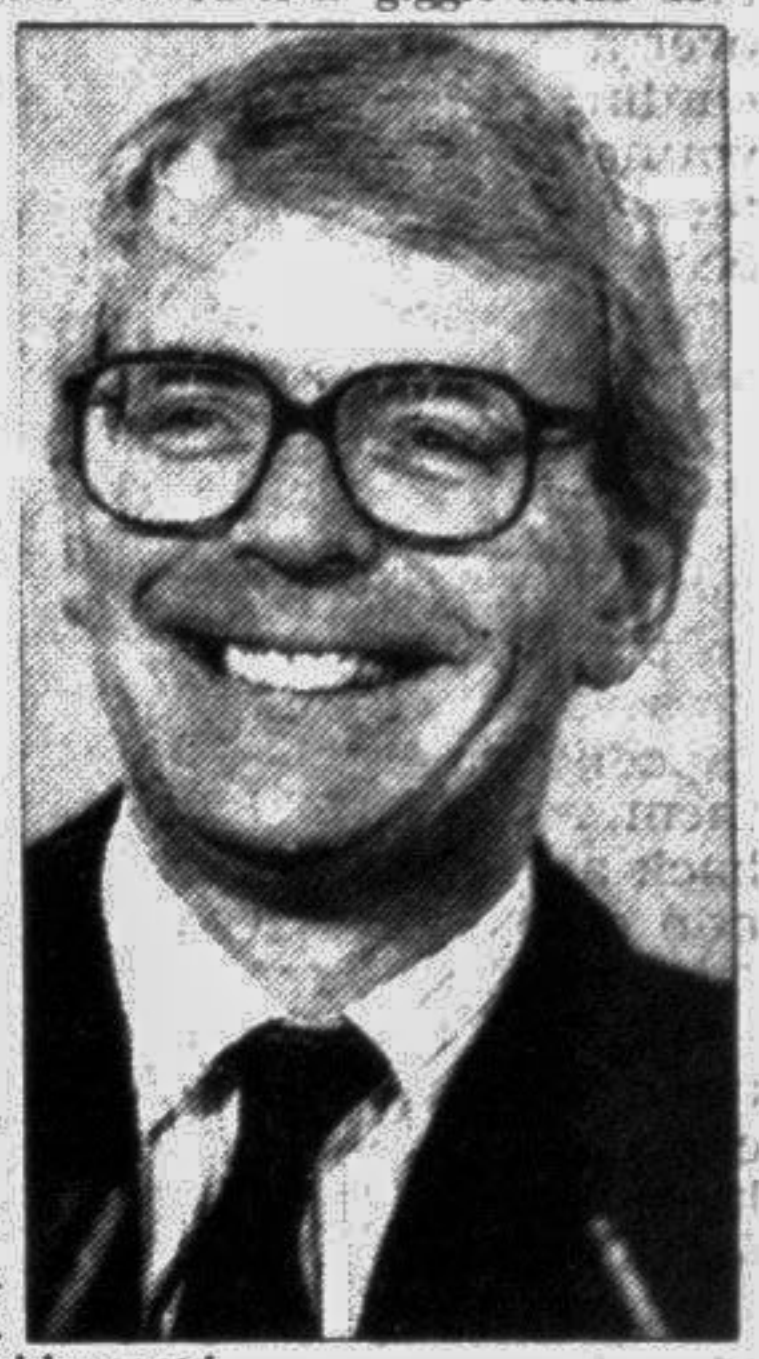
US move for wider role in peacekeeping

WASHINGTON, June 18: President Bill Clinton's administration is drafting new criteria that would provide for a much wider United States military role in UN peacekeeping operations, the Washington Post said today, reports Reuter.

Off the Record

Giggle clinic to cheer him up

LONDON: British Prime Minister John Major, whose popularity is at a record low, has turned to a "giggle clinic" to cheer himself up. Britain's Daily Mirror newspaper said on Friday, reports Reuter.



Folic acid can halve congenital defects

LONDON: "A daily dose of Multivitamin tablets including Folic Acid taken by women around the time of conception could almost halve the rate of major congenital abnormalities in babies," a study published in the British Medical Journal said on Friday, says Reuter.

That's a great tie

WASHINGTON: President Bill Clinton didn't take the shirt off a reporter's back but he did take a Mickey Mouse tie from a journalist after a news conference on Thursday, reports Reuter.



BRIEFLY

Deportees' 7th month: Nearly 400 Palestinians Thursday began their seventh month stranded between Lebanese and Israeli army lines, charging that the world had forgotten them, AFP reports from Lebanon.

"We don't expect anything more from anybody, not from our so-called Arab brothers who betrayed us, nor the negotiators (at the Arab-Israeli peace talks) in Washington," said their spokesman, Abdel Aziz Rantissi.

"Our fate was not even discussed during the previous round of peace talks," he said, referring to the ninth round of talks in April-May. "The whole world has forgotten us."

Nor did they expect anything from the 10th round of talks that opened on Tuesday.

Woman killed in Lebanon blast: A PLO officer was badly wounded and a woman was killed when a bomb she handed to him wrapped as a gift in a chocolate box blew up in a South Lebanon refugee camp Thursday security sources said, Reuter reports from Lebanon.

Ali Iskandar, an officer with the Palestine Liberation Organisation's (PLO) mainstream Fatah group, his wife and son were wounded by the blast at his doorstep in Rashidiyah camp near the port city of Tyre, the sources said.

The woman's body was severely mutilated. She was identified only as Umm Ali.

The sources could not confirm immediately if the attack was linked to an 18-month-old power struggle between Fatah and the radical Fatah Revolutionary Council (FRC).

16 Palestinians hurt in clashes: Sixteen Palestinians suffered bullet wounds Thursday in clashes with Israeli soldiers in the occupied Gaza Strip, Palestinian sources said, AFP reports from Jerusalem.

Most were hit in the Shatti and Jabalya refugee camps and in incidents in the town of Gaza, the sources said.

According to the same source the Israeli army maintained a curfew on the Nusseit camp for the third day running to carry out searches for wanted Palestinians activists.

Elsewhere four fire bombs were thrown at an Israeli bus on the outskirts of Nablus in the West Bank on Thursday evening. But none was hurt, an Israeli military source said.

Hilly Solmon Islands PM: Businessman Francis Billy Hilly became Prime Minister of the Solomon Islands after defeating former prime minister Solomon Mamaloni in a secret parliamentary ballot Friday, the Pacific news agency Paccnews said, AFP reports from Honiara.

Governor General Sir George Lepping announced the result outside the steps of parliament.

He said the vote was close, but did not give figures.

Hilly, 46, will be sworn in at a public ceremony at the Lawson Tama Stadium and is expected to name his cabinet in the next few days, Paccnews said.

US slates Arafat: The United States on Wednesday accused Palestine Liberation Organisation Chairman Yasser Arafat of "unhelpful and polemical argument on human rights," says Reuter from Washington.

Reacting to Arafat's speech to the United Nations world conference on human rights in Vienna, State Department spokesman Mike McCurry said, with peace talks underway in Washington, "now is the time for all parties to work towards a comprehensive peace settlement and avoid unhelpful and polemical arguments in international fora."

In a written statement, McCurry also said, the United States objects strongly to Arafat's charges of a double standard in its policy with respect to human rights.

"We are proud to be at the forefront of the struggle for human rights and will continue to exert efforts to promote human rights objectives."

Muslim states' appeal to UN: Islamic states urged the United Nations Thursday to denounce "naked Serbian aggression," in Bosnia-Herzegovina and lift a UN arms embargo so that Bosnian Muslims can defend themselves, Reuter reports from Vienna.

A draft declaration circulated at the UN world conference on human rights in Vienna by the 52-nation Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) called for "forceful" action by the Security Council to stop the killing in Bosnia.

Following a dramatic appeal on Tuesday by Bosnian Foreign Minister Haris Silajdzic, the Vienna meeting unanimously adopted a resolution calling on the Security Council to take action to save the people of the besieged Muslim enclave of Gorazde.

The resolution made no mention of lifting the arms embargo, as the Bosnian government has long demanded.



Former Japanese Finance Minister Isutomo Hata is surrounded by reporters outside his office on Thursday. Hata is a leader of dissident group from the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP).

Myanmar opposes linking human rights to aid

VIENNA, June 18: Myanmar shrugged off protests Thursday against its human rights record and rejected any interference in its internal affairs or attempts to link the issue to development aid, reports AFP.

Foreign Minister U Ohn Gyaw defended his country's hardline views at the UN world conference on human rights as about 30 demonstrators stood in the gallery wearing masks of detained opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi.

But Ohn Gyaw rebuffed what he called efforts to impose outside models of human rights and said that such concerns must be balanced with the need of Myanmar and other states to ensure stability and economic development.

Suharto appoints 45 members of advisory body

JAKARTA, June 18: Indonesian President Suharto appointed today the 45 members of the new Supreme Advisory Council (DPA) which includes 12 former Ministers, and several former Governors and leading religious leaders, reports AFP.

Fresh military strike on LTTE positions

COLOMBO, June 18: Hundreds of heavily-armed government troops backed by an indefinite curfew advanced on rebel positions in northern Sri Lanka today following a fresh military strike in the region, officials said, reports AFP.

Press Kuwait to repeal death sentences of 10 Palestinians

CAIRO, June 18: Jordan urged the Arab League to press Kuwait into repealing death sentences against 10 Palestinians convicted of collaborating with Iraq, sources close to the League said Thursday, reports AFP.

UN needs its own military

LONDON, June 18: British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd said Thursday that the United Nations needed its own military and civilians staff to oversee troop deployments, reports AFP.

While recognising the UN's efforts in Cambodia, Somalia and the former Yugoslavia he said the organisation should be "Realistic about its capacities."

"I believe the United Nations has come to the stage when the Secretary General Boutros Boutros Ghali also needs a general staff, a core of highly professional military and civilian experts to act as the organisation's nervous system," he said during the annual banquet for foreign diplomats in Britain.

Such a group would be responsible for planning and coordinating rapid troop deployment, he added.

Omar Abdel for ouster of Hosni Mubarak

JERSEY CITY (New Jersey), June 18: An Egyptian Islamic Leader living in the United States since 1990 reiterated Thursday his call for the overthrow of Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, reports AFP.

At a press conference at his home near Jersey City (New Jersey) Sheikh Omar Abdel Rahman said, "The removal of the Mubarak regime is a matter that is a must in the Islamic world."

He did not recommend violence.

Rahman, 55, and blind, called on Washington to end its support for the Egyptian Government, saying, "America is going to be held accountable before the whole world."

He accused Egyptian Authorities of torturing prisoners and Mubarak of lining his pockets.

'Press Kuwait to repeal death sentences of 10 Palestinians'

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WHO recommends reform in prisons to stop spread of AIDS

GENEVA, June 18: The World Health Organization (WHO) is recommending sweeping reforms in prisons in an effort to control the spread of AIDS, reports BSS.

Guidelines prepared on the basis of a consultation organized by WHO recommend that condoms should be made available to prisoners if any possibility of sexual intercourse exists and that wherever prisoners inject drugs, prison services should consider introducing needle-exchange programmes and providing bleach to clean injecting equipment, if such provisions are made for the community at large.

The findings also revealed that most of the prisons surveyed have no effective measures for preventing HIV transmission through drug injecting. Nor do they have specific programmes for women prisoners even though their HIV rates are often higher than those of men.

prison, this will benefit everyone." To help prevent sexual transmission in prisons, the guidelines recommend that, as well as providing information, prison authorities or medical services should make condoms available to prisoners if any possibility of sexual contact exists. At the same time, aggressive sexual behaviour such as rape or the exploitation of vulnerable prisoners should be combated with adequate staffing, surveillance and disciplinary sanctions, as well as by providing education. The guidelines recommend that more attention should be given to prison health services in all of the systems studied.

HIV transmission through drug injecting, the guidelines recommend that in countries where bleach is available to injecting drug users in the community, the distribution of diluted bleach should be allowed in prisons housing injecting drug users. Also where clean syringes and needles are available to drug injectors outside prisons, the authorities should consider supplying clean injecting material to inmates during detention.

testing should only be allowed with the informed consent of the prisoner. Compulsory testing would be "unethical, ineffective and discriminatory."



RUSSIA: A young man dressed as a soldier, tries to pull out a golden tooth from a skull near the town of Kaloje on June 15. This man is part of a group trying to make money out of exhuming remains of German soldiers killed during World War II.

Women be excluded

WASHINGTON: A Pentagon panel has recommended that women be excluded from some ground war units in which they now serve, despite a call by the US Defence Secretary for more combat jobs for women, The Washington Post reported on Friday, says Reuter.