

## Lord Owen calls for UN reforms

LONDON, June 19: International negotiator Lord Owen on Friday called for UN reforms including a voluntary peace-keeping force, expansion of the Security Council and a command and control facility at its New York headquarters, reports Reuter.

The former British Foreign Minister, who has spent much of the past year trying to negotiate a peaceful settlement to the war in Bosnia, said Germany and Japan and possibly India, Nigeria and Brazil should be made members of the council.

"It is patently absurd that the economic strength and the political clout of the Federal Republic of Germany and Japan are not reflected in the permanent membership of the Security Council," he said in a speech in London.

Owen, the European Community's chief negotiator on Yugoslavia, has admitted that the multi-ethnic peace plan for Bosnia that he devised with former UN mediator Cyrus Vance had failed but he said some aspects of it should be salvaged.

He added that there were lessons to be learned from the Bosnian crisis and stressed the importance of a volunteer UN force.

"There is everything to recommend UN forces being solely and wholly made up of volunteers... such a force should be specifically and collectively trained with an ethos of UN peacekeeping and peacemaking."

Owen said the scope for military intervention in the former Yugoslavia is constrained due to the terrain and the complexity of the war and called for a centralised UN control centre.

"I believe that by far the most important priority for the UN Secretary General is to have at his elbow the sort of command and control system that any minister of defence would consider absolutely essential."

Earlier on Friday Owen, who arrived in London from a meeting in Copenhagen, said the EC should give him new guidelines on how to end the fighting in Bosnia.

## Clinton plans to take more direct role in ME talks

WASHINGTON, June 19: President Bill Clinton told Jordan's King Hussein on Friday that he planned to take a more direct role in Middle East peace talks and both said tangible progress was possible this year, reports Reuter.

Clinton and the King held their first meeting and it was clear the new President was trying to put behind him the strained ties between the United States and Jordan over Hussein's refusal to back Washington in the 1991 Gulf War.

"We're moving toward a good relationship between the two," said White House spokeswoman Dee Dee Myers.

Palestinians complained this week in the first week of the 10th round of negotiations with Israel that the United States was not doing enough to spur progress.

The US-brokered 19-month-old talks have yet to achieve any significant results on either of their parallel tracks, according to some participants, prompting growing

disillusionment with the peace process.

Myers said Clinton and Hussein reaffirmed "their shared commitment to achieving tangible progress in the Middle East peace process this year."

"President Clinton reaffirmed that the United States is committed to serving as a full partner, an honest broker in these historic negotiations," she said.

Clinton, Myers said, also told the King that "he was going to take a real direct role in it and we look forward to progress."

Asked to elaborate on the direct role, Myers said only that Clinton "plans to just make sure that the process moves forward."

The King, who was officially neutral in the Gulf War, had strained ties with America by condemning the US-led alliance which drove Iraq from Kuwait and delaying UN sanctions against its biggest trading partner.

"We talked a little about Iraq and the imperative nature of continuing to enforce those sanctions and being very tough on them," Clinton told reporters after Hussein's motorcade carried him away.

But privately, senior officials made clear this was not viewed as a serious impediment to US-Jordanian ties.

"I believe the government of Jordan is working hard to enforce UN-mandated sanctions against Iraq. There have been some lapses but these have generally been corrected when pointed out to senior Jordanian officials," a senior administration official said.

About 35 million dollar in US economic aid for 1992 and 1993 is still frozen pending congressional approval which would follow certification by the President that Jordan is complying with the sanctions.

The money must be approved by September 30 but no date has been set for the issue to be raised in Congress.

The King's support for Arab-Israeli peace talks was

long won him points in Washington and Jordanian officials said before his visit that he planned to use his credibility on the issue to lay the groundwork for future relations.

Hussein admitted the negotiations "are a long way from getting there but there is not an alternative. I think we must do everything we can to let the moment pass."

The King, 57, is to check into the Mayo clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, for tests next week to ensure that cancer which forced removal of a kidney and ureter last year has not re-occurred.

The meeting came two days after a congressional report was made public that said Jordan gave military help to Iraq during the Gulf war including the sharing of intelligence information.

A White House official said Clinton did not raise the report with Hussein, and Myers said there was "good personal chemistry between the two."

## Off the Record



Vocalist Bobby McFerrin performs in a jazz concert on the south lawn of the White House, in celebration of the 14th annual Newport Jazz Festival Friday. President Clinton joined the performers on stage with his saxophone in the finale. —AFP/UNB photo

## France adopts new law to stem immigration

PARIS, June 19: A controversial bill aimed at stemming the tide of immigration to France was adopted Friday by the National Assembly with few changes, reports AFP.

The bill drawn up by Interior Minister Charles Pasqua will introduce severe restrictions for foreigners wishing to stay in the country.

After lengthy debate, it was adopted by 480 votes to 88 — the socialists and the communists voting against.

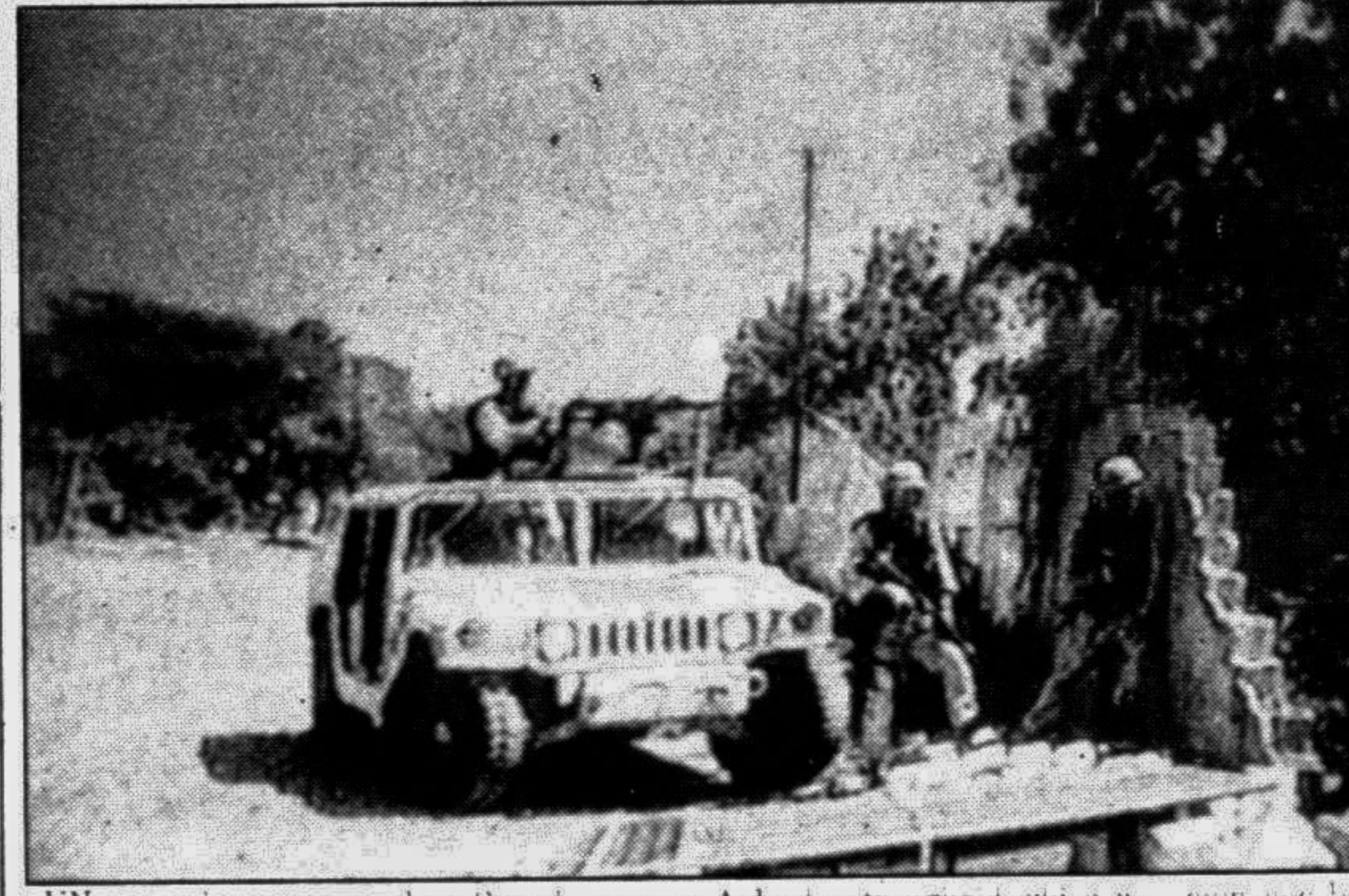
Under the measures which will be introduced by the new law, police will be able to check a person's identity for any reason apart from his race, and officials will be able to refer suspicious cases of marriages to the authorities, who have to rule on the matter within 15 days.

But deputies, in a move supported by Prime Minister Edouard Balladur, managed to kick out plans to withdraw medical treatment at home for foreigners with an uncertain status. The original draft would have allowed them to be treated only in hospitals.

An opposition amendment maintaining current penalties against employers who knowingly take on foreigners without the right papers was also unanimously adopted.

The penalties include making employers reimburse any social security benefits paid to illegal immigrants.

The bill will now go to the senate, but opponents intend to continue their protest against it notably with a demonstration today in Paris and other large cities.



UN peacekeepers guarding Somali warlord Aided's stronghold which was damaged by US-led UN air strike recently. —Star TV photo

## UN authorises dispatch of 300 US troops to Macedonia

UNITED NATIONS, June 19: The Security Council on Friday authorised the dispatch of 300 US troops to the former Yugoslav republic of Macedonia, to help prevent fighting in nearby Bosnia from spreading, reports Reuter.

In a unanimous resolution, the Council also welcomed the US offer to provide the troops.

The UN Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in the former Yugoslavia already has about 700 Scandinavian troops in Macedonia.

There are widespread fears that any violence in the mainly Albanian-inhabited Kosovo region of Serbia could involve Albanian in the fighting and that neighbouring Macedonia could become a battleground.

Even before the Security Council gave its approval, an advance party of eight US officers headed by a colonel, arrived in Skopje, the Macedonian capital, on Friday to prepare the way for the main contingent.

About 340 US troops are already serving with the 23,000-strong UNPROFOR.

## Timor rebel leader seeks clemency

JAKARTA, June 19: Indonesia said on Saturday that East Timor rebel leader Xanana Gusmao, jailed for life for battling Jakarta's rule over the former Portuguese colony, had appealed for clemency, reports Reuter.

"This means he admitted his guilt. His clemency appeal will be processed through standard procedures," Coordinating Political and Security Affairs Minister Susilo Sudarman told reporters after meeting President Suharto.

A decision of clemency is up to Suharto.

The East Timor rebel movement has in the past denied that Xanana had pleaded for clemency. Such an appeal would effectively recognise the right of Indonesia to try him.

Indonesia invaded East Timor soon after the Portuguese left in 1975. It annexed the territory in 1976 but the United Nations still considers it under Portuguese administration.

## BRIEFLY

**Canadian soldier killed in Bosnia:** A Canadian peacekeeping soldier died when an anti-tank round hit his armoured vehicle in central Bosnia Friday shortly after a ceasefire took effect, a UN spokesman said, Reuter reports from Sarajevo.

The identity of the attackers at Buz near the Bosnian capital of Sarajevo was not known, he added.

A ceasefire agreed by Commanders of Muslim, Croat and Serb forces fighting in Bosnia took effect at noon (100 GMT).

**LTTE to free 39 hostages:** Sri Lanka's dominant Tamil guerrillas have agreed to free 38 policemen and a soldiers held hostage by them for three years, military sources said yesterday, AFP reports from Colombo.

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) informed the military through the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) that they would hand the prisoners over to their relatives Saturday, the sources said.

Some 72 relatives of the captive security men are currently visiting them in the northern Jaffna peninsula following an ICRC initiated mercy mission. The Tigers took the hostages just after fresh fighting broke out in June 1990.

**Bosnian President in Ankara:** Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic arrived in Ankara Friday evening to discuss the latest developments in the Yugoslav conflict with Turkey's Muslim leadership, AFP reports from Ankara.

After arriving from Madrid after a tour of European countries, Izetbegovic made no comments at the airport ahead of a meeting scheduled with Turkish President Suleyman Demirel.

He was also due to meet Interim Premier Erdal Inonu and Prime Minister designate Tansu Ciller, officials said.

**Roger Clinton to act in film:** Roger Clinton, the younger brother of President Bill Clinton, will appear in a new film, "National Lampoon's Last Resort," Trimark Pictures said on Friday, Reuter reports from California.

Corey Feldman and Corey Haim will co-star as Sam and Dave, who are summoned to the Treasure Island resort to save it from an evil villain. Clinton will play Gino, a none-too-bright brute with a soft spot.

The film is being produced by Rose and Ruby Productions and will be released in the United States by Trimark.

Trimark said the film was set to begin shooting immediately in southern California.

**Spain buys art collection:** Spain has paid 338 million dollars to buy the world's second biggest private art collection, Spanish Culture Minister Jordi Soler Tura said Friday, AFP reports from Madrid.

The cabinet Friday approved a decree buying the 775 masterpieces in the Thyssen-Bornemisza collection from their current owner, the Favorita Trusts Limited.

## Major denies EC failures to blame for Bosnian war

LONDON, June 19: British Prime Minister John Major late Friday denied that diplomatic failures of the European Community (EC) were to blame for the civil war in Bosnia-Herzegovina, reports AFP.

Speaking ahead of next week's EC summit in Copenhagen, Major told Independent Television News (ITN): "It isn't a European failure. This has been a matter dealt with through the United Nations."

"The United States, the Soviet Union, countries around the world in the UN have all played a part in this. There are UN troops there. This is a problem that has been dealt with right the way around the world."

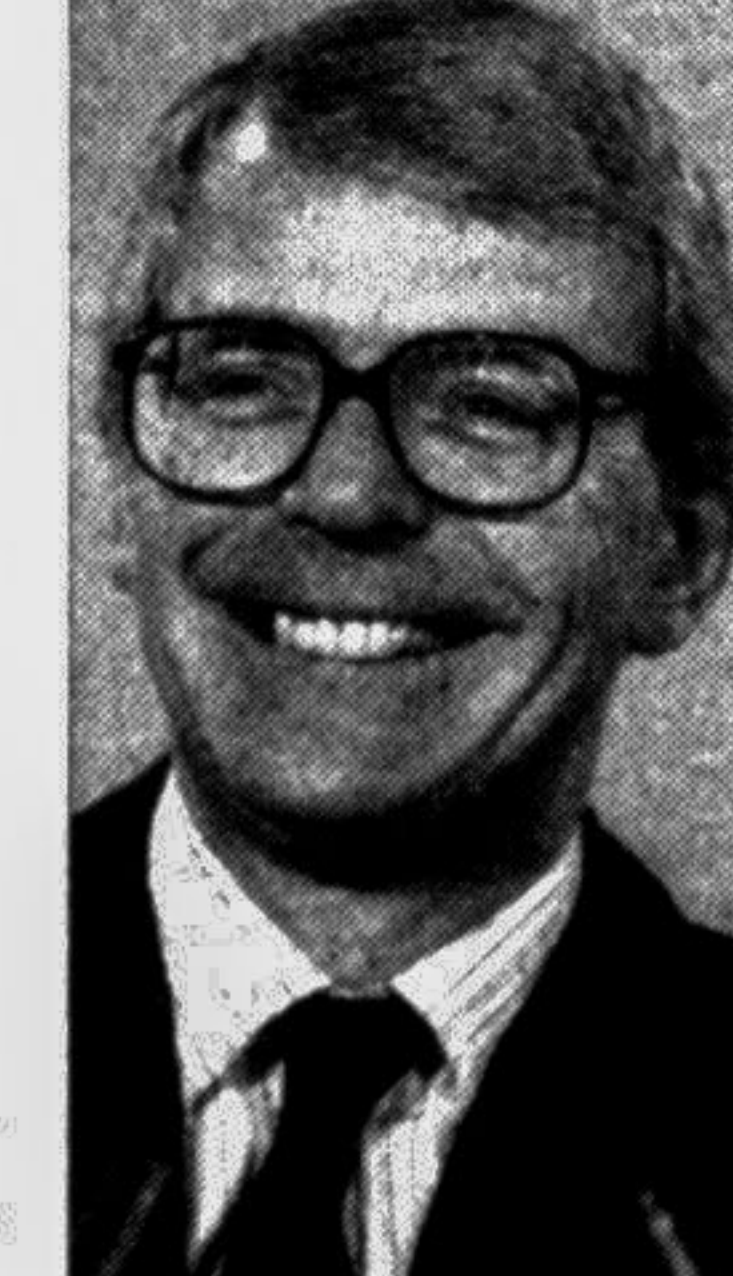
Major added that the only way to permanent peace in Bosnia was through diplomacy.

"Lord Owen with partners has tried this over many months with great skill and great courage. There is more work still to be done, but there is no easy solution to it and there never has been from the moment the conflict started."

Lord Owen for the EC and Cyrus Vance for the UN drew up a plan for the division of Bosnia-Herzegovina into semi-autonomous provinces, which

has been rejected by Bosnian Serbs.

Concentrating on the agenda of the forthcoming EC summit, he reiterated Britain's opposition to the social chapter of the Maastricht Treaty on further European union.



John Major Britain secured an opt-out clause from the social chapter which seeks to impose regulated hours and wages throughout the EC.

"My position is that the whole of Europe, the whole of the community has to compete with the Pacific basin, with the United States, with Japan," Major said, adding that to put extra costs on employers was "folly."

"My argument has been that all across Europe we are handicapping the possibility of Europe as a whole being competitive against those other markets around the world."

"If our European partners wish to impose those costs upon themselves, then I can't stop them doing that, but I am not accepting them for the United Kingdom," Major said.

## Landslide kills 11 in China

BEIJING, June 19: A landslide has killed 11 people in China's northwestern Gansu Province, Xinhua reported today, reports AFP.

The landslide occurred Wednesday afternoon when 20 farmers working as casual labourers at Yanhe township brickworks in Lixian County were taking a rest at the foot of a mountain slope, the official news agency said.

## Azerbaijan in political turmoil

BAKU (Azerbaijan), June 19: The former Soviet Republic of Azerbaijan was in political turmoil today after its elected president abruptly left the capital in the face of an army uprising, reports Reuter.

President Abulfaz Elchibey fled by helicopter for the enclave of Nakhichevan after two weeks of advances towards Baku by army rebels seeking his resignation.

Soviet-era politician Geidar Aliyev, 70, who was elected parliamentary Chairman last week as the crisis gathered pace, said that in accordance with the constitution he was taking over as President for the present.

Elchibey, an academic who served a jail term for dissident offences in the 1970s when Aliyev was First Secretary of Azerbaijan's Communist Party, was elected President a year ago with nearly 60 per cent support.

But he has grown increasingly unpopular at home as Azerbaijan suffered heavy military losses against Armenians

in the disputed region of Nagorno-Karabakh.

Benefiting from disenchantment with the record of his popular front leadership, the rebels have walked unchallenged into many towns.

The chief spokesman for Elchibey, a former dissident elected to power a year ago, said he left to avert further bloodshed and because there were real fears for his life.

"He (Elchibey) went to Nakhichevan to prevent possible bloodshed and to guarantee his own personal safety. 'It's safer there,' said spokesman, Arif Aliyev.

Elchibey's aides stressed that he remained the elected President and that any attempt by parliament to install Aliyev permanently in his place would be unconstitutional.

But it was unclear why Elchibey chose to leave Baku. Rebel forces were still 100 km (60 miles) away and there was no immediate sign that government forces would lose control of the situation in the

Caspian Sea capital. Soldiers lounged listlessly around Baku's streets and there was little sign of an imminent emergency.

Some Moscow-based newspapers reported that rebel leader Suret Guseinov gave a Friday night ultimatum to the Azerbaijan leadership.

The Daily Nezavisimaya Gazeta said Guseinov demanded the resignation of Elchibey and the creation of state council with either himself, or another person elected by the parliament, at its head.

Guseinov's rebels started advancing on Baku after seizing control of the western city of Gyandzhaon June 4 and had threatened to enter the capital if Elchibey refused to resign.

"At this difficult moment, I think the President should not have left us," he said.

The Russian news agency ITAR-Tass quoted Aliyev as telling deputies that Elchibey had gone to his home village of Keleky in Nakhichevan.

Aliyev, a pragmatic ex-Soviet Politburo member who has managed to revive his career since the superpower's collapse, said: "The most serious task before us now is solving the problem of the vacuum of executive power."

Turkey, Azerbaijan's powerful international ally, said Elchibey's effective removal was unacceptable to the civilised world. Acting Prime Minister Erdal Inonu urged Azeris to unite to resolve a "dark and turbulent" situation by legitimate means.

Turkish Ambassador Altan Karamanoglu told Turkey's Anatolian agency that Aliyev had persuaded the rebels not to enter Baku now that Elchibey had fled. There was no confirmation of this report.

## Four killed, 18 hurt in Cairo blast

CAIRO, June 19: Four people were killed and 18 wounded on Friday in a bomb blast on crowded Cairo street, the latest in a series of bombings blamed by the government on Muslim militants, reports Reuter.

"It was a terrible explosion. Everything shook," said survivor Diya Hignat, 32. "It looked like a huge bomb. May god have mercy on us. Those who were just passing by. We were terrified. People started running hysterically."

The bomb exploded in or near the construction site of a new extension of the Cairo underground rail system, which is being built along the main street throughout the poor northern suburb of Shubra.

Blood soaked the rubble-strewn street. Police hunted through the debris for clues and collected a number of nails. The previous bombs in Cairo have all been packed with nails to maximise injuries.

A police source said one of those killed was a middle-aged woman and another was a 10-year-old boy.

Emotional crowds swarmed around police and Interior Ministry officials yelling "no to terrorism" and "there is no god but God."

Interior Ministry officials at the scene of the explosion said three people were killed, but hospital sources said a fourth person had died in hospital later.

It was the fourth bomb in Cairo in a month. Nobody claimed responsibility for any of the previous attacks, which killed nine people and injured nearly 50.

But senior police officers blame militants who have been fighting an increasingly bloody war for more than a year to overthrow the government and turn Egypt into a purist Islamic state.