

International
Ghali outlines plans

UN to preserve operation in Somalia after US withdrawal

UNITED NATIONS, Nov 13: Secretary General Boutros Ghali has outlined plans to preserve UN operations in Somalia after a US pullout in March and has warned of possible "widespread fighting" among resurgent factions next year, reports AFP.

Boutros Ghali, in a report to be submitted to the Security Council Monday, rejected a complete United Nations withdrawal from the country and said UN personnel would "make a determined effort to initiate a political dialogue with all the factions," including partisans of the most powerful warlord, Mohamed Farah Aided.

But between now and March, he said, UN forces "will not use coercive methods to ensure a secure environment, which is lacking mainly, in south Mogadishu," General Aided's stronghold.

Fighting between UN troops and Aided partisans has killed more than 70 foreign soldiers and hundreds of Somalis since June. The worst clashes occurred in early October when US led troops tried to arrest Aided, who is blamed for the deaths of 24 Pakistani peacekeepers here on June 5.

Boutros Ghali said that since the fighting in October the situation has been generally quiet.

But he warned: "Mogadishu remains tense in the capital and elsewhere, major factions are re-arming, apparently in anticipation of a possible return to widespread fighting sometime in 1994."

As a result, he stressed, "the international community must not abandon Somalia in view of the incontrovertible desire of the Somali people for the continued presence of UNOSOM

(the UN operation) in their country."

The United States, with 7,450 troops in Somalia at present, is to withdraw all combat forces and most of its logistical support units by March 31, which Boutros Ghali described as "the most significant new development" in the UN mission.

An estimated 1,100 French soldiers are to leave by the end of December, along with 960 from Belgium. The secretary general disclosed that he had written to 42 UN member states asking them either to contribute for the first time or to boost their current participation.

He also set out three options to cope with the loss of US forces:

- Maintaining the current mandate and 29,000 strong troop strength. UN contingents would refrain from "coercive methods to enforce disarm-

ment in south Mogadishu" but would preserve "the necessary capability for coercive disarmament."

- Scaling back to 16,000 troops and a logistics staff of 2,500. UN forces would "rely on the Somali parties in order to discharge its mandate" and would use force only in self-defence.
- The deployment of only 5,000 troops charged with ensuring security at air and sea-ports.

Outlining United Nations accomplishments in Somalia, Boutros Ghali cited "an enormous success in reducing starvation deaths and conditions of famine in the country."

He said 39 district councils had been set up and regional councils were now operating in six areas. The goal, he added, is to establish a transitional national council by January 1994.

UNHCR cash crisis hampers relief supply to Burundians

GENEVA, Nov 13: Some 700,000 Burundian refugees need help urgently due to torrential rains, while aid is being hampered by a severe cash crisis at the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), a spokeswoman said Friday, reports AFP.

Spokeswoman Christiane Berthiaume said UNHCR emergency funds had been virtually exhausted after sending 8 million dollars to help the refugees who fled to neighbouring countries after an attempted military coup unleashed a wave of inter-ethnic violence in Burundi.

A 17 million dollar UNHCR appeal launched after the coup attempt on October 21 in which President Melchior Ndadaye and several ministers were murdered only raised some 1.5 million dollars, she added.

"After having emptied out all their pockets," the UNHCR managed to scrap together

about half of the amount needed.

The UNHCR's emergency account has dropped from its usual balance of 25 million dollars to just 700,000 dollars, she said.

"That means that if tomorrow another crisis arises elsewhere, we will have nothing."

There are now fears that disease could break out in the temporary camps thrown up in Rwanda, Zaire and Tanzania, as refugees try to shelter from incessant rains in simple huts. The hygiene is "terrible," Berthiaume said.

There is a lack of aid and sanitation, and getting access to the refugees is also proving difficult, she added.

Thousands of people are believed to have been massacred in clashes between Hutus and Tutsis triggered by the failed coup, which was led by the Tutsi-dominated army.

Clinton pledges to sell war planes to Israel

WASHINGTON, Nov 13: President Clinton Friday pledged to sell Israel advanced US war planes and previously restricted computer technology to encourage the Israelis to cooperate further in the Middle East peace process, reports Reuters.

He also promised the United States would not cut its annual 3 billion dollar in assistance to America's top ally in the Middle East and would consult with Congress on other ways that Israel could "defray the cost of peace."

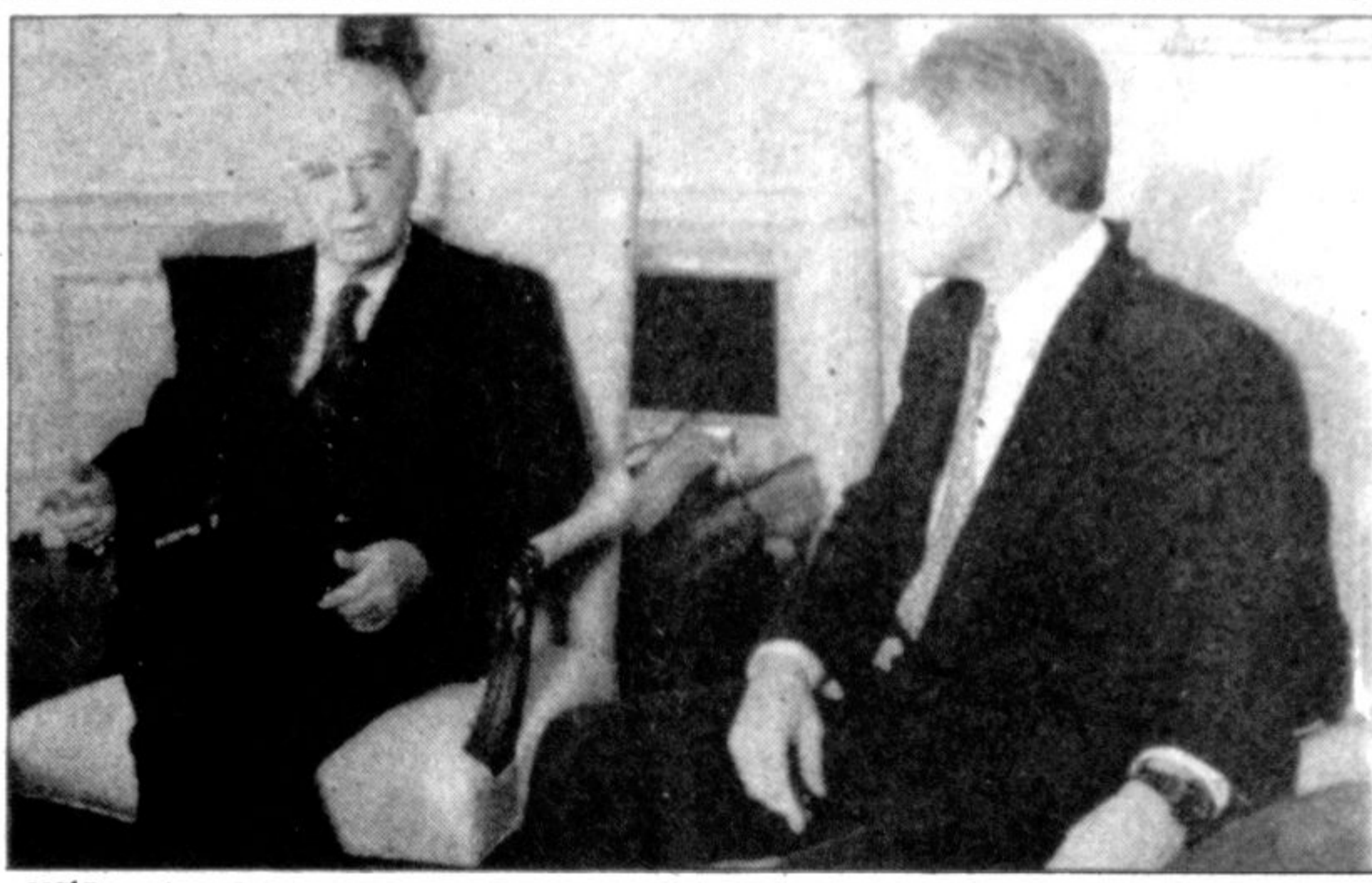
Clinton confirmed the moves at a news conference with visiting Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin that was overshadowed by a development that could undermine the historic Israeli-PLO peace accord

signed at the White House two months ago.

The Israeli army said it had determined that five members of the Fatah faction of Yasser Arafat's Palestine Liberation Organisation were responsible for the October 29 killing of a Jewish settler on the Israeli-occupied West Bank.

Both Clinton and Rabin publicly called on Arafat to condemn the attack. Clinton said Arafat was "definitely bound at a minimum" to do so under terms of the peace accord.

"I think we all recognise that he (Arafat) may not have total control over everyone who acts in the name of Fatah, but he is now bound by ... the clear terms of the agreement to condemn it," Clinton said.



US President Bill Clinton (R) meets with Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in the Oval Office of the White House Friday. — AFP photo

PLO-Israeli talks resume tomorrow

TUNIS, Nov 13: The sixth round of PLO-Israeli negotiations for Palestinian self-rule will resume on Monday in Cairo, PLO sources in Tunis said.

The two parties have decided not to continue them in the Egyptian resort of Taba, sources close to the negotiations told Reuters today.

The talks were suspended early this month because Palestinian from the West Bank town of Jericho and the Gaza Strip by December 13 did not go far enough.

As a result of Egypt's mediation, an ad-hoc PLO-Israeli committee met in Cairo earlier this week and reached an agreement to resume the talks after Israel showed more flexibility.

Latur, Omerga jolted again

NEW DELHI, Nov 13: Hundreds of villages and relief camps in southern India were hit Friday by the biggest aftershock since an earthquake killed more than 9,000 people in the region six weeks ago, officials said Saturday, reports AP.

About 25 people were injured and more than 100 houses were damaged in the five-second tremor that created widespread panic, officials and news reports said.

There were no serious injuries among the people, who mostly got hurt in stampedes to get out of their homes, said Praveen Singh Pardesi, the top official of Latur district. Two women fainted with fright.

Latur and Omerga regions in Maharashtra state were the worst affected by the September 30 earthquake that destroyed 67 villages, leaving about 120,000 people homeless. They now live in relief camps of tents and tin sheds.

The region has been repeatedly rocked by aftershocks, but Friday night's tremor which measured 5 on the Richter scale, was the most powerful so far, said Pardesi in a telephone interview from Latur.

NAM ministers for jt action to check population boom

JAKARTA, Nov 13: Urgent joint action is needed to curb a global population explosion that threatens to increase the number of refugees and destroy natural resources, speakers at an Indonesian-hosted conference said, reports Reuters.

A three-day meeting of population ministers and officials from the Non-aligned Movement (NAM), in preparation for a major international gathering in Egypt next year, ends this weekend.

The dominant theme of the meeting, attended by officials from only about half of NAM's 108 members, was the need for urgent cooperation between developed and developing countries.

"During the latter years of this century there will be a global population increase of 100 million per year," Iran's Deputy Public Health Minister, H Malek Afzali, told the conference on the tourist resort island of Bali.

"This increase will predominantly concern countries which are not only incapable of providing social services and employ-

ment opportunities to their people, but are also unable to satisfy the most elementary requirement of their populations."

"This population increase will eventually surpass boundaries and take the form of international migration and waves of refugees, exacerbating already existing difficulties," he added.

John Bongaarts, from the US-based population council, said, "The world's population has increased from 2.5 billion in 1950 to 5.5 billion today and growth continues unabated at an unprecedented rate of nearly one billion per decade."

He said World Bank and UN projections indicated an extra six billion people, mainly in the developing world.

The meeting was opened on Thursday by Indonesia's President Suharto, the current NAM Chairman.

Population control is a major issue for Indonesia, the world's fourth most populous country which has suffered international criticism for rapid depletion of forests.

Nana Sutresna, Indonesia's Ambassador-at-large for NAM, said, "population is a broad concern that straddles national and regional boundaries."

"We are all aware that a major cause of the steady deterioration of the environment all over the world is the pressure of population not only on available natural resources as a source of food and income but also living space."

Nepali communists threaten to resume movement

KATHMANDU, Nov 13: Nepal's major communist political opposition party, the Nepal Communist Party-United Marxist and Leninist (NCP-UML) has threatened to resume its agitation against Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala, a party source said today, reports AFP.

The NCP-UML called off 10 weeks of agitation August 17 after signing an agreement under which the ruling Nepali Congress (NC) party promised to look for a way of removing Koirala "in appropriate time."

Jackson cancels 'Dangerous' tour

BEVERLY HILLS, Calif., Nov 13: Michael Jackson cancelled his worldwide "Dangerous" tour Friday, saying he is addicted to painkillers, reports AP.

In a taped statement released in the office of his publicist, Jackson said the pressure of child molestation allegations recently made against him by a teen-age boy had prompted him to abuse the painkillers he had been taking under prescription.

"My friends and doctors advised me to seek professional guidance immediately in order to eliminate what has become an addiction. It is time for me to acknowledge my need for treatment in order to regain my health," the entertainer said in the statement.

"I realize that completing the tour is no longer possible and I must cancel the remaining dates. I know I can overcome the problems and will be stronger from the experience."

Jackson had been in Mexico City, where he cancelled several concerts earlier this month complaining of dental problems.

He had been in the midst of a tour that included dates in Asia, Russia, Israel and Latin America.

But while on tour, he had been dogged by a child molestation investigation by Los Angeles authorities. He also faces a lawsuit filed by the teenager, who claims the entertainer befriended, then abused him.

The boy's allegations prompted the police investigation.



A crying Palestinian boy tries to make his way through Israeli border guards closing Jerusalem old city's Damascus Gate, during a round-up following a stabbing on Friday. Israeli police stopped Palestinians from passing through this gate after a soldier was knifed by an Arab youth. — AFP photo

3 UN employees injured in Mogadishu

MOGADISHU, Nov 13: Three civilian UN employees were wounded in south Mogadishu today by armed bandits who stole their vehicle, a spokesman for the UN operation in Somalia (UNOSOM) said, reports AFP.

One of the three, Kai Lincoln, an American who works at UNOSOM's operation centre, was seriously hurt while the condition of the other two, Shirley Brownell of Liberia and Lars Anderson of Norway, both UNOSOM security officers, was less worrisome, said spokesman Faruk Mawlawi, without giving details.

The incident occurred early today not far from Benadir hospital, when bandits stopped the UN vehicle the three were in one of the three opened fire, the Somalians shot back, wounding the three then made off with the vehicle, the spokesman said.

UNOSOM's military spokesman captain Tim McDavitt meanwhile could not confirm reports that an Italian soldier was killed Friday night in a separate incident in northern Mogadishu.

The spokesman of the US forces in Somalia, Colonel Steve Rauch, said three US soldiers were slightly wounded Friday in a road accident in southwestern Mogadishu when their truck overturned.

He said unidentified persons took advantage of the confusion after the accident to steal an M-16 rifle.

Off the Record



Dewi Sukarna, Indonesia's former first lady, poses at her home in Jakarta Saturday. Madame Sukarna has sparked controversy by appearing naked in a book of photographs recently published in Japan. The book has been banned in Indonesia. — AFP photo

Apology for announcing death news

LONDON: Mortified media bosses on Friday apologised for mistakenly announcing the death of Britain's Queen Mother and sacked the Australian journalist who sparked the rumour, reports Reuters.

In a bizarre chain of coincidences, an Australian video-tape editor with Sky News in London mistook footage being prepared in the event of the 93-year-old Queen Mother's death for the real thing and contacted his mother in Brisbane with the news.

The misunderstanding reached a local radio station and was then broadcast to the nation on Australian television breakfast news.

Australian Rupert Murdoch's Sky News satellite television channel said it deeply regretted any distress or embarrassment to the Queen Mother and her family. It said the editor, who was not named, was sacked on Friday after an internal inquiry.

Punishment for sleeping with prostitute

BEIJING: A communist party member in Shanghai was expelled for sleeping with a prostitute, the city's Liberation Daily reported on Saturday, reports AFP.

Wang Gongda, party secretary and manager of a subsidiary of the Shanghai Shuixian Electrical Appliance Industry Co Ltd, paid 400 yuan to sleep with a prostitute late last month, the report said.

He was detained and was later stripped of his membership and fired from his factory post.

Wang's actions "seriously damaged the party's reputation and image," the newspaper said.

Magazine to be printed with human blood

MUNICH (Germany): Germany's liberal daily Sueddeutsche Zeitung is using specially prepared human blood to print text on the cover of its weekly magazine, to draw attention to violence against women in former Yugoslavia, reports Reuters.

The blood, donated by women volunteers, will be added to ink and used to print the words "Anywhere women are dying, I am wide awake," on the title page, designed by American artist Jenny Holzer.

"I wanted to protest against the tactical and organised violence against women (in the war)," Holzer told reporters on Friday. "I wanted to use a medium that is as shocking as the subject of my pictures."

Her photographs inside the magazine show parts of the body inscribed with quotations from a rape victim, a rapist and a bystander.

Abiola may announce cabinet soon

LAGOS, Nov 13: The self-declared winner of June 12 presidential elections Moshood Abiola may announce his cabinet soon, after a court ruling that the present interim government is illegal, a source close to Abiola told AFP Friday.

"I think he (Abiola) is just waiting for the decision of the federal court of appeal. It is very likely that he (Abiola) might form his government if that court rules in his favour," said the source.

A Lagos High Court on Wednesday here declared the Ernest Shonekan-led Interim National Government (ING) illegal, a ruling which the ING immediately said that it would challenge at the federal court of appeal.

Hearing on the case in the appeal court is expected to open next week, an informed source told AFP.

The development came after Abiola scored a diplomatic victory late Thursday when about 15 ambassadors, especially those from the western donor countries, at the ceremony was an acceptance and recognition of the victory of Abiola at that elections, annulled by the military for alleged irregularities, one of the ambassadors who attended the ceremony told AFP.

Those present at the occasion were there to show the ING (Interim National Government), led by Chief Ernest Shonekan, that they believe in democracy and that they are prepared to deal with the man who they believe won that June election," said the ambassador, who requested for anonymity.

The dinner, in honour of US new ambassador to Nigeria, must have encouraged Chief Abiola in his struggle for the recognition of his claimed electoral victory, said another diplomat.

The dinner, organised barely a day after the Lagos High Court declared illegal the ING, was attended by the High Commissioner of Britain, Canada and Zambia and the ambassadors of China, Netherlands, Finland, Norway, Sweden, Liberia, Romania and Denmark.

The Russian embassy was represented by its Charge d'Affaires while France and Zaire were represented by diplomats, an AFP correspondent present at the occasion reported.

The new US ambassador, Walter Carrington, who arrived in Nigeria last Friday, presented his letters of credence to Shonekan on Wednesday, expressing the disappointment of his government and the international community over the annulment of the June 12 election.

The Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC), the nation's central labour movement, Thursday afternoon had given the government a 72-hour ultimatum to rescind that decision on the hike.

BRIEFLY

Arafat blasts killing of Israeli

PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat today condemned the killing of an Israeli settler by Palestinians and urged an end to violence against Israelis to safeguard the Middle East peace process, reports Reuters from Tunis.

"We condemn the killing of the Israeli settler (Haim Mizrahi) and this individual operation was carried without the knowledge of the leadership," Arafat said responding to a question by the official Palestinian news agency Wafa.

"We demand to all to comply with what was agreed on and stop violence acts to safeguard the peace process," he added.

N Korean PM ends Cambodia tour

North Korean Prime Minister Kang Song-San ended a week-long visit to Cambodia Saturday after signing several cooperation agreements, Reuters reports from Phnom Penh.

Kang signed pacts on Friday with Foreign Minister Prince Norodom Sirtvudh covering economic, trade, cultural and agricultural cooperation, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs Uch Kim An said.

"There was no question of military assistance," Uch said.

Some observers had speculated that the North Koreans might offer military aid to the government, which faces an armed threat from Maoist Khmer Rouge guerrillas.

Road mishap claims 13 in Kenya

Thirteen mourners were killed and 15 injured when their minibus collided with a communal taxi and burst into flames on the Nyeri-Nyahururu road in central Kenya on Friday, the Kenyan press reported yesterday, AFP says from Nairobi.

Six of the dead, including a child, were burnt beyond recognition inside the minibus, the reports said.

The minibus was ferrying mourners to the rift valley town of Nakuru from central Kenya's Murang'a district after they attended the funeral of a man shot dead by police during an attack on Bahati police station last week by gunmen apparently looking for firearms.

Quake hits Russia: An earthquake measuring 7 on the Richter scale was measured Saturday in the sea off Kamchatka peninsula in Russia's Far East, but officials had no reports of damage or injuries, AP reports from Moscow.

Fires kill 1200 in China: More than 1,200 people were killed in 23,046 fires throughout China during the first eight months this year, a report said yesterday, AFP reports from Hong Kong.

Hosokawa plans to tour Europe: Japanese Prime Minister Morihiro Hosokawa plans to tour European countries including Italy, Germany and France in January, news reports said Saturday, AFP reports from Tokyo.

France expels another imam: France expelled a Muslim religious leader Friday after he was arrested for disturbing public order, an official source said, AFP reports from Abignon, France.

France expels another imam: He was the second imam to be repatriated by French authorities within the last three days.

Moroccan Mohamed Lilouia, the imam at a mosque in the southeast town of Carpentras, had been refused a residence permit in May.

He was taken to a transfer centre in Marseille, before being accompanied to the Port of Sete to await a boat for Morocco.