

Japan has all parts to make N-bomb

LONDON, Jan 30: Japan has acquired all the parts needed to make a nuclear weapon, and may have built a bomb which requires only plutonium to be completed, The Sunday Times reported, says AP.

The Ministry of Defence has warned Prime Minister John Major that North Korea's nuclear programme may force Japan to abandon its non-nuclear stance, the newspaper said.

The risks were detailed in a paper to the Joint Intelligence Committee, the government's main security adviser to the Cabinet, The Sunday Times said.

Neither the Japanese nor the British governments had any immediate comment on the newspaper report.

The report says that Japan has key bomb-making components, including plutonium and electronic triggers, and has the expertise to go nuclear very quickly. The Sunday Times said.

An unnamed expert told the

Compromise on final terms for Israeli pullout from Gaza, Jericho

DAVOS, Switzerland, Jan 30: A senior member of the Palestine Liberation Organisation said Sunday that negotiators had reached a compromise on final terms for an Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and Jericho, reports AP.

Abed Rabbo, a senior adviser to PLO leader Yasser Arafat said "We have a compromise on the table. If both sides say yes, then we have an agreement."

He added, "It was a compromise achieved by negotiation. We accepted."

Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres is expected to meet with Arafat toward midday after aides toiled through the night to try to thrash out the final details. The two men met for about four hours late Saturday.

"The only thing I can say is that we worked very hard in a positive atmosphere but the job is not yet over," Peres said during an early morning walk

with Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Moussa.

Moussa was upbeat. When asked whether he was optimistic, he said, "Yes I am." He added that he hoped there would be a breakthrough. Moussa said he met with Arafat several times Saturday and in the early hours of Sunday.

Peres told The Associated Press that two committees were still working on some of the outstanding problems on the implementation of their peace agreement reached last year.

These include how much area around the West Bank town of Jericho will be ceded to the Palestinians, and control of the border crossings with Egypt and Jordan from the new Palestinian regions.

Israel demands it maintain security on the borders, but the PLO says the presence of Israeli soldiers would violate the guarantees of autonomy. Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation reached a general accord September 13 in Washington for an Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories. The accord calls for limited Palestinian self-rule in Jericho and the Gaza Strip, but the two sides so far have failed to agree on exact terms of its implementation.

Rabbo and Yossi Sarid, Israeli environment minister, told reporters waiting at the luxury hotel shortly after midnight that the two sides hoped to wrap up a deal by midday.

But Peres refused to be drawn on the prospects for a breakthrough. He was relaxed and smiling as he talked with an Associated Press reporter during a stroll through the snowy streets of this Alpine resort. Moussa described it laughingly as "fresh air diplomacy."

"I can't make any promises about times or announcements," Peres said when

Plan to set up interim govt in Somalia

KAMPALA, Jan 30: The Somali faction headed by warlord Mohamed Farah Aided said today it planned to set up an interim government in Somalia before the end of March, in a veiled ultimatum to the UN peacekeeping force there to leave, reports AFP.

Spokesman for Aided's Somali National Alliance (SNA) Mohamed Hassan Awale who accompanied the faction leader to Uganda said the United Nations peacekeeping force in Somalia (UNOSOM) had outlived its usefulness in the war-torn country now that famine had ended.

"After the creation of an authority in the capital Mogadishu and our target is March, disarmament will start and if we need help we shall ask African leaders to provide a peacekeeping force," said Awale. Aided advisor on international affairs.

Aided left the Ugandan capital today after a four-day visit during which he had talks with President Yoweri Museveni.

The warlord has repeatedly called for UNOSOM's departure accusing the force of killing thousands of Somalis.

The United States has set March 31 as the deadline for the pullout of its troops from Somalia, but the UN plans to maintain a 16,000-strong international force in the country.

UNOSOM went to Somalia last year originally to keep the peace while aid workers distributed food to hundreds of thousands of starving people but the force was later locked in bloody clashes with SNA militiamen after the UN accused Aided of ordering the killing of its soldiers and ordered his arrest.

Awale said Aided had "fruitful discussions with President Museveni on the situation in Somalia and the progress towards peace amongst the fighting factions." The meeting took place on Saturday.

BRIEFLY

Mamata for voters' ID card: The West Bengal Youth Congress-I president, Mamata Banerjee, on Saturday said that photo identity cards for voters were necessary specially for West Bengal to hold fair election in the state, reports PTI.

She also advocated imposition of president's rule in the state before holding the assembly election. It would be next to impossible to hold free and fair election in the state with the left front in power, Banerjee told pressmen near Siliguri.

The Youth Congress (I) chief, who reached New Jalpaiguri on her 'jano-sanjog yatra' in six districts of North Bengal, also deplored the condition of the districts.

Kyrgyzstan goes to polls: People in the former Soviet Republic of Kyrgyzstan began voting yesterday to decide the future of a president praised by the West for his reformist policies, Reuters reports from Bishkek.

As mist lifted from the Tian Shan mountains nearby polling stations in the capital of this small nation on China's northwest frontier opened at 7:00 am (0200 GMT) to a trickle of voters.

The referendum will decide whether President Askar Akayev, who dreams of turning Kyrgyzstan into Asia's Switzerland, must leave office or finish a five-year term ending in 1996.

Shakeup in Malaysian army: Malaysia has named its army chief, General Borhan Ahmad, as its new armed forces commander in a reshuffle of top military officers, Reuters reports from Kuala Lumpur.

Borhan, 54, will succeed General Abdul Rahman Hamid, who is retiring after holding the post for a year. Defence Minister Najib Razak said in a statement late on Saturday.

Borhan's appointment takes effect on February 1.

Borhan, who joined the army in 1959, was a member of the elite special forces commando unit before he was promoted to army chief last year.

Ruling party wins Taiwan polls: Taiwan's ruling Nationalist Party have won island-wide local government elections but the main opposition Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) and independent candidates made strong gains, Reuters reports from Taipei.

The nationalists won 214 of 309 village and town mayoral posts at stake in Saturday's polls, which were marred by widespread allegations of vote-buying and campaign violence.

They won 260 mayoral posts in the last elections in 1990. The DPP, which wants Taiwan to abandon its official goal of eventual reunification with China, more than tripled its number of mayoral seats to 21 from six, provincial election commission spokesman Huang Teh-Wang said on Sunday.

3.2 tons of drugs seized in Yangon: Myanmar scored a big progress in its campaign against narcotic drugs in 1993 with a total of more than 3.2 tons of narcotics seized, Xinhua reports from Yangon.

According to latest official statistics, among the seized narcotic drugs were over 2416 kilograms of opium, 278 kilograms of heroin, 6.9 kilograms of heavy opium solution and 599 kilograms of marijuana.

Moreover, the authorities also seized 125 vials of morphine injection, 2452 litres of phensedyl, a local cough medicine which is used by some drug addicts as substitution of narcotics and 1,000 gallons of acetic anhydride which are used in heroin refining from opium.

Mexico to talk with rebels: The government agreed Saturday to a request by southern Mexican rebel for direct peace talks, recognising the guerrilla group as a political force in formation, AFP reports from San Cristobal De Las Casas.

Presidential envoy Manuel Camacho, who was sent by President Carlos Salinas De Gortari to seek a settlement in the month-old uprising by indigenous rebels, said the government was dropping its demand that the Zapatista National Liberation Army disarm before establishing a dialogue.

"Conditions for dialogue exist and peace is viable," Camacho told reporters in San Cristobal De Las Casas, one of the cities in the impoverished state of Chiapas where the rebellion broke out January 1.

Indonesian envoy to Bosnia soon: Indonesia is planning to post an ambassador to Bosnia-Herzegovina soon, the official Antara news agency yesterday quoted Foreign Minister Ali Alatas as saying, AFP reports from Jakarta.

"We are just waiting for a decision on who will be appointed Indonesian ambassador to Bosnia," Alatas said after appointing his ministry's new inspector general Saturday.

Mandela starts campaign

JOHANNESBURG, Jan 30: Nelson Mandela on Saturday released the African National Congress' election manifesto as he officially launched his campaign with a promise the ANC is ready to pull South Africa back from the brink, reports AFP.

"Our country is a mess," he told about 500 supporters, diplomats and celebrities at a recreation complex in the black township of Soweto, south of here.

"The economic devastation of apartheid remains," he said. "We are aware that eliminating the mess created over decades by the (governing) national party will not be easy."

UN withdrawal from former Y'slavia to spark a tinderbox

SARAJEVO, Jan 30: Bosnian General Jovan Divjak has warned that any withdrawal of United Nations peacekeepers from the former Yugoslavia would spark a tinderbox in the Balkans in the face of rampant Serbian nationalism.

In an interview with AFP, "Divjak, one of two deputy chiefs-of-staff in the Bosnian army, deplored the 'lack of determination' shown by the United States and the 'irresponsibility' of the European Community, whose negotiator Lord Owen has been trying to broker a three-way carve-up of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

With the present balance of forces in Bosnia-Herzegovina,

any UN withdrawal would "only put a match to the powder keg the Balkans have become," he said.

Divjak said the Bosnian army was "poorly armed, starved of logistical back-up, but well motivated" and would carry out the political objectives it had been assigned.

"Despite protestations of peace, the three parties continue to clash on the ground, because the Serbs and the Croats have not yet completed the boundaries of their Quasi-states, while the Bosnian government is seeking to recapture the territory taken from it force."

He said the Bosnian Croat HVO forces were trying to forge a corridor in central

Bosnia linking the towns of Prozor, Gornji Vakuf and Travnik with Vitez and Busovaca.

Some 14,000 soldiers from Croatia with around 40 tanks, helicopters and aircraft had reinforced the HVO troops, Divjak said.

But he vowed that the "Bosnian Croats and Croatia will be the biggest losers in this year."

A former officer in the defunct Yugoslav army, Divjak, himself of Serb origin, predicted that "without a strong multi-national Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia cannot survive."

Serbia's expansionist appetite was not limited to

the pro-Israeli militia in Lebanon, the South Lebanese Army.

The paper said Zachrin appointed Lieutenant Colonel Yisrael Ramot, former commander of an elite paratroop commando unit to head the training operation.

The hired officers were informed of dangers and instability in the Central African Nation of Congo, it said.

Since disputed elections last May June, heavily-armed opposition militias have battled government forces, killing at least 200 people and turning parts of the capital Brazzaville into a battlefield.

Bosnia, he said, pointing out that Serbs already controlled a quarter of Croatian territory.

The Bosnian Serbs were fielding 80,000 men, 25,000 of whom had come from Serbia, he said.

Backed by at least 500 tanks, they were trying to establish a corridor running from northwest to southwest along the Krivaja valley, which was why they were currently attacking the Muslim-held town of Olovo, on the Krivaja river some 30 kilometres northeast of Sarajevo.

"The Serbs are not interested in Olovo itself," Divjak said. "What they want is to advance up the valley towards Vozuca and Maglad (which are held by the Bosnian army) to

link up with (Serb-held) Doboj."

That way they would drive a wedge between the second and third Bosnian army corps, he said.

Sarajevo itself was in a bad way, he admitted. "Not one single weapon has got into Sarajevo since November 1992," he said.

It was now more than a year and a half since the Bosnian forces had managed to destroy any of the 80 Serb tanks training their guns on the city.

More firepower had been deployed to pound Berlin into surrender at the end of World War II, he said, with some 1,500 artillery pieces ranged against the city.

By contrast, Sarajevo had not more than 20 artillery pieces, no mortars, no ammunition, few weapons and only a few home-made handgrenades with which to defend itself.

"We are putting the emphasis on diversionary tactics," he said. He said airstrikes against Serb positions would help ease the situation.

"It would be enough, by way of reprisals, to bomb their mechanised units and tanks, their ammunition dumps, and to knock out the 20 or so bridges across the Drina river between Serbia and Bosnia-Herzegovina."

One thing was certain, he said, "The war will not end tomorrow."

Meet to end Lesotho crisis today

HARARE, Jan 30: The foreign ministers of Botswana, South Africa and Zimbabwe, whose countries formed a regional joint task force seeking to resolve the military crisis in Lesotho, are to meet in Pretoria Monday to review the situation, reports AFP.

According to Zimbabwe's Sunday Mail, the ministers will hear a report from a six-member fact-finding mission sent to the mountain kingdom last week by the three countries at the talk held in Gabone last week.

The ministers are expected to make recommendations to their heads of states after hearing the findings.

Iraq regains 80pc pre-Gulf war strength

WASHINGTON, Jan 30: Iraq's military has regained much of its pre-Gulf War strength, US news and World Report magazine reported Saturday, says Reuter.

The magazine, citing intelligence sources in London, said in its latest edition that while the Iraqi army was only half as large as it was before being defeated by a US-led coalition in 1991, it has regained 80 per cent of its pre-war fire power.

It said that while Iraq before the war had about 5,500 tanks, more than half of those were obsolete Soviet-built T-54s and T-59s. The country now has about 2,500 tanks but most of them are modern T-72 Soviet-built ones.

The Iraqi air force, which suffered heavy losses, is now flying an estimated 400 combat-ready aircraft, the magazine said.

Many Iraqi jets were flown to Iran to escape the conflict. Baghdad is still trying to get back many of them.

Cabinet reshuffle in Libya

SIRTE, Libya, Jan 30: Libya on Saturday named Abdel Majid al-Kaud as head of a new 16-member cabinet, but kept the same Foreign Minister in a sign it prepared for a long standoff with the West over the Lockerbie bombing, reports AFP.

The General People's Congress (GPC), or parliament, appointed Kaud, an engineer and former Agriculture Minister, as Prime Minister in the first new government in four years.

Staying on in their key foreign policy posts were Omr Al-Muntasser as Foreign Minister and Jomaa al-Mahdi al-Fezani as Minister of Arab Unity.

A western diplomat said the appointments signalled that Libya would probably stick to its refusal to surrender two suspects accused of blowing up a Pan American airliner over Lockerbie, Scotland in 1988, killing 270 people.

"In foreign policy, it looks like continuity," a western diplomat in the capital Tripoli said.

The parliament named outgoing Prime Minister Abu Zeid Omar Durda as its new Deputy Speaker. Durda replaced Mohammad Hijazi, who became Minister of Justice, which had been vacant since Ibrahim Al-Bakkar died last year in a car accident.

The armed forces commander, Colonel Abu Bakr Yunes Jaber, a close aide of Libyan leader Colonel Muammar Gaddafi, stayed on as the defence Minister - not listed as an official post.

About 1,000 delegates attended the GPC which began last Saturday in Sirte, 400 kilometres northeast of the capital Tripoli.

Off the Record

Parents of dropouts to be fined

BEIJING: Parents of dropouts in Beijing now face stiff fines equal to as much as 20 months' salary, as the city tries to make sure children get their compulsory education, an official report said Sunday, says AP.

Under the new regulation, which goes into effect this month, parents are to be fined 200-5,000 yuan (dls 23-575) if their school-age children are not enrolled, the Xinhua news agency reported.

Chinese law requires six years of primary school and three years of middle school. The new fines apply to Beijing only.

The report said 99.9 per cent of primary school-age children in Beijing were enrolled, as were 99.92 per cent of middle school-age children.

Enrollment figures are far lower outside Beijing, particularly in rural areas where school fees often are too high for farming families and where girls often are kept out of school.

An international survey released Sunday showed that only 86 girls were enrolled in primary schools for every 100 boys in China, and 73 girls per 100 boys in secondary grades.

Charles ends affair with Camilla

LONDON: Prince Charles has ended his affair with an army officer's wife in order to regain the public esteem lost through the breakup of his marriage to Princess Diana, British newspapers reported Sunday, says Reuter.

The heir to the throne's relationship with Camilla Parker-Bowles was commonly cited as a major cause of the royal marriage split.

It's over with Camilla, proclaimed the tabloid news of the World, the Prince and his married confidante have made a pact not to see or even speak to each other.

It quoted a friend of the Prince as saying Bowles was eager to preserve Charles' chances to succeed his mother, Queen Elizabeth, both the Prince and Camilla know how important this year is to him it said.

A poll released earlier this month showed that Prince Charles' popularity had sunk to all-time lows, with most Britons preferring Diana.

Charles won an approval rating of only 17 per cent while Diana had 47 per cent — an indication that she had kept the sympathy of the public since the couple's bitter separation 13 months ago.

Ten years ago, Charles was the most popular member of the royal family, with a 50 per cent confidence vote.

But then came rumours of the adulterous affair with Bowles, which have not been denied.

Spiritual slave

NEW ORLEANS: The parents of a missing Italian celebrity offered a reward Saturday for her return and expressed the belief someone might be holding her as some kind of "spiritual slave," reports AP.

Ylenia Carrisi, 23, the granddaughter of the late American movie star Tyrone Power, has been missing since New Year's Day.

Romina Power said she and her husband, both Italian entertainers, would pay handsomely for their daughter's return.

"I think she is being held by people here against her will. I don't know, I can't explain why. It's just a feeling I have. I might be right I might be wrong," said Romina Power, who flew here Thursday from Italy with her husband, Al Bano, to help police search for their daughter.

"I don't mean just for information. Bring her to us. They will have a very large reward," the mother told a local television station.

Behaviour problems

NEW DELHI: Nearly 22 per cent children in the age group of three to six years have behaviour problems and the prevalence of such problems is higher among the boys, according to a recent study by the Indian academy of pediatrics, reports PTI.

Fearful reaction and attention-seeking behaviour are more common among the girls, the study adds.

The Indian study spread over a period of six months was conducted by Dr Shashi Rai and his colleagues at the Department of Psychiatry and Pediatrics in the capital's Lady Hardinge Medical College.

Some 200 pre-school children in the outpatient department were screened. They were chosen randomly twice a week. Their socio-economic status was assessed based on education, occupation and monthly income of the parents.

Of the 200 children, 115 were boys.

The researchers found that symptoms like temper tantrums, fights and bites destructive nature, management difficulty, hyperkinesis and distractibility were more common in boys.