

## De Klerk apologises for past racial injustice

DARLING, South Africa, Feb 18: President F W de Klerk apologised Friday for past racial injustice but accused the African National Congress of dwelling on it instead of working for a better future, reports AP.

"Fighting about that which is wrong in the past will not make a better future," de Klerk told about 300 people from the back of a flatbed truck in this rural town 100 kilometers (60 miles) outside Cape Town.

On a one-day campaign blitz through the western Cape region, de Klerk hammered away at the rival ANC's economic policies, which he said would destroy the nation's economy. The ANC, the nation's biggest black group and the expected winner of April 26-28 national elections, has released a manifesto calling for state interven-

tion and possibly nationalisation of some industries to help distribute wealth more evenly among blacks and whites.

De Klerk's National Party says the ANC plans widespread nationalisation.

"Only if the National Party does extremely well in this election will there be business confidence to attract investors. Foreign investors will not come and build factories if the threat of nationalisation hangs over them," he said at an earlier stop in the village of Mamre.

As in other campaign tours, de Klerk sought to portray the National Party as far different from the days when it instituted and enforced apartheid. "We say we are sorry about the mistakes of the past, but we broke the neck of apartheid. We are a new National Party," he told the crowd.

## Convoys of artillery quitting hills around Sarajevo Muslims won't welcome Russian troops to guard Serb weaponry

SARAJEVO, Feb 18: Bosnian Muslim Vice-president Ejup Ganic rejected on Thursday deployment of Russian UN troops to control Serb weaponry around Sarajevo, reports Reuter.

"As you know the Russians are not neutral in the case of Bosnia-Herzegovina. They didn't go along with this NATO peace process. We're certainly not welcoming Russians to guard Serbian weapons. We would rather let them keep our weapons that Serb weapons," he said.

Ganic was speaking to reporters after the Bosnian Serbs agreed to a Kremlin proposal to pull back their heavy

weaponry from around the city of Sarajevo, which they have besieged for the past 22 months.

Announcing Serb agreement, Moscow's special envoy Vitaly Churkin made no mention of Russian UN troops controlling Serb weaponry but spoke rather of Serbs pulling back from their siege positions.

AP adds, Convoys of Bosnian Serb artillery began withdrawing from the hills around Sarajevo in compliance with a NATO ultimatum to pull back or be bombed. "We do think the war in Sarajevo is finally over," Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic said.

Thursday's pullout reported by UN monitors followed a pledge by Karadzic to meet NATO's Sunday deadline. He made the concession under pressure from Russia.

Karadzic spoke with reporters after meeting with Vitaly Churkin, Russia's special envoy, in Pale, the Bosnian Serb stronghold southeast of Sarajevo.

Lt Col Bill Aikman, a UN spokesman in the shell-shattered Bosnian capital, would not specify what sort of equipment was being withdrawn, but said, "We're talking heavy weapons."

"Literally they're moving out in convoys, not in individual

vehicles," he said. "Clearly there's a major withdrawal going on."

He said UN monitors saw convoys of equipment moving off the hills, and UN commanders received information that withdrawals meeting NATO conditions would be completed within 36 hours.

Also Thursday, Moscow offered to send Russian UN peacekeeping troops to Sarajevo in a bid to head off NATO air strikes against the Bosnian Serbs. The offer was accepted, the United Nations said in New York.

## Mandela, Arafat hold talks

THE HAGUE, Feb 18: Nelson Mandela, the ANC Chairman, and Yasser Arafat, leader of the PLO, held an hour-long meeting here this morning, official said; AFP reports.

Talks centred on a proposed visit by Mandela to Israel, according to a Dutch committee for the support of the democratic process in South Africa, quoting African National Congress (ANC) officials in Johannesburg.

Such a visit, however, would only take place once a peace accord was concluded between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), the committee said.

The talks took place at the official residence here of Prime Minister Ruud Lubbers.

Following the meeting, Arafat was to hold talks with Lubbers and deputy economic minister responsible for foreign trade Yvonne van Rooy on Dutch aid to the future autonomous Palestinian territories.

## Off the Record



Sylvester Stallone (L), co-owner of the Planet Hollywood restaurant chain, dots the eyes of a Chinese Lion to bring good luck during an inspection tour of the soon to open Planet Hollywood Hong Kong restaurant February 17. Planet Hollywood Hong Kong, billed as an experience inspired by film, food and fantasy, is due to open April 94.

— AFP photo

## Papaya an effective contraceptive

RIGHTON (England): Researchers in Britain said on Thursday that the tropical papaya fruit was an effective contraceptive and powerful enough to abort pregnancy, reports Reuters.

A research team at the University of Sussex, southern England, said papaya contains a very strong enzyme called papain which interacts with the hormone Progesterone. Progesterone prepares the uterus for pregnancy and is necessary to maintain the developing fetus in the womb.

If Progesterone and papain interact, the level of progesterone needed to maintain pregnancy can be affected, researcher Tharmalingam Senthilmohan said. These changes to progesterone levels prevent conception and cause abortions.

"It about one fruit a day is eaten deliberately (by a pregnant woman) it is possible to abort within a week," he said.

The fruit only had to be eaten over two or three days to be effective, he added. Abortion could be ensured by eating unripe fruit that contains a higher papain concentration.

Malcolm Topping, senior lecturer in chemical and medical sciences at the university's biomedical laboratories, said the papaya could become the basis for a new form of contraception for the west.

Senthilmohan said the pink-fleshed, mango-like fruit had long been used as a traditional remedy for contraception and abortion in the Indian sub-continent.

## American women unaware of STDs

WASHINGTON: American women have a false sense of security in the face of an epidemic of sexually transmitted diseases, health advocates say, reports AP.

A survey released Monday found the attitude of most US women toward STDs is, "It won't happen to me." To change that, the government must educate women about all sexual diseases, just as it teaches them about AIDS, said a coalition of women's groups.

"We don't merely want tracking of the problem. We want action and prevention," said Joan Kurlansky of the Campaign for Women's Health. "Women are uninformed, unconcerned and not taking action in the face of rising risk."

There are an estimated 13 million cases sexually transmitted diseases every year, not counting AIDS. One of the most dangerous, syphilis, is at the highest level in 40 years.

## India extends ban on JKLF

NEW DELHI, Feb 18: India has extended the official ban on the separatist Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) for two more years, a government spokesman said on Thursday, reports Reuter.

The government will soon issue a fresh notification re-declaring the JKLF as an unlawful organisation under the unlawful activities prevention act," he said.

The earlier notification banning the group was issued on February 18, 1992, and expires on Friday.

While all separatist groups in the strife-torn northern state remain banned, JKLF is the only group outlawed by the federal government. The others have been banned by the local government.

India has been battling a four-year-old separatist movement in Jammu and Kashmir.



Liz to undergo hip replacement surgery

NEW YORK, Feb 18: Elizabeth Taylor, one of Hollywood's most glamorous super stars, will undergo hip replacement surgery and complete recovery may take up to two years, the surgeon conducting the operation said Thursday, reports Reuter.

Taylor will check into a Los Angeles hospital in early March for surgery to overcome an ailment which limits her ability to walk without pain for any considerable distance. Dr John Moreland said in a statement released by her publicist.

The operation, which will keep her on crutches or a walker for two months, adds to her life time of woes publicised in headline stories — eight marriages, weight problems, drugs and alcohol.

Taylor's hip ailment was aggravated when she slipped on the ice during a Swiss vacation in January.

## BRIEFLY

**Clinton suffering from eye infection:** President Clinton's left eye was puffy and bloodshot Thursday and the White House said he was suffering from an infection known as conjunctivitis, Reuter reports from Washington.

Spokesman Arthur Jones said Clinton's condition had been diagnosed as conjunctivitis, a fairly common eye infection. During a picture-taking session with members of groups representing the elderly, Clinton's eye was puffy and red.

**Week-long polls begin in Fiji:** The South Pacific nation Fiji began its week-long general elections today, Xinhua says from Canberra.

The election was called by Prime Minister Sitiveni Rabuka after his government's 1994 budget was defeated in the parliament last November.

Rabuka came into power 20 months ago after winning a national election in May 1992. In normal cases, a government in Fiji has a 5-year term.

**Cresson arrives in Jakarta:** Former French Prime Minister Edith Cresson arrived in Jakarta today for a five-day visit as chairwoman of a group of French companies, a French embassy official said. AFP reports from Jakarta.

Cresson is scheduled to meet several ministers including Minister for Industry and Trade Hartarto Sastrosuwarto, Transportation Minister Hayanto Dhanutirto, and tourism, Post and Telecommunication Joop Ave.

**Grenade kills 9 in Philippines:** An unidentified assailant hurled a grenade inside a carnival compound in the southern Philippines Friday, killing nine people and injuring 22 others, police said. AP reports from Manila.

The police said the incident occurred at 12:15 am Friday (1615 GMT Thursday) in Isulan, the capital town of Sultan Kudarat province, 960 kilometers (600 miles) south of Manila.

The national police headquarters in Manila had no other details on the incident. No suspects have been arrested.

**13 feared drowned in Tanzania:** Thirteen people were feared drowned after an overloaded boat capsized on Lake Victoria, state-run radio Tanzania reported today, reports Reuter from Dar es Salaam.

The boat, with a capacity of 10 passengers, had 32 on board, as well as a cargo of maize, the radio said. It was hit by a big wave and capsized on Thursday. Police were searching for survivors.

**Hosokawa plans to visit China:** Japanese Prime Minister Morihiro Hosokawa plans to make an official visit to China for three days starting March 19, the Mainichi newspaper reported today. AFP reports from Tokyo.

The two governments will finalize Hosokawa's itinerary during Chinese Vice Premier Zhu Rongji's visit to Japan from February 23 to March 3, the daily said.

## 52 killed in stampede at Chinese rly station

HONG KONG, Feb 18: More than 50 people were reportedly killed in a stampede at a train station in southern China's Hunan Province in a rush to get back to work following the end of the Lunar New Year celebration, a report said today, reports AFP.

At least 52 people were confirmed killed and more than 40 seriously injured in a stampede at Hengyang station late Tuesday as migrant workers attempted to board a south-bound train for the booming Guangdong province, the Beijing-backed Wen Wei Po newspaper said.

Since Sunday, the number of migrant workers taking trains for Guangdong Province at Hengyang has swollen to 160,000 daily, the Wen Wei Po said.

Tin Tin said at least 29 of the victims were women workers aged between 18 and 20.

It is believed to be the first tragedy of its kind during the Chinese Lunar New Year celebrations when millions of people rush home and later return to work in their droves after the week-long holidays.

Provincial authorities were urged to take precautions in the rush which strained the train services.

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haste to board the train and fell on pavement made slippery by rain.

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The reality of it is that these shipments are actually creating quite a substantial environmental health and safety danger in less industrialised materials such as plastic.

Divecha said 24 of the richest countries, including the United States, Japan, Germany and Australia, produce 98 per cent of the world's hazardous

international convention which bans the transfer of toxic wastes from one country or another. The export continues because a "loophole" allows recycling or reprocessing by the importing country.

He also criticised the 1989 Basel Convention for setting a "double standard" by calling on poor nations to stop importing toxic wastes but failing to ban their export from rich countries.

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PLO leader Yasser Arafat (L) leaves the Catshuis with Secretary of State Yvonne van Rooy (C) and ANC leader Nelson Mandela (R), February 18. Mandela met Arafat for the first time in 1990 and the two met again after Arafat's arrival Thursday night in the Netherlands.

— AFP photo

## US fails to push Israel to quit Gaza, Jericho: Arafat

TUNIS, Feb 18: PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat said on Thursday the United States had failed to push Israel to withdraw from the occupied territories and that the delay was dangerous, report Reuter.

"We are in need of a positive role from the American administration, not to leave us alone with the Israelis," Arafat told Reuters in an interview in his Tunis headquarters.

"Numerous rounds of negotiations since then have failed to resolve all remaining obstacles to the Israeli pullout," Arafat warned that delay was dangerous.

"We are in the third month now after the December 13 deadline and nothing has been implemented on the ground," the frustrated PLO leader said.

"The Israeli government is not in a hurry," he said. "The delay by the Israelis is dangerous, it will lead to confusion and will spread to the whole

area."

In an interview with the New York Times published on Friday, Arafat said he had lurched from one disappointment to another since the accord with Israel was signed.

"The Israeli government is not in a hurry to implement this agreement," Arafat told the newspaper during an interview in Tunis. "But this is a dangerous policy that could backfire."

Arafat, in a separate interview with the Jordan Times, also accused Israeli troops of aiding the spread of arms in the occupied territories in a plot of create chaos in Palestinian self-rule areas.

"There is a very terrible trade of arms going on under the auspices of some Israeli officers in the West Bank and Gaza Strip," he said.

— AFP photo

## Iran wants to mediate in Kashmir crisis

NICOSIA, Feb 18: Iran is prepared to act as a mediator in conflicts in Kashmir and Georgia, the official IRNA news agency reported on Thursday, says Reuter.

"Iranian President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani said that Tehran is willing to step up its efforts to settle the Kashmir issue in order to regain the rights of the oppressed people of Kashmir," IRNA reported.

The agency said Rafsanjani was speaking in Tehran to a personal envoy of Pakistan's Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto.

Kashmir is a Muslim-majority Himalayan region two-thirds controlled by India and one-third by Pakistan.

IRNA also reported the Vice-Speaker of Iran's Majlis (parliament), Hassan Rowhani, as telling visiting Georgian Foreign Minister Alexander Chikvaidze that Iran was ready to act as mediator in his country.

— AFP photo



Home owners shift through the debris of what was their house February 17. Which was leveled during a powerful earthquake in the south Sumatra province of Lampung, Indonesia February 16. The official death toll from the quake rose to 186, as road links reopened and medical personnel and relief supplies poured in.

— AFP photo

## Quake death toll rises to 186 in Indonesia

LIWA (Indonesia), Feb 18: The death toll from a strong earthquake which shook the south Sumatra Province of Lampung early Wednesday has risen to 186 people, with more than 2,000 injured, according to the relief centre here, reports AFP.