

## US to resume high-level talks with DPRK Mar 21

WASHINGTON, Mar 4: The United States Thursday announced it would resume high-level talks with North Korea on March 21 in Geneva, in a bid for increased cooperation between the West and the isolated Stalinist state, reports Reuter.

The State Department said in a statement it was going forward with the official announcement after international experts arrived in Pyongyang to begin inspecting seven declared nuclear sites and after North Korea and South Korea resumed their dialogue on Korean issues.

The US team in Geneva will be headed by Assistant Secretary of State for Political and Military Affairs Robert Gallucci, who conducted two previous rounds before they were broken off last summer in a dispute over Pyongyang's obligations under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

(NPT)

The talks will aim at a thorough and broad resolution of the nuclear and other issues that separate the DPRK (North Korea) from the US and the rest of the international community, State Department spokesman Mike McCurry said.

He renewed the US warning that the high-level talks and temporary cancellation of "team spirit" military exercises announced earlier by South Korea are based on the premises that the IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency) inspections will be fully implemented and South-North nuclear dialogue will continue through the exchange of special envoy.

In an agreement reached last week in New York, North Korea agreed to allow the long-sought IAEA inspections to go forward and to resume the North-South dialogue.

## US rejects fresh UN call for more peacekeepers in Bosnia

WASHINGTON, Mar 4: The United States Thursday rejected a new call by UN officials for more peacekeepers in Bosnia and backed a decision not to call NATO air strikes after renewed shelling in Sarajevo, reports Reuter.

We have a very determined view about the role that we can play, State Department spokesman Mike McCurry told reporters.

I think the United Nations and other partners that we have in the world community are well aware of our views on the use of US ground forces. The president has been clear on that, the secretary has been clear on that, and the fact that we are more engaged in the diplomatic effort doesn't change those views, he said.

Christopher told the Senate Wednesday the US-brokered Bosnian Muslim-Croat unity accord signed in Washington on Monday neither meets this test nor alters the US view.

The UN commander in Bosnia, General Jean Cot, Thursday criticised Washington for avoiding a Bosnia peace-keeping role while new cease-fires were threatened with collapse for lack of UN reinforcements.

He said the US refusal to

send troops until Serb, Muslim and Croat factions signed and enforceable peace treaty was a strange and not very courageous idea.

Cot, French commander of the UN protection force in former Yugoslavia, and UN special envoy Yasushi Akashi appealed for 10650 more troops to save cease-fires in Sarajevo and central Bosnia.

A Canberra report says: NATO should use air strikes if necessary to prevent renewed military aggression in Bosnia, Turkish Foreign Minister Hikmet Cetin said on Thursday.

Asked by reporters how aggression should be deterred, he replied: "In my opinion, if necessary, air strikes."

Because decision without political will, decision without forces behind cannot work,

Cetin said.

Cetin, on a visit to Australia, was speaking before the outbreak of renewed fighting which shattered a fragile truce which had been holding in the Bosnian capital Sarajevo for more than two weeks.

Cetin, had said it appeared Bosnia was close to achieving lasting peace following a Muslim-Croat agreement to link their territories in federation of ethnically-based cantons.

Therefore NATO and the UN Security Council should give a clear ultimatum again to the sides that we will not tolerate any new aggression, any new action in those areas, he said.

Turkey is a member of NATO, the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation.



US actor Jack Nicholson addresses a crowd of some 1,000 people after receiving the American Film Institute's 22nd Life Achievement award March 3 at the Beverly Hilton in Beverly Hills. The event celebrated the 35-year career of the Oscar winning actor.

— AFP photo



British Foreign Secretary, Douglas Hurd (R) and PLO envoy Nabil Shaath, talk to the press in England March 3 after Hurd told him that Britain would participate in any international observer mission to assure security on the West Bank.

— AFP photo

## Armed clash leaves 5 dead in Sindh

KARACHI, Mar 4: Five people were killed and nine injured in an armed clash between two powerful Pakistani clans in a remote Sindh village, press reports said Friday, says AFP.

A local daily The News said the Bugti tribe Thursday attacked Goran village near Larkana, some 400 kilometres (250 miles) from here, with rocket launchers and Kalashnikovs.

The attack was in retaliation for an earlier clash with the Mazaris in which four Bugti people had died, it said, adding that those killed in the latest incident were all Mazaris.

Tribal enmity is a common feature in the southern Sindh and southwestern Balochistan provinces sometimes, continue for decades.

## Off the Record

### Remote-controlled robot arm helps perform operations

LONDON: Canadian surgeons reported Friday that they have used a remote-controlled robot arm to help them to perform operations on people, reports Reuter.

The technique, described in the Lancet Medical Journal, could be extended to allow for help from experts miles away from the operation room.

Dr Michael Gagner of the Hotel-Dieu De Montreal Hospital said in the report that he and colleagues used the robot arm, fitted with a tiny camera, in three gall bladder operations last year.

There were no complications or technical problems during surgery, and the patients were able to go home within two days, the Lancet said in a statement.

This approach may offer economic benefits to smaller surgical teams and may lead to more sophisticated systems for the performance of complete robotic surgery.

### Jury awards 3 women with leaking silicone implants

HOUSTON: A jury awarded three women with leaking silicone breast implants 15 million dollars in punitive damages from three companies a day after it ordered same companies to pay 12.9 million dollars in actual damages, reports AP.

On Wednesday the jury found 3M Corp., based in Minnesota; McGhan Medical Co. of Goleta, Calif.; and Inamed of Las Vegas liable for the leaking implants and awarded the 12.9 million dollars.

An appeal will be considered, said Richard Rawls, an attorney for the companies.

"I think what happened here is unfortunate," Rawls said of the women's implant problems. "This jury decided that the breast implants were the cause of that. Like I say, the scientific community hasn't reached a consensus on that issue."

As Thursday's 15 million dollars damage award was announced, Darla Lawson, Judy McMurry and Susan Doss hugged each other, and people in the courtroom applauded.

"This is what we wanted," Ms. McMurry said. "The main thing is that we won. We needed a strong yes."

The verdict orders 3M to pay 4 million dollars to Ms. Lawson and 5 million dollars to Ms. McMurry and Ms. Doss. McGhan Medical, the financial arm of Inamed, was ordered to pay an additional 1 million dollars to Ms. Lawson. All three women had the implants removed in 1992.

"I think I'm still in shock. There's just so many more behind us," Ms. Lawson said.

## Peace process has lost credibility: Arafat

BRUSSELS, Mar 4: Actions, not words, are needed by Israel and the United States to stop the Middle East peace talks collapsing in the wake of the Hebron massacre, PLO leader Yasser Arafat said on Thursday as saying, reports Reuter.

The peace process has lost credibility. We need concrete steps to convince our people that more than massacres and more oppression can come out of the negotiations, he said in an interview published in Belgium's Le Soir newspaper.

In Amman, Greek Foreign Minister Karolos Papoulias, on a Middle East tour representing the European Union, expressed support for Arafat's calls.

last Friday.

Describing the settlements with their 120,000 Jewish occupants in the Israeli-occupied territories as a "time bomb", Arafat repeated his demands that they be disarmed.

"We are not asking for the moon. But we neither want to kill the peace or be killed by it," he said, calling for an international peacekeeping force to protect Palestinians.

In addition, an atmosphere of tranquility and stability has to be created after the regretful incidents in Hebron, he said after talks with Jordanian officials.

Arafat said the Hebron massacre had changed the climate, but not the fundamentals of the peace process.

"We were on the point of making peace. Instead of that we have witnessed a massacre," he said.

— International presence is

last Friday.

Bhutto said she hoped the Afghan leaders, including President Burhanuddin Rabbani and his opponent prime minister Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, would settle their differences



at the earliest possible time

so that their country could begin reconstruction after 15 years of civil war.

Crowds of angry Afghans

last week sacked the Pakistan

embassy in Kabul and fired

rockets on the Pakistan border

after Pakistani commandos

shot dead three Afghan gun-

men who had hijacked a

school bus and taken hostage a

group of school boys.

Political analysts said the

incidents could harm ties be-

tween Pakistan and Kabul's

Islamic coalition government,

set up in April 1992 when the

Pakistan-backed Mujahideen

took power from the former

communist government.

a basic condition and disarming the Jewish settlers is another condition," Papoulias, Current President of the European Union Council of Ministers, told Reuters when asked what was needed to protect Palestinians.

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"We claim our dues, the United States tells us to be patient until the definitive accord is signed."

## Amnesty for rebels illegal, says Yeltsin

MOSCOW, Mar 4: President Boris Yeltsin to day denounced last week's parliament amnesty for jailed rebels as illegal and unconstitutional but appealed for a new era of cooperation between parliament and the administration, reports Reuter.

In a Kremlin speech to the full cabinet and parliamentary leaders, Yeltsin said a new memorandum for civic peace in Russia being discussed between the branches of power could form a new basis for cooperation and political stability.

The Amnesties passed overwhelmingly by parliament on February 23, was followed by the release of former Vice-President Alexander Rutskoi and other Yeltsin foes who tried to topple the President on New Year's Day.

Pakistani officials told Bhutto that 18,000 Afghan refugees had arrived in Peshawar since the start of the year.

UN officials estimate that 109,000 Kabul residents have fled to the eastern Afghan town of Jalalabad since January 1.

Kabul's population has fallen to 800,000 from 1.5 million when the Mujahideen took power as a result of the fighting.

Pakistan has closed its border to new refugees and says it will allow in only those carrying valid travel documents.

But he continued that Russia could now resolve its internal disagreements peacefully.

A six-truck United Nations food convoy left Peshawar.

## Clinton's health reform plan losing support

WASHINGTON, Mar 4: Two new opinion polls show that US President Bill Clinton's health reform plan is losing support on several fronts as US Congressional Committees begin work on it, reports Xinhua.

An ABC, Washington Post poll, which was conducted February 24, 27, found 44 per cent in favour of the plan and 48 per cent opposed. Three weeks earlier attitudes were almost reversed at 51-41 in favour.

A CNN USA Today/Gallup Survey conducted February 26-28 found only 46 per cent in favour of the Clinton plan and 48 per cent opposed. A month earlier, 57 per cent had backed it with only 38 per cent against.

Both polls had three-point

margins of error. For the first time more Americans are begin-

ning to disapprove of the plan than approve of it. The polls said, adding that the American public is showing increasing signs of wariness.

Some influential organiza-

tions have either voiced their

opposition against or edged

away from supporting the

health reform plan since Clinton outlined it in his State of the Union address earlier

this year.

The American Medical Association (AMA) said that the plan, if executed, is likely to build a big wall between doctors and patients and it insists that doctors should have the

US chamber of commerce, which represents 220,000 small business, pulled back on Monday from supporting two key elements of the reform proposal: mandatory employer payments for all workers health insurance and extension of coverage to everyone.

Clinton yesterday dismissed the negative polls, saying they were the inevitable product of high-priced TV ads run by his critics. He blamed special interest groups for letting him down.

"How could it be otherwise?" he opined. "Look at the millions and millions of dollars that have been spent by interest groups to trash the plan. I don't have as much money to run television ads as the health insurance industry does," he said.

Critics in congress and

outside of government charge

that Clinton's plan is too bu-

reaucrat.

## 2000 Angolan children face food shortage

LUBANGO, Mar 4: At least 2,000 children aged five to 15 face critical food shortages in the Huila province of Southern Angola, a World Food Programme official warned Thursday.

He was at Jakarta's Sukarno Hatta Airport by Indonesian Foreign Minister Ali Alatas. Silajdzic is scheduled to meet Indonesian President Suharto, current chairman of the 110-nation Non-Aligned Movement.

He said the health of the children could deteriorate over the next few weeks because of drought in the region.

Efforts by international relief organisations to offset the effects of the drought have so far made little headway, he acknowledged, adding that people most at risk are in the north and east of the province.

## Mexican rebels return to their remote forest villages

SAN MIGUEL, Mexico, Mar 4: Pursued by packs of reporters, the leaders of Mexico's Indian revolt have returned to their remote rain forest villages to decide whether to make peace in return for promises of aid and more democracy, reports AP.

Rebel soldiers wearing ski masks briefly formed a line and held their guns at attention as the insurgent military chief, known as Subcomandante Marcos, arrived at this little village Thursday with several other masked rebels.

Peace activists linked hands to form a line to hold back several dozen journalists

who had accompanied the convoy on its three-hour journey from San Cristobal de las Casas, where a first round of peace talks ended on Wednesday.

Hoping to