

## 14 BSF men to be tried for killing 31 Kashmiris

NEW DELHI, Mar 27: Four officers and 10 other members of India's paramilitary border security force (BSF) are to be court-martialed over the killing of at least 31 Kashmiri demonstrators, the Pioneer newspaper said yesterday, reports Reuters.

It said the trials had been recommended in an internal BSF report into the shootings of the demonstrators last October as they protested against an army siege of Kashmir's holiest Muslim shrine, where secessionist militants were holed up.

BSF spokesman were not immediately available for comment.

## Benazir acquitted of another case

LAHORE, Mar 27: A Pakistani court cleared Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto on Saturday of misusing an air force transport plane four and half years ago during her first period in office, reports Reuters.

The accusation was one of seven charges of abuse of power used by President Ghulam Ishaq Khan to dismiss her government in August 1990. She has already been acquitted of three others.

Judge Munir Sheikh threw out the allegation that Benazir ordered the unauthorised use of an Air Force C-130 plane to fly favourable deputies to a northwestern district to keep them from being influenced by opposition parties hoping to bring down her government in a parliamentary no-confidence vote.

There is no proof of any order passed by the respondent for the deployment of the flights, he said. How could she be held guilty if there is no such definite proof?

## Indian troops building concrete bunkers in Kashmir

# Delhi plans a limited war, says Pak General

KURDARA, Mar 27: Indian troops are building concrete bunkers in Kashmir and their movements indicate plans for a limited war, a senior Pakistani army officer said at this forward post, reports, AFP.

"They are making concrete bunkers regularly," said General Ghulam Khaja, a brigade commander at the Nikial sector outpost 5,635 foot up in the Pir Ranjwal mountains.

The Pakistani position, adjacent to Poonch city in the Indian-held part of Kashmir, is about a kilometer as the crow flies from the line of control that divides the state between its two rival neighbours.

"The apparent Indian intention is a limited war with Pakistan," the brigadier told reporters flown into the sector Saturday by the army. The war he envisaged would be of short duration and scattered over selected areas.

Khaja said India had built and manned military posts every 300 metres (1,000 feet) and seeded surrounding territory with anti-tank mines.

Displaying some anti-personnel mines he said were laid by Indians on this side of the disputed border, Khaja said India had constructed three-tier forward, middle and rear lines.

Indian villages in a three

kilometer (two-mile) belt had been evacuated and troops equipped with early detection and night-vision systems. Forward posts also had trained dogs, he said.

Pakistan and India have fought two wars for control of Kashmir since the two countries won independence in 1947.

The media trip was the first since bilateral relations plunged to a new low in the wake of a four-year 'freedom struggle' in the southern part of Kashmir controlled by India, which blames the unrest on Pakistan.

The helicopter carrying

journalists stopped at several post along the fragile border. Officers pointed out mud houses pock-marked by gunfire.

Officers at different places said there had been a 'sharp increase' in Indian attacks on border villages since 1989, when Muslim militants started a bloody resistance movement against Indian rule.

Khaja, in response to questions, did not rule out the possibility that Israeli officers were assisting Indian forces in Kashmir.

"We could see some people in different uniforms. Are they commandos or foreigners, we

don't know," he said. Reporting "some change" in activity across the border, he said that at times "we feel somebody is directing them to go on a killing spree."

Lieutenant colonel Inayat Wali, commander of the Tetri note post in the Rawalakot sector, said India routinely fired on border villages at night, at a cost of several civilian lives.

Military casualties are "very rare," as India's aim seems to be to "demoralise" the population by unleashing "terror" on both sides of the border, another officer said.

But he said the villagers were prepared to make

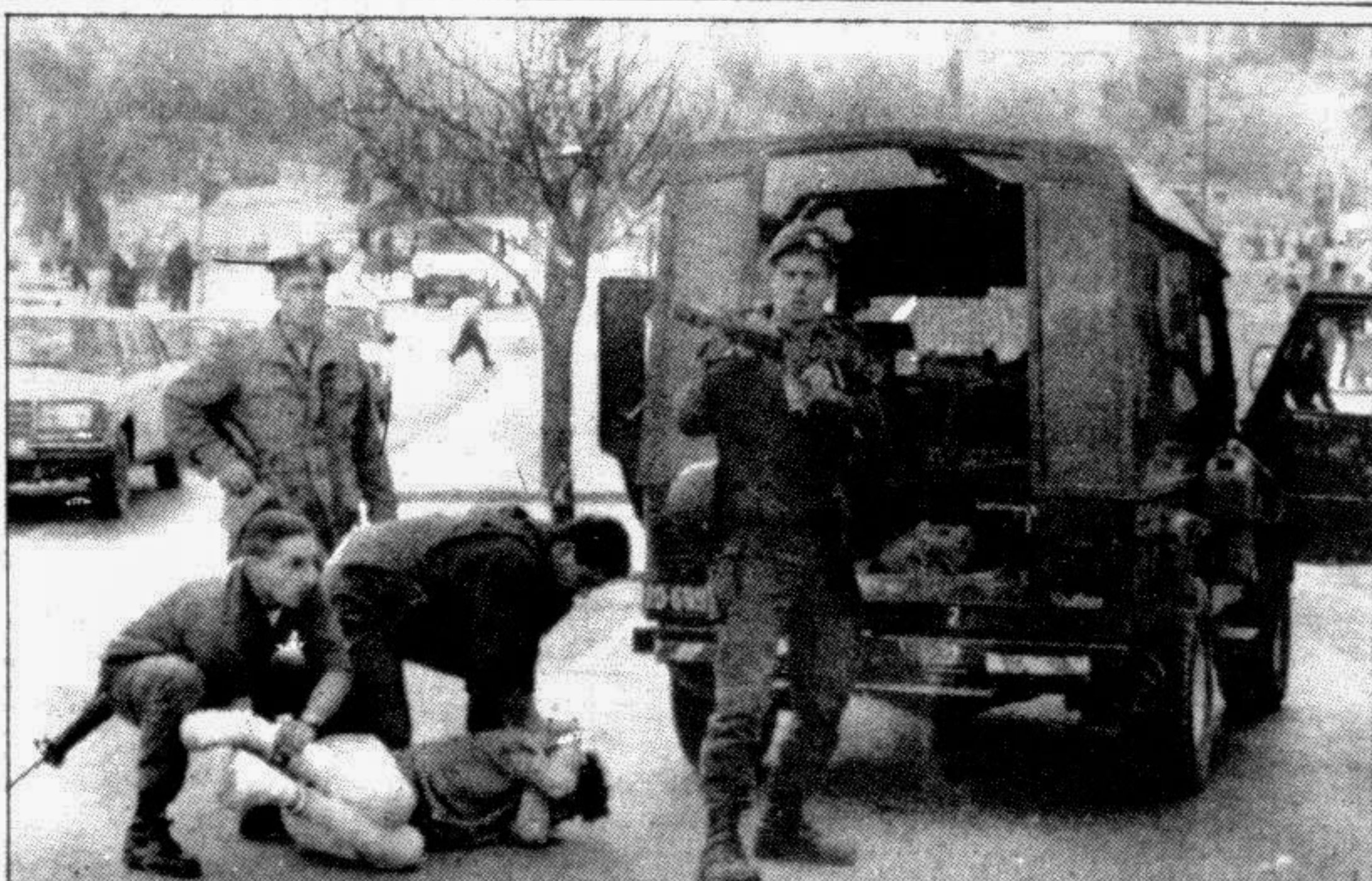
"sacrifices for their cause."

The army let journalists talk to hundreds of refugees who had allegedly fled Indian atrocities and civilians who suffered loss of limbs or serious bullet injuries in attacks over the past few months. They included women and children.

A six-year-old girl was recovering from two bullet wounds. A three-year-old boy was the "youngest victim." His father, who had a fractured arm, told reporters that some Indian "saboteurs" placed a bomb outside his home, which was detonated by Indian tracer fire.



Planesmen policemen try to remove the wreckage of a vehicle destroyed during a black day observed in Karachi yesterday. MQM supporters started violence early yesterday against an alleged sexual harassment of a young woman during an army raid. — AFP photo



A Palestinian youth who tried to escape arrest outside the Old City walls of Jerusalem on Saturday is dragged to the jeep by Israeli border guards where he was roughed up before being taken away. — AFP photo

## Pentagon moves to bolster its forces in ROK

NEW YORK, Mar 27: The Pentagon has been moving to bolster its forces in South Korea to protect against an attack by North Korea, today's New York Times reported, says Reuters.

The US is strengthening its military position as it seeks support at the United Nations for possible economic sanctions against North Korea, the Times said.

The US wants the sanctions imposed if North Korea continues to block inspections of its nuclear programme.

The army has also begun to replace older helicopters in South Korea with new Apache attack helicopters, it said.

## Abdel-Rahman wants to subpoena Clinton to testify at trial

NEW YORK, Mar 27: Sheikh Omar Abdel-Rahman, charged with plotting to blow up the United Nations headquarters and to assassinate Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, wants to subpoena President Clinton to testify at his trial, according to court papers filed Friday, reports Reuters.

In a 20-page memorandum filed in federal court, the 55-year Egyptian cleric said he wants to explore Clinton's 'secret' dealings with the Egyptian government.

In his court papers, Abdel-Rahman says he believes 'political manoeuvrings' between President Clinton and Hosni Mubarak of Egypt were behind the charges against him.

The cleric, who speaks virtually no English, is representing himself with the assistance of a court-appointed lawyer.

## BRIEFLY

**1 more Kurd dies in Germany:** A third Kurd has died in Germany after setting himself ablaze this week in protest at what he considered Bonn's support for Turkish suppression of his people, Kurdish sources said on Saturday, Reuters reports from Frankfurt.

The sources at a Kurdish demonstration in Frankfurt said that the man died in hospital on Saturday from serious burns but police were unable to confirm the report.

Two Kurdish women died after dousing themselves with petrol and setting it alight on Monday. They left a suicide note saying that they protesting at German arms sales to Turkey.

**Turkey violates Greek air space:** Turkish fighter planes violated Greek air space, Greek government spokesman Evangelos Venizelos said Saturday, labelling the violation "an organised provocation". AFP reports from Athens.

Greek Defence Ministry officials said more than 20 F-16 and Phantom F-4 warplanes from Turkey's air force flew into Greek air space between 0800 and 1000 GMT Friday over the east and north of the Aegean Sea.

Greek fighters intercepted and 'maneuvered' the planes out of the Greek zone, the officials said.

**Buthelezi won't obstruct voting:** Zulu Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi told President F W de Klerk he would not obstruct voting in the KwaZulu homeland during South Africa's all-race election, Reuters reports from Durban.

But an ANC leader from the battlefield black townships of Natal province said de Klerk would play into Buthelezi's hands if he took the pledge at face value.

"This is not acceptable," said Blade Nzimande, whose base in the Natal midlands has seen many killings in conflicts between ANC members and Buthelezi's Inkatha Freedom Party followers.

**Thais repatriate 10000 Cambodians:** Thailand has repatriated since Friday an estimated 10,000 Cambodian refugees who fled the fighting in west Cambodia, it was reported yesterday, Xinhua says from Bangkok.

They were among the 25,000-odd people, who fled to Ban Pakkard, Chanthaburi province, east Thailand, last weekend when Cambodian government forces stormed Pailin, a stronghold of the Khmer Rouge.

Pailin has fallen to the Cambodian government forces.

**52 extremists killed in Algeria:** Fifty-two Islamic fundamentalists were killed throughout Algeria in the three days prior to the weekend, security forces said Saturday, indicating a surge in security action, AFP reports from Algiers.

The toll, which related to deaths between Wednesday and Friday, took to 323 the number of fundamentalists killed by security forces since March 10.

The killings come amid an intensified government crackdown on fundamentalists, in particular following a jail break-out on March 10 in which 900 prisoners escaped.

**Italians go to polls:** Italian voters yesterday began changing the face of the country's politics in one of the most important general elections to be held in 45 years, Reuters reports from Rome.

Polling stations opened at 0430 GMT in the two-day election, in which 48.4 million Italians are eligible to vote.

"A revolution in the ballot box," the Rome-based Messaggero newspaper declared in a banner headline yesterday.

## 28 more die in Afghan war

KABUL, Mar 27: Rival Afghan factions exchanged rocket fire overnight and throughout Saturday in the capital Kabul, killing at least 28 people and wounding more than 130, hospital doctors said, reports Reuters.

The fighting subsided on Saturday evening and a spokesman for President Burhanuddin Rabbani said an offensive by rebel militias in eastern Kabul had been repulsed.

A government aircraft bombed rebel positions south of Kabul, he said. There was no information about casualties.

Seven people were killed when a rocket hit a house where mourners had gathered for the funeral of a boy killed in a rocket attack on Friday, official Kabul radio said.

It said 19 people were killed and 17 wounded on Saturday when 273 rockets were fired on Kabul by anti-Rabbani militias controlled by Prime Minister Gulbuddin Hekmatyar and northern warlord General Abdul Rashid Dostum.

Doctors at Kabul Hospitals put casualties at 28 killed and more than 130 wounded by rocket fire since Friday evening. No estimate of casualties was available from anti-Rabbani forces.

Seventy-two houses were destroyed by rockets, the radio said.

A woman at a hospital in central Kabul said her cousin and a cook were killed and her husband and three other members of the family were

wounded when a rocket hit their house.

At another hospital in western Kabul, an 11-year-old boy said he was carrying water to his house when a rocket fell in the street killing two people and wounding six, including him.

A government spokesman said anti-Rabbani forces launched the attacks on Kabul to avenge setbacks in northern Afghanistan.

A Geneva report says: 400,000 people in Kabul are threatened with starvation due to a food blockade, the head of a UN peace mission seeking national reconciliation in Afghanistan said on Friday.

The latest round of combat around Kabul erupted on January 1.

## Paris meet for more women in politics

PARIS, Mar 27: Parliamentarians from 111 countries said on Saturday they wanted more women in politics, reports Reuters.

The 560 members of the interparliamentary union agreed after a six-day meeting in Paris there could be no dynamic democracy unless policy was defined jointly by men and women.

They agreed on a plan to remove cultural and religious obstacles to the entry of women into politics, to encourage their participation in political parties and to set legal bases of equality between sexes.

They also called on the international community to review the structure of the United Nations to give it a wider world role and better power to prevent conflicts.

The meeting also produced a declaration listing criteria for free and fair elections. It covered all aspects of a poll from the right to campaign and vote to non-discrimination in voting operations and appeals against election results.

## Yeltsin guarantor of democracy: Nixon

NEW YORK, Mar 27: Former US President Richard Nixon cautioned Friday against writing off Russian President Boris Yeltsin because of his increasingly erratic behaviour, saying he remains the best guarantor of Russian democracy, reports AFP.

Nixon, writing of his recent trip to Russia in the New York Times, noted an onset of pessimism and anti-American sentiment there and said "Russia's political scene can only be described as chaotic."

"President Yeltsin has lost much of the mystique from his historic role in the destruction of Soviet communism. He may be finding that history is against him. Over the centuries, revolutionary leaders have not been good nation-builders," Nixon wrote.

But it would be premature to write Yeltsin off because of his frequent absences from Moscow and his increasingly erratic conduct, he said.

## Ishikawa polls a test for Hosokawa

TOKYO, Mar 27: Voters in central Japan went to the polls today to elect a new governor in a crucial test for Prime Minister Morihiro Hosokawa's unwieldy coalition, reports Reuters.

The election in Ishikawa prefecture marks the first time since Hosokawa took office last August that his coalition must face an electoral challenge from the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), who were ousted by Hosokawa after 38 years in power.

Pitted against coalition candidate Masanori Tanimoto are LDP-backed Hiroshi Ishikawa and a Communist Party candidate.

Voting ends at 6 pm (0900 GMT) with results expected about 10 pm (1300 GMT).

While the vote is for the prefectural governor, the campaign's focus was on whether Hosokawa's national government has done anything good for the people.

Hosokawa campaigned for the 48-year-old coalition standard bearer on Saturday, stressing the need for more political and economic reforms after the LDP's long and often corrupt rule.

"Who will reform this country?" he asked rhetorically in a televised speech.



Miss Thailand 1994 Miss Arriya Sirisopa, 22, (R) poses beside last year's winner Miss Sattarika Ubonsiri, 22, after winning the Miss Thailand 1994 contest yesterday at Bangkok. — AFP photo

## Clinton wants to be ruler of world: Zhirinovsky

NEW YORK, Mar 27: Russia's nationalist leader Vladimir Zhirinovsky, in an interview with David Frost, says President Clinton wants to be the ruler of the world and that "America would like to destroy Russia," reports Reuters.

In the interview the nationalist also says that Russia would use nuclear weapons if it had to in any showdown with the United States and he charged that his Liberal Democratic Party actually won a majority of the votes in last December's elections but was cheated out of victory.

## Croat parliament votes to join new Bosnian Federation

SARAJEVO, Mar 27: Moves towards a new Bosnian Croat-Muslim Federation gathered pace as the Bosnian Croat parliament voted to join it and military leaders from both sides agreed on a joint army command, reports AFP.

In Mostar, south-west Bosnia, the parliament of the self-declared (Croatian) Republic of Herzeg-Bosnia voted almost unanimously on Saturday for the new federation crafted by US and Russian mediators and signed in Washington last week.

There was only one "no" vote and three abstentions for

the plan, which calls for a Muslim-Croat Federation consisting of several ethnically based cantons in a loose confederation with Croatia.

The Muslim-dominated Bosnian parliament is due to meet on Monday in Sarajevo to discuss the federation plan, which was signed in Washington by Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic, Bosnian Croat leader Kresimir Zubak and Croatian President Franjo Tudjman.

The Mostar assembly agreed to send a delegation to that meeting made up of Croat members of the Bosnian par-

liament who walked out last September protesting that the interests of the Croat minority were being ignored.

Agreement on the new federation would mean the end of Herzeg-Bosnia as an independent entity. Its powers would be transferred to a new federal government based in Sarajevo, and to the individual cantons.

The Serbs, the region's most powerful community who control nearly 70 per cent of Bosnia, have rejected any participation in the new union.

Approval for the federation had been expected after the Herzeg-Bosnia presidency

came out in favour on Friday, and Zubak urged the assembly on Saturday to accept it.

"If we are going to be realistic and objective and manage to overcome our narrow local and regional interests, I think we will reach the conclusion that this plan meets the interests of the Croatian people as a whole," Zubak said.

The assembly proposed that Zubak should be president of the new Bosnian federation. Izetbegovic, the current President of Bosnia, is expected to step down.

Sources close to the Bosnian government told

Izetbegovic might quit within a month as part of an unwritten understanding between the government and Bosnian Croats.

He should have handed over the rotating Bosnian presidency to a Croat member of the collective leadership in 1992, but regular constitutional procedures were suspended due to war.

As a further indication Izetbegovic might be preparing to step down, Sarajevo radio reported that he would reclaim the leadership of the Muslim-based, Party of Democratic Action.

Izetbegovic resigned as party chief in December 1992 when Bosnian Croats and Serbs complained that the head of a multi-ethnic state should not simultaneously lead an ethnically-based party.

Earlier on Saturday Muslims and Croats took a first practical step towards forming a new Bosnian federation when their military leaders signed an agreement for a joint army command.

The government and Croat armies shared a joint command as allies against Serbs who rebelled against Bosnia's independence in 1992.

## China selling arms to Myanmar: US

WASHINGTON, Mar 27: China is continuing to sell arms to Myanmar despite US appeals to Beijing to halt them, said a State Department official Friday, reports AFP.

The official said the US was worried about arms sales to Myanmar because of the ruling junta's history of human rights abuses.

He added that other countries apart from China were involved in the arms sales.

"We have no reason to believe these states have curbed their arms sales to the Myanmar regime," he said.

## Off the Record

### Holi not joyful for everyone

NEW DELHI: Revellers doused in lurid colours and fuelled by milk-and-hashi cocktails roamed the streets and villages of India Sunday to celebrate Holi, the most exuberant festival in the Hindu calendar, reports Reuters.

It was the first Holi celebrated for several years without a grim cloud of recent religious or political violence and joy was uninhibited.

Children, young and old, took to the streets to drench strangers with pails of coloured water, shower them with powdered colour and take a few hits in return.

Some wealthier people at their farms on the outskirts of Delhi filled big tanks with coloured water and insisted everyone get a ducking.

It was not joyful for everyone, however. Most Indians, despite the Hindu vegetarian tradition, eat meat on Holi, but this year abattoir workers decided to go on strike for higher pay. None of the mutton or goat usually eaten on Holi was available in the markets.

### Clinton made unwelcome sexual advances?

LONDON: A 27-year-old American woman has alleged that US President Bill Clinton made sexual advances to her when he was governor of Arkansas and effectively her boss, the Sunday Telegraph reported, says AFP.

It said that Paula Corbin Jones, 27, charged in an affidavit that Clinton "made a series of unwelcome sexual advances, each of which was unmistakably rebuffed" after summoning her to his hotel room nearly three years ago.

Jones, now living in California, has until May 8 to pursue the allegations in the courts before the alleged offences lapse, the paper said.

It quoted her lawyer Daniel Traylor as saying she was still hesitating over whether to go ahead, for fear it would draw reprisals against her family.

The Sunday Telegraph added that the White House had denied Jones, charges, saying that Clinton had never met her. Jones alleged that the incident occurred during a congress at the Excelsior Hotel in Little Rock, Arkansas on May 8, 1991, while she was working for the state's industrial development agency.

She went to Clinton's room when he invited her, thinking it was for professional reasons. When she rejected his advances, he threatened her with being fired, she said.

Clinton was "boorish and grotesque," Jones told the paper. "I was really afraid of losing my job."

### Followers rally to hear monk declare his innocence

BANGKOK: Some 5,000 followers of a Thai monk rallied at a Bangkok temple Saturday to show support for the controversial Buddhist leader and hear him declare his innocence in a lingering sex scandal, reports AFP.

The monk, Yantra Ammarobikkhu, has been accused of having sex with several women and, some six years ago, of fathering the child of one follower.

Yantra, in his first public statements on the matter since the charges were levelled about three months ago, said the former nun who claims she bore his child was pregnant before she met him.

He also said the woman had faked the birth certificate that she gave Thai authorities when she brought charges against him.

Thai police had declined to look into the case, saying it was a religious matter. But an investigation earlier this year by the Home Ministry's Religious Affairs Department found Yantra innocent of the sex charges.