

PLO, Israeli negotiators resume peace talks

CAIRO, Apr 10: Israeli and PLO negotiators resumed peace talks Sunday, four days before the deadline for Israel to complete a withdrawal from occupied lands that it hasn't even begun, reports AP.

Palestinians have expressed hope of at least reaching an agreement on starting the pullout by Wednesday's deadline. But Israeli officials have said they see little likelihood of succeeding before that date.

The deadline was set in the PLO-Israeli accord signed last Sept. 13. It calls for Israel to withdraw from the Gaza Strip and the West Bank town of Jericho and for the areas to be turned over to limited Palestinian self-rule.

The withdrawal was supposed to start Dec. 13 under the accord, but that deadline was missed as talks dragged on.

Negotiators said little as they entered a Cairo hotel for their meeting Sunday. Security seemed to be tighter at the hotel, apparently because of the slaying of a top Egyptian police official Saturday by suspected Muslim radicals.

"We will do our best," Nabil Shaath, chief negotiator for the Palestine Liberation Organization, said when asked

about reaching agreement this week.

The deadline is effectively Tuesday, since Wednesday is Israel's memorial day for its war dead and Thursday is the 46th anniversary of the Jewish state's creation in what had been Palestine.

In an interview Saturday, Shaath referred to Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's comments calling Wednesday's deadline unimportant, and accused Rabin of dragging out the talks as a pressure tactic.

"Every time he talks about the dates not being sacred, he suggests Israel can hold on forever and we're supposed to buckle under," Shaath complained.

He also said he feared that further prolonging the negotiations would mean more violence in Israel and the occupied territories.

"The longer the process drags on, the more it encourages extremists on both sides," he said.

Shaath said the killing of seven Israelis in a car bomb on Wednesday was "the daughter of Hebron," a reference to the West Bank city where 30 Palestinians were massacred on Feb. 25 by a Jewish settler opposed to peace talks.

'Presidential candidates must have military background'

New constitutional guidelines bar Suu Kyi from politics

BANGKOK, Apr 10: A constitutional forum steered by Myanmar's ruling military junta has adopted guidelines seen by public of the union of Myanmar. It will be divided into 14 regions and its president must be free of foreign connections, according to the radio.



Aung San Suu Kyi.

Myanmar state radio monitored in Bangkok said on Saturday night the national convention had adjourned until September 2. After setting constitutional guidelines on

the name of the state, its leadership and structure.

The guidelines say the country will be called the republic of the union of Myanmar. It will be divided into 14 regions and its president must be free of foreign connections, according to the radio.

The junta's ruling body, the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC), had earlier changed the name of the country from Burma to the Union of Myanmar after seizing power in a bloody coup in 1988.

The third clause about the head of state was directly intended to disqualify Aung San Suu Kyi from becoming involved again in politics in Myanmar, a diplomat based in Yangon told Reuters in a telephone interview.

He said the clause stipulated that candidates for the presidency cannot be married to foreigners, must not be second-generation foreigners and may receive no support from

abroad. They must have a military background and have been living in the country without interruption for at least 20 years.

Suu Kyi, 48, the daughter of national hero Colonel Aung San, and the 1993 Nobel Peace Prize recipient, has been under house arrest in Yangon since July 1989.

Married to a British academic, Michael Aris, she returned to Yangon in early 1988 to care for her ageing mother, and became involved in politics.

Despite her house arrest, the opposition National League for Democracy led by Aung San Suu Kyi won a landslide victory in a 1990 election. The junta ignored the result and refused to hand over power to the elected members of parliament.

"The junta may release her as soon as the constitution is promulgated," the diplomatic source said. The draft constitution is expected to be completed early next year.

But a Thai military source who visited Yangon recently predicted that the constitution will be put into effect later this year.

The SLORC was formed after the military staged a coup in September 1988 when scores of pro-democracy protesters were killed.

It opened the national convention in January 1993, grouping military representatives, politicians, academics and ethnic delegates, with the aim of preparing a draft constitution and paving the way for democracy.

The three new guidelines were among six proposed by the SLORC as basic principles for the constitution. One of the most controversial specifies that the military must have a prominent role in the country's politics.

"It is a sham convention, a pretext for the SLORC to prolong their power and to ban Aung San Suu Kyi from politics," a senior Karen source said.

Off the Record

Manual to deal with sexual harassment

NEW WORK: The US Navy has prepared a new handbook on how to recognise, prevent, and deal with sexual harassment. The New York Times reported Sunday, says AP.

The 64-page manual was designed as a source for Navy commanders and is to be distributed throughout the fleet by early fall, the Times said. It holds commanders responsible for eliminating sexual harassment in their ranks.

The manual, "Commander's Handbook — A Tool Kit for Prevention of Sexual Harassment," details what kind of behaviour is allowed, when caution needs to be used and what is prohibited.

The booklet also describes how complaints should be handled and warns that people who complain should not face penalties. The manual includes orders and memorandums issued by Navy leaders since dozens of women were assaulted at the Tailhook convention of naval aviators in Las Vegas in 1991.

Since 1992, the Navy has dismissed 89 officers and sailors for sexual harassment, while admitting that the new regulations have achieved mixed results, according to the Times.

Some outside experts question whether the manual — which the Navy wants to be a sign of how seriously it takes sexual harassment — will change ingrained attitudes, the Times said.

Tallest man in the world

ISLAMABAD: Mohammad Alam Channa, a Pakistani with a height of seven feet eight inches, has been included in the Guinness Book of World Record 1994 as the tallest man in the world.

According to the Associated Press of Pakistan Saturday Channa gets this title after attending a contest among the claimants to be the tallest in the world.

He is followed by an American lady Sandy Allan who is seven feet five inches tall.

ID cards for ladies of the night

NEW DELHI: A national forum of prostitutes on Sunday demanded state-issued identification papers for ladies of the night to eliminate chances of girls being forced into India's flourishing flesh trade, reports AFP.

The All India Prostitutes Welfare Association said such a step will also help in combating the menace of AIDS and help the police to track down innocent victims of the flesh trade.

"The government should issue identity cards for licensed prostitutes, which will help the police to prevent innocent girls being forced into the profession," association president Khairati Lal Bholia said.

He also demanded sterner laws to eradicate prostitution syndicates saying criminality should be divorced from the world's oldest profession.

"Flesh-traders, gangsters, touts and pimps should be punished severely," Bholia said, adding that the government should also cobbles together a pension scheme for retired or disabled prostitutes.

The federal suppression of immoral traffic act bans sex workers from soliciting in the public, though several cities have allowed regulated prostitution.

Bholia's association, which claims to have India's estimated 900,000 prostitutes on its rolls, has been crusading for a better deal for the sex workers, representation in parliament and an end to white slavery.

The ID cards will also help clients to be more wary and use condoms, Bholia said of his suggestion against the spread of the Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome disease in India.

Diana offered post of Red Cross envoy



LONDON, Apr 10: The Princess of Wales is to become roving ambassador for the British Red Cross, The Sunday Times newspaper reported, says AFP.

Red Cross Executive Director Mike Whittam said Princess Diana had agreed to spend part of her time abroad on behalf of the organisation. But he said she had not yet said whether she would take up the post.

The paper said the Princess was having French lessons and was considering learning Italian.

Princess Diana, estranged wife of Prince Charles, announced in December that she would cut down on public engagements, but she also said she would try to find a way of combining a worthwhile public activity with a more private lifestyle.

She agreed last November to become Vice-President of the British Red Cross.

Violence claims 4 more in Natal

DURBAN, Apr 10: Four people, two of them policemen, were killed in overnight violence in South Africa's volatile Natal Province, the Defence force said today, reports Reuters.

The killings bring to 144 the death toll since a state of emergency was declared in Natal and adjoining KwaZulu black homeland on March 31.

Defence force Major Nick Sendall said a policeman was shot and killed in Madadeni township near Newcastle in northern Natal on Saturday night, while another policeman was killed and one wounded near Kokstad on the border with Transkei.

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VHP's call to build Ram temple has revived fears of fresh riot

NEW DELHI, Apr 10: A call by Hindu holy men to storm the town of Ayodhya and erect a grand temple on the rubble of the Babri Mosque has revived fears of another Hindu-Muslim blood-letting in India, reports AFP.

Worried Muslim leaders are urging their 120-million-strong minority community not to be provoked and appealing to the government to stop the Hindus from carrying out the threat.

One Muslim member of parliament, Syed Shahabuddin, warned of dangerous consequences if the proposed multi-million-dollar temple for Hindu Lord Rama was allowed to come up on the Babri Mosque's ruins in Ayodhya.

"The restraint and patience Muslims have so far shown in the face of the greatest provocation should not be tested be-

yond limits," Shahabuddin, a former diplomat, said here.

"It is the government's responsibility to ensure that the temple is not built," added Ahmed Bukhari, the deputy priest of the 17th century Jama Masjid, the country's largest mosque.

"If the temple is built, there will be trouble," he said.

Some 2,000 people were killed across India in the worst Hindu-Muslim violence since independence in 1947 after thousands of Hindu fanatics tore down the 16th century Babri Mosque on December 6, 1992.

The frenzied Hindus went on to raise a small makeshift temple of their warrior-god Rama on the rubble before paramilitary forces drove them away about 40 hours after the mosque was destroyed.

On April 4, holy men

aligned to the outlawed Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP, World Hindu Council) called upon the faithful to take over the site and build a majestic Rama temple if the government failed to construct one.

The religious leaders did not fix any date, but VHP sources said the construction could begin in November.

The Observer newspaper said the holy men's April 4 call, issued after a three-day meeting in Hardwar town, had "all the incendiary element that (India) needs to once again go up in flames".

Vinay Katiyar, a hardline MP of the pro-VHP Bharatiya Janata Party (Indian People's Party), said: "The (Rama) temple will be constructed. No force on this earth can stop it... If it causes tensions, so what."



A Rwandan woman carries the baby of a Swiss family April 9 at Butare on the Rwanda-Burundi border across which numerous foreigners were fleeing the civil disturbances in Rwanda.

Foreigners start leaving Rwanda

MULINDI, Rwanda, Apr 10: The first Americans and Europeans fleeing blood-soaked Rwanda were arriving in safer havens Sunday as new reports of a massacre at a Franciscan mission surfaced, reports AP.

Three convoys of vehicles carrying roughly 300 Americans and Europeans arrived in Bujumbura, Burundi, on Saturday and early Sunday, a US Embassy source there told The Associated Press in a telephone interview.

About 330 US Marines who

had been stationed off the coast of Somalia arrived in Burundi to help with the evacuation, said US officials in Germany.

Foreigners have generally been spared the violence which has left thousands dead in ethnic fighting. It broke out after the presidents of Rwanda and Burundi were killed in a plane crash Wednesday.

Soldiers of the majority Hutu tribe were fighting rebels made up mainly of their ethnic enemies, the minority Tutsis. Civilians were shot to death,

hacked to pieces, and killed by grenades.

"There was a massacre of some sort that happened at this Franciscan mission on Friday," Oxfam spokesman John Magrath said in Oxford, England. "We don't even know how many people were killed."

Magrath said three workers of the relief agency from the United States, Britain and the Netherlands, saw Hutu forces enter the Franciscan mission.

"They looted it, they flushed out all the Tutsis who were there and killed them all," Magrath said.

BRIEFLY

Israeli police chief resigns: Israeli police chief Rafi Peled announced his resignation on Saturday following a Supreme Court order to reopen an investigation into charges that he received discounts at a hotel chain, Reuters reports from Jerusalem.

"It was not easy to reach this decision but because the Israel police is dear to me and the security of Israel is important to me, I decided this is the step I must take now," Peled told a hastily-assembled news conference in Jerusalem.

The high court of justice told the Attorney General on Thursday to start procedures for a disciplinary hearing against Peled but rejected petitions to press criminal charges.

Balladur ends Shanghai tour:

French Prime Minister Edouard Balladur left Shanghai yesterday after a four-day visit aimed at mending fences with China, the French consulate said, AFP reports from Shanghai.

Balladur's aircraft left around midday (0400 GMT) after a slight delay caused by an engine problem, it said.

The visit to Beijing and Shanghai was intended to set the seal on normalising ties, after a two-year dispute caused by the sale of French Mirage jets to Taiwan, considered by China to be a renegade province.

3000 Peruvian rebels surrender:

More than 3,000 Shining Path rebels have surrendered to government forces so far this year on the northeastern Hualaga front, the government reported Saturday, AFP says from Lima.

According to General Alfredo Rodriguez, chief military officer in the region, the majority of the insurgents surrendered in Tingo Maria, Huanuco, 450 kilometers (280 miles) east of Lima.

Authorities also reported confiscating 56 shotguns, 25 rifles, grenades and munitions.

Vietnamese army chief in China:

The Chief of Staff of the Vietnamese Army, General Dao Dinh Luyen, arrived in China Saturday for an official visit, The army daily Quan Doi Nhan Dan said, AFP reports from Hanoi.

General Luyen is also a member of the Communist Party's Central Committee and Vice Minister of Defence.

The paper provided no other details about the trip, which comes three years after official normalisation between China and Vietnam which has led to several exchanges of military delegations, including defence ministers. China and Vietnam fought a brief, bloody border war in 1979 and are still locked in dispute over their joint frontier and rival claims on the Spratly Islands, in the South China Sea.

Blast kills 3 in Yemen:

A bomb at school killed three people and wounded two on Saturday in northern Yemen, the newspaper Al-Ayam reported, AFP says from Aden.

The weekly published in the southern port city of Aden said the explosion ripped through an administrative building of the school in Jubah, in the government of Shabwa.

It did not identify the casualties. Meanwhile a daily also published in Aden, Sawt al-Ummal, said that two local employees of the US oil firm hunt were wounded when their car came under fire in the Maswar region of northern Yemen on April 3.

4 die as planes collide in US:

Four people were killed Saturday when two small private planes collided as they were coming in to land at an airfield at Farmingdale, local authorities said, AFP reports from New York.

The four were aboard a Cessna-152 and a Piper Comanche which collided and crashed on to a factory, setting off a fire which was quickly put out.

The cause of the collision was not immediately known.

Moderate quake shakes Japan:

A moderate earthquake measuring 5.5 on the Richter scale jolted northern Japan yesterday, the Meteorological Agency said, AFP reports from Tokyo.

There were no reports of injuries or property damage from the quake, which occurred shortly after 3:00 (0600 GMT), police said.

Turkish troops kill 72 Kurds

ANKARA, Apr 10: Troops killed 72 Kurdish guerrillas and lost six men in a week of clashes in Turkey, reports Reuters.

Provincial authorities said in a statement that soldiers shot dead six rebels of the separatist Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) in an overnight clash in Sirtak province.

Security forces recovered the bodies of a further 32 militants killed in a combined air and land attack launched on Tuesday against their mountain strongholds in Diyarbakir and Bitlis provinces, the statement said.

The governor's office reported 34 guerrillas, an officer and five soldiers killed on Friday.

Ghali orders UN troops to reverse Serb gains in Gorazde

SARAJEVO, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Apr 10: UN troops were ordered to use "all available means" to roll back Serb military gains in the Muslim enclave of Gorazde as cease-fire talks remained deadlocked, reports AP.

UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali issued the order Saturday after Bosnian Serbs used tanks and artillery to capture a key ridge overlooking central Gorazde on Friday. His spokeswoman said air strikes were a possibility.

But the UN commander in Bosnia, Lt. Gen. Sir Michael Rose, said he had no immediate plans to use force against the Serbs and would continue pursuing negotiations.

Boutros-Ghali's order came after nearly two weeks of Serb advances on the Gorazde en-

clave, 60 kilometers (35 miles) southeast of Sarajevo. It was unclear what effect the order would have, because there are no UN peacekeeping troops in Gorazde.

But similar tough talk by the secretary-general preceded a NATO ultimatum in February that forced Serbs to pull back their heavy guns from Sarajevo under threat of air strikes.

Washington and NATO have urged a speed-up of the planned deployment of hundreds of Ukrainian peacekeepers in Gorazde, a town of 65,000.

Fighting there threatens recent steps toward peace in Bosnia, including a Muslim-Serb truce in Sarajevo that has held since February 10, and an agreement by Croats and the

Muslim-led government to stop fighting and from a federation.

Sarajevo radio said Saturday night that Bosnian Serb forces had launched artillery and tank attacks against the government-controlled Bihac region in northwest Bosnia, killing five civilians and wounding a number of others since Friday.

Rebel Muslim leader, Fikret Abdic had also launched sporadic artillery attacks throughout the day, according to the radio, monitored in London.

In Sarajevo, talks between Bosnian Serb and government military chiefs yielded no apparent progress Saturday. Rose said he told the two sides to think over their options for 48 hours.

"I hope both sides will consider not pushing forward in any way at all on the ground during this period," he said.

The government Commander Gen. Rasim Delic, told Bosnian radio he "accepted completely" a UN proposal for a 14-day truce "which includes that the Serbs have to withdraw from the safe area of Gorazde."

He said Serb Gen. Ratko Mladic had countered with a proposal that would let Serbs keep their gains in Gorazde. Mladic told reporters he wanted "agreement on the permanent and complete cessation of hostilities, which is far more than what was offered by the opposite party."

US special envoy Charles Redman said he still hoped for progress. "There certainly

does seem to be a sense on both sides that some things are possible now that didn't see possible even some months ago," said.

He declined to comment on Boutros-Ghali's order, saying he and Rose weren't aware of it "until virtually at the end of the meeting today."

After meeting in Geneva with the UN mission chief in former Yugoslavia, Yasushi Akashi, Boutros-Ghali called for a return by the parties, especially the Bosnian Serbs, to the positions they held before the outbreak of the recent fighting," said his spokeswoman, Therese Gastaut.

Boutros-Ghali told UN forces "to use all available means as authorized by the relevant Security Council resolutions to attain this objective,"

Gastaut said.

"We don't exclude any means, and airstrikes are included in those Security Council resolutions."

Maj. Rob Annink said Friday's advance put the Serbs atop a hill south of the Drina River "in line of sight" of central Gorazde. The area, known as the Gradina heights, is just 4 kilometers (2 1/2 miles) from the town centre.

Though there was no shelling of the town Friday, Annink said, although "a number of villages were seen burning" in outlying areas.

Bosnian radio said Serb shelling continued Saturday. UN aid officials reported two deaths Friday, bringing the total to at least 85 since the offensive started.

3000 troops to take part in jt exercises in Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, Apr 10: Some 3,000 US, British and Kuwaiti troops are to take part in joint exercises next week, the largest in the Emirate since the 1991 Gulf War, military and diplomatic sources said here Saturday, reports AFP.

Lieutenant Colonel Bruce Cole, a US military spokesman, said around 2,500 marines and navy personnel would take part in the air, land and sea manoeuvres code named native fury 1994.

The US destroyer Oldendorf and six F-18 warplanes were expected in Kuwait, while the first marines started to arrive last Monday by plane from California.