

## Rabbani declares truce in Kabul

KABUL, Apr 13: Afghan President Burhanuddin Rabbani today proposed an immediate end to the factional fighting in Kabul, but not in the northern provinces, reports AFP.

"I declare an immediate and permanent ceasefire inside Kabul along," Rabbani told the 60 to 70 assembled peace delegates, some from Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, at the opening session of an Islamic Clergymen's peace delegation. However, the president firmly stated that he would not

### Pulitzer prizes announced

NEW YORK, Apr 13: Winners of the 1994 Pulitzer prizes in journalism and arts were announced here today, reports Xinhua.

According to the New York based Columbia University, which administers the prize competition, there were 14 journalism and seven arts categories of the prizes.

Among the journalism prizes, one of the major awards for journalists in the United States, the New York Times captured three spot news reporting, feature writing and feature photography. The Chicago Tribune took two awards for explanatory journalism and editorial writing.

The Times' report on the World Trade Centre bombing, which happened on February 26 last year, won the spot news reporting prize.

Each award of the prizes carries a cash prize of 3,000 US dollars except the public service award, which comes with a gold medal.

## BRIEFLY

**Blast kills 11 in China:** A driver fixing a stalled bus triggered a blast that killed 11 passengers and injured 23 near China's coastal Qingdao City, an official newspaper said. Reuter reports from Beijing.

Six of the 11 dead were burned beyond recognition in the April 4 explosion in Shandong province, Shanghai's Xinhua Evening News said in a report seen on Wednesday in Beijing.

Four of the 23 injured were in serious condition, including a 75-year-old passenger, the report said.

**Mubarak's visit to Japan postponed:** Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak's visit to Japan, originally scheduled for April 18, was postponed. Egypt's official Middle East News Agency (MENA) reported Tuesday, Xinhua says from Cairo.

The postponement is due to the recent political developments in Japan. MENA quoted a Foreign Minister statement as saying:

A new date for the visit will be set later, according to the statement.

The Japanese Prime Minister announced his resignation on April 8 and his successor has not been chosen yet.

**Arafat in Strasbourg:** Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) chairman Yasser Arafat arrived in the French city of Strasbourg yesterday to address the Council of Europe for the first time, airport officials said. Reuter reports from Strasbourg.

Arafat was due to address the parliamentary assembly of the 32 nation council, which promotes democracy and human rights, at 11.30 am (0930 gmt).

He was also due to hold a news conference at 2.45 pm (1245 gmt) before leaving again later in the afternoon.

**4 Palestinians shot in Jericho:** An Israeli civilian shot and wounded four Palestinian students in front of their school in the occupied West Bank town of Jericho on Wednesday, a student said. Reuter reports from Jericho.

A 16-year-old youth who was wounded in the shoulder by bullet fragments said an Israeli civilian in a patrol truck sprayed bullets at the students in front of a high school and fled.

The Jericho hospital confirmed four students were admitted but said they were hit by rubber bullets. The shootings occurred before a bomb killed six people on an Israeli bus in the central town of Hadera.

**ROK's chief Buddhist monk resigns:** The chief monk of South Korea's largest Buddhist order resigned Wednesday, ending two weeks of violence that resulted in hundreds of arrests, AP reports from Seoul.

"I apologise to the people for the confusion," Suh Uhyun, chief of the Chogye order, said in announcing his resignation. Almost 80 people were reported injured in the protests against him.

Dissidents have welcomed the resignation and announced that an emergency meeting of senior monks would be held this week to select Suh's successor.

**Quake shakes Oregon:** A magnitude 5.5 earthquake shook southern Oregon and northern California Monday night. There were no immediate reports of injuries, AP reports from Portland.

Preliminary estimates from the University of Washington Geophysics Department places the quake's epicentre between Klamath Falls, in southern Oregon, a Yreka, in northern California.

The area is sparsely populated and there were no immediate reports of injuries. But the quake reportedly smashed at least one storefront window in Klamath Falls and was blamed for scattered power outages in the region.

**Commons' committee backs democratic reforms in HK**

LONDON, Apr 13: Plans by Hong Kong governor Chris Patten for democratic reforms despite Chinese opposition won backing Wednesday from the House of Commons' Foreign Affairs Select Committee, reports AP.

"To be seen to give in to China would have undermined the authority of the governor and the government of Hong Kong to such an extent that the stability of Hong Kong, and perhaps financial stability too, would be at risk," it said in a report.

The all-party committee supported the British govern-

ment's refusal to water down the planned democratic reforms and do a deal with China "which could appear shabby and inadequate."

But it noted that many critics regard the planned reforms as too little and too late.

The committee called for the establishment by law of a human rights commission for Hong Kong.

It said that after 1997, when Britain's lease expires and the colony reverts to Chinese rule, Britain will not be able to guarantee much protection to the people of Hong Kong.

"We are determined to continue the fighting until the final annihilation of the militias in Afghanistan," Rabbani said.

Coupled with Rabbani's tough stand against the northern militias, he also accused neighbouring Uzbekistan of supplying Dostum with military aide in order to undermine the Islamic state of Afghanistan.

"Uzbekistan has sent tanks, aircraft, ammunition and logistical support to Dostum," he claimed.

In Kabul the military situation is complicated by the fact that Dostum is in alliance with Prime Minister Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, whom Rabbani called upon to cut ties with the Uzbek warlord.

The final fate of the militia is in the hands of Hekmatyar, and only Hekmatyar," Rabbani declared in a challenge to his rival.

Rabbani asked his call for a permanent Kabul ceasefire to be taken to Hekmatyar by the head of a provincial peace delegation, Jalaluddin Haqqani, who was also present at the Intercontinental Hotel opening session.

## Serbs continue offensive against Gorazde OIC calls for extension of air raids to protect 6 safe areas

JEDDAH, Saudi Arabia, Apr 13: The organisation of the Islamic conference Tuesday urged NATO to stage bombing raids to protect all six UN-designated Muslim safe areas in Bosnia, not just Gorazde, reports AFP.

In a statement, the organisation called on the United Nations to endorse such an extension of the raids, saying that they created the six safe zones.

US warplanes operating under NATO command bombed Serb positions outside Serb besieged Gorazde in eastern

Bosnia on Sunday and Monday.

The Islamic conference reiterated its calls for the world body to exempt the Muslim-led government in Sarajevo from a UN embargo on arms sales to the former Yugoslav Republics.

Reuter adds: Bosnian Serb

leader Radovan Karadzic said today that Serbs would treat UN peacekeeping forces as a potentially hostile force after NATO jets bombed Serb positions around Gorazde in eastern Bosnia.

Karadzic, in a letter to the United Nations Secretary General, reiterated the suspension of Serb relations with the UN Protection Force (UNPROFOR), announced on Sunday after NATO carried out the first of two air raids against Serb forces besieging the UN designated "safe haven" of Gorazde.

"All our agreements so far, and our good manners which we displayed out of our trust in you, are now a thing of the past since we are forced to regard the behaviour of UNPROFOR as a potentially hostile force," Karadzic wrote in a letter to UN Secretary General Boutros-Ghali.

Meanwhile Serbian forces continued their offensive against the Muslim enclave of Gorazde in eastern Bosnia throughout the night, radio Sarajevo reported Wednesday.

There was no immediate confirmation from United Nations military sources.

The radio said major concentrations of troops had been seen at Ustipraca, 20 kms (12 miles) northeast of Gorazde, where elements of the army corps from Uzice and special troops from Nis, both towns in Serbia, have arrived with 15 tanks.

US F-18 fighter plane takes off from the NATO military base in Aviano April 12 for a routine flight. The F-18 was used for the April 11 bombing of Serb positions around the besieged Muslim enclave of Gorazde in Bosnia.

— AFP photo

## 'Delhi to sit with Kashmiris if they give up violent campaign'

NEW DELHI, Apr 13: The Indian government is ready for peace talks with Kashmiri Muslim militants if they give up secessionist demands and accept Indian sovereignty, Home Minister Shankarrao Chavan said here Tuesday, reports AFP.

"If the rebels are prepared to come for talks there is no objection," Chavan told reporters.

But the guerrillas would have to give up their violent four-year-old campaign for an end to Indian rule over Kashmir before talks can begin, Chavan said in a reiteration of New Delhi's stand.

"Ultimately it has to be within the constitution. Any talks beyond the constitution are ruled out," he added. Chavan's colleague Rajesh Pilot, Internal Security Minister, had said late Monday that the government wanted a political settlement of the issue but would not hesitate to take stern measures to quell violence.

Pilot said more paramilitary troops would be deployed across the province and security at military installations

strengthened to foil attacks by Muslim militants, whom India alleges are armed and trained by neighbour Pakistan.

He did not specify the number of reinforcements to be sent to the valley, where

### 11 Maoist guerrillas killed in Bihar

NEW DELHI, Apr 13: At least 11 Maoist guerrillas were killed and eight policemen injured in a fierce gunbattle overnight in the eastern Indian state of Bihar, the Press Trust of India (PTI) reported today. Nawada's stand.

The slain rebels belonged to the outlawed Marxist Communist Centre (MCC) organisation, PTI said, adding that they were gunned down by police in the district of Nawada during a raid.

"Release our innocent colleagues," they screamed. "We want justice."

Ghulam Rasool, a labourer leading the protest, said the two employees Munir Ahmed and Mohammed Altaf who were arrested Saturday remained in detention for the blast at a key ammunitions depot.

Some 1,200 slogan-chanting demonstrators gathered in front of the field ordinance depot in Nainagar, the state summer capital, to demand the release of their colleagues picked up for the March 29 blast which killed 15 officers.

The bombing occurred as Israelis marked the eve of Independence Day and Memorial Day for soldiers killed in Arab-Israeli wars.

Police were alerted for possible further reprisal attacks for the February 25 Hebron mosque massacre, in which a Jewish settler killed 30 worshippers.

"I can only express deep shock and pain for this terrible thing that was done on such a day," Shahal said on army radio.

The blast occurred at about 9:40 am in Hadera, a town just south of the northern port of Haifa, on a bus apparently heading for Tel Aviv.

Yaakov Ganot, commander of northern police said on Israel radio that five people were killed. Officials at Hillel Yaffe Hospital in Hadera reported treating 21 wounded people, most suffering from light injuries.

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