

## BRIEFLY

## Lebanon severs ties with Iraq:

Lebanon severed its diplomatic ties with Iraq Monday after Baghdad refused to lift the immunity of two detained diplomats suspected of killing an Iraqi dissident in Beirut last week, minister said. Reuter reports from Beirut.

Ministers who attended an emergency session of the Syrian backed government of Prime Minister Rafik Al-Hariri told reporters the cabinet voted unanimously to cut ties with Iraq.

Minister of State Hassan Izzeddine said: "The cabinet has unanimously voted for severing ties with Baghdad."

## Thai FM visits Myanmar:

Thai Foreign Minister Prasong Soontri travelled to Myanmar today to invite its ruling junta to a July meeting of southeast Asia's most important group, reports Reuter from Bangkok.

Prasong was due to meet junta chief General Than Shwe and other leaders and invite Myanmar to attend as a guest a ministerial meeting in Bangkok of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), a Thai Foreign Ministry official said.

## 30 tonnes drug seized in Lebanon:

Lebanese and Syrian troops seized 30 tonnes of hashish and arrested 16 suspects on Monday during a crackdown in eastern Lebanon, official sources said. Reuter reports from Baalbek, Lebanon.

They said the drugs, packed and ready for shipping, were found during a house-to-house search of two villages in the eastern Bekaa Valley.

Some weapons were confiscated during the operation, they added.

## Blast in central Tehran:

A bomb exploded in central Tehran yesterday and security forces sealed off the area, witnesses said, AFP reports from Tehran.

Ambulances and fire engines raced to the scene but there was no immediate word on casualties from the blast, which is believed to have been caused by a car bomb.

## 10 die in Indian bus mishap:

At least 10 people were killed and 40 injured Sunday, when an overloaded Indian bus skidded into a deep ditch in the mountainous northern state of Kashmir, police said. Reuter says from Jammu.

The bus, carrying 80 passengers, slipped off the road on a bend near Doda about 550 km (350 miles) north of the Indian capital Delhi.

Police said some of the seriously injured were airlifted to nearby Jammu for emergency treatment.

## 18 civilians killed in Peru:

At least 18 civilians were killed and two were missing following a weekend attack in Peru's Amazon basin region blamed on Shining Path rebels, the army said Monday. AFP reports from Lima.

The people killed late Saturday in Monterrico, 225 miles east of Lima, included four children and family members "who refused to continue giving (compelled) logistical support" to the Maoist guerrillas, the army command said in a statement.

The rebels used firearms and blades in the attack on the village, setting fire to houses and looting homeowners' belongings before withdrawing, the army said.

## Court verdict on divorce divides Indian Muslims

NEW DELHI, Apr 19: A court verdict striking down the traditional form of Muslim divorce has divided Indian Muslims — the liberals welcoming the move and the conservatives enraged, reports AP.

Many Muslim groups reported Monday saying that Indian courts had no business interfering with the Shariat, the Muslim personal law.

The order Friday by the Allahabad High Court in the northern state of Uttar Pradesh struck down a Muslim tradition that allows Muslim men to divorce by saying "Talaq, Talaq, Talaq," which means divorce in Arabic.

"It is the established view that triple utterance of Talaq in one sitting annuls marriage," said Maulana Asad Madani, President of the Jamiat Ulama-Hind, a Muslim political party.

Their validity of Muslim divorce laws could not be adjudicated by courts, said Syed Sahabuddin, a Muslim federal lawmaker belonging to the opposition Janata Dal party.

There are no nationwide figures, but clerics say most divorces among 100 million Muslims in predominantly Hindu India, occur this way. India ranks among the countries with the biggest Muslim population along with Indonesia, Bangladesh and Pakistan — all of which are Islamic states.

"The termination of a marriage in one sitting has been held valid from the days of the Prophet," G M Banatwala, President of the Muslim League, the largest Muslim political party, was quoted by the Asian Age daily as saying.

But many young and educated Muslims welcome the court order. "When marriage is done with fanfare and elaborate rituals, how can you annul a marriage abruptly in one sitting," said Naseem Sheikh, a lawyer in the western city of Bombay.

"With this verdict of the High Court, I hope we are moving a step closer to gender justice," said Shabana Azmi, a movie actress who has worked in Bombay and Hollywood.

## Khmers recapture ex-HQ in Pailin

PHNOM PENH, Apr 19: Cambodia's Khmer Rouge have recaptured their former headquarters in western Pailin, guerrillas based in Phnom Penh said today, reports Reuter.

"We recaptured Pailin today, April 19 at 12.45 pm. We seized eight tanks and destroyed seven," said one official based at the Khmer Rouge's office in Phnom Penh. He added that government soldiers, who took the town one month ago, had "fled in disarray across their own minefields."

Fighting between rebels and army units had been reported within a 15 km (nine miles) radius of the town since the government's March 19 attack.

Asked to comment on the military situation in Pailin, one senior Cambodian army commander said: "For the time being I can't confirm that Pailin has been recaptured by the Khmer Rouge."

## Ghali seeks broader authority to order air strikes on Serbs

SARAJEVO, Apr 19: The United Nations prepared to send more peacekeepers and asked NATO for broader authority to order air strikes as Bosnia Serbs closed in on the Muslim enclave of Gorazde, reports AP.

UN officials said Monday that Serb leaders had committed yet again to a ceasefire and the deployment of UN troops in the eastern enclave, home to an estimated 65,000 people. But it might be another of several broken pledges in recent days.

"The town is at their mercy," said the UN commander for Bosnia, Lt Gen Sir Michael Rose of Britain. "We are on the edge of a major humanitarian catastrophe."

UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali responded by asking NATO to authorise air strikes to protect all the UN-designated "safe areas" in Bosnia. He was seeking broader authority to call in NATO planes but made no specific request for military action to end the Serbian siege of Gorazde.

UN spokesman Maj Dacre Holloway said a Red Cross convoy and a company of UN troops were prepared to head to Gorazde on Tuesday. Miroslav Krizanjic, speaker of the Bosnian Serb assembly, claimed they had stopped all military activities around Gorazde. But relief officials and local leaders reported more shelling.

Russia's special envoy, Vitaly Churkin, lashed out at Serb leaders after trying to negotiate a halt to the fighting at Gorazde. Churkin said he had never heard so many broken promises. He said his government should break off talks with the Serbs, despite their cultural and religious ties with

Russia.

"The time for talking is over," he said upon returning to Moscow. "The Bosnian Serbs must understand that by dealing with Russia, they are dealing with a great power and not a banana republic."

Churkin offered little hope to the thousands of refugees huddled in the ruins of Gorazde trying to escape explosions and bullets from snipers and machine guns. "There is very little way to control the situation," he told reporters in Zagreb, Croatia.

In Washington, President Clinton dismissed the possibility of further air attacks on Serb forces around Gorazde. He renewed his call for an end to the UN ban on arms shipments to Bosnia's Muslim-led government.

The European Union nations sought a meeting with the United States, Russia and

the United Nations for a coordinated diplomatic effort like the ultimatum that forced Serbs to pull artillery away from Sarajevo in February.

Bosnia's Muslim president, Alija Izetbegovic, said that watching Gorazde crumble taught his people a lesson. "In this world only force is respected," he told 2,000 people in Sarajevo protesting against the United Nations.

"The defenses have collapsed. There are intentional and indiscriminate attacks on civilians," UN spokesman Joe Sills said in New York.

The few UN workers in Gorazde reported artillery shells hit the town's hospital, a refugee centre and the Red Cross building.

One shell fell every 20 seconds during the morning and slowed to one a minute by mid-afternoon, said Ron Redmond.

Mitterrand urged EU, Russia and US to help stop war in Bosnia

## Mitterrand urges EU, Russia and US to help stop war in Bosnia

PARIS, Apr 19: French President Francois Mitterrand on Monday called on the European Union, Russia and the United States to mount an urgent, diplomatic initiative to stop the fighting in Bosnia, reports Reuter.

Citing deteriorating conditions in Bosnia and the failure of recent diplomatic efforts, Mitterrand's office said a statement the French President called on UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali to organise the fresh diplomatic drive.

A Mitterrand spokesman said the French head of state telephoned US President Bill Clinton last Thursday.

He sent letters on Friday to Russian President Boris Yeltsin, Boutros-Ghali and Greek Prime Minister Andreas Papandreu.

Watanabe won't quit LDP

TOKYO, Apr 19: Former Japanese Foreign Minister Michio Watanabe announced today he would not quit the opposition Liberal Democratic Party to run for prime minister, reports AP.

His decision makes it almost certain that Foreign Minister Tsutomu Hata, 58, will be selected by the ruling seven-member coalition for the post, Jiji press said.

Watanabe, 70, had threatened to leave the LDP, hoping to pick up enough political support within the coalition to run for the premiership. But he gave up his bid after failing to gain considerable support from the ruling coalition.

Watanabe's decision makes it virtually that Hata will be the coalition's choice. Hata is considered the strongest candidate to replace Prime Minister Morihiro Hosokawa who resigned April 8 over allegations of involvement in financial scandals.

ROK police foil Anti-US rally

SEOUL, Apr 19: Riot police firing tear gas crushed a violent anti-American protest today by some 300 radical students against the deployment of Patriot anti-missile batteries at US bases in South Korea, witnesses said, reports AP.

Fighting erupted in the southern city of Kwangju when the demonstrators hurled rocks in a bid to occupy a US cultural centre building, denouncing the arrival Monday of the Patriots, witnesses in Kwangju said by telephone.

## Off the Record

## What's in a name?

MOSCOW: There's a sober side to the Beer Lovers Party: It wants to be taken seriously, reports AP.

But when the Beer Lovers tried to register as a bona fide political party, Justice Ministry officials balked.

"They said our name was too 'unusual' for Russia," said Konstantin Kolachev, 29-year-old secretary-general of the anti-party party.

The Beer Lovers stuck to their steins. Nothing doing, they replied. It's Beer Lovers party or nothing.

No dice, the ministry said, giving them a month to think it over.

At a suds-soaked news conference Monday — the beer was free, naturally — the Beer Lovers said they weren't backing down. "We'll give the ministry another chance," Kolachev said generously.

Are these guys for real? Sort of.

The party was born over a glass of beer in December after Communists, neo-fascists and assorted other hard-liners romped to victory in parliamentary elections that attracted barely half the electorate.

Kolachev and party chairman Dmitry Shestakov, both of whom had run and lost as candidates of moderate parties, read the returns as a massive protest vote, a huge "NO!" to politics as usual.

What, they wondered as they and a few like-minded friends dissected the election, could everyone be FOR? They took another sip and it hit them: Beer. What's not to like about a nice, cool, frothy brew?

"If people stop voting altogether, there won't be any democracy to speak of," Shestakov said. "There will be a totalitarian regime — or oligarchy."

The party now boasts 10,000 members, a fax machine and a "politburo." It has a position on the Black Sea Fleet issue and friends in high places, among them Sergei Shakhral, leader of the mainstream Party of Unity and Accord.

## Gunman dressed as lawyer in court

BOMBAY: A gunman dressed as a lawyer whipped out a pistol from under his gown and shot and seriously wounded an alleged Bombay gangster in a court here, police said Tuesday, reports AP.

Ashwin Naik, facing trial under anti-terrorism laws, was hospitalised in serious condition after being shot twice in the head at close range Monday while being escorted by police to a hearing, police said.

The gunman, Ravindra Sawant, 25, suspected to be a member of a rival gang, was arrested after being shot and injured by a policeman.

Sawant was dressed in a lawyer's gown and carrying a law-book, the code of criminal procedure, when he pulled out the handgun and opened fire on Naik, police said.

Three accomplices sped away in a getaway car following the shooting, police said.

Interneicne clashes are frequent among Bombay gangsters who run illegal gambling networks and a flourishing flesh trade the western Indian metropolis.

## Perry welcomes statement DPRK will never have N-weapons: Kim-II-Sung

WASHINGTON, Apr 19: North Korean President Kim II-Sung said in an interview with the Washington Times today that his country does not have the need, the will or the ability to make nuclear weapons, reports Reuter.

North Korea has been accused of developing a nuclear capability and has resisted international efforts to make a full inspection of its nuclear installations.

Kim said in weekend meeting with diplomats and a small group of reporters that "we have neither the need to make nuclear weapons or the will and the ability to do so."

"We will never have nuclear weapons. I promise you. Who can we use them against?" Kim said.

Kim said the Patriot missiles the United States sent to South Korea because of rising tensions on the Korean peninsula "are war weapons regardless of their use."

The North Korean leader also said Japan was "moving to arm herself with nuclear weapons" and this "presents a great threat to the peace and security" in Asia.

Asked about a North Korean diplomat who threatened North Korea would turn the South into a "sea of fire," Kim replied that the diplomat said "something which was out of place."

"Actually, we don't want any war," he said. "Those who like war are completely out of their mind."

Another report says, US



Pakistan's Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto (L) is greeted by nine-year old Mehreen (C) and twelve-year old Samnand (R), children of embassy employees, as she arrives at the Bonn/Cologne airport April 18. Benazir started the official part of her three-day visit to Germany Tuesday. — AFP photo

## Progress in Cairo talks on Palestinian self-rule

CAIRO, Apr 19: Israel and the PLO have made progress in negotiations on self-rule in Gaza and Jericho but Israel is still resisting demands for a full amnesty for Palestinian prisoners, a senior PLO official said, reports Reuter.

Nabil Shaath said the two sides were closer to agreeing the scope of jurisdiction of a fledgling Palestinian legal system in the areas designated for self-rule under a peace accord signed in Washington last September.

"I think we are closing in today on arrangements of jurisdiction that is as close to the declaration of principles as possible," Shaath, who heads the PLO delegation, told reporters after more than 12 hours of talks on Monday.

At issue is the scope of Palestinian law over Israelis and foreigners in the autonomous areas, as well as Israeli law over Palestinians.

"What they presented in the beginning was a total defiance of the declaration," added Shaath without elaborating.

Talks on an amnesty for Palestinian prisoners remain stalled, he said. The Palestinian Liberation Organisation is insisting that the amnesty cover militants from the Muslim fundamentalist group Hamas, which opposes the Cairo talks.

In the past two weeks members of Hamas have killed 12 Israelis in two suicide bombings. On Monday an Arab said by police to be a Hamas guerrilla attacked bus passengers in Jerusalem with an axe, wounding up to four people.

Israel says it cannot free those Hamas supporters who might carry out acts of violence and has offered to release 5,000 prisoners leaving at least 3,000 still in jail.

The prisoners are still being discussed but I cannot report progress today," he said.

The head of the Israeli delegation, deputy chief of staff Amnon Shakhna, declined to speak to reporters at the end of Monday's talks.

PLO executive committee member Mahmood Abbas, also known as Abu Mazen, arrived in Cairo late on Monday. Shaath said Abbas, who signed the Washington peace accord for the PLO, would stay until the end of this week's talks.

He said PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat and Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, who are due to meet in Bucharest this week, would discuss the progress of the Cairo talks.

Blacks consider Afrikaans as language of the oppressor

SOWETO, South Africa, Apr 19: A blunder eight years ago by a minister for black education sparked a South African uprising that led eventually to the country's first all-race elections this month, reports Reuter.

Mass defiance shook white-ruled South Africa and boosted black nationalist morale.

Protests against teaching in Afrikaans in black schools sparked a nationwide violence, beginning in Soweto in June 1976, that killed hundreds.

The apartheid bastion was never the same again after the November 1975 decree that black school pupils would be taught in what was regarded as a language of racial oppression.

Hostility to the decree by then-Bantu education minister MC Botha forged a profound change in South African politics, says Soweto teacher Bongosi Ngubo.

The announcement sent shock waves through the classrooms and the black community because Afrikaans was

## Watanabe won't quit LDP

TOKYO, Apr 19: Former Japanese Foreign Minister Michio Watanabe announced today he would not quit the opposition Liberal Democratic Party to run for prime minister, reports AP.

His decision makes it almost certain that Foreign Minister Tsutomu Hata, 58, will be selected by the ruling seven-member coalition for the post, Jiji press said.

Watanabe, 70, had threatened to leave the LDP, hoping to pick up enough political support within the coalition to run for the premiership. But he gave up his bid after failing to gain considerable support from the ruling coalition.

Watanabe's decision makes it virtually that Hata will be the coalition's choice. Hata is considered the strongest candidate to replace Prime Minister Morihiro Hosokawa who resigned April 8 over allegations of involvement in financial scandals.

## ROK police foil Anti-US rally

SEOUL, Apr 19: Riot police firing tear gas crushed a violent anti-American protest today by some 300 radical students against the deployment of Patriot anti-missile batteries at US bases in South Korea, witnesses said, reports AP.

Fighting erupted in the southern city of Kwangju when the demonstrators hurled rocks in a bid to occupy a US cultural centre building, denouncing the arrival Monday of the Patriots, witnesses in Kwangju said by telephone.

## Perry welcomes statement DPRK will never have N-weapons: Kim-II-Sung

WASHINGTON, Apr 19: North Korean President Kim II-Sung said in an interview with the Washington Times today that his country does not have the need, the will or the ability to make nuclear weapons, reports Reuter.

North Korea has been accused of developing a nuclear capability and has resisted international efforts to make a full inspection of its nuclear installations.

Kim said in weekend meeting with diplomats and a small group of reporters that "we have neither the need to make nuclear weapons or the will and the ability to do so."

"We will never have nuclear weapons. I promise you. Who can we use them against?" Kim said.

Kim said the Patriot missiles the United States sent to South Korea because of rising tensions on the Korean peninsula "are war weapons regardless of their use."

The North Korean leader also said Japan was "moving to arm herself with nuclear weapons" and this "presents a great threat to the peace and security" in Asia.

Asked about a North Korean diplomat who threatened North Korea would turn the South into a "sea of fire," Kim replied that the diplomat said "something which was out of place."

"Actually, we don't want any war," he said. "Those who like war are completely out of their mind."

Another report says, US

Fierce fighting in Kigali

KIGALI, Apr 19: Fighting intensified in Kigali early today, with "heavy shelling and lots of gunfire" as rebels battled government forces for control of the body-strwn Rwandan capital, a United Nations official said, reports AP.

The increase in fighting followed an admission by army commanders Monday that 1,000 rebel reinforcements had entered Kigali.

Acting armed forces chief of staff General Marcel Gatsinzi said the military was prepared to consider all rebel conditions for a ceasefire.

But UN officials contacted by telephone in Kigali said the two sides had failed to meet to negotiate a ceasefire because they had rejected each other's demands.

The rebel Rwandan patriotic front wants the disbanding of the interim government proclaimed after the death of President Juvenal Habyarimana. In a mysterious April 6 plane crash.

Thousands of people have been killed in Rwanda in the past two weeks in an orgy of violence that erupted after the presidents of Rwanda and neighbouring Burundi were killed in a rocket attack on April 6.

considered the language of the oppressor and few blacks had any interest in it," says Ngubo, 32, who teaches in the huge black township outside Johannesburg.

For some members of the "class of '76," wounds of the protest clashes remain literally.

They shuffle about with broken limbs, with little hope of making a meaningful contribution to the emerging democratic society.

Police bullets in the first major clash on June 16, 1976 ended their dreams of becoming doctors, scientists, engineers, lawyers, nurses and other professions.

Walking along the route of those demonstrations which led to the deaths of 600 people and hundreds of detentions a year later, Ngubo said the students' subsequent actions across the country contributed in a large part to the collapse of white minority rule.

He and several of the "class of '76" interviewed said that to the black community and the

world, the pupils had scored their first major political victory and more followed.

Student demands were largely confined to educational matters, but the 1976 uprisings changed the pattern after pupils realised they had the capacity to force the government to make social and political changes.

From urging free and compulsory education, pupils began to blend their education demands with calls for the release of Nelson Mandela and other political prisoners, and the unbanning of political organisations.

A physician, then a student, who did not want to be named for ethical reasons, recalled: "For many years South Africans has struggled against the injustices of apartheid... the situation limped along till that fateful day on June 16, 1976 when the bullets of ruthless policemen cut into columns of marching Soweto schoolchildren."

Ken Oosterbroek, one of South Africa's top news photographers, is held by fellow photographer Gary Benard of the Johannesburg Star after he was killed by police gunfire in the Katherlong black township of Johannesburg April 18. Two other photographers were reported injured in the incident.

Ken Oosterbroek, one of South Africa's top news photographers, is held by fellow photographer Gary Benard of the Johannesburg Star after he was killed by police gunfire in the Katherlong black township of Johannesburg April 18. Two other photographers were reported injured in the incident.

Ken Oosterbroek, one of South Africa's top news photographers, is held by fellow photographer Gary Benard of the Johannesburg Star after he was killed by police gunfire in the Katherlong black township of Johannesburg April 18. Two other photographers were reported injured in the incident.

Ken Oosterbroek, one of South Africa's top news photographers, is held by fellow photographer Gary Benard of the Johannesburg Star after he was killed by police gunfire in the Katherlong black township of Johannesburg April 18. Two other photographers were reported injured in the incident.