

International

Algeria calls for OIC meet on Gorazde issue

ALGIERS, Apr 20: Algeria called Tuesday for a emergency meeting of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) to discuss the Bosnian Serb assault on Muslims in Gorazde, the Foreign Ministry said, reports AFP.

Algiers would push for "collective action to dissuade the Serbs from their aggression."

Kohl, Yeltsin talk Gorazde situation over telephone

BONN, Apr 20: German Chancellor Helmut Kohl and Russian President Boris Yeltsin yesterday discussed the situation in Gorazde over the telephone, reports Xinhua.

Spokesman for the German government Dieter Vogel said that for the interests of the civilians, Kohl hopes for a peaceful solution to the conflict and ceasefire there.

Kohl stressed that every effort should be made to end the bloodshed in Gorazde and find a permanent and peaceful solution to the issue.

Kohl talked over the phone on Monday with US President Bill Clinton and French President Francois Mitterrand on the situation in the Muslim enclave of Gorazde.

It also criticised "the international community's hesitation in confronting in a decisive and resolute manner the repeated defiance of the Serbs of international rights and laws."

The secretary general of the 45-member OIC, Hamed Al Gabid, meanwhile expressed the "anguish of the Islamic world in the face of the massacre of innocent civilians in Gorazde," eastern Bosnia.

The organisation is coordinating its action at the United Nations in New York, said Hamed Al Gabid from his headquarters in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

Iran's President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, meanwhile, attacked the United Nations for failing to halt "the genocide of the Muslims by the Serbs" and urged the European union to intervene, the Iranian news agency IRNA said.

The Iranian and French Foreign Ministers Ali Akbar Velayati, and Alain Juppe, discussed over the telephone "the need to counter the Serb crimes," IRNA said. Velayati "voiced concern over the massacre of innocent Muslims."

Serb artillery and snipers pushed their offensive into the heart of Gorazde on Tuesday.

NZ may send more peacekeepers to Bosnia**NATO allies consider UN request for more air power**

BRUSSELS, Apr 20: The NATO allies on Wednesday considered a United Nations' request for permission to call in air strikes to protect "safe areas" in Bosnia from relentless Serb attacks, reports AP.

President Clinton has signalled his willingness to expand the scope of threatened air strikes by the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation against Bosnian Serbs.

Ambassadors of the 16 allied nations were discussing the call by UN Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali for more air power at their regular weekly meeting.

"I very much hope NATO will make a credible and positive response to Boutros-Ghali's request," Sir John Weston, the British ambassador, said in a BBC interview.

Diplomats said it was unlikely, though, the ambassadors would give final approval to the Boutros-Ghali request at Wednesday's meeting and would probably schedule another one in the coming days.

They suggested military strategists would be asked to draw up contingency plans for possible use of air strikes to protect the UN-designated safe havens for Muslim civilians.

In a letter to NATO Secretary-General Manfred Woerner, Boutros-Ghali asked for approval to call in alliance warplanes "to launch air strikes . . . against artillery, mortar positions or tanks" determined to be responsible for attacks against civilian targets in the safe areas.

He made his request after Serbs, ignoring international appeals to halt their onslaught, battered the safe area of Gorazde, which is held by Bosnia's Muslim-dominated government.

In Washington, Clinton decided Tuesday to back Boutros-Ghali's appeal as part of a package of military and diplomatic recommendations drawn up to halt the violence in Bosnia, administration officials said.

NATO agreed last August to use air power against Serb positions if the United Nations requested it to end the siege of safe areas. At a summit in January, Clinton and other alliance leaders reiterated that position.

The allies, though, have not yet given Boutros-Ghali permission to call in the air raids.

Under a different procedure, the United Nations already can order NATO "close air support" to protect UN peacekeepers in Bosnia. American fighters early last week bombed Serb positions attacking Gorazde when UN troops were at risk.

In February, Boutros-Ghali requested NATO help after a shell killed dozens of civilians in a marketplace in the Bosnian capital Sarajevo.

The allies responded by issuing a 10-day ultimatum to the Serbs to withdraw their heavy guns around the besieged capital or face air raids.

The Serbs complied as part of a cease-fire arranged around the city.

UN-designated safe areas

include Gorazde, Sarajevo, Bihać, Srebrenica, Tuzla and Zepa.

Bosnian Serbs began the war in April 1992 after a Muslim-Croat vote to secede from Yugoslavia. The Serbs have seized about 70 per cent of Bosnia in fighting that has killed or left missing more than 200,000 people.

APP adds: Prime Minister Jim Bolger said Wednesday he was "actively considering" a request by the United Nations for more New Zealand peacekeepers to be sent to Bosnia.

Following a general request from the UN for 10,000 more troops, later reduced to 3,500, Bolger said the government had the appeal "under active consideration" and would be seeking the views of other UN members of the matter.

"But we should understand that if New Zealand puts more UN forces into Bosnia . . . that some of them may not come home. This is not a tranquil area, as we know, this is by most definitions a war zone," he said on Radio New Zealand.

Off the Record**Princess Anne to star in TV ad**

LONDON: Queen Elizabeth's daughter Princess Anne is to become the first member of Britain's royal family to star in a television advertisement — for a charity, reports Reuter.

The Princess will appear next week in the advertisement to promote Save the Children Fund's largest ever fund-raising appeal marking its 75th anniversary, the charity said Wednesday.

The charity, of which the Princess is president, was founded by a British woman appalled by the suffering of children in Austria after World War I. It now operates in more than 50 countries.

**Cannibalism in prison**

MOSCOW: Five hungry inmates in a Kazakhstan prison killed their cellmate, skinned him and cut him into pieces which they boiled in a kettle and ate, Itar-Tass news agency said on Tuesday, reports Reuter.

It said the incident happened last week and was not unexpected because most of the 80,000 prisoners in the former Soviet Republic were permanently hungry. Tass gave no further details on the case.

Chelsea inherits mom's social conscience & dad's talent for math

WASHINGTON: Fourteen-year-old Chelsea Clinton has inherited her mom's "social conscience" and her dad's talent for math, the First Parents say, reports AP.

In turn, Mom and Dad have learned a few things from their daughter.

In an interview with Parents magazine, President Clinton said he is a better person and a better president for having been a father.

"Parenthood ties you to the rest of life in a way and makes you less self-absorbed," he said.

Hillary Rodham Clinton added that "our willingness to just learn from Chelsea and respect who she is, the person she was meant to be, has helped us a lot."

Trading compliments, Clinton said Chelsea had her mother's social conscience and discipline, while Mrs Clinton joked that Chelsea "certainly didn't get her math ability from me" and the teen had her father's "remarkable big mind and big heart."

In the interview, the Clintons talked at length about the challenges and pleasures of parenthood in a rare public reflection on the daughter they generally try to shield from the spotlight.

Recalling Chelsea's birth, Mrs Clinton said she delivered by Caesarean section and Clinton was the first father the hospital let into its operating room for a birth.

"I was awake and he was holding my hand," she recalled. "And then he started talking to all the doctors and nurses. And so it was just this kind of group experience. . . . We would have loved to have more children."

Neither Clinton addressed why they did not have more children. A spokesman for the first lady, Neel Lattimore, said they have not elaborated on the matter publicly.

Asked to answer the question "Why have kids," Clinton began with a joke and finished with a serious response, saying: "Apart from the fact that it keeps civilisation going — someone's got to do it — I think the experience of putting someone else first, constantly, in a way that is full of joy even in the tough times, makes you a better person, a fuller person, more whole."

Gavel coming down on L A Law

LOS ANGELES: The gavel is coming down on "L A Law." The NBC drama about the lives, loves and courtroom battles of yuppie lawyers is being cancelled after eight seasons, reports AP.

The final episode will air May 19 — after a "countdown" of four original episodes beginning April 28, the network said Tuesday.

"L A Law," focusing on a group of ambitious lawyers in a downtown Los Angeles law firm, premiered September 15, 1986, and drew immediate critical acclaim.

The series, created by Steven Bochco ("NYPD Blue") and Terry Louise Fisher, won 15 Emmy Awards and was named outstanding drama series for a record-tying four times in 1987, 1989, 1990 and 1991.

That matched the mark held by Bochco's "Hill Street Blues" series about an urban police precinct.

But the series then suffered a storyline identity crisis and an accompanying plunge in ratings, finishing as low as 61st one week last year.

Benazir blames India for instability in South Asia

BONN, Apr 20: Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto said on Tuesday South Asia stood at a crossroads and could either move towards peace or become a factor for instability in international affairs, reports Reuter.

Speaking to the German Society for Foreign Affairs in Bonn, Benazir blamed India for South Asia's failure to rise above mutual suspicion and achieve stability and prosperity.

Bhutto arrived on Monday for a four-day visit, officials said, would focus on improving trade with Germany, including trade.

Pakistan's relations with India have deteriorated be-

cause of renewed tensions in Kashmir, the mostly Muslim region ruled two-thirds by India and the rest by Pakistan, she added.

"All inter-state disputes in South Asia are between India and the other countries, not between any two or more countries other than India," said Benazir Bhutto.

"It is regrettable that India has not only obstructed amicable settlement of its problems with the other South Asian states, it has also added to the difficulties faced by its smaller neighbours."

The non-resolution of the Jammu and Kashmir problem, the centre issue in our relations, has served to perpetuate

tension and hostility and forced Pakistan to divert its meagre resources towards defence preparedness instead of addressing our socio-economic imperatives," she said.

The South Asian region — Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka and Maldives — is home to over a billion people, nearly one-fourth of the world's population.

"It can either achieve peace and stability and prosperity and become a valuable partner in the establishment of a just and lasting world political and economic order, or it may . . . become a factor of instability for the international system."

Hun Sen accuses Thailand of aiding Khmers

PHNOM PENH, Apr 20: Co-Premier Hun Sen confirmed today that Khmer Rouge guerrillas recaptured their capital Phnom Penh in northwest Cambodia, and accused Thailand of directly aiding the rebels in their counter-attack, reports AFP.

"I accuse Thailand directly," an angry Hun Sen, reached by telephone in the northwest city of Battambang, told AFP. "During the fighting there was artillery support from Thai territory."

He said several hundred Khmer Rouge fighters were transported through Thai territory to reinforce the Pailin counter-offensive.

"Let (Thai Foreign Minister) Prasong Sosnirat explain this to me face-to-face," he said.

**UN welcomes accord in South Africa**

UNITED NATIONS: The UN Security Council late Tuesday welcomed a last-minute deal between South Africa's key black and white leaders to bring the Zulu-led Inkatha party into next week's crucial elections, reports Reuter.

In a statement read at a formal meeting, the 15-member body commended "all the parties involved for the statesmanship and good will which they have displayed in reaching this result."

The statement, read by council president Colin Keating, New Zealand's ambassador, also hoped the agreement would bring an end to the violence which has scarred South Africa and called on all parties to conduct free and fair elections.

"The council looks forward to the successful completion of the electoral process in South Africa and to the establishment of a democratic, non-racial and united South Africa that will take its place in the international community," the statement said.

US admin for security talks in northeast Asia

WASHINGTON, Apr 20: A senior US official suggested Monday the establishment of a security dialogue in northeast Asia to ease tensions and avoid an arms race in the troubled area, reports AFP.

Winston Lord, Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, told a State Department policy forum that the Clinton administration was more open to such dialogues than its Republican predecessor.

"There will be a need for a forum in northeast Asia as well as one which now exists in southeast Asia," he said, referring to the security talks between the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and its dialogue partners.

"We think this can be a very promising vehicle for preventive diplomacy . . . I think in terms of significance for stability and peace in the region (this) could be a very fundamental legacy indeed," Lord said.

He said the idea was in an embryonic stage, but the goal would be to "erase misperceptions, ease tensions, perhaps build confidence and deter arms races," throughout the

Asia-Pacific region.

Lord said that the Bush administration had feared that launching a regional security dialogue in Asia would be interpreted as a cover for a diminishing American presence in the region.

"We see these dialogues as supplements to not supplanting force presence and our alliances," he said.

Tensions in northeast Asia have heightened since North Korea has refused to allow international inspection of its nuclear programme to make sure it is not building an atomic bomb.

Some officials and analysts have expressed fears that failure to stop Pyongyang could trigger an arms race involving China, Japan and South Korea as well.

But Lord cautioned the need for "patient diplomacy" with the North Koreans to ease the fears of Japan, South Korea and keep China on board since it has a veto on the UN Security Council.

He said that if any conflict erupted, it would be important to show it was the result of "North Korean intransigence and not American impetuosity."

SEOUL, Apr 20: North Korea is expected to allow fresh nuclear inspections and will soon announce new measures to open its closed economy, a US defence analyst said in an interview published Wednesday, reports AP.

Dr William Taylor Jr. made the remarks to South Korea's Yonhap News Agency in Beijing, where he arrived Tuesday from a week-long visit to North Korea. The interview was published in the Korean language Wednesday.

Taylor, senior vice president of the Washington-based Centre for Strategic and International Studies, was invited along with several US and Japanese journalists to last Friday's celebrations of North Korean leader Kim Il Sung's 82nd birthday.

From lengthy talks with North Korean leaders, including a 3 1/2 hour meeting with Kim, Taylor said he got the impression that the Pyongyang government would allow fresh nuclear inspections "in the

near future."

He said he was not sure how soon they might take place.

North Korea's refusal last month to allow UN inspectors to make a full survey deepened suspicion that it is developing atomic bombs.

On Tuesday, Kim personally denied this and said he would order a suspected plutonium-extracting facility destroyed if Washington recognised his Communist government and provided economic aid.

Kim is chairman of the Unification Policy Committee of North Korea's supreme People's Assembly, and handles policy toward rival South Korea.

Taylor also said North Korea would announce "very soon" new measures, more expensive than previous ones, to open its nuclear facilities to outside inspections.

Taylor was quoted as saying that diplomacy is the only way of resolving the dispute, and that sanctions could provoke the beleaguered North Koreans into war.

Taylor, who has visited North Korea several times,