

## Benazir demands quick UN action to save Gorazde

ISLAMABAD, Apr 22: Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto sent a message to UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali on Thursday demanding quick UN action to save the Bosnian Muslim enclave of Gorazde from a Serb onslaught, reports Reuter.

Benazir, currently visiting Germany but copies of whose messages were released in Islamabad by the Foreign Ministry, said she hoped the UN Security Council would quickly approve a Pakistani proposed resolution demanding air strikes against Serb artillery and withdrawal of Serb forces from Gorazde.

"The council must act quickly," the message said. "Time is the essence."

Benazir also urged Boutros-Ghali to issue instructions under existing Security Council resolutions authorising air strikes against Serb positions being used to attack the six UN-declared "safe areas", including Gorazde.

She also called for the lifting of a UN arms embargo

against Bosnian combatants, "if the UN protection force cannot save the victims of Serbian genocide, if there is fear that UN forces may take casualties, let us at least not prevent the Bosnian people from obtaining the means for self-defence."

Meanwhile, some 300 Bosnian refugees, including women and children, Thursday staged a demonstration in front of western missions to Islamabad calling for an end to the "massacre" of Bosnian Muslims by Serb forces.

"Stop worthless promises and useless talk," read a banner carried by a Bosnian child while others read "genocide in Gorazde will make Europe's face more dirty."

The refugees, flown in to Pakistan last year, are living in a camp in nearby Rawalpindi. Witnesses said they drove in buses to the well-guarded diplomatic enclave.

The protestors paraded in front of UN offices and the embassies of the United States, Britain and France, chanting anti-UN slogans.

## NATO may issue ultimatum to halt Serbian offensive

LONDON, Apr 22: NATO appears likely to issue an ultimatum to the Bosnian Serbs besieging Gorazde, a Foreign Office spokesman said here today, reports AFP.

The spokesman, reacting to comments by French Foreign Minister Alain Juppe, said an ultimatum "sounds like if it will might be the outcome of the NATO meeting" about to start in Brussels.

Juppe said the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation should consider issuing an ultimatum to the Bosnian Serbs.

Reuter from Geneva adds: The UN building in Gorazde was hit by two tank rounds early today as Bosnian Serbs resumed shelling the eastern enclave, a United Nations spokesman said.

Initial reports cited no casualties in the building, which houses UN military observers and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

staff, according to Ray Wilkinson, UNHCR spokesman in Geneva, who quoted UN sources in Gorazde.

"Two probable tank rounds hit the upper parts of the UN building," Wilkinson told Reuters. "A lot of debris fell from the building."

"All are safe, there were no casualties in the UN building," he added.

The same building was struck by Bosnian Serb fire on Monday.

UN sources reported about 40 impacts in the Muslim town, where shelling began mid-morning on Friday, according to the spokesman. "There is regular exchange of small arms fire and machine gun fire," he added.

Meanwhile a Moscow report says: Russia Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev described the actions of Bosnian Serb forces besieging the Muslim town of Gorazde as criminal today, ac-

cording to Interfax news agency.

Interfax said Kozyrev made his remark during talks with Danish Foreign Minister Niels Helveg Petersen.

Kozyrev described Bosnian Serb actions as "irresponsible and criminal," Interfax said.

Nonetheless, he said in a reference to NATO proposals for further air strikes, "one should not hasten to widen the zone of air strikes in Bosnia."

Kozyrev said he had spoken by telephone on Thursday night to US Secretary of State Warren Christopher.

"Russia, the US, the European Union and the United Nations, lack a common approach to regulating the Bosnian conflict," Kozyrev said, apparently pressing Kremlin plans for a summit with US President Bill Clinton and EU and NATO leaders.

Xinhua adds: the Canadian government on Thursday de-

cided to support a request from UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali to authorise NATO air strikes against Serbs in Bosnia.

The decision was made at a cabinet meeting after a four-hour emergency debate in the House of Commons in Ottawa.

Prime Minister Jean Chretien said Canada will support air raids on the Serbs if they refuse to stop attacking UN troops in the country.

Chretien received a phone call from US President Bill Clinton Thursday and was informed of the US proposal to step up the bombing of Serb forces.

At the beginning of the debate, Foreign Minister Andre Ouellet restated Canada's preference to a peaceful solution but he said Canada is prepared to act.

"Hopefully air strikes will not be necessary, but we have to say tonight if necessary there will be a strike," he said.

## Off the Record



The single most important camera ever to be seen at auction, a Leica 'O' series, is expected to go under the hammer in excess of 100,000 pounds (149,000 dollars) and set a new world record when it is auctioned off at Christie's early in June. The camera, seen 22 April in London, was a prototype of the commercially successful 35mm Leica. The camera's inventor, Oskar Barnack, worked for the Leitz company in Wetzlar, Germany and died in 1936.

— AFP photo

## Cold weather upsets rabbits' hormones

LONDON: Unusually cold weather has wrought havoc with the sex lives of Britain's rabbits leaving pet shops across the country in short supply, a breeders' organisation said on Thursday, reports Reuter.

The British Rabbit Council said there were shortages in central and northern England, particularly around the city of Birmingham and in the Counties of Worcestershire and Yorkshire.

"It has been a very long cold winter and that is the root of the problem," a spokesman said. "The cold weather is upsetting their hormones and not allowing the breeding cycle to get going."

The chairman of the pet city chain of pet shops called for all reputable breeders with baby rabbits to spare to get in touch. "It's not always true to say that rabbits breed like rabbits," he said.

## 'Bicycling and walking to make Americans healthier'

WASHINGTON: The Clinton administration wants Americans to double their bike rides or walks, reports Reuter.

A three-year, 1-million dollar government study to be released Friday found that bicycling and walking would make Americans healthier, clean the air, cut traffic jams and make life more livable.

Transportation Secretary Federico Pena will mark the day with a speech to cycling activists and federal highway administration will go by foot to present a copy to Congress.

The national bicycling and walking study has set as a goal a doubling of the 7.9 per cent of the total trips taken by bicycle or by foot.

This is the first time that the government has fixed a target, said Bill Wilkinson, Executive Director of the Bicycle Federation of America.

"In effect, they are the bicycle and pedestrian element of the nation's long-range transportation plan and we want to see these goals reached by the end of the century," Wilkinson said.

The study, brainchild of Minnesota Democrat Clav Sabo, found that 1.5 of the average 20 tips Americans take each week are by bike or foot.

The study recommends no specific budget for achieving its goal of three trips a week by bike or foot, but is promoting educational efforts to increase the number.

In 1993, 730 cyclists and 6,000 pedestrians died in encounters with motor vehicles and 75,000 cyclists were injured, according to the federation. An unknown number of pedestrians were injured.

## Lenin wanted cyanide to die quickly

MOSCOW: A dying Lenin asked Stalin to supply him with a strong poison, potassium cyanide, so that the ailing founder of the Soviet state might die more quickly, a television documentary said Thursday, reports AFP.

The programme showed a note hand-written by Stalin in which he informed other members of the Politburo of what was then the Russian Bolshevik Party of Lenin's request, made through his wife, Nadezhda.

Lenin's wife "informed me, in extreme confidence, of Vladimir Ilyich's request that I, Stalin, find and sent to him potassium cyanide," the text of the letter stated.

"She explained to me that Lenin was suffering terribly, that he could no longer live in his condition, and insisted persistently that I should not turn down the request," it added.

The letter was read on the programme by Dmitri Volkogonov, the official appointed by President Boris Yeltsin to supervise the archives of the Soviet Communist Party, and the programme broadcast on CIS central television.

## 140 civilians injured in Afghan war

KABUL, Apr 22: At least 140 civilians were wounded Thursday as fighting continued between Shi'ite guerrillas and Afghan President Burhanuddin Rabbani's forces here for the second day, reports AFP.

Some 42 civilians were admitted to Wazir Akbar Khan Hospital while 27 casualties were brought to the main Jamhuriat hospital by late afternoon.

Another 37 people with bullet and shrapnel wound, were admitted to Aliabad Hospital while 34 more casualties went to Karte Se Hospital in war-torn Karte Se, doctors said.

By late afternoon the situation became calmer and shooting almost stopped. But roads to south Kabul were closed to vehicles.

The number of people killed was not known as hospitals

in Kabul do not receive bodies.

"Nobody knows how many have died," one doctor said as a group from the Shi'ite Hezbi-Wahdat faction battled pro-Rabbani troops with rockets and mortars for control of a small but strategic central-city mountain peak for two hours.

The duels brought southbound traffic to a standstill during the peak hours at midday.

The fighting followed Wednesday's clash, which official Radio Kabul had described as a "misunderstanding." So far it did not involve an all-out offensive by Wahdat and the skirmishes remained localised in the area of Salam hill just below the strategic television tower mountain.

Wahdat, a nominal ally of Prime Minister Gulbuddin Hekmatyar and Uzbek General Abdul Rashid Dostum,



Romanian President Ion Iliescu (C) mediates a handshake between Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres (L) and PLO leader Yasser Arafat (R) after a press conference at the Crans Montana Forum conference in Bucharest April 21. Both Israeli and Palestinian top officials agreed that this meeting was a step forward in the Middle East peace negotiations.

— AFP photo

## Fatah, Hamas agree to stop killing collaborators in Gaza

GAZA, Apr 22: Leading Palestinian rival groups in the occupied Gaza Strip reached a rare agreement, announcing today a 30-day halt to killing Arabs collaborating with Israel, reports Reuter.

Officials of PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat's Fatah Movement said the six-point agreement between the military wings of Fatah and the Islamic Resistance Movement Hamas was the first such accord in the Gaza Strip.

"After careful examination of the issue of collaborators, the movements of Fatah and Hamas agreed to stop killing collaborators from April 22 to May 22, 1994," their joint

statement said.

A Fatah official in Gaza, Rashid Abu Shabak, told Reuters the month-long break was meant to give Palestinians helping Israeli intelligence authorities a chance to redeem themselves.

Since the start of the Palestinian uprising, collaborators with Israel have been punished and killed by the PLO and Hamas.

Fatah issued a statement three months ago saying killing collaborators would be halted until the Israeli army turns over control of the Gaza Strip and Jericho to Palestinian self-rule as envisaged in a September peace

deal.

The number of collaborator killings has gone down since Hamas carried out a spate of them in late January and February.

Hamas, which oppose Arafat's peace deal with Israel, has killed 13 Israelis in three attacks in the last 2-1/2 weeks. The agreement applies only to the Gaza Strip and not to the occupied West Bank.

"We are in a transitional period now and there is a security vacuum, so it would be better to wait until we have an authority to deal with such issues according to a Palestinian judicial system and laws," said Marwan Barghout, a senior Fatah official.



The famous clock-tower of the Houses of Parliament is seen through a bloom of tulips in London April 21 as warm weather comes to England.

— AFP photo

## Malaysia calls for Ghali's resignation

KUALA LUMPUR, Apr 22: Malaysia has called for the resignation of UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali because of his failure to resolve the escalating conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the national Bernama news agency reported today, says Reuter.

"The United Nations should elect a Secretary-General who is 'really an activist and brave, and would resolve the problems in Bosnia-Herzegovina,'" Bernama quoted Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohammad as saying.

He said the resignation of Boutros-Ghali would bring chance in the events in the former Yugoslav republic. "What is certain is that he did not do anything to settle the conflict in Bosnia," Mahathir said.

Predominantly Muslim Malaysia has been critical of the United Nations' handling of the Bosnian crisis.

## Sihanouk invites govt, rebels to peace talks

PHNOM PENH, Apr 22: King Norodom Sihanouk today invited the Cambodian government and the nominal head of the Khmer Rouge guerrillas to take part in peace talks to bring an end to Cambodia's fratricidal war, reports AFP.

Faced with the ongoing tragic situation in the country, the king said it was his duty to invite National Assembly Chairman Chea Sim, Co-prime Ministers Prince Norodom Ranariddh and Hun Sen and the Khmer Rouge leader Khieu Samphan to a five-day "Round table of peace and national reconciliation."

The talks would take place at the capital's Royal Palace from May 2-7.

## Rival Somali clans locked in fighting

MOGADISHU, Apr 22: Rival clan fighters battled for a fifth consecutive day in Mogadishu and UN officials said the fighting was delaying the delivery of anti-cholera supplies to parts of the city, reports Reuter.

UN military spokesman Major Asif Iqbal told reporters the fighting on Thursday was in a southern Mogadishu area just outside the UN-held airport and around UN residences.

The fighting was between warlord Mohammad Farah Aided's Habre Gedir and the Hawadle clans. Officials at Mogadishu's Benadir and Digfer hospitals said they treated up to 43 people with gunshot wounds on Wednesday.

## UN withdraws troops from Rwanda

NAIROBI, Apr 22: About 1,000 UN peacekeepers packed their bags to fly out of blood-soaked Rwanda today and Saturday amid continuing ethnic atrocities, a UN spokesman said, reports AFP.

Their speedy departure follows a Security Council decision Thursday to withdraw most UN forces from Rwanda after more than two weeks of carnage during which 10 Belgian peacekeepers were killed by government forces.

Only a token force of 300 soldiers will remain. They will continue to shuttle between Rwanda's rebels and government forces to try and broker a ceasefire. UN spokesman Abdul Kabia said by telephone from Kigali.

Kabia said small arms fire continued in Kigali on Friday but the Rwandan capital was

quieter than earlier this week when heavy artillery battles raged.

The drastic reduction in the UN force, which initially numbered 2,500 before Belgium withdrew its 400-man contingent this week, stemmed from UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali's proposal that it be massively reinforced to restore order or substantially reduced.

The 1,700 troops still in Kigali are from 22 nations, with the main contingents provided by Bangladesh and Ghana.

The UN chief rejected a third option of withdrawing the force altogether in his report to the Security Council.

Only about 1,700 UN soldiers remained in Kigali on Friday after the Belgians and "non-essential" members of

other contingents were evacuated.

UN special envoy to Rwanda Jacques Roger Booh-Booh left Kigali on Friday to attend Tanzanian-brokered peace talks between the rebels and the government in the northern Tanzanian town of Arusha.

Representatives of the rebel Rwanda Patriotic Front, dominated by the minority Tutsi tribe, were expected to attend the meeting, as well as a government delegation, including senior officers of the mainly Hutu army.

But the rebels have already said that they will refuse talks with "the clique of killers" on the interim government formed after the death of President Juvenal Habyarimana in a mysterious April 6 plane crash.

The rebels said they would negotiate only with representatives of the armed forces, a position that has raised anger with the government delegation, diplomats said in Nairobi.

Before leaving Kigali, Booh-Booh renewed an appeal to the warring parties to "redouble their efforts to agree on a ceasefire."

He denied that the UN was abandoning Rwanda to its fate, saying that UN agencies and aid organisations would stay to care for hundreds of thousands of homeless people displaced by the fighting.

Tanzanian president Ali Hassan Mwinyi will host the Arusha talks.

Neither the rebels nor the government are strangers to Arusha, where they signed Tanzanian-brokered peace accords last August after months of intense negotiations.

## Factory blast claims 20 in India

Twenty workers were killed and 10 others were injured on Thursday in a factory blast in the southern Indian state of Andhra Pradesh, the Press Trust of India (PTI) news agency said yesterday, Reuter reports from New Delhi.

PTI said the explosion occurred when workers at a cement plant in Chilamakuru village of Cuddapah district were clearing hard blocks of cement by drilling.

The victims included the factory's general manager and mines manager.

## Castro in fine health, say FM

Cuban President Fidel Castro is in fine health, Foreign Minister Roberto Robaina said Thursday, dismissing as unfounded some foreign media reports that the Cuban leader had suffered a stroke, Reuter reports from Havana.

"I can assure you he is in better health than ever, in the middle of working on the many tasks this country is doing," Robaina told Reuters, when asked about the foreign media reports broadcast Tuesday.

Robaina said he had seen Castro just hours before, to report on his Latin American tour earlier this week.

Rabat withdraws troops from Somalia: Morocco has withdrawn the last units of its 1,200-man contingent from the United Nations peacekeeping force in Somalia, officials said on Thursday, Reuter reports from Rabat.

Rabat said last month it would pull out its forces by the end of April and would hand over to the International Red Cross the military hospital it set up in Mogadishu.

## 100m street children around world are drug addicts

GENEVA, Apr 22: Some 100 million street children around the world have become addicted to drugs, alcohol and other substances in order to cope with abject poverty, a UN health official warned Thursday, reports AFP.

A wide range of substances — including glue, cannabis and pharmaceuticals — were used by a growing number of increasingly young children, said Andrew Bell, head of a World Health Organisation (WHO) addiction project.

"At least during initial stages, the use of drugs by street children is functional in most circumstances," said Bell, who runs the WHO "street children and substance abuse" project.

"It is a coping mechanism. Substances may be used by

street children to keep awake for work or alert to possible violence, to get to sleep, to dull physical or emotional pain, or to replace the need for food," he said.

In Guatemala, nine out of 10 street children could be hooked on solvents used to produce paint, low-grade glue and other powerful substances, he said.

Bolivia, Colombia and Peru had registered a huge rise in the numbers of children — including those as young as eight years old — smoking cigarettes containing "basuco" — a toxic by-product of cocaine, he added.

Bell warned that substance abuse could lead to range of other health dangers including malnutrition, prostitution and AIDS.