

## 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 unless talk,' read a banner carried by a Bosnian child while others read 'genocide in Gorazde will make Europe's face 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 protesters paraded in front of UN offices and the embassies of the United States, Britain and France, chanting anti-UN slogans.

## 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 Aliabadi 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

Kabul do not receive bodies. "Nobody knows how many have died," one doctor said as a group from the Shi'ite Hezbollah 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,

## 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 well 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 impacts 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 Helge 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 Mandre 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 Clay Sabo, found that 1.5 of the average 20 trips 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.

"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.

## 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 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 a range of other health dangers including malnutrition, prostitution and AIDS.



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

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 Israeli intelligence authorities a chance to redeem themselves.

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, 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.

Hamas, which oppose Arafat's peace deal with Israel, has killed 13 Israeli's 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.

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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 Israeli's 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.

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