

International

Instant fire fighting system in India

NEW DELHI, May 16: Defense scientists in New Delhi, have developed a fire fighting system that can detect and put out fires in less time than it takes to blink an eye, reports PTI.

All T-72 tanks have been fitted with this Automatic Fire and Explosion Suppression System (AFESS) developed at the 43-year old Defence Institute of Fire Research (DIFR).

Maj Gen B S Kataria director of the institute said the system will protect tank crew from getting roasted alive in case of diesel fuel or ammunition catching fire and exploding during enemy attack.

The diesel fire spreads extremely fast but AFESS reacts even faster and "dumps" Halon-1301 on the burning fuel. Each tank carries three gas cylinders.

In a recent demonstration, he AFESS extinguished tank fire in less than one-fourth of a

second Gen. Kataria said.

The fire fighting system has been integrated with another system which alerts the crew in the event of a nuclear, biological or chemical (NBC) attack. The NBC system has been developed by DIFR's sister laboratory in Jodhpur.

The fire protection system is also being fitted in ships and armoured personnel carriers.

According to Gen. Kataria, the institute in about six months will come out with protective suits for firemen. Currently India imports about 500 suits per year, each suit priced at about Rs 40,000.

It is also developing an emergency chute through which people trapped in tall building can escape in the event of fire.

Gen Kataria said the institute is training 400 people each year in fire fighting. It has been hired as consultant to the proposed metro project for Delhi.



A woman weeps upon arriving in Karachi from Yemen on Monday in the first batch of 232 Pakistani nationals to be evacuated from the strife-torn country. Some 30 Pakistani nationals remain.

— AFP photo

UN hopeful of implementing new peace plan for Bosnia

SARAJEVO, May 16: The United Nations hopes to start implementing a new peace plan for Bosnia this week by getting the rival commanders together to agree on a temporary truce lasting four months, reports Reuter.

UN sources said civilian officials of the world body planned to meet political leaders of Bosnia's warring factions to set up the ceasefire negotiations.

It would be the first concrete step on the road to peace under an initiative launched in Geneva last Friday by foreign ministers from the West and Russia.

Portents from the battle fronts were not hopeful. Clashes reported in northern Bosnia over the past week suggested the opposing forces on the ground were not yet in a mood for peace.

The Muslim-led Bosnian government and the Bosnian Serbs both publicly criticised

the call for a four-month truce, the Muslims saying it was too long and the Serbs too short. Muslims fear an open-ended truce would lock in Serb battlefield gains.

But UN sources said both sides appeared willing, despite public statements to the contrary, to consider such a truce during which a political settlement could be negotiated.

The Geneva initiative, the first joint strategy adopted by the United States, Russia and the European Union for ending the 25-month Bosnian war, called for a four-month truce with political negotiations to its role in the Bosnian conflict were lifted.

But Mocilo Krajisnik, speaker of the Bosnian Serb parliament, added in a radio interview: "The Serbs are ready to concede certain territories to the other side, but much less than the Muslims hope for."

US Secretary of State Warren Christopher, on an optimistic note, suggested that objections to the peace plan were predictable posturing.

"I'm not surprised to see them not put all their cards on the table," Christopher told reporters. "We're going to see some posturing on all sides."

yield land under a settlement.

"We have had agreements before, but the instruments to carry them out did not exist," Bosnian Prime Minister Haris Siladzic said on Sunday.

A Bosnian Serb leader said the Serbs would not even negotiate until UN sanctions imposed on rump Yugoslavia, comprising Serbia and Montenegro, for its role in the Bosnian conflict were lifted.

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ASEAN invitation to junta angers Myanmar dissidents

BANGKOK, May 16: Myanmar dissident groups have called on ASEAN to cancel an invitation to Myanmar to attend a July meeting in Bangkok, saying continued cooperation with the Yangon regime will be a great setback for the Myanmar people, reports Reuter.

The ASEAN nations should not ignore the plight of the Myanmar people while hoping to win financial gains from an illegitimate regime, the dissidents said in a statement received in Bangkok on Monday.

Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Aung San Suu Kyi, placed under house arrest in July 1989, remains in detention.

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), which groups Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand, has invited Myanmar to attend this year's ministerial meeting as a guest of host country Thailand.

The dissidents, including elected members of Aung San

Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD), student guerrillas and dissident Buddhist monks, said the regime which took power after crushing a 1988 democracy uprising does not represent the people of Myanmar.

The junta in Yangon — the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) — held elections in May 1990 but ignored the result, the landslide victory for the NLD.

Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Aung San Suu Kyi, placed under house arrest in July 1989, remains in detention.

The people of Myanmar chose their legitimate government in the 1990 May elections which the regime has refused to honour, the dissidents said in their statement.

It will be a great setback and loss for the Myanmar

people if ASEAN countries continue to cooperate with the regime ... it will also have a profound and lasting impact on mutual understanding and relations of people in the region.

We strongly urge the ASEAN nations not to create the SLORC as a legitimate government and to cancel the invitation ... to the Bangkok meeting in July.

A Karen guerrilla official also said it was wrong to invite the Yangon regime to the ASEAN meeting.

It is too early. The democratic countries of ASEAN should wait for changes in Myanmar for the return of democracy," he told Reuters.

Diplomats in Yangon say the most significant change introduced by the regime is that it has opened up the economy to foreign investment.

Bandaranaike under pressure to step down in favour of daughter

COLOMBO, May 16: Shri Lanka's main opposition leader Sirimavo Bandaranaike will soon decide whether she or her daughter Chandrika should run as Freedom Party (SLFP) candidate at the next presidential election, party sources here said today, reports Xinhua.

Bandaranaike was unanimously named party presidential candidate few months ago but the 78-year old leader who was twice premier in the island country is under increasing pressure to step down in favour of her 47-year old daughter Chandrika who is now the Chief Minister of

Western province. But no one in the decision making central committee of the party will openly ask Bandaranaike to withdraw from the candidacy, and it is very much at her discretion to continue as party presidential candidate or to step down in favour of her daughter, a party insider told Xinhua.

Chandrika's chances as potential leader of the main opposition Freedom Party received a new boost when she led her party into a sweeping win at the March 23 southern provincial elections, the SLFP's only formidable election success against the ruling United National Party (UNP) for last

seventeen years.

Her chances in the party to

become the mother also in-

creased greatly since brother

Anura Bandaranaike, her only

challenger crossed over to the

government after much in-

fighting and accepted higher

education portfolio few months ago.

A national level meeting of

SLFP's different organisational

bodies and elected members

to be convened next week is

expected to discuss party

strategy for next presidential

election due before December

this year, and Bandaranaike is

likely to make an important

speech there, the sources said.

Tutis.

Militias directed by extrem-

ist Hutu politicians have been

blamed by human rights organ-

isations and aid workers for

most of the slaughter, much of

it done with machetes, spears

and knives.

Meanwhile, United Nations

spokesman Moctar Gueye said

the rebels had "wonderfully

justified" an attack on a UN

convoy Sunday that came dur-

ing heavy fighting that broke a

four-day truce.

The United Nations had

protested the attack on the

army-escorted convoy that in-

cluded former French Cabinet

Minister Bernard Kouchner,

now head of the International

Association for Humanitarian

Action.

Kouchner was returning

from a meeting with interim

government officials in Gi-

tarana when his army-

escorted convoy came under

fire for about 20 minutes, said

Gueye, who was also on board.

They took cover between a

ditch and a clay wall for an

hour until an armoured per-

sonnel carrier arrived to res-

cue them, he said. No one was

injured.

Gueye said the rebel re-

sponse to the UN protest

pointed out that the United

Nations had not notified the

Patriotic Front that it planned

to use the road, that UN vehi-

cles could have been stolen,

and that Rwandan army vehi-

cles had inserted themselves

into the UN convoy.

Government officials fled to

Gitarama after an orgy of eth-

Mandela protests Sunday Times report

JOHANNESBURG, May 16: South African President Nelson Mandela has dismissed a report published in "London Sunday Times" on May 15 which said he would retire as head of state within two years, reports Xinhua.

"The article has absolutely no factual basis, and is nothing more than rumour mongering written with the intention to create uncertainty about South Africa's first democratically elected government," said Mandela, who was sworn in as new South African President on May 10.

Mandela expressed his displeasure with the totally unfounded and malicious disinformation published by the newspaper.

He said he wished to "state categorically" that he intended to remain in office for the full term.

The African National Congress (ANC), led by Mandela, in a statement said, "the people of South Africa have given President Nelson Mandela a clear mandate, and he intends to fulfil that mandate to the fullest."

The court heard that the mother had been "at the end of her tether."

The court heard that Sylvia was beaten with a cassava stick when she cried a lot.

The baby was beaten several times and on three separate occasions she fell on the cement floor outside the house.

A post mortem later revealed baby Sylvia died from severe head injuries and trauma, and congestion of the lower lobes of the lungs.

"Whatever sentence I give you today cannot be anything like the sentence you gave her," said judge Timothy Hinchliffe.

Off the Record**Lone child survives massacre**

RUGENDE, Rwanda: There he was, a little boy sitting alone. Not a soul was in sight, just the child who managed to survive on his own, reports AP.

Lt. Emmanuel Rutaisire, a member of the rebel army fighting the government in this ravaged nation, said he was on a routine patrol Sunday when he came across the boy, who had made a small nest of adult clothing at the sight where his parents apparently had been killed with hundreds of others.

"What a surprise. I looked for somebody else, but there was nobody," he said as he cradled the child, who could not quite say his first name and who appeared to be about 2 years old.

The church at Rugende, about eight kilometers (5 miles) east of the capital, Kigali, was one of the scenes of the many massacres.

There were signs that the boy subsisted on bananas, said Rutaisire, who said the youngster would be sent to a rebel-run orphanage.

"He has an instinct for survival," he said.

For crying a lot ...

PONT MORESBY: The wife of a soldier has been jailed for ten years in Papua New Guinea for beating to death her 18-month-old adopted daughter, reports AFP.

The National Court in the northern town of Wewak, jailed Annette Nawen Bulongol after convicting her of the murder of Sylvia Clement on July 2 last year.

The court heard that the baby had cried a lot and the mother had been "at the end of her tether."