

**BRIEFLY**



Undated file photo of Algerian television journalist Rachida Hammadi, who was injured in an attack by Islamic fundamentalists 10 days ago in Algiers. Hammadi, 32, succumbed to her injuries on Friday in a Paris hospital. She is the 31st journalist killed in fundamentalist violence since May 1993. — AFP/UNB photo

**Gas explosion kills 10 in Russia:**

Ten people including five miners were killed on Friday in an explosion of methane gas at the Vorkutinskaya mine near Vorkuta in northern Russia, Interfax news agency said. Reuter reports from Moscow.

The agency quoted Ivon Mokhanchuk, Deputy Chairman of the Russian Union of Coalworkers, as saying the other victims were three rescue workers and two transport workers.

**Saudi man beheaded in Riyadh:**

A Saudi man was beheaded in Riyadh province on Friday for murdering a fellow Saudi, the interior ministry reported, AFP says from Riyadh.

The death of Mohammad Ibn Mayef Ibn Abdallah Dussari in Kharj raised to 15, the number of people executed in one week in the Kingdom.

**Taiwan's president on ME tour:**

President Lee Tenghui left Saturday on a three-day trip to Jordan and the United Arab Emirates in a diplomatic victory against China's drive to isolate Taiwan, AP reports from Taipei.

China, which regards Taiwan as a renegade province, vigorously opposes any move that could be seen as diplomatic recognition of the Nationalist government in Taiwan, so foreign trips by the Taiwanese president take on a special significance.

**Karel Kovanda new UNSC president:**

Czech UN representative Karel Kovanda takes over the presidency of the Security Council yesterday, succeeding ambassador Li Zhaoxing of China, Reuter reports from UN.

The post rotates monthly according to the English alphabetical order of the 15 member delegations.

**Desai's condition improving:**

The condition of former Prime Minister, Morarji Desai, who underwent a neuro-surgery after being admitted to Jaski Hospital on March 20, is stable and improving last night, according to doctors attending on him, PTI reports from Bombay.

Desai, who was in a semi-conscious state after the operation, has shown spontaneous movement of limbs and giving good response to the treatment.

**Referendum in W Sahara delayed:**

A referendum on whether Western Sahara should become independent or part of Morocco has been further delayed, UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali said in a report released on Friday, AP reports from United Nations.

Boutros-Ghali had hoped to recommend to the Security Council that UN officials begin organising the referendum on June 1.

**Bodos kill 8 civilians:**

Suspected guerrillas fighting for an independent homeland for tribespeople in a remote northeastern province have shot and killed eight civilians, news reports said on Saturday, AP reports from New Delhi.

Insurgents, believed to be from the outlawed Bodo Security Force, fired their Kalashnikov rifles at a group of young men who had gone to a shop in Udalguri town of Assam state to buy lottery tickets, United News of India news agency said.

**Russian FM in Tel-Aviv:**

Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev arrived in Israel on Friday from Beirut amid violence between Israel and guerrillas based in Lebanon, Reuter reports from Jerusalem.

On arriving Kozyrev told Israel Radio he had brought new impressions from Damascus which could help bridge Israeli and Syrian positions peace talks between the two sides are stalled over the fate of the Golan heights, captured by Israel in 1967.

**Hezbollah leader's call to reject PLO-Israel deal**

KHARTOUM, Apr 1: A Hezbollah leader urged Muslims on Friday to reject the PLO's self rule accord with Israel and said only military resistance would persuade the Jewish state to withdraw from occupied Arab territories, reports Reuter.

Sheikh Naim Qassem, in Sudan for an Arab and Islamist conference, said the United States was trying to force a solution on the Palestinian issue under the slogan of peace "based only on the will of Israel."

The Hezbollah deputy secretary general said Arab and Muslim support for armed operations against Israel was growing.

**N-watchdogs face testing times as NPT expires this month**

VIENNA, Apr 1: The world's nuclear watchdogs face testing times this year, with experts fearing intensified smuggling of nuclear material as well as a possible erosion of clout of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), reports IPS.

The treaty expires in April after 25 years of being in force. The industrialised countries want the NPT extended in its present form for an indefinite period of time, but developing countries — particularly India and Pakistan — are against it.

The NPT obliges the nuclear "haves" including Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States not to transfer weapons technology to "have nots" and also to seek ways for denuclearisation.

The NPT has been signed by 168 countries. Three nuclear states in eastern Europe, Belarus, Kazakhstan and Ukraine, signed it last year.

But some countries claim the treaty has failed because the have's have not taken any meaningful steps towards reducing their nuclear arsenal.

"Some of the nuclear countries," like France and the United States, have violated the NPT by passing weapons technology to countries like Iraq and Israel," says Heinz Hoegelsberger of Greenpeace which is opposing the present proposal for the NPT's indefinite extension.

The conference in New York this April will seal the fate of the NPT. But reports from the UN headquarters say the North has mastered enough — albeit not overwhelming — support to get extended in its present form.

According to an official of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) based here, this lack of enthusiasm for the NPT could erode the treaty's authority to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons.

He notes that such a development comes at a time when it is foolhardy not to expect an increase in nuclear material smuggling, particularly with the depressing economic situation in the former Soviet republics.

"Being in the non-proliferation field means one has to be an eternal optimist and many positive things did happen in 1994," says the IAEA official, (but) the cases of nuclear smuggling is bound to increase in 1995.

Recently, for instance, alarm bells went off the IAEA over the seizures of weapons-grade nuclear material in Germany, which is being used as a gateway for the illegal trade from East to West.

And despite increased awareness and cooperation among states such as the agreement concluded between Germany and Russia last year, the situation seems set to worsen.

Says Hoegelsberger: "The technical abilities to make crude bombs of many countries are advancing on one hand while on the other the existing structures to control proliferation are not powerful enough."

In December, Czech authorities announced the seizure of 3.3 kilograms of highly enriched uranium (HEU) in Prague. Detained were a Czech nuclear expert and two citizens from an unnamed Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) country.

Meanwhile, German authorities themselves had their hands full last year confiscating nuclear material, mostly uranium and plutonium, from illegal traders. In at least one incident, the material was enriched up to 99 per cent.

"The seizures of nuclear materials has been happening with ever increasing frequency over the past few years," observes Hoegelsberger. "And there are no signs that it would subside."

The finger of suspicion points to Russia as the source of the material, but Moscow has made furious and vehement denials that it has anything to do with the illegal trade.

Russian Minister for Atomic Energy Victor Mikhailov said nailing Moscow of the crime was just part of a deliberate campaign to prevent Russia from entering the lucrative, but hotly contested, international market of civilian nuclear technology.

Russia has developed some advanced nuclear power plant technologies, he said, and Western countries, where most of the nuclear industry is based, do not want Moscow to come into the world market.

Whoever the source is, a worried IAEA is now instituting measures, including setting up a data bank to track nuclear smuggling.

For the past three years, the UN nuclear safeguards monitor has also been offering training course and seminars in eastern Europe to equip the authorities with proper inventory control systems. Officials at the IAEA note that Russia has yet to ask the agency to organise such a course.

The IAEA is also keeping watch over the Korean peninsula.

**Turkey denies UNHCR charges**

ANKARA, Apr 1: Turkey's military denied on Friday an accusation by the UN refugee agency that about 15,000 Iraqi Kurds had been displaced by the Turkish incursion in northern Iraq, reports Reuter.

"That's impossible," military spokesman Colonel Dogu Silachtoglu said. "All measures have been taken to ensure the safety of the local population," he told Reuters by telephone from the southeastern Turkish city of Diyarbakir.

The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) said in Geneva it had reliable reports that about 15,000 Iraqi Kurds had been forced from their homes by the Turkish campaign.

Troops have been hunting Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) rebels in the region since March 20

**Benazir to seek US mediation on Kashmir during Apr 11 trip**

WASHINGTON, Apr 1: Pakistan will seek US mediation on Kashmir, repeal of a law penalising Islamabad for its nuclear programme and fulfillment of an arms deal when Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto visits this month, its Washington ambassador says.

In an interview with Reuters ambassador Maleeha Lodhi said Pakistan is eager to use Benazir's Washington visit, — the first by a Pakistani Prime Minister in six years to improve ties that had fallen into crisis over the nuclear issue.

But she stressed that the April 11 visit will be judged to a large extent on Benazir's success in seeking a US commitment to repeal a law that ended aid to Pakistan because of US opposition to its nuclear arms programme. Islamabad also wants F-16 warplanes that it paid for but have been withheld.

The visit comes two months after Pakistan risked backlash from domestic critics and extremists by deporting to America the alleged mastermind of the World Trade Centre bombing.

Privately Pakistani officials say they hope this important instance of cooperation with Washington will help convince Congress to go along with Islamabad's key requests.

Lodhi said Pakistan's dispute with India over Kashmir is Islamabad's key issue because it is a flashpoint for war and other regional security matters are directly linked.

In an interview this week the envoy said Benazir will reiterate Pakistan's willingness to accept US mediation in peacefully resolving the Kashmir issue.

I think there is growing recognition in Washington that the Kashmir issue needs to be addressed, she said.

"We will be pointing to the fact that security issues that emerge from Kashmir nuclear non proliferation as well as

conventional arms control are inextricably linked and it is not feasible to try to address one without the other."

A decade ago Congress passed the Pressler Amendment which threatened to cut off aid if Pakistan developed nuclear arms.

Former President George Bush several years ago made that determination and ended aid, eroding US-Pakistan ties.

"Now Clinton administration officials say the law failed to halt the spread of nuclear arms and urge its repeal," Lodhi said this position is gaining in Congress.

"For US to move forward in the bilateral relationship this impediment needs to be reviewed, scrapped, repealed if we are to make any advance in promoting the agenda of non proliferation in the region," she said.

Lodhi said the law created a disincentive for India to cooperate on non proliferation initiatives by penalising Pakistan.

It also encourages Islamabad's dependence on nuclear arms by cutting off arms sales with the United States and thus weakening Pakistan's conventional capability, she said.

The United States has withheld transfer of 1.4 billion dollar in military equipment to Pakistan, including F-16s, Defence Secretary William Perry has suggested the United States find a third country to buy the equipment and pay Pakistan back.

But Lodhi said this is not realistic, she said Pakistan rejected a US offer last year to transfer the F-16s if Islamabad capped its nuclear programme and allowed intrusive inspections because it affected Pakistan but not India.

We cannot accept any unilateral step because we feel that compromises our national security but if India can be persuaded to take any non proliferation step, we will match that she said.



Haitian President Jean Bertrand Aristide (L) greets US President Bill Clinton upon his arrival at Port-au-Prince International Airport on Friday. — AFP/UNB photo

**Tibetans stage silent march in New Delhi**

NEW DELHI, Apr 1: Thousands of Tibetans staged a silent march here on Friday, the 36th anniversary of the Dalai Lama's arrival in exile in India, to thank the Indian government and people for their generous hospitality, reports AFP.

Nearly 3,000 Tibetan men, women and children, including monks and nuns, braved a scorching sun to walk about 10 kilometers (6.2 miles) from a 17th century fort to the city centre, waving multicoloured Tibetan flags.

Dozens of cloth banners carried by the marchers read: "Thank you India."

A spokesman for the marchers, drawn from Tibetan settlements from all over India, said the procession was organised to thank the government and people of India for their hospitality over more than three decades.

India is home to 130,000 Tibetan exiles, some 50,000 more than the number which fled Tibet along with the Dalai Lama and sought refuge in India after the Chinese authorities crushed a revolt in their Himalayan homeland.

The Tibetan "god-king" arrived in India on March 31, 1959. The Dalai Lama's government-in-exile is based in the Indian hill town of Dharamsala, from where he has pursued a relentless campaign for freedom despite New Delhi's growing friendship with Beijing.

**Tanzania closes its border with Burundi to halt exodus of Hutus**

BUJUMBURA, Apr 1: Tanzania on Friday closed its border with Burundi, halting an exodus of over 50,000 mainly Rwandan refugees trying to flee camps in northern Burundi as new murderous clashes were reported between Hutu civilians and Tutsi troops, reports AFP.

An official with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Dar-es-Salaam, contacted by telephone, said the government had sent troops to seal off the border and that Tanzania's minister of defence was in the area coordinating operations.

A spokesman for President Ali Hassan Mwinyi told AFP the government had not announced the border closure, but was not denying it.

UNHCR Nairobi spokesman Peter Kessler said there were some 55,000 refugees on the road in a column stretching for 20 kms (12 miles).

An AFP correspondent at Gasho, on the border of Muingya province saw a column of refugees come to a halt after officials of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) announced the border closure.

The officials were attempting to persuade the refugees to return to their camps at Magara.

The refugees — all Hutus were carrying meagre rations on their heads and appeared resigned to sleeping by the

roadside.

They appeared confused and unsure of why they had set out. Several spoke of "insecurity" and of "war" but admitted they had little idea of their future.

They said they were "too tired" to return to Magara but — looking both fatalistic and scared of the mainly Tutsi Burundian soldiers — appeared unlikely to protest too vigorously.

Kessler in Nairobi said some 3,200 of them had crossed over into Tanzania by early Friday, before the border was sealed and UNHCR officials admitted some others might over the next few days manage to "sneak through."

**Guatemalan govt, rebels break deadlock in talks**

MEXICO CITY, Apr 1: The Guatemalan government and leftist rebels broke a five-month deadlock in peace talks by agreeing Friday to defend the rights of the Central American nation's Mayan Indian majority, reports AP.

The accord raises new hopes for peace in Guatemala, where 150,000 people — most of them Mayan civilians — were killed or "disappeared" in 34 years of civil war.

The agreement leaves five major points to be negotiated in a final peace accord, which both sides hope to reach by

August. That would give the rebels time to participate in November national elections.

Today marks a dawn in Guatemalan history," said Gaspar Irom, commander of the rebels' Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity, or URNG.

The talks broke down after a July accord established a commission to look into the disappearances of civilians. The talks, held in Mexico, resumed in October.

Other items that remain on the agenda include reducing the size and power of the Guatemalan army and land reforms.

**Gorbachev asks US, Russia to mend fences**

MOSCOW, Apr 1: Former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev said on Friday the United States and Russia were both to blame for their cooling bilateral relations and he urged them to mend fences.

"Both sides are at fault. The Americans can't get rid of the complex that, as victors of the cold war, they can ignore the everyone's opinion, including Russia's," Gorbachev said in an interview with Reuters to be aired in the United States on Friday on CBS's the nightly news report.



The X-34 Small reusable launch vehicle, shown in the picture — an artist's rendering — made available on Friday by Orbital Sciences Corporation, will release satellites in space, re-enter the atmosphere and land on a conventional runway. The launch vehicle is an unmanned alternative to the current space shuttle and will be developed cooperatively by Orbital Sciences Corporation, Rockwell International and NASA. — AFP/UNB photo

**Off the Record**

**Marx, Churchill to make music together!**

EDINBURGH: Karl Marx and Winston Churchill will make music together in one of the highlights of this year's Edinburgh international festival, reports Reuter.

Announcing details of the three-week arts extravaganza which begins on August 13, festival director Brian McMaster said the massive piece "requiem for a young poet" by controversial German composer Bernd Alois Zimmermann would be a key attraction.

It blends the words of Marx with the voices of Churchill and other world figures in a taped soundtrack woven into a gargantuan score for symphony orchestra, jazz combo and massed choirs.

It was the last major composition by Zimmermann before he committed suicide in 1970. Regarded as a giant of post-war German music, he financed his musical studies in pre-war Bonn and Berlin by working as a labourer and playing jazz.

Edinburgh's world-famous festival costs about five million pounds (8 million dollars) to produce but generates an extra 50 million pounds (80 million dollars) for the Scottish economy, and organisers hope attendance this year will exceed the 400,000 seen in 1994.

McMaster said ticket sales alone for around 170 shows were expected to draw 1.9 million pounds (3 million dollars), even though individual tickets cost only five to six pounds for most events.

**Honecker's birthday present on sale**

BERLIN: A 100-hectare (250-acre) property presented to former East German communist leader Erich Honecker as a 70th birthday present by the head of this feared secret police went on sale on Friday, reports Reuter.

The German government is asking at least 4.5 million marks (3.3 million dollars) for the property in the northeastern state of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern which has a pool, sauna and bodyguards' quarters and its own motorway exit.

But the buyer must agree to use the 100-hectare estate, presented to Honecker in 1982 as a 70th birthday gift by former secret police chief Erich Mielke and long off-limits to the east German public, for non-profit purposes that serve the community.

**Khartoum confce suggests Islamic united nations**

KHARTOUM, Apr 1: Islamic fundamentalists from around the world appealed to Muslims on Friday to break free from a military economic and cultural stranghold they said the West was imposing on them, reports Reuter.

They told an Arab and Islamist conference in Khartoum the answer to their woes lay in setting up an Islamic united nations, creating a unified Islamic currency, and other suggestions.

The meeting, organised by Sudan's Islamic leaders has attracted representatives from Hizbollah, Hamas, Algeria's Islamist Al-Nahda group, Bosnia, Iran, the US organisation Nation of Islam and various Afghan parties.

But delegates gave the warmest welcome on Friday to Shamseddin Youssef, foreign affairs spokesman of the breakaway Chechen republic fighting Russian forces.

I call on the leaders of the Arab and Islamic world to do something to stop this massacre," Youssef said to cheers and calls of "Allahu akbar" (God is greatest).

Other speakers lashed out at topics from Western led sanctions against Iraq and Libya to the International Monetary Fund and the banning of the Islamic hejab (headscarf) from French schools.

"The enemies are going crazy. They are undressing our women," said Yassin Abu Bakr. "Men are the protectors of women and must fight against this aggression."

He said the UN sanctions banning international flights in Iraq and Libya was an attack on the pillars of Islam because it prevented them from performing the annual Haj pilgrimage.

A unified Islamic currency should be formed to help the realisation of a joint Islamic culture, he said.

The conference is due to issue a formal declaration after its final meeting on Sunday.