



Winnie Mandela (R) with her daughter Zenani, bids farewell to journalists at her home in Soweto on Monday after a press conference to announce her resignation as deputy minister of arts, culture, science and technology. The announcement came hours before her dismissal from the post came into effect. — AFP/UNB photo

**Fresh violence in Karachi: 9 killed**

**KARACHI, Apr 18:** Nine people were killed as violence erupted again in Pakistan's commercial capital overnight, bringing the death toll this month to more than 50, police here said today, reports AFP.

Seven people were shot dead by unidentified gunmen in the North Nazimabad area in the city's congested central district late on Monday. Four of them were believed to be members of the breakaway Haqiqi faction of the ethnic-based Mohajir Qaumi Movement (MQM), officials said.

The three others were vendors selling food at a roadside stall, residents said.

In another incident, a man injured by snipers near the city's airport on Monday afternoon died of his wounds in hospital.

In a separate incident, a man suspected of involvement in the killing of two American diplomats here last month was killed while trying to escape from police on Monday.

**Removal of corrupt ministers demanded Rao faces fresh challenge**

**NEW DELHI, Apr 18:** Indian Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao, saddled with humiliating defeats in state polls, faces a new challenge with five senior leaders demanding the sacking of corrupt federal ministers, reports AFP.

The Statesmen daily said on Tuesday that at least five members of the powerful Congress Working Committee (CWC) had launched a campaign against allegedly corrupt members in Rao's Congress (I) Party government.

They allege that corruption and a deviation from the 109-year-old party's stand on secularism had alienated voters, leading to the loss of important Congress bastions in provincial elections in November and early this year.

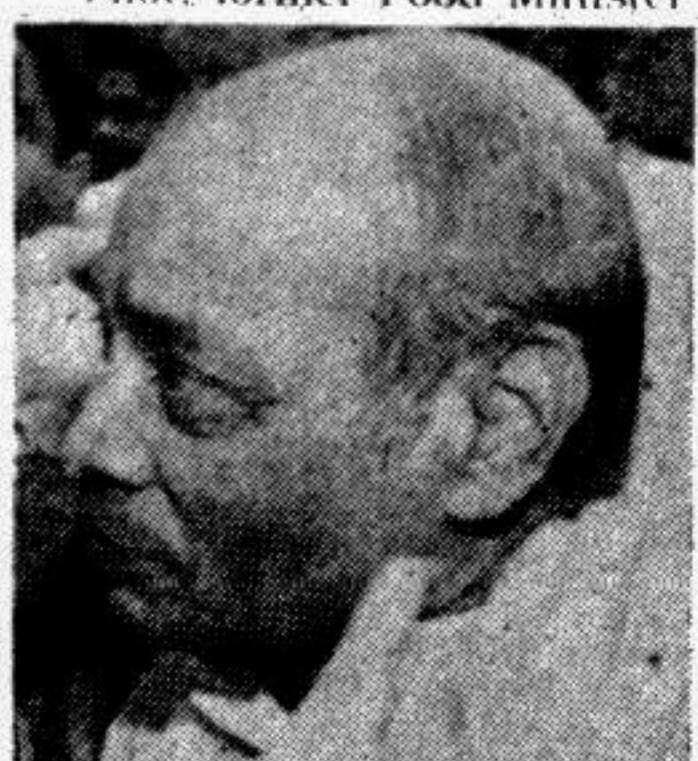
Minister of State for Home Affairs Rajesh Pilot was spearheading the drive in the CWC, which has a major voice in policy-framing and internal party matters, it said.

Pilot, former Food Minister and a K Antony and former Defence Minister Sharad Pawar would ask Rao to clean up his government and reaffirm that it is committed to secularism, The Statesmen said.

The removal of six unnamed corrupt ministers will go a long way in restoring the image of the party, a CWC official told the newspaper.

The campaign follows a demand by another former Congress minister, Rangarajan Kumaramangalam, that Rao should amend the 1995-96 federal budget when parliament meets on April 24 to the giant public sector's advantage.

Kumaramangalam, who quit the government in November 1993 after criticising Rao for the Congress rout in Uttar Pradesh state, said he would demand a "cut motion" (that the money raised from disinvestment in public sector companies should be put back into the public sector).



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**Pakistan doesn't share US view about Iran**

**ISLAMABAD, Apr 18:** Pakistan does not share Washington's view that Iran is a threat to stability in the Middle East, Foreign Minister Sardar Asf Ali said here on Monday, reports AFP.

"We do not share their views" on the matter, he told reporters adding that Iran was not discussed during the official US visit of Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, who returned home on Sunday.

"They are entitled to their views as we are to ours," Ali said, adding that Pakistan's relations with Iran were "good" and they would remain so.

"We have no threat from Iran," the foreign minister said, Pakistan, which has a sizeable number of Shiite Muslims, accords high importance to its ties with predominantly Shiite Iran.

It is a member with Iran and Turkey of the Regional Cooperation Development (RCD) pact, formed in the 1960s.

The RCD was enlarged in 1992 and renamed the Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO), admitting Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kirghizstan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

President Bill Clinton said on Thursday, two days after talks with Benazir in Washington, that Iran still posed the biggest threat to stability in the Middle East and that he was considering stronger sanctions against Tehran.

His comments came shortly after Iran marked the 15th anniversary of its ending diplomatic ties with the United States.

Washington severed relations on April 9, 1980, following the taking of 53 American hostages in the Iranian capital.

**BRIEFLY**

**Cult branches ordered shut:** A Moscow judge on Tuesday ordered the immediate closure of all Moscow branches of a shadowy Japanese sect, ruling in favour of a parents' committee suing the sect for corrupting Russian youth. AP reports from Moscow.

**Aun Shinni Kyo, a sect suspected in the March 20 nerve gas attack on the Tokyo subway, were ordered to pay 20 billion rubles (4 million dollars) to the Committee to Protect Youth from Totalitarian Religions.**

**215 Colombian rebels killed:** Colombia's armed forces killed 215 Marxist guerrillas in skirmishes between January and March, compared to a total of 700 killed during all of last year, according to a military report released on Monday. Reuter says from Bogota.

**62 hacked to death in Liberia:** Sixty two people, almost all women and children, have been hacked to death in the southern Liberian village of Yosi a UN children's fund (UNICEF) spokesman announced yesterday, AFP reports from Geneva.

**Citing a medical source and accounts by survivors, the spokesman, Damien Personnaz, said the victims were massacred with machetes on April 9. An undisclosed number of injured people were taken to the port city of Buchanan or flown by helicopter to the capital Monrovia.**

**Lanka demands body of maid executed:** The government on Tuesday asked for the body of a Sri Lankan maid executed in the United Arab Emirates for killing her employer's four-year-old daughter, officials said. AP reports from Colombo.

**The parents of the maid asked us to get the body back to Sri Lanka," said Pamela Deen, a foreign office spokesperson. Sirri Mohammed Faruq, in her 20s, was executed by a firing squad last week after she confessed to killing her employer's child in Ra-al-Khaimah, and Emirate 300 kilometers (185 miles) north of Abu Dhabi.**

**Israel deport 2 Palestinians:** Israel has deported two Palestinian prisoners to south Lebanon but Lebanese troops refused to allow them to enter government-controlled areas, UN sources said yesterday, Reuter reports from Tyre, Lebanon.

**They said Mohammad al-Joulani, 27, and Khamis Khodor, 58, were on Monday forbidden by Lebanese soldiers at Harma crossing point from crossing over from Israel's south Lebanon border occupation zone to government territories to the north.**

**Quakes jolt Russia's Far East:** Two strong earthquakes jolted Russia's Far East region, but there were no immediate reports of casualties or damage, Reuter says from Tokyo.

**ITAR-Tass news agency said the first earthquake, measuring up to six on the Richter scale, rocked the northern area of Russia's Far East island of Sakhalin at 1800 GMT on Monday. Japan's Meteorological Agency said on Tuesday that the second earthquake, registering 6.9 struck off the coast of the Kurile Islands at 2329 GMT on Monday with its epicentre about 60 km (40 miles) below sea level.**

**5 stabbed in US prison riot:** Inmates reportedly upset over orders to cut their hair and wear uniforms stabbed five prison guards and took three staff members hostage on Monday, AP reports from Columbia.

**One woman hostage was later released. Four of the wounded guards were in serious condition. By early afternoon, several hours after the uprising began, five inmates remained barricaded in a prison kitchen with their hostages, a man and a woman, said state Corrections Department spokeswoman Robyn Zimmerman.**

**8 die in USAF jet crash:** An Air Force jet crashed on Monday in a wooded area near some homes, trying to land at the airport in Alexander city, eastern Alabama. All eight people on board were killed, AP reports from Alexander City, Alabama.

**Fire Chief Ronnie Betts said there were multiple casualties but would not say how many. CNN said all eight people on board the jet were killed.**

**Nicaraguan gunmen kill 4:** Two men armed with assault rifles sprayed a bus with gunfire in rural Nicaragua early on Monday morning, killing four people and injuring 26, police said, Reuter reports from Managua.

**Epidemics claim 10 Filipinos:** Ten children died and 50 more were quarantined in the past two weeks after measles, malaria and diarrhoea epidemics hit a town east of Manila, a health official said yesterday, AFP reports from General Nakpr.

**Provincial health officer Manuel Salazar said the dead children, some as young as three years old, succumbed to the diseases. Fifty children were quarantined at an elementary school converted into a hospital in Umiray town, 70 km (43.4 miles) east of Manila, he added.**

**Brando's daughter dies:** Actor Marlon Brando's daughter Cheyenne committed suicide by hanging herself at her home on the South Pacific island of Tahiti in French Polynesia on Sunday, her family said on Monday, Reuter reports from Papeete.

**Relatives said Cheyenne Brando, 25, had been depressed ever since the murder of her boyfriend Dag Drolet by her half-brother Christian four years ago and had made three previous suicide attempts.**

**British actor Arthur English dies:** Veteran British actor Arthur English died over the weekend at the age of 75 after a long illness, his manager said on Monday, AFP reports from London.

**English died on Sunday at a hospital in Camberley in southern England. His son, Tony English, said the actor, best known for his comic roles, had been ill with emphysema for more than six years and "in and out of hospital."**

**12 killed in clash in Somalia:** Twelve people were killed on Monday when rival clan-based factions fought over a camel theft incident in the central Somali region of Gaidudud, clan leaders said, AFP reports from Mogadishu.

**An elder from the Marehan clan Hagi Dawd Dirir told reporters by radio that the fighting started after camel rustlers from General Mohamed Farah Aidid's Haber Gedir clan stole 160 camels from the Marehans.**

**Over 2 lakh pilgrims reach Saudi Arabia**

**DUBAI, Apr 18:** Some 232,000 Muslim pilgrims have arrived in Saudi Arabia to perform hajj (the annual pilgrimage) to Makka which is due to start in last April, the Saudi Press Agency said on Monday, reports Reuter.

The official agency said about 229,000 of the pilgrims already in the kingdom had arrived by air to perform the Hajj which reaches its climax in the second week of May.

Some 2.5 million Muslims including more than one million from abroad, performed the Hajj last year, according to Saudi Arabian newspapers.

The Iranian News Agency IRNA reported earlier on Monday that the first batch of some 69,000 Iranian pilgrims would start heading to Saudi Arabia, home to two of Islam's holiest shrines, on Wednesday.



Chinese Premier Li Peng (L) accompanies his Nepalese counterpart Man Mohan Adhikari (R) as they review the honour guard yesterday, at the welcoming ceremony in the Great Hall of the People in Beijing. Adhikari arrived here on Monday for a five-day official visit, the first by a Nepalese communist. — AFP/UNB photo

**Baby gets eyelid made of mother's hard palate**

**BEIJING:** Chinese surgeons have given a baby born without an eyelid for his right eye a replacement made from his mother's palate, an official report said Tuesday, reports AP.

The 10-month-old baby, named Nannan, was losing his sight in his right eye and was unable to sleep because he could not close his eye, the Xinhua News Agency reported. Doctors used tissue from his mother's hard palate because it is closest in strength to an eyelid, the report added.

The operation, the first of its kind in China, was performed at the No 2 People's Hospital in Dalian in northeast China's Liaoning province. Xinhua said.

**France urged to keep troops in Bosnia**

**ATLANTA, Georgia, Apr 18:** The chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff urged France on Monday not to withdraw its troops from Bosnia and warned of a "humanitarian catastrophe" if UN peacekeepers left, reports Reuter.

General John Shalikashvili said he could understand France's frustration after snipers in the Bosnian capital killed two of its soldiers in as many days.

"It is my deep hope that the French will somehow find it possible for them to remain and for the rest of the nations, that are part of UNPROFOR there, to remain," Shalikashvili said after addressing a civic group.

The alternative, if they were to pull out, is potentially so grave as far as a humanitarian catastrophe is concerned," he said, "there's no alternative right now."

Shalikashvili said thousands of people are alive today because UNPROFOR has helped feed Sarajevo's population.

Meanwhile, Conservative French presidential front runner Jacques Chirac said on Monday UN peacekeepers should have the right to return fire and counter attack if they are attacked in Bosnia.

NATO and the United Nations must imperatively give UNPROFOR the means to resist and counter attack when it is attacked.

**Iran's deadline to remove satellite dishes**

**TEHRAN, Apr 18:** Iran has given television-viewers until Saturday to take down the satellite dishes which allow them to tune in to foreign channels, Interior Minister Ali Besharati said Monday, reports AFP.

Anyone failing to do so faces a fine of up to three million rials (750 dollars) and the confiscation of their dishes by police, Besharati said.

Iranians caught importing, selling or installing dishes could be jailed and fined up to 100 million rials (25,000 dollars).

Parliament banned the "devil dishes," as Islamic hardliners call them, in February after they mushroomed on rooftops in Tehran and other big cities.

More than 100,000 homes now have dishes tuned in to 20 television stations from the United States, Europe and Asia.



Palestinian boy scouts join Israeli Peace Now activists in a demonstration on Monday near Tulkarem on the Green Line between Israel and the West Bank, calling for withdrawal of the Israeli army from Arab areas of the occupied territory. — AFP/UNB photo

**Crusader against child-labour shot dead in Lahore**

**ISLAMABAD, Apr 18:** A 12-year-old Christian boy who won international acclaim for highlighting the evils of child labour in Pakistan has been shot dead in an attack that appears linked to this outspoken crusade, reports AP.

Iqbal Masih was gunned down Easter Sunday as he and two friends rode their bicycles in their village of Murtik, near the eastern city of Lahore, said Ehsan Ullah Khan, chairman of the Bonded Labour Liberation Front (BLLF).

"We know his death was a conspiracy by the carpet mafia," Khan said in a reference to the owners of the carpet weaving factories who employ large numbers of children in Pakistan.

A labourer in Iqbal's village, about 240 km (144 miles) southeast of Islamabad, has been arrested in connection with the shooting, said Khan, whose group fights against child labour.

Iqbal, who worked as a carpet weaver under abysmal conditions from the age of 4 to 10, had attracted widespread attention in recent months.

At an international labour conference in Sweden last November, he spoke about the horrible conditions that child workers faced. In December, he went to Boston to receive the Reebok Youth in Action Award from the American shoe company.

At the time, Iqbal said he wanted to become a lawyer and would use the 15,000 dollar prize money for school. Brandeis University in Boston used offered him a full scholarship, during his visit.

"He was so brave... you can't

imagine," said Khan, who travelled with Iqbal to Boston.

Iqbal had received several death threats from people in the carpet weaving industry who were angered by his outspoken opposition to child labour. The latest death threat was received just two weeks ago, said Khan.

In an interview shortly before the Reebok award ceremony, young Iqbal said he had turned the tables on his old boss.

"I'm not afraid of him any longer. Now he's afraid of me," Iqbal said.

Khan said Iqbal's campaign against child labour had led to the closure of dozens of carpet weaving factories in his district.

"He also has managed to free thousands of children," said Khan.

The factory owners prefer children because their tiny fingers can make the smallest, tightest knots. Also, they seldom complain about abuses such as long hours, meager pay and dangerous conditions.

Iqbal was sold by his parents into virtual slavery at age 4, and was shackled to a carpet weaving loom for the better part of six years.

Khan recalled his first meeting with Iqbal, then a 10-year-old who was emaciated and wheezing like an old man. He covered in a corner of a meeting hall where Khan had gathered local villagers to urge them to fight against forced labour.

"Iqbal was hiding himself, it was like he was trying to disappear. He was so frightened," recalled Khan. "But I felt there

was something in this boy, that he had a strong will."

When Iqbal was freed, he stole his boss 13,000 rupees (419 dollars), a huge sum considering he earned only one rupee a day.

An estimated 6 million children age 14 or younger work in Pakistan, according to the Human Rights Commission, an independent group. They work in carpet factories, brick-making plants, on farms and as servants.

Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto has vowed to fight child labour but her government has taken only limited action. She faces powerful and influential industries who argue that the impoverished country needs their export earnings from carpets and other goods sold abroad.

**Off the Record**

**Incestuous father accused of 27-yr-old infanticide**

**BOYNTON BEACH, Florida:** A man accused of killing the son he fathered with his daughter 27 years ago confessed Monday to having a second child with his daughter, then killing the baby in the basement of their Pennsylvania home, police said, reports AP.

Paul Corvin, 63, was to be arraigned on a homicide charge Tuesday, said Scottsdale Police Chief Tony Martin.

"He cut the cord himself and carried the baby downstairs into the basement," Martin said. "He laid the baby down on the floor of the basement until it died."

On Saturday, police dug up a baby's skeletal remains in the spot where Corvin's daughter said he had buried her newborn son alive 27 years ago.

The 39-year-old woman told police she was 12 when she gave birth in a bathroom at home. She said her father, Paul Corvin, tried to drown the newborn, and when that didn't work, he buried him alive in the backyard.

The remains were turned over to the medical examiner's office. Sheridan said it might never be known if the child was alive when he was buried.

Police opened a murder investigation, but Sgt Kevin McGowan said there wasn't enough evidence to charge Corvin. Police said it is unlikely the baby's mother would be charged.

The woman said her boyfriend encouraged her to come forward and that she worried about the repercussions.

**From wrong number to nightmare**

**SAN JOSE, California:** It began as a wrong number, blossomed into a romance — and turned into a nightmare for two families, reports AP.

An heiress to the 12-year-old Tran family met at 60 with 51-year-old Kent Phillip Phiko, a secret boyfriend she met through an errant phone call.

On Wednesday, a warrant was issued for Phiko's arrest on a charge of felony child enticement, though authorities have said they don't believe the girl is in danger.

Police say the relationship apparently began after Phiko dialed the wrong number and Tran picked up the phone.

Several months ago, Tran's mother, Mal Pham Vo, noticed the name "Kent" and a phone number on her daughter's note-books. But she wasn't worried because junior high crushes are common.

In November, at Tran's birthday party at a pizza shop, the girl confided to her friends that she had a "secret admirer" named Kent, police said.

Two months ago, Mrs Vo noticed that her daughter's marks were dropping and began pressuring her to improve them. Then, on April 5 Tran left for Foothill Middle School as usual and never returned home.

Police called the mysterious "Kent's" number and Phiko's wife answered. She told officers her husband was a 260-pound sheet-metal worker from nearby Campbell and had recently left home after telling her about Tran.

He said he had "met this little girl through a wrong number" and they had several more conversations, Officer Todd Martin said.

Last week Phiko called his wife to say he was "protecting" a girl and would not be returning home. It was the last police heard from him.

The FBI has been in contact with San Jose police, but spokesman Rick Smith said there is little the agency can do for the moment.

**Movie memorabilia for sale**

**NEW YORK:** John Travolta's white disco suit, the tablets from the Charlton Heston classic "The Ten Commandments," and the 1940 Buick Phaeton from "Casablanca" will go on the auction block in June, reports AP.

The car in which Humphrey Bogart and Ingrid Bergman made their climactic drive to the airport in the 1943 film is expected to be the top money earner at Christie's film and TV memorabilia sale June 28.

The car is expected to sell for 60,000 dollars to 80,000 dollars said Christie's spokeswoman Kirsten Schabacker.

Travolta's white suit from "Saturday Night Fever," consigned by film critic Gene Siskel, is expected to fetch 30,000 dollars to 50,000 dollars. The Ten Commandments tablets, with stage directions etched on the back, are expected to sell for the same.

One of the later bits of movie memorabilia on the auction block is the bus bench on which Tom Hanks sat in the Academy Award-winning film "Forrest Gump." The bench, one of two in the movie, is expected to bring 6,000 dollars to 8,000 dollars.

**UN vehicles seized in Krajina**

**ZAGREB, Apr 18:** Rebel Serbs in Croatia hijacked four UN peacekeeping vehicles and seized overnight three UN soldiers and four members of a medical team, United Nations officials said on Monday, reports Reuter.

The incidents occurred over the weekend, in the breakaway Krajina enclave where Serb hostility to peacekeepers has mounted over recent changes in the UN mandate demanded by Croatia to help it regain authority over the region.

Three Belgian UN soldiers and four members of a UN Yugoslavian medical team were driving to Erdut in Serb-held territory on the Danube River border with Yugoslavia when they were stopped at a rebel checkpoint.