

## Jordan won't seal its border with Iraq

AMMAN, Sept 13: King Hussein said on Tuesday that Jordan will not seal its border with Iraq to pressure President Saddam Hussein but hoped Iraqis would see a new era of freedom and human rights, reports Reuter.

"Let me say very, very clearly that when I speak of the Iraqi people and their suffering I mean suffering regardless of whether it is externally induced or internally brought about," he told reporters.

The news conference, held because of a visit by Spanish Prime Minister Felipe Gonzalez, was his first since a speech in August that marked a dramatic shift away from his erstwhile ally Saddam.

However, the king repeated his position he would not close the border — Iraq's only dependable access to the outside world — and Jordan would continue

sending food, medicine and other supplies permitted under the UN sanctions.

He said Jordan would also continue to buy oil from Iraq, which has been Jordan's sole supplier since Saudi Arabia cut off shipments in September 1990 because of King Hussein's refusal to back the anti-Saddam coalition to drive Iraqi troops from Kuwait.

Jordanians were surprised this August when the King welcomed high-level defectors from Iraq and then repeated the US position that UN sanctions imposed on Iraq for its invasion of Kuwait would not be lifted without major internal changes in Iraq.

Jordanian businessmen, who sell an estimated 400 million dollars of goods to Iraq in exchange for its oil, have feared losing both present and future markets that could emerge after sanctions end.

## Serbs under pressure on two fronts Croat forces capture Serb-held strategic chunks of Bosnia

SARAJEVO, Sept 13: The Bosnian Serbs were under pressure on two fronts as NATO kept up relentless air strikes and Croat forces claimed to have captured strategic chunks of Bosnia from the Serbs, reports Reuter.

NATO warplanes bombed numerous Serb targets on Tuesday and US Defence Secretary William Perry said the alliance's air strikes had now virtually destroyed Serb air defences.

Within a few days, NATO aircraft will be able to fly with impunity over any Bosnian Serb space, provided they are flying high enough that they are not subjected to ground fire from manned portable systems, Perry said in a US television interview.

As Russia — the Serbs'

only major power friend — stepped up its pressure and rhetoric for a halt to the NATO bombing, the United States took steps to ease Moscow's concern about the air strikes.

But US President Bill Clinton rejected Russian charges that the two-week-old NATO campaign had threatened the Serbs with genocide.

"There has been no genocide there", Clinton told reporters in Washington. "There has been an extraordinary amount of care and discipline, with firmness and strength, and they (the air raids) were appropriately done."

Croatian television said Bosnian Croat troops had inflicted a new battlefield defeat on the Serbs by capturing

1,500 sq km (580 sq miles) of territory in western Bosnia, including the town of Sipovo, the mountain pass of Miliniste and the peaks of Demirovar and Vitorog.

As NATO aircraft attacked Serb military positions around Sarajevo and in eastern Bosnia, the Western alliance said it had expanded its target list since it started the raids on August 30 in a bid to break the Serb siege of Sarajevo and other UN-designated "safe areas."

NATO planes bombed Serb ammunition dumps at Vogusca just northwest of Sarajevo, causing explosions that rattled windows in the Bosnian capital.

Serbia's President Slobodan Milosevic met European Union envoy Carl Bildt in Belgrade and said

NATO's action was fostering war, not peace. Bildt goes to Croatia on Wednesday.

Meanwhile, the United Nations confirmed today that Bosnian Croat and Muslim forces supported by the regular Croatian army made large gains against Serbs in central and western Bosnia, including the town of Donji Vakuf.

"In central Bosnia the Croatian army, Bosnian Croat forces (HVO), and Bosnian government forces jointly made considerable gains. It would appear that the city of Donji Vakuf has fallen to these forces," UN special envoy Yasushi Akashi told reporters.

Akashi also confirmed that the mainly Muslim Bosnian army made significant advances in the north.

## MQM won't share power with government

ISLAMABAD, Sept 13: Pakistan's ethnic-based Mohajir Qaumi Movement (MQM) has ruled out power-sharing with the government as the two sides resumed talks here today aimed at bringing peace to the port city of Karachi, reports AFP.

Ajmal Dehlvi, leading a five-member MQM team from the strife-torn city, said the question of power-sharing could not be considered until the party's basic demands were accepted.

These include the immediate end of siege and search operations in Karachi, and withdrawal of security forces from residential districts.

The MQM also wants criminal cases against party leaders, MPs and workers withdrawn, the community's quota of government jobs increased, and cash compensation for families of party members killed in security operations.

Dehlvi, who flew from

Karachi late Tuesday, said, "We have no lust for power." The MQM wanted the issues resolved and grievances settled.

He hoped the two sides would discuss substantive issues as the government side had given a "commitment" on this.

Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto's Law Minister Nabi Dad Khan head the government's negotiators.

The two sides have held seven rounds of talks since negotiations began July 11.

Some 1,400 people have died so far this year in ethnic and political violence in the commercial capital.

The government blames the MQM, which represents Urdu-speaking Mohajirs who migrated from India after the 1947 partition of the subcontinent.

The MQM blames the unrest on the Benazir government's alleged discrimination against Mohajirs.

## BRIEFLY

### Peres-Arafat meet likely today:

Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres and PLO leader Yasser Arafat will probably meet on Thursday to try to clear obstacles blocking expansion of Palestinian self-rule, an Israeli official said on Tuesday, Reuter reports from Jerusalem.

She said the meeting in the Egyptian resort of Taba, originally scheduled for yesterday was postponed because negotiators were still working proposals to bridge the gaps between the two sides.

### Dalai Lama to call on Al Gore:

The Dalai Lama, the exiled Buddhist leader who won a Nobel Peace Prize for his non-violent advocacy of self-rule for Tibet, will call Wednesday on Vice President Al Gore, AP reports from Washington.

President Clinton received the Tibetan spiritual and political leader during two previous visits to Washington and appeared to be avoiding disapproval of China this time so as not to irritate already raw relations.

### 14 militants killed in Algeria:

Algerian security forces Tuesday killed a group of 14 armed Islamic militants in a day long fight on heights overlooking Algiers, officials said, warning that the toll from the battle could go higher, AFP reports from Algiers.

The announcement came after witnesses in the area reported heavy gunfire near the residential district of El Biar on the heights of Algiers. Officials said the 14 members of a "dangerous terrorist group" — the standard term for Islamic fundamentalists — had been operating in the Casbah Bab-el-Oued, El Biar and Bourzarea districts of the city.

### McKenna wins provincial polls:

The Liberal Party of premier Frank McKenna won an easy victory in Monday's provincial elections in New Brunswick, official results released Tuesday showed, AFP reports from Fredericton, Canada.

McKenna who has led the government in the Atlantic province since 1987 and is one of Canada's most popular premiers said the outcome of the vote would give his team new impetus in reviving the province's economy.

### Perry to visit C Europe:

A senior US defence official says Defence Secretary Perry will travel to Central Europe this month to discuss "the security of the region as a whole" and not to focus on issues associated with NATO expansion, USIS reports from Washington.

Perry departs for Europe on September 15 and will travel to Slovenia, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, and Hungary.

### Murayama, Fahd hold talks:

Japanese Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama and King Fahd of Saudi Arabia held talks in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia on the Arab-Israeli peace process and on Japan's oil imports, official sources said yesterday, AFP reports from Jeddah.

Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince, Abdullah Ibn Abdel Aziz, and Interior Minister Nayef Ibn Abdel Aziz attended the talks which were held late Tuesday, the official Saudi press agency said.

### 20 die as boat sinks in Philippine:

About 20 smugglers are believed to have died after the Philippine Navy sank their speed boat during a gunbattle near the sea border with Malaysia, a spokesman said yesterday, AFP reports from Zamboanga.

A navy boat was patrolling off the Tawi-Tawi Islands, south of Zamboanga, on Tuesday when it spotted the speedboat.

### Religious leader awarded in US:

Rabbi Menachem Schneerson, leader of the Lubavitch Hasidim until his death in June 1994, was awarded the Congressional Gold Medal on Tuesday by President Clinton, AP reports from Washington.

The rabbi's good work has been recognised by presidents for over two decades since President Nixon, especially in the field of education. The impact of his contribution is felt beyond the Lubavitch community and members of his faith, indeed the entire country," Clinton said in awarding the medal, the highest honour Congress can bestow.



French soldiers of the Rapid Reaction Force (RRF) take position at Mount Igman, near Sarajevo Tuesday as they practise together with British troops for more NATO actions against Bosnian Serbs. NATO unleashed Wednesday its biggest attack yet on Bosnian Serb targets near Sarajevo. —AFP/UNB photo

## Adhikary pledges support to govt King Birendra summons parliament

KATHMANDU, Sept 12: Nepalese King Birendra Tuesday night called for the ninth session of the House of Representatives to begin Thursday, at the recommendation of Speaker Ram Chandra Paudyal, state-radio announced, reports AFP.

The session of the House, the lower chamber of parliament, is a crucial one because new Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba and his coalition will have to win the support of at least 103 of 205 members to stay in power. Deuba and his four cabinet

colleagues were sworn in Tuesday evening at the royal palace by the King, who had dissolved parliament on June 13 at the request of former Prime Minister Man Mohan Adhikari, a communist.

The House also referred to as parliament, was reinstated by the Supreme Court last week, which declared its dissolution "unconstitutional and undemocratic."

If the three party ruling coalition cabinet composed of Deuba, the Nepali Congress Party (NCP) parliamentary leader, two other NC MPs

and one each from the rightist Rastriya Prajatantra Party and the pro-India Nepal Sadbhavana Party (NSP) fail to win the parliament's support, the government must resign. Meanwhile, ousted communist prime minister Man Mohan Adhikari today pledged his party's support to Nepal's new coalition government, saying he hoped it would dedicate itself to the welfare of the people.

The new government was sworn in Tuesday after the NCP-UML lost a vote.



The Princess of Wales and Italian opera star Pavarotti, after the princess arrived Tuesday for a charity concert in aid of the children of Bosnia, held in Modena, Italy. —AFP/UNB photo

## Arif Nikai new Punjab CM

LAHORE, Sept 13: Arif Nikai, the candidate of a political alliance led by Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, was elected unopposed as Chief Minister of Punjab province today, political sources said, reports Reuter.

The sources said that the main opposition Pakistan Muslim League (PML) led by former prime minister Nawaz Sharif had withdrawn its candidate for the post.

It did so because Nikai is a member of a pro-government PML splinter group known as the PML-J, and not a member of Benazir's ruling Pakistan People's Party (PPP).

The vote in the Punjab Provincial Assembly resolves a political crisis that began when President Farooq Leghari suspended the provincial government last week, following a revolt against former chief minister Manzoor Wattoo by most provincial ministers.

## Anti-govt move spreads in Sudan

KHARTOUM, Sudan, Sept 13: Anti-government protests that erupted in the Sudanese capital of Khartoum have apparently spread to another city, Egypt's Middle East News Agency said Tuesday, reports AP.

MENA said there were reports that the violence has spread to the city of Wad Madani, 160 kilometres (100 miles) south of Khartoum. It also said that "great numbers of civilians" rioted in Omdurman, a western district of the capital. It gave no details in either report.

AFP adds: Three hundred prisoners, seized their chance to escape in the chaos of Sudan's unrest, as they were about to be transferred from a jail in the capital, officials said today.

## UNHCR seeks \$ 28 m for Ethiopian, Somali refugees

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) said on Tuesday it needs 27.9 million US dollars for the repatriation and integration of Ethiopian and Somali refugees through the end of this year, according to a UNHCR press release issued here yesterday.

In an appeal to donor countries, UNHCR said contributions to these programmes have been extremely poor and many activities have been curtailed, if not stopped altogether, for lack of resources. Certain components of these programmes have been the subject of various UN consolidated inter-agency appeals.

## Off the Record



A Christie's employee displays a jewelled necklace belonging to Princess Salimah Aga Khan (whose photo is shown) Tuesday which is to be auctioned in Geneva Wednesday along with other items from Princess Salimah's collection. The necklace contains a 23.78 carat deep blue diamond and is expected to fetch over 7 million US dollars. —AFP/UNB photo

## Pampered children — outcome of one child policy?

BEIJING: Chinese parents are being chided for coddling their kids even after they leave home for college, reports AP.

A commentary Wednesday in the official English-language China Daily said parents are following their kids to the campus and keeping house for them instead of letting them learn to fend for themselves.

"A typical scene at the start of term is of parents laden down with luggage, bustling around to help their children settle on campus," it said.

"Some clean the dormitories for their offspring, some make their beds, or even live outside campus for several months to help their children adjust to the new life."

"It said that "in many teen-agers' eyes, parents play the roles of porters, drivers or housekeepers."

The commentary tacitly acknowledged that this was a result of China's policy since the 1970s of restricting families to one child each to control the population of 1.2 billion.

"The only child is prone to be pampered by parents," it said.

But parents shouldn't over do it, it said, adding: "Parents can accompany children to college, but they cannot accompany them through all the hardships and pains of their whole life."

The headline of the commentary was: "No more little emperors."

## Head scarf wins the race

HANCY, France: A court on Tuesday ordered the state to pay 50,000 francs (dfrs 10,000) to the parents of a young Muslim woman forced to leave her school because she refused to remove her head scarf in class, reports AP.

Salwa Ait Hamad, 15, was expelled from Haut de Penoy junior high school in Vandoeuvre, in the eastern Moselle region, on June 8 because she would not abide by an order to leave her head uncovered at school.

In defending her action, Salwa, born in France but of Moroccan origin, had cited her religious convictions which, she said, call for women to cover their heads.

School officials maintained that, by wearing a scarf, Salwa was endangering herself and others in physical education and technology classes.

The court came down in favour of the young woman, who recently entered another school in the region that tolerates head scarves.

Under the previous conservative government, Education Minister Francois Bayrou sent out a circular to schools counseling them not to allow students to wear "ostentatious" signs of their religion, but the target was clearly head scarves on Muslim girls.

Bayrou remains education minister in the current conservative government, led by Premier Alain Juppe.

## Libya expels Palestinians to punish PLO for peace bid

AL SALOUM, Egypt, Sept 13: Libya seeking to punish PLO leader Yasser Arafat for making peace with Israel is expelling more Palestinians Egyptian security sources said on Tuesday, reports Reuter.

The sources at Al Saloum border checkpoint between Egypt and Libya, 700 km (430 miles) west of Cairo, said Tripoli informed the Egyptian authorities that a new group of Palestinian deportees would be arriving soon at the crossing point in 20 buses to be ferried to the self ruled Gaza Strip.

It did not give a number for the new batch of deportees but Palestinians have been sent in hundreds to the Egyptian border over the past week.

On September 2 Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi, who opposes the 1993

Palestinian-Israeli peace treaty, urged Arab states to send all the Palestinians back to Arafat's self rule areas to bring about the economic collapse of his autonomous area.

On Tuesday, Arafat travelled from Gaza to Egypt where he met President Hosni Mubarak, he urged him to intervene with Gaddafi to stop the expulsion of Palestinians, officials said.

Hundreds of Palestinians had been thrown out, often ending up stranded for days on the border until they got approval of both Egypt and Israel to go to Gaza.

Egyptian authorities would not let Palestinians cross into Egypt without permits to go to Gaza. Entry to Gaza is subject to the approval of Israel which still controls the Gaza border.

## NGOs playing significant role in Beijing confce

BEIJING, Sept 13: From youth groups to local development banks to family planning agencies, nongovernmental organisations (NGOs) are playing a major role in the Fourth World Conference on Women for the first time making a significant impact on the commitments of governments at a United Nations meeting, reports USIS.

Representatives of thousands of NGOs around the world held their own forum in conjunction with the women's conference, then moved into the official arena to make their opinions and needs known as governments negotiated policies to advance opportunities and empower women.

As it turned out, the conference on women became the largest and most visible example of the influence grassroots organisations are

beginning to wield on the international agenda.

Government delegates and UN officials alike believe that the NGOs are the key to changing women's lives. Those private organisations not political leaders, will be implementing the conference's final document, the Platform for Action.

The women's conference, which is the largest meeting ever sponsored by the UN is also the largest in terms of individual NGO participation from all regions of the world, says Kristen Timothy, NGO coordinator. Since the last women's conference 10 years ago in Nairobi, she says, "we have seen a huge increase in terms of women NGOs joining activities."

"We find that what is clearly happening... is an educational process taking place and that civil society —

represented in this case by women and supporters of women's issues — are finding more and more of a voice at the international level. The adage 'think globally, act locally' is growing in its meaning for all as people try to participate and try to have an influence on the international agenda," Timothy says.

Some 2,500 NGOs who do not normally participate in UN meetings or conferences are at the women's conference, according to Timothy, joining another 500 NGOs who have what is called "consultative status" at the UN. Altogether, there have been some 4,000 individuals involved, she says.

"This would not have been the case 10 years ago at the last conference in Nairobi, when there were still parts of the world where women's NGOs were not particularly

numerous," she says. "We have seen a huge increase not only in the number of women NGOs who wish to participate in setting the global agenda, but we've seen a huge increase in the number of NGOs who do not have women as their specific agenda but are very anxious to participate because they, over the past 10 years, added women's issues as an important part of their overall activities."

"The networking that began (in Nairobi) between women from different parts of the world produced a number of international networks of women's groups," she explains. "We find that the NGO community participating in this conference is well organised but very diverse. Some have come with a strategic agenda. They are working to help improve the

Platform for Action to add their views and they are lobbying."

Other NGOs, Timothy reports, are in Beijing "to network, meet people of similar interests, to form international networks. A large network of older women has just formed, and they have a commitment to be in touch with each other to work together from all the different regions. Some have very specialised interests and they are here to learn, exchange information, and talk about what works."

Deputy US Secretary of Education Madeleine Kunin, a member of the US delegation, says she expects that many women will return to their countries "transformed to some extent" with new energy, insights, and networks to put pressures on their governments for some

of the programmes that are being developed in Beijing.

"Conferences like this do create a momentum and a universal dialogue in these face-to-face discussions that result in changes that we can't fully predict, but one can pretty safely say things won't be quite the same thereafter," Kunin says.

Fern Katz, a member of the National Council of Jewish Women, an American NGO says "the conference brought together 30,000 or more women and it has provided a cohesiveness and a sense of energy that I'm sure we've never had before."

"I feel now that we're ready for action... I intend to go home and talk to women about running for elected office. I think in the United States women are not properly represented in Congress."