Japan renews land lease for US base in Okinawa

Japanese government signed documents today to renew leases for US military facilities in Okinawa, overruling objections from the local governor. reports AFP.

It also asked for an emergency extension of leases about to expire:

Despite a court order Monday, Okinawa Governor Masahide Ota had refused to sign the documents, citing local opposition to the bases following the rape of a 12-yearold schoolgirl by three US ser-· vicemen in September.

A defence agency official appointed by Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto signed the documents Friday.

Tokyo's unprecedented move came less than three weeks before US President Bill Clinton makes a state visit to

AP adds: US military personnel are being warned to

keep away from a military, facility on Okinawa that is at the centre of an intensifying land lease dispute, a Marine Corps spokesman said Friday.

Local authorities, fearing radical protests this weekend. have mobilised several busloads of riot police and erected a tall fence around the facility a sprawling US Navy communications centre known as the "Elephant Cage.

Over the objections of Okinawa's governor, Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto on Thursday signed papers to force Shoichi Chibana, the owner of a plot now used for the facility, and dozens of other landowners to renew their leases.

Those papers were submitted to a special committee on Okinawa Friday morning. Okinawa Gov. Masahide Ota refused to comment, but has said he intends to take the case to the Supreme Court.

400 file nominations for Lok Sabha election

Pro-India Nat'l Confce won't take part in Kashmir polls

different constituencies on

each day. The elections will be

the first in the state since the

start of a separatist rebellion in

1990 in which more than

JAMMU, India, Mar 29: One of the largest pro-India parties in Jammu and Kashmir, the National Conference, said today it would not contest coming general elections in the troubled state, reports Reuter.

National Conference leader Farooq Abdullah told a news conference in the state's winter capital Jammu that the party would not participate in the election unless the federal government granted the region a greater degree of auton-

"My party will not be participating in the forthcoming elections for six seats in Jammu and Kashmir state," Abdullah said after a three-day meeting of his party's leaders. Polling for the state's six

seats in the federal parliament

20,000 people have died. "Unless the government of India grants autonomy to all three regions of Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh, the elections would be meaningless." Abdullah said. "I have to restore the feelings of the peo-ple. That's possible only if the

this autonomy. Abdullah was Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister when the revolt broke out six years ago. His father, Sheikh Abdullah, dominated state politics

government of India grants

is set for May 7, 23 and 30, for half a century before he with voting taking place in two died in 1982.

AFP from New Delhi adds: More than 400 people have submitted nominations to fight upcoming Indian.general elections so far, but the total number of contestants is likely to touch the 9,000 - mark, officials said Thursday.

More than 400 aspirants submitted their nominations from 10 states for the 545-seat Lok Sabha, the lower house of parliament. The largest number of 127 was recorded in the southern state of Karnataka.

Most of those who have filed their papers are independents who will fight without any party label. Most political parties are yet to decide on candidates across the country.

Pilgrims warned against bringing books, leaflets during *Hajj*

RIYADH, Mar 29: Saudi Arabia on Thursday warned Muslims planning to make the annual pilgrimage to Makka next month against bringing political publications and pictures in the Gulf kingdom, reported AFP.

"It is strictly forbidden for the pilgrims to introduce into the kingdom books, pictures or pamphlets that have an ideological or political character," the Interior Ministry said in a statement.

Those who disobey will be prosecuted and deported the statement added. Similar warnings were issued in previous years.

EU summit opens in Italy

TURIN, Italy, Mar 29: A summit of leaders of the European Union, designed to launch the inter-governmental conference (IOC) on the EU's future, opened here today, reports AFP.

The IGC is expected to run well into next year. Its central objective is the reform of EU decision-making to prepare for the entry of up to 10 eastern European countries, as well as Malta and Cyprus over the next five to 10 years.

The IGC will also examine ways of making the EU more effective in terms of foreign policy and in the fight against crime and unemployment.

4-ex republics of Soviet Union to sign accord

MOSCOW, Mar 29: Leaders of four former Soviet republics meet at a Moscow summit today to sign a deal on strengthening ties ruptured when the Soviet Union fell apart, reports

Russian President Boris Yeltsin plays host to the presidents of Belarus, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan for the signing of agreements on deepening integration between the four

Civilian govt takes over in Sierra Leone

FREETOWN, Mar 29: A civilian government takes over in Sierra Leone on Friday from soldiers who have dominated the West African nation for decades, reports Reuter.

Muslim lawyer Ahmad Tejan Kabbanh. 64. whose party won presidential and parliamentary elections concluded on March 15, faces the urgent task of striking a deal with rebels whose five year guerilla campaign has wrecked the econ-

A 21-one gun salutes will mark the handover from military leader Brigadier Julius Maada Bio Totejan Kabbah at parliament building at 10 a.m. (1000 GMT).

Bosnian fed isn't falling apart: US

NATO for pressing Balkans to implement Dayton accord

TOLEDO, Spain, Mar 29: NATO Secretary-General Javier Solana called here late Thursday for international pressure on leaders of the former Yugoslavia to apply the Dayton peace agreements "in the letter and the spirit," reports

He also urged the former belligerents to show extraordinary generosity, sacrifice and long-term vision.

Speaking at a seminar on "new dimensions of European defence," Solana said that the mission of the NATO-led peace Implementation Force (IFOR) in the region was highly suc-

cessful. But he warned that IFO yould not stay indefinitely. aying that its peacekeeping presence did not constitute a pause in the conflict or "the most expensive ceasefire in

On NATO's relations with Russia, which strongly opposes plans for the Atlantic alliance to expand eastwards. Solana said it would be a mistake to isolate Moscow.

Meanwhile, the White House denied Thursday that Bosnia's Muslim-Croat Federation was threatening collapse. but acknowledged US efforts

to shore up the alliance central to the Balkans peace deal. "The Bosnian Muslim Federation is not falling apart," said White House spokesman Michael McCurry.

Forged in 1994 under intense US diplomatic pressure. the federation ended the hitter year-long war between Bosnia's Muslims and Croats and was key to the Bosnian peace accords hammered out

in Dayton, Ohio.

Off the Record

Hitler was suffering from parkinson's disease!

BONN: Adolf Hitler was suffering from parkinson's disease in the last years of his life, a German doctor said on Wednesday, more than 50 years after the Nazi leader's death, reports Reuter.

Professor Ellen Gibbels, head of Cologne University's Neuroology Department, said she had poured over scientific works and documentary films of Hitler before concluding he had been suffering from the debilitating brain disorder.

Reports by doctors and other eyewitnesses suggest Hitler's left arm trembled frequently during the final years of his life. "But these reports are so vague that they do not allow the tremor to be diagnosed," Cologne University said in a statement announcing the results of Gibbels' research.

To get a better idea of the Hitlers condition, the professor analysed newsreel films of the 1940s. "The results showed the development of a classic case of parkinson's, beginning around the middle of 1941 and reach-

ing a moderately severe stage by 1945," the university said.

JKLF accuses Pak govt of barring its team from joining UNHRC session

ISLAMABAD, Mar 29: The Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) today accused the Pakistan government of preventing its delegation from attending the current UN Human Rights Commission session in Geneva, reports AFP.

lts leader, Ammanullah Khan, told a press conference here that the two-man delegation was stopped by the federal investigation agency at Karachi Airport this week.

JKLF is one of about 30 militant groups involved in a separatist drive in the Indian-controlled southern part of Kashmir. Pakistan holds the northern third of the disputed Himalayan territory.

Khan said the two-man team had been invited to

ternational movement against all forms of discrimination and racism which has a consultative status with the UN Economic and Social Council.

Geneva by the Tokyo-based in-

He said the government had "hurt" the Kashmiri cause by preventing the visit.

The delegation was "fully equipped with material to expose rampant violations of human rights in Kashmir by India, said Khan who added that New Delhi's record in Kashmir "is worse than that of Serbs in Bosnia. More than 12,000 people

have been killed in Indian-held Kashmir over the past seven years in violence linked to a revolt by sections of the Muslim majority in the state.

third world hordes, who might

otherwise by swayed by the

chicanery of the communists.

The more centrist and liberal

views of foreign aid as essential

for global economic develop-

ment, and ultimately beneficial

to the donors of such aid has

never had much appeal in this

quarter. Humanitarian con-

cerns predicating foreign as-

sistance while having emo-

tional appeal (e.g. pictures of

starving children in Ethiopia)

are largely seen as episodic re-

ticulated very bluntly by Sena-

tor Jesse Helms, the conserva-

tive Republican senator from

North Carolina and more im-

portantly, the chairman of the

Senate foreign relations

committee. In Helms's view,

now that the cold war is over

and we are all capitalists, there

is no need to have any further

Their current position is ar-

sponses by the right.

BUILFIN

3 Bahrainians jailed for sabotage: he newly established State Security Court handed down its first verdicts in Bahrain's political unrest on Thursday, sentencing three men to prison for sabotage, AP reports from

The judgment by the court, set up on March 20, underlined the government's determination to quell rising violence in Bahrain, a central Gulf island that is a financial hub and home to a key US Navy base.

Libya to send hijackers to Egypt: Libyan authorities will extradite to Egypt three hijackers who seized an Egypt air flight and forced it to land in Libya.

Egypt's embassy in Libya said Thursday, reports AFP. "The hijackers will be back to Egypt," The embassy's Consul, Mamduh Shoeir, told the government daily Al-Akhbar. The paper's Friday edition quoting an embassy source. added that the extradition would take place within a matter

of hour. Hillary stresses religious tolerance: US First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton stressed the need for religious tolerance as she ended on Thursday a visit to Turkey and underlined her message by saying "We face enormous challenges in the future and the religious community will have to be in the forefront of assisting the rest of in meeting those challenges." Hillary said at a meeting with religious leaders, Reuter reports from Istanbul.

Strong quake claims 19 in Ecuador: A strong earthquake jolted central Ecuador on Thursday. killing at least 19 people and leaving dozens injured, a civil

defence spokeswoman said, Reuter reports from Quito. "So far we are aware of the death of 19 people and there are four who were buried by the toppling of a mine," a civil defence spokeswoman said. "We presume they are alive because they answer with knocks the calls of rescue workers." The quake, which destroyed many houses throughout the Andes Mountain range, struck central Ecuador around 6:303 pm est (2305 GMT) with a force of 5.7 on the open-ended Richter Scale.

Clinton to visit ROK, Russia in Apr: US President Bill Clinton will visit South Korea and Russia next month, adding these itineraries to his trip to Japan, a South Korean spokesman said yesterday. AFP says from Seoul. South Korean President Kim Young-Sam will meet Clinton

in the southern island of Cheju on April 16, Kim's spokesman quoted by Yonhap, said. Russian newsman killed in Tajikistan: A Russian television journalist was shot dead in the Tajik capital Dushanbe on Thursday, the 29th reporter to die in four years of civil strife that have made the country one of the riskiest

for the media. Reuter reports from Dushanbe. Russia's ITAR-Tass news agency said Viktor Nikulin, who worked for ORT Russian public television, was killed outside his office by two pistol shots fired by unknown assailants.



monitors activity from the reopened Fortuna bridge over the Sava River between Croatia and Serb-held Bosnia at Brcko on Thursday as the first IFOR truck crosses over. The bridge was reconstructed by Hungarian and US engineers, working with civilian contractors, who replaced spans over existing support columns. It was reopened on Thursday, four years after its destruction by Bosnian Serbs in April 1992.

- AFP/UNB photo

"War in Korean peninsula imminent" for aggression.

SEQUL, Mar 29: North Korea accused South Korea on Friday of being "on the verge" of attacking it and said a second war on the tense peninsula is not a question of if, but when, reports AP.

"The point now is not whether a war will break out in the Korean Peninsula or not, but when it will be unleashed" by the South, Kim Kwang Jin, ·the North's vice defence minister, said Kim pointed to recent mili-

tary exercises conducted by South Korea, saying they were much greater "in scope and intensity" than in previous South Korea had no imme-

diate comment, but has said in the past that its exercises are purely defensive in nature.

Kim, however, called them provocative and accused the government in Seoul of seeing food shortages and other "temporary difficulties" faced by the North as an opportunity

He said Seoul also was trying to divert public attention from scandals that have seen two former presidents and a host of lesser officials charged with taking millions of dollars in bribes.

Kim's statement was reported by the North's official Korea Central News Agency.

It followed the North's statement earlier this month that it will take "final steps" to prove that the current Korean armistice doesn't work. The North wants to negotiate a direct peace treaty with Washington, snubbing Seoul.

South Korean officials have raised concern that the communist regime in the North might attempt border clashes to divert attention from worsening food shortages.

The United States, which led UN forces in the Korean conflict on South Korea's side. is a signatory to the armistice

that ended the 1950-53 war. Washington maintains that any permanent peace treaty must be negotiated between South and North Korea. North Korea calls the South a US puppet and refuses to bargain

North Korea was forced to seek outside aid for the first time after massive flooding devastated its farm industry last summer, aggravating already chronic food shortages.

But with no official ties with major Western countries, international donations have been slow to come. On Thursday, the North renewed appeals for outside aid to help flood victims.

US officials have said they will move toward improving ties, with the North as a reward for its promise to freeze its suspected nuclear weapons programme - but not at the expense of Washington's ties with South Korea.

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Waterways: Life Source of the City

NIONS from Faridpur, fish from Barisal, poultry feed from Khulna, timber from Sylhet. The waterways surrounding Dhaka proved to be a source of life for a city under siege.

The 8 million inhabitants of the city felt the bite of the non-cooperation movement less than it was anticipated as far as essential foods, and even many luxury items, were concerned. Although 'all means' of transport were kept off the roads, many supplies to the city's kitchen markets kept

coming anyway. The prices of some essentials remained within the reach of the people, although others' shot up despite adequate supply

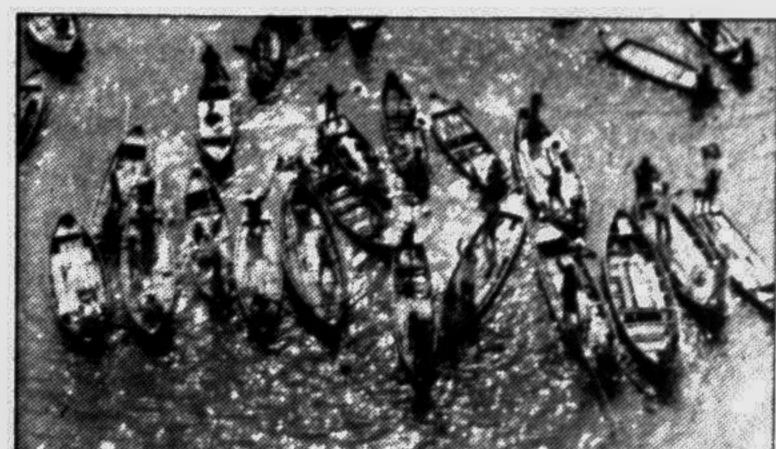
Waterways, the age old transport system, play the biggest role in providing life to our capital city during any siege which now occurs so frequently.

The waterways have been the main mode of transport in our country for hundreds of years," said Omar Ali, a trader at Babubazar, a wholesale rice market along the Buriganga river in the old city. "All these boats you see have brought merchandise from different parts of the country," Omar said pointing at the rows of countryboats anchored along

the Buriganga port. For the first time, Md Momeen, a supplier of poultryfeed, brought 295 sacks of his merchandise each weighing 50 kg, from Khulna on a huge countryboat. It took him exactly two and a half days to reach the capital along the Bhairab, Takerhat, Modhumati, Padma and the Buriganga rivers. The trip cost him 7,000

Momeen explained that in the past he brought his goods by truck and it not only cost him more as per the volume of the merchandise carried, but also with non-perishable items on board, at times he got stuck at the Aricha Ghat for days together before being ferried across the river

With the Buriganga, Sitalaksha. Turag and further down. the Dhaleswari rivers and a network of small canals surby Morshed Ali Khan and Rashida Ahmad



rounding the capital city. Dhaka enjoys the most natural accessibility from any part of the country.

ten-member crew have brought onions and some timber from Faridpur to the capital along the Padma. Jamuna, Meghna and Buriganga, He was hired for 5,000 taka by a trader to transport the mer-

and a half days of navigation. His 40-year-old countryboat with a loading capacity of 900 maunds, was fitted with an engine in 1989 for 30,000 taka. Gaffar remembered the early days when he and his crew had to row, sail and ferry to reach the capital in three days. With the engines fitted to the boats, life is much easier for thousands of majhis like

However, boatmen or majhis do have their complaints about the obstacles they regularly face on their trips. During the trip from Khulna, Momeen's boatmen had to stop and pay 'toll' at twenty different ghats. The recipients of this toll are none else but the police. The Khulna-Dhaka tripmay cost a single merchant boat up to 1 500 taka for the toll fund

Night navigation is threat ened with an increasing number of pirates on the way Most boats arriving at the ports

along the Buriganga did not travel at night due to insecurity on the rivers. The time factor for the trips could have

Abdul Gaffar Majhi and his been drastically cut down if night navigation was assured The most menacing problem for any kind of water transport today is the rapid siltation across the country's waterways during the dry season. Majhis complained about chandise which took him one the chars in every river along

the way forcing them to make long, time-consuming detours. Along the ports of the Buriganga river hundreds of boats can be seen bringing in a range of other essentials for the city markets Many have used the lifeline to unload vegetables from the surrounding districts. fish from as far as Daulatkha in Bhola, rice from the northern districts, tinned food and other assorted items from Chittagong and a range of mer-

> Wholesale traders at Waizghat Badamtali. Babubazar Maulvibazar Chawkbazar and Imamgani said that during any hartal or siege the waterways kept their supply steady. The prices of the daily necessities would have shot up, beyond the reach of the common people, had it not been for the waterways around the city However, for the boatmen, prices are not so

of the country.

steady Char Toriea, a fishing

chandise from different parts

trawler from Bhola, was anchored at the Swarighat, the city's largest fish market alongside other trawlers bringing in fish. Its crew, all seasoned fishermen, were waiting to sell their catch hilsa, rup chanda, kept in an ice-room in the haul of the trawler. "We are having trouble

selling our fish," said a boatman. "For every 80 pieces of medium size hilsa our price is 1,000 taka, while our price of rup chanda is 4,000 taka per maund," said the fisherman on the Char-Torika. This, surprisingly, is less than the price commanded during non-hartal

When there is trouble transporting goods from the ghats inland due to lack of road facilities. the tisnermen and other boatmen lose out.

Gafur, his long experience as a majhi, thinks that his business is intimately linked with road transport in the country. "When the goods get moving by road transport, we hardly return home empty Gafur said adding that there was a demand for his boat during any hartal or non-cooperation to come to the capital but when returning he often had to return without anything on

board. Dabir Majhi had come all the way from Kushtia along the Gorai, Jamuna, Padma and the Buriganga with beetle leaf (paan) in two days. He had learnt that there was a big scarcity of paan in the capital. "You see so many boats have brought in paan from other parts." Dabir Majhi said with a sigh showing other boats

In addition to the daily necessities reaching the capital's kitchen markets through the waterways, other items such as drums of fuel oil, bricks, sand and cement are pouring in: When asked whether better

use of boat transport could not be made in normal circumstances, many traders and boatmen agreed that there would be far less chaos on the roads if the city took advantage of the natural and fortunate routes provided by our water.

LETTER FROM HARVARD

The Growth of Isolationism in America way of buying the loyalty of

ENATOR Dole with two thirds of the delegates in the bag is almost surely going to be the Republican nominee for President. However the battle for the heart and mind of the Republican Party is far from over. Patrick Buchanan with his flery rhetoric, his uncompromising stands on a variety of issues, and his refusal to bow to the majority will, may have lost the battle but may yet win the war for the soul of the Republican Party, and more importantly the Republican campaign platform.

Buchanan to a greater extent than most other candidates in the Republican primarily capitalised on the deep anger of the working Americans who face uncertain futures in a world where despite five years of economic growth. job security is at its lowest ebb. His essential message is that because of the short sighted largess of American politicians . who have signed on to various international trade agreements (e.g. GATT, NAFTA), American jobs are being lost to low wage developing countries such as Mexico and Bangladesh. To add insult to injury (especially with regard to Mexico), according to Buchanan, the United States is facing a veritable invasion of illegal immigrants who are coming into the United States and displacing honest, hardworking, taxpaying Americans.

While Buchanan's analysis of the economic insecurity of the working Americans may be superficial, self-serving, and smack of demagoguery, it is clear that it has struck a chord in the heartland of America. There has been a long history of isolationist tendencies among some sections of the American public, and in these hard times, foreigners have become easy scapegoats. The mood in America is clearly moving towards a consciousness that America in its naivete and open-door policy is

being exploited by its trading

partners, and being besieged by a flood of illegal immigrants. In an era where America is the only military superpower. -some on the right believe that too much sovereignty is being reded to multi-lateral bodies such as the United Nations. GATT etc. Basically there is a sense that America is doing more than its share and that foreigners are somehow exploiting its good nature "America for Americans", and "Americans first" are slogans that are increasingly gaining prominence in the rhetoric of even mainstream politicians.

While some may argue that Buchanan's vision of "Fortress America" is an extreme position, the danger is that his po-

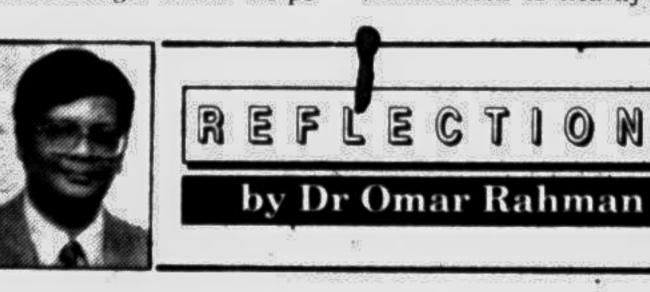
has approved a bill which would slash roughly 30% of the total foreign aid budget. Given that Israel and Egypt, the two sacred cows of American foreign policy account for roughly 40% of the total foreign aid disbursed, and are unlikely to be affected, the rest of the world (particularly countries like Bangladesh) will suffer disproportionately.

Other indications about

American disengagement from

international concerns is the

fact that the US is currently about a billion dollars in arrears with respect to its contribution to the United Nations operating budget. The Republican dominated US congress (which itself is heavily influ-



litical success has made these positions much more acceptable than in the past. Thus no matter who wins the presidential elections (now that Dole and Clinton are almost certainly going to be the respective nominees of their parties), they will have to deal with an electorate which is increasingly disenchanted with foreign concerns and is more often than not, willing to blame foreigners for their own economic woes. The impact of this shift in

political values is far reaching. particularly with regard to foreign aid, which is likely to be cut fairly significantly. On a parenthetic note, it is one of the ironies of this debate, that the level of US foreign aid which is significantly less than 1% of its GNP is perceived wrongly by most Americans as being substantially higher. Be that as it may, the US congress

enced by its right wing) views most multi-lateral bodies (and particularly the UN) with deep undisguised suspicion. For the Republican right, " UN by its accommodation of America's enemies (curre auy Cuba, Iran, Iraq, Libya, to name the most prominent) is seen as biting the hand that feeds it. The US is after all the single largest contributor to the United Nations and accounts for about 25% of its budget. They hearken back to a more uncomplicated time of gun-boat diplomacy, when America would not have to seek consensus or support from others in its conduct of foreign policy, but instead could "talk softly and carry a big stick."

For many on the right, the premise of foreign aid has always been a containment of the communist expansionist menace. Foreign aid was viewed as a relatively cheap

foreign assistance. His particular bete noire is the Agency for International, Aid (AiD), which he has always viewed as an outpost of liberalism. Senator Helms actually proposed abolishing AID and incorporating its vastly reduced functions within the State Department. He is also as might be expected no fan of the World Bank, which he views as another quasi socialist institution supporting corrupt third world governments, instead of promoting American commercial interests. While many in America and abroad may view Helms's vision of US foreign aid as somewhat

extreme, the fact of the matter is that, it is gaining more and more legitimacy. While it is unlikely that the pendulum of American foreign policy will swing back to that degree of isolationism, it is clear that for the near future, countries that are dependent on American largesse will have to do with considerably less. America is changing and we in countries like Bangladesh can no longer depend on the "kindness of strangers.