

## International

## Libya's chemical arms plant Mubarak for probe by Egyptian-European team

CAIRO, Apr 8: Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak called Sunday for an Egyptian-European mission to visit Libya to investigate a reported chemical weapons plant under construction, reports AFP.

"To avoid the use of violence, we will talk with the Libyans," Mubarak told a joint press conference with his French counterpart Jacques Chirac.

"Perhaps we can agree that an European party go with us to see the place which is said to be producing chemical weapons," he said.

The United States says Libya is building the world's largest chemical weapons plant at Tarhuna, 65 kilometres (40 miles) southeast of Tripoli, while Libya insists the site is only a factory for irrigation pipes.

Mubarak said he asked US Defense Secretary William Perry during his visit to Cairo last week "to provide information and photos which prove the truth of what has been reported."

"No decision can be made in this matter without there being certain information," he said.

Chirac, in turn, said he did not discuss the Libyan plant in talks with Mubarak, adding, "I don't have enough information on this subject to comment."

Perry did not rule out the use of force by Washington to prevent completion of the underground plant at Tarhuna, saying the US had several options "the first being diplomacy and the second deterrence."

Arab League head Esmat Abd al Meguid expressed his "sorrow" on Sunday at Perry's hints at military actions against Libya.

## BRIEFLY

### Prison revolt ends in Argentina:

Rebellious inmates freed 17 hostages on Sunday, ending an 8-day mutiny that had spread through the country's prisons, AP reports from Buenos Aires.

"I have the great pleasure to announce that, almost as an Easter gift, the situation in the prisons has been normalised," said Roman Catholic Bishop Emilio Bianchi di Carcano, a member of a negotiating team.

The hostages, including Criminal Court Judge Maria Malere, her secretary and at least 12 guards, fled out of Sierra Chica Prison, 400 kilometres (250 miles) south of Buenos Aires, to the applause of bystanders.

### Fire bombs hurt 6 in West Bank:

Six Israelis were injured Sunday when two fire bombs were thrown at their bus near the Palestinian village of Beit Omar, emergency workers said, AP reports from Beit Omar.

One person suffered moderate burns, and the others were slightly burned, the Magen David Adom ambulance service said. They were taken to hospitals in Jerusalem.

The army sealed off Beit Omar, and soldiers and police searched the area, Palestinian and Israeli settler sources said.

### SA violence claims 5 more:

Five people were killed and four wounded when gunmen opened fire on a memorial service at a house in South Africa's Zulu heartland, police said on Sunday. Reuter reports from Durban.

Five or six attackers burst into a home near Greytown in KwaZulu-Natal province on Saturday night where the Ngidi family were holding a memorial service for a dead relative, spokesman Henry Budhram said.

### 4 drug dealers killed in Brazil:

Four drug dealers were killed in a shootout with police in a Rio de Janeiro slum, Brazilian newspapers reported on Sunday.

Reuter reports from Rio de Janeiro.

The Correio Braziliense daily said in the Vila de Joao

slum, 4 died after about 20 bandits attacked a police patrol in the early hours of Saturday.

One police officer was slightly injured. Correio added.

### Bus mishap kills 11 in C Java:

At least 11 people died and 45 others were injured in a four bus pile-up in Wonosobo, Central Java, an official said yesterday.

AFP reports from Jakarta.

"The bus' brakes weren't working," said Syamsul Ma'rif, a spokesman in Wonosobo regency.

Ma'rif said the accident happened Sunday morning when the inter city Jaya Indah bus lost control after its brakes broke down and initiated a pile-up accident when it ran into a parked bus which was letting off passengers.

### 5 miners die, 4 missing in China:

Five miners died and four others remain missing after three coal shafts flooded 12 days ago and trapped 57 people underground, a mining official said yesterday. AFP reports from Beijing.

Rescuers are continuing to search for the four miners, but hopes are slim of finding them alive, said a spokesman, surnamed Xue from the Mining Bureau of southwestern China's Guizhou province.

### Avalanche kills 8 in Ecuador:

Three mountain climbers missing after an avalanche that killed eight people and injured nine were feared dead, the Red Cross said Sunday. AP reports from Quito.

The 20 climbers were caught in the avalanche Saturday, about 130 feet (40 meters) from a wooden shelter on Cotopaxi Volcano, 55 miles (90 kms) south of Quito, according to Red Cross and radio reports.

### Fewer women to contest Indian polls

NEW DELHI, Apr 8: A small percentage of women who constitute half of Indian population were nominated by different political parties to contest the forthcoming Lok Sabha polls, reports BSNL.

The pro-Hindi Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) had fielded women candidates for 22 seats out of 464 it contemplates to fight while the ruling Congress has given party tickets to 47 out of 533 Congress candidates contesting for the 11th Lok Sabha polls.

Communist Party of India (M) is contesting 77 seats for which five are women while Communist Party of India (CPI) has nominated three women from 44 candidates.

The times of India, quoting Vinayak Farooqui of the National Federation of Indian Women (NFIW) said, "in the recent times, all political parties have been talking a lot about empowerment of women but when it comes to giving tickets, very few give a chance

### 1.2m prisoners being held in 31 European states

STRASBOURG, Apr 8: More than 1.2 million prisoners were being held in 31 European countries, more than half of them in Russia, according to statistics compiled for the council of Europe in 1994, and made public Sunday, reports AFP.

The census dated September 1, 1994, found that 664,700 of the inmates were being held in Russia.

According to the annual study, the number of prisoners in the 31 European countries studied remained virtually stable in 1994, compared with the previous year, after 10 years of growth in the prison population.

## Villagers caught in crossfire of Indo-Pak dispute over Kashmir

NEELUM VALLEY ROAD, Pakistan, Apr 8: Face down in a muddy, roadside ditch, Ahmed Younis lies small to avoid a burst of gunfire, reports AP.

The first shots whiz across Pakistan's contested border with India as the sun's last light fades behind the towering mountains.

A 12-kilometre stretch (7 1/2-mile) stretch of the Neelum Valley Road is the only supply route for Younis and his fellow villagers, who are caught in the crossfire of Pakistan's 49-year-old dispute with India over ownership of the Himalayan state of Kashmir.

Their village is just inside the part of Kashmir controlled by Pakistan, within range of Indian soldiers across the nearby border.

## Heavy combat operations to flush out Chechen rebels

GROZNY, Apr 8: Russian troops conducted intensive combat operations today in southeastern Chechnya in an effort to drive rebels forces out of two of their mountain strongholds, reports AP.

The ITAR-Tass news agency, quoting the federal command, said the Russians were attacking the villages of Vedeno and Dargo, two important bases for fighters loyal to separatist leader Dzhokhar Dudayev.

There was no immediate word on casualties.

In another development, Gen. Stanislav Kondratyev, deputy commander of the federal forces in Chechnya, denied reports that Russian forces had moved in on the village of Shali.

Russian troops claimed to have cleared rebel forces from the settlement of Benoi-Vedeno, a village to the east of Vedeno, ITAR-Tass said.

Since Sunday, Russian troops claimed they came under rebel fire 11 times, and five Interior Ministry troops were wounded.

The latest fighting came one week after President Boris Yeltsin announced his peace plan for Chechnya and said Russian troops would fire only if attacked. The unilateral cease-fire, however, has not been observed and the Kremlin still seems far from an end to the war.

About 100 Russian servicemen already have been killed in the past week of fighting, the Russian NTV network said Sunday.

Russian leaders say "special operations" such as bombardments and localised clashes will continue despite Yeltsin's peace initiative.

Yeltsin is under pressure to end the unpopular war, which began nearly 16 months ago as

an effort to end Chechnya's separatist drive and since has killed more than 30,000, before the June 16 presidential elections in which he is seeking a second term.

The Russian president has proposed indirect talks with Dudayev and other Chechen leaders.

Dudayev has responded positively to the possibility of Mintimer Shamlyev, the president of the mainly Muslim republic of Tatarstan, in central Russia, being named to mediate the conflict, ITAR-Tass reported.

However, Vyacheslav Mikhaylov, Russia's Minister of Nationalities, said Yeltsin's attitude towards talks was negative although some field commanders had expressed their readiness for talks, ITAR-Tass reported.

It was unclear when talks might begin.

### Ship with arms intercepted

## 'Iranian plan to attack Jewish targets uncovered'

and its Arab neighbours.

Peres bitterly attacked "four European countries" that he said have extended billions of dollars in credits to Iran in the last few months. He did not name the countries.

They forgot just one thing ... that Iran is financing the Hezbollah and the Islamic Jihad," Peres said, referring to Islamic militant groups that have been fighting Israel.

Also Sunday, the army announced the Israelis had arrested a Palestinian student who allegedly had undergone training in Iran to carry out attacks against Israeli targets.

Khalil Zuhada Suleiman Abu Issa, 24, was arrested last month when he returned from Turkey, where he had been studying medicine.

The army issued a statement saying Abu Issa was recruited in Turkey by a representative of the Islamic Jihad.



A Palestinian shouts slogans against the Israeli closure as hundreds of Palestinian Christians and Muslims hold a joint march through Gaza City on Easter Sunday to protest the six-week-old Israeli closure of the Palestinian territories. At the march, headed by leaders of local Christian churches and Islamic clerics, demonstrators carried banners demanding an end to the "punishment of the Palestinian nation".

— AFP/UNB photo

## Pyongyang blames Seoul for heightening tensions

## ROK won't tolerate DPRK's 'reckless provocations': Kim

SEOUL, Apr 8: South Korean President Kim Young-sam told top military leaders today that "reckless provocations" from North Korea would not be tolerated, a presidential spokesman said, reports Reuter.

Seoul has been shaken by North Korean incursions into a sensitive border area in the past three days in a dramatic signal of Pyongyang's intention to completely ignore a truce agreement that ended the 1950-53 Korean War.

A Defence Ministry spokesman said South Korea and the United States were discussing a possible deployment of US Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS) aircraft to improve surveillance of North Korean troop movements.

The US-led United Nations Command has called North Korean incursions in Panmunjom a "significant violation" of the 1953 armistice.

He did not give any details of possible countermeasures.

North Korea on Sunday sent about 180 soldiers into the joint security area at Panmunjom, the only crossing point in the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) dividing the Korean Peninsula. It was the third incursion in as many days.

Another report from Tokyo says, North Korea today broke a nearly two-day silence over heightened tension in the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) with South Korea, again blaming the crisis on Seoul and adding "bellcose quarters of the United States" to its list of trouble-makers.

A commentary in the Communist Party newspaper Rodong Sinmun said South Korea faced an "irrevocable disaster" if it ignored Pyongyang's warning against making war preparations to invade North Korea.

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munjom a "significant violation" of the 1953 armistice.

But a command spokesman said there was no cause for alarm as the situation elsewhere along the border remained normal.

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## HR situation in India-held Kashmir deteriorating

MUZAFFARABAD, Pakistan-controlled Kashmir, Apr 8: US Senator Hank Brown Sunday said he was concerned about the "deteriorating" human rights situation in Indian-held Kashmir and tension between India and Pakistan over the dispute, officials said, reports AFP.

Brown, who held a 90-minute meeting with Sardar Abdul Qayum, the prime minister of the Islamabad-administered part of Kashmir, said the United States believed in a peaceful settlement of the Kashmir issue.

Officials said the Republican senator from Colorado expressed "deep concern" over alleged human rights violations in the Indian zone, adding it was not only a major source of tension between India and Pakistan but also an "economic burden" for New Delhi.

India has repeatedly accused Pakistan of arming and training Muslim separatists in its part of the province, a charge Islamabad has denied.

It only provides diplomatic support to the Kashmiris' right to self-determination.

Pakistan controls the northern third of Kashmir while India administers the southern part of the state. The two countries have fought two wars over the province.

Qayum called on the US Congress to send a fact finding mission to Kashmir.

### Weather a key concern, says Li

BELJING, Apr 8: Concerned with the challenge of feeding China's 1.2 billion people, Premier Li Peng says he often is preoccupied with watching weather forecasts, reports AP.

Interviewed by the French television network Antenne 2, Li said his main motivation was to work "on behalf of the people."

Since China has only 7 percent of all the world's arable land to nourish one-fifth of its population, the grain harvest has a major influence on our politics," Li said.

"So, when it is dry, I watch the evening news to see if it will rain the next day. That is my primary preoccupation."

### CPI (M) may join future coalition govt : Jyoti Basu

NEW DELHI, Apr 8: Indian Communists could for the first time join a possible coalition government after general elections in April-May, a veteran Marxist said today, reports AFP.

The Press Trust of India quoted Jyoti Basu, a leader of the Communist Party of India (Marxist), as saying his party may join a coalition if the "Third Front" made of centrist and leftists won the polls.

"A situation may arise when the CPI (M) might have to join the new government, Basu told reporters in Agartala, capital of the north-eastern state of Tripura.

Basu, the most prominent Indian Communist, is the Chief Minister of the eastern state of West Bengal. He has held that office since June 1977.

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