

Sudan govt, rebels sign peace charter US orders expulsion of Sudanese diplomat

UNITED NATIONS, Apr 11: The United States has ordered the expulsion of a Sudanese diplomat suspected of aiding terrorists who plotted to blow up the United Nations and assassinate Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, reports AP.

US officials told Ahmed Younis Mohamed, a second secretary at the Sudanese mission to the United Nations, on Tuesday that he had 48 hours to leave the United States. James P. Rubin, a spokesman at the US mission said Wednesday.

"Our understanding is that the gentleman will depart the United States within the required 48 hours," a US official said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

The official said Mohamed and a second Sudanese diplomat, Siraj Younis, were suspected of having given information to terrorist groups in 1993.

Younis has already left New York.

Last week, US Ambassador Madeleine Albright told members of the Security Council that two members of the Sudanese mission were involved in aiding terrorist groups.

Albright addressed the council as it considered imposing sanctions against Sudan for its participation in a 1995 assassination attempt against Mubarak. Sudan has denied involvement.

The council is expected to

resume its discussion of the sanctions next week.

The Sudanese mission to the United Nations was listed as an unindicted co-conspirator in the 1993 bombing of the World Trade Centre, which killed six people, and in a plan to blow up the United Nations, the Lincoln and Holland tunnels, the George Washington Bridge and a federal building in New York City.

Last year, 10 people, including blind Sheik Omar Abdel Rahman, were convicted in the plots and sentenced to terms ranging from 25 years to life. Another Sudanese-born defendant, Siddiq Ibrahim Siddiq Ali, pleaded guilty during the trial.

Reuter adds: The Sudanese government and two rebel factions on Wednesday signed a peace charter in the capital, Khartoum.

The agreement was signed by First Vice President Al-Zulfiqar Mohammad Al-Saleh for the government along with the leaders of two factions which broke from the mainstream southern rebel movement, the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA).

Riek Machar, signing for the southern Sudan Independence Movement (SSIM) said: "I have come to contribute to the breaking of the barriers of mistrust, hatred and lack of confidence which have characterised relations between north and south Sudan for the last 40 years.



South Korean President Kim Young-Sam (L) and his wife Son Myong-Soon (R) cast their ballots at his home town in Seoul on Thursday for the 15th Assembly election. South Koreans went to the polls to elect a new parliament amid mounting border tension with North Korea.

— AFP/UNB photo

Kashmiri editor's body recovered from Jhelum river

SRINAGAR, India, Apr 11: The body of a Kashmiri journalist kidnapped last month by unidentified gunmen was pulled from a river in Kashmir on Wednesday, police said, reports Reuter.

The five countries will promise in the agreement that their border troops will not attack each other and they will not target their military exercises at one another. It also will limit the amount of live ammunition used in border exercises and ensures that observers may be sent.

The signing ceremony will be held during a state visit by Russian President Boris Yeltsin. The presidents of the other three former Soviet states also will attend, Foreign Ministry spokesman Chen Jian said.

219 Chinese to perform Hajj: Muslim farmers from China's poverty-stricken Ningxia province have begun the Hajj pilgrimage to Mecca, the Xinhua news agency said. Reuter reports from Beijing.

A total of 219 Muslims from the northwestern province flew to Saudi Arabia on Wednesday, it said. Most of the pilgrims were farmers who paid about 22,000 yuan (2,650 dollars) to make the trip, the agency reported late on Wednesday.

Gallery on Subhas Bose in Port-Blair: The Andaman and Nicobar Islands administration has decided to set up a permanent gallery in the memory of Subhas Chandra Bose at the Cellular Jail in Port Blair. PTI reports from Port-Blair.

Subhas Chandra Bose had first hoisted the Indian tricolour at Port-Blair on December 30, 1943. He had also visited the Cellular Jail to pay homage to the martyrs when the island was under Japanese occupation.

Chretien to open Romania's N-plant: Canadian Premier Jean Chretien and Romanian counterpart Nicolae Vacarolu will inaugurate this former communist country's first nuclear reactor on April 17, officials said Wednesday. AP reports from Bucharest.

The Canadian-designed Candu-6 reactor, which is to reach capacity by August, is part of a larger five-reactor nuclear power plant located at Cernavoda, 160 kilometres (100 miles) east of the capital Bucharest.

US may shift small number of troops from Okinawa

WASHINGTON, Apr 11: US and Japanese officials are nearing agreement on a consolidation of military bases on Okinawa that may result in shifting a small number of troops to elsewhere in Japan, a Pentagon official said Wednesday reports AP.

Kenneth Bacon, chief spokesman for Defense Secretary William Perry, said both sides remained committed to keeping the overall US troop level in Japan at approximately 47,000. The actual number in Japan fluctuates but current stands at about 45,000, including about 29,000 on Okinawa, officials said.

Concise on rebuilding Bosnia

Serb leaders demand separate representation

SARAJEVO, Apr 11: Bosnian Serb leaders said on Wednesday they would not attend a reconstruction conference as part of an overall Bosnian delegation and demanded separate representation, reports Reuter.

Rajko Kasagic, Prime Minister of the Bosnian Serb Republic, told Carl Bildt, the international high representative for Bosnia, that his invitation to attend the conference was "unacceptable."

The conference, to drum up international aid to rebuild Bosnia after 43 months of war between its Muslim, Croat and Serb communities, starts on Friday whether the Serbs go or not.

Red Cross workers, for the first time since the fighting broke out Saturday, began to venture out Wednesday. One worker, James Jallah, said he counted 16 bodies on his tour.

An embassy spokesman in Monrovia said up to 600 people were waiting quietly out-

US evacuates Americans, foreigners from Liberia

WASHINGTON, Apr 11: As US war planes stood by, Air Force helicopters evacuated Americans and other foreigners Wednesday from war-torn Liberia, reports AP.

More than 270 people had been ferried to safety during the first 24 hours and hundreds of others from a variety of countries waited outside the US Embassy compound to join the airlift.

Americans were being given first priority in the voluntary evacuations, but continued fighting prevented many from making it to the embassy, State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns said.

Only 61 Americans were aboard the initial flights, which took the evacuees to neighbouring Sierra Leone, a two-hour ride by helicopter. Seats not filled by Americans were taken by nationals from Britain, Ireland, France, Canada, Australia, Ghana, South Africa and Greece. Egyptian Ambassador Ahmed el-Misri was among those flown out.

A total of 14 helicopters and military aircraft were involved in the operation.

An embassy spokesman in Monrovia said up to 600 people were waiting quietly out-

side the embassy gates Wednesday for screening to see if they qualified to join the airlift.

No one is being turned away if they are deemed eligible, a State Department official said. The eligible include American citizens, Liberians with US residential cards or passports and third country nationals.

It was not clear how many of the 470 Americans in Liberia want to be evacuated. Burns attributed the low turnout during the early hours of the evacuation partly to fighting which persisted despite a cease-fire.

Meanwhile, the stench of rotting bodies filled the Monrovia air Wednesday as bands of armed thugs roamed the streets, looting homes and food warehouses and smashing cars and shop windows.

Exactly how many people have been killed in the five days of fighting between rebels and government troops is unclear.

The conference, to drum up international aid to rebuild Bosnia after 43 months of war between its Muslim, Croat and Serb communities, starts on Friday whether the Serbs go or not.

Red Cross workers, for the first time since the fighting broke out Saturday, began to venture out Wednesday. One worker, James Jallah, said he counted 16 bodies on his tour.

An embassy spokesman in Monrovia said up to 600 people were waiting quietly out-

Egyptian police nab 245 suspects

CAIRO, Apr 11: Police Wednesday arrested 245 people suspected of trying to re-establish and extremist Muslim group with foreign backing, reports AP.

Police officials, detained in 17 Egyptian provinces, were trying to recreate the Takfir wa Hizb, or Renunciation and Emigration, organisation.

The group's philosophy rejects society as infidel and urges members to isolate themselves from it and bring true Islam.

The group was largely crushed in 1977 after its members assassinated Egypt's minister of religious endowments, Mohammed Hussein el-Dabah, who supervised religious affairs for the state.

— AFP/UNB photo

delayed a state dinner by nearly two hours. And when they finally did sit down and break bread, they agreed not to toast each other, bucking international tradition in a mutual — if unusual — diplomatic snub.

Instead, Chinese premier Li Peng bluffed at counterpart Alain Juppe's plans. It nearly scuttled the lucrative trade deal into chaos, underscoring just how touchy China can be when it comes to human rights.

Both nations signed the agreement for 33 Airbus jets and other contracts Wednesday evening, and Juppe made no mention of human rights in his address. But the standoff

continued.

"Money has become more important than human rights. It's crazy," said Wen Lin, a 25-

International

South Koreans vote for new parliament

SEOUL, Apr 11: Polls opened Thursday in Parliamentary elections seen as a mid-term referendum on President Kim Young-sam, reports AP.

As voting started at 6 am (2100 GMT) at 16,394 polling stations across the country, electoral officials feared voter apathy and good weather will result record-low voter turnout of less than 70 per cent.

Bus terminals and train stations were crowded early Thursday with people who used the national holiday to go picnicking.

Newspapers reported as many as 20 per cent of eligible voters were undecided on the eve of the election, which some said was marred by mud-slinging and regionalism.

Kim was hoping for a strong showing by his New Korea Party as an endorsement of wide-ranging political and economic reforms enacted during his first three years in office.

The efforts by the first civilian president in 32 years to clean up endemic corruption have resulted in the arrests of his two military-backed predecessors on bribery charges.

But Kim's carefully cultivated image as clean was tarnished during the campaign when a long time aide was arrested on charges of pocketing millions of dollars in bribes from businessmen. Kim also has come under fire for being soft on North Korea.

Kim's party lost badly in local

government elections last year and many observers thought that trend would continue in Thursday's balloting.

But recent North Korean military incursions into the demilitarised zone separating North and South Korea gave the president's party an unexpected boost.

At stake were all 299 seats in the unicameral National Assembly, with 253 of them directly contested. The other 46 seats will be allotted among political parties on a proportional basis. A total of 1,389 candidates were running.

The polls were to close at 6 p.m. (0900 GMT). Exit polls will be allowed for the first time, but official results are not likely to be known until Friday morning.

The results will shape South Korea's political landscape before the presidential elections in mid-1997. With political power concentrated in the presidency, parties often seen National Assembly elections as a warm-up for the Big Election.

A continuing majority in the often raucous National Assembly would allow Kim to push ahead with his reforms. His party now controls 150 seats.

But if the ruling party loses its majority, Kim would probably be forced to merge his party with one of several minor opposition parties and his reform campaign could lose momentum.

Off the Record

He plays himself on 'A Child's Wish'

WASHINGTON: President Clinton will portray himself in an upcoming made-for-TV movie about a child with terminal cancer whose wish is to meet the president, reports AP.

A White House official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Wednesday that Clinton agreed to the cameo role because it reinforces the importance of the Family and Medical Leave Act.

Filming of CBS movie, "A Child's Wish," began recently in Washington. The movie deals with the troubles of a family when the daughter loses a leg to cancer and the father subsequently loses his job as a result of spending too much time with her.

The president's scene will be shot in the next few weeks, the White House official said.

"He plays himself. It's a very serious role," the official said of Clinton. "He very strongly believes that the Family and Medical Leave Act is of great importance to the country."



Tom cruise fills it in real life

SANTA MONICA, California: Tom Cruise, who's played many a film hero, filled the role in real life when a woman was struck by a hit-and-run driver, reports AP.

The actor was on his way home from dinner on Tuesday when he saw Heloise Vinhas lying in the street. Cruise stopped and called for help on his cellular telephone, his publicist Pat Kingsley said Thursday.

Vinhas, 22, was in excruciating pain and didn't even recognise her guardian angel, who made sure she got to the hospital.

Cruise checked and learned that the woman had torn ligaments in a knee and would be hospitalised two days.

Israeli jets bomb Lebanon

'Syria, Lebanon must take responsibility for attacks'

JERUSALEM, Apr 11: Israel

will put pressure on the Lebanese government to rein in Shi'ite Muslim fighters waging a guerrilla war with Israeli soldiers in southern Lebanon, a senior defence official said Wednesday, reports AP.

"Syria must understand that if it wants to conduct a comfortable lifestyle like it conducts today in Lebanon, it cannot allow the Hezbollah to operate freely like it does today," he said.

Meanwhile, Israeli air force jets struck twice in eastern and southern Lebanon early Thursday, hours after Shi'ite Muslim guerrillas killed an Israeli soldier and wounded two in south Lebanon, police said.

Police and reporters in Lebanon's ancient city of Baalbek said there were no casualties from the rare nighttime air attack on Tallet Kayal hill, an area used as a garbage dump 1.2 miles (2 kilometres) west of the city.

Iranian-backed Hezbollah guerrillas and Syrian troops stationed in the eastern Bekaa Valley opened fire with aircraft guns at the Tallet Kayal hill, an area used as a garbage dump 1.2 miles (2 kilometres) west of the city.

Police said they did not know how many Israeli soldiers were killed in the attack.

Police and reporters in Lebanon's ancient city of Baalbek said there were no casualties from the rare nighttime air attack on Tallet Kayal hill, an area used as a garbage dump 1.2 miles (2 kilometres) west of the city.

Less than a mile from Checkpoint Charlie, named for the Israeli soldier and guerrilla who died there, a 20-year-old Israeli soldier was killed in a suicide bombing at the checkpoint.

The Israeli soldier was killed in a suicide bombing at the checkpoint.

The Israeli soldier was killed in a suicide bombing at the checkpoint.

The Israeli soldier was killed in a suicide bombing at the checkpoint.

The Israeli soldier was killed in a suicide bombing at the checkpoint.

The Israeli soldier was killed in a suicide bombing at the checkpoint.

The Israeli soldier was killed in a suicide bombing at the checkpoint.

The Israeli soldier was killed in a suicide bombing at the checkpoint.

The Israeli soldier was killed in a suicide bombing at the checkpoint.

The Israeli soldier was killed in a suicide bombing at the checkpoint.

The Israeli soldier was killed in a suicide bombing at the checkpoint.

The Israeli soldier was killed in a suicide bombing at the checkpoint.

The Israeli soldier was killed in a suicide bombing at the checkpoint.

The Israeli soldier was killed in a suicide bombing at the checkpoint.

France unwilling to press China on HR front for trade's sake

PARIS, Apr 11: It seemed simple enough in a dinner speech announcing a nearly 2 billion dollar deal to sell jetliners to China, France's prime minister planned to mention Beijing's human rights problem, reports AP.

Instead, Chinese premier Li Peng bluffed at counterpart Alain Juppe's plans. It nearly scuttled the lucrative trade deal into chaos, underscoring just how touchy China can be when it comes to human rights.