Annan seeks US-Euro help to make ceasefire in Zaire

UNITED NATIONS, Mar 16: With prospects for a multinational force fading. Secretary-General Kofi Annan is turning to the United States and Europe to put pres-sure on Zaire's rebel leader to accept a ceasefire, reports AP.
Senior UN officials,

speaking on condition of anonymity, said the special UN envoy to the region, Mohamed Sahnoun, will meet rebel leader Laurent Kabila on Saturday in Goma, Zaire, to urge him to accept a cease-

Diplomatic sources said Kabila was present during a meeting Thursday between Sahnoun and Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni, part of a series of contacts to stop the fighting which threatens hundreds of thousands of Rwandan refugees.

According to the sources. Annan met Thursday night with ambassadors from the

five permanent members of the Security Council — the United States. Britain, France, Russia and China as well as envoys from Germany and the Netherlands to urge them to use their influence with African governments friendly to Kabila. The sources said all the diplomats agreed to do so.

The Security Council planned to issue another statement Friday urging Ka-bila to accept a cease-fire. The Zairian government of Presi-dent Mobutu Sese Seko has already agreed to the truce.

But the sources said Annan asked the council to hold off on the statement pending the outcome of Saturday's meeting between Kabila and the UN envoy.

Annan declined to say how much progress his envoy had made toward pushing Kabila into agreeing to a

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"The issue is complex, the stakes are high, and lots of governments are involved and want to see a solution,' Annan told reporters. "But we are trying to coordinate our efforts. and I believe we are coordinating them much

Kabila has demanded faceto-face talks with Mobutu as a condition for a cease-fire. Mobutu has refused to meet Kabila.

more than is evident."

African leaders are planning a regional summit March 19 in Nairobi, Kenya. Zaire says it will send a representative, but did not say whether Mobutu would be

Two previous Nairobi summits - without participation of either Zaire or the rebels - yielded no tangible results.

Last month, Annan called

Yeltsin wishes Clinton a speedy recovery

MOSCOW, Mar 16: President Boris Yeltsin, cast in a sudden role reversal, wished US President Clinton a speedy recovery and said he would meet him as soon as your health came after Clinton underwent knee surgery Friday for a torn tendon and only a few days before their scheduled summit in Helsinki, Finland, reports AP.

The summit, originally scheduled for Washington, was moved to Helsinki after Yeltsin's recovery from November heart surgery was slowed by pneumonia and the flu. But now it's the 66-year-old Yeltsin who appears robust and the 50-yearold Clinton who's in the hospi-

Clinton said Friday he still will make the summit, and plans to fly out on Tuesday. His doctors said it appears he will be able to withstand the trip.



Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat is surrounded by journalists after the international meeting he convened, Saturday in Gaza City. Ignoring strong protests from Israel, diplomats from around the world met with Yasser Arafat to hear Palestinian grievances over the Jewish state's hardline policies. AFP/UNB photo

Indian SC urges govt to protect two mosques

NEW DELHI, Mar 16: The Supreme Courts has urged Indian authorities to protect two ancient mosques from Hindu fanatics who destroyed a 16thcentury Islamic shrine in 1992, newspapers said Saturday, reports AFP.

for a new multinational mili-

tary force to help stabilize the

situation in eastern Zaire

and help provide aid to the

hundreds of thousands of

Rwandan refugees caught up

proved such a force last year but scrubbed it after hundreds

of thousands of refugees went

home. But thousands more

refused to join such a force,

preferring diplomacy to solve the crisis and UN humanitar-

ian aid to the refugees. Other major countries refuse to join

the force without the Ameri-

Also Friday, Human

Rights Watch/Africa urged

the United States and the Eu-

ropean Union to exercise the

"full weight" of their influ-

ence to protect civilians in

Zaire.

But the United States has

fled deeper into Zaire.

The Security Council ap-

in the fighting.

Judges AM Ahmadi and Sujata Manohar on Friday Directed the Governments in New Delhi and the northern state of Uttar Pradesh to guard the mosques in the cities of Mathura and Varanasi at all

Both these mosques, are claimed by Hindu nationalists to have been raised after razing Hindu temples. Muslims say they were not.

Hindu militants Earlier this week held a massive rally at Mathura, near the Taj Mahal town of Agra, to claim owner-

ference early today before his

The doctor told reporters

that a civil rights group stole

his videotape which showed the

president's second son. Kim

Hyun-chul discussing the re-

moval of the head of a Korean

the son's phone conversation

was revealed last week, fueling

widespread allegations that the

The videotape containing

cable television channel.

appearance at a police station.

ship over the disputed mosque that is now guarded by hundreds of police and paramilitary troops.

The judges said the authorities should do everything necessary in discharge of their obligation to protect the "Islamic shrines in Mathura and Varanasi". Both towns are located in Uttar Pradesh.

Hindu militants in the 1980s launched a similar campaign seeking ownership of a 16thcentury mosque in the Uttar Pradesh town of Ayodhya over similar grounds.

That mosque was eventually razed by Hindu fanatics in December 1992. Triggering the worst outbreak of Hindu-Muslim clashes across India since the country's independence in

Diplomats meet Arafat despite Israeli protests

GAZA CITY, Mar 16: Ignoring strong protests from Israel. diplomats from around the world met with Yasser Arafat here Saturday to hear an urgent appeal to "rescue the peace process," from a recent series of hardline Israeli decisions, reports AFP

But the representatives from the United States, Russia, the European Union, the United Nations, Egypt, Jordan, Japan and Norway rebuffed a request by Arafat for action to force Israel to back off from its policies and a Palestinian spokesman said he was "not optimistic" following the meeting.

In his opening remarks. Arafat said he called the meeting "for one reason, to rescue the peace process and return it

its natural course." "We want your support to find a mechanism to ensure

true and precise implementa-

tion of the peace agreements,' he said, charging that Israel "has run roughshod over all the signed agreements." The rest of the meeting was

closed to the press. "I call on the Israeli government to step back from its settlement policies and to properly implement the agreement on further redeployment," Arafat

Israeli government spokesman Moshe Fogel labelled the conference an "act of bad faith." "When the Palestinians define such a conference as one intended to save the peace process, it means they are going outside the framework of the interim agreement," Fogel told

"This smacks of a logging of the Palestinians for imposing their point of view upon," the spokesman added.

Clinton took rest on Saturday WASHINGTON, Mar 16:

President Bill Clinton rested up Saturday after emergency surgery on his knee and made plans for a rigorous week of overseas travel and meetings with foreign officials, reports

"The president is doing great. He is resting comfortably, and he will be back on his feet both of them — very soon," said Vice President Al Gore who filled in for Clinton delivering a weekly radio address.

The president was spending his second day in the hospital where he was rushed Friday for surgery to repair a tendon he tore in his knee during a golf trip to Florida.

Doctors said there were no complications in the two-hour operation and Clinton is insisting he will head to Helsinki for summit with Russian President Boris Yeltsin Wednesday.

Israeli settlement

policy will provoke

Albright, Primakov hold pre-summit meet

Albanians arrive in Brindisi Saturday after crossing the Adriatic sea from Durres in Al-

bania onboard the "Val Frio". Albanians fleeing the anarchy in their country are arriving

WASHINGTON, Mar 16: Russian Foreign Minster Yevgeny Primakov met his US counterpart Madeleine Albright Saturday to prepare for next week's Russian-US summit in Helsinki with the thorny issue of NATO expansion at the top of the agenda, reports AFP.

in Italy in their hundreds, most of them by boat.

Primakov and Albright, who for slightly more than two hours at the State Department, had been expected to discuss Moscow's demands that the alliance not deploy any military infrastructure within Eastern European countries that would join the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

NATO appeared to move in

AP reports from Washington.

AFP reports from Riyadh.

of the rallies.

that direction Friday when it announced that for now. It did not think it necessary to permanently station extra

troops in Europe. The Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland are the leading contenders for NATO membership when the alliance meets at a July summit

in Madrid. On Saturday, State Despokesman partment Nicholas Burns alluded to Moscow's fears when he said the NATO concession "should clarify any misconceptions

about NATO's plans. He noted that the concession would not affect "NATO's ability to respond quickly and decisively to any security

threats to current and future members of the alliance." Before heading for the

the Russian embassy in Washington that lasted for more than an hour. Primakov is set to meet

State Department, Primakov

made an unscheduled stop at

— AFP/UNB photo

with defence Secretary Wiliam Cohen today and with President Bill Clinton Monday ahead of the summit Wednesday and Thursday. Russian President Boris

Yeltsin cautioned Friday that his summit with Clinton might not resolve the Row over NATO expansion, but said such an outcome should not be seen as a "tragedy."

son had orchestrated govern-SEOUL, Mar 16 : South Koment personnel exchanges. rean police summoned a doctor

Police summon doctor of

ROK president's son

"It was stolen from my of President Kim Young-sam's clinic," the doctor said, acson today in a widening invesknowledging the authenticity of tigation into alleged wrongdothe videotape in which the son ing by the son, reports AFP. was seen discussing the control Television showed Park of Yonfrap Television News Kyung-shik, a urologist, read! (YTN) by a loyalist to the presiing a statement at a news con-

> Park was a family doctor for the Kims during the 1992 presidential election, but apparently lost favour with the son this

> The president's son, who has long been the subject of rumours, caught headlines last month for his alleged role in a murky loans-for-kickbacks scandal enveloping the Hanbo business group.

MRTA rebels attack textile store in Lima tered the store, which also op-

LIMA. Mar 16: Suspected Marxist rebels burst into a textile store in Lima on Saturday. throwing grenades that sparked a large fire in which at least two direlighters were injured, police

"It's a terrorist attack. They used hand grenades," police bomb squad officer Carlos Samaniego told Reuters.

Peruvian anti-terrorist police confirmed the attack in Lima's working class UA Victoria district was carried out by rebels of the Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (MRTA)

About 20 MRTA members are holding 72 hostages at the Japanese ambassador's home in Lima in a siege which has so far lasted 88 days.

Police, quoting witnesses, said heavily armed rebels enerates a wool-products factory and shouted MRTA slogans before the fire broke out shortly after 3:00 PM local time (200 "They threw the grenades as

they shouted their slogans." said Samaniego, adding details were scarce because bomb squad officials had yet to enter the building.

The MRTA seized hundreds of VIP hostages when it stormed the diplomatic compound on December 17 and continues to hold its most prized bargaining

Among the captives still held are President Alberto Fuiimori's brother Pedro, the envoys of Japan and Bolivia and two dozen Japanese diplomats and businessmen.

repercussions in ME: Mubarak CAIRO, Mar 16: Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak again

warned Israel on Saturday that its policy of expanding Jewish settlements of occupied Arab land would provoke serious repercussions in the region, reports AFP. "The situation is serious be-

cause of Israel's settlement policy," Mubarak was quoted as saying it by the official Mena news agency on his way back from an official visit to Mo-

He said that "Egypt and Morocco shared identical views on recent Israeli measures in Jerusalem," in reference to planned construction of a new Jewish settlement in the annexed Arab eastern section of

The "Al Gods committee," which takes its name from the Arabic for Jerusalem, is to meet on March 27 and 28. Mubarak told reporters after a meeting with King Hassan II.

Soyinka urges Canada to snap diplomatic ties with Nigeria MONTREAL, Mar 16: Wole

Sovinka, winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1986, is urging Canada to break off diplomatic relations with his native Nigeria to protest human rights violations, reports AFP. Speaking in Montreal on Friday, Soyinka said Ottawa also should impose a trade em-

bargo on oil-rich Nigeria. Soyinka, the first black writer of any nationality to win the literature prize, spoke two days after the regime of General Sani Abacha charged him and 11 other pro-democracy dissi-

dents of treason.

On Wednesday, Canadian Foreign Minister Lloyd Axworthy announced that Canada had temporarily shut down its diplomatic mission in Nigeria

10,000 stage protest against Vietnam lodges Bellin complaint with constitutional amendments Beijing over oil by Belarus president exploration US assails HR Abuses in Belarus: The State Department expressed concern Friday about human rights HANOI Mar 16: Vietnam has violations in Belarus, charging that severe restrictions on

lodged a formal complaint with Beijing over Chinese oil exploration in an offshore area Hanoi considers its own, the official Vietnam News Agency (VNA) said today, reports

"The operation of the Chinese oil rig has seriously violated Vietnam's sovereignty over its exclusive economic zone and continental shelf, VNA said, quoting a leather which was sent to the Chinese Embassy in Hanei on March 10.

"Vietnam demands the Chinese side stop the operation of the Kan Tan Ill Oil Rig and withdraw in form the exclusive zone and the continental shelf of Vietnam," the letter said.

"The note stresses that China's violation.. runs counter to the fine development trend of the friendship and cooperation between the two countries and caused bad effects on the progress of the ongoing negotiation to solve border and territorial issues between the two countries," VNA added.

along streets surrounded by po-MINSK, Belarus, Mar 16: About 10,000 protesters marching constitutional amendments

introduced by President Alexander Lukashenko as dictatorial, reports AP. No incidents were reported at the Constitution Day march. which came a day after police clubbed, beat and detained

protest Lukashenko's authoritarian rule. Lukashenko won a Nov 24 referendum which gave him nearly unlimited power in this former Soviet republic and allowed him to effectively rewrite

scores of people who gathered to

the 1994 constitution. But despite his huge margin of victory and overall popularity, thousands attend regular protests organised by the opposition Belarusian Popular

Front. Chanting "Freedom," "Inde-

pendence" and "Lukashenko is a

freak," the protesters marched

WASHINGTON, Mar 16: For

as little as dlrs 1 per patient per

year, the world could eliminate

four tropical diseases by 2007.

ports AP.

ficult in the future."

- Chagas disease, which has

infected about 18 million peo-

ple in Latin America and kills

45,000 annually. Spread by

the diseases are:

lice cordons and rallied at a square in central Minsk. The marchers carried Be-

larus' red-and-white former national flags, banned by Lukashenko as part of his programme to reunite Belarus with Russia, and waved brochures bearing the text of the 1994 constitution. In front of the downtown

Sports Palace, a group of young people tore down the official red-and-green flag and tore it to

"One thing is obvious: The republic must live today and tomorrow according to the 1994 constitution," the speaker of the former parliament disbanded by Lukashenko, Semyon Sharetsky, told the meeting.

The opposition and leading international organizations say the referendum was tainted by fraud and unconstitutional.

Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati (L) meets

with his Saudi counterpart Saud al-Faisal (R) Saturday in Riyadh. Iranian diplomats said that Velayati's visit, the first to Saudi Arabia in four years, will insist on Tehran's innocence in the June 1996 Kobar bombing that killed 19 Americans. Velayati is expected to raise the issue of the annual Muslim pilgrimage to Makkah. Saudi Arabia is preparing to welcome up to two million visitors for the pilgrimage next month. It warned the faithful against bringing in any political material. Iran has asked the Muslims to carry demonstrations in — AFP/UNB photo Makkah.

100 US agents operating undercover in Germany

FRANKFURT, Germany, Mar 16: About 100 American intelligence agents are operating undercover in Germany, Der Spiegel magazine said Saturday, in a report that also named an alleged agent recently ordered to leave the country, re-

ports AP. US and German officials declined to comment on the Spiegel report, or verify the name of Peyton K. Humphries, who the magazine said was being expelled.

The German Economics Ministry on Monday confirmed that a US diplomat tried to recruit one of its department chiefs to spy for Washington, after Spiegel reported the affair two days earlier.

According to Spiegel's latest report, the Economics Ministry informed Germany's counterintelligence office in 1995 that a ministry department chief responsible for Iran had been meeting with American agents since 1994.

The counter-intelligence office instructed the Economics Ministry employee to continue the meetings, in which the Americans were chiefly interested in getting a list of German companies that delivered high technology supplies to Iran. Spiegel said.

The employee refused to supply such a list, the report said. The employee was also asked about Iran's connections with the so-called Mykonos trial.

Two ex-ministers found guilty of corruption in Sri Lanka COLOMBO, Mar 16: A high

-level inquiry in Sri Lanka found two former ministers and two bureaucrats guilty of corruption and recommended the talking away of their civil rights, a state-run weekly said today, reports AFP.

The special presidential commission appointed by President Chandrika Kumaratunga found that the four men received kickbacks or helped themselves to state land during the previous government, the Sunday Observer said.

The former Energy Minister Chandra Bandara died of a heart attack during the inquiry proceedings and the three-judge team recommended "civic disabilities" on the other three, the newspaper said.

"kissing bugs" that bite people sleeping at night and drop parasite-ridden feces, the worms invade the body's organs, eventually causing heart failure. — River blindness, a parasite

Health Organization says, respread by blackflies that has New therapies, like a oneinfected about 18 million peodose leprosy treatment that could be available later this ple, mostly in Africa and Latin America. The adult worms live year, and creative disease-fightin the body for 10 years, annuing strategies in developing countries provide what WHO ally releasing larvae that travel tropical disease chief Dr. Tore to the eye and, if not treated quickly, can blind. Godal calls there is a real historic opportunity now to eliminate these diseases so they will Leprosy, the disfiguring

not haunt us in the future." Goinfection spread by close contact with the victims. It strikes dal said. "If we don't do it, we about 1 million people every may see drug resistance and (elimination) will be more dif-As laid out in a WHO report.

 Lymphatic filariasis, spread by mosquitoes to about 120 million people in a tropical belt between India and islands in the Pacific. The parasites live in lymph nodes, disabling their victims by causing gross swelling of the limbs.

Godal said in an interview that recent discoveries in insect control and therapy make these diseases ripe for elimination as public health threats within 10 years. Elimination means few people would be at risk from the diseases; parasitic infections cannot be eradicated completely because they live in

WHO yet to collect fund to combat 4 killer diseases

Some tropical disease experts warn that it will be a tough fight.

Chagas, for instance, has no vaccine and no good treatment. so eliminating it will depend on entire villages being repeatedly treated for kissing bug infestations, said Ben Beard, an entomologist at the US Centres for Disease Control and Preven-

"If everyone doesn't treat at the same time, you can't eradicate it," Beard said. "I'm a little skeptical."

He recently genetically engi neered bacteria that one day may prevent kissing bugs from spreading Chagas, if the treatment proves safe.

But Godal said recent developments give new promise. WHO scientists, for example, will consider in June whether to recommend treating newly diagnosed leprosy victims with a new one-dose therapy instead of the six months of pills that patients typically take today Japan's Nippon Foundation has pledged free leprosy drugs to

WHO until 2000 Godal said Latin America is mobilizing to fight Chagas by giving residents control over insecticide instead of having governments spray entire villages. Insecticide-laced paint, for instance, can prevent a

years. Argentina is testing new insecticide canisters that people would spray at first sight of Merck Inc. is donating a powerful drug called ivermectin

home's infestation for two

to fight river blindness, Godal said. One tablet a year suppresses newly hatching worms. After 10 years of treatment, the adult worm that infected the victim dies, leaving no offspring, he said. A once-a-year dose of ivermeetin together with another

drug called DEC can reduce by 99 per cent the filariasis parasite concentration in victims blood, he said The cost? Godal has no firm

budget yet, but it's more than 160 million dlrs a year. "If you add the cases," he said. "that's less than dirs I per patient per

Vice President Al Gore leads the Democratic field by far in early polling for the 2000 nomination, but the news isn't all good, AP reports from Washington. Among Democratic voters surveyed, 41 per cent selected Gore as their preferred candidate for president, according to a Time/CNN poll released Friday. But only 34 per cent said Gore would make a good president, down from 42 per cent in October. The poll also found that 60 per cent of those surveyed felt Gore's fund-raising phone calls from the White House were in-

freedom of speech and assembly have been imposed recently.

former Soviet republic ended in the reported arrest or detention

of more than 100 individuals. He said some reportedly were fol-

lowed and picked up well after the event and far from the scene

Arab League Secy-Gen in Riyadh: Arab League Secretary General Esmat Abdel Meguid arrived in

Rivadh on Saturday evening for talks with Saudi Arabian

officials about the Middle East peace process, officials said,

ing Israel's decision to build a new Jewish Quarter containing

6,500 homes in disputed East Jerusalem. Saudi Arabia will

chair the next regular meeting of foreign ministers from the

league's 22 members which is to be held in Cairo on March 30

41 pc Democrats support Gore:

The discussions are expected to focus on the situation follow-

Spokesman Nicholas Burns said peaceful protests in the