

# Koreas' direct talks remain at impasse

**BELJING, Apr 16:** The first direct talks in four years between the two rival Koreas remained at an impasse Thursday, with negotiators ending their latest meeting without an agreement, a South Korean diplomat said, reports AP.

The negotiators from North and South Korea met for nearly two hours in a plush hotel in Beijing, but "there was no result," said Kim Ok Joon, a South Korean Embassy official.

No future meetings were scheduled, but the two sides would stay in contact, Kim said. The two delegations were also to meet for dinner Thursday evening, he said. He said he didn't know when the delegations would return home.

"There are many gaps in opinion," the South's lead negotiator, Deputy Unification Minister Jeong Se-hyun, was quoted as saying by South Korea's Yonhap news agency after Thursday morning's meeting.

The two sides did not meet Wednesday, partly because of a national holiday in North Korea marking the birthday of

former leader Kim Il Sung, the embassy official said.

The discussion, which started Saturday in Beijing, are the first direct talks between the two sides since Kim's death in 1994.

The last meeting Tuesday stalled over North Korean demands for fertilizer and its refusal to give South Korea a timetable for reuniting families separated by the 1945 division of the Korean peninsula into the communist North and capitalist South and by the 1950-53 Korean War.

North Korea's lead negotiator, Chun Kum Chul, continued to insist Thursday that South Korea unconditionally provide the famine-stricken North with fertilizer badly needed after three years of poor harvests, according to the Yonhap report.

Chun said Tuesday that North Korea asked Seoul to provide 500,000 tons of fertilizer urgently needed for spring planting.

South Korea offered 200,000 tons — a proposal Chun said was "not generous."



Bill Richardson, left, the special envoy of US President Bill Clinton and the US ambassador to United Nations, is seen off by Nawaz Sharif, Prime Minister of Pakistan at Prime Minister House in Islamabad on Thursday. Richardson will visit Afghanistan on Friday to meet Taliban leaders and their opposition for peace in the war-torn country. Pakistan's Foreign Minister Gohar Ayub is seen in centre. — AP/UNB photo

## Richardson-Sharif hold meeting

# Missile proliferation in region features in talks

**ISLAMABAD, Apr 16:** Missile proliferation in a region that has seen three wars in the last 50 years ranked high on talks Thursday between UN Ambassador Bill Richardson and Pakistan's Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, reports AP.

At the end of the talks held in the grand white marble prime minister's residence overlooking the federal capital, Richardson said "US and Pakistan relations are in good shape... we had a terrific meeting."

However, he refused to elaborate.

Sharif too refused to give details, but dismissed suggestions that the testing earlier this month of the medium-range Ghauri missile threatened relations between Pakistan and the United States.

"Why should it harm relations with the US? It is Pakistan's indigenous missile programme," Sharif told reporters outside his residence. "It must not harm relations with anybody."

The Ghauri missile with a range of 1,500 kilometres (900 miles) and a payload of 720 pounds can hit deep into neighbouring India, against whom Pakistan had fought three wars.

The two South Asian neighbours went to war in 1948 and 1965 over the disputed Himalayan state of Kashmir, divided between the two countries by the departing British, and again in 1971 over Bangladesh or what was then East Pak-

## 20 killed in violence in Kashmir

**SRINAGAR, India, Apr 16:** Twenty people were killed in separate incidents of violence in the northern Indian state of Kashmir which has been wracked by a Muslim separatist campaign, police said here today, reports AP.

Six rebels and two soldiers were killed late Wednesday at a village 40 kilometres (25 miles) south of the Kashmir summer capital Srinagar following a gunbattle sparked by an army raid.

Police said five militants were killed in a firefight of the apple-growing town of Sopore, and eight other deaths had been reported across the state since late Wednesday.

# Future arms inspection in Saddam's palace compounds Iraq appears to be setting limits

**UNITED NATIONS, Apr 16:** Iraq appears to be setting limits on future arms inspections in President Saddam Hussein's palace compounds and has tried to circumvent the weapons experts by appealing directly to Secretary-General Kofi Annan and diplomats, a UN report said on Wednesday, reports Reuters.

Charles Duelfer, who led a team of arms experts and diplomats into Iraq's "Presidential sites" in March and April said in the report that the mission - the first test of Annan's February 23 agreement with Iraq - went smoothly as a whole despite the large number of personnel on all sides.

But he said Iraq's views of the accord made it clear that "the fundamental issue of continuing access is by no means solved and has only been postponed to the future."

Duelfer's comments, obtained by Reuters, appeared in an annex to a security council report written by Jayantha Dhanapala, the UN undersecretary-general for disarmament, who organised the team that

## Armed men attack village in Philippines :3 killed

**COTABATO, Philippines, Apr 16:** About 30 men attacked a remote southern Philippine village with gunfire, killing at least three people and setting fire to 14 huts and a Muslim mosque, police said Thursday, reports AP.

About 10 other villagers, who were mostly asleep in their houses, were injured in the attack at dawn Wednesday in Ilyan in Sultan Kudarat province, provincial police chief Aminda Maminta said.

Maminta said about 30 men, armed mostly with rifles, entered the farming village.

agreement averted a bombing raid by the United States.

Specifically, Duelfer said Iraq officials had told him repeat visits to the palaces were "not finite" he also said that diplomats on the inspections at times took Iraq's side against the inspectors and that Baghdad officials now took some of their disputes about the inspections directly to Annan.

But Annan, questioned by reporters, said the agreement we signed does allow entry and re-entry and therefore I really don't know where this is coming from.

Told that the comments came from oil minister Amir Muhammed Rasheed, he said, "I don't know if General Rasheed can overrule President Saddam Hussein and Deputy Prime Minister Tareq Aziz. That agreement was signed by President and discussed with President. So if there is any change in the agreement, I expect it to come from higher levels."

The agreement, he said was very clear and allowed "entry and re-entry" to the eight presidential compounds.

# 'Israel must withdraw troops unconditionally from South Lebanon'

**CAIRO, Apr 16:** Visiting Syrian President Hafez Al Assad said on Wednesday that Israel must unconditionally withdraw its troops from South Lebanon, reports AP.

"Now they (the Israelis) say they want to withdraw. That's good and the Lebanese accept that, provided it involves a detailed implementation of the resolution," he said referring to the 1978 UN resolution 425 calling for an immediate withdrawal.

"Resolution 425 does not require any agreement or commitment" for it to be carried out, Assad said at a joint press conference with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak.

"The Israelis must leave in the same way they arrived, I think that's also the Lebanese point of view," he said.

Israel earlier this month offered to withdraw from South Lebanon, where it maintains a buffer zone, provided Beirut guarantees security on the border region.

Assad arrived in Cairo earlier Wednesday accompanied by Vice President Abdel Halim Khaddam and Foreign Minister Faruq Al-Shara for talks with Mubarak on latest developments in the Middle East.

Mubarak said the Israelis "entered Lebanon without permission and must also leave the country without permission, that's the solution."

Meanwhile, Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Mousa said that Lebanese Prime Minister Rafic Hariri would visit Egypt soon, but he did not elaborate.

# Y'slavia won't accept intl mediation over Kosovo issue

**BELGRADE, Apr 16:** Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic reiterated Wednesday that his country won't accept any international mediation over the Kosovo issue, Tanjug news agency reported, reports Xinhua.

While meeting with visiting Danish Foreign Minister Helveg Petersen, Milosevic said there is no need for foreign mediation in talks on the Kosovo issue. There were no reasons to interfere in Yugoslavia's internal affairs.

Milosevic said the Kosovo issue is Serbia's internal affair and Kosovo an inalienable part of the territory of Serbia. The issue needed to be resolved in a political way.

Kosovo, a Serbian province with an ethnic Albanian majority, has sunk into chaos since ethnic Albanians, calling for independence from Serbia began clashing with local Serb police.

Yugoslav and Serbian authorities have rejected international mediation or the internationalisation of the issue, arguing it is Serbia's internal affairs.

## Richardson hails wide-ranging talks with Sharif

**ISLAMABAD, Apr 16:** US Ambassador to the United Nations Bill Richardson today hailed wide-ranging talks with Pakistani Premier Nawaz Sharif with the Afghan conflict and troubled Kashmir topping the agenda, officials said, reports AP.

The talks went off well, Richardson told reporters as he emerged from the meeting along with Sharif at the prime minister's official residence here.

"We had a very good meeting with my friend and great friend of the United States," Richardson said. "We made good progress in the talks, he added, without going into details.

The talks covered almost every topic, Sharif said, specifically mentioning Afghanistan and the situation in the Himalayan region of Kashmir which has long been a thorn in relations between Pakistan and India.

## Yeltsin signs law banning return to Germany treasures

**MOSCOW, Apr 16:** President Boris Yeltsin signed Wednesday a law banning the return to Germany of treasures looted during World War II, a Kremlin spokesman was quoted by Interfax as saying, reports AP.

But the Russian President also appealed to the constitutionally court to re-examine the manner in which the law was adopted by parliament, spokesman Sergei Yastrzhembsky said.

Yastrzhembsky said the law, which Yeltsin was obliged to sign by Russia's highest court, violated Russia's constitution and its commitments under international law.

Parliament passed the trophy art bill to prevent the return of all cultural treasures looted by Soviet troops during World War II, overriding a presidential veto in a vote a year ago.

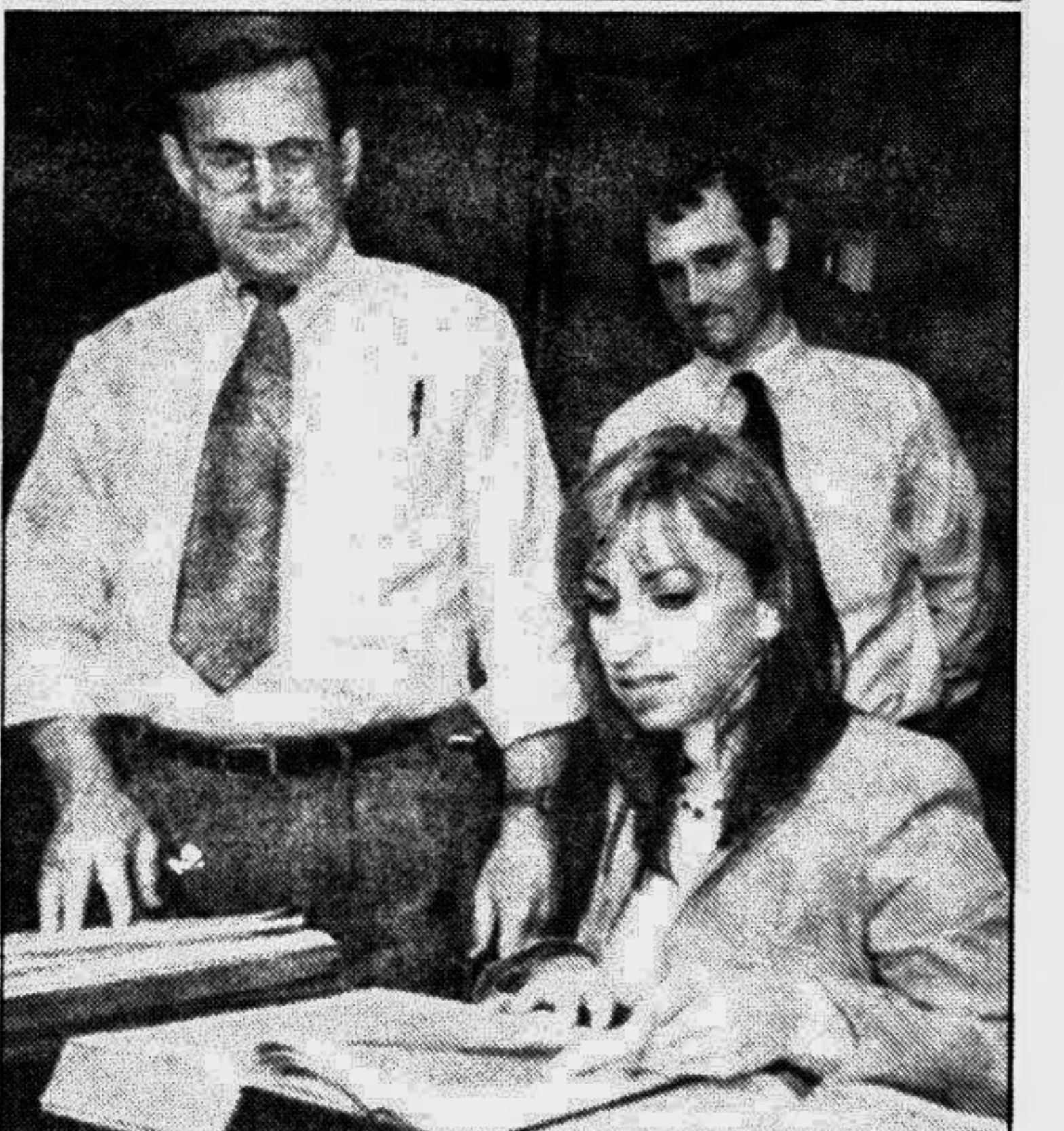
## Red tides have killed over 30 tons of fish in China

**BELJING, Apr 16:** Red tides have killed more than 30 tons of fish worth more than 2 million yuan (dhrs 240,000) in Zhuhai, the south China city bordering Macau, an official newspaper reported Thursday, reports AP.

The decade's worst red tides already have wiped out half of the stock of fish farms in nearby Hong Kong, a loss the Hong Kong government has put at 80 million Hong Kong dollars (US dhrs 10.2 million) but fish farmers say may be three times that amount.

A separate report by the state-controlled China News Service said about 100 tons of fish had died in Nan'ao, east of Hong Kong in southern China's Guangdong province.

The report said the red tide originated in Fujian province, which lies to the northeast of Guangdong.



Paula Jones holds a meeting Wednesday, in Dallas, Texas, with lawyers Don Campell, left, and Wes Holmes to discuss the odds of winning an appeal of the April 1 decision by Judge Susan Webber Wright, which found that her sexual harassment suit against President Clinton did not merit a trial. — AP/UNB photo

# BRIEFLY

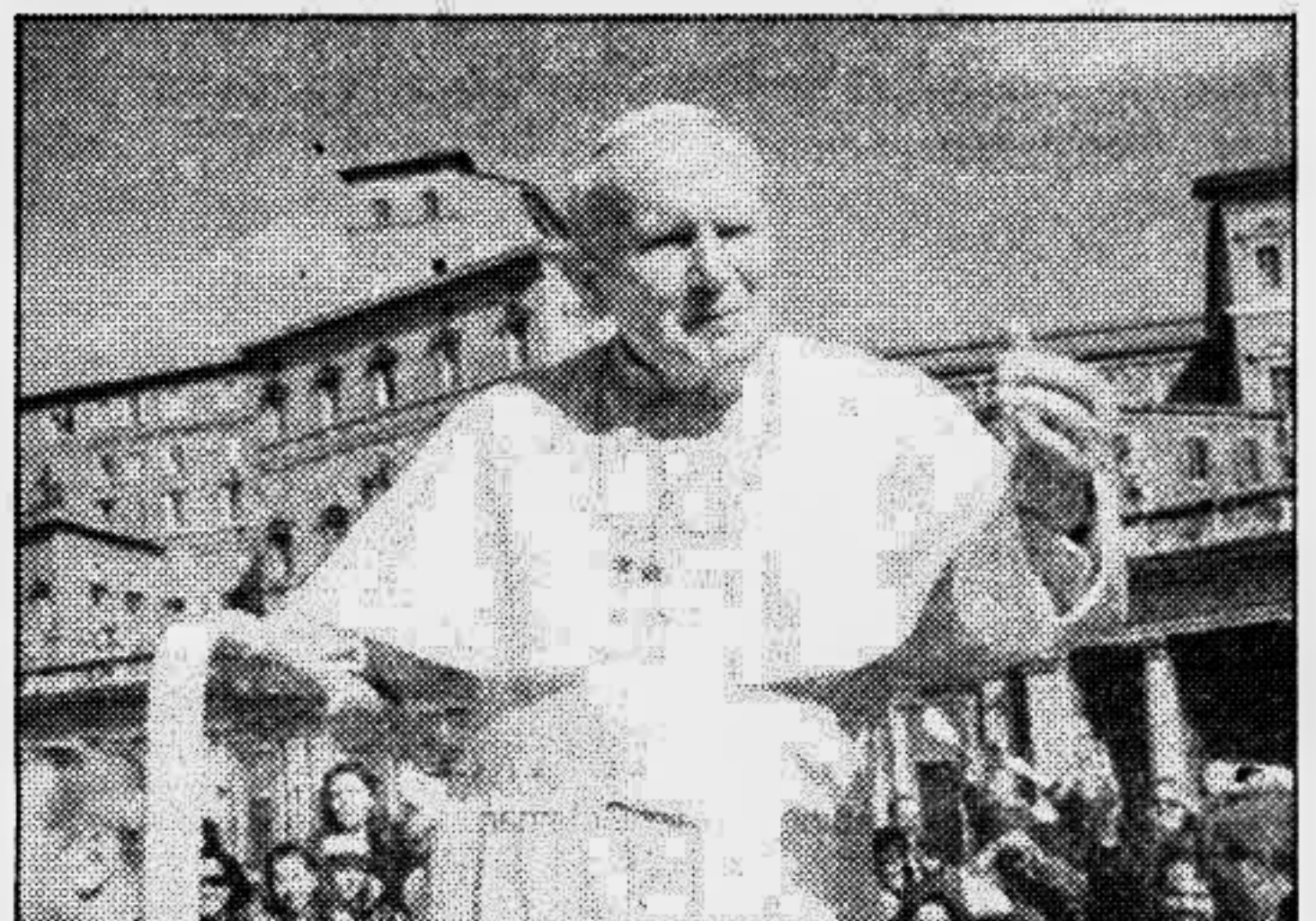
**Flash floods in Indonesia:** Briefly flash floods swept about 40 houses and killed one person in Karang Dapo Lama village, Indonesia's south Sumatra province before dawn on Wednesday. Xinhua reports from Jakarta.

At least three people have gone missing in the floods that occurred after the Betung River, a tributary of Musi River, overflowed, Antara News Agency reported yesterday.

The floods also destroyed 40 hectares of farmland and carried away thousands of cows and goats.

**Death toll in vehicle smash in SA now 31:** South African police said yesterday that the death toll in a horrific five-vehicle smash in the eastern province of Kwazulu-Natal has risen to 31 including 27 children. Reuters reports from Johannesburg.

At least 50 were hurt, many severely, after a school bus, horse and trailer, mini-bus, car and taxi collided on a open road outside the northern Kwazulu of Newcastle on Wednesday afternoon.



Pope John Paul II waves to the faithful after his weekly General Audience in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican, Wednesday. During his address, the Pontiff greeted pilgrims from Ireland and Northern Ireland and renewed his encouragement for all parties to work for the success of the peace pact reached last week. — AP/UNB photo

**3 Russians killed in Chechnya:** A Russian army general and two other senior officers were killed early Thursday in an ambush in Ingushetia, a restive region bordering the breakaway republic of Chechnya. AP reports from Moscow.

Gen. Viktor Prokopenko of the military's General Staff of the Russian armed forces and two unidentified General Staff colonels died when unknown assailants fired automatic weapons and grenade launchers at their convoy, the Interfax news agency reported, quoting government officials.

**Mayor of Tehran freed:** Tehran Mayor Gholam-Hossain Karbaschi, arrested 11 days ago on corruption charges, was released from prison on Wednesday, the official IRNA news agency reported, AFP reports from Tehran.

IRNA said the mayor was on his way to the Interior Ministry, which has set up a defence committee for him and mounted an exhibition publicising his achievements as mayor of the capital.

**NATO to hold 50th anniversary meet:** President Bill Clinton will host to next spring's 50th anniversary NATO meeting in Washington, the White House said Wednesday. AP reports from Washington.

The Western alliance is expected to welcome at its meetings on April 24-25, 1999 the entry of Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic as new members. Their invitations for membership were approved at a 1997 summit of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in Madrid.

**Clashes leave 3 dead in Nigeria:** Three people were killed and several others wounded in clashes between supporters and opponents of Nigerian strongman General Sani Abacha in the southwest Nigerian city of Ibadan, an AFP correspondent reported, AFP says from Ibadan.

The report came as a UN special rapporteur on Wednesday issued a damning report cataloguing the Nigerian military junta's systematic violation of basic human rights. The UN report, the first to be devoted entirely to Nigeria, provoked an angry reaction from Nigeria's Foreign Minister Tom Ikimi, who charged that the European Union, and Britain in particular, wanted to destabilise his country by denouncing human rights abuses.



President Clinton signs his name to a sign welcoming him to tornado-ravaged Birmingham, Ala., Wednesday. Clinton toured the area of Alabama where some 32-people were killed last Wednesday when the force-5 tornado struck. — AP/UNB photo

# Death of Pol Pot heralds end of career of one of world's most psychotic tyrants

**PHNOM PENH, Apr 16:** The reported death of Khmer Rouge leader Pol Pot heralds the end of the murderous career of one of the world's most psychotic tyrants, but precise details of his life remains shrouded in mystery, reports AP.

The shadowy Khmer Rouge leader, thought to be 72 although the exact date of his birth is not clear, died of a heart attack, Khmer Rouge cadres and the Thai military said today.

Senior Khmer Rouge officers contacted in the hills surrounding the rebels' beleaguered stronghold at Anlong Veng told worldwide television news that Pol Pot died at 11.15 pm on Wednesday.

Senior Thai military officers in the border region told AFP they had been informed by Khmer rebels near the frontier

early this morning.

Pol Pot has been held responsible for the deaths of up to two million Cambodians, victims of a gruesome regime bent on turning the country into an agrarian Maoist utopia between 1975 and 1979.

Pol Pot grew up in a relatively prosperous farming family in Kompong Thong province, the heartland of the then French protectorate.

One of his brothers, Saloth Neap, once described Pol Pot as a gentle and kind child, adding he had no idea what his sibling had become until he saw a poster of "brother number one" — Pol Pot's title as leader of the Khmer Rouge — hung up at this work collective.

Having studied at a Buddhist monastery and a Roman

catholic school, Pol Pot won a scholarship in 1949 to study radio electronics in Paris.

Never a brilliant student, the young activist devoted his time to radical student politics and Marxism — charming converts at cell meetings in his Latin quarter apartment in Paris.

He eventually lost his scholarship and returned to Phnom Penh in 1953.

Pol Pot then sealed the ranks of the fledgling underground Cambodian Communist Party and became secretary-general in 1962.

His success was attributed to his ability to combine remarkable charm and grace with an unflinching appetite for killing.

In 1963, fearing persecution from then Prince Norodom Si-

hanouk's secret police, Pol Pot and several of his trusted right-hand men fled into the bush.

Based in remote northeastern Cambodia, Pol Pot was influenced by the surrounding hill-tribes, these "original Khmers" were self-sufficient in their communal living, had no use for money and were "untainted" by Buddhism.

When he came to power in 1975, Pol Pot quickly set about transforming the country into his vision of an agrarian utopia by emptying the cities.

Abolishing money, private property and religion and setting up rural collectives.

Pol Pot's radical social experiment claimed the lives of countless Cambodians through execution, disease and starvation.

People who simply wore

glasses or could speak a foreign language were often targeted.

The Khmer Rouge government fell in 1979 when Vietnam invaded Cambodia after a series of violent border confrontations.

Pol Pot and his men once again fled to the northern jungle.

But in the tropy tropy world of the Cold War, Khmer Rouge enjoyed support from the United States and other Asian nations for its opposition to the pariah that Vietnam had become after the Vietnam war.

Pol Pot officially retired as leader of his guerrilla movement at the end of the 1980s.

Last July, Pol Pot was charged with treason by the Khmer Rouge and sentenced to life under house arrest.

# Richardson visits Afghanistan today Renewed US interest raises hopes of pressure on warring factions

**KABUL, Apr 16:** Renewed US interest in Afghanistan, evident from the visit Friday of US Ambassador to the United Nations Bill Richardson, has raised hopes of stepped up pressure on the warring factions here to sue for peace, reports AP.

Wrecked by a bitter civil war among groups once backed by Washington to defeat the 10-year Soviet occupation, Richardson's brief visit is being hailed as a turning point after years of apparent US disinterest.

The Americans can bring peace to our country if they want to do so, the parties to accept a solution, just like they did in Bosnia," reasoned M Abadi, an engineer living in war-shattered Kabul.

Residents throughout the capital echo such sentiments, arguing the United States maybe ready to finally pay what is considered to be a debt to Afghanistan for the expulsion of the Soviet Red Army in 1989.

"We suffered greatly to beat the Russians and the communists but we were left with more fighting and the Americans just forgot about us," lamented farmer Ghulam Farooq evening a stump where his leg was before it was blown off by a Soviet laid mine.

During his two-hour flying visit to Kabul, Richardson and his delegation plan to meet the number-two leader of the hard-line Taliban militia, Mullah, Mohammad Rabbani, and the NGO on a tour of the smashed city.

Officials say he will attempt to convince the hardline mil-

tia to opt for peace before the spring when a fresh round of fighting may break out. While also urging them to improve their rights record.

Richardson, the most senior western political figure to visit Afghanistan since war broke out nearly 20 years ago will then fly north to meet leaders from the anti-Taliban alliance.

In Shaberghan, he plans to meet the powerful ex-communist and ethnic-Uzbek warlord Abdul Rashid Dostam, and in Farsabad he is to meet ousted president Burhanuddin Rabbani and top commander head Shah Masood.

UN officials and analysts here, however, cautioned against expecting the visit to bring the breakthrough in efforts to end the conflict hoped for by Afghans.