NATO warplanes begin air exercises

Fighting escalates in Kosovo

PRISTINA, Yugoslavia, Jun 15: Fighting escalated on several Kosovo fronts, with Serbs and ethnic Albanians accusing each other of starting clashes that killed at least five people. reports AP.

Meanwhile, NATO warplanes flew across the skies early Monday outside Kosovo's borders in an effort to intimidate the Serbs into stopping attacks on the ethnic Albanians.

On Sunday, Serb forces launched 500 grenades into villages in the Decani area in western Kosovo, according to the Kosovo Information Centre. which is close to the pro-independence Albanian leadership.

In the provincial capital of Pristina, Serbian police colonel Novica Zdravkovic said ethnic Albanian militants killed two policemen and injured two others in separate incidents in Kosovo's southwestern Djakovica region and the Decani area.

The New York Times.

tion valid.

truent illnesses.

More than 300 people have died since the crisis escalated in March, when Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic launched a crackdown on separatist ethnic Albanians fighting to free the province from

Fearing the conflict could spill over into neighbouring Albania and Macedonia, Western nations warned Milosevic last week that he must change his hard-line policy or face the threat of force.

NATO warplanes took off carly Monday for simulated air attacks in Albania and Macedonia in an effort to intimidate the Serbs into stopping attacks on the ethnic Albanians in

Albania and Macedonia, countries neighbouring Kosovo, have agreed to let their territory be used for the exercises, which were ordered by allied defence ministers Thursday.

NATO also has called for its

BUILFIE

Former CIA chief in Saigon dies:

John H. Richardson, a CIA station chief in Saigon in the early

1960s who briefly supported the regime of President Ngo Dinh

Guadalajara, Mexico. The cause was lung cancer, said his son.

As Saigon station chief in 1962 and 1963, Richardson's mis-

sion was to inh tence Ngo Dinh Nhu, a brother of President

Diem, Neil Sheehan, an author and authority on Vietnam, told

Manila airport reopens: Manila's airport

reopened yesterday nearly 12 hours after a Japan Airlines plane

swerved halfway off a wet runway into muddy grass while

from the plane, flight JL 745, after the accident late Sunday

night. Two Japanese and a Filipino were hospitalized, officials

Rakhimov wins Russian republic polls:

Incumbent president Murtaza Rakhimov easily won a second

term in the Russian republic of Bashkotorstan, according to

Rakhimov captured 73 per cent of the votes on Sunday to

preliminary results released yesterday, AP says from Moscow.

beat his rival, Timber Minister Rif Kazakkulov, who took 9.3

per cent, the regional electoral commission said, according to

the Interfax news agency. Overall turnout for the vote in the

southern republic was more than 68 per cent, making the elec-

Yeltsin-Kiriyenko meet postponed: A

meeting between President Boris Yeltsin and Prime Minister

Sergei Kiriyenko, scheduled for yesterday, has been postponed

This time it wasn't Yeltsin who was feeling under the

weather, but the youthful premier. Kiriyenko had a cold and

was running "a slight temperature," said his spokesman Kon-

stantin Voitsekhovich, according to the Interfax news agency.

The youth of the 35-year-old prime minister made him the tar-

get of scores of jokes at the time of his appointment to the job

this spring. Unlike his boss, Kiriyenko has no history of fre-

15 die in Russia apartment fire:

Fifteen people, including five children, were killed when an

apartment fire broke out in a southeastern Russian region,

Olovyannaya, 250 kilometres south of the southeastern city of

Chita with burns of varying degrees after the Sunday fire, the

ITAR-Tass news agency said. Some tenants in the aged structure

Ethiopian to be executed in UAE:

An Ethiopian woman has been condemned to death for

marijuana trafficking in the southern Gulf Emirate of Dubai.

when police seized three kilograms of marijuana she was trying

to sell for 20,000 dirhams. The woman, who was not named,

had originally been jailed for life, but a Dubai appeals court

China's oldest captive panda dies:

One of China's oldest pandas in captivity has died, according to

Zhuzhu, who was 31, died June 8 from respiratory failure in

the zoo in Guiyang, capital of southwest Guizhou province, the

Xinhua News Agency reported Sunday. Pandas live an average

16 years in the wild and 20 to 25 years in captivity, the report

said. The country's oldest panda now is 36-year-old Dudu kept

Gulf News said the 30-year-old woman was arrested last June

Four people were rushed to a hospital near the settlement of

news agencies reported yesterday. AP says from Moscow.

had already moved elsewhere. ITAR-Tass reported.

newspapers reported yesterday. AFP says from Dubai.

amended the sentence on Sunday.

state media reports, AP says from Beijing.

in the zoo in the central industrial city of Wuhan.

due to illness. AP says from Moscow

At least 23 passengers were injured while being evacuated

Richardson died June 1 in his home in Zapopan, a suburb of

Diem, has died. He was 84, AP reports from New York.

landing, officials said, AP reports from Manila.

The Kosovo Information Centre added that Serb police brought reinforcements of about 40 armoured vehicles and 15 tanks into the region. The centre also said Serb forces launched grenades against a cluster of villages

an annual event.

der with Albania.

own air power in an airshow displaying military helicopters and planes, including Russian-made MiG29 jets. The show is

The main ethnic Albanian

party, the Democratic League of Kosovo, said Serbian military

and police forces "began a broad attack" with heavy artillery

against three villages in the

Djakovica area, near the bor-

northwest of Pristina in the

ISLAMABAD, Jun 15: In let-

ters to US president Bill Clinton

and members of the United

Nations Security Council, for-

mer prime minister Benazir

Bhutto warned Monday that

South Asia was "dangerously

now proven nuclear powers -

facing each other across a dis-

larly lobbing mortars and fir-

ing artillery at each other. Be-

nazir Bhutto said the key to

peace is a settlement of the

only exacerbate an already

and India also have rejected as

counter productive economic

sanctions recommended last

Friday at a meeting in Britain

NEW YORK, Jun 15: The

many facets of the genius of

Rabindranath Tagore, winner

of the Nobel Prize for Literature

in 1913, were touched upon in a

moving and colourful tribute to

the Indian poet organised here.

jointly by the Tagore Society of

New York and the United Na-

tions Women's Guild at the Dag

Hammarskjold Auditorium at

with people from many lands,

many dressed inflowing tradi-

tional robes, while others were

in evening gowns and suits. A

Japanese woman, Akiko, was

in a sari, which she was wear-

Tagore Society president Joan

Zinderman playfully noted that

the first two letters of Tagore's

motto "Unity in Diversity" were

UN. She said the event marked

the 137th birth anniversary of

the poet and the 40th anniver-

prise by presenting New York

art dealer Bernhardt Crystal, a

tall and bearded figure haunt-

ingly similar in looks to

Tagore, who described the in-

fluence on his life of a meeting

with Tagore at the age of 14.

when he was in a deep crisis,

and of his subsequent corre-

The society sprung a sur-

In her opening remarks.

ing for the first time.

sary of the society.

The auditorium was packed

The function was organised

reports IANS

the UN

volatile situation, she warned.

Economic sanctions will

The leaders of both Pakistan

puted Kashmir border, regu-

With India and Pakistan —

close to war", reports AP.

Kashmir dispute.

Settlement of Kashmir dispute

Benazir for US, UNSC's

quick intervention

Tributes to Tagore in

New York function

Drenica region, where the govmilitary planners to study op-tions for even tougher action, ernment crackdown began earlier this year. while insisting that it is only studying its options to be ready for any political decisions.

Outside Belgrade on Sunday,
Yugoslavia demonstrated its

None of the reports could be independently confirmed, since police and ethnic Albanian militants, known as the Kosovo Liberation Army, have set up a maze of blockades in contested areas across the

province. Milosevic revoked Kosovo's broad autonomy in 1989 in an attempt to suppress the Alba-nian independence movement. But since the crackdown began, the KLA has grown stronger and more popular among ethnic Albanians.

The KLA controls an estimated 40 per cent of the province, where ethnic Albanians outnumber Serbs 9 to 1.

About 50,000 people have fled the fighting, many of them across the border to Albania or Macedonia, or to the province of Montenegro, which together with Serbia forms Yugoslavia.

of the foreign ministers of the

elected prime minister, Benazir

Bhutto urged quick, interven-

tion by the UN Security Coun-

cil, and the United States in

particular, to resolve the 51-

year-old quarrel over Kashmir.

neighbours after the British de-

parted the Subcontinent in

1947. Kashmir has been the

flash point of two previous wars

Council, Benazir urged the in-

dustrialised nations to "put

aside (your) punitive measures

- sanctions will not put the nu-

clear genie back in the bottle -

and assume a pro-active, con-

structive and positive role in

the worsening South Asian cri-

rabbi, of a priest, of a minister..

but none could give me the

comfort I longed for. Then came

a poem from the poet that

calmed my fevered spirit." Crys-

tal's voice broke as he concluded

his moving reminiscence. The

words of Rabindranath Tagore

- and his hand reaching out to

mine - can be said to have

Tagore, author and UN. Secre-

tary General's Executive Assis-

tant Sashi Tharoor gave a brief

but synoptic review of Tagore's

many-splendoured oeuvre - po-

etry, music, dance, essays, let-

ters, novels, paintings, even his

lectures that were described by

an American newspaper as

of the US. in which he rebuked

his host country for the war

hysteria then sweeping the US.

His fee was for those times an

as an international bureaucrat,

Tharoor amusingly contrasted

Tagore's own vision of interna-

tionalism with the role of such

bodies as the UN. and its prede-

cessor, the League of Nations.

consisting as they were of rep-

resentatives of aggressive na-

tionalistic powers that ruled

mankind needed to be saved

Tharoor said that to Tagore,

over the fate of humanity.

from these very bullies.

Referring to his own career

astronomical \$700 per lecture.

Tagore was on a lecture tour

Before reading two poems by

saved my life."

"\$700 per scold."

In her letter to the Security

between Pakistan and India.

Split between the two uneasy

Instead Pakistan's twice-

world's major powers.

Lawmaker killed in Bihar

PATNA, Jun 15: A commu-nist lawmaker and two of his supporters were shot and killed by unidentified assailants in India's eastern state of Bihar, the second killing in two days of a state legislator, police said

Monday, reports AP.

The assailants riding a motorbike sprayed bullets on Ajit Kumar Sarkar's car on Sunday, killing all three passengers in Purnea, a town 1,600 KM east of New Delhi, KA Jacob, the direc-

tor-general of police said.

About 10,000 people poured into Purnea's streets and attacked police with rocks as news of Sarkar's killing spread. Police fired in the air and beat protesters with bamboo sticks. On Saturday, Brij Bihari

Prasad, a former state minister belonging to the governing Rashtriya Janata Party, and his guard were murdered by suspected political rivals.

Bihar has a reputation as India's most lawless state. Many of its legislators are accused of leading criminal gangs and buying their way into local politics.

Butler reaches accord with Baghdad

BAGHDAD, Jun 15: UN chief weapons inspector Richard Butler reached agreement with Iraq Sunday on a plan to complete its disarmament in accordance with Security Council resolutions within two months, raising the possibility of an early lifting of eight-year-old UN sanctions, reports AFP.

The agreement was announced jointly by Butler and Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tareq Aziz at the end of the a three-hour meeting here Sunday, their fourth in just two

"I am glad to be able to join with Aziz tonight and say that we have achieved it," said the head of the UN Special Commission on Disarming Iraq

(UNSCOM). We have completed today some very searching talks and have agreed upon a schedule of work programme for the next two months on outstanding disarmament issues. "At the end of that two months period the Deputy Prime Minister and I will meet again to consider

Milosevic heads for Moscow as pressure mounts on him to resolve Kosovo crisis

where we are up to.

BELGRADE, Jun 15: Yu goslav President Slobodan Milosevic was heading for Moscow today for talks with his Russian, counterpart, Boris Yeltsin as NATO air exercises built up the pressure on him to resolve the Kosovo crisis, reports AFP.

Milosevic was due to meet Yeltsin on Tuesday to discuss Kosovo, the southern province of the Yugoslav republic of Serbia where the authorities are accused of carrying out brutal "ethnic cleansing" against the

majority Albanian population. Russia is the closest to Belgrade of the six-nation Contact Group, which has given Milosevic until Monday to end the offensive against the ethnic Albanians, or Kosovans.

The Contact Group which also comprises Britain, France. Germany, Italy, and the United States, urged Milosevic on Friday to permit international monitoring in Kosovo. allow refugees to return home and begin an effective dialogue with moderate ethnic Albanian leaders.

Milosevic is expected to urge Yeltsin against yielding to pressure from the West for outside military intervention in

Report on Netanyahu's acceptance of US proposal on troop pullout denied

JERUSALEM, Jun 15: Benjamin Netanyahu's spokesman and the White House denied an Israeli television report late Sunday that the Israeli prime minister had agreed to a US proposal to restart peace talks with the Palestinians, reports

Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank.

Israeli public television's authoritative chief diplomatic correspondent Dan Samama said Netanyahu had finally accepted the US plan under which Israel will withdraw from 13 per cent more of the West Bank.

Samama quoted unnamed ministers and US officials as saying an agreement with the Palestinians would be signed in Washington next month, and that Netanyahu's acceptance had been conveyed to the Palestinian Authority.

But a spokesman for Netanyahu, who faces fierce opposition to the US plan among members of his right-wing coalition, denied the television

Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, left, meets with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in

Cairo Sunday to discuss the stalled Middle East peace process and the US proposal for an

"There is still no agreement Shai Bazak told AFP. White House spokesman PJ

Crowley also told AFP, "our discussions with the parties continue. We've not reached a conclusion. "We continue to work with

the parties on an agreemen that would allow us to launch accelerated final status talks." Right-wing and religious parties have warned they will

pull out of the governing coalition if Netanyahu agrees to a withdrawal of 13 per cent. The prime minister tried

unsuccessfully in meetings over the weekend to persuade spiritual leaders of the national religious party to support the US

Hiroshima bomb survivor to launch 'peace campaign' in India, Pakistan

NEW DELHI, Jun 15: A survivor of Hiroshima's atomic bomb attack will launch a "peace campaign" in India and Pakistan to illustrate the horrors of nuclear war, organisers said today, reports AFP.

They said Yadsuhiko Takeda a 65-year-old Hiroshima bomb survivor would begin the campaign in New Delhi after his arrival here late today and end it in the Pakistani city of Lahore.

India staged five nuclear detonations in early May. 24 years after its first nuclear explosion. Pakistan responded by setting of six nuclear devices. The two neighbours have fought three wars.

Takeda's visit to India is being organised by the Japanese peace group Gensuikin (Japan Congress Against Atomic and Hydrogen Bomb) and the Movement in India for Nuclear Disarmament (MIND), which groups intellectuals and defence

MIND said the trip could not be described as a "protest visit," but "rather a peace campaign to open the eyes of everybody, here with press conferences, exhibitions of Hiroshima photographs and memorabilia and

meetings. A spokesman said Takeda who is also scheduled to visit the Indian cities of Jodhpur,

Jaipur and Bombay as well as the Pakistani cities of Islamabad. Lahore and Karachi might visit the test sites in both countries if the situation allows

India staged its nuclear detonations in the northern desert, range of Pokharan, which is heavily guarded and closed to outsiders. The Pakistani tests were staged in the Chagai Hills

The Indian public responded to the test with jubilation. There is no mass anti-nuclear movement in the country. Both India and Pakistan have rejected international calls to roll back their nuclear programmes saying they will only participate in world-wide efforts to cut back nuclear

Hiroshima Mayor Takashi Hiraoka told India after its tests that nuclear devices and the human race cannot coexist indefinitely. "All countries must learn from the experiences of Hiroshima and Nagasaki," Hiraoka had said.

The US B-29 bomber Enola Gay dropped a Uranium bomb on Hiroshima on August 6 1945. A Plutonium device almost twice as powerful, was dropped on another Japanese city, Nagasaki on August 9. Japan surrendered six days later ending World War II.

Queen Mother oldest royal in British history

- AP/UNB photo

LONDON, Jun 15: The Queen Mother Elizabeth has entered the record books as the oldest royal in British history, reports

The mother of Queen Elizabeth II, she has lived for 97 years and 315 days, and on Sunday passed the longevity record held by Queen Victoria's granddaughter Princess Alice, who died Jan. 3, 1981. She will celebrate her 98th birthday

"It is difficult to say it categorically but I cannot find any British royal from our records who has lived longer than the Queen Mother," the Express newspaper reported royal expert Harold Brookes-Baker, editor of Burke's Peerage, as say-

The Queen Mother married into the royal family in 1923 and was 51 when her husband. King George VI, died in 1952.

Despite two hip replacement operations in the past two and a half years, she still undertakes public engagements - including unveiling a foundation stone for a hospital accident centre for children 10 days ago.

1000 bodies of cyclone-victims recovered in Gujarat

NEW DELHI, Jun 15: More than 1.000 bodies have been recovered in the western Indian state of Gujarat following last week's cyclone, officials said

today, reports AFP. They said medical teams had been deployed across the region to prevent epidemics and waterborne diseases following the

disaster. The Press Trust of India quoted officials putting the of-

ficial toll at 1,040. They said more bodies had

been recovered from Kutch district, the worst-hit area with 794 deaths.

The evolone, with winds of up to 150 KM an hours and followed by torrential rains and a three-metre tidal wave smashed into the Gujarat coast Tuesday after brewing in the Arabian sea.

About 45,000 people were affected total damage in the region has been estimated around 385 million dollars.

'US to take tough stand on HR issues in China, Kosovo'

WASHINGTON, Jun 15: Secretary of State Madeleine Albright vowed Sunday that the White House would hang tough on human rights in two distinct parts of the globe - in China and the breakaway Yugoslav province of Kosovo.

In a taped interview broadcast on Cable News Network. !!bright called a government crackdown in Serbia's separatist province Kosovo "unacceptable," saying the world was determined to prevent another Bosnia - where NATO firepower ended three years of ethnic cleansing of Bosnian Muslims and Croats in 1995.

Albright said Contract Group nations — Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Russia and the United States - where hoping for progress from a meeting between President

Boris Yeltsin and Serbian Pres-

ident Slobodan Milosevic. "We are working very hard to make very clear to him (Milosevic) that the escalation in violence and the bloody business that's going on there is unacceptable," adding that the United States was "very concerned" about the majority Albanian province.
To press that point home, 80

planes from 13 NATO countries will join exercises in Albania and Macedonia today in a show of air power aimed at ending Belgrade's bloody crackdown on Kosovo separatists.

Albright also dismissed criticism that the administration was soft on China, saying the White House would use an upcoming state visit to Beijing to talk tough with Chinese leaders about human rights.

Delegates gather in Rome to forge int'l criminal court

ROME, Jun 15: They will be fighting over words like "trigger mechanism" and "aggression." But if more than 180 nations succeed in establishing an international criminal court at a five-week UN conference, the consequences will be real for the world's most heinous criminals, reports AP.

Delegates were to start work today after an opening speech by UN Secretary-General Kofi

The road to a world court will be long and hard. The delegates must wrestle with basic issues, such as the powers granted the prosecutor

what will set a prosecution in motion (the "trigger mechanism"), how much influence the UN Security Council and its members will have and what crimes it would cover, including the ill-defined "aggression," generally meaning against another state.

All parties basically agree that the court will target genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity. Defendants will be individuals, unlike at the existing International Court of Justice at The Hague. where nations lodge complaints against other nations.

spondence with the poet. "I sought out the council of a Fighting in Guinea-Bissau

intensifies

LISBON, Portugal, June 15: Rebel soldiers and government troops in Guinea-Bissau pounded each other's positions in the capital with rockets. mortars and artillery, with several empty embassies reportedly hit and the insurgents denying claims they had been crushed, reports AP.

The intensified fighting in the West African country's capital. Bissau, came as the insurgents denied government claims that they had been crushed. Guinea-Bissau is a former Portuguese colony.

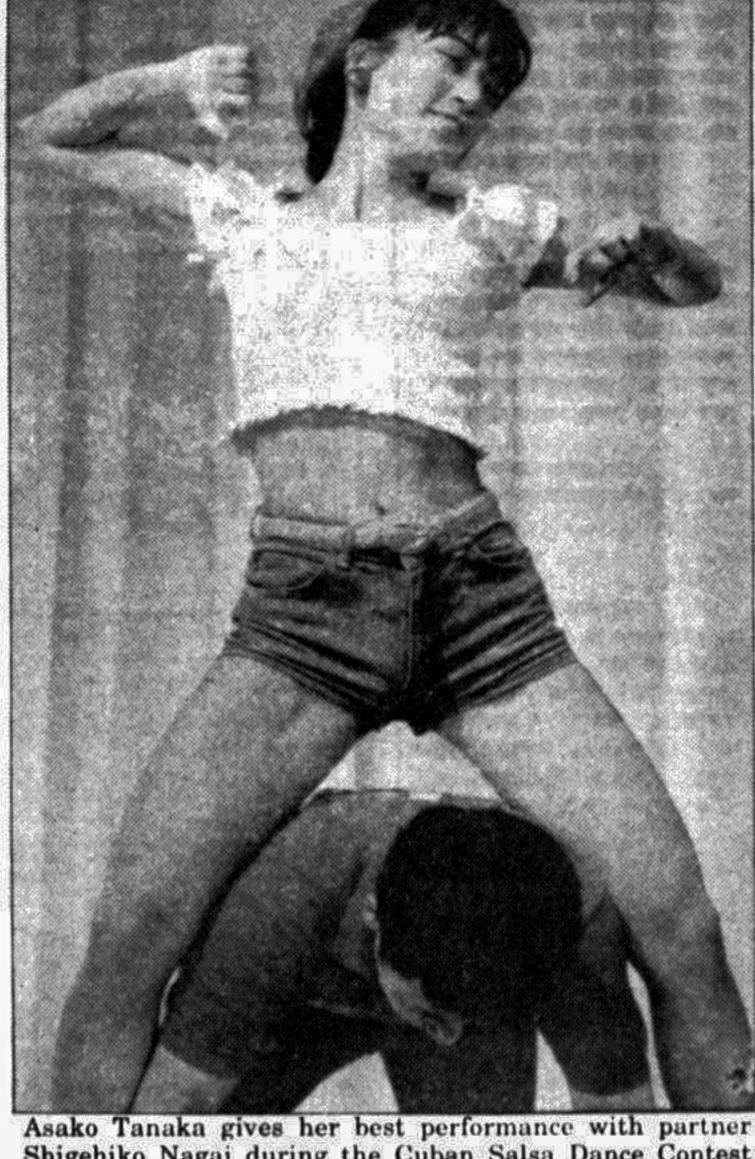
The US and Swedish embassies, the main hospital and the Finance Ministry took direct hits, Portuguese radio RDP-Africa said. Damage to the Russian and French embassies also was reported. With the fighting escalating.

thousands of people were desperately seeking an escape route. There was no reliable in-

formation on the number of casualties in the fighting.

Fighting between the rebels and government forces, backed by reinforcements from neighbouring Senegal and the Republic of Guinea, has centered on a garrison in the suburb of Bra. where the mutineers have been holed up since launching a coup attempt a week ago.

Reuter adds: About 200 people who were fleeing fighting in Guinea-Bissau drowned on Friday when they tried to reach the Bijiagos islands off the coast of the West African state, the Portuguese news agency Lusa said on Sunday.



Shigehiko Nagai during the Cuban Salsa Dance Contest in Tokyo Saturday to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the start of Japanese immigration to Cuba. - AFP photo I from more than half a dozen

Leaders of Ethiopia, Eritrea agree to halt air strikes Italian envoy Rino Serri met

ASMARA, Eritrea. Jun 15: The leaders of Eritrea and Ethiopia have agreed to immediately stop using air strikes in their border war, according to a US presidential spokesman, reports AP. US President Bill Clinton

spoke by telephone with the leaders of the two countries while flying Sunday from Los Angeles to Washington, deputy press secretary Joe Lockhart While the agreement does

not end the border dispute between the Horn of Africa countries, the White House said it "can help restore the mutual confidence necessary to achieve a peaceful resolution of the conflict as quickly as possible. Eritrea welcomed the airstrike ban as a first step towards meeting its call for a total halt to hostilities

"I think the Ethiopian government is beginning to realise that force is not going to solve this problem," said government spokesman Yemane Gebreab. "We do hope they will not want to fight on the ground anymore either."

There was no immediate comment from the Ethiopians. Ethiopia and Eritrea, one time allies who less than a decade ago were part of the same country, have battled since early May over several stretches of their common border with the loss of hundreds of lives. No skirmishes have been

reported since Thursday. Ethiopia has insisted that Eritrea withdraw its troops disputed areas, the largest being the 410-square-kilometre Yirga triangle - before peace talks can begin. Eritrea has refused, claiming it owns the disputed territory, based on boundaries drawn by Italy when it occupied the country in

The White House statement said the moratorium against air strikes, and threats of air strikes, "will continue indefinitely or until such time as ei-ther party concludes that any prospect for a peace process has come to an end and provides formal advance notice to the US government that it will no longer respect this moratorium. The statement also thanked

Italy for diplomatic efforts that helped to secure the agreement.

US cautions its citizens in Gulf

DUBAL Jun 15: The United States has told Americans in the Gulf to take extra precautions after an exiled Saudi dissident threatened to target all US citizens in his holy war against US forces in the region. reports Reuter.

"The US continues to receive information from other sources which indicates planning for an attack against Americans in the Gulf," said an advisory issued by the US Embassy in the Saudi capital Riyadh.

late Saturday with Eritrean's President Isaias Afwerki before flying Sunday to the Ethiopian capital, Addis Ababa. Other diplomatic, efforts

were in the works. Five leaders appointed by the Organisation of African Unity planned to begin a mission later in the week. To avert a full-scale war that

could destabilise the region, the African delegation is seeking a plan that would let both Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi and Isaias back down with honor. The agreement to stop air

strikes was the first sign that the two men are willing to compromise.

Also, Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak was trying to arrange a ceasefire on the ground, according to Eritrean Foreign Minister Haile Wolde-

Eritrean bombing raids have killed at least 48 civilians in two attacks on northern Ethiopia. Ethiopian warplanes killed four people in two attacks at a military-civilian airport on the outskirts of the Eritrean capital, Asmara. Commercial flights to Er-

first bombing on June 5. Fearing continued violence embassies evacuated thousands of their citizens in chartered flights. Ships have hovered off the

itrea have been halted since the

coast, fearing the Ethiopians would bomb the port of Massawa as they did during Eritrea's 30-year war for indepen-