

Gaddafi to pursue charges against UK US won't negotiate with Libya over its two suspects

WASHINGTON, Aug 29: The United States said Friday it would not negotiate with Libya over 'guarantees' in a plan to hand over for trial two suspects linked to the 1988 Lockerbie bombing, reports AFP.

There are no details to negotiate with Libya. Libya has no grounds for delay, State Department spokesman James Foley said after Libyan leader Moammar Gaddafi rejected the US demand to 'immediately turn over two Libyans for trial in the Netherlands.'

'We are not ready to send human beings like that without guarantees,' Gaddafi said in a live interview with the Qatari channel Al-Jazeera.

Earlier Friday, White House spokesman Barry Toiv told reporters travelling with President Bill Clinton in Massachusetts, 'the only choice for Libya is immediate compliance.'

Toiv noted the UN Security Council's unanimous backing Thursday for the US British plan to put the two men on trial in the Netherlands.

Libya has agreed to deliver

the two suspects to the Netherlands but on Friday called for negotiations on judicial procedures.

In London on Friday, a Foreign Office spokesman said Britain would be happy to clarify any points that Libya might raise, but that the offer was 'totally non-negotiable.'

'There are comprehensive safeguards and assurances of a safe trial,' the spokesman said.

Reuters adds from London: Libyan leader Moammar Gaddafi said on Friday the British intelligence service and plotted to kill him and he wanted those responsible to be brought to justice.

In an interview with Libyan television Gaddafi said the 1986 US bombing of Libya and Britain's attempt to kill him should be dealt with in the same way as the 1988 Lockerbie airliner bombing.

'How can they talk about Lockerbie and not talk about the massacre in 1986 of our people and children? How can we talk about Lockerbie and

forge the assassination attempt which was organised by the British intelligence and which has witnesses to it?' he asked.

Gaddafi said a British officer called 'Schiller' had confessed the British intelligence service had drawn up a plan to try to kill him. The plot was hatched when former conservative prime minister John Major was in power in Britain.

'Afterwards we found out that it was true, this was before the labour government came to power,' Gaddafi said, speaking in Arabic.

The British intelligence was involved in a plot to kill Gaddafi, this has been confirmed and they cooperated with the American intelligence,' the Libyan leader said.

He said Libya would shortly present a tape which had proof of the assassination attempt and would provide other material 'in sound and images.'

'After that there will be political and legal procedures with Britain, which protects people who are terrorists and murderers who admit to killing,' Gaddafi said.

Pakistan for early resumption of talks with India

ISLAMABAD, Aug 29: Although Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's last minute cancellation of his trip to the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) summit is seen as a setback to revival of talks with India, Islamabad said it would press for early resumption of the dialogue reports IANS.

The foreign ministers of the two countries are expected to meet on the sidelines of the NAM summit in South Africa and may discuss a strategy to resume the talks, official sources said. Newly appointed Pakistani Foreign Minister Sartaj Aziz, who left for Durban today at the head of his country's delegation to the summit, told IANS, 'We are ready to resume talks at the earliest.'

Confirming the cancellation of the Prime Minister's proposed trip to Durban, Aziz said he would discuss with NAM leaders a host of global, regional and bilateral issues, focusing on peace and security in nuclearised South Asia. Aziz said that in his bilateral meetings, he would brief his counterparts about the latest situation in Kashmir.



Female supporters of former prime minister Benazir Bhutto burn an effigy of Swiss Judge Daniel Devaud and a Swiss flag in front of the Swiss consulate in Karachi Friday. Dozens of women yelling 'down with Switzerland,' urged the government to stop this media trial and to withdraw all charges against Benazir Bhutto. — AP/UNB photo

Govt troops appear to have retaken Kinshasa

KINSHASA, Aug 29: Troops loyal to DR Congo President Laurent Kabila appeared Friday to have regained control of Kinshasa where soldiers fired into the air amid street celebrations to mark victory over rebels in the capital, reports AFP.

However, the unconfirmed reports were denied by a rebel leader, Deogratias Bugera, who said the Tutsi led rebels were continuing to fight and had not lost 'the battle for Kinshasa.'

Thousands of residents had fled the east of the capital Friday as government troops using aircraft artillery and tanks were said to have mopped up rebels trying to return to their homes in the capital.

There were outbreaks of joy in several Kinshasa neighbourhoods when troops flashing the V sign for victory told people that the rebels in the eastern sectors of the capital had surrendered.

Meanwhile the Congolese Armed Forces (FAC) called on locals to halt summary executions of the rebels who had reportedly been beaten and burnt to death as they tried to get to their homes.

The operation in the capital's east, between the town centre and the international Ndjili airport 25 kilometres away was described by the army as a 'sweeping operation.'

Further street celebrations were sparked by a report on official radio, again unconfirmed that loyalist forces had retaken the Inga hydro electric dam southwest of Kinshasa.

The city's long suffering population was hit Friday by the latest in a series of power black-outs which began after the dam fell into rebel hands.

Earlier President Laurent Kabila's son Joseph presented as new armed forces chief of staff, had urged locals to halt all violence as accusations of anti Tutsi genocide by the regime mounted.

US still determined to hold Clinton-Yeltsin summit

WASHINGTON, Aug 29: President Bill Clinton pledged to help Russia 'get through this dark night' of financial and political turmoil if it sticks with painful economic reforms. The United States warned it would be 'a serious policy error' if Russia returned to Soviet-style economic controls, reports AP.

Clinton said Friday that he will go to Moscow next week for a two-day summit with Russian President Boris Yeltsin to prove America's friendship at a time of trouble.

'Anybody can come see you when you're doing well,' the president said during an outing from his vacation retreat on the Massachusetts island of Martha's Vineyard.

Clinton held a half-hour telephone conference call with Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott, in Moscow for summit preparations, and a

delegation in Washington that included Vice President Al Gore and Lawrence Summers, the deputy treasury secretary. Talbott reported that Yeltsin personally assured him that he did not intend to resign and would serve out his full term until 2000. Yeltsin himself said on Russian television that he would not resign.

Clinton's six-day trip, including stops in Northern Ireland and Ireland, will be the president's first overseas trip since his embarrassing acknowledgment of an extramarital affair with a onetime White House intern less than half his age. Clinton is sure to be closely watched for signs that his leadership or international credibility have been weakened.

While some Russia analysts say it doesn't make much sense for Clinton to meet with Yeltsin amid questions whether Yeltsin's government will sur-

vive, the president expressed determination to go. 'We should tell them that it will be strong and do the disciplined, hard things they have to do to reform their country, their economy and get through this dark night that we'll stick with them,' Clinton said.

Similarly, National Security Adviser Sandy Berger said, 'We have an enormous stake in Russia's future, in its continuation on a path of democracy and market reform.' Further, Berger told a White House briefing, 'the Russian people should know that particularly at times of difficulty, the United States and the West will not turn away from cooperation.'

Despite the chaos, Berger said that there was 'absolutely no reason to believe that [Yeltsin] is not in firm control of the military and other elements of government.'

UNSC asks Afghan factions not to protect terrorists

UNITED NATIONS, Aug 29: The UN Security Council on Friday demanded that Afghan factions not protect terrorists accused by Washington of recent attacks on US facilities, reports AFP.

The 15 member council unanimously adopted the resolution, which calls on Afghan groups to 'refrain from harbouring and training terrorists and their organisations and to halt illegal drug activities.'

On August 20, the United States launched missile strikes against bases in Afghanistan linked to multi-millionaire Saudi dissident Osama Bin Laden.

Washington says Bin Laden orchestrated the August 7 bombing of US embassies in Nairobi and Dar Es Salaam.

The Taliban forces which control most of Afghanistan, repeatedly have said that they would not hand over Bin Laden, the United Nations does not recognise the Taliban.

US embassy bombings Suspect implicates Osama's organisation

NEW YORK, Aug 29: A second suspect in the bombing of the US Embassy in Kenya blamed the attack on a terrorist organisation allegedly headed by Islamic militant Osama bin Laden, investigators said, reports AP.

Mohamed Sadek Odeh, 33, has denied involvement in the attack, which US investigators also believe was orchestrated by bin Laden.

Odeh, who was arrested on the day of the bombing in Pakistan, was brought to a US courtroom Friday on charges of murder, murder conspiracy and conspiracy to use weapons of mass destruction.

He told his lawyer he was a follower of bin Laden, but insisted he was not part of the bombing plot. He also said hurting civilians was against his religion.

'There are Muslims and there are Muslims,' the lawyer, Jack Sachs, said he was told by

Most Britons less positive about royal family

LONDON, Aug 29: Almost exactly a year after the death of Princess Diana, more than one in four Britons feel less positive about their royal family than did 12 months ago, a newspaper poll published Saturday reported, says AP.

The NOP poll published in The Express, a middle market national tabloid newspaper, reported that 25.8 per cent of the 1,200 adults questioned said their opinion of the royal family had fallen in the past 12 months, although a slightly larger number, 28.2 per cent, said that their feelings towards the royals had improved.

The newspaper said that 42.9 per cent of people questioned said their opinion had remained unchanged since Diana's death in a Paris car crash on Aug 31.

Tibet braces for further inundations

BEIJING, Aug 29: With torrential rains forecast, flood fighters in Tibet are bracing for further inundations, prolonging a season of deadly summer flooding in the remote Himalayan region, state media reported Saturday, says AP.

As in other parts of China hit by devastating floods, Tibet has mobilised soldiers and civilians to build up dikes as water levels on its major rivers hit record levels over the past two months, the China Daily said.

At least 53 people have been killed in heavy floods and mudslides in the region since mid-June, the newspaper said.



Tel Aviv resident Ora Kaufman is being wheeled to a Tel Aviv hospital after being injured when a bomb exploded in a trash can Thursday. Ora Kaufman has been injured in a previous bomb attack in Jerusalem September 4, 1997, when she was photographed holding her infant daughter Tamar moments after a suicide bomb attack at Jerusalem's Ben Yehuda pedestrian mall. Both Ora and Tamar were hurt in the attack. — AP/UNB photo

BRIEFLY

Tremors shake Tibet: An earthquake measuring 5.2 on the Richter scale yesterday shook Tibet's remote Xainza area, some 250 kilometres northwest of Lhasa, the official Xinhua news agency reported, AFP says from Beijing.

It struck at 6:01 am (2201 GMT Friday) and was an aftershock from a 6.0-magnitude quake that hit the area four days earlier, the report said, quoting the state seismological bureau.

Cuban dissident jailed: A Cuban dissident convicted of giving false information to the US government's Radio Martí radio station was sentenced Friday to three years in prison, the official Cuban government news agency reported, AP says from Mexico City.

Reinaldo Alfaro Garcia was convicted in Havana of disseminating 'false news against the international peace,' Prensa Latina said in a report monitored in Mexico City. The proceedings were closed to foreign journalists. Prosecutors had originally sought a 12-year sentence.

Amnesty for 144 Laotians: Laotian government officials say a general amnesty will be granted to 144 prisoners, including five women, as part of Constitution Day celebrations, AP says from Laos.

The amnesty has been granted on the order of President Khamtay Sipandong, the official said on condition of anonymity. The decree, which has not been publicly announced, also states that 302 prisoners are to have their sentences decreased. The order did not specify the nature of anyone's crimes.

Earthquake jolts Tokyo: An earthquake measuring 5.4 on the Richter scale jolted Tokyo and its environs yesterday, but there were no reports of casualties or damage, the meteorological agency said, AFP reports from Tokyo.

The epicentre of the quake, which struck at 8:46 am (2346 GMT Friday), was located in Tokyo Bay at a depth of 70 kilometres under water. The agency said there was no fears of Tsunami seismic tidal waves from the earthquake.

Rebels shoot 5 in Colombia: Colombian marxist rebels shot dead five civilians on Friday after dragging them out of their homes at dawn accusing them of collaborating with the army, authorities said, Reuters reports from Bogota.

Police said the killings by Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) guerrillas, occurred in the small town of Labranzagrande in a rural area of central Boyaca province.

Apartment fire claims 6 in Taiwan: A pre-dawn fire raged through an apartment in southern Taiwan yesterday, killing six people, police said, AP says from Taipei.

Chen Teh-cheng, a 30-year-old fisherman, escaped the fire by jumping from a window in his third-story home in Tainan, 300 km south of Taipei, police said. Police quoted neighbours as saying the fire broke out soon after the Chen, who was drunk, shouted at his wife for locking him out of the apartment.

US may be considering giving food aid to Cuba

WASHINGTON, Aug 29: The Clinton administration is considering providing food assistance to Cuba, according to two Cuban-American lawmakers who oppose the plan, reports AP.

In a letter Friday to US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, Reps. Lincoln Diaz-Balart and Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, both Florida Republicans, said they oppose 'in the strongest possible terms, all forms of aid, including food assistance, to the Castro dictatorship.'

They said the administration is working with Cuba and the World Food Programme and may respond favourably to a 20.5 million dollar appeal for assistance issued by the WFP for donations to Cuba.

'Such action would constitute another unjustifiable and condemnable reward for Castro's brutality,' they said.

An administration official said there has been no official notification as yet from the WFP concerning an appeal for Cuba.

The official noted, however, that the United States normally responds favourably to WFP appeals for food in cases of obvious hunger even if the country in need is a US adversary.

I have become an expert in apologising: Clinton,

OAK BLUFFS, Massachusetts, Aug 29: President Bill Clinton said he has become such an expert in asking forgiveness in recent days that it is now 'burned in my bones,' reports AP.

But he still stopped short of offering a direct apology for the Monica Lewinsky affair.

Seeking forgiveness 'gets a little easier the more you do it,' Clinton told a church audience Friday celebrating the 35th anniversary of Martin Luther King Jr.'s 'I Have a Dream' speech.

'And if you have a family, an administration, a Congress and a whole country to ask you, you're going to get a lot of practice,' he said.

'In these last days, it has come home to me again, something I first learned as president — but it wasn't burned in my bones — and that is that in order to get (forgiveness), you have to be willing to give it,' Clinton said.

He spoke also of feelings of anger, bitterness and resentment — apparent references to what he considers an intrusive investigation into his private life by Independent Counsel

Kenneth Starr.

Clinton has spent much of his vacation secluded with his wife Hillary and their daughter Chelsea, playing no golf and concentrating on what his press secretary called family 'healing.'

The president spoke from the pulpit at historic Union Chapel, before a cheering, applauding audience and a moderator who told him that black America is 'no far weather crowd' and will 'be with you through thick and through thin.'

As he spoke from scribbled notes, Clinton clearly had in mind the turmoil over his recent admission of an inappropriate relationship with Ms Lewinsky, a former White House intern.

Clinton has been under intense pressure from friends, allies and key Democrats to either make a direct apology or to express a deeper sense of remorse for his actions.

White House spokesman Barry Toiv said that, while he had spoken with the president after his speech, Clinton had not made clear to him whether

or not he intended that his words be seen as an apology.

Clinton has been criticised in some quarters for devoting fully half of his Lewinsky address to the United States last week to his anger over the Starr investigation.

Without being specific, he spoke to the audience in Oak Bluffs of 'the anger, the resentment, the bitterness, the desire for reaffirmation against people you believe have wronged you.'

Clinton's speech was his second in two days before politically friendly crowds. On Tuesday he flew from his vacation retreat on Martha's Vineyard to Worcester, Massachusetts to present thoughts on preventing school violence. He got a warm reception from Democrats who outnumber Republicans four-to-one in the area.

Meanwhile another report adds from Colombia: Employees at an electronics outlet reportedly warned Linda Tripp when she bought a recording device that it is illegal to tape a phone conversation in the state of Maryland without the other party's consent.



President Clinton flashes a thumbs-up sign as he reaches into a crowd of supporters after addressing a gathering at the Union Chapel in Oak Bluffs, Mass., Friday. The President visited the chapel for a commemorative programme on the 35th anniversary of Martin Luther King Jr.'s 'I Have a Dream' speech. — AP/UNB photo

Gaddafi offers Clinton a lawyer!

CAIRO, Aug 29: US President Bill Clinton got an offer of help Friday in handling his domestic problems from an unlikely source: Moammar Gaddafi, reports AP.

The Libyan leader offered to send a lawyer to help Clinton deal with the fallout arising from his relationship with former White House intern Monica Lewinsky.

'I have no bad intentions towards (Clinton), and I was willing to send him a lawyer to defend him,' Gaddafi said in an interview with the Qatari television channel Al-Jazeera.

He said Clinton is a victim of a Jewish and Zionist conspiracy.

Gaddafi also criticised former president Ronald Reagan, who ordered an air attack on Libya in 1986 in retaliation for the bombing of a Berlin discotheque in which two US servicemen were killed. Libya said 37 people, including Gaddafi's adopted daughter, were killed in the attack.

'Clinton is not Reagan, who was ridiculous, an idiot, aggressive and behaved like a cowboy,' he said.