

ME peace talks drag into 5th day No sign of deal yet

WYE MILLS, Maryland, Oct 19: Israeli-Palestinian peace talks dragged into an unscheduled fifth day today after an intensive push by President Bill Clinton failed to bring the two sides together over a new, US-proposed land-for-security accord, reports AFP.

Clinton wangled with each of the sides throughout the weekend and into the early hours of today but there were no direct Israeli-Palestinian meetings and there were no signs a deal was imminent.

In an unusual twist, Clinton met past midnight Sunday with Israel's hawkish new foreign minister, Ariel Sharon, whom Palestinian officials accused of hardening the Israeli position after joining the negotiators early Sunday.

Clinton and Sharon met for 90 minutes until around 1:15 am (05:15 GMT) Monday, US officials said.

Officials said Clinton was expected to again join today's talks after spending the night back at the White House.

The Palestinians said it would now take at least another two to three days of intensive efforts to even try to reach a deal, while Israelis suggested they should settle for far less than the comprehensive, US-drafted peace package which has been the subject of the talks for more than a year.

It was not immediately clear if the jostling was part and parcel of the mini-crisis and tantrums that traditionally

mark the final stages of mid-east peace negotiations or a sign of impending breakdown in the talks.

In an extraordinary effort to rescue the peace effort, Clinton on Sunday enlisted all his top security and foreign policy advisors, including vice-president Al Gore, in the mediation at the remote Wye River Conference Centre in eastern Maryland.

But by early today, Israelis and Palestinians appeared nearly as far apart as before the summit began on key elements of the deal put forward by the United States to break the 19-month deadlock.

US State Department spokesman James Rubin announced Sunday that the meetings would run into an unscheduled fifth day today, warning of "serious dangers ahead for the people of the region" if a deal was not concluded.

Clinton shuttled between Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat for more than 10 hours Saturday and more than 13 hours Sunday in a bid to work out compromises.

The Palestinian officials said Netanyahu offered, via Clinton, to reach a partial agreement based on the US package and to push back thorny issues to future negotiations.

The Israeli leader specifically offered to transfer 13 per cent more of the West Bank to

partial Palestinian rule over a three-month period, as proposed by the United States, to release 400 Palestinian prisoners in stages, and to authorise the opening of a Palestinian airport and joint industrial zone in the Gaza Strip, they said.

In exchange, Israel wants immediate Palestinian action on a list of specific security measures to halt terrorism, the officials told AFP on condition of anonymity.

Netanyahu's offer would delay decisions on a host of key issues ranging from a second further West Bank withdrawal, the opening of transport corridors between the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and the release of another 3,100 prisoners — all steps required under the interim peace accords.

Also left unresolved would be Palestinian demands, backed by Washington, for a freeze on construction of Jewish settlements on Occupied Land.

In an 80-minute late Sunday meeting with Clinton, Arafat rejected the Israeli suggestion outright and insisted on an all-or-nothing deal based on the original US package proposal.

Arafat also complained that Sharon, a fierce opponent of the Oslo peace accords, had raised new demands for Palestinian security guarantees and balked at shifting some West Bank land currently under partial Palestinian control to fuller self-rule.



A small boy, his face painted to represent the flag of Chile, eats chocolate as his mother voices her opposition to former Chilean dictator Gen. Augusto Pinochet on Sunday outside a London hospital where he is under arrest. — AP/UNB photo

Death toll may rise Typhoon Zeb kills over 100

TOKYO, Oct 19: Typhoon Zeb has killed more than 100 people in a trail of destruction through the Philippines, Taiwan and Japan, and the toll may yet rise, according to rescuers here today and other officials, reports AFP.

The typhoon killed more than 70 people in the Philippines after slamming into the country Wednesday, left at least 23 people dead in Taiwan after striking Thursday, and moved on to claim 13 lives in Japan.

Police in Japan said the toll could rise as they searched for a 78-year-old man who went missing when the storm, since downgraded to a tropical depression, struck Saturday.

"We are continuing our search," said a police official in Fukuoka prefecture, southern Japan. "He has not come home yet since he left his home for fishing on Saturday."

Japan's coastguard was cleaning up oil from a Panama-registered freighter, the 1,987-tonne *Isabela 153*, which ran aground on the coast of Shizuoka, southwest of Tokyo, early Sunday.

45 burned to death in Bogota

BOGOTA, Oct 19: At least 45 people were burned to death Sunday and some 70 injured when an explosion, attributed to leftist armed opposition fighters, blew up an oil pipeline in northwest Colombia, authorities said, reports AFP.

The explosion occurred in the hamlet of Machuca, 600 kilometres northwest of the capital along Colombia's main pipeline, when most of the town's inhabitants were asleep.

Speaking on national television, Defence Minister Rodrigo Lloreda said army experts had determined the blast was deliberate and blamed the attack on leftist guerrillas from the National Liberation Army (ELN), this country's second-largest armed opposition group.

The group also blew up a nearby bridge, he said.

Death in pipeline blast in Nigeria rises to 400

LAGOS, Oct 19: Up to 400 people were burned to death when a burst pipeline exploded and caught fire in southeastern Nigeria Sunday, local correspondents at the scene said, reports AFP.

Hundreds more were reported to be in hospital after the pipeline near the village of Jesse, not far from the main town of Warri, burst into flames.

"I physically counted 230 bodies burned beyond recognition," one local newspaper reporter was quoted as saying.

Local authorities ordered the dead to be buried in mass graves. Hundreds of people were collecting spilled refined oil at the site of a breach in the pipeline when it exploded. The resulting fire devastated an area of some 200 square metres, the sources said.

Chairs of Diana's funeral service being sold at 3,000 pounds

LONDON, Oct 19: Chairs that held the guests at Princess Diana's funeral service are being sold for 3,000 pounds (dhs 5,100) each, The Sunday Times reported, says AP.

Westminster Abbey, which used the bench and elm chairs until March, decided to sell them to help defray the cost of new chairs. *Pew Corner*, a furniture company located in Surrey, southwest of London, bought all 800 and now plans to market the chairs to buyers in the United States, the newspaper said.

The chairs come with a certificate of authenticity signed by Welsey Carr, the dean of Westminster, and a gold-plated plaque saying, "This bespoke congregation chair was used in Westminster Abbey, England." The Sunday Times reported, "The chairs were purchased by the Abbey at intervals since the 1920s, and some may have been used during royal weddings and coronations. All were likely used at Diana's funeral service last year."

The paper did not say how much *Pew Corner* paid for the chairs. But a similar new chair would cost about 150 pounds (dhs 250), according to the paper.

Eight women and seven men from the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) gave themselves up at the point Pedro army camp on Saturday, the ministry said in a statement.

It said up to seven member of the LTTE were believed to have been killed or wounded in a confrontation in the north of the country on Sunday. Another five rebels were killed in another clash.

The ministry did not say if security forces had suffered any casualties.

5,000 more policemen to be deployed in Karachi

KARACHI, Oct 19: Another 5,000 policemen will be deployed on the streets of this violent port city in an attempt to quell the relentless bloodletting among ethnic rivals, officials said Monday, reports AP.

The police force is currently about 27,000 strong assisted by another 15,000 paramilitary Rangers.

Karachi, a teeming city of 14 million people, is wracked by relentless killings, often involving rival groups of an ethnic party known as the *Muttahid Qaumi Movement* (MQM). The movement, which represents Indian Muslims who settled in Pakistan at the end of British colonial rule in 1947, split into rival groups several years ago and they routinely clash.

Their battle is for control of the city.

During the weekend Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif visited Karachi and vowed to put an end to the killings that have terrorised entire neighbourhoods. It was after Sharif's trip to Karachi that the provincial government decided to increase its police force, said the officials, who asked not to be identified.

"Anti-state elements have their own agenda and they want to push the country toward destruction," the independent newspaper *The News* quoted Sharif as saying. The prime minister, however, did not identify the "anti-state elements."

Pakistan's largest city, Karachi is the nation's financial and commercial hub and

generates about 70 per cent of the government's revenue.

However, ethnic related disturbances routinely interrupt business, which economists estimate has cost the national exchequer billions of rupees (dollars).

On Saturday a former governor of southern Sindh, of which Karachi is the capital, Hakim Said was gunned down outside his office by masked men who escaped.

His death galvanized the city and generated rallies and protest demonstrations throughout the country on Sunday.

On Sunday in the eastern Punjab capital of Lahore scores of people held a memorial service for Said as well as for a militant religious leader, Maulana Mohammed Abdullah who was killed in the federal capital of Islamabad also on Saturday.

The small, but powerful religious group, *Jamaat-e-Islami* called for the government to step down, saying Pakistani lawmakers had failed to halt a sprawling law and order problem.

"The law of the jungle is the law of the land today," *Jamaat* leader Hafiz Idrres was quoted as saying.

More than 600 people have been killed in ethnic related violence in Karachi so far this year. Religiously motivated violence between rival Sunni and Shi'ite Muslim militants also has left hundreds of people dead in Pakistan, most of them in the eastern Punjab province.

Syria keen to solve dispute with Turkey

DAMASCUS, Oct 19: Syria on Sunday reiterated its determination to solve its dispute with Turkey through diplomacy and said that only Israel would benefit from any confrontation between the two neighbours, reports Reuters.

"We in Syria are very keen to settle what is between us and our neighbour Turkey through diplomatic channels," Defence Minister, Lieutenant General Mustafa Tias said, referring to Damascus's alleged support for Kurdish rebels.

Syria denies the charge that it backs the rebels.

Tias was speaking on behalf of President Hafez al-Assad during a graduation ceremony at an air force college.

"We call for the use of the language of logic and international law and not the language of threats because the only side

that will benefit from any military confrontation between the two neighbours Syria and Turkey is Israel," he said.

His remarks came as Syria and Turkey prepare to hold direct talks for the first time after two weeks ago over Damascus's alleged support for the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) seeking to establish self-rule in southeast Turkey.

There has been no official announcement in Damascus about the meeting which Turkish newspapers said would be held in a secret place today.

Tias renewed Damascus's condemnation of an informal Turkish-Israeli military alliance. He said Israel wanted to use its ties with Ankara to force Syria to capitulate and accept Israel's conditions for peace.

Raghunath on just concluded Indo-Pak talks Any significant agreement a long way off

NEW DELHI, Oct 19: Indian Foreign Secretary K Raghunath offered a downbeat report on his return from peace talks with Pakistan, warning that "fundamental" differences remained over key issues like Kashmir, reports AFP.

While stressing the importance of the fact that both sides had agreed to keep talking, Raghunath made it clear that any significant agreement was a long way off.

"We are coming forward to developing a friendly and peaceful relationship with Pakistan but certain steps are necessary and issues must be discussed in a serious and realistic manner," he told reporters on his return to New Delhi

overnight Sunday.

After three days of talks in Islamabad the two sides issued a joint communique Sunday, vowing to reduce the risk of war and keep up efforts to resolve their festering territorial dispute over Kashmir.

Admitting there was no progress on the decades-old dispute, they stressed the importance of returning to the negotiating table after more than a year's break and highlighted their joint resolve to continue the process.

Raghunath said there were still "fundamental" differences on the Kashmir issues, "the purpose of the dialogue is to discuss it and ensure what we can do about it."

7000 Pinochet supporters clash with police

SANTIAGO, Oct 19: Violent demonstrations broke out here Sunday night as some 7,000 supporters of former dictator general Augusto Pinochet clashed with police outside the British embassy.

Riot police used tear gas and water cannon on protestors who tried to break through police lines in an attempt to occupy the embassy.

"It is not a question of being positive but a question of being realistic about what we can achieve," he said.

The next round of talks, specifically on the issues of security, confidence-building measures and Kashmir, will be held in the first half of February, the communique said.

Before then the two sides will meet in New Delhi in November to discuss other issues such as military confrontation at Siachen Glacier, India's Wullar Barrage Project in Kashmir and the territorial problem of Sir Creek.

Indian newspaper reports Monday highlighted the antagonism between the two delegations.

The foundation held a much smaller protest Saturday when some 400 demonstrators threw eggs at the British Embassy.

British police, acting on a request from Spanish police and a Spanish warrant charging genocide, arrested Pinochet Friday evening at a London clinic where he was receiving treatment for back trouble.

Senators and Pinochet supporters sent a letter to Britain's ambassador to Chile, Lynne Evans, protesting the arrest of the former Chilean strongman.

Chile's Foreign Ministry has also protested, saying Pinochet was on a diplomatic visit and therefore protected by diplomatic immunity.

But other Chilean political parties — including socialists and christian democrats — have distanced themselves from their own government's attitude.

Fernandez was interior minister under the Pinochet regime, which stretched from 1973 to 1990 and during which some 3,000 people were killed or disappeared.

The demonstration was organised by Cuba's rightist independent democratic union and the Augusto Pinochet Foundation.

BRIEFLY

Pope John Paul II greets Italian President Oscar Luigi Scalfaro at the end of a mass celebrated in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican, Sunday, closing a week of celebrations that marked his 20 years as Pontiff. On October 16, 1978, Karol Wojtyla, the Archbishop of Krakow, Poland, was chosen to lead the Roman Catholic Church. — AP/UNB photo

Malaysian govt threatening to fire civil servants

'If found at street demonstrations

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 19: Moving to curb growing opposition to Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad, the government is threatening to fire public workers caught at anti-government rallies, a news report said Monday, reports AP.

Abdul Halim Ali, chief secretary to the government, told civil servants they were required by law to support their government and would lose their jobs if found at street demonstrations.

"If their unlawful acts result in serious consequences, they can be sacked," Abdul Halim was quoted as saying in the *New Straits Times*, citing a law that regulates the conduct of government employees.

Protests have flared in recent weeks in support of dissident Anwar Ibrahim, who was fired on Sept. 2 as deputy premier and finance minister. He was subsequently arrested after launching a reformist campaign.

Demonstrators have de-

manded Anwar's release and the ouster of Mahathir, who has ruled Malaysia for 17 years.

"No one, especially government officers, should ignore or go against the government's wish to make Malaysia an industrialised nation or should act in a manner that can disunity society or split the civil service," Abdul Halim said.

He added that he had not received any reports of civil servant involvement in the demonstrations, which have turned into massive weekly affairs in downtown Kuala Lumpur.

At one recent street demonstration, however, government workers were among the front line of protesters shouting "Reforms! Reforms!" and "Step down Mahathir" in defiance of a blanket police ban on political rallies.

"I work in the government and I don't like my government," said a civil servant, who asked to be identified only by

his first name, Mamat.

Authorities recently threatened that students caught at the political rallies would face expulsion in adherence with a longstanding ban on student involvement in politics.

Meanwhile, the prime minister urged country to remain united in the face of its worst economic crisis since independence.

"We should be thankful because although the country faces economic difficulties, our lives have not been severely affected," Mahathir said, adding that Malaysia was not as bad off as some of its Southeast Asian neighbours, where many people are unable to buy food, medicine and other necessities.

Mahathir, who is in Tokyo on a 5-day visit, made the remarks in a special message in honor of Deepavali, a Hindu festival of lights celebrated as a national holiday Monday. Mahathir is expected to return Tuesday.

11 die in bus accident in Nepal: A bus carrying Nepali villagers fell into a ravine on Sunday night, killing 11 people and injuring at least 44, police said yesterday, Reuters reports from Kathmandu.

British actress Joan Hickson dies: British actress Joan Hickson, who played the Agatha Christie character Miss Marple in an ABC Television series, has died at the age of 92, her son said on Sunday, AFP reports from London. Hickson died on Saturday in a hospital in Colchester, Essex, Nicholas Butler said. She made her acting debut in 1927 and had a long stage career before taking on her most famous TV role as the shrewd detective, which ran from 1984 to 1992.

15 missing in Malaysian boat capsizes: Fifteen people were missing after a boat filled with mostly hotel workers sank off central Malacca State, the National Bernama news agency said yesterday, Reuters reports from Kuala Lumpur.

3 Palestinians shot dead in WB: Three Palestinians said they were shot and wounded when Israeli security forces opened fire on their van in the West Bank on Sunday night, Reuters reports from Hebron.

2 newsmen disappear in Kosovo: A reporter and photographer working for Yugoslavia's official news agency Tanjug disappeared in the troubled Serbian province of Kosovo Sunday, the agency said, AFP reports from Pristina.

NATO ready to attack Y'slavia

WASHINGTON, Oct 19: NATO is "keeping the trigger cocked" to ensure that Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic stops his crackdown on Kosovo as he promised, US special envoy Richard Holbrooke said Sunday, reports AP.

He said the Atlantic alliance can provide the impetus to change history in the troubled Serbian province by holding to its threat of force while giving Milosevic time to implement the deal he signed to stop the violence and withdraw.

NATO plans for air attacks on Yugoslavia remained on hold as the North Atlantic Council, NATO's top policymaking body, extended the deadline for Milosevic's compliance from last Saturday to Oct. 27. NATO spy planes continue to scan the region.

"NATO didn't blink," Holbrooke said. "The NATO trigger remains cocked as we see whether he is complying with it."

The Serbs fully know the consequences if they don't comply, and this is not a bluff," Holbrooke said on ABC's news show "This Week."

As part of the Holbrooke-Milosevic agreement that averted NATO airstrikes, U-2 spy planes began missions Saturday over Kosovo, and an advance team for the 2,000-member "verifier" team arrived in Yugoslavia.

A White House official said after the return of the air surveillance mission that they spotted clear signs that at least two of the seven Yugoslav forces

battalions were on their way out of the Serbian province.

Holbrooke said NATO commander Wesley Clark would return Tuesday to Belgrade to check on the progress of the withdrawals. "There's no reason to take anyone's word on faith," Holbrooke said. "They only respect force and the credible use of force."

"He said NATO air strikes in the Serb-controlled area of Bosnia three years ago, the first ever military action by NATO, helped convince Milosevic that NATO was serious about its demands that he stop persecuting Kosovo's ethnic Albanians."

Mexican rebel leader calls for renewed talks

MEXICO CITY, Oct 19: Mexican rebel leader Subcomandante Marcos called for a renewed peace dialogue in the troubled state of Chiapas, while claiming the government had to interest in a peaceful solution, reports AFP.

The masked leader of the Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN) suggested talks with a mediating group and with representatives of "civil society."

But he made it clear he had no plans for an immediate resumption of direct talks with the government, which broke down in September 1996.

52 killed as train derailed in Egypt

CAIRO, Oct 19: Rescue teams Monday ended their search for survivors of a train wreck in northern Egypt that killed about 52 people, reports AP.

At least 100 people were injured when a train derailed in Kafr el-Dawar, about 30 kilometres southeast of Alexandria Sunday afternoon, said Nabih Yusef Shalout, the medical director in the province of Buhaira.

Five mangled bodies were found beneath the last three carriages to be hoisted by a mobile crane. With the 47 fatalities reported by Shalout earlier, the death toll reached 52, though the number has not been officially confirmed.

Residents of Kafr el-Dawar who helped take the casualties to hospitals said many more had died.

Residents also accused the authorities of neglect.

One came until 8:15, said Khaled Mohammed Lotfi. "Everyone you see working here is a local man. We asked them to call the defence ministry to bring in soldiers to help, but they called us crazy."

Shalout said most of the dead were bystanders in the town, while most of the injured were passengers.

The train, which was travelling south from Alexandria, left the rails when the driver changed tracks "at high speed," the Interior Ministry said in a statement.

A teenager who saw the crash, Hany Roushdy, said the train was moving very fast.

"It did not seem to be able to stop. It shot off the tracks and went towards the town square," he said.

The train crashed through a wall beside the railway, hit a war memorial in the square and slammed into seven shops, witnesses said.

"When the train hit the buildings, "it sounded like thunder," said Roushdy, 18.

A businessman in the square, Mustafa Attiya, said he heard girls screaming. "I turned around and saw the train shoot across and hit the girls."

The train snared the leg of a fruit vendor.

Ranariddh offers to send deputy to proposed summit

PHNOM PENH, Oct 19: Cambodian opposition leader Prince Norodom Ranariddh has offered to send a deputy to a proposed summit meeting in a bid to break the country's month-old political stalemate, his party said today, reports AFP.

The prince's Funcinpec Party said secretary general Tol Lah had been appointed to represent the price if the meeting to negotiate a coalition government was held in Phnom Penh.

The offer was made to King Norodom Sihanouk on October 16 but so far there has been no public response from the monarch.

A Funcinpec statement received here today said Tol Lah would have "adequate authority to negotiate," but the prince would only attend in person if the proposed summit was held at the King's residence in Beijing.

The King, prince Ranariddh's father, has offered to chair the meeting and will decide on its venue in consultation with the parties involved.

A spokesman for the ruling Cambodian People's Party (CPP) under strongman Hun Sen said the talks would surely fail unless the party leaders attended.

"We are ready if the king calls a meeting but if you call it a

"summit" then the leaders must attend." CPP spokesman Kieu Kanhar Kanharit told AFP.

"If the key decision makers are not there then nobody will have the power to take positions."

The government and the CPP have said the talks must take place in Cambodia.

The meeting — involving the CPP, Funcinpec and second opposition group the Sam Rainsy party — is crucial to the formation of a coalition government following elections in July, which Hun Sen won but without the two thirds majority needed to govern alone.

Gorbachev says US should end 36-year old embargo against Cuba

MIAMI BEACH, Oct 19: The United States should end its 36-year-old economic embargo against Cuba's communist government to foster democratic change on the island, former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev says, reports Reuters.

"The Cold War is over," Gorbachev, who is in the United States on a speaking trip, told a news conference in Miami Beach late Saturday.