

# Argentina to take one lakh Russian immigrants

**BUENOS AIRES, Jan 21:** Argentina is willing to receive about 100,000 Russian immigrants from the newly independent Baltic states over the next two or three years, Argentine Foreign Minister Guido Di Tella said, reports Reuter.

In an interview published on Monday he told the Daily Cronista Commercial that Argentina would make the offer this week in Washington at an international conference on aid for the former Soviet republics.

"The Russian minorities in Latvia and Estonia are not only large, most of them neither accept to stay there nor want to return to Russia," Di Tella said.

"These groups may be interested in emigrating to Argentina and that is what we will offer in Washington," he added.

Argentina would impose a few conditions for the immigration. Di Tella said an influx of Russians would not have to cause labour or housing problems.

Adequate financial support would have to be provided, about 100,000 US dollars per family of immigrants, he added, although he did not specify where such funds would come from.

At the conference called by US Secretary of State James Baker, Argentina will also propose that Washington and the European Community divert funds from their farm subsidy programmes to food aid for the former Soviet republics.

"This way we would solve a good part of the dramatic food shortage the former superpower is suffering and at the same time scrap one of the main elements disturbing international trade," he said.

# Lankan Tigers ambush foot patrol, kill 20 troops

**COLOMBO, Jan 21:** Tamil guerrillas ambushed a foot patrol in the northeast Tuesday and killed 20 soldiers, the military said, reports AP.

Five more soldiers were missing after the attack in the village of Irankandy, about 15 miles (25 kilometres) north of the port city of Trincomalee, said officials in the region contacted on phone.

The incident occurred a day before the first batch of Tamil refugees are scheduled to arrive in Trincomalee port as part of massive repatriation programme between India and Sri Lanka.

More than 200,000 Sri Lanka Tamils fled to neighbouring India to escape the 8-year-old ethnic war in the north and east.

On Monday, 614 Tamils accompanied by Indian com-

mandos and a 10-member bomb disposal squad, set sail aboard an Indian naval ship from Madras, the capital of the southern Tamil Nadu state.

About 120,000 more Tamils are expected to be repatriated to Sri Lanka in similar batches every 10 days, Indian diplomats said in Colombo.

Upon their arrival, the Tamils will be issued temporary identity cards and will be housed in three welfare centres.

Some foreign social workers have said conditions in the north and east are unfavourable for the return of the Tamils whose lives may be endangered by violence between rebel and government troops.

Critics of the repatriation programme in India say only 10,000 Tamils wish to go back to war-ravaged Sri Lanka.

## Defence, economic ties to fall short of previous levels

# Russia, India to sign treaty on cooperation in March

**NEW DELHI, Jan 21:** Russia and India will sign a new treaty on cooperation to replace a 1971 Friendship Pact which committed Moscow and New Delhi to military and other cooperation for more than two decades, officials and newspapers said today, reports AFP.

The new treaty would be

signed during Russian President Boris Yeltsin's visit here in March but defence and economic cooperation would fall short of previous levels.

Indian External Affairs Ministry officials said the two countries drafted the new treaty during Foreign Secretary Jyotindra Nath Dixit's visit to Moscow ending

last week.

But newspaper said the treaty would omit the clauses which made India the former superpower's closest ally outside the communist bloc for more than two decades.

"That is absolutely correct," said a senior Foreign Ministry official.

The proposed treaty with the Russian Federation comes barely seven months after the renewal of the 1971 Indo-Soviet Treaty, which source say has been nullified following the Soviet Union's dismantling.

"The new relationship between India and Russia will be pragmatic and an un sentimental acceptance of the fact that nothing in international relations is immutable," The Times of India said.

The ministry official said a two-year agreement on defence was also being worked out, referring to India's concerns over possible military spurs shortages because the Soviet Union has been its main supplier since its independence from the British in 1947.

India is sounding out the United States in a bid to open an alternative source of military supplies, and the Pentagon has agreed to step up military exchanges with its counterpart here in a first move towards defence coop-

eration.

India is also trying to include a clause that neither country would enter into an agreement or take other diplomatic or other action that might endanger the security of the other," in line with the 1971 Indo-Soviet Pact, The Times said.

Officials said that negotiations on trade ties with Russia had been "most difficult."

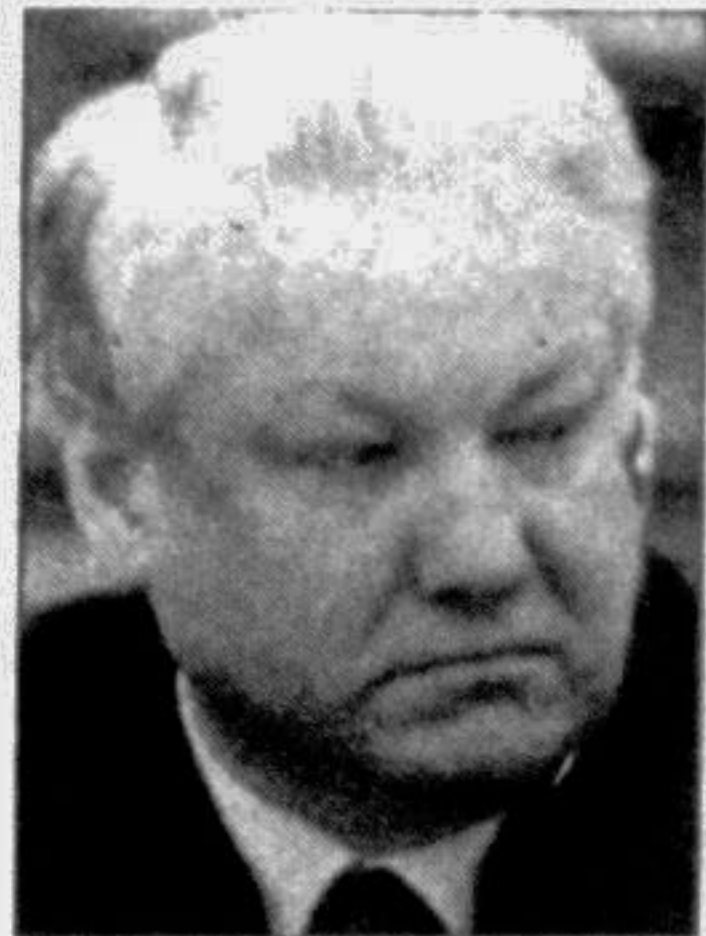
"The broad agreement reached between the Indian delegation and its counterpart in Moscow, represents a major departure from the past with the scrapping of the annual trade plan in favour of a more flexible contractual arrangement," said the Indian Express.

The two sides have also failed to reach a decision on the previous rupee-rouble Indo-Soviet trade arrangement, it added, although India and Russia have agreed to a two-year transitional period for making the switch-over to hard currency trade.

Indian exports to Soviet states fell sharply from a projected 50 billion rupees (1.9 billion dollars) to 28 billion rupees (1.07 billion dollars) in April-September 1991.

The former Soviet Union had been India's second largest trading partner after the United States, with two-way trade worth the equivalent of almost five billion dollars in 1990.

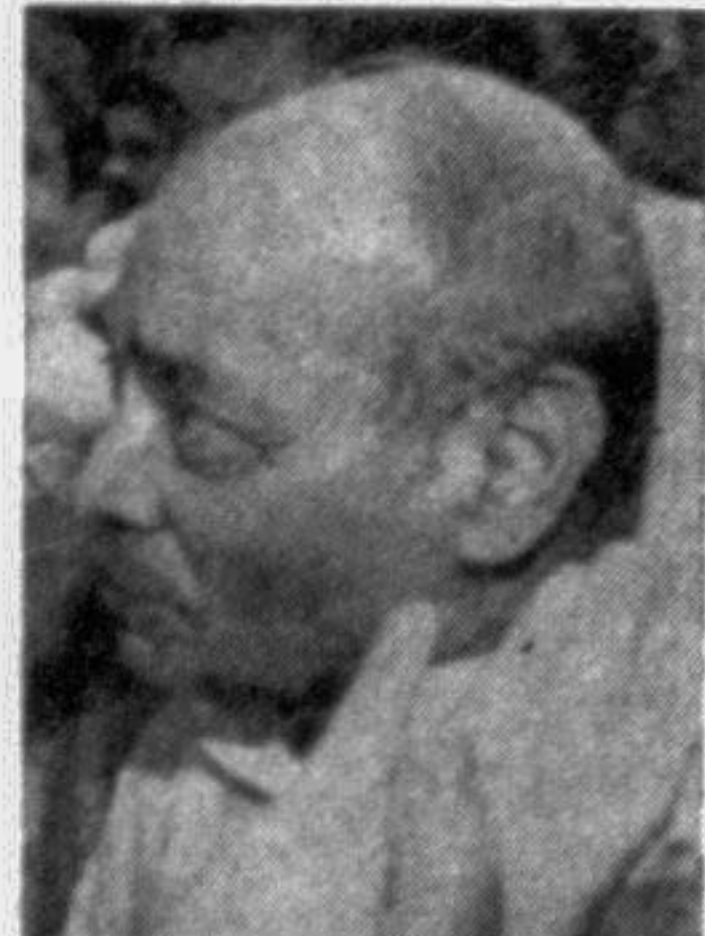
The former Soviet Union aided India in nearly vital 100 industrial projects while non-aligned India was pro-Moscow on world affairs including Cambodia and Afghanistan.



Boris Yeltsin

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Narasimha Rao

The Statesman said the new draft treaty omits guarantees that each country would come to the help of the other in case of war, and also drops India's use of words such as "imperialism."

Dixit, who returned Friday, failed to get concrete proposals on economic cooperation included in the draft, and offi-

# UN to take part in ME talks as full-fledged participant

**UNITED NATIONS, Jan 21:** The United Nations will only take part in the next Middle East conference in Moscow as a full-fledged participant and not as an observer, a UN spokesman said on Monday, reports Reuter.

US Secretary of State James Baker said he and UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, meeting in Mexico City last Thursday, had discussed the possibility of making the world body a direct participant in the multi-lateral Middle East peace talks later this month in Moscow.

Spokesman Francois Giuliani said the United Nations "would be happy to participate" in the Moscow conference on January 28 and 29 "provided it is invited to attend as a full-fledged participant."

Giuliani said this meant Boutros-Ghali, an architect of the 1979 peace treaty between Egypt and Israel, would not send an observer as in previous rounds in Madrid and Washington.

The United Nations has always played a useful role in the search for a solution to the

Middle East crisis," he said, adding that "the United Nations will continue to play such a role."

Baker told reporters accompanying him on his trip to Mexico, El Salvador and Nicaragua that the issue "is a question to be determined primarily through discussions between Israel and representatives of the United Nations."

Israel had long rejected an Arab-proposed international peace conference under United Nations auspices.

# India to open missions in Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan

**NEW DELHI, Jan 21:** India will open full diplomatic missions in Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, two of the members of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the Press Trust of India (PTI) said Monday, reports AP.

Unidentified government officials were quoted as saying the missions would be opened by March in Tashkent and Alma-Ata, capitals of the two republics.

The report follows the return of an Indian delegation, led by Foreign Secretary Jyotindra Nath Dixit, from a tour of various CIS states last week.

PTI also quoted officials as saying that India and Russia had agreed in principle not to do anything prejudicial to each other's national security in a new friendship

# Off the Record

## Three-kilometer long letter to friend

**KATHMANDU:** Setting out to write the world's longest letter, a Nepalese student has written a 10,315-page massive more than three kilometers (2 miles) long to a friend in India, reports AP.

Rajendra Chand Thakuri, 20, said Sunday his 42-kilogram (92-pound) letter would measure three kilometers and 42 centimeters (2.13 miles) if the sheets were placed end to end.

"I talked about myself, my friend, great personalities of the world and also about the drug problem," said Thakuri when reached by telephone.

He said the letter, which took five months to write, cost him 170 dollars in postage.

## Fresh air for Great Pyramid!

**GIZA PLATEAU (Egypt):** How do you give the Great Pyramid a breath of fresh air? That's the challenge facing experts trying to rid Egypt's largest pyramid of thousands of years of stale air, reports AP.

"This is a serious problem for us," said Zahi Hawass, director-general of antiquities for the pyramids outside Cairo. "Nobody's done anything about this air since Cheops' time, 4,500 years ago. And it's getting to be a real problem."

A lot of stale air accumulates in 45 centuries. Especially in something as big as the Great Pyramid, which rises 481 feet (146 meters) on a base that covers 13 acres (5.2 hectares).

The problem is the thousands of tourists who each winter trek through barely maneuverable passage ways between the burial chamber and so-called queen's chamber.

## Fraud charge against Mrs America

**CORONADO (Calif.) Jan 21:** The San Diego County Department of Social Services is investigating the reigning Mrs. America for welfare fraud, a newspaper reported Monday, says AP.

The San Diego Tribune reported the investigation, citing sources it didn't name. Jill Scott's lawyer on Monday acknowledged she violated department rules, but said she didn't deliberately cheat the system.

Mrs. Scott, 32, applied for welfare shortly after filing for divorce from George E. Scott in July, said her attorney, Matthew Kremer.

Scott failed to deliver the 1,340 dollar a month a court ordered him to pay to support his ex-wife and two children, ages 6 and 8, Kremer said. He since has paid them less than \$1,000, Kremer said.

Scott couldn't be reached for comment Monday.

Mrs. Scott violated department rules by failing to send the money she received from her ex-husband to the County Department of Revenue and Recovery, Kremer said. "She regrets this is take," he said.

Mrs. Scott, formerly of Arizona, was crowned Mrs. America in December 1990. Her term expires in April.

## Beware of horny Aussies

**SYDNEY:** Australian men who go on "sex tours" to Asia may be passing on AIDS to prostitutes, the medical journal of Australia said Monday, reports Reuter.

Detailing the case of an Australian who returned from such a tour to Bali in Indonesia, doctors at the Macfarlane Burnet Centre for medical research in Melbourne found that the man had acquired the AIDS-causing HIV virus in Australia before going on the tour.

He sought AIDS tests at the centre after visiting four prostitutes in Bali and was tested positive. But the doctors found that the man had acquired the virus from having sex with an Australian woman two years earlier.

"In this instance, it is the sex tourist who has put the sex worker at risk of HIV infection," wrote Dr Nick Crofts.

"This may have provided entry of the infection to a population previously free of the virus."

# US urged to return Iranian assets

**TEHRAN, Jan 21:** A senior Iranian official urged Washington on Monday to speed up the release of Iranian assets frozen in the United States since 1979, Tehran radio reported, says AFP.

"Iranian assets deposited in the United States to buy arms are assessed at more than 10 billion dollar," First Deputy Vice President Hassan Habibi said.

He called on the US administration "to take rapid steps to return the Iranian assets deposited in the United States" before the 1979 Islamic revolution that toppled the Shah.

According to informed sources in Tehran, Iranian and US legal and military experts are expected to meet next month in The Hague to try and reach agreement on hundreds of arms contracts signed by Iran before the revolution.

Iranian assets and arms that had either been ordered or being serviced in the United States were seized after the take-over of the US embassy in Tehran in November 1979.

The two countries broke off diplomatic relations the next year.

# Koreas exchange copies of non-nuclear pact

**SEOUL, Jan 21:** South and North Korea on Tuesday exchanged signed copies of a non-nuclear accord, completing procedures for making their divided peninsula free of nuclear weapons, reports AP.

The accord, signed by the two prime ministers, will be put into effect during the sixth round of high-level talks in their North's capital of Pyongyang Feb. 18-21.

The signed copies were traded when South Korea's Vice Unification Minister Lim Dong-Won met with Choe U Jin, a North Korean roving ambassador, at the border village of Panmunjom.

At a working border meeting on New Year's Eve, the rival Koreas reached full agreement to make their peninsula nuclear-free. The accord was later signed separately by their prime ministers.

The historic accord bans the Koreas from testing, producing, possessing and deploying nuclear weapons, on their territories. Both sides also verbally agreed to joint, reciprocal on-site inspections of suspected nuclear weapons sites.

Officials said the joint on-site inspections are separate from mandatory inspections by the U.N International Atomic Energy Agency based in Vienna.

## Velayeti off to Kiev

**TEHRAN, Jan 21:** Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayeti today left for a two-day visit to Kiev to deliver a message from President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani to his Ukrainian counterpart Leonid Kravchuk, reports AFP.

The official Iranian news agency Irna said the trip would be the first of its kind by a senior government official since the break-up of the Soviet Union last month.

During his stay in Kiev, Velayeti and Ukrainian officials will review bilateral relations and issues of mutual interest, Irna said, adding that the two countries would open embassies in each other's capital soon.

## Khmer Rouge kills 25 govt troops

**BANGKOK, Jan 21:** The Khmer Rouge said Tuesday its guerrillas had killed 25 Phnom Penh government soldiers in heavy fighting last week in Cambodia's strategic central province of Kompong Thom, reports AFP.

The powerful guerrilla faction, in a clandestine radio broadcast monitored here, said 38 government troops had been wounded from January 12-15 in clashes in the Staung area, some 30 kilometres (18 miles) northwest of Kompong Thom city.

The radio failed to mention casualties on the guerrilla side but said 25 government troops had died in the fighting.

# BRIEFLY

**Chinese FM arrives in Windhoek:** Chinese Foreign Minister Qian Qichen arrived in Windhoek Monday from a brief stopover in South Africa for a two-day visit, South Africa's domestic news agency SABA reported, AFP from Windhoek reports.

The Chinese Foreign Minister was due to hold talks with Namibian officials, including President Sam Nujoma and his counterpart Theo-Ben Gurirab.

He told reporters at the airport Namibia's independence from South Africa in March 1990 was "a big step forward towards the decolonisation of the African continent."

"Now changes are taking place in South Africa, therefore the overall situation is good," he said.

Qian had brief talks Monday in Johannesburg with his South African counterpart PIK Botha and with the hardline black opposition Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC), which China supports.

**Iraq violates human rights: UN:** UN special envoy Max Van Der Stoel said Tuesday that "massive violations" of human rights were taking place in Iraq, reports AFP from Hague.

Van Der Stoel, a former Dutch Foreign Minister, headed a UN mission which left for Iraq on January 3 to investigate the human rights situation there.

"I return from my trip even more pessimistic," Van Der Stoel said.

**Polls in Kurdistan April 3:** Elections will be held on April 3 to form a Kurdish parliament in liberated regions of Iraq, an official of the Kurdistan Front (KF), a coalition of eight opposition parties in Baghdad, said Monday, reports AFP from Turkey.

The KF has invited representatives of the United Nations, the European Community and unspecified political personalities to monitor the election, Ahmed Bamarni, a member of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (UPK), said in this southeast Turkish city.

The Front, he said, "will come out of the elections more powerful."

**Armenia asked to join UN:** Armenia has officially asked to join the United Nations, a UN official said Monday, AFP from New York says.

In a December 31 letter to the General Assembly and the Security Council, Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali said he had received the request signed by the President of Armenia.

Armenia is the fourth member of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) to ask to join the United Nations after Tazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Kirgistan.

The council was expected to grant Kazakhstan's request soon before considering the other republics requests to join the international body.

Russia officially succeeded the former Soviet Union in the Security Council as a permanent member, giving it veto power along with China, the United States, France and Britain.

**UN dispatches troops to El Salvador:** The United Nations began to dispatch military observers to El Salvador on Monday to monitor compliance with the country's peace accords, Reuter reports from El Salvador.

A statement from the UN observer mission in El Salvador, said Spanish Army General Victor Suanzes, who will command the peace-keeping force, was due to arrive on Monday afternoon along with six other military personnel.

Around 100 military observers will join the force later this week from neighbouring central American countries and 101 others are due to arrive on Friday from Spain, the statement said.

**Plane crash claims 86 in France:** A French Airbus plane carrying 96 people crashed in hilly countryside Strasbourg, France late Monday, and all but around 10 of those aboard were feared dead, officials said, reports AFP from France.

# It's a decision of heart Imelda files candidacy

**MANILA, Jan 21:** Imelda Marcos filed her presidential candidacy Tuesday at the Commission on Elections, the first formal step in her bid to succeed President Corason Aquino, reports AP.

"This is a decision of the heart," said the 62-year-old widow of former President Ferdinand Marcos. "For years the poor have cried with me."

"I know that the suffering of the Filipino people can be headed... With God's help it will be done. As I have always said, when the people speak, Imelda follows."



MANILA, Imelda Marcos belts out a song in her native Warray dialect to the delight of racing fans during her visit to the Santa Ana racetrack. She is on the campaign trail as an opposition candidate in the May 11 presidential election. —AFP/UNB photo

Mrs Marcos fled the Philippines with her husband after the 1986 popular uprising that ended his 20 years in power. She left behind hundreds of pairs of shoes and other signs of an extravagant lifestyle that prosecutors contend was paid for with money looted from the national treasury.

Mrs Marcos, who registered under her late husband's Kilusang Bagong Lipunan party or New Society Movement, is the first major political figure to file candidacy.

The former first lady, clad in black dress and wrapped with a red scarf with multi-coloured dots, came out of the Commission's office flashing the V-sign, as photographers and reporters swarmed around her.

She told reporters she decided to file her candidacy to end all speculations on whether I am running or not."

Mrs Marcos had blasted the leadership of Mrs Aquino of inefficiency and corruption. But she herself faces 47 criminal and civil suits filed by the government alleging the Marcoses stole billions of dollars in public funds.

# ROK will ask Japan to compensate 'comfort girls'

**SEOUL, Jan 21:** South Korea's government decided Tuesday to ask Japan to compensate thousands of Korean women who had been forced to serve as prostitutes for Japan's World War II army, reports AP.

Officials said that while asking Japan to investigate the women's cases, South Korea also would gather information and hear testimony from those abducted to serve as "comfort

girls" for Japanese troops.

The decision came in a meeting of senior officials from 16 government offices, including the ministries of Justice, education, culture, home and foreign affairs.

The meeting was called after President Roh Tae-woo last week ordered a thorough investigation of the issue, which has rekindled anti-Japanese sentiment among South Korea's 42 million peo-

ple.

Korea was under Japanese colonial rule from 1910 to 1945. Anti-Japanese sentiment is still strong among Koreans because of a belief that Japan tends to gloss over past wrongdoing.

Only this month has Japan's government acknowledged that the army was involved in forcing Korean women into prostitution.

Formerly, it had held that

private enterprise ran the brothels.

On a state visit to Seoul last week, Japanese Prime Minister Kichi Miyazawa apologized for forced prostitution, but there have been no offers of compensation. Officials have said individuals could pursue compensation through Japanese courts.

Activist groups demonstrated almost daily before and during Miyazawa's visit,

demanding that Japan fully apologize and compensate the victims.

No official figures are available but Korean and Japanese historians say between 70,000 and 200,000 people were drafted into the "Teishintai," a corps of women used as labourers or sex slaves for Japanese troops during the war.

New evidence shows that even 11- and 12-year-old pri-

mary school girls were mobilized to provide sexual favors.

Japan has maintained that all issues from the colonial period were covered by the 1965 treaty that normalized relations between Seoul and Tokyo. Japan has no formal ties with Seoul's rival, Communist North Korea. Korea was divided in 1945, when Japan's World War II defeat ended its rule of the entire peninsula.