

# BRIEFLY

## Karen Guerrillas kill seven:

Myanmar's ethnic Karen guerrillas Thursday killed seven people and wounded four in an attack on a village northeast of the capital, official radio Yangon said in a broadcast monitored in Bangkok, reports AFP.

Heavily armed rebels of the Karen National Union (KNU) attacked a village near Shwegying township in Pegu division, some 150 kilometres (90 miles) northeast of Yangon, killing two men, three women and two baby girls and wounding three men and a one-year-old boy, the radio said.

Myanmar military officials were quoted as saying the attack was "totally unprovoked and without reason."

## Mugabe appeals for foreign aid:

President Robert Mugabe on Friday declared Zimbabwe's drought a national disaster and appealed to foreign donors for food, money and medicine to avert starvation, reports AP.

The drought follows three successive years of poor rainfall that has hit harvests and water reserves "with very serious and adverse effects on human lives and livestock," Mugabe told reporters.

"The survival of our people comes first," he said. Zimbabwe is one of several southern African nations suffering the worst drought since records began around 1900.

## Workshop fire kills 22 in Bangkok:

Twenty-two workers died in a fire at a cardboard box factory after they were unable to escape through locked iron grating, a newspaper reported Friday, reports AP from Bangkok.

The daily Thai Rath reported that the workers at the three-story factory in Bangkok were unable to break through the gratings as the fire spread Thursday.

Most of the victims were found beside the ground floor gratings, but one of six survivors said they managed to escape only because an iron gate on a third-story window was damaged.

The cause of the fire was under investigation. However, the newspaper speculated that an electrical short circuit may have set off the blaze.

## CBS Radio vice president dead:

Robert Hyland, senior vice president of CBS Radio and general manager of KMOX radio, has died at age 71, reports AP from St-Louis.

Hyland died of cancer at home Thursday, his family said. Hyland joined the network-owned KMOX 41, years ago as national sales manager and was credited with the station's rise to become one of the nation's top news-talk stations in terms of advertising.

CBS founder William Paley called KMOX "The jewel in CBS crown."

Hyland was the only radio executive at CBS to be named a senior vice president. He was offered the presidency of CBS Sports and the CBS Radio Network, but turned them down to remain in his native St-Louis.

## Pilots killed as Cuban jets collide:

Two Cuban Mig-21 jet fighters collided in mid-air during a training exercise, killing both pilots and their two co-pilots, Cuban officials announced in Havana Friday, reports AP.

The accident occurred Thursday afternoon in the province of Pinar Del Rio, to the west of Havana, said the Cuban news agency Ain.

A special armed forces commission will investigate the cause of the collision.

## Earthquake rocks Costa Rica:

An earthquake measuring 6.0 on the Richter Scale, which is strong enough to cause severe damage, struck Costa Rica on Friday night, the United States geological survey said, reports Reuter.

There were no immediate reports of damage or injuries in the quake, which struck at 7:54 pm local time (015 EST). The epicentre was about 30 miles (45 km) northwest of the capital San Jose.

## UN rejects Iraqi request:

The Security Council's Sanctions Committee rejected on Friday an Iraqi request for an Iraqi airliner to be allowed to operate one flight a day between Baghdad and Amman, a committee source said, reports Reuter from United Nations.

The committee, which meets behind closed doors, also turned down a request for an Iraqi Boeing 727 stranded by UN sanctions in Tunis or Amman to be flown home and used for domestic flights between Baghdad and Basra.

The source said both requests would involve breaches of the sanctions imposed on Iraq shortly after its invasion of Kuwait in August 1990.

Iraq said the proposed Baghdad-Amman flights were to transport United Nations staff and foreign diplomats, as well as Iraqi officials, "in view of the fact that the land route between the two countries is hazardous and is sometimes closed as a result of bad weather conditions."

## 30 killed as Lankan troops storm Tigers' bunkers

COLOMBO, Mar 7: Twenty soldiers and 10 Tamil separatist rebels were killed in an army operation to wipe out rebel bunkers in northern Sri Lanka, military sources said on Friday, reports Reuter.

Three soldiers and 10 rebels, including a local leader, were killed when about 100 troops stormed the bunkers near army-controlled Vettlakerni beach on the northeast coast on Thursday, a Defence Ministry statement said.

The statement said nine soldiers were wounded when troops conducting a clearing operation in the area came across lines of newly-built bunkers.

Terrorists who were occupying these bunkers offered stiff resistance but troops with the supporting fire provided by helicopter gun-ships successfully overran them," it said.

## Peace talks turn into an empty dialogue: Lebanon

BEIRUT, Mar 7: Lebanon said on Friday Middle East peace talks have turned into an "empty dialogue" and should be suspended until after Israeli elections in June, reports Reuter.

"A new round of peace talks is not justified before the Israeli elections... the talks should be postponed until after the elections", Foreign Minister Faris Bouez told reporters.

"The present Israeli government is acting like a caretaker administration which cannot offer serious and tangible ideas... we are against holding talks just for the sake of empty dialogue, just like what is happening now," he said.

Israel is engaged in separate talks with Lebanon, Syria, and a joint delegation of Jordanians and Palestinians. The last round in Washington, like the previous three, produced no real progress.

Beirut's main aim is to press for the withdrawal of Israeli troops from an anti-guerrilla buffer strip in South Lebanon.

Syria, Armenia set up ties

DAMASCUS, Mar 7: Syria and Armenia decided Friday to establish diplomatic relations and called for a peaceful settlement between Armenians and Azeris in the disputed territory of Nagorno-Karabakh.

# Third World allies help China avoid censure motion at UNHRC

GENEVA, Mar 7: The United Nations Human Rights Commission avoided harsh judgement of China as it ended its 48th annual session here Friday, reports AP.

The commission, which focused mainly on Asia, criticized Myanmar, warned Indonesia and severely condemned Iraq and, more gently, Iran.

The Chinese government was cited for human rights violations in China and torture in Tibet but avoided formal censure after a Pakistani motion prevented the vote.

Beijing once again escaped condemnation, as it did following the June 1989 crackdown on the student-led movement for democracy, by enlisting the support of its Third World allies.

China contended that the UN text on China and Tibet challenged Chinese territorial integrity and sovereignty over Tibet.

The United States had already called for the withdrawal of a motion on Tibet alone. The US representative in Geneva said: "rightly or wrongly the US foreign policy has been based on Chinese sovereignty over Tibet."

He added that China was still on the agenda and that a "procedural vote" and not "the case" had been lost.

The US position was criticized by European delegate

and by pro-Tibetan lobbies. They suspect Washington caused the procedural confusion to persuade China to sign the nuclear non-proliferation treaty.

Tibetan leaders, however, were not discouraged by the vote. The Dalai Lama's representative for UN affairs, Lodi Gari said: "The question of Tibet is once again recognized to be an issue of international importance."

But he complained that the United States was an obstacle to the resolution on Tibet.

"What was unexpected and disappointing was the US government's opposition to passage of a resolution on Tibet," he said. "Even when the text of the resolution was entirely revised in order to accommodate US interests, that country failed to actively promote its passage."

The UN commission accused the military junta of Myanmar of "serious violations" including the expulsion of Muslims and the house arrest of Nobel Peace Prize laureate and opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi.

Indonesia was warned that the Secretary General would keep a close eye on the situation in East Timor. The UN body condemned the shooting of civilians in the former Portuguese territory last November.

Jakarta was saved from the

sterner censure requested by Portugal thanks to the solidarity of its Asian neighbours.

The commission saved its severest judgement for Iraq, saying violations there were without parallel since Nazi Germany, according to the UN special envoy Max Van Der Stoel.

The Iraqi government has denied the accusations, but Van Der Stoel called for human rights observers to be sent to Iraq.

The commission largely ignored African and all in American countries except for criticizing Cuba for its refusal to cooperate with the United Nations.

Guatemala was not strictly censured.

Most of the delegates to the commission supported an Australian motion that a permanent body be set up to react immediately to serious human rights violations.

## Li thanks Third World allies

Reuter from Beijing says: Prime Minister Li Peng has thanked Third World allies for helping China avoid a censure motion at the UN Human Rights Commission, the official China Daily said today.

Li said most developing countries, which adhere to basic principles and uphold justice, resist and oppose the draft resolution which at-

tempts to interfere in China's internal affairs, and harm the country's sovereignty under the pretext of the so-called human rights issue in Tibet," the newspaper said.

"We extend our sincere gratitude to these countries for their support," Li was quoted as saying. "We join the common stand of the Third World in opposing any interference in the internal affairs of other nations on the pretext of human rights violations."

The commission in Geneva voted on Wednesday to take no action on a western resolution censuring China for violating human rights, especially in Tibet.

If the censure motion had passed, it would have been the first condemnation of China in the 47-year history of the commission.

Chinese troops overran Tibet in the 1950s. Tibet's leader, the Dalai Lama, fled in 1959 after an abortive uprising.

Tibetan dissidents say that since then the Chinese communist leadership have worked to destroy Tibet's culture and religion.

China's Third World friends, led by Pakistan, scuttled the motion by calling a vote which effectively ended the debate.

Most of those who voted for censure were western nations. Russia also favoured censure.



MINICH: A Turkish foreign worker kisses the hand of former Soviet President Gorbachev on his arrival here. Raisa Gorbachev (L) smiles at the scene. —APP/UNB photo

# Pak Kashmir Prime Minister vows to halt JKLF march

ISLAMABAD, Mar 7: The Prime Minister of Pakistan Kashmir vovod on Friday to halt a fresh attempt by secessionist militants to lead a mass march into Indian-ruled Kashmir, reports Reuter.

Sardar Abdul Qayyum said his government had taken steps to prevent a repetition of last month's march that ended with at least seven demonstrators being killed in battles with Pakistani security forces stopping them reaching the line.

## Indonesia wants to help resolve Kashmir crisis

JAKARTA, Mar 7: Indonesia has offered to mediate between India and Pakistan to seek a peaceful solution to the Kashmir crisis, visiting Pakistani Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Siddique Kanju said today, reports AFP.

"Indonesia hopes Pakistan and India could find a peaceful solution on this matter," Kanju quoted Indonesian President Suharto as saying after meeting with him here.

Kanju said he had explained the present situation in Kashmir, where 6,000 people have killed during the last 2-1/2 years, to Suharto.

The pro-independence Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) has announced plans for a second march on March 30 in support of a violent Muslim uprising against Indian rule in the two-thirds of the mountain region it controls.

Qayyum, movement had entered a crucial stage where a single wrong step could distract the struggle, the official AFP news agency reported.

"They (the JKLF) are trying to sabotage the struggle so that it does not enjoy the sym-

## Ghali calls for truce in Nagorny-Karabakh

NEW YORK, United Nations, Mar 7: UN Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali, saying he was "deeply concerned" by fighting in Nagorny Karabakh, called Friday for an immediate ceasefire in the Azerbaijan enclave, reports AFP.

The Secretary-General believes the fighting in the region "which has resulted in many deaths in recent weeks... is particularly alarming," said his spokesman Francois Giuliani.

Boutros-Ghali recalled that Azerbaijan and Armenia, which were officially admitted to the United Nations Monday, are obliged as members of the

thies of the people," he said. Qayyum accused the JKLF, one of the main militant groups waging a guerrilla war in the Kashmir valley, of turning to "terrorism" and dividing the Kashmir people.

He strongly opposes the JKLF's call for an independent Kashmir and wants the whole region to become part of Pakistan since independence in 1947 over Kashmir, warned last month it would shoot anybody who tried to cross the heavily defended cease-fire line.

## Talks on Northern Ireland resume tomorrow

LONDON, Mar 7: Negotiations between Protestants and Catholics on the future of northern Ireland will resume in Belfast on Monday, officials said Friday, reports AFP.

The talks were broken off on July 3 after becoming bogged down in procedural disputes.

The Irish and British governments agreed in Dublin on Friday to temporarily suspend the Anglo-Irish conference to clear the way for the resumption of the intercommunal talks.

## FIS warns of civil war

The fundamentalist Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) on Friday warned of civil war in Algeria in its first reaction to a court ban on its activities, reports AP.

Violent clashes meanwhile broke out Friday, between Muslim fundamentalists and security forces at a mosque in Constantine, leaving a number of casualties as the Muslim holy month of Ramadan began, the Algerian news agency APS said.

"The false calm by the media carries a risk of civil war," said a communique signed by the President of the FIS National Commission for information, Abdelrazak Radjam.

Radjam has been living in hiding for several weeks.

The communique was pasted at the El Arkam mosque at Chevalley near Algiers.

## China's Cultural Minister resigns

BEIJING, Mar 7: China's hardline Minister of Culture He Jingchi has submitted his resignation after coming under fire from senior leader Deng Xiaoping, Chinese sources said today, reports Reuter.

The sources in the ministry said they did not know the reason. He had given for resigning as Acting Minister, but said he might have cited old age. He is in his 70s.

He was appointed Acting Minister in late 1989 after liberal author Wang Meng was forced to resign in the purge of reformers that followed the suppression of pro-democracy demonstrations in Beijing in June of that year.

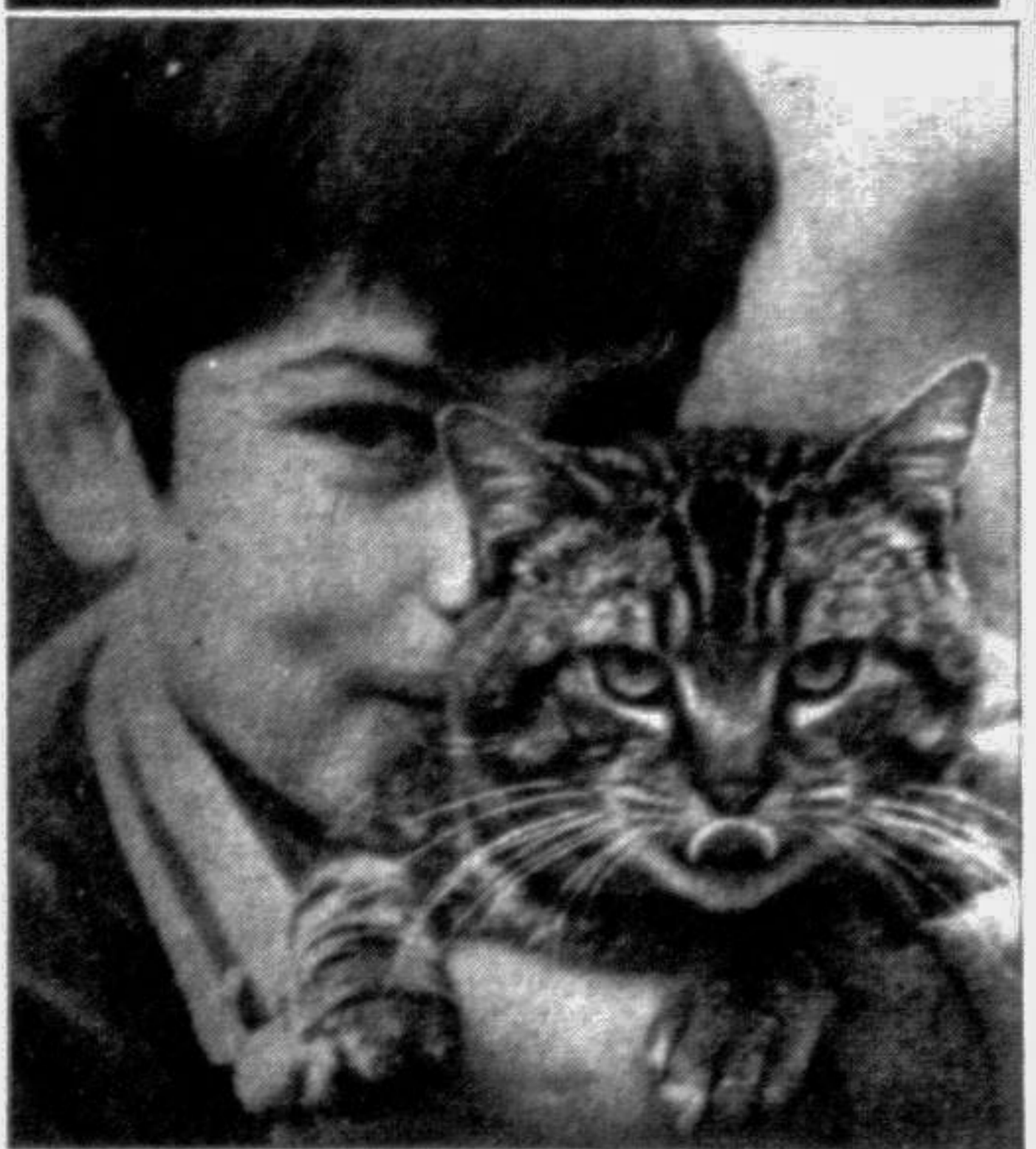
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# Off the Record



LE TOURNEUR, NORMANDY, France: Mimine, a four-year-old tomcat, is cuddled by his owner Bertrand, after Mimine returned home following a two-year absence. Mimine trekked 400km from Tourcoing, a town in Northeastern France where Bertrand's family had accidentally left Mimine behind after their 1990 summer holidays, back to the family's home in Normandy. —APP/UNB photo

## Goldfish cocktails make bad joke

WELLINGTON, New Zealand: Animal activists are investigating complaints that a Wellington bar is serving live goldfish in cocktails, reports AP.

Reports say bartenders take the fish off a bowl at the Route 66 bar and drop them into a glass with tequila and lemon, according to the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

If the allegations are true, said SPCA director Ross McLauchlan, the group will file charges under the Animal Protection Act.

The staff at the Route 66 bar denies the accusations, McLauchlan said.

But lawyer Kelly Jefferies, who represents bar owner Lance Burt, confirmed Friday that live goldfish were "occasionally" dropped into patrons' drinks "for a joke."

"It's not something that appeals to me," he said. "But I'm not sure how the SPCA would intend to prosecute. It's certainly unusual but it's not cruel."

Jefferies said the SPCA was over-reacting. He said fish in other circumstances are killed "with a hook through the face."

"It raises a question of how you kill fish. If they prosecute, they will be prosecuting everyone who goes fishing."

## Cops are top crooks in Mexico city

MEXICO CITY: Former policeman Ricardo Chaires Garcia says the city traffic cops entangled him in a web of corruption. Now that he has blown the whistle, his former superiors denounce him as a crook, reports AP.

In a city notorious for police corruption, Chaires and five other fired officers have made the highly unusual move of demanding an investigation of graft.

Half of all the complaints received by the city assembly's Public Security Commission are corruption complaints lodged by police against their own superiors, commission President Amalia Garcia said.

According to his work record, Chaires twice served time for robbery and attempted extortion. He was accused, but not convicted, of property damage and transporting contraband.

None of that ended his police career. What did, he claims, was his refusal to pay bribes to his bosses, financed by extortion from the public. Chaires is fighting dismissal, which police say was for stealing a gold chain off the neck of a pedestrian.

Depending on their rank and experience, police take home between 265 dollar and 400 dollar a month, department spokesman Red Albert Palacios said. Police say they work seven days a week, although Palacios denied that.

One veteran commander said, "This is the only job where you pay to work."

Two policemen at Mexico City's entertainment Pink Zone, who said they mere afraid to let their names be used, said in an interview that most cops pay their superiors 10 dollar for a book of tickets, 50 dollar for a day off, 100 dollar to 150 dollar a week just to keep the job.

## Leopard halts city life

NEW DELHI, Mar 7: A wild leopard attacked a man in a crowded city area and hid in a bathroom where a woman locked it in before calling for help, a news agency reported Saturday, AP says.

The animal was captured Friday by forest officials using tranquilizer darts, said United News of India.

It said normal life in Lal Chowk area of Cuttack "came to a sudden halt Friday morning when the leopard was seen running about in the center of the city trying to find a safe haven."

The animal had come from the Chandaka forest, 30 kilometers from Cuttack, United News said. The city is 1,250 kilometers southeast of New Delhi.

After some time, it attacked a man and ran into a bathroom outside a house, United News said. As thousands of people watched from a distance, a woman mustered enough courage to bolt the door, it said.

The news agency said the drama lasted about 10 hours.

# Shevardnadze returning home to save Georgia from chaos

MOSCOW, Mar 7: Former Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard A Shevardnadze said Friday he is returning to his native Georgia to help save the republic from economic and political chaos, reports AP.

Many Georgians hope that the comeback of the 64-year-old Shevardnadze, called the "White Fox" by his opponents, will drive their country out of the deepening economic depression.

Shevardnadze, a key supporter of the reforms that led to the Soviet Union's demise, is seen as a leader who could

unify various political factions that have been divided after the ouster of President Zviad Gamsakhurdia.

Press reports say he is well ahead of other politicians in privately-commissioned popularity polls.

Gamsakhurdia supporters say Shevardnadze represents the centralist forces in Moscow, and claim he orchestrated the armed revolt that ousted Gamsakhurdia from power last January, after two weeks of fighting in the capital of Tbilisi.

At a news conference on

the eve of his return, Shevardnadze condemned Gamsakhurdia's regime as "Authoritarian" and said he is planning to cooperate with a broad range of political parties for a new democratic Georgia.

He noted the economy "is practically in ruins," with idle factories, people out work, food and energy shortages, and crime. He has set up an international fund to draw investment to Georgia.

"We speak about saving the country, saving the people from hunger and chaos. Naturally, when, there is such

a situation in my homeland I could not stand aside," he said.

Shevardnadze said he decided to return after discussing the step with the ruling Military Council and other Georgian, Russian and foreign politicians.

Part of Shevardnadze's political appeal is his international prestige, which could draw badly-needed foreign investment and help Georgia break out of its isolation.

Georgia is the only former Soviet republic, other than the Baltics, that has not joined the new commonwealth.

# ROK National Assembly elections March 24

SEOUL, Mar 7: The government said Friday that elections for the National Assembly will be held March 24, reports AP.

Candidates from the ruling Democratic Liberal Party, opposition parties and independents immediately began to register with election officials.

About 1,500 candidates were expected to file papers by the Tuesday deadline.

The troubled economy, is expected to be a top campaign issue. South Korea, once praised as an economic success, has been hit by high inflation and slow exports. Its trade deficit hit an all-time high of \$19.6 billion last year.

The campaign will not begin in earnest until Sunday because parties are required to register or notify authorities of

their campaign rallies 24 hours in advance.

A total of 299 legislators will be elected - 237 to four-year terms from single-member districts and another 62 awarded seats under a proportional representation system.

Prime Minister Chung Won-shik called for fair and orderly elections and expressed concern about corruption.

"We must feel ashamed of muddy, corrupt campaigning in some areas. The government will harshly deal with any lawbreakers," Chung said on national television.

At least four people, including two prospective candidates, have already been arrested for bribing or giving gifts to voters.