

# BRIEFLY

**10 killed in Delhi bus mishap:** Ten persons were killed and 56 injured, seven of them seriously when a Delhi-bound private bus rolled 250-ft down a deep ditch at Phil-Ka-Maurn near Barog, about 60 km from here on Shimla-Kalka national highway Monday night, reports PTI from Shimla. The ill-fated bus (dpl-2042) was on its way to Delhi from Shimla and most of the passengers were tourists returning after a trip to the hill station. Eight persons died on the spot while two succumbed to injuries in Solan hospital, seven seriously injured persons were rushed to PFI, Chandigarh, while 44 others with multiple injuries were brought to hospital at Solan. Some of them were being brought to Indira Gandhi Medical College at Shimla.

**Explosions rock Manila:** Four bomb explosions rocked Manila early Tuesday hours before the inauguration of Philippine President-elect Fidel Ramos, police said, reports Reuter from Manila. The blasts damaged three banks and a railway station but there were no reports of casualties, investigators said. No group has claimed responsibility for the pre-dawn blasts.

Ramos, who won the May 11 Presidential election is to be inaugurated in a ceremony at a Manila park later Tuesday as the country's eighth President, succeeding Corazon Aquino. The explosions occurred about eight hours before the inauguration. Police said they had made no arrests.

**Bush hails Mitterrand:** The United States Monday hailed French President Francois Mitterrand for his dramatic visit to the besieged Bosnian capital of Sarajevo, reports AFP from Washington. "We applaud" the French President's trip, State Department spokeswoman Margaret Tutwiler said in the first official U.S. reaction to the visit. She described the 75-year-old Mitterrand as a "brave and courageous man."

Tutwiler said the trip "highlights the great needs" of the victims of the factional war in Bosnia-Herzegovina, adding that "Everyone is doing what they can." She added that President George Bush had tried to contact Mitterrand by telephone Monday but had been unable to reach him.

**92 more freed in Myanmar:** Myanmar military government has released 92 more political prisoners, including three members of the leading pro-democracy party, the official Working People's Daily reported Tuesday, says AP from Yangon. The release Monday was the 17th since junta leader General Tan Shwe announced April 24 that political prisoners who posed no threat to national security would be freed. To date, 277 detainees have been released, including former Prime Minister Nu, 17 senior leaders of the National League for Democracy and 36 other members of the league, which swept a 1990 general election but was prevented from taking over the government by the junta.

**New cabinet in Syria:** Syrian Prime Minister Mahmud Zubi has presented his new 37-member government, it was announced on television in Damascus Monday, reports AFP from Damascus. Eighteen ministers entered the new cabinet which replaces a government Zubi formed in November 1987. The heads of the key ministries of defence, foreign affairs, economics, interior and information were reappointed. Syrian President Hafez Al-Assad asked Zubi last Wednesday to form a new cabinet.

**Tajik President to visit Pakistan:** Tajikistan President Rahmon Nabiyev is due Islamabad on a five-day state visit to Pakistan, it was officially announced in Islamabad Monday, reports AFP from Islamabad. During his visit starting Tuesday he is scheduled to hold talks with Pakistani leaders on bilateral relations, regional and international issues, officials said. He is also due to visit Lahore, the capital of Punjab, and leave from there for Dushanbe on Saturday.

**Floods claim 2 in Assam:** The floods have claimed two lives in Assam, where the rising waters of the river Brahmaputra and its tributaries during the past 24 hours have forced the situation to remain critical, reports PTI from Guahati. The Sonitpur Deputy Commissioner, SL Mewara, said that the two persons, father and son were drowned in the river Brahmaputra near Naduar Monday when the country boat carrying them capsized. Their bodies were yet to be recovered.

**Thai parliament dissolved to pave way for Sept 13 polls**

BANGKOK (Thailand), June 30: The House of Representatives was formally dissolved Tuesday to pave the way for general elections designed to avert further political turmoil and street violence, reports AP. Several legislators interviewed said the dissolution was only a small step forward on Thailand's painful road to full-fledged democracy. They said the military's power had to be reduced through major, structural reforms. Others greeted the new elections as a good chance to rid of the House of numerous legislators widely held to be corrupt and incompetent. Prime Minister Anand Panyarachun said Monday night that the country's second general election in less than six months would be held September 13.

After a March 22 general election, pro-democracy protesters took to the streets and were suppressed violently by the military, but won their main demand — the resignation of Prime Minister Suchinda Kraprayoon. Security forces killed or wounded hundreds of pro-democracy demonstrators. The protesters had been dissatisfied that Suchinda was appointed prime minister from his post as army commander without running for Parliament. Several constitutional amendments passed by the outgoing legislators would curb the power of the military-dominated upper house of Parliament, or Senate, and require that future prime ministers come from the ranks of elected members.

US charge d'affaires Howard Steers, the top American diplomat in Moldova, said it was "very hard to tell" whether the shooting was started by ethnic Russian and Ukrainian separatists, or by Moldovan government forces. Both sides denied responsibility.

**UN mission comes under fire in Moldova**

MOLDOVA, June 30: A UN fact-finding mission and an American diplomat came under gunfire Monday along the front line of Moldova's civil war and were evacuated after a three-hour standoff. No one was injured, reports AP. Sniper fire rang out from at least two buildings as the delegation rode into the city of Bendery in a convoy of limousines flying the white-and-blue flag of the United Nations, witnesses said. US charge d'affaires Howard Steers, the top American diplomat in Moldova, said it was "very hard to tell" whether the shooting was started by ethnic Russian and Ukrainian separatists, or by Moldovan government forces. Both sides denied responsibility.

None of the cars was hit by bullets. Steers and the three UN fact-finders were accompanied by Moldovan government officials and journalists. The international observers took refuge in Bendery's central police station and stayed there for three hours, while gunfire erupted around the building and artillery rounds flew overhead, journalists said. There was small arms fire two blocks from us, and some mortars. Into the second hour, the fire was getting a lot closer to us. Eventually the Moldovans (accompanying the group) decided it was too dangerous for the UN folks," Steers said. In the confusion of the evacuation, Steers missed the armored vehicle and rode out of the city in his limousine. He said he was not afraid.

Several constitutional amendments passed by the outgoing legislators would curb the power of the military-dominated upper house of Parliament, or Senate, and require that future prime ministers come from the ranks of elected members.

**Clinton, Perot defend abortion rights**

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. June 30: President Bush's two presidential rivals reaffirmed their support for abortion rights Monday, with Democrat Bill Clinton declaring that "only the next election can preserve" those rights, reports AP. Bush said he was pleased with a Supreme Court ruling Monday that gave states broad new powers to restrict abortion. Bush said the high court had upheld "reasonable restrictions on abortion" and reiterated his opposition to abortion in all cases except rape, incest or where the life of the mother is at stake. Undeclared independent candidate Ross Perot said he respects the law as interpreted by the Supreme Court but believes abortion should be a woman's choice. "Personally, my position has

justice who will take us the rest of the way down the road to overturn Roe vs. Wade," said Ann Stone, the leader of a Republican group that favours abortion rights. The landmark 1973 Roe vs. Wade decision guaranteed abortion rights. Clinton sought to bring to centre stage an issue that has never proven decisive in a presidential contest. "Only the next election can preserve it," Clinton said in Little Rock, Ark. Later, he said "it would be a terrible mistake to turn the clock back 20 years. I hope that this election will serve as a fire wall against turning the clock back." Clinton said the court's 5-4 vote showed that with one more court appointment, Bush could attain his goal of having the high court reverse Roe vs Wade.

Clinton sought to bring to centre stage an issue that has never proven decisive in a presidential contest. "Only the next election can preserve it," Clinton said in Little Rock, Ark. Later, he said "it would be a terrible mistake to turn the clock back 20 years. I hope that this election will serve as a fire wall against turning the clock back." Clinton said the court's 5-4 vote showed that with one more court appointment, Bush could attain his goal of having the high court reverse Roe vs Wade.

Clinton sought to bring to centre stage an issue that has never proven decisive in a presidential contest. "Only the next election can preserve it," Clinton said in Little Rock, Ark. Later, he said "it would be a terrible mistake to turn the clock back 20 years. I hope that this election will serve as a fire wall against turning the clock back." Clinton said the court's 5-4 vote showed that with one more court appointment, Bush could attain his goal of having the high court reverse Roe vs Wade.



WEST BANK: The driver (R) of local Palestine leader Faisal Hussein stops an Israeli settler from attacking his boss on Monday. — AFP/UNB photo

## ANC demands De Klerk's resignation

BOIPATONG, South Africa, June 30: The African National Congress demanded on Monday that President F W de Klerk resign at once, saying he had lost control of the South African police and failed to prevent township massacres, reports Reuter. "He must go," ANC Secretary General Cyril Ramaphosa told tens of thousands of mourners at a funeral for 37 of 41 victims of a massacre at Boipatong, south of Johannesburg. "He has proved himself incompetent and useless because he cannot control the security forces. We are no longer prepared to live with the jackboot and the gun," he said. Ramaphosa said De Klerk told ANC leader Nelson Mandela last month that he could not control the white police.

Constitutional Development Minister Roelf Meyer, the government's chief negotiator installed democracy talks with the ANC, denied that De Klerk had made any such admission. The ANC pulled out of multi-party reform talks last week in protest against the Boipatong massacre, for which it blamed migrant workers loyal to the Inkatha Freedom Party and police. AP adds from Dakar: Nelson Mandela said his meeting Monday with UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali gave him new hope of resolving his conflict with the South African government. "I leave the meeting with a feeling of strength and hope," Mandela told reporters. Boutros-Ghali, seeking to bring Mandela's African National Congress and South Africa's white government

back to the negotiating table, met Saturday with Foreign Minister Pik Botha. Mandela later met with Nigerian President Ibrahim Babangida and Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe, in one of many private sessions before the opening of the 51-nation Organization of African Unity summit. The summit was opened Monday afternoon by outgoing OAU President Babangida, who called for a minute of silence to honour of the assassinated Algerian leader, Mohamed Boudiaf. Mandela told reporters he was particularly touched by Boudiaf's death because Algeria had "played a vital role in the struggle against racial oppression in South Africa." Mandela said he had other ANC fighters received military training in Algeria.

## Ruling IDA to part with MQM

ISLAMABAD, June 30: The Ruling Islamic Jamhoori Ittehad (Islamic Democratic Alliance) of Pakistan has decided to part with its major political ally, the Mohajir Qaumi Movement (MQM), reports Xinhua. The decision was made during a nine-hour cabinet meeting held at the Prime Minister house here Monday, 10 days after the operation against the MQM started in Karachi, capital of Sind province. The cabinet meeting, presided over by Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and attended by almost all federal ministers and state ministers except MQM federal ministers, reviewed the overall situation prevailing in Sind province. Federal Minister for Food

and Agriculture Abdul Majid Malik, who just returned from his fact-finding mission to the province as a special representative of the Prime Minister, submitted his detailed report about the Sind situation to the cabinet. According to local press reports, a consensus was developed among the participants at the cabinet meeting that the government should go for by-elections if some legislators opted to quit their seats. The secretariats of Pakistan's National Assembly and the Sind provincial assembly received more resignations of MQM legislators Monday, bringing the total number to 27, including nine members of the national assembly and 18 members of the provincial assembly.

Meanwhile, Federal Production Minister Islam Nabi confirmed that he has tendered his resignation both as member of the National Assembly and federal minister. He said he has decided to "discontinue" his involvement in politics and has no intention of joining any political party. Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif said Monday that his government will not be intimidated by the resignations and will press ahead with the ongoing clean-up operation in Sind province. More than 60 MQM members have been arrested in the clean-up operation conducted by the army in collaboration with the police and paramilitary rangers.



MOLDOVA: A local civilian sits on top of his tractor after finding a new body on the street in Bendry on last Sunday. — AFP/UNB photo

## Commander of Fatah killed

SIDON, Lebanon, June 30: Unidentified assailants Tuesday shot and killed the commander of PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat's Fatah guerrillas, police said, reports AP. A police spokesman, who cannot be named in line with regulations, said an undetermined number of attackers opened fire at Col Anwar Madi with automatic rifles as he drove across the southern provincial capital of Sidon at 10:10 am (0710 GMT).

Madi was admitted to Hammoud hospital in Sidon suffering from bullet wounds in the head, chest and abdomen. He died shortly after he was admitted to the emergency ward," said the spokesman, who cannot be named in line with regulations.

Madi was admitted to Hammoud hospital in Sidon suffering from bullet wounds in the head, chest and abdomen. He died shortly after he was admitted to the emergency ward," said the spokesman, who cannot be named in line with regulations.

## Jayalalitha denies misappropriation charges

MADURAI, June 30: The Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, Miss Jayalalitha yesterday denied charges that she had misappropriated party funds to the tune of Rs one crore and had sold off party property, reports PTI. Addressing a meeting at the AIADMK's two-day victory conference here, she said she had only taken a loan from the party's fixed deposit and had repaid it. Stating that she had kept all the property left by the late MG Ramachandran, AIADMK founder, intact, she said she had purchased a building for Rs 20 lakh for the party at Pondicherry. Miss Jayalalitha said she never aspired to become the Chief Minister but was only keen on strengthening the party and restoring the MG Ramachandran government after his death.

MADURAI, June 30: The Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, Miss Jayalalitha yesterday denied charges that she had misappropriated party funds to the tune of Rs one crore and had sold off party property, reports PTI. Addressing a meeting at the AIADMK's two-day victory conference here, she said she had only taken a loan from the party's fixed deposit and had repaid it. Stating that she had kept all the property left by the late MG Ramachandran, AIADMK founder, intact, she said she had purchased a building for Rs 20 lakh for the party at Pondicherry. Miss Jayalalitha said she never aspired to become the Chief Minister but was only keen on strengthening the party and restoring the MG Ramachandran government after his death.

MADURAI, June 30: The Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, Miss Jayalalitha yesterday denied charges that she had misappropriated party funds to the tune of Rs one crore and had sold off party property, reports PTI. Addressing a meeting at the AIADMK's two-day victory conference here, she said she had only taken a loan from the party's fixed deposit and had repaid it. Stating that she had kept all the property left by the late MG Ramachandran, AIADMK founder, intact, she said she had purchased a building for Rs 20 lakh for the party at Pondicherry. Miss Jayalalitha said she never aspired to become the Chief Minister but was only keen on strengthening the party and restoring the MG Ramachandran government after his death.

MADURAI, June 30: The Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, Miss Jayalalitha yesterday denied charges that she had misappropriated party funds to the tune of Rs one crore and had sold off party property, reports PTI. Addressing a meeting at the AIADMK's two-day victory conference here, she said she had only taken a loan from the party's fixed deposit and had repaid it. Stating that she had kept all the property left by the late MG Ramachandran, AIADMK founder, intact, she said she had purchased a building for Rs 20 lakh for the party at Pondicherry. Miss Jayalalitha said she never aspired to become the Chief Minister but was only keen on strengthening the party and restoring the MG Ramachandran government after his death.

## Miyazawa in US

WASHINGTON, June 30: Japanese Prime Minister Kiichi Miyazawa arrives here today for his first meeting with President George Bush in five months, armed with a new blueprint to revive the Japanese economy but reluctant to provide more aid for Russia, reports AFP. The Bush-Miyazawa talks are being kept deliberately low key by the US side in stark contrast to the January summit in Tokyo which was billed as a showdown over trade, but was dominated by Bush's fainting fit at a state dinner. Japanese ambassador Takakazu Kuriyama said the two leaders would likely review the progress made since the Tokyo declaration signed in January but he did not expect any new commitments on trade.

WASHINGTON, June 30: Japanese Prime Minister Kiichi Miyazawa arrives here today for his first meeting with President George Bush in five months, armed with a new blueprint to revive the Japanese economy but reluctant to provide more aid for Russia, reports AFP. The Bush-Miyazawa talks are being kept deliberately low key by the US side in stark contrast to the January summit in Tokyo which was billed as a showdown over trade, but was dominated by Bush's fainting fit at a state dinner. Japanese ambassador Takakazu Kuriyama said the two leaders would likely review the progress made since the Tokyo declaration signed in January but he did not expect any new commitments on trade.

WASHINGTON, June 30: Japanese Prime Minister Kiichi Miyazawa arrives here today for his first meeting with President George Bush in five months, armed with a new blueprint to revive the Japanese economy but reluctant to provide more aid for Russia, reports AFP. The Bush-Miyazawa talks are being kept deliberately low key by the US side in stark contrast to the January summit in Tokyo which was billed as a showdown over trade, but was dominated by Bush's fainting fit at a state dinner. Japanese ambassador Takakazu Kuriyama said the two leaders would likely review the progress made since the Tokyo declaration signed in January but he did not expect any new commitments on trade.

## Ramos sworn in as Filipino President

MANILA, June 30: Retired General Fidel Ramos took the oath of office as president Tuesday in the first orderly transfer of power in the Philippines in a quarter-century, reports AFP. Chief Justice Andres Narvasa administered the oath at noon in the presence of outgoing President Corazon Aquino, who stepped down after a turbulent six-year rule that began with the overthrow of the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos in 1986. Vice President Joseph Estrada, a popular actor who ran on an opposition ticket in the May 11 elections, was sworn in five minutes ahead of Ramos, 64, the first career soldier and Protestant to lead the largely Roman Catholic Southeast Asian country.

MANILA, June 30: Retired General Fidel Ramos took the oath of office as president Tuesday in the first orderly transfer of power in the Philippines in a quarter-century, reports AFP. Chief Justice Andres Narvasa administered the oath at noon in the presence of outgoing President Corazon Aquino, who stepped down after a turbulent six-year rule that began with the overthrow of the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos in 1986. Vice President Joseph Estrada, a popular actor who ran on an opposition ticket in the May 11 elections, was sworn in five minutes ahead of Ramos, 64, the first career soldier and Protestant to lead the largely Roman Catholic Southeast Asian country.

MANILA, June 30: Retired General Fidel Ramos took the oath of office as president Tuesday in the first orderly transfer of power in the Philippines in a quarter-century, reports AFP. Chief Justice Andres Narvasa administered the oath at noon in the presence of outgoing President Corazon Aquino, who stepped down after a turbulent six-year rule that began with the overthrow of the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos in 1986. Vice President Joseph Estrada, a popular actor who ran on an opposition ticket in the May 11 elections, was sworn in five minutes ahead of Ramos, 64, the first career soldier and Protestant to lead the largely Roman Catholic Southeast Asian country.

## Boudiaf's funeral today Assassin arrested

ALGIERS, June 30: The killer of Algerian head of state Mohamed Boudiaf was arrested on Monday just after the assassination, an official statement said, reports Reuter. The killer has been arrested and the inquiry now going on will uncover the instigators of the crime and their accomplices," said the statement from the country's collective presidency. It was read on state television. Another report adds: The funeral of Algerian head of state Mohamed Boudiaf, assassinated on Monday, will be held tomorrow (Wednesday), the collective presidency said in a statement.

The statement, carried by the official news agency APS, said the funeral arrangements would be organised by a committee headed by interior minister Laarbi Belkhetir. Meanwhile AFP adds: Germany condemned the assassination Monday of Algerian President Mohamed Boudiaf as a "cowardly killing and called on all sides in Algeria to do everything to prevent a further escalation of the violence there. Government spokesman Dieter Vogel added Chancellor Helmut Kohl had learnt of the killing with "shock and indignation." The shooting came two days after the trial opened of seven

leaders of the outlawed Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) who are facing the death sentence on charges of armed insurrection. The Septuagenarian leader was recalled from exile after the army intervened in January to cancel elections the FIS was poised to win. UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali expressed Monday his "shock and dismay" over the assassination of Algerian President Mohammed Boudiaf, a UN official said. Boutros-Ghali "condemns this act of terrorism," said the Secretary General's spokesman Francois Gulliani. Boutros-Ghali has expressed his condolences to the Algerian government, as well as to the family of the slain president, Gulliani said. AP adds from Tripoli: Libyan leader Moamar Gadhafi expressed sorrow over the assassination of Algerian leader Mohamed Boudiaf and reaffirmed solidarity with Algeria, the official Libyan news agency JANA said Tuesday. In his message of condolences, Gadhafi "reaffirmed... the depth of relations and unity of destiny binding the two peoples and countries," JANA said. Libya and Algeria belong to the Arab Maghreb Union, which also includes Morocco, Tunisia and Mauritania.

ALGIERS, June 30: The killer of Algerian head of state Mohamed Boudiaf was arrested on Monday just after the assassination, an official statement said, reports Reuter. The killer has been arrested and the inquiry now going on will uncover the instigators of the crime and their accomplices," said the statement from the country's collective presidency. It was read on state television. Another report adds: The funeral of Algerian head of state Mohamed Boudiaf, assassinated on Monday, will be held tomorrow (Wednesday), the collective presidency said in a statement.

The statement, carried by the official news agency APS, said the funeral arrangements would be organised by a committee headed by interior minister Laarbi Belkhetir. Meanwhile AFP adds: Germany condemned the assassination Monday of Algerian President Mohamed Boudiaf as a "cowardly killing and called on all sides in Algeria to do everything to prevent a further escalation of the violence there. Government spokesman Dieter Vogel added Chancellor Helmut Kohl had learnt of the killing with "shock and indignation." The shooting came two days after the trial opened of seven

leaders of the outlawed Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) who are facing the death sentence on charges of armed insurrection. The Septuagenarian leader was recalled from exile after the army intervened in January to cancel elections the FIS was poised to win. UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali expressed Monday his "shock and dismay" over the assassination of Algerian President Mohammed Boudiaf, a UN official said. Boutros-Ghali "condemns this act of terrorism," said the Secretary General's spokesman Francois Gulliani. Boutros-Ghali has expressed his condolences to the Algerian government, as well as to the family of the slain president, Gulliani said. AP adds from Tripoli: Libyan leader Moamar Gadhafi expressed sorrow over the assassination of Algerian leader Mohamed Boudiaf and reaffirmed solidarity with Algeria, the official Libyan news agency JANA said Tuesday. In his message of condolences, Gadhafi "reaffirmed... the depth of relations and unity of destiny binding the two peoples and countries," JANA said. Libya and Algeria belong to the Arab Maghreb Union, which also includes Morocco, Tunisia and Mauritania.

## Off the Record



MUNICH, GERMANY: Hollywood's film star Audrey Hepburn and musical producer Stanley Donen posing for a picture Monday. Hepburn presents a general view of her career and her life at Munich's cultural centre Crasteig. — AFP/UNB photo

## The Universe is still expanding

CAGLIARI, Sardinia: The Universe is at least 15 billion years old and is still expanding, according to evidence from the Hubble space telescope, a scientific convention heard on Monday, reports Reuter. The "Big Bang" is still going on and we do not know when it will end," said Professor Piero Benvenuti, European scientific representative of the Hubble Telescope Project. He was introducing a week-long conference "Science with the Hubble Space Telescope" in China, outside Cagliari. The 2.1 billion dollar telescope, designed for the US space agency NASA in the 1970s, was launched in April 1990 to allow astronomers to view space from outside the confines of the Earth's atmosphere. The conference heard that readings from the telescope had allowed an international team of astronomers to take a major first step in redetermining the expansion rate of the Universe. Previous calculations of this rate, which helps to determine the size and age of the Universe, have varied widely. But by using the space telescope to study the brightness of a faint galaxy 16 million light-years away, scientists have managed to come up with more precise figures. Their calculations conclude the Universe is at least 15 billion years old, according to a communique from the Space Telescope Science Institute in Baltimore, US.

CAGLIARI, Sardinia: The Universe is at least 15 billion years old and is still expanding, according to evidence from the Hubble space telescope, a scientific convention heard on Monday, reports Reuter. The "Big Bang" is still going on and we do not know when it will end," said Professor Piero Benvenuti, European scientific representative of the Hubble Telescope Project. He was introducing a week-long conference "Science with the Hubble Space Telescope" in China, outside Cagliari. The 2.1 billion dollar telescope, designed for the US space agency NASA in the 1970s, was launched in April 1990 to allow astronomers to view space from outside the confines of the Earth's atmosphere. The conference heard that readings from the telescope had allowed an international team of astronomers to take a major first step in redetermining the expansion rate of the Universe. Previous calculations of this rate, which helps to determine the size and age of the Universe, have varied widely. But by using the space telescope to study the brightness of a faint galaxy 16 million light-years away, scientists have managed to come up with more precise figures. Their calculations conclude the Universe is at least 15 billion years old, according to a communique from the Space Telescope Science Institute in Baltimore, US.

CAGLIARI, Sardinia: The Universe is at least 15 billion years old and is still expanding, according to evidence from the Hubble space telescope, a scientific convention heard on Monday, reports Reuter. The "Big Bang" is still going on and we do not know when it will end," said Professor Piero Benvenuti, European scientific representative of the Hubble Telescope Project. He was introducing a week-long conference "Science with the Hubble Space Telescope" in China, outside Cagliari. The 2.1 billion dollar telescope, designed for the US space agency NASA in the 1970s, was launched in April 1990 to allow astronomers to view space from outside the confines of the Earth's atmosphere. The conference heard that readings from the telescope had allowed an international team of astronomers to take a major first step in redetermining the expansion rate of the Universe. Previous calculations of this rate, which helps to determine the size and age of the Universe, have varied widely. But by using the space telescope to study the brightness of a faint galaxy 16 million light-years away, scientists have managed to come up with more precise figures. Their calculations conclude the Universe is at least 15 billion years old, according to a communique from the Space Telescope Science Institute in Baltimore, US.

CAGLIARI, Sardinia: The Universe is at least 15 billion years old and is still expanding, according to evidence from the Hubble space telescope, a scientific convention heard on Monday, reports Reuter. The "Big Bang" is still going on and we do not know when it will end," said Professor Piero Benvenuti, European scientific representative of the Hubble Telescope Project. He was introducing a week-long conference "Science with the Hubble Space Telescope" in China, outside Cagliari. The 2.1 billion dollar telescope, designed for the US space agency NASA in the 1970s, was launched in April 1990 to allow astronomers to view space from outside the confines of the Earth's atmosphere. The conference heard that readings from the telescope had allowed an international team of astronomers to take a major first step in redetermining the expansion rate of the Universe. Previous calculations of this rate, which helps to determine the size and age of the Universe, have varied widely. But by using the space telescope to study the brightness of a faint galaxy 16 million light-years away, scientists have managed to come up with more precise figures. Their calculations conclude the Universe is at least 15 billion years old, according to a communique from the Space Telescope Science Institute in Baltimore, US.

CAGLIARI, Sardinia: The Universe is at least 15 billion years old and is still expanding, according to evidence from the Hubble space telescope, a scientific convention heard on Monday, reports Reuter. The "Big Bang" is still going on and we do not know when it will end," said Professor Piero Benvenuti, European scientific representative of the Hubble Telescope Project. He was introducing a week-long conference "Science with the Hubble Space Telescope" in China, outside Cagliari. The 2.1 billion dollar telescope, designed for the US space agency NASA in the 1970s, was launched in April 1990 to allow astronomers to view space from outside the confines of the Earth's atmosphere. The conference heard that readings from the telescope had allowed an international team of astronomers to take a major first step in redetermining the expansion rate of the Universe. Previous calculations of this rate, which helps to determine the size and age of the Universe, have varied widely. But by using the space telescope to study the brightness of a faint galaxy 16 million light-years away, scientists have managed to come up with more precise figures. Their calculations conclude the Universe is at least 15 billion years old, according to a communique from the Space Telescope Science Institute in Baltimore, US.

## Grannies rocking on the dance floor

OSLO, Norway: Grandmas by the thousands are expected in arctic Norway for a festival that could give their grandchildren gray hair, reports AP. These grandmas aren't planning to knit or bake cookies, and if they rock, it'll be on the dance floor. At the first Grandmothers Festival, July 3 to 5 in Bodo, grandmas can engage in such vigorous activities as horse racing, tandem parachute jumping, deep-water scuba diving, hiking, motorcycling, and soccer. "We grandmothers are of all ages, from our early 40s to great-grandmothers. We want people to know that grandmothers are not just the ones with their hair in a bun, sitting in a rocker, crocheting," said festival grandmother-in-chief Vigdis Waernes. Waernes said she thought it was "completely crazy" when a local attorney late last year suggested using Grandmas' Pasture, a field near the town on Norway's west coast, for a Grandmother's Festival. "Gradually, I realized that if anyone deserves their moment, it's grandmothers," said Waernes, 46. "Grandma never gets to kick a soccer ball around. Here, she can do it if she feels like it," said Waernes. "Grandma often feels like it's forbidden for her to go to a pub. It's all right for grandpa to go in for a beer if he feels like it, but she feels it is out of place for her. We want her to go to the pub if she wants to."

OSLO, Norway: Grandmas by the thousands are expected in arctic Norway for a festival that could give their grandchildren gray hair, reports AP. These grandmas aren't planning to knit or bake cookies, and if they rock, it'll be on the dance floor. At the first Grandmothers Festival, July 3 to 5 in Bodo, grandmas can engage in such vigorous activities as horse racing, tandem parachute jumping, deep-water scuba diving, hiking, motorcycling, and soccer. "We grandmothers are of all ages, from our early 40s to great-grandmothers. We want people to know that grandmothers are not just the ones with their hair in a bun, sitting in a rocker, crocheting," said festival grandmother-in-chief Vigdis Waernes. Waernes said she thought it was "completely crazy" when a local attorney late last year suggested using Grandmas' Pasture, a field near the town on Norway's west coast, for a Grandmother's Festival. "Gradually, I realized that if anyone deserves their moment, it's grandmothers," said Waernes, 46. "Grandma never gets to kick a soccer ball around. Here, she can do it if she feels like it," said Waernes. "Grandma often feels like it's forbidden for her to go to a pub. It's all right for grandpa to go in for a beer if he feels like it, but she feels it is out of place for her. We want her to go to the pub if she wants to."

OSLO, Norway: Grandmas by the thousands are expected in arctic Norway for a festival that could give their grandchildren gray hair, reports AP. These grandmas aren't planning to knit or bake cookies, and if they rock, it'll be on the dance floor. At the first Grandmothers Festival, July 3 to 5 in Bodo, grandmas can engage in such vigorous activities as horse racing, tandem parachute jumping, deep-water scuba diving, hiking, motorcycling, and soccer. "We grandmothers are of all ages, from our early 40s to great-grandmothers. We want people to know that grandmothers are not just the ones with their hair in a bun, sitting in a rocker, crocheting," said festival grandmother-in-chief Vigdis Waernes. Waernes said she thought it was "completely crazy" when a local attorney late last year suggested using Grandmas' Pasture, a field near the town on Norway's west coast, for a Grandmother's Festival. "Gradually, I realized that if anyone deserves their moment, it's grandmothers," said Waernes, 46. "Grandma never gets to kick a soccer ball around. Here, she can do it if she feels like it," said Waernes. "Grandma often feels like it's forbidden for her to go to a pub. It's all right for grandpa to go in for a beer if he feels like it, but she feels it is out of place for her. We want her to go to the pub if she wants to."

OSLO, Norway: Grandmas by the thousands are expected in arctic Norway for a festival that could give their grandchildren gray hair, reports AP. These grandmas aren't planning to knit or bake cookies, and if they rock, it'll be on the dance floor. At the first Grandmothers Festival, July 3 to 5 in Bodo, grandmas can engage in such vigorous activities as horse racing, tandem parachute jumping, deep-water scuba diving, hiking, motorcycling, and soccer. "We grandmothers are of all ages, from our early 40s to great-grandmothers. We want people to know that grandmothers are not just the ones with their hair in a bun, sitting in a rocker, crocheting," said festival grandmother-in-chief Vigdis Waernes. Waernes said she thought it was "completely crazy" when a local attorney late last year suggested using Grandmas' Pasture, a field near the town on Norway's west coast, for a Grandmother's Festival. "Gradually, I realized that if anyone deserves their moment, it's grandmothers," said Waernes, 46. "Grandma never gets to kick a soccer ball around. Here, she can do it if she feels like it," said Waernes. "Grandma often feels like it's forbidden for her to go to a pub. It's all right for grandpa to go in for a beer if he feels like it, but she feels it is out of place for her. We want her to go to the pub if she wants to."

OSLO, Norway: Grandmas by the thousands are expected in arctic Norway for a festival that could give their grandchildren gray hair, reports AP. These grandmas aren't planning to knit or bake cookies, and if they rock, it'll be on the dance floor. At the first Grandmothers Festival, July 3 to 5 in Bodo, grandmas can engage in such vigorous activities as horse racing, tandem parachute jumping, deep-water scuba diving, hiking, motorcycling, and soccer. "We grandmothers are of all ages, from our early 40s to great-grandmothers. We want people to know that grandmothers are not just the ones with their hair in a bun, sitting in a rocker, crocheting," said festival grandmother-in-chief Vigdis Waernes. Waernes said she thought it was "completely crazy" when a local attorney late last year suggested using Grandmas' Pasture, a field near the town on Norway's west coast, for a Grandmother's Festival. "Gradually, I realized that if anyone deserves their moment, it's grandmothers," said Waernes, 46. "Grandma never gets to kick a soccer ball around. Here, she can do it if she feels like it," said Waernes. "Grandma often feels like it's forbidden for her to go to a pub. It's all right for grandpa to go in for a beer if he feels like it, but she feels it is out of place for her. We want her to go to the pub if she wants to."

OSLO, Norway: Grandmas by the thousands are expected in arctic Norway for a festival that could give their grandchildren gray hair, reports AP. These grandmas aren't planning to knit or bake cookies, and if they rock, it'll be on the dance floor. At the first Grandmothers Festival, July 3 to 5 in Bodo, grandmas can engage in such vigorous activities as horse racing, tandem parachute jumping, deep-water scuba diving, hiking, motorcycling, and soccer. "We grandmothers are of all ages, from our early 40s to great-grandmothers. We want people to know that grandmothers are not just the ones with their hair in a bun, sitting in a rocker, crocheting," said festival grandmother-in-chief Vigdis Waernes. Waernes said she thought it was "completely crazy" when a local attorney late last year suggested using Grandmas' Pasture, a field near the town on Norway's west coast, for a Grandmother's Festival. "Gradually, I realized that if anyone deserves their moment, it's grandmothers," said Waernes, 46. "Grandma never gets to kick a soccer ball around. Here, she can do it if she feels like it," said Waernes. "Grandma often feels like it's forbidden for her to go to a pub. It's all right for grandpa to go in for a beer if he feels like it, but she feels it is out of place for her. We want her to go to the pub if she wants to."

OSLO, Norway: Grandmas by the thousands are expected in arctic Norway for a festival that could give their grandchildren gray hair, reports AP. These grandmas aren't planning to knit or bake cookies, and if they rock, it'll be on the dance floor. At the first Grandmothers Festival, July 3 to 5 in Bodo, grandmas can engage in such vigorous activities as horse racing, tandem parachute jumping, deep-water scuba diving, hiking, motorcycling, and soccer. "We grandmothers are of all ages, from our early 40s to great-grandmothers. We want people to know that grandmothers are not just the ones with their hair in a bun, sitting in a rocker, crocheting," said festival grandmother-in-chief Vigdis Waernes. Waernes said she thought it was "completely crazy" when a local attorney late last year suggested using Grandmas' Pasture, a field near the town on Norway's west coast, for a Grandmother's Festival. "Gradually, I realized that if anyone deserves their moment, it's grandmothers," said Waernes, 46. "Grandma never gets to kick a soccer ball around. Here, she can do it if she feels like it," said Waernes. "Grandma often feels like it's forbidden for her to go to a pub. It's all right for grandpa to go in for a beer if he feels like it, but she feels it is out of place for her. We want her to go to the pub if she wants