US asks Arabs to sign Chemical pact

WASHINGTON, Jan 12: The State Department appealed to Arab nations Monday to sign an international treaty to prohibit chemical weapons, reports AP.

The appeal was issued on the eve of the departure of Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger for Paris, where he will join representatives of about 120 nations to sign the

Arab countries have served notice they will not sign the treaty so long as Israel retains nuclear weapons.

State Department spokesman Richard Boucher said the elimination of chemical weapons "is an important step towards the control and elimination of weapons of mass destruction.

"The United States believes that progress towards the elimination of chemical weapons should not be held hostage to progress in other areas, and that there should be no linkage between the Chemical Weapons Convention and issues in the nuclear or biological field."

During his two-day stay in Paris, Eagleburger will meet with the Russian, Japanese and South African foreign minis-

Govt, Hindu nationalists responsible for fresh violence in Bombay

Press sees riot as threat to India's unity

NEW DELHI, Jan 12 Outraged Indian newspapers savagely attacked government and opposition Hindu nationalist politicians today over fresh religious violence in which more than 230 people have been killed, reports Reuter.

Few had doubts the violence, which has devastated the western cities of Bombay and Ahmedabad for nearly a week, was inspired by Hindu nationalists who targeted Muslims and had been deal with extremely badly by the ruling Congress Party.

Apathy and indifference were accusations levelled by several newspaper editorial writers, who worried about the effect on democracy and India's unity.

"Has the Congress Party lost the will to govern? Will the Sangh Parivar (Hindu nationalist movement) be truly able to function as a responsible opposition?" asked the Times of

"There has virtually been a pogrom declared against Muslims," it said.

"It is nothing short of scandalous that a full five days after the resurgence of communal violence in Bombay, the

administration continues to be paralysed."

The violence is part of the fall-out from the destruction of a 16th century mosque in the northern town of Ayodhya.

The demolition of a mosque that had become the symbol of a political battle between believers in India's secular constitution and Hindu nationalists sparked nationwide violence in which more than 1,100 people were killed.

The government arrested leaders of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), the standardbearer of Hindu nationalism in parliament, accusing them of

inciting the demolition.
It released them on Monday and newspapers urged them to help curb violence which politicians in Bombay and newspaper editorialists in New Delhi said was fomented by nationalists in hoped of forcing the government into early elections.

"Their foremost concern must be to persuade the nation that they have the national interests at heart," the Times

"Unless they and other opposition parties make common cause with the government to

provide India with what it yearns for most - a swift return to normalcy - chances are that untold chaos and anarchy will overwhelm it".

None of the newspapers went as far as the opposition Janata Dal Party of former Prime Minister Vishwanath Pratap Singh, which called on Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao to dismiss the governments of Maharashtra and

Bombay and Ahmedabad are the main cities of the two states, both ruled by congress whose national government dismissed four BJP State administrations after the Ayodhya mosque was razed.

The Janata Dal said it was only fair for the Maharashtra and Gujarat governments to be dismissed on the same grounds that they had failed to maintain law and order.

front page editorial. "What is not clear and extremely distressing is the Union Government's ominous silence and inexplicable reluctance to act before it is too

late," the Pioneer said.

But the Pioneer newspaper

came close to such a call in a



BOMBAY, India: A Border Security Force (BSF) soldier is positioned before a mosque on Monday in this western port city after seven days of communal Hindu-Muslim clashes which has left at least 160 people dead. The military have been ordered to shoot rioters on - AFP/UNB photo sight.

UN move for peace in Angola

WASHINGTON, Jan 12: In an attempt to save the dying peace process in Angola, Secretary General Boutros-Ghali asked the Security Council January 11 to endorse UN efforts to arrange a' meeting between the leaders of the two warring sides, reports

In a letter to the Council. the secretary general said the US representative in Angola has proposed a meeting between President Eduardo dos Santo and UNITA leader Dr

Jones Savimbi, but both sides have yet to agree to the site. "Unless the fighting can be brought under control and dialogue restored between the two sides, it is difficult to see how the peace process in

Angola can be saved," he said. Boutros-Ghali said that "the situation in Angola has deteriorated severely since the beginning of the year."

The UN Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM) reported there have been outbreaks of heavy fighting in at least 10 provincial capitals and other population centres. In almost all cases the outcome has been that UNITA premises have been destroyed and its personnel captured and, in some cases, killed.

N-tests affect Russian children: Russian children are suffering genetic mutations, cancer and

other diseases caused by nuclear tests conducted by the Soviet Union more the 30 years ago, a news agency reported Monday, says AP from Moscow.

A group of Russian scholars studying the effects of nuclear tests held in Semipalatinsk, Kazakhstan, reported diseases of the central nervous system in children who live in the neighbouring Altai region of Russia.

They also recorded a unusually high incidence of cancer and low life expectancy in Altai, according to the Itar-Tass news agency. But the worst effect is genetic mutations caused by radiation, it said.

25 face trial for coup in Venezuela: A military court began imposing prison sentences on Monday on soldiers and about 25 civilians charged with participating in a bloody coup attempt last November, lawyers for the

detainees said, reports Reuter from Caracas. The lawyers, who said they had been expelled from the army fort in the capital where the summary trials were taking place, told reporters some of the men already had been sen-

Naruhito to visit 6 ME states: Japanese Crown Prince Naruhito, on what may be his last trip overseas as a bachelor, is to visit six Middle East countries this month, the palace said yesterday, reports Reuter from Tokyo.

Naruhito, 32, will leave Japan on January 22 on a twoweek tour taking in Oman, Qatar, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, said a palace spokesman.

Fire destroys 284 acres of land: Firefighters helped by morning frost extinguished Taiwan's worst forest fire, which swept through the popular Yushan National Park in central Taiwan for six days, officials said Tuesday, reports AP from Taipei.

Officials said the fire, which began last Wednesday, destroyed 115 hectares (284 acres) of forest, including rare spruce, Chinese cypress and 100-year-old trees. They said it would take 30 years to reforest the area.



PITTSBURGH: In this photo provided by the University of Pittsburgh Medical Centre, doctors transplant a baboon liver into the body of a man dying of Hepatitis B on Monday. The operation was the world's second baboon liver - AFP/UNB photo transplant.

Baboon liver transplant slated: Animalrights activists carrying signs with such slogans as

"Frankenstein lives in Pittsburgh" criticized the transplant of a baboon liver into a dying man, reports AP from Pittsburgh. "I don't think an animal should be used as spare parts,"

said Pat Knezevich, who was among 15 animal-rights demonstrators outside the University of Pittsburgh Medical Centre on Monday.

The unidentified, 62-year-old patient remained in critical condition Tuesday. Doctors said Monday he was groggy and responded to commands to open his eyes. The liver was working well, said Lisa Rossi, a hospital spokeswoman.

Bush plans to make content of Iran-contra videotape public

NEW YORK, Jan 12: Iran-Contra prosecutors have turned over to the White House videotapes of the 1988 interview President Bush gave investigators, the New York Times reported in Tuesday editions, reports AP.

Before he leaves office, Bush plans to make public the contents of the videotaped deposition along with a diary he had kept as vice president, the Times said, quoting unidentified government officials.

The White House had called on independent counsel Lawrence E Walsh to release the interview after Bush pardoned former Defence Secretary Caspar W Weinberger and five other officials who had been either charged with wrongdoing or convicted in connection with

the Iran Contra affair.
The White House has contended that the release of the videotape would rebut critics who charged that Bush had issued the pardons to cover up his knowledge of the Iran-Contra affair.

After the Christmas Eve pardons were announced, Walsh accused Bush of "misconduct" by withholding the diary until early last month.

Late last month, Bush retained former Attorney General Griffin Bell to represent him in dealings with Walsh's office.

Walsh said he did not learn of the diary's existence until last month despite repeated requests to the White House for documents.

Cristiani fails to comply with peace accords

WASHINGTON, Jan 12: Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali informed the Security Council January 11 that Salvadoran President Cristiani has failed to comply with the peace accords in the cases of 15 Salvadoran army officers who were to be purged from the military, and said he has asked the president to "take early action" to see that the accords are fully implemented, reports AP.

However, the Salvadoran president appointed seven officers as military attaches to Salvadoran embassies abroad and ha deferred decisions on eight other officers, Boutros-Ghali said, and the actions do "not comply with the Ad Hoc Commission's recommendations which require these offices to be discharged."

LTTE offers to free 2 cops as goodwill gesture

COLOMBO, Jan 12: Shri Lanka's dominant Tamil Tiger guerillas have agreed to release two policemen from captivity "as a gesture of goodwill to commence peace negotiations," a state run daily reported today, says AFP.

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) made the offer during talks with a delegation of Christian clergy, led by the Bishop of Colombo Kenneth Fernando over the weekend in the northern Jaffna peninsula, the Daily News reported. The newspaper quoted in-

formed sources as saying that LTTE Supremo Velupillai Prabhakaran agreed to a request by

KABUL, Jan 12: Afghan

President Burhanuddin

Rabbani's government and the

radical Hezb-I-Islami party

have agreed to a temporary

truce, sources in a peace mis-

sion set up last week said on

from either side was available.

on Sunday to close down

Kabul's airport, saying it would

shoot down planes using the

airport or nearby Bargram air

base if the government failed

to release imprisoned Hezb

The peace mission which

members by Monday evening.

But no formal statement

The Hezb had threatened

Monday, reports Reuter.

the eight-member delegation to free the policemen ahead of peace talks to end the island's ethnic bloodshed.

"As a request made by the bishops to release the two constables in custody, it was agreed to by Prabhakaran, as a gesture of goodwill in order to commence peace negotiations," the Daily News said. The LTTE has detained

about 40 policemen and army soldiers after capturing them mostly in eastern areas of Shri The newspaper said Prabh-

akaran, who leads an army of well trained guerillas fighting for a separate Tamil homeland in the island's northeast, held separate talks with three of

includes representatives of

several Mujahideen groups is

led by Shi'ite Muslim leader

agreed in talks with the mis-

sion to draw up lists of each

other's prisoners held during

intermittent fighting since last

April when the Mujahideen

lapsed former communist gov-

ernment after 14 years of civil

not to fight until a proposed

meeting of the leaders of all

Afghan Mujahideen parties is

held in Kabul, the sources said.

The sides have also agreed

took power from the col-

The sources said both sides

Ayatollah Mohseni.

the bishops who visited the LTTE heartland of Jaffna.

"The (LTTE) leader ex plained to the bishops the sufferings of the Tamil people due to the atrocities of the Shri Lankan Government," the Daily News said.

The report came amid repeated denials by government spokesman of contacts between Colombo and the LTTE to resume direct peace talks to end the drawn out ethnic con-

Fourteen months of peace talks between the two sides ended in failure in June 1990 leading to more bloodletting. Thousands have died in the bitter fighting.

No date for the meeting was

set. The sources said the peace

mission was trying to contact

the Mujahideen leaders, some

of whom are living in

tiate, presidential spokesman

Abdul Aziz Morad told re-

Sunday announced the forma-

tion of a 205-member interim

parliament chosen from more

than 1,000 members of a con-

troversial assembly that last

month elected Rabbani as

president for the next two

- AFP/UNB photo

"We are very keen to nego-

The Afghan government on

Neighbouring Pakistan.

porters.

Published reports Monday said Calcutt plans Afghans agree to truce

to recommended stringent new laws against intrusion into privacy in his report to the government scheduled for January 28.

McGregor's letter shows that at a time when the press was facing fierce criticism over coverage of the marriage, the couple themselves and friends were providing much of the information in an apparent bid by each side to win publicity for its own version of events.

Off the Record

They deliberately supplied

LONDON, Jan 12: A leaked letter by Lord McGregor, cha-

it to the newspaper

irman of the watch Comm-ission, says Prince Charles and

Princess Diana deliberately provided newspaper with details

of their marriage troubles, reports AP.

The letter printed

Tuesday by the London

newspaper The Guardian

said the government was

aware the couple had indi-

vidually recruited rival

newspaper groups to reveal

their separate accounts of

night the letter was gen-

uine. He sent it December

11 to Sir David Calcutt, an

attorney appointed by the

excesses by London's brash

McGregor said Monday

their failed marriage.

tabloid press.

By stressing the role allegedly played by Charles and Diana in providing information, the letter could reduce some of the force of Calcutt's reported recommendations for press curbs.

There was no immediate comment from Buckingham Palace. The Guardians said Calcutt had circulated McG-regor's letter to highly place civil servants at the palace and in the

Prime Minister John Major told Parliament December 9 that Diana, 31, and Charles, 44, who married July 21, 1981, were separating. Major's announcement followed mo-nths of reports in the tabloid press that the marriage was on the

McGregor wrote that Diana's actions had seriously embarrassed the commission.

He said Buckingham Palace assured the commission that Diana was not involved in leaking information on the marriage split.

Again in public

DALLAS: Ross Perot publicly returned to politics Monday, recruiting Americans for a watchdog group he said would counter special interests that prevent government reform and deficit reduction, reports AP.

The group, United We Stand, America, is forming the volunteer organization of the same name that got the Dallas billionaire onto the presidential ballot as an independent in all 50 states and helped him win 19 per cent of the vote in November. Now the group will be a

non-profit or ganization instead of a political campaign. And it will cost 15 dollar a year to be a member.

Monday night on the Cable News Network's Larry King Live," Perot said "United We Stand America" has received 66,000 calls on the group's toll-free phone numbers and 80

per cent of the callers have signed up as members. Perot will be the group's national director. At an earlier news conference, he insisted he didn't have his eye on a

loftier title. A 1996 presidential bid is 'not anywhere in our agenda,'

said Perot, who campaigned last year on a programme to eliminate the federal deficit.

Family of five dies in Seoul flat fire

SEOUL, Jan 12 : A family of five died yesterday when fire gutted their flat in Seoul, the second fatal blaze in South Korea in less than a week. police said, reports Reuter.

The fire was brought under control in 30 minutes, but it had already destroyed the whole apartment, a spokesman said. He said the cause of the fire was still unknown but was likely to have been caused by a

short circuit. Twenty-eight people were killed and more than 60 injured last Thursday when fire raced through and apartment block in the city of Chongu, south of Seoul.

Israel's no to UN plea reawakens 'painful emotion' of '48

JERUSALEM, Jan 12: For Palestinians, Israel's latest rejection of UN pleas to take back the 415 men deported to Lebanon reawakens painful emotions dating to the founding of the Jewish state in 1948, report

After hundreds of thousands of Palestinians fled or were driven from their homes as Israel came into being, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 194 urging return of the refugees at "the earliest practical date." Israel refused. Forty-four years later, it is

take back Palestinians. Sari Nusseibeh, an adviser to Palestinian peace negotiators, said this painful history is why delegates to the US-backed talks are

again ignoring a United Nations entreaty to

refusing to return to the table. "I find it extremely hard for the Palestinian delegation to compromise on this issue," he said. "This measure... ripped open a very deep

wound that every Palestinian carries with him." Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin also was reacting to deeply felt Israeli emotions in

urging the expulsions. He defended his decision this week as a second UN envoy pressed Israel to comply with the Security Council's demand to take back the deportees. At the time the 415 men were expelled in

mid-December, Israelis were outraged at the killings of six troopers. Israel accused the deportees of being supporters of radical Muslim groups blamed for the slayings. Israel may have miscalculated the

Palestinians' reaction, too. Logic might say that the PLO-backed Palestinian peace negotiators would accept, or even applaud, expelling radicals from the fundamentalist Hamas movement. Hamas is the chief rival of the Palestine

Liberation Organization in the occupied territories and is desperately fighting the peace process that the PLO supports. But logic does not always apply in the

Middle East. The Palestinians and other Arab delegates immediately pulled out of the Washington peace talks, and rioting erupted in the occupied territories.

Faisal Husseini, who as chief adviser to the negotiators has received death threat from radical Palestinians, said that Hamas was part of Palestinian national unity and was fighting the same "ruthless enemy."

UNITED NATIONS: US ambassador Edward Perkins walks past reporters on Monday

on his way to a meeting to discuss Iraqi violations of Persian war ceasefire agree-

It didn't help that Rabin was the chief force behind the expulsions. Palestinians had warmed to his promises to speed up peace talks, but distrusted him for his role in trying to quell their five-year uprising, and in expelling Palestinians in 1948.

As a young officer, Rabin oversaw the largest single expulsion of Arabs during Israel's independence war, driving about 50,000 men, women and children out of the Arab towns of Lydda and Ramle into what is now the

occupied West Bank. During the forced march from Lydda in the heat of July 1948, some old people and children died from lack of water. The people of Ramle, seeing their neighbours' suffering, agreed to go peacefully if given buses.

Rabin called the action a military necessity removing a hostile population - in a section deleted from his 1979 memories by Israeli censors but later printed by The New York

In his account, Rabin recalled the march from Lydda. "There was no way to avoid the use of force and warning shots in order to make the inhabitants march the 10 or 15 miles (16 to 25 kms) to the point where they met up with the (Jordanian) Arab Legion," he wrote.

It's not hard to see how Palestinians can make a comparison with today's deportation of 415 men - some from 1948 refugee families and Israel's attitude that, once over the border, they were Lebanon's responsibility.

Nusseibeh said the Palestinians simply see history repeating itself in the latest expulsions and the failed UN efforts to reverse them.

'As far as Palestinians are concerned... the pain in their collective memory is the whole business of being made homeless, being made refugees," he said. "It's a pain I don't really think anyone but the Palestinians understands."

Patten encourages compromise

HONG KONG, Jan 12: Trying to break the deadlock over Hong Kong's future, Gov Chris Patten encouraged legislators Tuesday to ratify political proposals that would satisfy both China and Britain, reports

Until, now, Patten had defied Chinese pressure to compromise over his plans to increase democracy in the British colony before its transfer to Chinese Communist control in 1997.

While Patten said he wouldn't scrap the proposals according to China's wishes, he urged the Legislative Council to recommend constitutional, reforms, no matter how watered down, that had the broadest appeal.

