International =

PLO demands timetable for return of deportees

ME talks in mid-April likely

Pakistan may buy tanks from Poland

Kohl to meet Clinton soon: Germany's

Foreign Minister told President Bill Clinton on Thursday that

Chancellor Helmut Kohl would like to set up a meeting soon

with the new US leader, the White House said, reports AFP

discussed the need for establishing good bilateral relations,

White House spokeswoman Dee Dee Myers said.

Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel met briefly with Clinton and

On a possible meeting between the two leaders, Myers

said, "They didn't agree on any specific date, but the

President would certainly like to meet with Kohl at some

Belarus ratifies START-I: The parli-

ament of Belarus ratified the START-I treaty Thursday,

leaving Ukraine as the only former Soviet republic still

The Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty and its protocols re-

The parliament approved the disarmament treaty with the

Belarussian lawmakers also voted to approve the Nuclear

quire Belarus to surrender all 81 of the SS-25 single warhead

missiles that it inherited from the former Soviet nuclear ar-

United States at a closed session after four hours of debate, a

Belarussian Foreign Ministry spokesman told The Associated

Non-Proliferation Treaty, which forbids the export of nuclear

weapons technology, and the so-called Lisbon Agreement,

which commits Belarus to send its nuclear arms to Russia for

Abducted Spanish nuns freed: Two

Spanish nuns kidnapped by Muslim bandits in the southern

Philippines have been released unharmed after three weeks

in captivity, the Spanish Embassy in Manila said yesterday.

confirmed caremelite sisters Fatima Urriparen, 38, and Julia

Foraster, 65, had been freed in Sulu province, where they

They are expected to be flown to Manila Friday.

sued a public appeal for the nuns freedom.

No details were immediately available, but embassy sources

The release came one day after President Fidel Ramos is-

UK Minister leaves for Kenya: ov-

erseas Development Minister Lynda Chalker left Britain

Thursday night for a four-day visit to Kenya and famine-hit

make sure that we are tuned into whatever needs to be done

Lady Chalker told journalists at London's Heathrow airport

the US-led multinational force of about 38,000 personnel in

Somalia could begin to be replaced by troops under UN com-

Hercules aircraft operating out of Nairobi have flown 2,200

tons of emergency supplies to airstrips in southern Somalia

China fears quake: An earthquake as strong

as the one that killed tens of thousands of people in

Tangshan, northeast China in July 1976, is expected to hit

said Thursday, AFP reports from Hong Kong.

measure more than seven on the Richter scale.

the west of the country before the end of the decade, a report

seismological experts as saying that the massive quake would

The Beijing-funded New Evening Post quoted Chinese

They said some 16 earthquakes measuring above five on

On Wednesday, an earthquake measuring 5.4 damaged

the Richter scale had been recorded in China and its coastal

areas in 1992, with the strongest near Lhasa in Tibet on July

houses and sent strong shocks through China's far-west

Xinian region. It was the third strong tremor to hit the coun-

Dae-Jung's son joins politics: The son of former opposition leader Kim Dae-Jung has entered

politics to take up the mantle of his father who was defeated

trict chapter of the opposition Democratic Party on Friday,

party is struggling to reorganize following a defeat in the

December presidential elections to Kim Young-sam of the rul-

not been publicly active in politics. The senior Kim has re-

Kim Hong-il, 46, was elected chairman of the Mokpo dis-

Kim's entry into politics comes as the largest opposition

The younger kim has served as advisor to his father but has

in three presidential elections, AP says from Scoul.

the party said. Mokpo is a southern port

UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali said Thursday

A Royal Air Force spokesman said Thursday two British

when the Americans finally give way to the United Nations,"

"I am going to see the relief operation in Somalia and to

considering the disarmament pact, reports AP from Minsk.

ISLAMABAD, Feb 5: Pakistan is negotiating the purchase of 320 T-72 tanks from Poland. the Minister for Defence Production told the National Assembly here Thursday, reports AFP.

Hazar Khan Bijarani did not put a price on the deal which has not been sealed but said Poland had offered an improved financial package.

He said the army approved the purchase after carrying out tests on two Polish tanks in

Pakistan last summer. The deal will include spares, support, maintenance and the transfer of technology,

Bijarani also told the Assembly that a US team was in Pakistan for discussions on the return of warships leased to Pakistan, a demand scen here as arm-twisting by

from Washington.

dismantling.

AFP reports from Manila.

were kidnapped on January 17.

Somalia, says AP from London.

mand within weeks.

since December 12.

try in a week.

ing party

tired from politics.

before boarding a flight for Nairobi.

Washington over a nuclear

controversy. The US leased four destroyers, four frigates and logistics vessels to Pakistan before susreturn of all the Palestinians deported by Israel, reports

Islamabad insists its pro-

Bijrani said the lease of one frigate expired in January 1991 but it had not been withdrawn. The leases on the remaining eight would expire this year or next, he added.

The council has ordered the return of all the men in a

He also urged the United States to cancel its deal with Israel, reiterating that Palestinians will boycott peace talks with the Jewish state

Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin on Wednesday said Israel could resort to mass deportations again.

But in their frozen no man's

snow two years or more if nec-

"We shall never recognise the legitimacy of our deportation, whatever price we have to pay, he added.

Reuter adds: Middle East peace talks are unlikely to resume before April because of the row over Israel's mass deportation of Palestinian in militants, Israel and Palestinian in negotiators said on Thursday.

An Israeli Foreign Ministry spokesman said US Secretary of State Warren Christopher suggested to Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres that Israel and its Arab neighbours might meet again for bilateral talks in mid-April.

"The two spoke this afternoon by telephone and Mr Christopher indicated he is thinking of a mid-April period for the next round of bilateral

Raphael Gamzou.

Hannan Ashrawi, spokesof the Palestinian to the talks, said a resumption of both multilateral and bilateral negotiations would depend on Israel accepting back all of the 415 Palestinians it deported to Lebanon in December.

"The Americans did inform us very early this morning that the multilaterals have been postponed. There is no specific date for resumption," Ashrawi said of multilateral talks on regional economics and arms control scheduled for next week.

"We don't think (direct) negotiations on the whole will take place before April because there has to be an acceptable solution to the deportee issue, meaning the UN resolution has to be fulfilled,' she said.

Myanmar delegates resume discussion on new charter

BANGKOK, Feb 5: Delegates to Myanmar's constitutional convention broke into eight groups Thursday and resumed discussions of the proposed new charter, state-run Radio Yangon reported, says AFP.

The groups comprised delegates from registered political parties, members of the Peoples' Assembly elected in the 1990 poll that the ruling junta has never recognized, ethnic minorities, workers, farmers technicians, state employees and others, it said in a broadcast monitored here.

At the end of the day's talks, held at Yangon's horse racing track, the nearly 700 delegates agreed to hold further discussions Friday and next week, the radio said without elaborating.

The junta-appointed constitutional convention opened January 9 but abruptly adjourned two days later.

Heated debate on German citizenship

BONN, Feb 5: A debate over he status of foreigners in Germany heated up on Thursday when a government official pressed for easier citizenship for long-time residents, mostly workers from abroad and their children.

reports Reuter. Cornelia Schmalz-Jacobsen, the top government official in charge of Foreigners' Affairs, urged Bonn to scrap an 80year-old law largely limiting citizenship to those with German parents and excluding children born or raised here by foreign nationals.

Referring to the 1913 Law's emphasis on German heritage passed by blood, she said: "Nowhere has blood flowed so heavily into the law as in Germany."
She added that easier citi-

zenship would help prevent any rise of Islamic fundamentalism among Muslim immigrants, such as the 1.6 million Turks who make up the biggest foreign minority.

Rushdie visits Foreign Office

LONDON, Feb 5: For the first time since receiving an Iranian death threat four years ago, author Salman Rushdie publicly visited the Foreign Office on Thursday, reports AP.

Reporting the meeting, the Iranian state news agency accused the British government of "refueling the dispute" bétween the two governments over Rushdie.

The Indian-born writer went into hiding February 14. 1989, when the late Ayotollah Ruhollah Khomeini called on Muslims to kill Rushdie because his novel "The Satanie Verses," allegedly blasphemed

The International Rushdie Defence Committee, said the 45-minute meeting between Rushdie, 45, and Foreign Office Minister Douglas Hogg showed that Britain had made a "substantial shift in policy on this matter."

Off the Record

Greek men are the sexiest on earth

MONTREAL: Greek men are the sexiest on earth, French men the most charming and Australians the most romantic. according to a 14-country survey of women who read Harlequin romance novels, reports AFP.

According to the survey, which questioned 5,100 of the 200 million women that Harlequin says read its books, Canadians are said to be endowed with considerable sex appeal, while Hungrians and Greeks shared first place for the

ability to whisper 'I love you'. Greeks and Scandinavians are the keenest on intimate evenings for two, while Australians, Greek and Canadians are the most spontaneous lovers.

French women were said to be the easiest to bowl over with flowers, although Hungarian men know their lover's floral tastes better than anyone else, the survey found.

The survey also found that Harlequin readers are generally nonplussed by the approach of valentine's day.

He clinically died three times

DARWIN, Australia: A 24-year-old Australian council worker was fighting for his life on Thursday after receiving more than 1,000 bee stings while pruning trees, reports Reuter.

The man was coloured blue after the attack. He clinically died three times, and was revived each time, St John ambulance regional superintendent Edeline Sinclair said in

"He was up in a cherry picker when he accidentally disturbed the bees," she told the Australian Associated Press. The man, whose name has been withheld, jumped to an-

other tree to escape the bee swarm. Neighbours who witnessed the attack carried the man to a nearby swimming pool and threw him in. Sinclair said.

"We took six minutes to get to the scene," she said. The man suffered two heart failures and was pronounced clinically dead twice at the scene of the attack and once later at Royal Darwin Hospital, she said.

The man was being held in the intensive care unit and was listed as being in serious condition.

Don't go for foreign wives, money is no problem

ABU DHABI: The United Arab Emirates has launched a fund to help local men marry Emirates women after soaring wedding costs forced them to seek foreign wives, the UAE's newspapers reported Thursday, says AFP.

They said the fund, endorsed late last year by the UAE's President Sheikh Zayed Ibn Sultan Al-Nahayan, was the first of its kind in the region and would offer grants of up to 70,000 dirhams (19,000 dollars) to any man from the Emirates seeking to marry, provided his bride is a compa-

Its aim is to help nationals who cannot meet wedding expenses and end the phenomenon of marrying foreign women, which is adversely affecting our society, culture, traditions and language, said Labour and Social Affairs Minister Saif Al-Jarwan, who heads the fund.

The fund's capital of 50 million dirhams (13.6 million dollars) will be financed by the federal budget every year but is

also open for donations, he told a news conference Wednesday It is the first ever such project in the region, where dowries, the money paid by a bridegroom to his bride under

Islamic law, generally exceed 20,000 dollars. Weddings also cost thousands of dollars.

Age no barrier to having babies

LONDON: US researchers who have helped three women over 50 give birth say age may be no barrier to having babies, reports Reuter.

In a report released on Friday the researchers from the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, at the University of Southern California, Los Angeles, said all three women

were past menopause. Another four are due to deliver in the next three months and there were two miscarriages among the 14 couples entered in the study, they wrote in the British medical journal

The technique has already raised questions about its ethics and the possible health drawbacks for the mothers.

Generally after menopause the uterus can no longer provide a nurturing environment for a growing fetus. But the researchers found that uterine function may not be

seriously impaired by age, at least in post-menopausal women in their 50s who use steroid hormone replacement therapy. In the study, eggs donated by younger, healthy women

were fertilised in a test tube and the resulting embryo transferred to the womb. There is little doubt that the uterus remains receptive to

embryo implantation and development of normal pregnancy well beyond the limits of natural reproduction, the trescarchers conclude. "Women who wish to become pregnant in their 50s should

be rigorously screened medically and psychologically, and if found to be fit, the option of oocyte (egg) donation should not be withheld.

UN troops may replace US soldiers in Somalia

UNITED NATIONS, Feb 5: The US-led multinational force in Somalia could begin to be replaced by troops under UN command within weeks, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Chali said Thursday, reports AP.

It was the first time Boutros-Ghali had given any indication when the transfer might begin. He did not say Thursday how long the handoff would take, but previously had said the process could take up to six months, and occur in

The peacekeeping mission

would replace a US-led military force of about 38,000 personnel, allowing the United States to withdraw some 20,000 servicemen and women.

The UN's special envoy on Somalia, Ismat Kittani of Iraq. said Wednesday the UN force could number up to 20,000, which would be about 3,000 more than the United Nations has in Cambodia, its largest operation to date.

Asked about the transfer. Boutros-Ghali said, The sooner will be the better.

Akihitos visit US next year

the newspaper that the imperial trip would be confirmed at a meeting between US President Bill Clinton and planned visit to Washington

The trip, expected to be late next year, would be the first to the United States by a

pending economic and military assistance to the country in 1990, suspecting Pakistan of developing nuclear weapons.

gramme is peaceful and has offered to sign the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty at the same time as its rival India.

The minister said Pakistan recently acquired three mine hunters from France and hoped to secure new submarines.

TUNIS, Feb 5: The Palestine Liberation Organisation on Thursday called for an urgent meeting of the United Nations Security Council to adopt a timetable for the

PLO information chief Yasser Abed Rabbo reiterated the organisation's rejection of an Israeli-US plan to repatriate 100 of the 400 deportees stranded in South Lebanon since December 17.

Under the plan, Israel would cut the term of exile of the remainder to one year maximum as part of a deal with Washington to avoid UN sanc-

Abed Rabbo said the proposal constituted a dangerous action and provided Israel with permanent protection from the United States for its violations of Security Council resoresolution passed December

The PLO spokesman called on the council to meet quickly to take measures and adopt a compulsory cleaner for the return of all the Palestinian deportees.

until all the men return.

land in South Lebanon, the deportees' spokesman Abdel Aziz Al-Rantissi said on Thursday the expelled Palestinians were ready to stay in the wind and



MARJ EZ ZOUHOUR: Spokesman of the Palestinian deportees Abedi Aziz al-Rantissi (C) surrounded by deportees Thursday, denies Israeli charges that he was involved in the kidnap and murder of Israeli soldier Ian Sodun who was abducted in May 1989.

- AFP/UNB photo

Tshisekedi to seek foreign military intervention

"condemning the firefighter

KINSHASA, Zaire, Feb 5: President Mobutu Sese Seke's main rival has come out of hiding to urged foreign military intervention, as Western pressure mounted for Mobutu to surrender his 27-year monopoly on power, reports

Senior officials from the United States. France and Belgium met Thursday in Brussels, Belgium, to consider ways to further isolate Mobutu economically and politically.

On Wednesday, the three nations demanded Mobutu transfer power to Etienne Tshisekedi, his arch-rival and head of a transitional government Mobutu was forced to accept under pressure from Western aid donors.

Mobutu called the officials Thursday by satellite phone from his remote ancestral home in Gbadolite to reject the latest Western demands, saying they amounted to

instead of the arsonist." Obadolite is 725 miles (1,150 kilometers) northeast of Kinshasa on the border with the Central African Republic. Pressure has been building

against Mobutu since last week, when rioting by regular army troops over pay led to an outbreak of fighting with Mobutu's presidential guard. The unrest developed into a confrontation between forces loyal to Mobutu and pro-Tshisekedi troops.

The prime minister's government said at least 1,000 people have been killed, mainly regular army troops killed by presidential guards. The fighting broke out after Mobutu issued 5-million zaire notes declared illegal by Tshisekedi and rejected by merchants.

Tshisekedi has been in hiding since the fighting began and came out for the first

time Thursday to issue his plea for foreign military interven-

"One of our friends, Belgium, already has troops just across the river, Tshisekedi told a news conference. "That is why I have launched an appeal to the international community... to introduce them (soldiers) into the country to assure our se-

He said Mobutu's guards had targeted opposition leaders' homes last weekend, including his own. "The bullets were flying all around the house here, but there were no direct hits," he said. The son of one opposition leader was killed in a rocket attack.

Meanwhile, troops loyal to Tshisekedi held on to two key army bases in the capital Thursday, and there was no sign Mobutu's guards were preparing new attacks on



PARAKOU, Benin: Pope John Paul II (L) shakes hand of an unidentified Muslim representative as he arrived Thursday in the city, made up mostly of Muslims and animists with Catholics, a tiny minority. The pontiff appealed to the world's Muslims to work for peace. - AFP/UNB photo

TOKYO, Feb 5: Japanese Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko are to visit the United States next year, the Yomiuri Shimbun said Friday, reports

Government sources told Kitchi Miyazawa during the Japanese Prime Minister's later this year.

Japanese Emperor.

Saudi woman who refuses to wear veil now in Canada September 1991 immigration TORONTO, Feb 5: A young board ruling. Saudi woman who refused to

woman's application for

refugee status, Immigration

Minister Bernard Valcourt in-

tervened last week, permitting

the woman identified in doc-

uments only as Nada to apply

for permanent resident status.

had been in hiding since the

Nada, who is in her 20s,

She claimed her freedom of wear the veil in her Muslim movement was restricted in homeland has won refugee sta-Saudi Arabia and she was subtus in Canada after claiming jected to violence on numerthat her basic human rights ous occasions simply because were threatened because she she walked down the street was female, reports AP. alone without covering her After the immigration and Refugee Board rejected the

> The immigration board, in rejecting her claim, counseled that she, 'like all her compatriots, would do well to comply with the laws of general application she criticizes and under all circumstances."

Valcourt said the immigra-

new guidelines that note that although persecution of women is not specifically mentioned in the current law, the statue may properly be interpreted as providing protection to women who demon strate a well-founded lear of gender-related persecution. The guidelines are better

than nothing, said Marie

Louise Cote, the Montreal

lawyer who represented Nada

in a telephone interview. "But

guidelines are not binding. You

cannot force board members

to render a decision in any

tion board soon would release

Valcourt's intervention in the case was a reversal of his earlier stand. Previously he had said Canada should not impose its values on other countries and that recognizing such cases would result in a flood of female refugees into Canada. Nada, who hopes eventually

to change her name and start a new life here as a Canadian citizen, declined to be interviewed. She had the strong backing of Canada's International

well as women's groups.

Center for Human Rights and

Democratic Development, as

Women said Valcourt's ruling will not help 12 other women who face deportation to their home countries. Judy Rebick, president of

Committee on the Status

The National Action

the organization, called for a moratorium on deportations of women until the definition of refugee status is reviewed.

"We need a change to the law so that gender persecution becomes clearly a basis of refugee status and a clear amendment to the law that includes women who are victims of domestic abuse where laws

do not exist to protect them in their own country,' Rebick Eighty per cent of the

world's refugees are women and children, and yet twothirds of the refugees that Canada accepts are male. The Canadian system obviously is biased in favour of men."

Canada accepts the United Nations' definition of a refugee as a person who has a wellfounded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group or political opinion'.

Heatwave claims over 20 in Australia

SYDNEY, Feb 5: More than 20 people have died in the past two days in a heatwave in Australia despite a cool respite today more seorching weather is forecast for the weekend, reports Reuter.

Police and health authorities in south Australia said today hundreds of people had been admitted to hospitals in the past two days as temperatures hovered around 40 degrees Celsius (104° fahren-