Huge nuclear material litters Kazakhstan

MOSCOW, Apr 6: Eight mil lion tonnes of radioactive ma terial litter Kazakhstan, creat ing a radiation count equivalent to more than half the fallout from the 1986 Chernobyl nuclear disaster, Itar-Tass reported Monday, says AFP.

The survey by a team of Kazakh scientists said the Central Asian republic also has another 225 million tonnes of less active nuclear material on its territory.

Pavel Kayukov, a geophysicist who led the team, said the most powerful radioactive material was buried in the west ern region near Semipalatinsk, which for years was a testing site for both underground and surface Soviet nuclear explo-

The nuclear center there was closed in August 1991 on

the orders of President Nursultan Nazarbayev, after more than 500 nuclear explosions had been carried out since 1947.

Kayukov also accused the uranium industries located in the South and West of the republic of responsibility for the presence of millions of tonnes of radioactive waste around Kazakhstan.

He said the radioactivity in some petroleum deposits is 100 times over the acceptable levels set by the former Soviet

ndent States after Russia.

In all, 529 nuclear waste dumps were counted by the team on its survey across the republic, which is the second largest member of the Commonwealth of Indepeernment.

At least 5,000 people have

Hezb-i-Islami warns of fresh bloodshed

Fate of Hekmatyar's cabinet uncertain

CHARASAYAB, Afghanistan, Apr 6: Rebel leaders must accept a new Islamic government in Afghanistan or face more bloodshed. Prime Minister-designate Gulbuddin Hekmatyar warned Monday, reports AP.

Last week, Hekmatyar dismissed the cabinet formed by the nine rebel factions in April 1992 to replace, the ousted communist rulers and said he had picked a new one.

But President Burhanuddin Rabbani immediately reversed the order and said the cabinet would stay on until he had approved another.

The dispute deepened the tensions among former rebel leaders struggling for control in the Afghan capital of Kabul following 13 years of civil war against the Soviet-backed gov-

been killed a more than 20,000 others wounded in fighting that began with the overthrow of the former com-

munists regime. Hekmatyar's radical Hezb-i-Islami faction was blamed for most of the But it was unclear how the bloodshed. Speaking to reporters at his base 20 kilometers (15 miles)

ment as "the other side." Hekmatyar argued the president had overstepped his authority spelled out in a pace and power-sharing pact signed last month. He said rebel negotiators had agreed that two

cabinet positions would go to

south of Kabul, Hekmatyar re-

ferred to Rabbani's govern-

each faction. But the other rebel chiefs said Hekmatyar had picked the new cabinet without talking to them. Hekmatyar has been accused of giving the most powerful portfolios in his new

cabinet to his closest allies.

On March 7, the rebel leaders signed a pact in Pakistan and in the Muslim holy city of Mecca to stop fighting, share power and accept Hekmatyar as prime minister.

agreement would be implemented and whether it offered a permanent settlement to the rebels' long-standing differ-"Some people are deliber-

cord so that it gradually loses its significance and becomes irrelevant," Hekmatyar said. He warned the new government may be the last

ately trying to violate this ac-

chance for a peaceful settlement in Afghanistan. Xinhua from Islamabad says: Hekmatyar has accused President Rabbani of violating

the Islamabad peace accord by

refusing to dismiss the old

Hekmatyar hinted at a press conference in his headquarters at Charstab near Kabul on Monday that a failure of agreement on the new cabinet would push Kabul towards the brink of war, according to reports reaching in Islamabad

He said that the fact is that Rabbani wants the present government to continue without change and they consider themselves not bound by the Islamabad accord.

He blamed Rabbani for violating the Islamabad accord which he felt is the last chance for the peaceful settlement of the Afghan crisis.

On the possibility of war between his own Hezb-i-Islami and Rabbani's Jamiat-i-Islami, lickmatyar said 'we resent war, we will avoid war as long as it is not imposed on us."

Shiv Sena blacklists actor Hangal

NEW DELIII, Apr 6: Members of an extremist Hindu group have called for a boycott of films starring an Indian actor who attended a Pakistan national day function, the Press Trust of India said, reports Reuter.

The news agency said the Bombay-based Shiv Sena blacklisted veteran actor AK Hangal, a Hindu, after the showed up at the event in the city last

Shiv Sena wiclds considerable influence in Bombay, India's film capital.

Shiv Sena volunteers dug up a cricket pitch in Bombay last October to prevent the first game of Pakistan's tour Pakistan took its team home after the incident.

The boycott could harm Hangal professionally, with Shiv Sena volunteers keeping a close watch on cinemas to enforce the ban.

Serbian court bans Muslim magazine

BELGRADE, Apr 6: A Serbian court has banned the latest issue of the Muslim magazine Sandzak, published in the southern Serbian region of the same name, for containing caricatures held to be defamatory to Serbian leaders, the Muslim news agency ISA

reported Monday, says AFP. The court at Novi Pazar, the main town of Sandzak, accused the magazine's chief editor, Sefket Krcic, of "provoking national, racial or religious hatred, the Yugoslav news agency Tanjug said.

Muslims, who make up half of Sandzak's population of 44,000, demand autonomy

Lanka imposes curfew in Mannar Island

COLOMBO, Apr 6: An indefinite curfew was imposed Tuesday in northwestern Mannar Island after Tamil rebels killed three soldiers in an ambush, military officials said, reports AP.

The soldiers were in a jeep travelling on a causeway linking the island to the mainland when the rebels ambushed them Monday night, officials

Troops launched a cordon and search operation immediately after the curfew took effect at 6 am (0030 gmt), said the officials at the Joint Operations Command.

Over 17,500 people have been killed in Sri Lanka's decade-old Tamil separatist war, where rebels from the minority Tamil community are east of the country.

Off the Record



A pet monkey ruffles the hair of a seven-month-old baby girl in a southern Shri Lankan village. The monkey, named Kira, is useful around the house helping with baby sitting and picking fruits although Shri Lanka's wildlife law bans household pets other than cats and dogs.

World War II bomb disrupts Brussels' airport

- AFP/UNB photo

BRUSSELS: A World War II bomb disrupted traffic at Brussels' international airport after it was unearthed by construction workers, news reports said Tuesday, reports AP. The runway at Zaventem airport was closed for 20 minutes

after the bomb was discovered Monday afternoon. Some planes were diverted to provincial airports. Army bomb-disposal experts rendered the 85 kilo (187

pound) bomb harmless with a controlled explosion. Reports said the bomb was made in the United States. It was likely dropped during a World War II bombardment of

German-occupied Belgium. The bomb was found by workers building an extension to

She demands apology not compensation

TOKYO: Song Shin-do, a Korean who says she was forced to have sex with Japanese soldiers during World War II, sued the government Monday, demanding a personal apology but no compensation, reports AP.

Song, 71, became the first ethnic Korean living in Japan to identify herself as a wartime sex slave.

"For 48 years I've felt so ashamed of my past," Song told reporters. " But as I get old, I finally decided it's better to

speak out than dying without telling my story." Women from South Korea and the Philippines already have sued the Japanese government, asking for an apology and compensation.

But Song said she doesn't want money.

"I can't bring money to my grave, I want to her that old man Miyazawa apologize," she said, referring to Prime Minister Kiichi Miyazawa.

Miyazawa has issued general apologies, including one on a trip to Seoul in January 1992. But one of Song's lawyers, Kim

Gyong duk, said the suit demanded a clear apology to Song herself. The suit charges the government with "crimes against

Song, like many other Korean women, said her ordeal

started with deception. In 1938, a Korean broker lured her to Pyongyang from her hometown south of Seoul with promises of a well-paying job at the war front. Instead, she was sent to a camp in Wuchang in northeast-

ern China, where she was forced to have sex with dozens of Japanese soldiers daily for three years, she said. She was later transferred to other brothels in China until the war ended in



Two Russian prostitutes sit in their kitchen after injecting themselves with a mixture of drugs, following a night on - AFP/UNB photo

Ukraine tries to become N-power, shouts Russia

growing urgency, Russia is shouting that Ukraine is trying to become a nuclear power. Ukrainian leaders deny it, but the world may well wonder: just how close is Kiev to getting its finger on the button, reports AP.

The answer, Russian and Western experts say, could range from a few months to several years, depending on how hard the Ukrainians try.

"Ukrainians do have the technical know-how, if only they decide to invest enough money and effort," said Alexander Konovalov, Director of the centre for military policy at Moscow's Institute of the USA and Canada.

Western countries have worried about nuclear proliferation in the former Soviet Union since the country's collapse in 1991 left atomic weapons in four newly independent states: Russia, Ukraine, Belarus and Kazakhstan.

AFP from Bangkok.

and several injured.

peace negotiations."

The latter three agreed last

MOSCOW, Apr 6: With year in Lisbon, Portugal, to transfer their weapons to Russia or destroy them, eventually leaving Russia as the re-

gion's only nuclear power. Belarus and Kazakhstan stuck to the agreement and ratified the START I and nuclear non-proliferation treaties. But Ukraine has become increasingly reluctant to send its warheads to Russia and has nor yet joined either START I or NPT.

Russia has cried foul with growing vigor, culminating Monday in an official accusation that Ukraine was violating the Lisbon agreement and trying to "widen the circle of nuclear powers."

The statement followed the virtual breakdown of Russian-Ukrainian nuclear talks. Moscow also may have been emboldened by President Clinton, who capped the Vancouver summit with Boris Yeltsin on Sunday by endorsing Russia's bid to be sole hetr of the Soviet nuclear arsenal.

Ghali in Bangkok: UN Secretary General

Boutros Boutros-Ghali arrived in Bangkok yesterday for an

overnight stop before a visit to troubled Cambodia, reports

He told reporters at the airport that next month's UN-or-

Boutros-Ghali travels to Phnom Penh tomorrow of a two-

The radical Khmer Rouge faction is boycotting the elec-

ganised elections in Cambodia will be held despite the in-

day visit to inspect the UN operation in Cambodia as the

tion, and has been blamed for an escalating number of attacks

in recent days which have seen four UN peacekeepers killed

Fatah wing slates Syria: The Fatah wing

of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Monday

accused Syria of ordering murders of its members to force

the PLO to resume peace talks with Israel, reports AFP from

statement published here PLO members had been executed

by the Fatah-Revolutionary Council of Abou Nidal.

sources said Monday, AFP reports from Rome.

building contracts, the sources said.

said, reports Reuter from Trujllo

of the security forces had died

north of Lima, police said.

Mounir Magdah, head of Fatah's armed wing said in a

Maqdah said "Gangs of the traitor Abou Nidal" had

"Assassinated, on Syria's instructions, our leaders in order to

force our people into accepting the Israeli conditions of the

Italian politician under inquiry:

The former Secretary of the Christian Democrat Party.

Arnaldo Forlani, is under investigation by magistrates probing

Italy's ever-widening graft and corruption scandal, judicial

funding of political parties in a scam involving public road-

Rebels kill 10 in Peru: Maoist Shining Path

guertilas on Monday ambushed a truck while it patrolled a

highland region, killing 10 members of the security forces

and their civilian driver and wounding eight others, police

remote zone through radio, originally reported 30 members

19 members of a mixed patrol on the highway between

Santiago De Chuco and Trujillo, some 5000 kms (330 miles)

in the attack or in a gunbattle that followed, police said.

Another live policemen and three soldiers were wounded

Police in this northern city, in communication with the

About 50 Shining path guerillas mined the truck carrying

Seven policemen, three soldiers and a civilian driver died

Forlant is being investigated in connection with the illicit

campaign for the May 23-27 election formally begins.

creasingly unstable situation in the country.

US to build N-plant in Russia

An activist of the Azad Kashmir People's Party (AKPP) flashes victory sign as his jeep

crosses a landslide successfully near Ghari Dopatta, 20 kms from Muzaffarabad on

Tuesday. Pakistani troops and Azad Kashmir authorities erected hurdles in the way of

marchers to foil their attempt to cross the ceasefire line separating Indian held Kashmir

and Pakistan held Kashmir. Authorities successfully managed to halt the marchers 24 kms

NEW YORK, Apr 6: A US company and the Russian gov ernment have agreed to build a nuclear reactor in Russia that would generate electricity by burning plutenium from obsolete warheads, according to a

from the ceasefire line without any incident.

published report, says AP. General Atomics of San Diego and the Russian government finalized the plan for the 1.5 billion dollar plant last week, the New York Times re

ported in Tuesday's editions. It wasn't immediately known whether the plant had been mentioned at the Vancouver summit between President Clinton and Russian

President Boris Yeltsin. Getting the plant going would require up to dirs 100 US government and would use excess plutonium that was scheduled to be disposed of

million over five years from the

"This reactor offers a very attractive opportunity to destroy weapon-grade plutonium and simultaneously produce electricity," General Atomics Chairman Neil Blue told the Times.

But the president of the Nuclear Control Institute, a private group based in Washington, criticized the

We see this as a major diversion in trying to get plutonium out of commerce," said Paul Leventhal, the institute's

president, "It's better to turn it into glass and bury it." The proposed reactor

would be cooled by helium and is described by General Atomics as immune to a melt-

- AFP UNB photo.

The plant, which would take 10 years to build, would convert 50 per cent of its generated heat into electricity, compared with the 33 per cent conversion rate of most commercial nuclear power plants. The proposed plant's conversion rate would be

higher than usual because the heated helium would directly turn a turbine rather than heating an intermediary, such as water, which would then turn the turbine.

Kim fears war with North

sung, was held to discuss the

issue of North Korea's nuclear

potential with Foreign

Minister Han Sung-joo, who

went to the United States and

Secretary of State Warren

Christopher agreed to gradu

ally increase pressure on

North Korea to reverse its de

In Washington, Han and US

Japan last week.

SEOUL, Apr 6: President Kim Young-sam warned Tucsday that North Korea may risk military confrontation with rival South Korea to counter international pressure to rejoin a nuclear controls treaty, reports AP.

Kim's warning came as the Communist North issued its own warning that it would take unspecified self-defence mea sures if international society takes collective sanctions against it.

Kim's warning was seen by observers as indicating growing concern within the Seoul government that quiet diplomacy may not help solve the impasse with its northern neighbour over inspections of its suspected nuclear facilities.

There is a possibility that North Korea might run military risks after rejecting the international demand eventually." Kim told a meeting of key Cabinet officials The meeting, also attended

by Prime Minister Hwang In-

cision to withdraw from the Nuclear Non proliferation China denies

arms import BELJING, Apr 6: A Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman said in Beijing that China does

of large scale, reports Xinhua The spokesman made the remark when asked to com ment on a report that 85 US Congressmen wrote a letter to President Bill Clinton asking him to express US concern to Russia on its sale on billions of dollars of arms to China.

not intend to import weapons

The Pyongyang govern ment's decision will take effect

In Tokyo, Han agreed with Japanese Foreigi: Minister Michio Watanabe on the need to exert diplomatic effort to case the tension. They expressed hope that the North's key ally, China, would play the role of go between.

After hearing Han's report, Kim said his Scoul government, in close consultation with the United States. Japan and other allies, must try to help solve the issue through diplomacy

But he also expressed con corn that the hard-line communist North, if pushed into a corner, might trigger military provocations along the heavily armed border

"North Koreas nuclear weapons development must be stopped by all means. Kim

lighting for an independent homeland in the north and the streets on Sunday. High winds delay | Yeltsin returns home to start campaign for referendum

launch of Discovery MOSCOW, Apr 6: President Boris Yeltsin, buoyed by CAPE CANAVERAL, Apr 6 Dangerously high winds de layed Tuesday's launch of space shuttle Discovery on a

mission to study the thinning of the earths protective ozone layer, reports AP Discovery was supposed to lift off at 1:32 am EDT (0532 GMT), but NASA held the countdown at the nine-minute mark in hopes the high crosswinds would subside at the Kennedy Space Center's shuttle emergency landing strip. Safety guidelines are

aunches. ing a last-minute problem with an engine valve that appeared to be too hot

promises of 1.6 billion dollars in US aid to help his reforms. has returned home to start a vigorous campaign for support in a key referendum on April 25, reports Reuter

Yeltsin, on the way back from his first summit with US President Bill Clinton, stopped off in the central Siberian city of Bratsk on Monday where he urged the population to back his reforms as well as the idea of early elections.

The ballot paper, changed last week by the conservative supreme legislature as part of a raging power struggle with Yeltsin, will contain four ques

I propose a simple formula

for voting - go out and vote 'yes to all four questions" Yeltsin said after visiting the city's giant aluminium smelter.

the support to half the elec-

The questions are a vote of confidence in the president, a vote of confidence in reforms begun since the Soviet collapse

Don't be afraid to say yes even to the question relating to the re-election of the president Yeltsin added, saying he was sure he would win re-

Interfax news agency that the presidential team was only interested in the questions on the vote of confidence in Yeltsin and on early parliamen-

First Deputy Prime Minister Vladimir Shumeiko told Interfax news agency that the presidential team was only interested in the questions on the vote of confidence in Yeltsin and on early parliamen tary elections.

of confidence in the painful economic reforms-which Yeltsin's opponents hope will result in a large 'no vote- as

Confidence in the president automatically means confidence in his policy, he said. An opinion poll in the daily

evening newspaper Izvestia

said 43 per cent of those

asked said they would vote for "The most optimistic forecasts suggest Yeltsin could get the backing of 46 per cent of the population, which in any normal country would be con-

On Monday, Canadian Prime Minister Brain Mulroney called for swift international action to deliver billions of dollars to Russia to keep its fledgling

democracy alive.

"If the international finan-

cial institutions are swift and effective, relief and assistance from this quarter could also be in the billions of dollars, Mulroney said

Mulroney noted that Friday's decision by the Paris Club to re-schedule Russian debt would provide about dollars 15 billion in immediate

"That should be the imme diate objective of the G 7 (Group of Seven major industrialised nation), to insure that decisions are made that place Russia irreversibly on the road to freedom and eventual eco-

Mulroney hosted the US Russian summit in Vancouver at the weekend at which President Bill Clinton announced Washington's 1.6 billion dollars aid package to help Yeltsin's government. The Russian leader now has

can hang onto power.

Before leaving Bratsk Yeltsin told Interfax the summit had for the first time created a pragmatic way for (our) two countries to work together to give Russia and the world the chance to confidently push forwards the idea of democ-

Interfax quoted the Russian in Siberia.

143 in West Bengal CALCUTTA, India Apr 6

Cholera claims

Cholera has killed 143 people and affected some 8,000 others in India's West Bengal state, the state health Minister said Monday, reports AFP. West Bengal state health

across four districts but was not yet an epidemic. Doctors in West Bengal had earlier identified the disease as gastroenterits due to a lack of drinking water in the vil-

Minister Prasanta Sur told re-

porters here the disease had

spread in several villages

The West Bengal administration has taken all steps to halt the spread of cholera, which has also claimed victims in Calcutta since the first

stricter for nighttime Engineers also were assess

The Russian leader needs

torate according to rules set by the congress of People's Deputies, the supreme legislature. He must start campaign ing immediately if he is to have any chance of overcoming growing political apathy.

in late 1991, and two on whether early presidential and parliamentary elections should

First Deputy Prime Minister Vladimir Shumiko told

tary elections.

He dismissed the question

sidered a great achievement,"

nomic greatness," he said

Clinton's explicit support for his reform effort as long as he

leader as telling Bratsk work ers he had got to know Clinton well. Much of the aid would be spent on developing small and medium businesses

deaths were reported.