Non-proliferation of nuclear arms

Pressler wants US to maintain threat of aid sanctions

NEW DELHI. Dec 13: Senator Larry Pressler said Monday he will fight to maintain the threat of US aid sanctions to control the proliferation of nuclear weapons, reports AP.

The Pressler Amendment, which was applied against Pakistan in 1990, is under review by the Clinton Administration in an overhaul of its foreign aid policy.

The legislation that Pressler sponsored in 1985 requires the US President to certify that Pakistan is not trying to develop nuclear weapons to be eligible for aid.

Last month, the State Department said the amendment did not promote US non-

proliferation objectives in South Asia. One week later, the department reversed itself and said Pakistan would remain ineligible for aid, even if it is not specifically mentioned in the new policy.

Pressler, in India among a three-member delegation of Republican senators, said the final word on the fate of the amendment will be determined this spring.

"There is a draft proposal that would make some alterations, but the Clinton administration says it will support the same policy," he told a news conference. "I will continue to fight to keep my amendment.

said the South Dakota senator. "It is the only piece of legislation on non-proliferation with some teeth in it."

Pressler said that China "is a much greater long-term problem in non-proliferation than any other country" in Asia, and said Japan "will react in five or six years" China's nuclear capabilities.

India and Pakistan have fought three wars since 1947 and are still at odds over the divided Himalayan province of Kashmir.

Both are understood to have the ability to quickly assemble a nuclear weapon. But no sanctions have been applied against India, which gets little US aid.

Pakistan received hundreds of millions of dollars during the 1980's when it was the main supporter of Muslim rebels fighting the Soviet-backed regimes in Afghanistan.

Pakistan Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto has called the US policy discriminatory and said it was "degrading and humiliating to expect Pakistan to roll back its nuclear programme."

Pressler said he suggested to Indian Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao, and would tell Ms Bhutto, that moving goods and tourists across the border could break down the hostility between their two countries.



PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat (L), Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak (C) and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin (R) meet in Cairo on Sunday. The three leaders began talks in a bid to strike a last minute deal to launch Palestinian self-rule on schedule. - AFP photo

Congress recovers lost ground in three states

NEW DELHI. Dec 13 Congress (I) recovered lost ground in three of the four former Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) ruled states in last month's assembly poll mainly because voters perceived it as a better alternative to the reunifled Janata Dal, a PTI com-

puter analysis shows. But in Uttar Pradesh, i lost more ground with voters taking the SP-BSP combine as a more credible alternative and in Delhi, it was the BJP which gained from the swings against both Congress (I) and JD.

The Congress (I) swings ranged from minus 6.97 per cent in Delhi (since 1991) to 12 per cent in Himachal Pradesh. The swing was minus 3.25 per cent in UP, plus five in Rajasthan and 7.15 per cent in Madhya Pradesh.

Kurds kill 36 in Turkey: At least 36 people were killed during weekend attacks by rebel Kurds in southeast Turkey, the Anatolian news agency reported yesterday. Reuter says from Istanbul.

It said troops killed 2 members of the separatist Kurdistan Workers Party who raided a military post near Kukurca, a town in Hakkari province.

Thirteen civilians were shot dead when PAKK gunmen raided a village in Adiyaman province, the agency said.

Tremor hits Assam: Assam-Bhutan border areas yesterday experienced a moderate tremor of 5.0 degree intensity on the Richter scale, meteorological officials said, PTI reports from New Delhi.

The earthquake with epicentre at latitude 26.7 degree north and longitude 92 degree was felt at 0504 HRS 1st, the officials



Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamed (L) and his Indian counterpart P V Narasimha Rao walk upon Mahathir's arrival at Rashtrapati Bhaban (Presidential Palace) on Monday in New Delhi. - AFP photo

10 die in Congo violence: At least 10 people, including an army colonel and his wife, have died in a weekend of political violence in the south of Congo's capital Brazzaville, witnesses said on Sunday, Reuter reports from Brazzaville.

Funeral services said they had received the bodies of about 10 people killed on Saturday and Sunday but the toll was be-

lieved to be higher. Police said the dead included an army colonel, Jean-Pierre Mouanda, and his wife, attacked in their home by opposition supporters.

Benazir, Tansu Ciller plan trip to Sarajevo

ISLAMABAD, Dec 13: Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto and Turkey's Premier Tansu Ciller are planning to visit to the Bosnian capital of Sarajevo, Pakistan's foreign minister said Monday, reports AP.

"As women, as mothers and as wives the visit . . . will be a special gesture towards the brave women of Sarajevo." Benazir was quoted as saying by her Foreign Minister Sardar Assef Ali.

Benazir returned Sunday from a 10-day official visit to Iran and Turkey, her first international trip since becoming Prime Minister in October.

Assef Ali said the two female leaders planned to ask former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher to accompany them to Sarajevo

Few details were available on the planned visit. No date had been set, nor had the leaders considered the logistics or security of a visit to the war-battered city, said Assef Ali.

Khamenei leads memorial service for Golpayegani

NICOSIA, Dec 13: fran's spiritual leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei led a memorial service on Sunday for a senior Shi'ite theologian whose death brought thousands of mourners on to the streets, the official Iranian News Agency (IRNA) said, reports Reuter.

IRNA said Khamenei and religious, political and military officials attended the ceremony in Tehran for Grand Ayatollah Mohammed Reza Golpayegani, who died of natural causes on Thursday at the age of 96.

Golpayegani, regarded as the highest-ranking theologian in the hierarchy of Shi'ite Islam. was buried on Saturday in the holy city of Qom-a centre of Shi'ite Muslim learning where he had spent most of his life as a teacher.

Tens of thousands of people came out into the streets to mourn his death. The government declared Saturday a holiday and laid on buses and trains to take mourners to Qom from Tehran.

ruin peace move: Aideed

ADDIS ABABA, Dec 13: form a Somali government by the Addis Ababa accord in all Somalia's most powerful warlord Mohamed Farah Aideed accused the 'United Nations on Sunday of working behind the scenes to wreck efforts for peace and reconciliation in his wartorn horn of African coun-

> try, reports Reuter. At a news conference at the end of five days of talks in the Ethiopían capital Addis Ababa, Aideed said: "The failure of the current talks was due to foreign interference."

Aideed went on to accuse the United Nations Operation in Somalia (Unosom) of planning to form a new Somali government without his Somali National Alliance (SNA).

"We know that those who have refused to sign the supplementary agreement to the Addis Ababa accord (agreed last March) are being called for an urgent meeting with Unosom in Mogadishu," he said.

"We also know the plan is to

MOSCOW, Dec 13: Russian

ultra-nationalist Vladimir

Zhirinovsky said after apparent

successes in parliamentary

elections he was ready to work

together with President Boris

Yeltsin, but senior ministers

branded him a dangerous fas-

sleepless night, he outlined an

apocalyptic vision of future

conflicts that he believed would

lay waste to large parts of Asia

and prompt Russia to send

troops to the shores of the

Zhirinovsky, emerging dra-

matically from the shadows of

Russian politics, said he was

confident he could win the pres-

idency as the next landmark in

his carrier. But he struck a

gentle, cautious tone in talking

about his future in parliament

- a stark contrast to the brash

"If Yeltsin asks us to form a.

rhetoric of his campaign.

Indian Ocean to restore order.

His energy unflagging after a

cist, reports Reuter.

without the participation of SNA-which is totally impossible." Aideed added.

Aideed said his SNA enjoys the support of "75 per cent of the Somali people.

"Those who have refused to sign the current supplementary agreement to last March's Addis Ababa accord have no backing of the Somali people. It will be futile to try and work out a plan without the presence of SNA," he added.

The 12 Somali groups allied to rival warlord Ali Mahdi Mohammed said in a statement that last week's talks failed because Aideed had demanded changes in the March Addis Ababa accord.

"The current talks could not conclude on a satisfactory note due to renewed demands from the SNA side designed to engage in a new revision of the Addis Ababa agreement", it said.

"The Group of 12 will abide

Zhirinovsky ready to work

with President Yeltsin

government, we are ready. If he

invites us to join the govern-

ment, take up two or three

ministerial positions, we are

ready," said Zhirinovsky, rat-

tling out his views in a fast.

ready to remain as the largest

to offer a ministerial place to a

man who has described the

president's economic policies as

national betrayal and aroused

horror in the west with plans

for Russian territorial expan-

Nikolai Medvedev, Yeltsin's as-

sistant in charge of Russia's

territories, showed the com-

munists taking 13 per cent and

pushing Russia's choice into

third place. The conservative

Agrarian Party was given eight

per cent, the feminist women of

The figures, released by

opposition party and help con-

structively," he told Reuters.

"If he offers nothing we are

Yeltsin seems scarcely likely

husky monotone.

circumstances and will also pursue dialogue with SNA to find common ground for reconciliation," it added.

Aideed said his group had in fact made a number of concessions in an effort to remove barriers to a reconciliation.

"Of the five demands SNA presented earlier, three were withdrawn and we requested the other factions to accept the remaining two," he said.

Aideed's remaining two demands were to raise the number of political factions represented in the proposed Transitional National Council (TNC) and the participation of factions during the election of members to the TNC in the re-

The latest talks, described by diplomats as the last chance for the warring Somali groups to unite, were called by Ethiopian President Meles Zenawi with backing from the UN and the US

Russia seven per cent, and the

reformist Yaloko bloc of

economist Grigory Yavlinsky six

puty Prime Minister Sergei

Shakhari's Pres, was struggling

to stay above the five per cent

cutoff point, as was the centrist

With their votes added to-

.The six regions were

gether, reformist parties won a

mere 23 per cent to 47 per cent

Magadan, Sakhalin and Amur

in the Far East, Tomsk in

Siberia, Kursk in central Russia

and Smolensk on Belarussian

on party lists for half the seats

in the lower house of parlia-

ment. But as the only overtly

party based result, they give an

indication of the make-up of the

rest the parliament as well.

The figures referred to votes

for hardline opposition parties.

Democratic Party.

Another reform party, De-

per cent.

UN working behind scene to Off the Record

Rule to wear helmet

LAUSANNE (Switzerland): Sikhs must wear motorscooter helmets even if it means removing the turban that is a symbol of their faith, according to Switzerland's highest court, reports AP. The Federal Tribunal, in a ruling published Monday, threw out an appeal by a Sikh against his 1990 fine for riding a mo-

torscooter in Zurich without the legally required helmet. The man had appealed, saying he could not be expected to

wear a helmet over his headdress. But the high court ruled that the helmet meets the key requirement that Sikhs cover their head in public. Religious

freedom was not violated, it said. The plaintiff's name and nationality were withheld under Swiss court rules.

Sikhism emerged in India in the 15th century, drawing elements from Hinduism and Islam. Most followers are in the Indian state of Punjab.

Smile for safety week

LONDON: Put a smile on your face and you can prolong life by reducing stress, the British Safety Council says, reports Reuter.

The council launched a smile for safety week with a call for people to grin their way to a healthier lifestyle.

"Smiling is the key to wellness and now is the time to start on the road to a happier, healthier, stress-free life," said the council's Director General James Tye."

"All it takes is a smile and you're on your way to feeling better and looking younger."

Tye said it was particularly important to put on a cheery face in the run-up to the Christmas period, traditionally the most stressful time of the year.

Inequities shame

LONDON: More than 20 per cent of British children live in poverty and state welfare payments are inadequate, a research group said yesterday, reports Reuter. The Commission on Social Justice, sponsored by the opposi-

tion Labour Party, said it costs at least 3,000 pounds (4,488 US dollar) a year to rear a child under the age of 11 but the government's child benefit provides only 15 per cent of that sum.

"The inequities and deprivations suffered by children in the UK are not our misfortune but our shame," Dr Penelope Leach, a noted child psychologist and co-author of the commission's report, said in a statement.

The Report, published on Monday, said more than one in five children in the United Kingdom lived in poverty.

It added that government policy-makers must take tough decisions on the support they want to give the country's children through child care, pre-school education and parental leave as

'He could not have been that man since he was 63'

MANILA: An elderly Philippine Congressman denied Monday he and a girl were caught naked in a downtown parking lot and demanded a public apology from a government lawyer who

made the allegation on radio, reports AFP. State Prosecutor Necito Hilario told radio station Dzxl the couple were caught having sex in a parked car late Sunday.

Police did not press charges when the unidentified man, in his 40s, offered a calling card introducing himself as Congressman Eleuterio Violago.

Violago, in a call to Hilario broadcast on the station, said he could not have been that man since he was 63 years old, had 12 grandchildren, and had witnesses to prove he was elsewhere at the time.

Militants kill 13 Algerian cops

ALGIERS, Dec 13: Thirteen policemen, including a special forces lieutenant, were killed in attacks during the weekend. Algerian newspapers reported on Sunday, reports Reuter.

Twelve were killed at a police checkpoint on Thursday in the Sahara desert town of Ghardaia, about 470 KM (290 miles) South of Algiers, Algiers daily Le Matin reported.

On Friday a special intervention forces lieutenant was killed in the coastal city of Annaba, about 420 KM (260 miles) east of the capital, the Daily Alger Republican wrote.

Interior Ministry spokesmen were not immediately available to comment on the reports.

The violence began after the authorities cancelled an election in which the fundamentalist Islamic Salvation Front party had taken a huge first-round lead. The party was later banned.

2 blacks shot dead

JOHANNESBURG, Dec 13: Several whites thressed in camouflage uniforms shot to death two blacks, including an 11year-old boy, and wounded five Monday in what police said was a racial attack, reports AP.

The attackers forced two cars off a rural road and ordered the black passengers to run into a nearby field. The gunmen then opened fire, said

police Maj Henriette Bester. The boy and a 21-year-old man were found dead in the field. Five other men were wounded. Two of them had been stabbed and had their ears cut off, police said.

An 8-year-old boy and a 10year-old girl escaped unhurt.

Philippines reimposes death penalty MANILA, Dec 13: President

Fidel Ramos signed legislation Monday reimposing the death penalty, terming it an essential step to protect Philippine society from "the most heinous offenders of our laws," reports AP.

*Capital punishment had been abolished by the 1987 constitution, ratified during a wave of liberalism that swept the country after the popular uprising against the late strongmen Ferdinand Marcos a year earlier.

But Ramos, a former military chief and defence secretary, had campaigned for its reimposition even before his election in May 1992. The Philippines had been the only non-communist Southeast Asian country to abolish the death penalty.

"In re-examining this provision of our constitution, we do not reject its spirit," Ramos said at a signing ceremony. " We only say that there are now compelling reasons for restoring capital punishment."

" With this new law, we can now more effectively utilize the criminal justice system to protect our citizenry and our society from the most heinous offenders of our laws," he added.

The complicated measure provides for death by lethal gas for 14 crimes, including piracy, rape, murder, drug-trafficking and official corruption, depending on the circumstances of the offence.



President Fidel Ramos (L) signs into law a controversial bill restoring the death penalty for "heinous crimes" at a ceremony in Malacanang Palace on Monday. At right is Senate President Edgardo Angara.

Gaddafi invites most feared radicals'

leader Muammar Gaddafi, frustrated by two years of sanctions against his country, announced on Sunday he was inviting the Arab worlds most feared radical groups for a meeting in Tripoli, reports Reuter. Among those invited were

Palestinian leaders, Abu Nidal and Ahmed Jibril, who terrorised the West with bomb attacks, kidnapings and hijackings. The two men also oppose the PLO's peace accord with

As long as the West doesn't agree to meet them I invite Abu Nidal and Ahmed Jibril to meet here in Libya openly and pub-

TRIPOLI, Dec 13: Libyan licly, Gaddafi told a cheering crowd of around 20,000 people in the town of Aziziya, some 40 KM (25 miles) south of Tripoli.

"I am not supporting their terrorist activities but support their struggle, Gaddafi said in a flery half-hour speech.

The maverick leader said the two men were Palestinian leaders fighting a just cause and that western powers were "forcing Palestinians to talk to the enemy."

He also invited the Irish Republican Army, fighting for an end to British rule in Northern Ireland, to Libya for talks

"Ireland has the right to freedom and unity," he said.

Delay in Israeli pullout may prompt further bloodshed

JERUSALEM, Dec 13: Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin huddled with advisers early Monday, reportedly considering an Arab prisoner release to calm nerves frayed by a delay in Palestinian autonomy in the occupied terri-

tories, reports AP. The peace accord signed by Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation set Monday as the starting date for withdrawal of Israeli forces from

parts of the territories. But Rabin and PLO chief Yasser Arafat announced Sunday they had failed to bridge their differences over the planned withdrawal, delaying the pullout. They said they

would meet again in 10 days to discus the transfer of authority to Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank region of Jericho.

Officials feared the delay in the Israelt withdrawal could prompt further bloodshed. Forty-one Palestinians and 14 Israelis have been killed since the accord was signed September 13.

Some damage-control measures already were being considered. An official in Rabin's office said the prime minister met with advisers after returning from Cairo Sunday night. Israel radio indicated they

were considering a release of

to 1,200 inmates and permit three deported men to return to the occupied territories as goodwill gestures. Rabin, however, refused

Palestinian prisoners. Reports

Sunday said Israel may free up

comment when asked about possible releases at a news conference in Cairo. Rabin said he and Arafat would meet again in Egypt in 10

days and attempt then to reach agreement. Key sticking points are how far troops would pull back from the city to Jericho, Israel's insistence on keeping sole control over border crossings, to Egypt and Jordan, and on maneuverability in chasing

after guerillas when Jewish settlers come under attack.

Both leaders stressed their commitment to the agreement. Confidence in the peace already has waned in the wake of daily attacks by Palestinian and Israeli extremists trying to stymie the accord, each maintaining it is a sellout to the other side.

Attacks continued Sunday night with the shooting and wounding of an Israeli bus driver in the West Bank. Shlomo Ohana, 28, of Beersheba, was in serious condition with a gunshet wound in the chest after his bus was ambushed outside the city of

Herbon, a flashpoint of Arab-Israeli violence lately in the occupied West Bank.

The right-wing Israeli party Tzomet said the delay proved the need for a reexamination of the peace agreement, while Palestinians said the move could encourage Islamic and nationalist opponents of peace.

"The delay will not help for the credibility of peace." said Dr Haidar Abdel-Shafi, a leading PLO figure in the Gaza Strip. "People will have more fears and doubts."

This agreement is doomed." said Islamic fundamentalist activist Jamal Khudari of Gaza

City. "Violence, killing and destruction were increased by this agreement and now we will see more and more."

"Any delay in carrying out the agreement gives the murderers a chance to stymie the agreement," said lawmaker Ran Cohen of the left-wing Meretz

Housing Minister Benjamin Ben Eliezer, while supporting the need for further negotiations, also warned on Army radio that "any delay isn't good."

'We have already entered a new dimension of conflict, with eye-for-an-eye" attacks, Ben-Eliezer added

Nov 11 debacle: Lankan commander to resign

COLOMBO, Dec 13: Shri Lanka's army commander has confirmed that he will resign to take responsibility for the army's worst defeat by Tamil separatist rebels, reports Reuter.

"I decided to quit my post after taking sole responsibility for the November 11 security forces debacle at Pooneryn' General Cectl Waidyaratne said in comments reported in today's island newspaper. Waidyaratne would retire by the end of the month and be replaced by the army's Chief of Staff and northern commander, Major General Gerry de Silve, the president's office said.