BREFER

Mandela, de Klerk on jt mission: South Africa's two main leaders - President F W de Klerk and Nelson Mandela - arrived in Botswana's capital Wednesday on a first-ever joint diplomatic mission to meet regional leaders.

AP reports from Gaborone. Though they travelled separately, the joint trip illustrated how Mandela's African National Congress has assumed prominence in South Africa in the run up to the nation's first all-race election at the end of April

As the nation's leading black group, the ANC is expected to win the vote and lead the first post-apartheid government.

Municipal polls in WB, Gaza soon: Municipal elections may take place "very soon" in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip. Israeli television's Washington correspondent reported Tuesday, AFP says from Jerusalem.

The correspondent said the proposal, which was on the agenda for the Palestinian-Israeli talks in Washington Tuesday, aimed to prepare Palestinians in "now to exercise democracy" before elections for the autonomy council.

According to the PLO-Israel autonomy accord signed in Washington on September 13, the autonomy council elections are to take place before July 13.

US launches unmanned spacecraft: A small unmanned spacecraft was launched by the Defence Department Tuesday in the first US mission to lunar orbit in more than two decades, Reuter reports from California.

The probe, called Clementione, lifted off atop a Titan IIG rocket on a path that will take it past the moon, where it will map the surface. It will continue on then, toward a rendezvous with an asteroid 1620 geographos, a Vandenberg spokesman said.

The mission is the first US flight into lunar orbit since Apollo 17, the last Apollo moon landing, in 1972. It is the Defence Department's first space mission beyond earth's

500m-yr-old fossil found in China: Some 500-million-year-old fossils of sea creature has been found in northern China's Hebel province, according to the provincial geological prospecting bureau, Xinhua reports from Shijiazhuang.

The discovery was made in mountainous Quyang county. The fossils were lodged in a marine sedimentary deposit in the Cambrian stratum on the surface of the upper layer of the Gushan limestone group.

Govt fears Khmers' attack: The government has boosted defences in northwestern Cambodia in anticipation of a Khmer Rouge attack after bombs exploded near the temples of Angkor, injuring three children, a government official said Wednesday, AP reports from Phnom

Guerilla movements in the past two weeks indicated preparations to attack Siem Reap town, 225 kilometers (140 miles) northwest of the capital, Information Ministry spokesman Sieng Lapresse told a news conference.

He said groups of three to five guerillas have been launching hit-and-run attacks, and were believed responsible for setting two or three small bombs that exploded Tuesday in front of a main tourist lodging, the Grand hotel.

Kozyrev defends ethnic Russians: Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev said living conditions must improve for ethnic Russians in the former Soviet Republics, during a visit Tuesday to Kyrgyzstan, Interfax reported. AFP says from Moscow.

"Defending the Russian-speaking population does not amount to imperialism." Kozyrev told Kyrgyzstan's President Aikar Akayev during a meeting in the capital Bishakek.

He added that Russia could not remain indifferent to "violations of that population's rights is happening in Latvia where Russians are being expelled from the country."

HK regrets China's stance: Hong Kong said Wednesday it regretted China's latest blast at funding plans for its new airport, and challenged the legal basis for Beijing's threat to disavow construction deals when it takes over the colony in 1977. AP reports from Hong Kong.

It appealed to China for talks to settle the dispute. China announced Tuesday that it would not be liable for loans or contracts to build the airport. The US 20.2 billion dollars project now under construction is designed not only to ease congestion at the colony's existing airport, but to reinforce confidence in Hong Kong's future under Chinese

Soldier shot in Gaza: Palestinians opened fire on an army jeep in Gaza City on Wednesday, lightly injuring a soldier before one of the assailants was wounded by return fire, the army said. AP reports from Jerusalem.

The Muslim fundamentalist group Hamas claimed responsibility for the attack. Hamas opposes the Israel-PLO peace accord and has vowed to keep up shooting attacks on Israeli soldiers and settlers.

The incident began when a jeep drove down Omar el Mukhtar Street, Gaza City's main thoroughfare, at about 6:40 am. Arab reporters said.

Major shakeup in NY

Kashmiris observe Black Day on Republic Day

India displays military might

NEW DELHI, Jan 26: Muslim rebels fired two rockets on a Republic Day celebration in Kashmir Wednesday as India marked the 44th anniversary of its constitution with a parade of its latest weaponry in New, Delhi, reports AP.

For the first time on display was the Indian-developed Prithvi missile among battle tanks, rocket launchers and camel-mounted desert troops.

India's missile programme has fuelled concern among western countries. led by the United States, over its ability to conduct nuclear war against Pakistan, which also has a nuclear weapons capability.

The Prithvi, which can carry a one-ton warhead up to 250 kilometres (155 miles) was deployed last year. Four other long and short-ranged missiles are under development in the 285 million dollars programmes.

In Srinagar, capital of Jammu-Kashmir state, two rockets crashed outside a stadium as a state official unfurled the tricolor flag on the parade

No one was injured, but the rockets damaged a water tank

and burnt a tree. No one immediately claimed responsibility. Separatist groups called on Kashmir's residents to observe a "Black Day" and few ventured outdoors.

Rebels want Kashmir to break away from India and become either independent or join with Pakistan. The insurrection in India's only Muslimmajority state has left 8,200 people dead in the past four

New agencies also reported continued exchanges of smallarms fire with Pakistan, and claimed five rockets fitted with timing devices feel in southern Kashmir.

In New Delhi, Prime

Minister Goh Chok Tong of Singapore joined India's president Shankar Dayal Sharma and Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao behind bulletproof glass on the grandstand at the outset of the 14-kilometre (9-mile) march.

The day celebrates the adoption of the constitution in 1950, three years after Britain gave its colony independence and partitioned it into Hindudominated India and Muslim Pakistan.

Abut 2.000 soldiers in crisp blue, green or red tunics of the air force, navy and 30 army regiments marched down Rajpath, a broad boulevard between the president's palace and the India Gate war memo-

Helicopters showered rose petals on the dignitaries and thousands of civilians watching in sunny spring-like weather.

Six anti aircraft guns were mounted on tall buildings overlooking the parade site, as 6,000 policemen ringed the area to guard against terrorist

Visitors passed through a maze of metal detectors. Security was so tight that women with handbags were turned away and people were asked to leave behind safety matches and cigarette lighters.

PTI from Bangalore says. Republic Day celebrations in

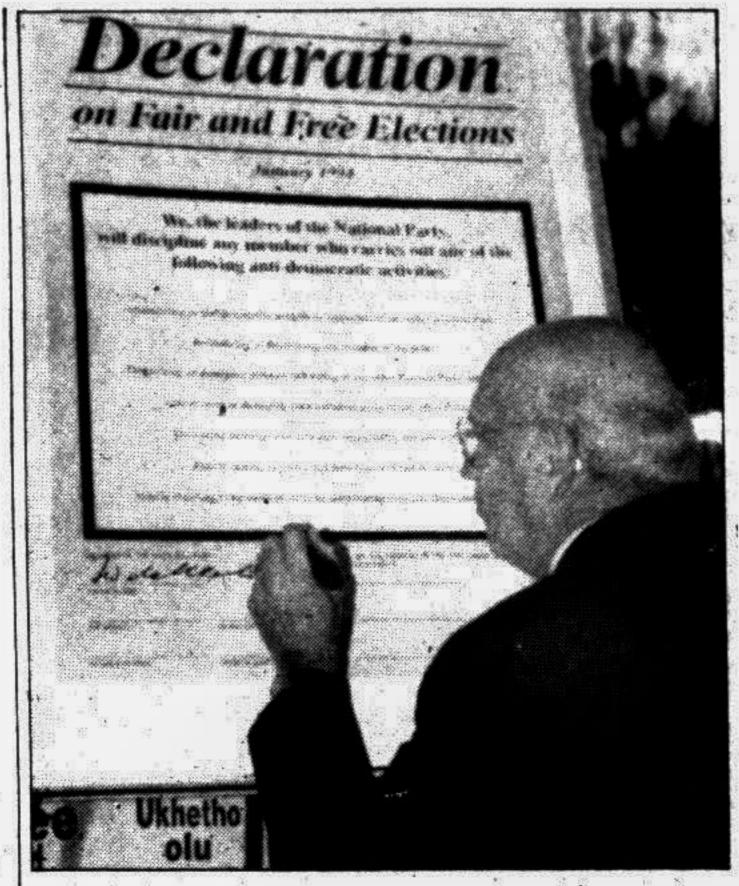
Karnataka were marred by untoward incidents in Hubli. where an attempt by a BJP-RSS combine to hoist the national flag at the controversial 'Idgah' maidan, despite prohibitory orders, was foiled by

Amidst massive security arrangements, police took into custody several BJP leaders. including all-India General Secretary, B S Yedityurappa, State President and K S Eshwarappa, along with about 360 volunteers when they tried to march into the barricaded ground violating curfew.

A second-year college student, waving a national flag, attempted to set himself a blaze at the maidan.

Police burst teargas shells and made a lathi charge to disperse a crowd gathered in the town.

In Bangalore and other places, the flag-hoisting passed off peacefully, and in the state capital the Governor. Khursheed Alam Khan, holsted the tricolour and watched an impressive march past.



South African President F W de Klerk signs a declaration for free and fair elections on January 25 in Pretoria.

- AFP photo

Johnnie Cochran (C), attorney for entertainer Michael Jackson, flanked by Howard Weitzman (L) fellow attorney for Jackson, and Larry Feldman (R) attorney for the teen-aged boy who accused Jackson of sexually molesting him, speaks on January 25 at a joint press conference outside the Santa Monica courthouse. They announced that Michael Jackson has reached an - AFP photo out-of-court settlement with the boy.

Afghan war may halt refugee repatriation process

TEHRAN, Jan 26: The civil war ranging in Afghanistan could trigger a new influx of refugees into Iran and Pakistan and halt the repatriation process, UN High Commissioner for Refugees Sadako Ogata warned Tuesday, reports AFP.

Ogata said the UNHCR was unable to "encourage" the repatriation of some 2.5 million Afghan Refugees from Iran and Pakistan, and with the intensification of fighting in Afghanistan "There is even a danger that refugees may again be forced to flee across borders in search of safety."

Ogata's message was contained in a letter read out to ministers at a meeting of the 10-member Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO) in

The Afghan capital Kabul has been hit by a new upsurge in fighting since January 1 which has left some 10,000 people dead or wounded and forced thousands to flee the country.

Defence forces loyal to

President Burhanuddin Rabbani repulsed a rival Uzbek-Pashtun infantry assault on eastern Kabul late Monday, launched under a fierce artillery bombardment. Ogata said she did not ex-

pect the international community to fund the repatriation process as long as fighting threatened the lives of the re-

She warned of the tendency of many governments to close their borders when faced with the threat of

Belarus parliament sacks KGB

chief, Interior Minister

refugee influxes," and called for borders to remain open for "people who require international protection.

"While protection and assistance for the internally displaced can ease the burden, it cannot replace the need for asylum," the letter said.

"I therefore appeal to you for your continued commitment to preserve the institution of asylum."

Ogata warned that the international community's resources had been "strained. and a lack of funds could force an end to several operations.

With UNHCR help Iran and Pakistan have stepped up efforts to repatriate Afghan refugees who fled the 14-year civil war in Afghanistan.

the Lithuanians but had re-

fused permission for them to

be handed over to the Vilnius

being unaware of the activities

of Lithuanian secret agents on

the parliament to demonstrate

its hostility to the policies of

President Stanisalv Shusk-

evich, whose resignation and

that of Kebichwa also de-

Belarus territory.

Shyrkovski was accused of

The case was seized on by

Vajpayee asks Delhi to foil Pak designs

NEW DELHI, Jan 26: The leader of the opposition, Atal Bihari Vajpayee yesterday took strong exception to the call by the Pakistan Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto for an all Pakistan bandh on February five on the Kashmir issue and demanded that the government "foil the evil designs of Pakistan," reports PTI.

In a statement here, he said, "In the annals of Indo-Pak relations a wholly unacceptable development is the call given by the Prime Minister of Pakistan on the issue of Kashmir.

He said this was in total violation of all international norms and "it appears as if all this is born out of great frustration or the domestic compulsions of Pakistan's internal politics."

Vajpayee said the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) rejects outright these provocative assertions of Benazir and the state of Jammu and Kashmir is an integral part of India and shall remain inspite of "Pakistan inspired bandh or no

He said it is time for the Indian government to halt the drift and to demonstrate through word and deed its clarity of purpose and its. determination to foil the evil designs of Pakistan.

No specific date to end UN arms monitoring in Iraq

BAGHDAD, Jan 26: A senior US official said on Tuesday he had no date in mind for the completion of a strict monitoring programme of Iraq's arms industry and disarmament activities, reports Reuter.

Charles Duelfer, deputy

chairman of the UN Special Commission (UNSCOM) dismantling Iraq's weapons under 1991 Gulf War ceasefire terms. said it would be rash to fix a time — framework for Iraq's full compliance with UN weapons demands.

"I would be reckless to pre dict when that programme could in fact be completed. Duelfer, an American, told Reuters. Earlier UNSCOM chairman

Rolf Ekeus estimated it would take until the end of 1994 before he could be satisfied with UN plans to disarm Iraq.

An easing or a lifting of the oil embargo on Iraq imposed in response to its 1990 invasion of Kuwait, depends largely on Irag's full compliance with all UN weapons demands.

Duelfer, 41, was a senior State Department official before joining his new post with UNSCOM. He arrived in Baghdad on Friday to work out a mechanism on how to implement UN resolution 715. calling for an intrusive control of Baghdad's weapons industries in the future

US may send Patriot missiles to ROK missiles) will intensify the ag-WASHINGTON, Jan 26: The

Clinton administration may send Patriot missiles to South Korea as an impasse continues over North Korea's refusal to allow nuclear inspections, a Republican lawmaker said Tuesday, reports AP.

Administration officials spoke to members of the House Foreign Affairs Committee on Monday about the tentative proposal, said Rep. Benjamin Gilman of New York, ranking Republican on the panel. "We were informed The

concern is whether it would be an exacérbation of the problem," Gilman said in an inter-

The lawmaker described the standoff between North Korea and the West as "very tense. We're in fragile negotiations, tense negotiations. Whether or not this (Patriot

gression is something we have to closely examine." An administration official,

speaking on condition of anonymity, said the US theatre commander, Gen. Gary Lucky. requested the Patriots."We look at the request favourably." the official said.

Stressing that President Clinton has not decided whether to deploy the missiles, a second administration official said Congress is being consulted. Both aides spoke on condition of anonymity.

"In a review we sought from our theatre commander to ensure we're doing everything necessary for the security of South Korea and the defence of American troops. (Luck) requested a deployment of Patriot missiles.

Off the Record

Women begin to follow Lorena Bobbitt

ISTANBUL: A Turkish woman sliced off the penis of her lover after he announced he was leaving her in a copycat version of the Lorena Bobbitt case in the United States, the daily Hurriyet reported on Tuesday, says AFP.

A hospital in Ankara surgically reattached the penis of victim Abdulah Kemal Konak, a garage security guard. The woman, Zeynep Atici, whose age and job were not revealed, was reportedly on the run. She was said to have bound

Konak by his hands and feet when he was too drunk to resist. AP adds from Seoul: In what police said might be a Bobbitt

case copycat crime, a South Korean man found with his penis cut off died from loss of blood Wednesday.

Park Soo-burn, 42, found bleeding in front of a motel in Uijungbu, 10 kilometers (6 miles) north of Seoul, died hours

after he was taken to a nearby hospital, officers said. The severed penis has not been found, they added. Police said they were investigating the case and speculated that someone, might have been influenced by the much publi-

cised "Lorena Bobbitt's case in the United States. Shankaracharya knows

things in advance NEW DELHI: Rajiv Gandhi's death was predicted by Kanchi Kamakoti Shankaracharya Chandrashekhar Sraswati, who at-

tained mahaprayan recently, about 11 days before the late prime minister was slain, the Chief Election Commissioner, T N Seshan, disclosed Tuesday, reports PTI. The Shankaracharya was able to know things in

advance, and on May ten 1991 he had said that the end of Rajiv Gandhi was approaching. Seshan said paying homage to the Swamiji at a solemn function here. . When Rajiv Gandhi was

told about the prediction he said he would have to face the ultimate truth one day, according to Seshan. Highlighting the signifi-

cance of the path shown by the Shankaracharya, the Chief Election Commissioner said tolerance is the greatest gift we have given to the mankind

Describing the Shankaracharva as a symbol of tolerance, he

said people belonging to all faiths linked him and a large number of them paid him homage after the mahaprayan.

Greek Cypriots refuse to resume talks

NEW YORK, Jan 26: The

"A beat cop will be respon-

sible for holding the ground

he's charged with." William

Bratton said. "The cops will

· A half-dozen top police offi-

cials are retiring, and two men

who are a decade younger than

their predecessors will move

up. Bratton said at a news

conference. Among those

leaving are the chief of organ-

city's new police commis-

reports AP.

have to be cops.

NICUSIA, Jan 26: Greek Cypriot authorities on Tuesday refused to resume UN-sponsored talks with Turkish Cypriots to resolve the problem of the divided island, the official Cyprus news agency reported, says AFP.

Government spokesman Yiannakis Cassoulides told reporters the talks "cannot start" because there was no clear Turkish Cypriot position on proposals put forward by the United Nations.

The announcement came at the end of a visit by UN special envoy Joe Clark, who held two days of talks with Denktash and Cypriot President Glafcos Clerides.

police department ised crime control and the chief of personnel.

The moves are one of the sioner announced a shakeup biggest top-level shakeups in and streamlining of the dethe history of New York's partment's top brass Tuesday. 30,000-member police force. and promised that beat police the nation's largest. ware the next target in his campaign to revitalise the NYPD. Bratton's plan will give beat

police less paperwork and have them report directly to precinct commanders. "We want to revitalise and streamline the New York City Police Department," he said.

Bratton was appointed by the city's new mayor. Rudolph Giuliani, and assumed his post January 10.

The department's shakeup comes on the heels of tough

states are increasingly frus-

trated by the world commu-

nity's failure to end the plight

of Bosnian's Muslims but are

unlikely to go it alone, reports

the world community's failure

to end the suffering of their

co-religionists in Bosnia

Herzegovina and say the world

has turned a deaf ear to their

the dispatch of Muslim peace

keepers at a time when west-

ern powers are considering a

pullout of their forces, they

say their troops will not stay in

Bosnia indefinitely but are re-

France. Britain and Canada

Among the spurned offers is

offers of help.

Muslims diplomats decry

Interior Minister Vladimir Yegorov and the head of the

country's intelligence service were sacked by parliament Tuesday over the extradition of two Lithuanian communist leaders, an official said, reports AFP Yegerov had apologised in a

MINSK, Jan 26: Belarus

letter to Prime Minister Vyacheslav Kebich Monday. after coming underfire from the hardline communist parliament, which had to confirm his resignation. In a closed-door session

attended by 224 members.

195 voted against Yegerov and

187 against KGB, chief Eduard

Shyrkovski. Parliament de-

luctant to pull out alone or be-

US President Bill Clinton

says peace cannot be imposed

on Bosnia's warring factions

and there is no consensus

long to the 51-member Orga-

nisation of the Islamic Confe-

rence (OIC) want air strikes to

lift the Serbian siege of Sara-

jevo and tougher action to help

relief convoys reach other

lifting the arms embargo

against Bosnia have been in

the United Nations proved

they cannot solve the problem

but they don't want our help.

Their repeated appeals to

The world community and

embattled Muslim enclaves

Most Muslim states who be-

within NATO for air strikes.

fore spring

cided not to remove chief prosecutor Vasily Sholodonov The Lithuanians were

wanted in their homeland for alleged involvement in an attempted coup by pro-Soviet troops three years ago that left 14 dead and 700 injured. The minister told Kebich

he "recognised his mistake" in not following correct procedures and by working with the Lithuanian secret services to extradite the two men after their arrest on January 15. Mykolas Burokévicius and

Juozas Jermalevicius had spent several months in Russia be. fore taking refuge in Belarus. Sholodonov said he had

given an "oral" order to arrest

developments in Bosnia-

Herzegovina

manded last week in a resolution that was later withdrawn. But centrist deputies said Tuesday they thought that

Kebich wanted to get rid of the three because they were too independent

World's failure to end plight of Bosnians upsets Muslims Muslim states also could

But despite their anger Muslims in the Middle East. Bosnia the Indian subcontinent and Asia are keen to work within the international community. he said. At this stage, the only option is to increase political pressure especially at the United Nations and to continue humanitarian help." he

added. The view of the Muslim states also reflects the frustra tion of public opinion angered at the fate of fellow Muslims. Muslim countries have so

far officially resisted pleas

from Bosnian Muslim officials

to send military help. Privately. however. Muslim fighters mostly from Afghanistan and Iran are reported fighting in

Iran last week renewed an offer to send 10,000 soldiers to join UN peacekeepers in Bosnia. The Islamic republic had first made the offer in July as part of a 17.000-man force from Islamic countries to help protest UN-designated "safe areas" for Bosnian Muslims from attack by Serbs The offer was not taken up

and western powers appear adamant in their wish to block the arrival of Muslim troops. especially from fundamentalist Iran to keep peace in Europe. the diplomats said

consider their most potent weapon against the West. which is their economic power based on control of oil. A del egation of the Jeddah-based Organisation of the Islamic Conference last week met Bosnian Muslim leaders in Geneva and later issued a veiled threat of economic ac tion against western nations deemed to be blocking the peace process. But Muslim officials doubted

any such action would be taken as rich Muslim states - like Gulf Arabs - as well as the poor ones are keen to preserve vital economic links with the West "Talk of economic action is

probably one way of increasing

political pressure ... nobody sees it actually happening, but maybe it is a sign of how desperate the Muslims have become to alleviate the suffering in Bosnia," one said. Rich Muslim states have

been pouring money, estimated by some officials at more than 200 million dollar to support what they see as a holy war to defend Europe's Muslims. The Islamic world's two top

women leaders. Prime Ministers Tansu Ciller of Turkey and Benazir Bhutto of Pakistan. plan a morale boosting trip to Sarajevo on February 2

And Turkey sent 18 F-16 fighters to Italy in April to join NATO contingents enforcing a no fly zone over Bosnia.

Amnesty slates UN forces' role in Somalia

LONDON, Jan 26: Amnesty International today sharply criticised the behaviour of United Nations forces in Somalia, where it said UN troops may have "unlawfully" killed Somali militants and improperly detained others, reports AFP "UN troops must never be

permitted to violate the UN's own hard won standard or consider themselves outside the treaties which the UN calls government world wide to respect the international human rights group said in a statement here.