

## Court annuls election of Zhirinovsky



said the court's finding could be appealed against within 10 days.

The ruling came after one of the five losing contenders for the constituency, Professor Oleg Novikov, filed a formal complaint that election regulations had been violated.

He alleged that candidates had not enjoyed equal access to television, as provided by the rules, and that the ballot paper contained the name of a contender who had pulled out of the election race.

Zhirinovsky headed the party list of his Liberal Democratic Party which performed strongly in the polls. But he also stood as an individual in the Shchelkovo Constituency, near Moscow, and it is that seat which he chose to fill in the state Duma (Lower House).

Half of the 450-seat Duma is filled by deputies elected on party lists and another half by winners in individual constituencies.

MOSCOW, Feb 26: A Russian court ruled on Friday that election procedure had been violated in the constituency from which ultra-nationalist Vladimir Zhirinovsky was elected to parliament and said the December 12 poll was invalid. reports Reuter.

The significance of the move by the Shchelkovo District Court, reported by Interfax News Agency, was not immediately clear. The report

## Gulf Arabs blame Israel for mosque massacre

DUBAI, Feb 26: Gulf Arab states held the Israeli government responsible for Friday's massacre by an Israeli settler of Palestinians at a mosque in the West Bank and hoped the attack would not jeopardise Middle East peace efforts, reports Reuter.

The governments of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates condemned in separate statements the killing of at least 53 Palestinian worshippers and the wounding of scores by an

official Saudi Press Agency quoted an official source as saying in a statement that "the Israeli government was responsible for this massacre for ignoring the crimes that Israeli settlers commit against unarmed Palestinians."

## BRIEFLY

### Shevardnadze invited to visit US:

President Clinton has invited Georgian leader Eduard Shevardnadze to make an official visit to the United States March 6-8, the White House announced Friday. Reuter reports from Washington.

The two leaders will meet at the White House March 7. It will be Clinton's first meeting with Shevardnadze.

The president is looking forward to discussing the US-Georgian bilateral relationship, political and economic reform in Georgia and events in the region," a White House statement said.

**British plane crashes:** An airliner carrying mail crashed in a snowstorm in central England Friday night, killing one of the two people on board, the owner said, AP reports from London.

The 90-seat Vickers Viscount came down in woodland near Droitwich, 110 miles northwest of London, a Civil Aviation Authority spokesman said. There were no reports of injuries on the ground.

The pilot was killed and the co-pilot injured, said the owner, British World Airlines. The plane, subcontracted to the Royal Mail service, had been carrying parcels.

**302 more Vietnamese back home:** A group of 302 Vietnamese migrants returned to Vietnam on Saturday under a voluntary repatriation programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Xinhua reports from Hong Kong.

Comprising 114 men, 76 women, 55 boys and 57 girls, they were the 204th batch to go back under the programme, according to a government information service announcement this afternoon.

**Danish tanks arrive in Tuzla:** Ten Danish leopard tanks arrived in the northeastern Bosnian city of Tuzla on Friday, four months behind schedule, to provide cover for UN peacekeepers, the Defence Ministry said. AFP reports from Copenhagen.

The 1,000-strong contingent of the Nordic battalion cracked open bottles of champagne when the tank column arrived.

The tanks are to help reopen Tuzla airport so that aid can be brought into the city, under siege from the Bosnian Serbs.

**Tremor hits Iranian city:** A new earth tremor measuring 5.7 on the Richter scale hit the city of Zabol in southeastern Iran Saturday. Tehran radio reported, only days after an earthquake killed six people in the same region. AFP says from Tehran.

The radio said there was no information about casualties or damage in the latest tremor, which struck at 6:33 am (0233 GMT).

About a dozen aftershocks measuring up to 5.9 on the Richter hit the sparsely populated Afghan border region after an earthquake measuring 6.6 on Wednesday.

**ROK to free 835 prisoners:** South Korea will release 835 prisoners and juvenile delinquents next week in a holiday amnesty, the Justice Ministry said Saturday. Reuter reports from Seoul.

The prisoners would be freed on Monday to mark the anniversary on March 1 of a 1919 uprising against Japanese colonial rule, a statement said. South Korea was a Japanese colony from 1910 until 1945.

**ROK liberalises travel to China**

SEOUL, Feb 26: South Koreans will be able to travel freely to China beginning in April, government officials said Saturday, reports AP.

Under present restrictions, South Koreans must receive permission from the Seoul government before they can travel to Communist China.

Some 200,000 South Koreans, mostly for business purposes, visited China last year. Tourism officials estimate as many as 500,000 tourists may visit this year as the result of the liberalisation.

South Korean President Kim Young-sam is scheduled to visit China for summit talks with China's Jiang Zemin in March.

## Proposed Muslim-Croat fed not adequate for peace in Balkans

**ZAGREB, Feb 26:** Croatian agreement to a US-proposed Muslim-Croat federation in Bosnia could bring peace nearer, but many here are afraid that lingering issue of Serb conquests could remain a threat to peace, reports AP.

President Franjo Tudjman bowed to international pressure Thursday and said he would negotiate with Bosnia's Muslims.

Under the new plan, to be discussed in Washington this weekend, the Muslims and Croats would form a federation, while Bosnian Serbs who want to unite with Serbia would be free to form their own.

Opposition leaders said the only solution was an undivided Bosnia-Herzegovina.

If the proposal works out, Serbs would then get to keep all the conquered lands, said Goran Granic, leader of

the

accomplish," Kulenovic said.

Tudjman's speech to leaders of his governing Croatian Democratic Union made clear he had no choice but to accept the proposal, even though it was a radical policy shift.

Tudjman for the first time said that a settlement in Bosnia was key to solving the problem of Serb-held territory in Croatia.

He apparently realised that Croatia has a greater chance of regaining those territories with Western support than if it is branded an aggressor in the Balkan conflict and strangled by sanctions.

Tudjman himself has long harbored a dream of dividing up Bosnian territory with Serbia. He has publicly supported a Croat-Muslim federation and other international

peace plans in hopes of winning Western acceptance and a place in Europe, but also has pursued possible cooperation with the Serbs and other allies.

Now, he has apparently realised that he cannot have it both ways. He made clear that Croatia has no choice but to bow to Western pressure.

Sanctions would be ruinous to the already shaky economy. Bosnian Croats have recently lost ground to Muslim-led government forces in central Bosnia.

Croatia would be in a very unfavourable position if the war in Bosnia continues, Tudjman said.

His remarks also indicated tacit acknowledgement that Croatia cannot solve the problem of the Serb-held territories

## 16 Myanmar citizens held in Bangkok

BANGKOK, Feb 26: Thai immigration and special branch police have arrested and detained 16 Myanmar people in the Thai capital suspected of being anti-Yangon activists, a local newspaper said Saturday. AFP

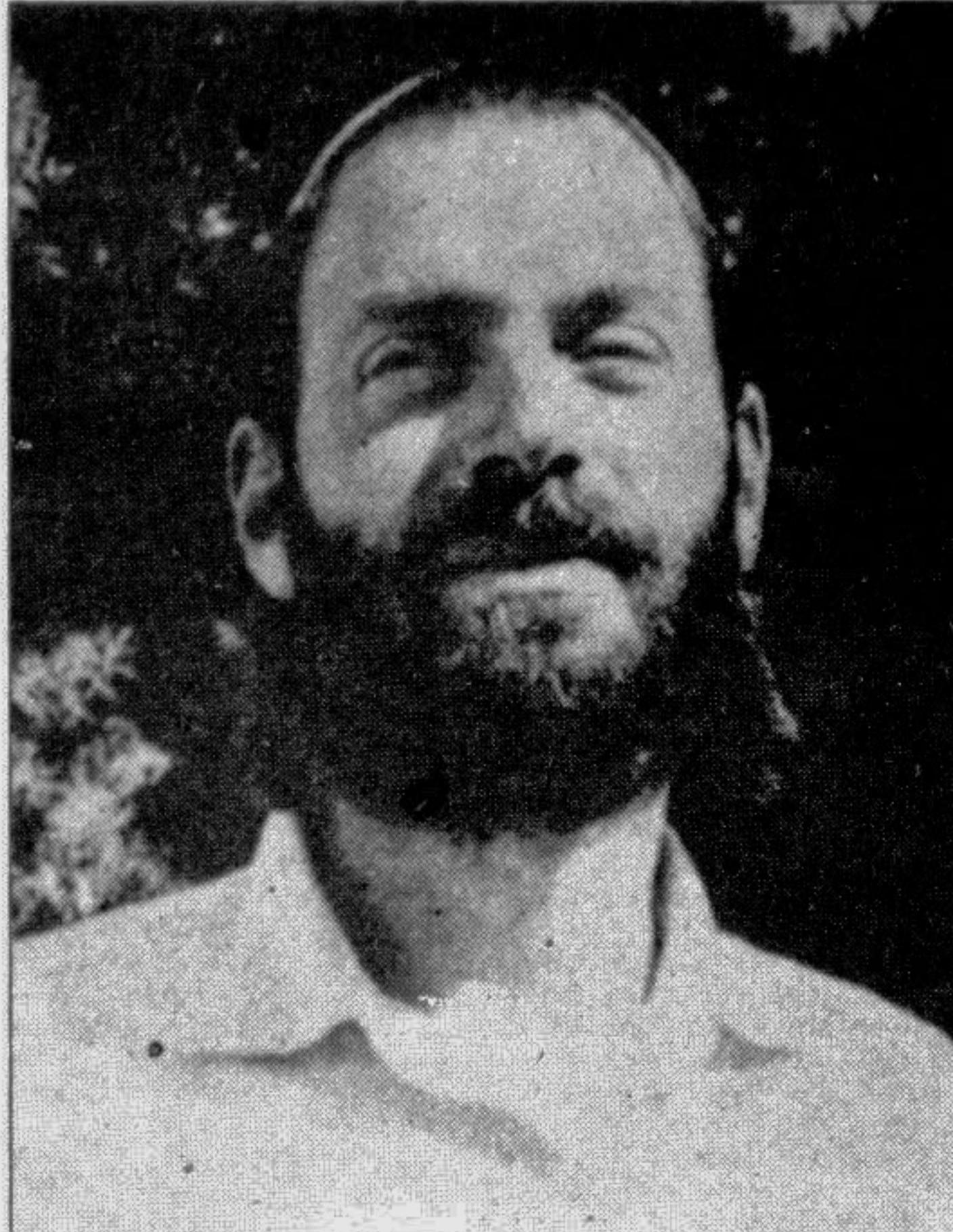
The 16 were taken to the immigration division's detention centre Friday, according to the Bangkok Post. Police could not be reached today for comment.

Thailand has played an increasingly active role in supporting the Myanmar junta, which has ruled its northern neighbour since 1988, despite persistent international criticism of its human rights record.

## International

## Israel rejects presence of int'l force to protect Palestinians

## PLO seeks urgent UN meet to condemn Hebron massacre



Undated picture shows US-born Doctor Baruch Goldstein who mowed down about 58 Palestinians praying inside the mosque in Hebron February 25. The 35-year-old Jewish settler spent years in the anti-Arab Kach movement and lived in the settlement of Kyrat Arba, a hotbed of Jewish extremism on the edge of Hebron.

— AFP photo

to decide on a statement or resolution.

The sense on the council was one of very great outrage and shock," Security Council president Roble Olhaya, the ambassador of Djibouti, said Friday night. "Our delay should not be interpreted as lessening the importance of what happened. We need to decide on the format."

Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali condemned the massacre but said it should not derail peace talks.

The PLO envoy to the United Nations, M Nasser Al-Kidwa, said in answer to questions, "I hope this is not a fatal blow to PLO-Israel peace talks. But it is a very serious one."

He also said Palestinian sources indicated at least six people were involved, not just a lone gunman. The PLO has said it has information that 20 to 30 Jewish settlers were involved, a senior Arafat aide said in Tunis.

Al-Kidwa spoke before attending closed Security Council consultations.

British Ambassador Sir David Hannay told reporters that all council members expected a formal meeting until Saturday because diplomats were divided over whether to issue a strong but legally nonbinding statement without a vote, or vote on a resolution backed by the PLO and Islamic countries.

Either move would condemn the massacre that Israel says was carried out by a lone gunman. PLO officials said they had information pointing to a group of Israeli settlers.

US, Israeli and nonaligned diplomats were continuing negotiations Friday night in order

to draft a formal statement.

Israel has rejected any international presence as a violation of its sovereignty.

The council delayed a formal meeting until Saturday because diplomats were divided over whether to issue a strong but legally nonbinding statement without a vote, or vote on a resolution backed by the PLO and Islamic countries.

Ho, the North Korean ambassador, denied after the talks that Washington had threatened economic sanctions if it didn't comply.

Thomas Hubbard, a US deputy assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific affairs, after talks late Friday with Ho Jong, North Korea's deputy ambassador to the United Nations.

The head of the International Atomic Energy Agency,

Hans Blix, was to report Monday on whether North Korea leaders would admit agency inspectors. If they refused, the United States had threatened to take the issue to the UN Security Council, and possibly consider economic sanctions.

Ho, the North Korean ambassador, denied after the talks that Washington had threatened economic sanctions if it didn't comply.

In the talks, Ho said, the United States agreed to call off joint military exercises this year with South Korea, resume high-level talks in Geneva on a permanent settlement to the nuclear issue and allow the resumption of North Korean

South Korean talks on the de-nuclearisation of the Korean peninsula.

Meanwhile Reuter from Seoul says: South Korea welcomed Saturday North Korea's decision to allow international inspections of its nuclear facilities.

"It is good that an agreement has been reached. Hopefully there will be no other obstacles and the inspections would be carried out smoothly," said a Foreign Ministry official, who asked not to be identified.

He, said North Korea was very likely to keep to the agreement this time and allow inspectors into its nuclear facilities.

Ho, the North Korean ambassador, denied after the talks that Washington had threatened economic sanctions if it didn't comply.

In the talks, Ho said, the United States agreed to call off joint military exercises this year with South Korea, resume high-level talks in Geneva on a permanent settlement to the nuclear issue and allow the resumption of North Korean

South Korean talks on the de-nuclearisation of the Korean peninsula.

Meanwhile Reuter from Seoul says: South Korea welcomed Saturday North Korea's decision to allow international inspections of its nuclear facilities.

"It is good that an agreement has been reached. Hopefully there will be no other obstacles and the inspections would be carried out smoothly," said a Foreign Ministry official, who asked not to be identified.

He, said North Korea was very likely to keep to the agreement this time and allow inspectors into its nuclear facilities.

Ho, the North Korean ambassador, denied after the talks that Washington had threatened economic sanctions if it didn't comply.

In the talks, Ho said, the United States agreed to call off joint military exercises this year with South Korea, resume high-level talks in Geneva on a permanent settlement to the nuclear issue and allow the resumption of North Korean

South Korean talks on the de-nuclearisation of the Korean peninsula.

Meanwhile Reuter from Seoul says: South Korea welcomed Saturday North Korea's decision to allow international inspections of its nuclear facilities.

"It is good that an agreement has been reached. Hopefully there will be no other obstacles and the inspections would be carried out smoothly," said a Foreign Ministry official, who asked not to be identified.

He, said North Korea was very likely to keep to the agreement this time and allow inspectors into its nuclear facilities.

Ho, the North Korean ambassador, denied after the talks that Washington had threatened economic sanctions if it didn't comply.

In the talks, Ho said, the United States agreed to call off joint military exercises this year with South Korea, resume high-level talks in Geneva on a permanent settlement to the nuclear issue and allow the resumption of North Korean

South Korean talks on the de-nuclearisation of the Korean peninsula.

Meanwhile Reuter from Seoul says: South Korea welcomed Saturday North Korea's decision to allow international inspections of its nuclear facilities.

"It is good that an agreement has been reached. Hopefully there will be no other obstacles and the inspections would be carried out smoothly," said a Foreign Ministry official, who asked not to be identified.

He, said North Korea was very likely to keep to the agreement this time and allow inspectors into its nuclear facilities.

Ho, the North Korean ambassador, denied after the talks that Washington had threatened economic sanctions if it didn't comply.

In the talks, Ho said, the United States agreed to call off joint military exercises this year with South Korea, resume high-level talks in Geneva on a permanent settlement to the nuclear issue and allow the resumption of North Korean

South Korean talks on the de-nuclearisation of the Korean peninsula.

Meanwhile Reuter from Seoul says: South Korea welcomed Saturday North Korea's decision to allow international inspections of its nuclear facilities.

"It is good that an agreement has been reached. Hopefully there will be no other obstacles and the inspections would be carried out smoothly," said a Foreign Ministry official, who asked not to be identified.

He, said North Korea was very likely to keep to the agreement this time and allow inspectors into its nuclear facilities.

Ho, the North Korean ambassador, denied after the talks that Washington had threatened economic sanctions if it didn't comply.

In the talks, Ho said, the United States agreed to call off joint military exercises this year with South Korea, resume high-level talks in Geneva on a permanent settlement to the nuclear issue and allow the resumption of North Korean

South Korean talks on the de-nuclearisation of the Korean peninsula.

Meanwhile Reuter from Seoul says: South Korea welcomed Saturday North Korea's decision to allow international inspections of its nuclear facilities.

"It is good that an agreement has been reached. Hopefully there will be no other obstacles and the inspections would be carried out smoothly," said a Foreign Ministry official, who asked not to be identified.

He, said North Korea was very likely to keep to the agreement this time and allow inspectors into its nuclear facilities.

Ho, the North Korean ambassador, denied after the talks that Washington had threatened economic sanctions if it didn't comply.

In the talks, Ho said, the United States agreed to call off joint military exercises this year with South Korea, resume high-level talks in Geneva on a permanent settlement to the nuclear issue and allow the resumption of North Korean

South Korean talks on the de-nuclearisation of the Korean peninsula.

Meanwhile Reuter from Seoul says: South Korea welcomed Saturday North Korea's decision to allow international inspections of its nuclear facilities.

"It is good that an agreement has been reached. Hopefully there will be no other obstacles and the inspections would be carried out smoothly," said a Foreign Ministry official, who asked not to be identified.

He, said North Korea was very likely to keep to the agreement this time and allow inspectors into its nuclear facilities.

Ho, the North Korean ambassador, denied after the talks that Washington had threatened economic sanctions if it didn't comply.

In the talks, Ho said, the United States agreed to call off joint military exercises this year with South Korea, resume high-level talks in Geneva on a permanent settlement to the nuclear issue and allow the resumption of North Korean

South Korean talks on the de-nuclearisation of