

BRIEFLY

China's oldest woman dies: Kong Yin, believed to be China's oldest woman, has died at age 123, the official China Daily newspaper said Friday. AP reports from Beijing.

Kong died last Saturday of emphysema in Guangdong, south China, it said. Born in 1871, Kong married at the age of 15 and had four children, the newspaper said.

She was a reigning "China Longevity Queen," a title that brought her a monthly stipend of 200 yuan (23 dollars), it said.

Reggie Kennedy resigns: Victoria Reggie Kennedy, wife of Sen Edward Kennedy, D-Mass, has resigned from her law firm over its decision to represent Libya in a wrongful death suit, Sen Kennedy's office said, AP reports from Washington.

Kennedy resigned as an act of conscience when she learned of the firm's intention to represent the country of Libya," said a statement issued late Wednesday by the Senator's office.

Kennedy's resignation from the firm Keck, Mahin and Cate, which she joined in 1987, took effect last week. She will work full time on her husband's re-election campaign, said Pamela Hughes, Kennedy's spokeswoman.

Sixth Fleet to join Breeze '94: Two Navy ships from the Sixth Fleet will participate in Breeze '94, a multinational humanitarian aid and peacekeeping exercise in the Black Sea, the Pentagon said Thursday, AP reports from Washington.

The effort will include ships from Bulgaria, Greece, Romania, Russia, Turkey, Ukraine and the United States as well as an observer team from the former Soviet republic of Georgia.

Participating in the July 25-28 exercise will be the destroyer USS Deyo out of Norfolk, Va. and the USS Grapple, a salvage ship out of Little Creek, Va.

Rose Kennedy turns 104: The Kennedy clan will gather this weekend for a happy occasion after a year of unhappy anniversaries, AP reports from Boston.

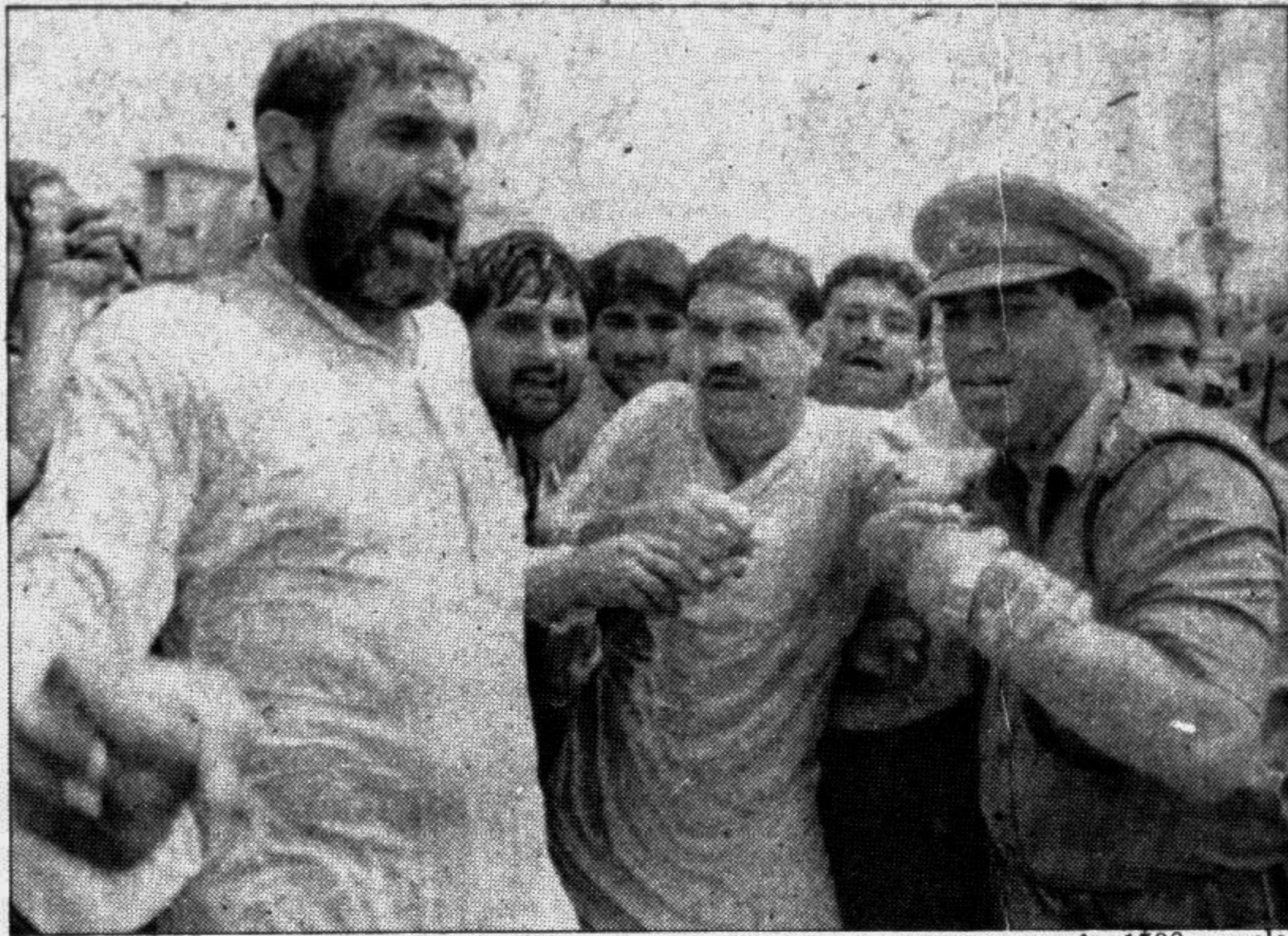
Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy, daughter of a mayor, wife of an ambassador and the matriarch of a family that produced one president, two US senators, a congressman and a state representative, turns 104 on Friday.

Rose Kennedy has been confined to a wheelchair since April 1984, when she suffered a stroke, and a nurse takes her for a walk near the water every day. She still has her hair set once a week, and a musician sometimes comes to the Kennedy family compound to play her favourite Irish songs.

Mandela to help Mozambique: Nelson Mandela on Wednesday promised South Africa's economic support for war-ravaged Mozambique and said he saw greater regional ties as the key to peace, AP reports from Maputo.

"South Africa wants to work as an equal partner with all its neighbours... It does not intend to dominate in any way," Mandela told a state banquet hosted by President Joaquim Chissano.

The South African leader stopped short of offering to mediate in Mozambique's fragile peace efforts.



Police drag away protesters drenched by water cannons after a demonstration by 1500 people against chronic water and electricity crises in New Delhi on Friday. Police also used teargas to stop the protest. — AFP photo

Power, water shortages in Delhi

NEW DELHI, July 22: Riot police used teargas and water cannons to scatter hundreds of demonstrators staging a protest today against chronic water and electricity shortages in the Indian capital, witnesses said, reports AFP.

Some 1,500 slogan-chanting placard-waving demonstrators converged on a busy crossroads near the maximum-security Tihar jail in west Delhi for the protest which threw rush-hour traffic into chaos.

"Give us water, give us power," shouted the men and women, who were mobilised by local leaders of the Congress (I) Party, the main opposition in the city legislature which organised the protest.

They demanded the resignation of the city chief minister, Madan Lal Khurana, for failing to keep promises to provide adequate supplies.

Protest against power outage in Karachi

KARACHI, July 22: After nearly one week without electricity, hundreds of residents waded through knee-deep water Thursday to hurl abuse at government officials they blame for the prolonged outage, reports AP.

Two weeks of torrential monsoon rains have knocked out power in more than half of Karachi, a city of 9 million that is Pakistan's largest.

"We had to protest. There was no other way we could get the attention of the government to our misery," housewife Khadija Bai said.

Flood waters caused by the heaviest rainfall in 17 years have submerged power lines of the port city's dilapidated electrical system.

At least 40 people have died, many of them electro-

cuted. Two people have been killed in daily rioting over the past week to protest the power outages. One died when police opened fire on protesters outside government buildings, now cordoned off by hundreds of heavily armed police and paramilitary troops.

Another person died in crossfire between police and demonstrators.

The power cut has cost businesses and industries in Karachi an estimated 3 billion rupees (100 million dollars) in the past week, said Habib Charania, spokesman for the Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

"Most of the businesses could not fulfil their export commitments," he said. "How can we run our production lines without power?"

US, DPRK resume N-talks in Geneva on Aug 5

TOKYO, July 22: North Korea and the United States will resume talks in Geneva on August 5, the official North Korean news agency KCNA announced in a dispatch received here today, reports AP.

Quoting a communique released by the Foreign Ministry in Pyongyang, it said "working-level contact" took place between US and North Korean officials in New York on Thursday, at which the sides agreed to resume the talks in Geneva on August 5.

The White House Thursday said there had been agreement in principle on a date to resume negotiations on Pyongyang's controversial nuclear programme and other matters.

White House spokeswoman Dee Dee Myers had said the

date would be announced later, but said talks should resume in the near future.

Myers emphasised that the third round of US-North Korea negotiations must take place under the same conditions as the Geneva talks that had resumed for only one day, on July 7.

North Korea had been seeking talks with Washington on moves to normalise relations, end its diplomatic isolation and gain economic help.

Meanwhile AP from Washington reports: The agreement on the Geneva talks, which were suspended after the death of North Korean President Kim Il Sung, was announced after diplomatic discussions at the United Nations.

Meanwhile, US Assistant

Secretary of State Robert Gallucci met with top South Korean officials in Seoul, where they repeated their demand that North Korea refrain from efforts to build nuclear weapons.

Gallucci, who will be the lead US negotiator in new talks with the Pyongyang regime, met with South Korean Foreign Minister Han Sung-joo and a South Korean envoy, Kim Sam-hoon.

They reiterated that North Korea must allow full inspections and refrain from reprocessing fuel from its nuclear power plants into plutonium, which can be used to make nuclear weapons.

Gallucci also is to consult with Japanese officials while he is in the region.

Pak official harassed in New Delhi

ISLAMABAD, July 22: Pakistan Thursday alleged two new incidents of harassment against its embassy in New Delhi and demanded that the Indian government stop such actions, reports AFP.

A strong protest was lodged with India over the latest incidents of "harassment and vandalism," an official statement said.

A senior official of India's embassy in Islamabad was summoned to the foreign office and told of the Pakistani government's "dissatisfaction," the statement said.

It said Indian intelligence officials "attacked" the Pakistani Naval Attaché Captain Asif Humayun and his family members in New Delhi on Wednesday while they were travelling in his official car.

The attackers blocked the road and hurled stones at the naval attaché's and smashed its windscreen, the statement said.

In the second incident an hour later, another car from the embassy was damaged in an "evidently preplanned collision with a car belonging to the Indian intelligence agencies," it added.

The alleged incidents followed tit-for-tat expulsion of four embassy officials, two by each country, earlier this month, after which the two governments agreed to discuss implementation of an existing bilateral diplomatic code of conduct.

Most Israelis want peace with Jordan

JERUSALEM, July 22: A majority of Israelis support territorial and water concessions to Jordan in return for peace, according to an opinion poll published today, reports AFP.

The Yediot Aharonot newspaper found that 52 per cent were prepared for concessions.

Forty per cent agreed with dual concessions, six per cent solely with yielding land and six per cent only with water concessions.

However, 43 per cent were against any such sacrifice and five per cent voiced no opinion.

Israel and Jordan opened peace negotiations this week and on Monday King Hussein meets Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in Washington for a first official summit.

Jordan is demanding a fair share of water resources and the return of several hundred square kilometres (miles) of land along the ceasefire line.

The survey was carried out this week among 500 Israelis by the Dahaf institute.

Strikes paralyse Nigeria

LAGOS, July 22: Government and union leaders in Nigeria were set to resume discussions today to try to end three weeks of strikes and protests that have paralysed the west African nation, reports Reuters.

In Lagos, the two striking oil unions Nupeng and Pengassan, will meet government officials to discuss their demands for the release of opposition leader Moshood Abiola and an end to military rule, union executives said.

Both Nupeng and Pengassan will attend tomorrow's meeting, Warri Agamene, president of the 150,000-strong junior oil workers union, Nupeng told the News Agency of

Nigeria (NAN). We intend to be there tomorrow, a spokesman for Pengassan, which represents 50,000 senior grade oil staff, told Reuters.

The first meeting between the government and Nupeng since it began its pro-democracy strike on July 4 took place on Wednesday but ended in dead lock.

Pengassan was not invited to Wednesday's session. But Agamene, who led a three-man Nupeng delegation, demanded that Pengassan, which joined the strike last week, must be involved.

He told NAN both the federal government and the owners of road tankers, many of

whose vehicles have been forced off the road by the strike, would be at Friday's talks.

Agamene said Wednesday's talks were inconclusive because the government delegation, led by junior Oil Minister Umaru Baba, said it had no mandate to discuss the union's political demands.

He said the focus of Friday's meeting would be on both the political and economic demands of the unions, which want Abiola.

The congress has threatened to call a general strike if the demand is not met by Monday.



Russian Nobel Prize winner Alexander Solzhenitsyn (2nd L), surrounded by his relatives and escorted by Moscow's mayor Yuri Luzhkov (R behind), arrives to a hero's welcome after 20 years in exile on Thursday. — AFP photo

'NYPD Blue' tops Emmy nominations

LOS ANGELES, July 22: The gritty police drama "NYPD Blue" collared a leading 26 nominations Thursday for the 46th annual Prime Time Emmy Awards, reports AP.

The ABC series was nominated as best drama and garnered bids for two stars, David Caruso and Dennis Franz. CBS earned the leading number of network nominations with 91, followed by ABC with 73 and NBC with 66. HBO received 34 bids and PBS had 25. Winners will be announced in September.

Also nominated as best drama were "Law & Order," NBC; "Northern Exposure," CBS; "Picket Fences," CBS; and, in an unusual recognition of a syndicated show, "Star Trek: The Next Generation."

Contenders for the best comedy series Emmy were "Frasier," NBC; "Home

Improvement," ABC; "The Larry Sanders Show," HBO; "Mad About You," NBC; and "Seinfeld," NBC.

Lead actors competing for the comedy series Emmy included four from NBC shows: Kelsey Grammer in "Frasier," John Larroquette in "The John Larroquette Show," Paul Reiser in "Mad About You" and Jerry Seinfeld in "Seinfeld." Also nominated was John Goodman in "Roseanne" on ABC.

Tim Allen, star of TV's top-rated "Home Improvement," was ineligible for the nomination because his representatives missed the deadline for submitting his name.

Patricia Richardson, Allen's co-star, and Academy of Television Arts & Sciences President Richard Frank read the top nominees in a pre-dawn ceremony. When

Richardson read the nominees for best comedy actor, she began, "Tim Allen — just kidding."

Richardson did snare a bid as outstanding lead actress in a comedy for her role in the show.

Other nominees in that category were Annie Potts in CBS' "Love & War," Helen Hunt in NBC's "Mad About You," Candice Bergen in CBS' "Murphy Brown" and Roseanne in ABC's "Roseanne."

Nominated with "NYPD Blue" stars Caruso and Franz for lead actor in a drama were Peter Falk for ABC's "Columbo," Michael Moriarty for NBC's "Law & Order" and Tom Skerritt for CBS' "Picket Fences."

Nominees for lead actress in a drama were Jane Seymour in CBS' "Dr Quinn, Medicine Woman," Angela Lansbury in

CBS' "Murder, She Wrote," Kathy Baker in CBS' "Picket Fences" and a pair of actresses from the NBC series "Sisters," Sela Ward and Swoozie Kurtz.

Besides "NYPD Blue," other shows that racked up numerous nominations include the HBO movie "And the Band Played On," the Bette Midler movie "Gypsy" on CBS, and the series "Seinfeld," "Frasier," and "Picket Fences."

Two PBS miniseries were among the nominees for the miniseries category: "Armistead Maupin's Tales of the City" and "Prime Suspect 3" which appeared as part of the "Mystery" series. Other nominees are CBS' "Oldest Living Confederate Widow Tells All," ABC's "Stephen King's The Stand," and NBC's "World War II: When Lions Roared."

Yangon troops storm refugee camp

BANGKOK, July 22: Myanmar troops stormed a refugee camp along the Thai-Myanmar border Thursday and burned down 120 houses after mounting a failed attack on a bigger camp nearby, relief sources said, reports AP.

A spokesman for the Mon National Relief Committee, contacted by telephone near the frontier, said Myanmar troops arrested 40 men at the smaller refugee camp and used them as shields in an attack at noon on the main Haloekhani Camp, which is temporary home to more than 6,000 people.

He said Mon guerrillas attacked the Myanmar force, numbering about 100 soldiers of the 62nd Infantry Battalion, and forced them to retreat to the smaller camp after a 15-minute battle. No casualties from the incident have yet been reported.

The spokesman, who asked not to be named, said the Myanmar burned down all the houses in the camp after their retreat.

After the attack, refugees from the main camp joined the 500 inhabitants of the satellite camp fleeing to Thailand, he said, adding that Thai Border Patrol Police did not obstruct them. Most of the refugees at the satellite camp lost all their possessions, he said.

Independent confirmation of the attack, which is in a remote location accessible only on foot, could not be obtained. But the sources who supplied news of the incident have proved reliable in the past.

Most of the refugees are from the Mon ethnic minority who claim they are being brutalised by the Burmese military. A Mon insurgent group has long fought the central

government.

The Haloekhani Camp is located about 280 kilometers (174 miles) west of Bangkok. The committee said both camps attack were inside Myanmar territory.

The attack came on the eve of a diplomatic coup for Myanmar's junta, which this year was invited for the first time to attend the annual meeting of the ASEAN.

Myanmar dissident groups have strongly criticised Thailand and other members of ASEAN for inviting Burma to its annual foreign ministers meeting, which begins here Friday.

Nicaragua against US intervention in Haiti

MANAGUA, July 22: The Nicaraguan government is against any possible US military intervention in Haiti, Nicaraguan Foreign Minister Ernesto Leal said yesterday, reports Xinhua.

The Daily 'La Tribuna' quoted the minister as saying that Nicaragua is opposed to the attempts to solve the internal conflict by means of military invasions.

"We believe that conflicts must be solved by peaceful means and that this is still possible for Haiti," Leal added.

About his recent visit to Japan, the minister said one of the achievements is the signing of an agreement on economic cooperation.

He said the Japanese government expressed its willingness to help promote Nicaragua's political and economic stability.

Jews protest blast in Argentine centre

BUENOS AIRES, July 22: Tens of thousands of people gathered in the rain on Thursday to protest the bombing of an Argentine Jewish community centre in which more than 45 people were killed, reports Reuters.

Some 150,000 Jews and others listened in a silence as Argentina's chief Rabbi Salomon Ben Hamu said prayers in Hebrew and an Israeli envoy read messages from Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Foreign Minister Shimon Peres.

Argentine President Carlos Menem held back tears on the days next to Jewish community leaders looking down on a sea of umbrellas filling a large plaza in central Buenos Aires.

over our hearts, we must not let terrorism take over our home. Ruben Beraja, leader of the Delegation of Argentine Jewish Associations (DAIA), said in a speech.

The demonstration was held three days after a powerful bomb raged the headquarters of DAIA and the Argentine Jewish Mutual Aid Association (AMIA).

The attack killed at least 45 people and rescue workers continue to search through the rubble for up to 70 people still unaccounted for.

All speakers forcefully urged local authorities to find those responsible for Monday's bombing and another attack that levelled the Israeli embassy in 1992 killing 30 people.

Off the Record

Phoolan retires into marital bliss

NEW DELHI: Phoolan Devi, the reformed Indian bandit queen who spent 11 years in jail for the massacre of 22 men has announced her retirement into marital bliss, Indian news reports said Friday, says AFP.

The much-mellowed Devi confirmed here Thursday she has married Umer Singh, a member of the Socialist Party who courted her for 10 years. She said the wedding took place on March 27, about a month after she was freed.

Devi, who is in her 30s, said she had earlier denied a recent news report about her wedding because she was "confused and scared."

Singh did most of the talking at a news conference here while Devi once the terror of the Chambal badlands of northern India, posed like a bashful housewife next to her beaming husband.

Singh said he fell in love with her during a visit to the Gwalior Jail where she was incarcerated after giving herself up to the authorities in 1983. Devi's surrender marked the end of her notorious two-year career as a gun-toting outlaw.

"I used to visit her once in a while and got attracted. I felt sorry for her and would think about the trauma she had gone through — her days roaming in the jungle and later suffering in jail. United News of India quoted Singh as saying.

The attraction was mutual, but Devi took her time before accepting his proposal.

"I had been through a lot, seen a lot of suffering and did not want to suffer again. I was superstitious...I did not think it (marriage) would work or that society would accept it," she said.

"All that is over," her husband said. "She will do social service, nothing else."

"I want to give her respect in society. I don't want people to ever point a finger at her and refer to her past again," he said.

Devi, whose life has been the subject of several movies and books, is writing her autobiography for a French publisher.

Law to outlaw sex with children

WELLINGTON: New Zealand's government said Friday it planned to introduce legislation which will outlaw sexual contact — at home as well as abroad — between New Zealanders and children, reports Reuters.

"Children in other countries should be accorded the same status and protection under our law as exists for New Zealand children," Justice Minister Doug Graham said.

Under the new laws, New Zealanders could be brought to trial in their own country for sexual offences committed against children abroad, as well as for organising and promoting "sex tourism" involving children.

The legislation comes as a result of media attention and international concern over tourists sexually abusing children in other countries, particularly in Asia.

Australia has recently enacted similar legislation, creating extra-territorial sexual offences for which Australians can be prosecuted.

Lobster Boy like Satan himself

TAMPA: Born with the same claw hands and stump legs as their father, two children of a sideshow performer known as the Lobster Boy hoisted themselves to the witness stand Thursday and described him as a brutal drunk, reports AP.

"He was like Satan himself...Very cruel, very cold-hearted, very sadistic," Cathy Berry testified at the trial of her mother, Mary Stiles.

Stiles is charged with murder for paying a teenage neighbour 1,500 dollars to shoot and kill her husband, Grady Stiles Jr., two years ago.

She must rely entirely on her own words and those of her children to convince a jury that years of abuse left her no choice.

Experts who were ready to testify that she was a battered spouse acting in self-defence were disallowed earlier in the day by Judge William Fuente, who ruled that Mary Stiles was not in imminent danger at the time of the slaying.