BREFLY



Kris Aquino, the unwed daughter of former Filipino President Corazon Aquino breaks into tears on Monday during a live television interview as she apologises for causing a scandal in her family. Kris, 23, four months pregnant from married movie actor Phillip Salvador, 20 years her senior tearfully narrated the difficulties she has been going through after her illegitimate pregnancy was made public last year. - AFP photo

13 feared drowned in Karnataka:

At least 13 women were feared drowned Monday when an overloaded boat they were travelling in capsized in the southern indian state of Karnataka, a news agency reported, AP says from New Delhi.

Rescuers had recovered two bodies and were searching for the missing passengers. United News of India (UNI) quoted police as saving.

Swedish army chief in Pakistan: Sweden's Army Chief, Gen Ake Sagren arrived in Islamabad on Monday to apologise to his counterpart for the killing of three gift horses from Pakistan. AP reports from Islamabad.

"He (Sagren) explained and regretted the unfortunate incident of the killing of three Pakistani horses in Sweden," said a Pakistan army new release.

Tributes to Subhash Bose: Rich tributes were paid to Netaii Subhash Chandra Bose on his 98th birth anniversary celebrated at a function on Monday morning, PTI reports from Patna.

- Garlanding of Netaji's statue, processions and prabhat pheries were some of the highlights of the celebrations.

8 Russians freeze to death: Eight people froze to death and another eight died in car crashes on Moscow's treacherously icy streets at the weekend. Interfax news agency reported on Monday, Reuter says from Moscow

It quoted health officials as saying 41 people were taken to hospital suffering from frost-bite and 84 were injured in car accidents. The frost-bite victims - and 115 out of 184 people who were treated for broken bones - were drunk, Interfax

Ukraine-Russian talks begin: Ukraine has opened talks with Russia to work out a deal for returning Soviet strategic bombers left on Ukraine territory

after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Itar-Tass news agency reported. AFP says from Moscow

Ukrainian Defence Ministry spokesman Alexander Kluban said the Ukraine was ready to sell back the Tu-160 and Tu-95 bombers or work out some mutually advantageous deal for their return the agency said

Dudayev phones Gaddafi: Chechen independence leader Dzhokhar Dudayev believes Chechnya is a victim of an international conspiracy to seize control of Caspian oil deposits. Libyan television monitored by the BBC reported Monday AFP says from London.

The television said Dudayev had expounded his theory in a phorie call to Libyan Leader Muammer Gaddafi.

Missing US pilot found alive: AUS Air Force pilot and his son who disappeared on a sky trip nine days ago were found alive Tuesday, a government official

said. AP reports from Ankara. Bolu province Gos Yener Rakicioglu, interviewed on television confirmed a report on Anatoha radio that the two were found at a camp run by the state forestry administration.

Last respect to Bazargan: More than 30,000 mourners on Monday attended the funeral of former Prime Minister Mehdi Bazargan who headed the first government after the 1979 Islamic revolution and was a key opposition figure for more than 50 years. AFP reports from Tehran

Friends and supporters gathered in front of Husseinieh Ershad Mosque in northern Tehran to pay their last respects to Bazargan, who died of a heart failure in a Swiss hospital on Friday at the age of 88

DPRK military rally this week: North Korea has summoned ideology vanguard officers into its tightly controlled capital for a major military rally this week to solicit loyalty to their new leader, Kim Jong-Il,

monitors in Seoul said vesterday. AFP reports from Seoul. In a broadcast monitored here on Monday, North Korea's official media reported the arrival in Pyongyang of army vanguards responsible for ideological indoctrination. said the South's official monitoring agency, Naewoe Press.

Dini faces confidence vote today: Italy's new Prime Minister, Lamberto Dini, on Tuesday looked set to win a vote of confidence in parliament with the support of parties that opposed him when he was Silvio

Berlusconi's treasury minister. Reuter reports from Rome. Dini, whose freshly formed emergency government faces the confidence vote in the 630-seat chamber of deputies. (lower house) on Wednesday, is counting on what were once

parliament's opposition parties to see him through. 9 die in Chinese inferno: An earlymorning inferno in a department store in the southeastern

city of hujiang has left nine people dead and two injured as well as causing serious damage, the Workers' Daily reported on Tuesday AFP says from Beijing. The 'major blaze' broke out at 3:00 am on Friday in the Dazhong Department Store in Jiujiang in Jiangxi province.

destroving shop installations and most merchandise on the third to lifth floors the report said.

Third World nations oppose Offthe Record indefinite extension of NPT

UNITED NATIONS, Jan 24: Delegates from 159 countries on Monday began a crucial round of discussions to review , put pressure on the nuclear the Nuclear Non-Preliferation Treaty (NPT) with Third World nations continuing their strong opposition to an indefinite extension of the pact, reports Reuter.

The five-day meeting is the last preparatory session before the April 17 conference on the treaty. The NPT, signed in March 1970, calls for decisions every 25 years on whether or not - and how the agreement will be extended.

The key issues are the same as delegates failed to resolve at the previous preparatory meeting in Geneva in September. But the difference now is that time is running out before decisions have to be made and a vote is taken.

An indefinite extension of the NPT, desired by the United States, Russia, Britain and France and other Western

states, is opposed by many Third World states, which argue for a limited extension to powers to tackle new proliferation concerns.

· Mexico's Marin Bosch, his country's ambassador to the Geneva disarmament conference, made a passionate case for Non-Aligned states at Monday's closed door talks.

He said nuclear weapons

states were not living up to their responsibilities, had not fulfilled their disarmament obligations and should not take the non-nuclear nations for granted, diplomats said. A decision to extend the NPT requires a simply majority of the 169 treaty members.

one of more fixed periods after which the treaty lapses. Prosplay Davinic, director of the UN Centre for Disarmament Affairs, said the

, treaty would survive the April

The options are an indefinite

extension or an extension for

conference but the "question is for how long."

A number of developing countries, including Mexico. Egypt, Indonesfa, Iran, Nigeria and others, want to win commitments from nuclear states for increased disarmament.

This would include a comprehensive nuclear test ban treaty, a prohibition on production of fashionable materials for weapons purposes, and improved access to nuclear technology as well as security guarantees that nuclear powers will not use their weapons against non-nuclear states.

The nuclear states argue that an indefinite extension would strengthen the treaty and encourage more countries to sign but recent moves by Washington have served to bolster the arguments of Non-Aligned states.

The Defence Department recently released a réview that delays reduction of the US nuclear force and refuses to make an independent no-first-

use of nuclear weapons

Egypt intends to mobilise Arab states against an, indefinite extension unless Israel can be persuaded to join the treaty. Israel has long been thought to possess nuclear weapons and remains outside

the NPT regime. Iran, with one glance at the new technology North Korea is getting, wants to ease or eliminate restrictions on technology. The Unites States strongly opposes this, suspecting Iran of planning a clandestine nuclear weapons programme. which Tehran has denied.

The influential environmental group Greenpeace came out strongly in favour of the nonnuclear states in opposing an indefinite extension of the treaty and instead advocated a series of five-year extensions.

"Indefinite extension would permanently legitimise the nuclear weapons states possession of nuclear weapons," a spokesman said.

Docs can keep

Deng alive

for 4 months

Doctors assigned to treat Deng

Xiaoping around the clock be-

lieve they can keep the

Chinese senior leader alive for

a least three to four months."

a Hong Kong daily said

more than 20 specialists in

Chinese and Western medicine

was earlier this month re-

named an emergency rescue

group, the English-language

South China Morning Post

quoted sources in Beijing as

Despite Chinese govern-

ment assurances that Deng is

The Beijing-based team of

Tuesday, reports AP.

HONG KONG. Jan 24:

DPRK agrees to put N-fuel rods in concrete

SEOUL. Jan 24: North Korea has agreed to put 8,000 corroding rods of spent nuclear fuel in dry concrete as part of a new nuclear deal with the United States, a diplomatic source in Seoul said on Tuesday, reports AP.

The South Korean source. speaking on condition of anonymity, said the agreement was made at six days of US North Korea talks that ended in Pyongyang on Monday. The fate of the 8,000 spent

fuel rods that North Korea unilaterally removed from its experimental 5-megawatt nuclear reactor last May was a key issue of contention left after the October 21 US-North Korea nuclear deal. Experts have warned that

reprocessing of the 8,000

YANGON, Jan 24: Talks

between military rulers and

leading opposition figure Aung

San Suti Kyl appear to have

stalled, with no real progress

towards meaningful dialogue

analysts said teday, reports

In a statement released on

Monday by her husband on his

arrival in Bangkok from

Yangon, Aung San Suu Kyi

indicated she would not agree

to talks in isolation but that

substantive negotiations must

include other pro-democracy

no sign it was ready to talk to

any other political opponent --

NOBE Jan 24 A week after

Kobe was devastated by an

earthquake, the Cabinet de

clared the once-vibrant city a

disaster zone Tuesday effec

building costs, reports AP.

tively shouldering huge re-

Opposition lawmakers as

sailed the government of

Prime Minister Tomiichi

Murayama for its slow re

sponse to the quake, which

Opposition delegate Akira

Kuroyanagi screamed at the

prime minister in an emo-

tional parliament session. He

demanded Murayama apologize

to the nation "for the suffering

"We were you thinking of?"

killed more the 5,000 people

The junta has so far given

Jeaders as well.

spent fuel rods, being kept temporarily in a cooling pond, could give the communist North enough weapons-grade plutonium to make four to five atomic bombs.

At the Pyongyang talks that began last Wednesday, the United States and North Korea reached agreement on all technical issues related to dry storage of the fuel rods, the South Korean source said.

. The source said a team of US specialists, joined by experts from the UN International Atomic Energy Agency, is expected to begin work on the dry storage as early as next week. Experts say dry concrete is

one of the safest ways of storing spent fuel rods to prevent them from corroding and giv

appear to have stalled

whether jailed, in exile of at

liberty - but, under interna-

tional pressure, had trumpeted

the meetings with Aung San

Suu Kyi, who is now in her

sage stressed there would be

"no secret deals" with the

junta, officially known as the

State Law and Order

Restoration Council (SLORC).

and that the goal remained the

establishment of a 'truly

democratic political system in

. A source familiar with both

sides said that contacts to date

amounted to little more than a

reaffirmation of their respec-

Kobe declared disaster zone

Murayama avoided any apol

ogy but said the government

will spare no effort to improve

disaster preparedness The

Finance Ministry unveiled a

series of tax breaks for quake

victims based on their income

losses still exceed their annual

income after discounting in-

surance payments will have to

pay no income tax of 1994, the

laxed restrictions on foreign

doctors who have volunteered

their services. The ministry

said foreign doctors will be al-

The Health Minister re

Those whose property

of the people.

and property loses

ministry said Tuesday

Her carefully phrased mes-

sixth year of house arrest.

ing off radioactivity. The rods could erode if kept in the coofing ponds.

North Korea's official news agency said Monday the US-North Korea talks in Pyongyang resulted in "significant progress." It did not report details.

Under the October 21 nuclear framework agreement. the North's spent fuel rods to be kept in dry concrete must be transferred to a third country by 2002, when the first of two new modern reactors is built in the North

The second reactor is scheduled to be completed one year later.

The two US-arranged lightwater reactors, worth 4 billion dollars, are a key part of the framework agreement.

tive positions, with the SLORC

defending its achievement and

Aung San Suu Kyi stressing

progress or no further meet-

ings, the junta could face in-

creased international pressure

rather than the increased ac-

Directorate of Defence

Services Intelligence were not

available for comment on

other analysts contacted in

Yangon on Tuesday all agreed

that the whole process would

lowed to treat quake victims

even though they lack

Tuesday, including one mea-

suring 3.6 swaying buildings

gave new urgency to the task

of demolishing heavily dam

appear on the verge of col

lapse. Police roped off areas

around threatened building to

timued to shake Japan's politi-

cal and financial establish-

Fallout from the quake con

aged structures; some of which

Aftershocks jolted the city

The continuing aftershocks

Japanese medical licenses.

and shattering glass

keep pedestrians away.

cess to international aid.

Tuesday.

take time.

If there were to be no

Junta spokesman from the

Foreign diplomats and

democratic principles.

generally healthy for a man of 90, speculation about his condition intensified last week after Hong Kong newspapers reported that he recently fell seriously ill Move to unite Suu Kyi's talks with junta

saving.

Akali Dal fails AMRITSAR. Jan 24 Despite mediation by the top Sikh religious leaders on Monday, the two rival factions of the main Sikh political party, failed to unite to oppose the governing party in the northern state of Punjab, reports AP.

But after a meeting with top Sikh political leaders, Manjit Singh, the head priest of the Golden Temple. Sikhism's holiest shrine, said unity moves would continue.

'A seven-member committee would meet leaders of both factions of the Akali Dal, the main Sikh political party, in an effort to unite them, Singh told reporters after the meet ing in Amritsar.

Singly barred Sikh political leaders from making statements to the press before the committee made its final report on February 17, saying he would excommunicate them if they defled him

Lanka okays VOA relay station

COLOMBO, Jan 24: The government has approved the construction of a controversial American radio relay station that some local residents fear could be put to military use officials said on Tuesday, reports AP. The approval came after the

cabinet reviewed the 60 million dollars Voice of America (VOA) station just as Sri Lanka officials were preparing to lobby Washington to raise gar ment quotas.



Spreading the vent of her savage-orange Empire-line silk gown to reveal its taffeta underpinnings, a Nina Ricci model leads the presentation of the designer's lame-embroidered evening dresses for 1995 in Paris on Sunday. - AFP photo

Oldest deer dies

SEOTLAND: The world's oldest recorded deer has died in Scotland at the age of 31, its owners said on Monday, reports

Bambi fived almost twice as long as most deer on a diet of sugar-beet, maize and chocolate biscuits before suffering a stroke at the weekend. Bambi entered the Guinness Book of Records in 1989 as

the world's oldest known deer and started receiving fan mail and Christmas cards after appearing on children's television. I am sure we will get a huge amount of mail when people hear the bad news," said Nancy Fraser, who tended Bambi at her guest house in the Scottish highlands since she was a

Doctor under investigation for mixing up sperm

NAPLES: An artificial insemiration specialist is under investigation for allegedly overlooking a man's healthy sperm and using another sample that passed on a serious blood disease to the baby, reports AP.

The inquest, announced Monday, is the latest scandal involving Italy's highly unregulated field of "test-tube" births. According to reports. Dr Raffaele Magli did not use the sperm of the father, but that of donor who carried tha-

lassemia, which causes a reduction in red blood cells. Their daughter. Giada, who is now 2 years old, must undergo periodic blood transfusions, the ANSA news agency re-

Prosecutors must now decide whether to seek indictment

or drop the case Magli also has sued the couple claiming they tried to extort about 1 billion lire (600,000 dollar) in exchange for a

promise not to go to police. Italy has few rules governing medical work to assist preg-

Earlier this month, a Rome gynaecologist came under criticism from colleagues after he claimed a girl was born two years after her mother's death - from a frozen embryothawed and implanted in the womb of her father's sister.

Some groups also have challenged the ethics of Italian doctors who help post-menopausal women give birth.

Now gay archive

LOS ANGELES A collection of more than 2 million items chronicling 20th century homosexual life and politics has found a home at the University of Southern California, reports The merged holdings of the International Gay and Lesbian

Archives and the ONE Institute include a 1906 edition of a -German gay magazine, a pink leather motorcycle outfit worn at a charity event and matchbooks from gay bars. 'One of our problems as gay and lesbian people is finding our roots. It's so important for people to know who and what

they came from said John O Brien, acting president of the ONE Institute, which administers the collection. The institute founded in 1952, has published a magazine and offered classes in gay studies

USC is providing space in return for access to the collec-

Walter Williams, an anthropology professor who teaches in USC's gender studies programme used the collections for his research on homosexuality in non-Western cultures and found information unavailable anywhere else

"I realized how valuable these were. Williams said.

40 Russian mothers reach Chechnya to rescue sons GROZNY. Jan 24: The to subdue the separatist south

women of Russia, trying to succeed where their menfolk have failed for six weeks, made a dramatic and determined bid on Monday to penetrate the heart of the embattled Chechen capital of Grozny, reports Reuter.

A busload of about 40 mothers of Russian soldiers reached the southwestern outskirts of Grozny around midday Their mission: to secure the release of sons taken prisoner during the drawn-out struggle for the city that began on December

I'm not leaving until I get my son back, even if I have to stay in cellars in Grozny till I find him," one middle-aged mother vowed. Others were red-eved and some incoherent after days of winter travel to the centre of the conflict.

But the group dressed in tight fur-trimmed coats, with the ends of their dyed fair hair just visible under bulky fun hats, fared no better than the Russian army has managed in its so far disastrous campaign

. The crowd scattered within seconds. Mothers poured out of the bus and fled in panic behind the shelter of the near est nine-storey blocks of flats Cars screeched away from the exposed road overlooking a dam and the fog-shrouded city

"Look what filthy swine those Russian soldiers are." yelled one Chechen man 'through rotting gold teeth as he ran for cover.

"It's just like them to shoot at their own mothers.

A measure of calm returned as the mother regrouped in the relative safety of the hidden courtyards behind the row of buildings. A few started talking to phiegmatic Chechen women already used to Russian aerial and artillery bombard-

"I had no idea you had to live in these conditions, facing all this bombing," a plump Russian matron said in wonderment amid the rolling thunderclaps of shell fire.



A woman weeps as she clutches the last of her money, which will not enable her to leave her destroyed house in Grozny on Saturday. - AFP photo

Violence is not characteristic of Islam: Suharto

JAKARTA Jan 24: Force

and violence are neither an Islamic characteristic nor example and those spreading the religion's teachings should reflect this. Indonesian President Suharto said today. reports AFP.

He was officially opening the ninth meeting of the Proselytising Committee of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference OIC being held at the State Palace here.

Tslamte preachers should show the peaceful face of the religion to the world. Truly, in the implementation of preaching we must show a face of Islam which is full of peace." he told more than 200 delegates from 22 nations. 'Allah has already given

guidance in preaching, guidance which is soft and full of smiles," he said, We must avoid preaching

which is forced above all with the way of violence," said Suharto.