BRIFLY

Walesa to seek reelection: Polish President Lech Walesa yesterday announced he plans to stand for re-election as president in an election due later this year, PAP news agency said. Reuter reports from Warsaw.

President Lech Walesa has officially announced that he will be a candidate for the office of president in the forthcoming elections," the agency said.

Nazarbayev's tenure extended: President Nursultan Nazarbayev said Sunday that voters in his Central Asian country gave him a clear mandate to remain in office until the year 2000, according to preliminary referendum results, AP reports from Almaty, Kazakhstan.

Expending Nazarbayev's term would cancel next year's planned presidential election, which would have been the first contested presidential poll since the former Soviet republic became independent in 1991.

Japan ready to recognise Bosnia:

Japan has expressed readiness to recognise the state of Bosnia-Hergegovina, the Vice-President of Bosnia's Muslim-Croat Federation Ejup Ganic said Sunday, AFP reports from

Speaking after a meeting with Japanese Foreign Minister Yohei Kono, who is visiting Zagreb, Ganic said cooperation between the two sides would continue "and this should soon lead to mutual recognition and an exchange of diplomats".

Bombay is now Mumbai: Bombay. India's bustling financial capital, will be known by its native name from Monday. The provincial government announced yesterday. AFP reports from Bombay.

The Hindu militant Shiv Sena Party, which rules the western state of Maharashtra, said all government departments had been ordered to switch over to the new name. "As far as we are concerned, it is not 'Bombay' but 'Mumbai' from today." said Pramod Navalkar, the Maharashtra Cultural Affairs Minister a Shiv Sena leader.

Funeral for ROK gas victims held: Eleven hearses slowly circled the dusty school yard on Sunday morning. Hundreds of students stood silently with heads bowed to bid farewell to classmates who were among 100° people killed in a gas explosion, AP reports from Taegu.

Forty-one of the victims were buried Sunday, even as the rescue squads continued to comb through the debris from more victims. One body, charred beyond recognition, was found early in the morning. A second person died at a hospital, and three people remained missing.

UNITA frees 7 POWs: The rebel UNITA movement has freed seven prisoners-of-war (POWs), the first such release since it signed peace accords with the Angolan government last November, the Red Cross said on Saturday, Reuter reports from Luanda.

They are in fine shape, and we are very happy. International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) field officer Ursula Eugster told Reuters.

One more to die in China: A man who doused his ex-wife with kerosene and set her on fire after she refused to remarry him has been sentenced to death, a newspaper reported on Sunday, AP says from Beijing.

The Shaoyang City Intermediate Court in southern Hunan province sentenced coal miner Yang Shilin to death last Tuesday for the attack, which permanently disabled his exwife, school teacher Zhao Xiaoyan, the Guangming Daily said.

Chiang Kai-Shek's widow to visit US Chinese anti nationalist leader Chiang Kai-Shek's 96-year-old widow will address the US Senate, 52 years after her last speech to Congress in Washington, local press reported yesterday. AFP reports from Taipei.

Soong Mayling, or Madame Ching Kai-Shek, whose husband founded the present government of Taiwan after fleeing mainland China following defeat in the civil war in 1949, wil make her speech on July 26, the United Evening News reported.

Palestinian cop shot dead: Palestinian policeman has shot dead a fellow policeman on the Gaza Strip, the authorities said yesterday, AFP reports from Gaza City.

It was unclear why national security officer Saer Mohammad Fares pumped four bullets into his colleague Nasser Shaaban Abu Akel as he drove a service vehicle south of Gaza City on Saturday. Fares was arrested.

Vietnam bans child labour: Communist Vietnam has banned child labour in 81 harsh and harmful work environments, the semi-official Vietnam Investment Review reported yesterday. Reuter reports from

The weekly, published by the State Committee for Cooperation and Investment, said a circular had been issued by the Labour Ministry banning the employment of children under the age of 16 in conditions "injurious to health and

5 killed in Mogadishu: At least five people were killed and 11 others were injured when a clan militia gang's artillery piece accidentally discharged outside Mogadishu's sea port, witnesses said yesterday, Reuter reports from Mogadishu.

The accident on Saturday apparently happened when the gang was parking its "technical" battle wagon mounted with a recoilless rifle, they said.

Ghali arrives in NZ: UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali arrived in New Zealand yesterday to begin a four day visit. AFP reports from Wellington.

He landed at Ohakea Air Force Base outside Auckland aboard and Australian air force boeing 707 before transferring to a New Zealand air force and over and flying to Wellington where he was met by Deputy Prime Minister Don Mckinnon.

Anti-govt rally in Bahrain: Riot police stormed a university campus in Bahrain to disperse about 200 students staging an anti-government protest, residents said vesterday. Reuter reports from Nicosia.

They said riot police, stationed at the main entrance to Bahrain University in Sakhir, entered the campus soon after students began their march on Saturday.

Troops on top alert in Colombo Off the Record fearing LTTE attacks today

COLOMBO. Apr 30: Security forces in the Sri Lankan capital were placed on top alert today ahead of the May Day holiday amid fears that Tamil rebels may try to carry out attacks here, officials said, reports

The authorities adopted further security measures including checks on passengers at Colombo's main railway station for Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) rebels who may have infiltrated the capital, officials said.

"We cannot afford to drop our guard. The Tiges have done it in the past and they might do it again," said a military official, referring to the LTTE's previous bombing campaigns in Colombo. The need for maximum alert by security forces in the

capital followed a wave of LTTE attacks in the past 11 days in the northeastern war theatre, leaving 164 security personnel dead, military offi-As the fighting escalated in

the northeast, the People's mostly Tamils, dead. Alliance (PA) government today appealed for calm and urged the public not to be "unduly perturbed and misled by misinterpretations."

The government was confident that security forces "will ensure that they are geared to face any threat posed by the LTTE while 'ensuring maxi-

cials said.

mum possible security and safety to the civilian population." an official statement

The LTTE killing of 13 soldiers from the majority Sinhalese community in the north in 1983 sparked a Sinhalese backlash against minority Tamils living in Colombo, leaving some 400.

The ethnic riots led to Tamil rebels intensifying their campaign for a separate state in the northeast for the country's two million Tamils.

AP adds: President Chandrika Kumaratunga returned from France Sunday and rushed into emergency meetings to discuss the latest

rebel attacks that have pushed Sri Lanka to the brink of a full-scale war in predominantly Tamil areas.

The use of surface-to-air missiles to down two Air Force planes on Friday and Saturday, killing 90 people, has not only raised questions about the peace talks that Kumaratunga had hoped to revive, but has caught the military unawares.

Before leaving Paris, where she attended a meeting with aid donors. Kumaratunga indicated a military response to the rebel attacks. "If we are attacked, we will attack," she

ROK gas blast: Two arrested

SEOUL, Apr 30: South Koreport said, reports AFP.

The seven, from the Taebaek Construction Co, its subcontractor Pyojun Cable Co. and from Wooshin Construction Co. were among more than 20 people taken in Friday and Saturday for questioning in connection with the country's worst-ever peace-time blast.

There it was apparently ignited by a welding torch used by a subway construction worker.

rean prosecutors said today they had arrested two people. and were seeking warrants for the arrests of five others in connection with the subway gas explosion in Taegu city that left 100 dead, a television

Five of the seven, including

drilling engineers and inspectors, were from Pyojun — the subcontractor involved in the drilling that ruptured the pipe one from the main contractor, Taebaek Construction and the last from the subway builder, Wooshin Construction.

Cong plans to amend TADA to woo Muslim voters ment in 1986 during unrest in

NEW DELHI, Apr 30: The Indian government, seeking to tone down tough anti-terrorist laws ahead of next year's elections, was set call a crucial meeting with opposition parties this week to discuss changes, officials said today. reports Reuter.

Muslim guerillas are fighting for a separate state.

The ruling Congress Party of Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao is seeking to win back alienated Muslims. who voted against it in recent state polls partly because they were angry at the Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (prevention) Act (TADA). which allows detention without trial.

Rao told parliament on Friday there was still a need for an anti-terrorist law, but it is clear that the law as it is should not continue." TADA enacted by parlia-

Chirac likely

to win French

presidency

rvative Jacques Chirac is likely

to win the French presidency

with between 54 and 55 per

PARIS. Apr 30: Conse-

the northern state of Punjab, is due to expire on May 23. Civil-rights groups have

A police officer inspects the damage of a bomb site on Saturday in northern Kashmir where

lambasted TADA as a big blot on democracy. Opposition parties and minority Muslim groups say the law has been misused to target them. Maintenance of law and

order is a state matter under the Federal Constitution and some state government have been accused of arresting political opponents under TADA. Rao conceded the law had

been misused in some places and said Home Minister Shankar Rao Chavan was consulting political parties to thresh out an alternative. As soon as consultations

were over, the government would come to parliament with suitable legislation to replace TADA. Rao said.

Chavan told a group of Muslim intellectuals earlier this month that the government was working to plug loopholes in the existing law that gives sweeping powers to police to arrest people suspected of terrorism and hold them without trial.

- AFP/UNB photo

At the weekend, Chavan said he was calling a meeting of opposition leaders and state chief ministers in the coming week to discuss the changes in the law.

He said there was a need to bring in changes that would minimise TADA's misuse by state governments.

The Chairman of the state-Rights Commission, Rangnath Misra, recently wrote to all parliament deputies asking them not to vote for an extension of TADA.

Cong dissidents to hold rival convention May 19

NEW DELHI, Apr 30: Indian Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao was under pressure today to hand over the running of his ruling Congress Party as top party officials tried to unite the increasingly fractious organisation, reports Reuter.

With Congress dissidents preparing a rival convention in New Delhi on May 19 and opposition groups already drawing up strategies for general elections due within 14 months. Rao loyalists appeared finally to be moving to stem the drift in the ruling party.

The Indian press reported sponsored National Human I that several government ministers and key state Congress figures were involved in an intensive round of weekend discussions to try to unite the

Gaddafi invites

Clintons to live

safely in Libya

TRIPOLI, Apr 30: Libyan

Kissing delegates

A Thai model covered with elaborate body paint poses on the

catwalk on Saturday. The Bangkok fashion show, featuring

only local designers, was staged to reflect concern with

- AFP/UNB photo

Thailand's environment.

CAIRO: A man caused a stir at a UN Crime Conference in Cairo when the closed circuit camera system transmitted lifesize pictures of him kissing a woman in the back seats of the main conference hall, reports Reuter.

For two minutes the scene appeared on giant banks of television screens dotted around the complex.

"There was a fat man sitting next to a woman in a dress. First he put his hand on her leg and then he kissed her once. The camera moved away," one witness said. The names and nationalities of the couple were not available.

"In general we'd like the participants to stick to the debate." UN spokesman Tim Wall said.

Miraculous reunion!

LONDON: A father and daughter, reunited after 34 years, discovered they lived in the same town and went to the same pub in northern England, the British press reported on Saturday, says AFP.

In the early 1960s, Albert Shaw went off to do his military service in Germany after separating from the woman with whom he had a daughter. Valerie. The young mother died soon after from tuberculosis but the father was never informed as his name did not figure on any legal document due to the fact they were not married.

· But 34 years later in the town of Doncaster a miracle occurred thanks to a local postwoman. Audrey, to whom Valerie recounted her past

"I know your dad - he's my brother", Audrey exclaimed, The reunion took place in a pub, regularly visited by both

father and daughter without either of them ever knowing. "There were tears, but it was smashing", said Albert, a 62 year-old builder.

I have seen Valerie every day since we met and cannot . believe we used to sit in the same pub together without

Besides finding his daughter. Albert also discovered he had two grand-children - Lisa, 14 and Adam, 12.

Bosnian govt rejects extension of truce

SARAJEVO. Apr 30: The Bosnian government refused a UN plea today to extend a tattered truce, offering instead an informal commitment not to attack their Serb enemies, UN special envoy Yasushi Akashi said, reports Reuter. "We discussed the possibil-

ity of extension ... and I regret the response we received at this point in time was not positive," said Akashi after talks with Bosnian Prime Minister Haris Silaidzic. The truce expires at noon (1000 GMT) on Monday.

Akashi said the Muslim-led Bosnian government had told him it would exercise 'maximum restraint" but that it wished to "record this attitude unofficially rather than officially.

The United Nations had hoped to get at least a written commitment by both sides not to engage in hostile action if attempts to prolong the ceasefire failed.

The special envoy said he had not given up hope and despite the lack of progress would continue with later meetings with Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic and Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic in the Serb headquarters town of Pale. Western governments have

warned that fighting in Bosnia might escalate seriously without the restraining influence of a truce. France and Russia have threatened to withdraw peacekeeping troops if a ceasefire deal is not signed. Meanwhile, AFP adds:

Sporadic fighting continued in some areas around Bosnia today with pockets of activity.

Fighting continued sporadically around the country "at recent levels," UN protection force spokesman Major Herve Gourmelon said.

In Sarajevo, two mortars hit the logistic road leading over

Mount Igman.

Peace talks on Nagorno-Karabakh to resume soon

LONDON, Apr 30: The warring sides in the seven yearold conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh, an Armenian majority enclave inside Azerbaijan, have agreed to resume peace talks as soon as possible, the ITAR-Tass news agency reported late on Saturday, says

The agency, in a dispatch monitored here by the BBC said announcement of the agreement was made in the Armenian capital Yerevan by lstvan Gyarmati, a representative of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe, which has been mediating in the dispute.

Gyarmati said the talks could resume in May,

cent of the vote against Socialist Lionel Jospin, the final polls allowed before the May 7 run-off vote showed on Saturday, reports Reuter. Surveys by the BVA and

Sofres polling institutes gave Chirac, making his third bid for the presidency, 54 per cent to 46 per cent for Jospin a first-time candidate.

A third poll, by the IFOP Institute, showed Chirac beating Jospin 55-45, maintaining the lead mentioned by earlier surveys this week.

BVA said its survey, published in the daily Le Monde. showed a slight erosion of the Chirac vote. Last Monday it had

put him ahead 55-45. IFOP and Sofres gave no comparative figures for earlier

Japan seeks broader role for its army TOKYO. Apr 30: Japan. treaty. Japan provides bases

which put severe limitations on its military after its World War II defeat, now wants to give it greater latitude to support U.S actions overseas, Kyodo News Service reported on Sunday, reports AP.

The emphasis would be on greater cooperation with the United States in U.N peacekeeping operations. Kyodo

It said logistics support for U.S forces also would be considered in case of a blockade imposed against communist North Korea, which has been threatened with sanctions if it reneges on an agreement to shut down its feared nuclear programme in exchange for replacement reactors and economic and diplomatic benefits.

Japan would take such actions

under a new interpretation of

its security treaty with the

Quoting unnamed government sources. Kyodo said

for U.S. forces, and the United States promises military support if Japan is attacked. It said Defence Agency Director-General Tokuichiro

Tamazawa would present the new interpretation to U.S Defence Secretary William Perry when the two meet in Washington Tuesday. The agency is looking for a new role for the treaty now

that Japan faces no immediate military threat, Kyodo said. It added that the agency considers the treaty a stabilising factor in the Asia-Pacific region. After its 1945 defeat in World War II. Japan adopted a constitution that bans using force to settle international

But a 1992 law permits it to send troops to join UN peacekeeping operations as long as the troops are working under UN command in the area of a cease-fire, and are requested by the United Nations.

Leader Moamer Gaddasi on Saturday invited US President Bill Clinton and his wife Hillary to live in safety from rightwing American extremists in Libya following the Oklahoma City carbomb explosion, re-

ports AFP. "We invite Clinton and his wife to live Libya, the only safe country in the world," said Gaddafi during a speech in Sirte, the Central Libvan Region where he was born. Gaddafi, who was marking

the 80th anniversary of a colonial era battle against Italy, said American Militia Groups were made up of poor people who rejected dictatorship. They heralded a "popular revolution of the American masses," he said.

Rescue workers are still searching for 61 people unaccounted for in wreckage of the Federal Building in Oklahoma City.

Russia sends 2000

guards in Tajikistan after a series of bloody clashes with Islamic rebels along the Tajik-Reuter.

deputy commander General Alexandre Tymkko said.

The general indicated that Russian military commanders were planning an assault to regain control of a section of the main road linking the capital

United States. Under the US launches fresh arms sales policy targeting Third World

NEW YORK. Apr 30: The Asia will also account for more United States is launching an that targets the developing rest of the decade. world as its most profitable market through the turn of the

century, reports IPS. The Pentagon arms trade forecast, the first of its kind, predicts the middle East will buy up to 64 billion USD in US arms through the year 2000. while East Asia will buy about 60 billion USD in military equipment.

"We are going to be world's arms supermarket." Thomas Cardamone, editor of the Washington-based monthly "Arms Trade News" said of a recently released market assessment by the US

Department of Defence. The Middle East and East

than 60 per cent of all US aggressive arms sales policy arms sales overseas during the

The third world demand for arms is expected to come mostly from Saudi Arabia. Egypt. Kuwait. the United Arab Emirates, Iran, Taiwan, Southern Korea, India, Pakistan. Malaysia and China.

The growing new demand for US weapons systems is predicted on rising ethnic rivalries, longstanding border disputes, and conflicting claims to economic zones in disputed waters.

Under a ground-breaking arms sales policy announced last month, defence industry officials will be provided with access to foreign government

officials to sell US weapons systems. US Embassy personnel and senior government ofpush arms sales overseas.

The other new component to the arms policy is a nod to arguments that potention of US jobs must be taken into account when arms export are considered. "We are in effect going to control the international arms trade," Cardamone

The Pentagon report, which effectively falls in line with the new arms sales policy, says Saudi Arabia will remain the world's estimated 32.4 billion USD in military equipment through the year 2000. Taiwan, the largest buyer in East Asia, is expected to buy

about 16.5 billion USD worth of weapons in the next five year accused arms dealers of

cashing in on the Asian economic boom by dumping their weapons on the financially vibrant region. Rafeeuddin Ahmed, former executive secretary of the Bangkok-based UN Economic Commission for Asia and the

arms exports to the Asia-Pacific region required urgent global action. Taking advantage of the healthy fiscal position of many governments, international arms producers and traders are vigorously pushing arms

sales in the region," he told

The arms deals with Asian ficials will also formally help. The United Nations last countries were also being

the UN Economic and Social

sweetened in a non-transparent manner," Ahmed said. "The potential destabilising impact of such arms build-up needs no elaboration."

Ahmed told delegates the Asia-Pacific region required an estimated average of about 140 billion dollars annually for infrastructure building. Pacific (ESCAP), said rising But as East Asian countries

prepare to spend USD 140 billion over the next decade in infrastructure, some military analysts say part of the money will also be channelled into military infrastructure since most of the countries in the region are modernising their

in an economic survey of the region, ESCAP says the

economies of South and East Asia grew more than six times faster than the global economy last year. While the world economy grew only one per cent, the combined output of South and East Asia grew by 6.9 per cent.

Cardamone told IPS the United States and other arms exporters were feverishly courting the Middle East and East Asia because "that is where the money is."

The Pentagon projects only about US 5.2 billion dollars in arms sales to Latin America and US 2 billion dollars to Africa.

more troops along Tajik border DUSHANBE, Apr 30: Russia has sent 2,000 troops to reinforce its contingent of border-

Afghan border, a Russian general said on Saturday, reports The reinforcements sent to the volatile Gorno Badakhshan area of eastern Tajikistan, bringing the number of Russian frontier guards in the country to 17,000, their