

International

BRIEFLY

Washington urges Delhi not to deploy Prithvi missile

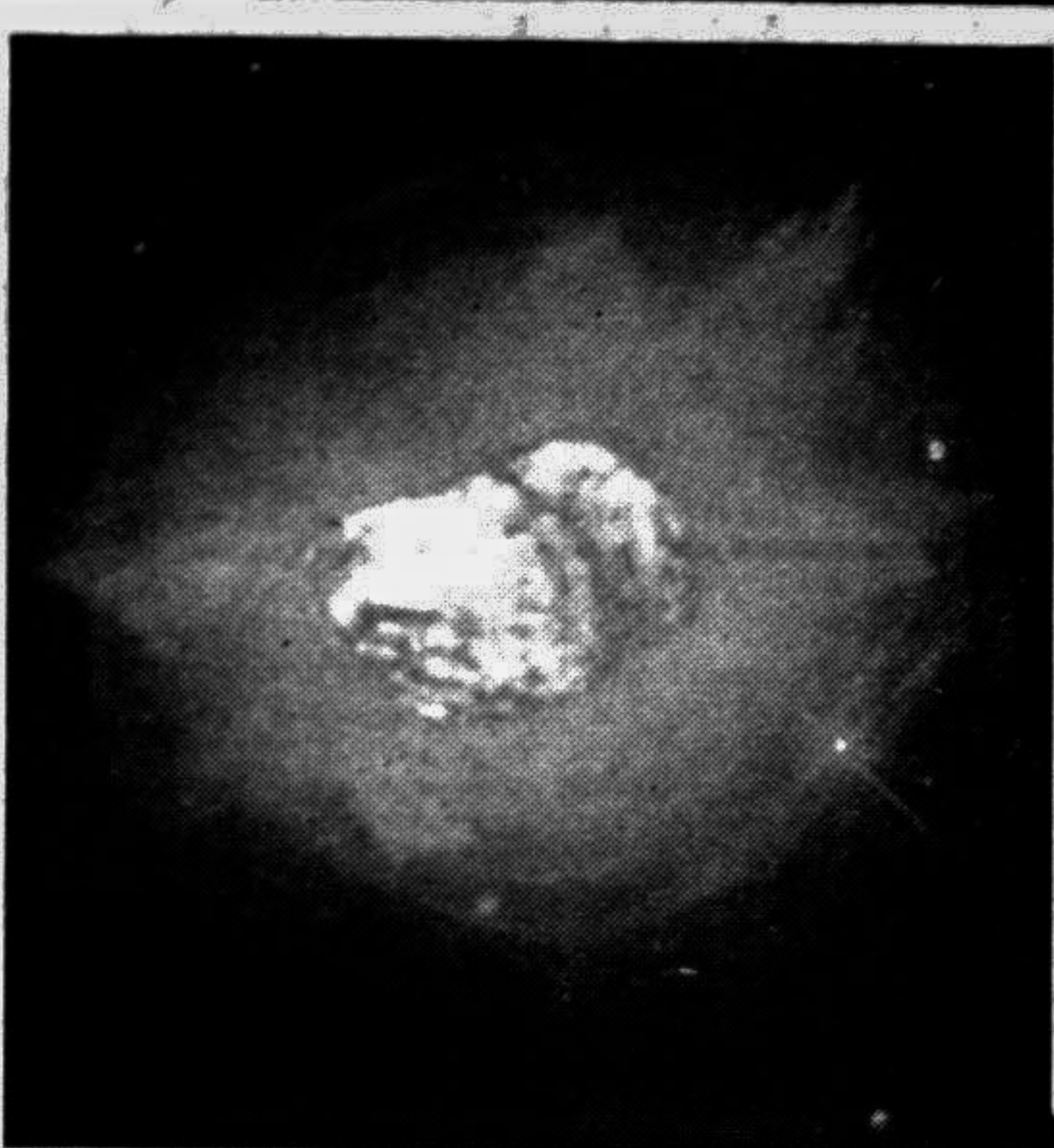
WASHINGTON, Jan 17: The United States on Tuesday urged India not to deploy its medium-range Prithvi missile, warning that such a move would "create new tensions" between India and Pakistan, reports Reuter.

"We are working very hard in the Indian subcontinent with both Pakistan and India to try to reduce tensions and to slow an arms build-up there," Bacon said. "So we would urge restraint on all sides, including India."

region and for nuclear arms control. India has successfully tested the Prithvi missile 14 times so far. A 15th test launch scheduled for Tuesday was postponed for unexplained reasons.

Chun files suit challenging his imprisonment

SEOUL, Jan 17: Former President Chun Doo-hwan today filed a suit challenging the law under which he was jailed on December 3, reports said, says AFP.



This photo taken by the NASA's Hubble space telescope and released on Tuesday shows nebula NGC 7027 detailing the process by which a star like the Sun dies. The nebula is a record of the star's final death throes.

**Benazir arrives in Japan:** Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto arrived in Japan yesterday for a four-day visit to meet with political and economic leaders, AFP reports from Tokyo.

**UK aid worker killed in Bosnia:** A British aid worker in Bosnia was killed Tuesday when the truck she was driving in a convoy careered off a road, Press Association reported, AP reports from London.

**Yeltsin meets Kuchma:** Russian President Boris Yeltsin met Tuesday with his Ukrainian counterpart, Leonid Kuchma, to discuss improving relations between the two former Soviet republics, AP reports from Moscow.

Both presidents supported strengthening economic ties and signed an agreement to set up a joint economic cooperation commission to be co-chaired by their two prime ministers, news reports said. "This commission, which will seek to invigorate multifaceted cooperation between the two countries, can be compared to similar commissions Russia has set up with the United States and France," Yeltsin's aid for international affairs Dmitry Ryurkov told the Interfax news agency.

**4 killed in Thai chopper crash:** Four Thai army officers were killed yesterday when their helicopter hit electricity cables and crashed, police said, Reuter reports from Bangkok.

**Rains kill 5 in Panama:** Intense rains pounding Panama have left five people dead, six missing, and more than 1,000 homeless in January, rescue workers said, AP reports from Panama City.

**Kobe victims mourn on anniversary:** Earthquake victims lit candles and offered silent prayers before dawn Wednesday at the precise moment when a devastating quake struck one year ago, AP reports from Kobe.

**2 Israeli troops killed in Hebron:** Palestinian gunmen shot dead two Israeli soldiers near the West Bank town of Hebron, the army said today, Reuter reports from Jerusalem.

**5 executed in Nigeria:** A senior Nigerian police officer and four others were executed by firing squad for armed robbery in Ibadan, western Nigeria, a newspaper reported yesterday, Reuter reports from Lagos.

**Security around Srinagar TV centre tightened**  
SRINAGAR, Jan 17: Security was beefed up around state-run media installations in this Kashmir summer capital Tuesday after Muslim militants staged an abortive bid to blow up a television relay centre, police said, reports AFP.

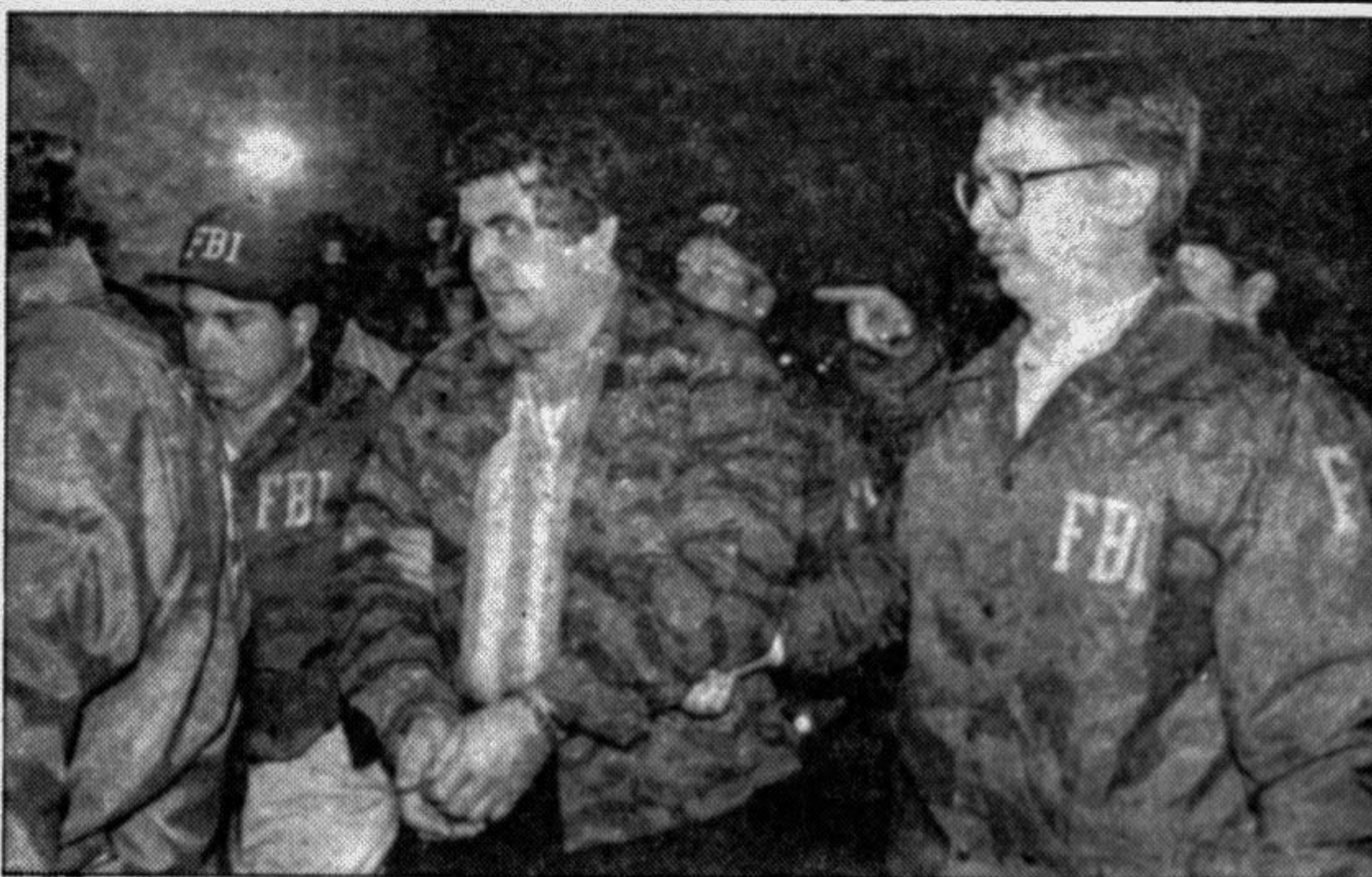
**China asks US, Japan to recall military attaches**  
WASHINGTON, Jan 17: China is asking the United States to recall a military attaché whom Chinese authorities detained — and later released — in southern China last week, the state department said on Tuesday, reports Reuter.

**Arrest warrants for 5 Rok ex-army generals sought**  
SEOUL, Jan 17: Prosecutors today sought arrest warrants for five retired military generals charged with treason and mutiny in connection with a 1979 coup and the 1980 Kwangju massacre, the prosecutor's office said, reports AFP.

**Jyoti Basu predicts another sweeping win for left front**  
CALCUTTA, Jan 17: The West Bengal Chief Minister, Jyoti Basu today predicted another sweeping win for the ruling left front in the forthcoming assembly elections, saying that party positions will remain the same, reports PTL.

**He took the idea from James Bond**  
CANBERRA: An Australian teenager accidentally has burned down his family's home while trying to kill a spider with an insect spray which he had turned into a makeshift flamethrower, reports AFP.

**UN High Commissioner for Refugees Sadako Ogata (C) is flanked by Carl Bildt (L) the Vice Chairman of the Conference on the Former Yugoslavia, and Daniel Spiegel (R) the US Ambassador to the UN at the start of the International Meeting on Humanitarian Aid for refugees in the former Yugoslavia on Tuesday.**



Suspected drug lord Juan Garcia Abrego (2nd R) is taken by FBI agents away from the FBI office in Houston, Texas, after being processed after his arrival from Mexico City late Monday. Abrego was taken to a federal detention facility in Houston then held at Harris County Jail.

Jyoti Basu predicts another sweeping win for left front

Residents of temporary housing in the western port city of Kobe held a solemn memorial service with a moment of silence at 5:46 am, marking the time when the 7.2 magnitude quake struck, killing more than 6,000 people.

Basu, however, admitted that the CPI-M was weak in two or three hot sabbha constituencies, but the opposition Congress (I) also faced a similar situation.

Commenting on the recent statement by a Congress (I) leader that the party will secure 25 seats in the lok sabbha elections, Basu quipped "I think them for leaving a few seats for us."

Former Italian PM faces trial

MILAN, Italy, Jan 17: In the sharpest challenge yet to his political comeback, ex-premier Silvio Berlusconi faces trial Wednesday on charges of bribing tax inspectors reviewing the books of his media empire, reports AP.

Hamas urges Palestinians to boycott elections

JENIN, West Bank, Jan 17: Leaders of the Muslim militant group Hamas said Tuesday they would consider their efforts successful if voter turnout in this weekend's Palestinian election falls below 50 per cent, reports AP.

candidate — Yehiya Ayyash, Jamal Khalil, a Hamas leader, told thousands of cheering Palestinians at an Ayyash memorial rally in this PLO-ruled town Wednesday.

the group, while not fielding candidates, had pledged not to urge voters to stay away. Voter turnout will be the main measure of support for Arafat, since all factions opposed to the Israel-PLO peace agreement are not competing in the elections.

Other Hamas leaders were more cautious, saying strong attendance at Ayyash memorial rallies was not a guarantee that the boycott would be widely observed.

But opinion was divided among legislators in the new State Duma, parliament's lower house, on whether to hold a no-confidence vote in Yeltsin's government.

Knesset formally okays West Bank accord

JERUSALEM, Jan 17: Israel's parliament formally approved the Israel-PLO accord extending autonomy in the West Bank and paving the way for Palestinian elections this weekend, reports AP.

September. The accord extended the Gaza-Jericho autonomy created in 1994 to most Arab-populated parts of the West Bank. Over the past two months Israeli troops have pulled out of six West Bank towns and hundreds of villages.

Separate jails for women prisoners in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD, Jan 17: The Pakistan government has bowed to international pressure and decided to provide separate jails for women prisoners, it was reported here today, says AFP.

At present women are housed in separate blocks in the same prisons as men. The decision has been taken following continued international pressure and domestic complaints about the plight of Pakistani women in jails, a local daily The News said.

Off the Record

Queen aware of Fergie's debt

LONDON: The Duchess of York, Queen Elizabeth II's daughter-in-law, has a bank overdraft of more than 1 million pounds (1.5 million dollars), according to reports in the tabloid press here Wednesday, reports AFP.



Officials at the queen's bankers, courts, are said to be "getting very nervous" over the Duchess's account, according to The Sun.

He took the idea from James Bond

CANBERRA: An Australian teenager accidentally has burned down his family's home while trying to kill a spider with an insect spray which he had turned into a makeshift flamethrower, reports AFP.

Ramirez's father, who tried to fight the fire with a garden hose, was treated for burns. Ramirez told the Canberra Times newspaper he had remembered the flamethrower technique from an old Bond movie.

Duma opens its session

MOSCOW, Jan 17: Russia's newly elected parliament held its first session Tuesday with angry demonstrations and sharp criticism of President Boris Yeltsin for his handling of the hostage crisis in southern Russia, reports AP.

Authorities fear that Palestinian or Jewish extremists would try to disrupt the January 20 election. Even as legislators were debating, two people were wounded when shots were fired at Israeli soldiers at a West Bank intersection north of Hebron, Israeli radio said Tuesday night. Their condition was unknown.

Duma opens its session

But opinion was divided among legislators in the new State Duma, parliament's lower house, on whether to hold a no-confidence vote in Yeltsin's government.

The liberal Yabloko party, led by economist Grigory Yavlinsky, proposed such a vote for the Cabinet's "inability to lead the country."