BUIEFLY



Nicolas Cage holds up his trophy for winning in the category of Outstanding Performance by a Male Actor in 'a Lead Role during the Screen Actors Guild Awards at the Santa Monioa Civic Centre Auditorium in Los Angeles on Saturday. Cage won for his role in the movie "Leaving Las Vegas." - AFP/UNB photo

British diplomat killed in NZ: Ase nior British diplomat in New Zealand was killed on Sunday when his motorcycle was in collision with a car, the British High Commission said on Monday. Reuter reports from Wellington.

The diplomat, Deputy High Commissioner Andrew Heath, was an Arabic specialist who had served in Jordan, Kuwait and Washington. He was married with two sons.

A spokesman said Heath, 42, was a motorcycling enthusiast who rode for relaxation at weekends. The crash occurred on Sunday morning near Shannon in the lower north island.

10 killed in Sierra Leone: At least 10 people were killed Sunday in southern Sierra Leone in an attack by suspected rebels, local journalists said, AFP reports from Abidian.

Delegations from Sierra Leone's military junta and rebels engaged in an almost five-year-long civil war had met earlier Sunday in Abidjan as "brothers" in what were the first talks aimed at resolving the conflict. Sunday's Ivory Coast-mediated talks came a day before presidential and parliamentary elections in the troubled West African state.

Military jet crashes in Cambodia: A military plane carrying people to a conference in northeast Cambodia crashed on landing at the weekend but there were no serious casualties, aviation officials and witnesses said yesterday. Reuter reports from Phnom Penh.

Civil Aviation Director Keo Sophal said the chartered Antonov-24 was carrying 36 foreign and local passengers and an unspecified number of crew to Banlung Inratanakiri province on Sunday morning for an international seminar on sustainable development.

Turkey's no 1 tycoon Koc dies Businessman Vehbi Koc. who left school as a teen eight decades ago to open a small grocery store and spent his life amassing Turkey's most formidable financial empire, died Sunday at age 94. AP reports from Ankara.

Koc suffered a heart attack at his five-star hotel in the Mediterranean coastal city of Antalya, where he was vacationing. He died en route to a hospital, the private Show TV said. Koc built a private commercial and industrial complex of 110 in ms, including a joint venture with the US automaker Ford, He invested in banking, insurance and tourism as well.

Road mishaps claim 14 in Gujarat: Fourteen persons were killed and twentyone others injured in four road accidents in Amreli, Junagadh and Rajkot districts of Gujarat Sunday, police said, PTI reports from Rajkot.

Eight persons were killed and five other seriously injured when their tempo plunged into a deep ditch near Ambardi village in Amreli district. The injured were admitted to hospitals in Rajkot and Ahmedabad. In another mishap, four persons were killed and two others seriously injured when two trucks collided near Gondal district yesterday. Two men, on a motorcycle, were run over by a truck near Manvadar town in Junagadh district.

Pope seeks peace in Afghanistan: Pope John Paul called on Sunday for an end to violence in Afghanistan, Reuter reports from Vatican City. "I feel for the suffering of so many innocent people and

want to encourage everybody to undertake a sincere and lasting dialogue," he told pilgrims and tourists gathered in St Peter's Square for his Sunday blessing.

Tremors hit northeastern Iran: Two tremors measuring 5.4 and 5.6 on the Richter scale on Sunday shook cities in northeastern Iran, the official IRNA news agency said yesterday. Reuter says from Nicosia.

The agency said the quakes hit at 1614 and 1742 GMT. shaking the cities of Kashmar and Sabzevar but caused no damage. A weaker third tremor measuring 4.7 also on Sunday night hit the city of Mashhad.

Blast kills 5 in Albania: Five people were killed and several dozen wounded when a bomb exploded yesterday in a supermarket in Tirana, police said, AFP reports from Tirana.

Albanian President Sali Berisha went to the site, where the explosion rocked the Vefa holding supermarket in midmorning. The popular supermarket is in the centre of Tirana.

Christopher in El Salvador: US Secretary of State Warren Christopher arrived in El Salvador on Sunday at the beginning of a three-day visit during which he will meet Central American presidents, Reuter reports from Salvador.

Christopher arrived at Comalapa airport on El Salvador's Pacific coast at 6-50 pm (0050 GMT) and was met by Salvadoran Foreign Minister Ramon Gonazalez, witnesses said. Christopher will later visit Chile, Argentina, Brazil and Trinidad and Tobago in the most extensive Latin American tour by a US Secretary of State since George Shultz visited the region in 1988.

18-hr strike paralyses Bombay

BOMBAY, Feb 26: Normal life in India's commercial centre of Bombay was paralysed Monday due to an 18-hour protest call by opposition par-ties against disbanding a panel looking into Hindu-Muslim violence three years ago, reports

Business establishments were closed and public transport was off the roads in response to a strike call given by the Republican Party of India, the centrist Janata Dal and Samajwadi Party, the police

Prakash Ambedkar, spokesman for the Republican Party of India said the strike call was in protest against disbanding of the one-man Srikrishna Panel by the Maharashtra state government on January 23.

Chief Minister Manohar Joshi, belonging to the Hindurevivalist Shiv Sena (Shivaji's army) Party said the Srikirshna Inquiry Commission was disbanded as the state government found its "existence unnecessary.

"Our people are enforcing the shutdown in most parts of the city and the strike has been total," Ambedkar said.

Yeltsin trailing behind in opinion poll.

MOSCOW, Feb 26: President Boris Yeltsin is trailing behind his Communist and ultranationalist rivals in the race for Russia's June presidential elections, a poll released Sunday indicated, reports AP. Yeltsin announced his in-

tention to seek a second term earlier this month, but he needs to overcome deep public mistrust caused by economic and social disarray seen as a direct outcome of the painful market reforms.

Yeltsin's political foes have capitalized on that widespread discontent to win a significant share of votes in parliamentary elections last December.

Of the 1,600 Russians questioned by the independent VTSIOM public opinion research center, only 8 per cent said they would vote for Yeltsin if elections were held now.

Louis Farrakhan challenges US govt to probe into his ME tour

CHICAGO, Feb 26: Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan on Sunday challenged the US government to investigate his controversial trip to Africa and the Middle East and said he intends to accept financial help offered him by Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi. reports Reuter.

I call you bluff. Bring me before Congress. It's time for the showdown." Farrakhan told followers in a four-hour speech, his annual "savior's day" address that drew thousands to a stadium at the University of Illionois Chicago

"I want you to bring me before Congress and ask me to register as a foreign agent. And I'm going to call the role of how many Senators are honorary members of the israeli Knesset." he added.

Farrakhan returned to the United States last week from a 20-nation tour during which he was attacked by the US State Department for "cavorting with dictators" in Iraq. Libya and Iran - so-called "pariah" states the United States has tried to isolate. .

Queen in IRA's

target list! LONDON, Feb 26: Soldiers

with machine guns on Sunday patrolled the grounds of Windsor Castle to protect Queen Elizabeth II after police reportedly learned that she is an IRA target, reports AP.

The London tabloid The Sun said maps and security plans for the castle and Buckingham Palace were found at the home of an IRA man killed last week when the bomb he was carrying on a London bus exploded The Feb 18 explosion wounded nine other peo-

A hit list and coded attack warnings also were found under a floorboard at the southeast London apartment rented by Edward O'Brien, 21, the newspaper reported.

"The documents and battle plans basically showed the IRA were going after the royal family," it quoted an unidentified security source as saying.

Killing of two prominent defectors in Baghdad

Jordan-Iraq diplomatic ties worsen to point of no return

AMMAN, Feb 36 : Diplomatic relations between Jordan and Iraq have degenerated to the point of no return after the killing in Baghdad of two prominent defectors who been refugees in Amman, according to Jordanian officials, reports.

However, Jordan, which has expressed outrage over the murder of General Hussein Kamel Hassan and his brother Colonel Saddam Hassan, does not envisages closing its border or tearing up trade agreements with Iraq, they said.

"Relations between Jordan and iraq, already very tense for six months after the defection of the two sons-in-law of Saddam Hussein and their families, have today reached a point of no return," a senior Jordanian official told, the news agency

"It will be difficult to repair the damage. Jordan will never be able to deal with the current regime in Baghdad because its actions go against human dignity." he added, "speaking on condition of

The same official, however, that a change in government

Monday.

NEW DELHI, Feb 26: Indian

President Shanker Dayai

Sharma today told Pakistan to

avoid the path of confrontation

with India and warned the ri-

valry between the two neigh-

bours could spark off an arms

race in South Asia, reports

speech to a joint session of

parliament said Islamabad's at-

tempts to build up a nuclear

arsenal had heightened mili-

tempts to acquire weaponry

and uranium enrichment

technology have been a matter

of serious concern to us. The

attempts heighten tensions in

our region and are likely to

Pakistan to eschew the path of

confrontation with India and

respond constructively to our

repeated offer of a bilateral di-

alogue to resolve outstanding

"We urge the government of

trigger an arms race.

"Pakistan's continuing at-

tary tension in the region.

President Sharma in a

Former South Korean president Chun Doo Hwan looks

down as he is escorted by prison officers into a Seoul

court house to face trial on corruption charges on

said: "Jordan'does not envisage. closings its borders with Iraq nor modifying its economic accords with this country, for which Jordan is the only life-

line to the outside world." Abdel Karim Kabarti, the Jordanian Prime Minister, told AFP: "the official Jordanian position is to distinguish between political relations and economic relations.

He stressed, however, that Amman was waiting to find out Baghdad's position" to see if it wants to change its attitude towards relations."

Jordanian politicians fear that Iraq might decide to raise tension between the two countries by stopping the distribu-tion of its oil in trucks that cross the border each day.

Jordan depends entirely on lraq for its oil supplies of 70,000 barrels per day and the trade between the two nations stands at 200 million dellars annually.

Officials spoke out after King Hussein said on Sunday that he was "disgusted" by the murder of the two senior tragi defectors on Friday, adding

- AFP/UNB photo

Telego Desam drops no-confidence vote against Rao

Indo-Pak rivalry can spark off arms

race in South Asia: Sharma

The President said India

He said the performance of

had warm ties with all its

neighbours in South Asia ex-

Indian troops in curbing ter-

rorism in the country has been

"creditable" and asserted the

law and order situation in In-

have been curbed and sepa-

ratist activities have been con-

tained to a very large extent."

Sharma said in his traditional

address to parliament's budget

ing drive by Indian troops to

crush Muslim insurgency in

Kashmir had been successful

and added that New Delhi

would hold elections at the

earliest possible date in Kash-

mir. which has been under

have died in Kashmir, India's

More than 12,000 people

federal rule since 1990.

Sharma also said an ongo-

session, which opened today.

"Terrorism and insurgency

issues," Sharma said.

dia was under control.

cept Pakistan.

was inevitable in Baghdad. Another AFP report says:

President Saddam Hussein cannot be trusted for any deals with the United Nations after he lured back defectors with promises of a pardon that failed to spare their lives, a newspaper said in Dubai Sun-

General Hussein Kamel Hassan, a former industry minister who disclosed arms and other secrets after defecting to Jordan, and his brother Saddam Kamel Hassan, former security chief, were shot dead in Baghdad on Friday.

The world will deplore the manner in which they were offered pardons and then summarily punished," the Gulf

The Iraqi opposition itself had blamed the defectors in part of Baghdad's brutality, the Khaleej Times said.

"It was also becoming clear that Jordan's King Hussein did not see eye to eye with the Iraqi brothers after the failure of the (Iraqi) diaspora to supthe newspaper

Chun appears

in court

South Korean president Chun

Doo Hwan appeared in court

today to face charges of brib-

ery, the second ex-head of

in 10 weeks, reports Reuter.

state to be tried for corruption

smock. Chun appeared before

a three-judge panel at the

Seoul district criminal court

along with five former admin-

tic Yonhap news agency

quoted Chun, 65, as telling re-

porters on arrival at courts

The retired army general is

being held in a police hospital

where he was moved in De-

cember during a month long

AFP adds, disgraced former

South Korean dictator Chun

doo-Hwan, looking undaunted

and fit despite a hunger strike,

defiantly denied bribery

charges on the opening day of

only Muslim-majority state.

stace 1989 when Muslim sep-

aratists launched an anti-in-

dian rebellion in the Himalayan

arming and training Muslim

separatist rebels. Islamabad

denies the allegations but ex-

terids moral and diplomatic

support to what it describes as

the Kashmiris just struggle for

budget session of the Indian

parliament opens today amid

opposition demands for the

resignation of Prime Minister

PV Narasimha Rao over the

country's worst bribery scan-

party, Telugu Desam, decided

to drop a no-confidence vote

against the five-year-old gov-

ernment as the move failed to

get the support of the com-

munists and the centrist

But a regional opposition

Another report says, the

self-rule.

Janata Dal.

India accuses Pakistan of

province bordering Pakistan.

his corruption trial today.

"I'm all right," the domes-

istration aides.

hunger strike.

Wearing a sky-blue prison

SEOUL. Feb 26: Former

ports AP. . In downtown Belfast.

Thousands more delivered the same message in 10 other Northern Ireland towns, and an estimated 60,000 marched in the Irish Republic in the most widespread demonstration against IRA violence in two decades.

statement Sunday night that district on February 9 to 900.

bring the number of British soldiers in the province to

The Docklands blast killed

Rallies throughout Ireland condemn IRA's killing

Britain sends 400 more troops

BELFAST, Feb 26: Church bells pealed throughout Ireland Sunday as tens of thousands called on the IRA to stop killing. Britain, meanwhile, ordered another 400 soldiers back to Northern Ireland, re-

10,000 demonstrators chanted "Cease fire now! Give us back our peace!" following the Irish Republican Army (IRA) decision to end its 17-month cease-fire by bombing London.

The British Army said in a

400 soldiers were being sent back to Northern Ireland. It brings the total sent back to the province since the IRA broke its 17-month cease-fire with a truck-bomb explosion in London's Docklands business The additional 400 will

two people. On February 18, an IRA man was killed when the bomb he was carrying on a London bus exploded prema-

The Army statement said the 400 form the second battalion of the Royal Dragoon Guards. They are currently based at Paderborn in Germany. On Thursday, 500 British soldiers were flown back to Northern Ireland.

Earlier Sunday, Irish Prime Minister John Bruton told a peace march from his hometown church in rural County Meath: "We are not going to allow the agenda for this democracy to be set by the army council of the IRA."

"This secret organisation, whose membership is unknown, who are accountable to no one, who do not stand before the public to get approval for what they do, has no right to act on our behalf. And the people of Ireland are saying:

In Dublin, US Ambassador Jean Kennedy Smith joined a 25,000-strong rally in College Green, where three months ago President Clinton addressed a crowd confident that the IRA cease-fire would last.

Ciller still hopeful of coalition govt in Turkey

ANKARA, Feb 26: Hoping to avoid new elections. Premier Tansu Ciller suggested Sunday there was still a chance of a coalition with a rival centreright party, reports AP.

"There is a possibility of a coalition between True Path and Motherland," said Ciller following talks between officials from her party and representatives from Motherland. Motherland leader Mesut

Yilmaz broke off talks with the pro-Islamic Welfare Party on-Saturday after the two parties failed to agree on the distribution of Cabinet seats. Welfare leader Necmettin Erbakan and Ciller had earlier

governments following December 24 elections. Turkey's Western allies and supporters of its secular political system were relieved by

the breakdown in talks with

tried their hand at forming

Welfare. They feared an Islamic party in government threatened Turkey's secular and Western-oriented system. The renewal of talks be-

tween the two centre-right parties appeared to be the lastchance attempt to avoid elections. Failure could force Turkey's president to order new elections. Ciller and Yilmaz failed to come to an agreement last

time they tried to form an alliance, mostly due to personal rivalry between them. Welfare placed first in general elections December 24 but its 158 deputies in the 550-member parliament fell

govern alone. Motherland has 133 seats in parliament and True Path has 135. They would need the support of one of the social democrat parties

short of the majority of 276 to

"Libya close to completing largest underground chemical weapons plant"

NEW YORK, Feb 26: Libya is close to completing the world's largest underground chemical weapons plant in a hollowed-out mountain near its capital Tripoli, the New York Times has reported quoting American intelligence officials. reports PTI.

The subterranean plant, situated 65 km away from Tripoli, may be completed in 1997 or 1998, covers six square miles and already stores most of Libya's stockpile of chemical weapons - about one hundred tons, the paper

the project was an irrigation system, a claim disputed by western intelligence agencies who say once the plant went into operation, it would be able to produce the ingredients for The newspaper says though

Libya has maintained that tons of poison gas every day.

US intelligence agency, CIA, has not been able to photograph the plant, German intelligence services have obtained copies of construction plans and building specifications from German and Austrian companies which help build the funnel for the plant.

Libya is said to be one of the 18 nations, mostly in the Middle East, working on chemical weapons' programmes, the report said quoting Director of Central Intelligence John M Deutch.

Western intelligence reports have claimed Libya has been working on chemical and biological weapons since early 1980s and cite the weapons

plant built at Rabta, southwest of Tripoli, with the assistance of German companies.

Off the Record

Quest for Chenghis Khan

CHICAGO: The University of Chicago is taking over an elusive quest for signs of the life and death of the 13th century Mongolian conqueror Chenghis Khan, reports AP. The dream is at the threshold of reality," says Maury

Kravitz, a Chicago Mercantile Exchange trader who plans to join the first month-long expedition, set to begin July 15 if enough money is raised. Kravitz announced in 1994 that he hoped to field such an

expedition, but last week he passed the baton to the university by transferring an agreement with the Mongohan government to conduct a five-year search for Khan's burial site. Chenghis Khan, Mongol conqueror of Central Asia, died in Tibet in 1227. His body was supposedly carried back to Mon-

golia for burial - along with considerable treasure "If we find treasure, it belongs to the Mongolian people, said historian John E. Woods, who will direct the first expedition, assuming the university is able to raise 100,000 dlrs to finance it.

Artifacts such as weapons and camp materials are more important than treasure anyway, he said. He'll search for the conqueror's birthplace, tomb, and other significant sites. The first expedition will include 15 Americans and 15 Mongolians. Three more expeditions are planned by decade s

the Ingush village of Arshty on the Chechen-Ingush border. Hawala scandal gives India chance to fight corruption Murayama admits mistakes in Kobe NEW DELHI, Feb 26: A Party have resigned. And the quake response

scandal has incriminated india's three top political parties for the first time, leaving some wondering if their nation will overhaul campaign finance laws that have long allowed corruption, reports AP.

Since January, the Central Bureau of Investigation has charged 24 politicians with taking kickbacks or illegal contributions from a business family between 1988 and

More indictments are expected as the CBI examines two confiscated Jain family diaries that contain the initials of 115 politicians and bureaucrats who allegedly accepted bribes.

Seven Cabinet ministers from the centrist Congress

two opposition groups, the Bharatiya Janata and Janata Dal, have both seen top officials forced out of office.

Coming two months before a general election expected in April, the 18 million dollars seandal could leave the three parties tainted and unable to win a majority in Parliament. That in turn could endanger

India's free-market reforms.

which the Congress Party introduced nearly five years ago to attract the foreign investment that this poor country desperately needs. The month-old scandal still .dominates newspapers and conversations even though India is closely watching a World

Cup cricket tournament that is

team is playing in South Asia.

The scam also has further blackened the reputations of politicians, even ones who haven't been charged.

Last week, for instance, during a lavish wedding ceremony in New-Delhi, two top Congress Party politicians showed up to bless the bride and groom, in keeping with an 'ancient tradition.

So many people in the crowd glowered at them and kept their distance that the Cabinet minister and the Parliament speaker soon had to leave, according to one of the guests.

But that doesn't mean the scandal has left everyone pessimistic. On Saturday morning, some of the many people walking

through Lodhi Gardens - one

of New Delhi's most beautiful parks - said they hope it will finally help clean up politics. "People have long heard

Russian Federal forces tanks rest in their battle positions near the village of Arshty in

Ingushetia, Sunday. Chasing the Chechen rebel forces, the Russian troops shelled the

Chechen village of Bamut, a base of Chechen fighters. Bamut is situated very close to

about corruption at the highest levels, but they had no evidence," said S. S. Gambhir, 82, a retired business executive. There must be 1.000 Jain families out there paying off

politicians," Mathur said. 'We all know that." In a separate interview, E. Sridharan, a political analyst at the respected Centre for Policy Research, agreed.

The scandal could prompt serious moves to real electoral reform, better campaign h nance laws. It's now in the interests of all the major politi cal parties to do this," he said. "It may even be in the in-

terest of the political parties to institute a system of state funding for elections.

- AFP/UNB photo

Like Japan, where scandals over illegal campaign contributions rarely lead to reforms. India has often done little to prevent such corruption. That reluctance has even been evident in the Jain case. The Central Bureau of In-

vestigation, under Prime Minister P V Narashima Raos control, only began charging people four years into its investigation and only after the Supreme Court demanded so After the scandal broke, the Supreme Court also compelled the top three political parties

file income tax returns that

show the names of their con-

to comply with a law passed in 1979 that requires parties to

Corruption has long been common among local and state bureaucrats, who often demand bribes for many of the services they provide every

thing from driver's licenses to

telephones That means the bribery scandal has left some people thinking there is little chance of reform no matter how many politicians are charged in the

current scandal This pessimism seems especially prevalent among younger peopie

Comprior is here that place in India said 25 vers old accountant Anul Kaura The scandal will probably end in a Cabinet shuffle not in any

effort to fight corruption

Troops, Taliban continue rocket attacks ISLAMABAD Feb 26 Afghan

government and opposition forces attacked each other's positions in the capital Kabul with rockets and bombs vesterday causing casualties on both sides. Kabal state radio said reports Kerret.

The appearant Unidean Is lame imbine fied 14 tockets. at residential areas in the besieged city killing at least two civilians and wounding eight the brant is a more ed in the

central than it Reporter calcuted by bounding harban's Charasyah Base sourced Kabul and other passes is killing at

moving bureaucracy also were blamed for delays in reaching victims trapped in the rubble. Around 6,300 people were killed in the quake, according to official figures..

TOKYO, Feb. 26: Former

Prime Minister Tomiichi Mu-

rayama acknowledged Monday

that the government's delays

in rescue efforts cost lives in

last year's Kobe earthquake.

last month, came under heavy

criticism after the January 17.

1995, earthquake for failing to

call in Japan's armed forces

until four hours after the

Huge traffic jams and slow-

Murayama, who resigned

reports AP.

quake.