

Displaced children from south Lebanon play wargames in Beirut on Monday. Israel stepped up air and artillery attacks in the 12th day of its war on Hezbollah raising the casualties to 159 people killed and 331 injured most of them civilians. - AFP/UNB photo

China, Nepal issue communique: China and Nepal have issued a joint communique calling for stability and development in South Asia and more international attention to the needs of developing countries. the state-run Xinhua News Agency reported Monday, AP reports from Beiling.

The communique was issued at the end of a visit to China by Sher Bahdaur Deuba, who became prime minister of Nepal in September. Deuba, who was accompanied by government ministers and Nepalese businessmen, held talks with China's leaders and also visited Xi'an and Shenzhen. Premier Li Peng thanked Deuba for Nepal's view that Tibet and Taiwan are part of China and his promise not to let any forces use Nepal for activities harmful to China's sovereignty and unification.

US envoy arrives in Monrovia: A US delegation has arrived in the Liberian capital to add its weight to efforts to bring a lasting peace after two weeks of fighting. Reuter reports from Monrovia.

Residents of the capital started returning home and clean ing up on Monday, while health workers battled to contain outbreaks of a disease thought to be cholera

Officials say the three-member US delegation, which arrived on Monday evening plans to stay until Thursday and meet the main players in the peace process, which has been seriously damaged by a new upsurge of fighting.

Yeltsin to visit China: President Boris Yeltsin set out yesterday for a visit to China by travelling to Russia's far eastern city of Khabarovsk, ITAR-Tass news agency reported, Reuter says from Moscow,

From Khabarovsk he will fly to Beijing on Wednesday for a three-day visit to China that is designed to cement an improvement in relations between the two countries and give a boost to Moscow's search for a new role in Asia in the 21st century.

Memoirs of Mitterrand published: Less than four months after Francois Mitterrand's death, the publication of his memoirs offers a new view of the former French president's controversial political evolution - his own, AP reports from Paris.

Two separate volumes, "Interrupted Memoirs" and "Of Germany, Of France," published by Editions Odile Jacob, will go on sale here Tuesday.

Rather than breaking new ground, the books reinforce the image Mitterrand projected throughout his 14 years in power - that of a highly intelligent, somewhat haughty man, and a very ambitious politician.

Alessandra Mussolini reelected: Alessandra Mussolini, granddaughter of Italy's fascist dictator Benito Mussolini, was re-elected to parliament but her cousin who hoped to become the second Mussolini in office was defeated, officials said on Monday, Reuter reports from Rome. Results from Sunday's general election showed Alessandra, 33, keeping her seat in the Chamber of Deputies (Lower

House) on the hard right national alliance ticket. She was first elected in 1992 representing a district in her home town of Naples.

US aid for Chernobyl victims: In

observance of the 10th anniversary of the Chernobyl nuclear power plant explosion, the Clinton administration is sending 1,500 tons of medical assistance to the victims, the State Department said Monday. AP reports from Washington.

The goods, which are being sent by sea and air, are worth 15.4 million dollars. They are being donated by the US government and by private entities. The contributions will arrive in Belarus on Tuesday, in Ukraine on Thursday and in Moldova on Saturday and will be distributed to medical facilities in the three countries. The 10th anniversary of the accident is Friday.

1st group of German police in Zagreb:
The first group of German policemen on their way to Bosnia to join the international peacekeeping operation arrived for a brief training period in the Croatian capital on Monday. Reuter reports from Zagreb.

The 85 Germans with 1,000 other foreign police will make up the International Police Task Force (IPTF) assigned to monitor the work of local police human rights in Bosnia, Croatia and Macedonia. In Bosnia, IPTF works in coordination with the NATO led peacekeeping force (IFOR) implementing the peace plan signed by former warring factions in Dayton, Ohio last December.

Irish novelist Molly Keane dies: Irish novelist Molly Keane, author of 10 novels that were a legacy of the country's settlement by Britain's land-owning classes, has died aged 91, friends said on Monday, Reuter reports from Dublin.

They said Keane, whose first work, the night of cheerful countenance, was published when she was 17 years old, died at her home in Ardmore, in West Cork, southern Ireland. She had suffered from a serious heart condition for many

Fire ruins Mexican slum: A raging fire swept through a shanty town in southwest Mexico City early Monday, killing a 5-year-old girl and destroying the cardboard homes of 300 poverty-stricken families, media reports said. Reuter reports from Mexico City.

Dozens of survivors suffered light burns as around 300 makeshift houses in the Corpus Crisiti district were enveloped in flames, the state-owned news agency Notimex said. Around 2,000 people were left homeless by the fire and are currently in shelter in nearby schools national radio net work Radio Red reported.

7 cops, 3 LTTE men killed in fighting

Retreating Tigers step up attacks on army posts in east

COLOMBO, Apr 23: Tamil Tiger rebels were in retreat from the northern Jaffna Peninsula Tuesday, but stepped up their attacks on military outposts on the civil war's second front in the east. reports AP.

The rebels overran a police station, killing seven policemen and wounding 15, at Serunuwara village in the Trincomalee district Monday night, a military official saids Guerilla casuafties were not immediately known.

In another incident, soldiers killed three rebels who apparently were reconnoitering an army base at Karapola in the eastern Polonnaruwa district, said the official on condi-

France on a two-day official visit.

JERUSALEM. Apr 23: US

Secretary of State Warren

Christopher met Prime Minis-

ter Shimon Peres today, hop-

ing to forge a US brokered

ceasefire between Israel and

Hezbollah guerillas in Lebanon,

They met in Jerusalem

minutes after witnesses said

guerillas had fired another

round of Katyusha rockets at

northern Israel. No one was

raeli warplanes attacked what

the army said were "terrorist

meeting Prime Minister

Shimon Peres today that talks

on a ceasefire between Israel

and Hezbollah guerillas in

Lebanon had reached "a very

"We are in a very intense

intense period."

sites" for a 13th straight day.

hurt. In Lebanon overnight, Is-

Christopher said after

reports Reuter.

tion of anonymity. The incidents were 190 kilometres (120 miles) northeast of the capital, Colombo. Earlier, the military reported that eight soldiers and five rebels were killed in fighting in the east on Sunday.

In the northern Jaffna Peninsula, the military's latest drive into rebel-held areas was slowed by hundreds of thousands of Tamil civilians, a military official said Tuesday.

After advancing 14 kilometers (9 miles) and seizing control of three towns, the troops were screening the civilians to uncover guerillas among them. and no ground had been gained since Saturday, said Major Tilak Dunuwille, a military spokesman.

"It's a painstaking process. We have to question each civilian, check their identification. and search them before allowing them to cross into areas

French President Jacques Chirac (R) and his wife Bernadette (L) pose with King Norodom

Sihanouk of Cambodia and Queen Moniteah, at the Elysee Palace on Monday. Sihanouk is in

NAM calls for UNGA meet to discuss attack on Lebanon

Christopher meets Peres with

hope to forge ceasefire deal

period now. As the prime

minister so accurately said. I

can see a very serious effort to

deal with the difficult prob-

lems we're facing together,"

stream." Peres said of the ne-

gotiations Christopher has

been conducting between Is-

rael and Syria with the hope of

Christopher's talks with

The discussions were due

AP says from Beirut, Israeli

Peres broke off after about 80

minutes for Israeli memorial

to resume in Jerusalem after

warplanes carried out bombing

"We are in the middle of the

Christopher told reporters.

forging a ceasefire.

Israeli leader said.

day ceremonies.

the ceremonies.

we control," said Dunuwille.

The military claimed that the civilians remained behind. rather than fleeing with rebels as they did during the previous offensive late last year. Many refugees wanted to return to homes in areas under military control. Dunuwille said.

Armored columns were camped outside of Kodikamam and Kachchai nine miles (14 kilometers), threatening guerilla supply lines.

Government troops also have surrounded Chavakachcheri, the largest city in the rebel-held part of the peninsula, but have not entered it yet, since they would have to deal with its 50,000 inhabitants

"The LTTE (rebels) have abandoned the town. But we need to clear the civilians we

- AFP/UNB photo

raids across south Lebanon on

Tuesday, destroying a water

tank that feeds 20 villages, as

US diplomats struggled to end

Beirut-Tyre highway sporadi-

cally, keeping traffic down to a

trickle on the main supply

artery to the south Lebanon

185-member General Assem-

bly to discuss Israel's bom-

bardment of Southern Le-

banon. The United Nations

said the session would be held

ernment said President Elias

Hrawi will address the meet-

ing, scheduled for 3:00 (1900

In Beirut, the Lebanese gov-

Meanwhile, Non-Aligned

battle zone.

Tuesday.

"There is a serious attempt Movement (NAM) nations have

on the part of everybody," the called for a meeting of the

Israeli gunboats shelled the

nearly two weeks of fighting.

already have, before taking on any more," said Dunuwille.

A military statement claimed hundreds of thousands of civilians had welcomed the troops, calling them liberators. but the claim could not be confirmed since independent observers are barred.

Reuter adds, tens of thousands of Tamil civilians streamed back to their homes in Sri Lanka's northern Jaffna Peninsula, which was virtually cut off from the mainland in an army offensive against separatist rebels, army officials said

"More than 100,000 people are now on the army's side." a military spokesman said. "We screen the first, issue identity cards, provide them temporary shelter and then send them home.

Pre-election violence claims. 5 in Bihar

PATNA, India, Apr 23: In an attack linked to national elections, gunmen sprayed bullets into a crowd watching a movie in a dusty village square, killing five people, police said Tuesday, reports AP

Assailants of the Ranbir Sena, a private army of uppercaste Hindu landowners, at tacked a wedding celebration Monday night attended by leftist activists, most of them lowcaste Hindus or Muslims, said Director General of Bihar Police S K Saxona.

In the rural areas Bihar and other north Indian states, vot ing often is along caste lines. and the intimidation of voters by hired gunmen is a common practice.

Saxena said more than 30 gunmen in Nari Nahore village 100 kilometers (62 miles) east of the state capital Patna, encircled the guests as they sat in the open village square and fired indiscriminately.

SA unveils new constitution

CAPE TOWN, South Africa, Apr 23: Negotiators on Monday unveiled a new constitution designed to make the final break with South Africa's apartheid past, reports AP.

The 121-page document already has been approved by party leaders, and is expected to be adopted following parliamentary debate Tuesday and Wednesday and further refinement by the constitutionwriting assembly.

The charter enshrines the right to adequate housing. food, water, education and health care - all of which were denied to the majority of Black South Africans under previous White minority governments.

"We the people of South Africa recognise the injustices of our past; honour those who suffered for justice and freedom in our land; and believe that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, united in our diversity." the preamble pro-

ROK president's ex-aide admits taking bribes

SEOUL, Apr 23: A former close aide of South Korean President Kim Young-sam today admitted in court that he had accepted bribes. Yonhap news agency reported, says Reuter.

charge of Kim's personal affairs in the Presidential Blue House, told a Seoul criminal court he accepted bribes totalling about 700 million won (900,000 dollar) in return for business favours, Yonhap said.

Chang was formally charged with bribery two weeks before general elections on April 11, giving opposition parties ammunition to ridicule Kim's anti-corruption drive that led to the sacking of hundreds of civil servants and put two former presidents on trial.

Kim's ruling New Korea Party lost its parliamentary majority in the elections, but captured 139 of 299 seats, which was better than expected.

China pledges military aid to Cambodia

PHNOM PENH. Apr 23: China has offered Cambodia's squabbling, cash-strapped armed forces a grant of dlrs 1 million in non-lethal aid, a government official said Tuesday, reports AP.

The offer, coming less than a week after China proposed dollars 3 million in military aid to neighbouring Thailand, underscores Beijing's effort to deepen ties with Southeast Asian governments.

Gen. Zhang Wan-Nian, deputy chairman of China's Central Military Committee, made the proposal to Second Premier Hun Sen during a four-day visit. China wants to help strengthen Cambodia's defence capabilities, said Prak Sokhon, one of Hun Sen's advi-

Off the Record

Queen of hearts watches heart operation

LONDON. As TV cameras rolled, would-be "queen of hearts' Princess Diana watched surgeons perform a four-hour heart operation on a young African boy Monday - and ran into

criticism. reports AP. Diana, who is pushing for a high-profile caring role after her impending divorce from Prince Charles, explained she wanted to underline her support for Chain of Hope. a charity that helps sick children from developing countries.

"I'm a great lover of children and the fact that a little person can have a second opportunity from my country - I'm very proud to be involved," she told Sky Television, which filmed the surgery at Harefield Hospital in north London.

"I do gather information much more from a visual contact not from reading books. I find."

Critics accused her of attention seeking.

"To actually go there to dress up and pretend that she is part of the scene - because that's all it is ... This is just a photo opportunity. I think it's a stunt," said agony aunt and former nurse Claire Rayner. The patient, seven-year-old Arnaud Wambo from

Cameroon, was brought to Britain by the Paris-based Chain of Hope for surgery to mend a hole in his heart. Such treatment is not available in his west African homeland. .

Diana, in blue surgical mask and gown, was present throughout the operation, performed by leading surgeon, Sir

In a BBC TV interview last year, the estranged wife of the heir to the throne said she would like to be an ambassador for Britain, helping to comfort suffering + or being a "queen of hearts," as she put it.

An unusual gift for his teacher

CHICHESTER. England: For impact, it sure beat an apple A nine-year-old boy caused consternation Monday when he brought a live World War II mortar shell to school as a present for his teacher, reports AP.

The boy, who was not identified, found the mortar while walking with his parents in a nature reserve used by the Army as a war-time firing range.

"When I saw it I immediately realised what it was, but I did not know whether it was an explosive mortar or a smoke one," said Nigel Coren, headmaster of the Kingsham County Primary School in Chichester, southern England.

"I took the device to an audio room in the school which has a steel door, a steel structure and no windows, before clearing the area." Army bomb disposal experts later removed the device and defused it.

A police spokesman said the device was 'a smoke mortar which is not as dangerous as an explosive one."

China rejects Moscow summit call to abandon all forms of N-testing

BEIJING, Apr 23: China rejected today calls from a recent eight-nation summit for it to abandon all forms of nuclear testing, saying some explosions were conducive to promoting the sector's peaceful development, reports AFP.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Shen Guofang made the comments at a regular news briefing when asked for China's reaction to last week's summit in Moscow between the Group of Seven most industrialised nations in the world and Russia on nuclear

The summit's final declaration called for a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) to be signed by September and to include the disputed "zero option" - a ban on all nuclear explosions, including small ones.

We believe nuclear explosions are one of the ways of mankind to make peaceful use of nuclear energy, therefore we believe the door on peaceful explosions should not be closed at least for now," Shen

China, not represented at the summit, is the only one of the world's five declared nuclear powers not to have committed itself to the "zero option" after Russia for the first time at the meeting joined the United States. Britain and France in endorsing the sweeping ban. China alone is still carrying

out nuclear tests. It has pledged to abandon most explosions after the signing of the CTBT but continues to oppose a blanket ban covering small tests for "peaceful pur-

Opposition group attacks Sudanese forces: 15 killed

CAIRO, Egypt, Apr 23: A down the civil war in the Sudanese opposition group on Monday claimed its first attack Rebels have been fighting on government forces and said 15 pro-government militiamen had died in the assault, reports The Sudan Alliance Forces

said in a statement faxed to The Associated Press that Saturday's assault was intended to pave the way for an armed uprising against Sudan's leader, Lt. Gen. Omar el-Bashir. The opposition group is

headed by former army Brig. Abdel-Aziz Khaled and is believed to include soldiers purged from the military on suspicion they were not loyal to El-Bashir. The group appears to be operating out of neighbouring

Eritrea. The country broke relations with Khartoum in December 1994 after accusing Sudan of supporting anti-government Islamic rebels.

The statement said the attack was aimed at Sudan's Popular Defence Forces, a militia set up by the government to back the army in trying to put

since 1983 to try to win more autonomy for southern Christians and animists from the Is-

lamic North. The statement said the attack occurred near the border town of Kassala, 420 kilometres (262 miles) east of Khar-

The group said 15 militiamen were killed, one was wounded and that weapons, ammunition and equipment were destroyed. It said its

fighters suffered no casualties. On Sunday, Sudan's National Salvation newspaper reported that three policemen were killed and three others wounded in an attack Saturday on their border post in Kassala

The Sudan Alliance Forces belong to the Democratic National Alliance, a federation of anti-government groups and southern rebels that has been meeting periodically in the Eritrean capital Asmara to plan strategy against el-Bashir's

US satisfied on missile talks with DPRK

WASHINGTON, Apr 23: The State Department expressed satisfaction Monday with weekend talks with North Korea on its missile programme and said it is prepared for discussions with that country on MIA-POW issues, reports AP.

Spokesman Glyn Davies said the missile talks in Berlin were useful and a good beginning. The administration is interested in continuing the

discussions, he said. The US goal is to win a North Korean commitment to stop both the export and production of missiles and to encourage Pyongyang to join a

multilateral group which seeks to curb the international missile trade.

range Scud missiles to Iran and Syria. Davies said the discussions were unrelated to the proposal

rea has in the past sold long-

set forth last week by Presi-

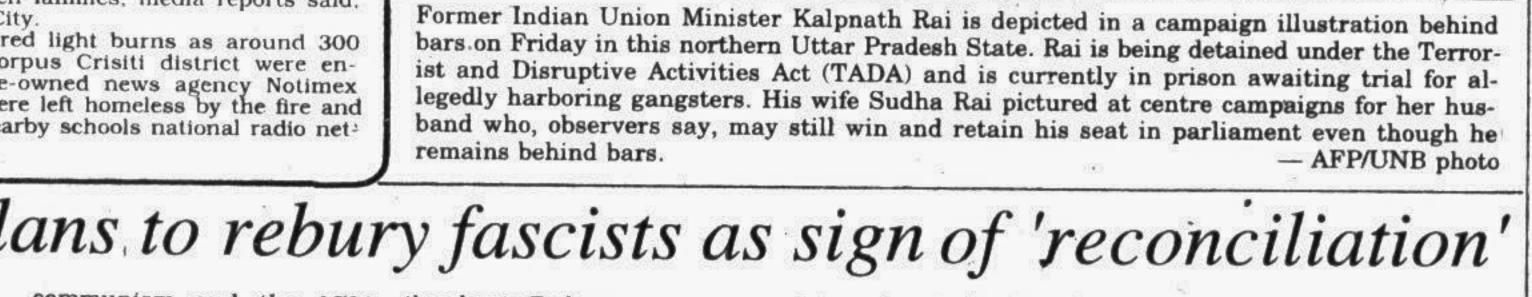
dent Clinton calling for uncon-

ditional talks between North and South Korea with the United States and China serving as mediators. Davies also said the administration wants talks with North Korea on the fate of the

8,100 Americans still unaccounted. US officials believe the remains of as many as 3,500 are

recoverable. In 1993-94. North Korea

returned 162 sets of remains but has complained that US The United States claims to compensation for labour and have evidence that North Koother costs was inadequate.



Tudjman plans to rebury fascists as sign of 'reconciliation'

ZAGREB, Croatia, Apr 23: Fifty years after Croatian Nazis wiped out the country's Jews and half a million Serbs, President Franjo Tudiman said he would go ahead with plans to rebury the fascists with their victims as a sign of

"reconciliation", reports AP. The move announced Monday is certain to spark criticism at home and abroad. Tudjman has been reluctant to acknowledge much Croatian responsibility for the atrocities committed by the Nazi puppet state that ruled Croatia during World War II.

In an interview aired on state TV, Tudjman shrugged off criticism from Croatia's few remaining Jews, who protested his idea to turn the former Nazi concentration camp of Jasenovac into a memorial to victims of fascism,

communism and the 1991 the plan to Tudjman. Serb-Croat war. "That way, the Jasenovac

camp can become a memorial for all victims of war and will warn the Croatian people against divisions and internal fighting they had suffered throughout the history," Tudj-

man said. But his idea of a common memorial for all, originally announced in January, already has outraged many as rewriting history.

Slavko Goldstein, a former head of Zagreb's Jewish community centre in Zagreb and a Holocaust survivor, warned Tudjman in a public letter that his idea amounts to "neutralising the message" of

the horrors of the Holocaust. US Secretary of State Warthe 40,000 people he said ren Christopher told Congress died on Croat-controlled terriin March that he would protest tory in World War II.

Jasenovac, focated 70 kilo-

metres (45 miles) southeast of Zagreb, was the bloodiest of about 28 death camps run by rulers of the Nazi puppet-state of Croatia in 1941-1945. The fascists - calling

themselves "Ustashas" or "insurgents" -shared the Nazis' hatred of Jews, Gypsies and Communists, and added their own contempt for Serbs. The number of Jasenovac's victims remains unknown,

although almost no one disputes that most were Serbs. The Ustashas are generally believed to have killed some 500,000 Serbs. Tudiman contended on Monday that Jasenovac accounted for as few as 28,000 of

Yugoslavia's longtime Communist leader, Josip Broz Tito, declared the camp's toll to be 700,000 of the 1.7 million people killed throughout Yugoslavia in World War II. When the war ended and

the fascists were evicted. Tito's Communist victors exacted their vengeance. They kept Jasenovac open till 1947. killing several thousand fascists, anti-Communists and dissidents. Most were Croat-Tan, Slovenian and Serbian! A memorial in the form of a giant stone flower was erected

during the post-war Communist era when Tito preached brotherhood and unity and stated that ethnic disputes were solved once and for all. "For most of Croats, the Jasenovac camp, as it is today,

doesn't represent a place

which they could accept."

Tudjman, a former communist general-turned-nationalist, said that in order to compensate for a "historical wrong" done to the families of the vic-

Tudiman said. "Because the

others (Croats) had suffered.

tims of Communism, their remains will be exhumed from elsewhere and reburied in the Jasenovac flood plain, side-byside with their tormentors. Tudiman's foes — and the Serb minority that has now largely fled his Croatia - accuse him of cultivating na-

tionalism in a way that harks back to the World War II state.

In 1994, he publicly apologised to the leading B'nai B'rith Jewish organization for a book in which he claimed Jews exaggerated the number of victims of the Holocaust

Chang Hak-ro, who was in