

South Korean President Kim Young-Sam (C) holds high on Tuesday the hands of his newly appointed ruling New Korea Party chairman, former premier Lee Hong-Koo (L) and outgoing party chairman Kim Yun-Hwan at a party national committee convention in Seoul. The reshuffle is seen as a move aimed at bolstering Kim Young-Sam's influence. - AFP/UNB photo

Gunmen kill 2 cops in Nepal: Two policemen were killed and another injured when gunmen believed to be Maoist insurgents ambushed a patrol in a remote village in West Nepal, officials said on Tuesday, Reuter

reports from Kathmandu. Gopendra Bahadur Pandey, a spokesman for the Home (interior) Ministry, said Monday's clash occurred at Cherpang village in Rukum district, about 500 kilometres (300 miles) west of Kathmandu, when a group of 25 insurgents attacked the patrol. Pandey said police returned fire but it was not immediately clear whether any of the gunmen were wounded.

Istanbul names park after Dudayev: The pro-Islamic municipality of Turkey's biggest city Islanbul on Tuesday named a park after rebel Chechen leader Dzhokhar Dudayev who was killed in a Russian attack last month. AFP reports from Istanbul.

"The death of Dudayev won't put an end to the fight of our Chechen brothers for independence, but on the contrary will strengthen the resistance," Istanbul Mayor Recep Tayyip Erdogan, elected from the pro-Islamic Welfare Party, told a ceremony. Nearly 2.5 million people whose ethnic roots lie in the Caucasus, including some 50,000 Chechens, live in Turkey and are sympathetic too the pro-independence uprising in Chechnya. Religious and nationalist circles in Turkey also support the rebel Chechen movement.

Lebanese PM arrives in Rome: Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik al-Hariri arrived in Rome on Tuesday to ask the European Union to help Lebanon after last month's Israeli attacks. Reuter reports from Rome.

' Italy currently holds the rotating European Union presidency. Hariri was scheduled to see President Oscar Luigi Scalfaro and Prime Minister Lamberto Dini in separate meetings before returning to Beirut on Wednesday. He will fly later to Brussels and Paris to continue his mission.

"Endeavour" to be launched May 19: NASA has bumped the launch of space shuttle Endeavour to May 19, three days later than planned, because of a scheduling conflict with the US Defense Department, AP reports from Cape Canaveral

A classified military operation has long been targeted for around May 16. NASA's preferred launch date for Endeavour's science mission. Officials at Cape Canaveral Air Station refused Tuesday to comment on the operation. Cape Canaveral Air Station tracks all launches and major military exercises, and needs a few days between each operation to change its computer systems.

AIDS virus on rise in Ukraine: A growth in drug use in Ukraine has spurred a sharp jump in cases of HIV infection in recent months, health officials said

Wednesday. AP reports from Kiev. "We're beginning to see an explosion in infections," said Valery Ivasyuk, head of the Ukrainian presidential committee for combating AIDS. "It's a national catastrophe." Some 2,564 people in Ukraine have been registered as HIV-positive and 73 people have developed full-blown AIDS since the first case as reported in the country in 1987. Nearly 700 of the HIV cases were registered this year alone.

Russian forces kill 8 rebels: Russian border guards killed eight rebel fighters who were trying to efter Tajikistan from Alghanistan. Russian military officials said Wednesday. AP reports from Dushanbe.

A spokesman for Russian border troops stationed in Tajikistan as peacekeepers said Tuesday's shootings took place along a route used for smuggling drugs from Afghanistan to former Soviet countries and Europe. But the Russians said the victims were opposition militants, according to the Interfax

ROK PM begins Europe tour: south Korean Prime Minister Lee Soo sung departed Wednesday for a 16-day tour of Turkey. Poland, Hungary, and Romania to promote bilateral ties. AP reports from Seoul.

During his tour. Lee is to meet with Turkish Prime Minis ter Mesut Yitmaz Polish Prime Minister Włodzimierz Cimoszewicz, Hungarian Prime Minister Gyula Horn, and other political and business leaders, his office said. Lee is expected to explain the current security situation on the Korean peninsula and bid for help in urging rival communist North Korea to agree to peace talks

14 feared drowned in Albania: A group of 13 children and their teacher were presumed drowned in south-eastern Albania when their boat capsized. Albanian state radio said yesterday. Reuter reports from Ti-

It reported the accident happened on Tuesday afternoon. The children were boating on Prespa Lake, which borders Albania, Greece and Montenegro.

Quake hits Russian Far East: A strong earthquake occurred Wednesday in the Pacific Ocean near the Kuril Islands region of Russia's Far East. Authorities said there were no reports of damage or casualties. AP reports from Moscow

The quake, centered 120 kilometers (75 miles) southeast of Shikotan Island just north of Japan, had an estimated magnitude of 6.5 to 7, said Tatiana Timshenko of the Ministry for Emergency Situations in Moscow. Several villages in the Kurils reported feeling the quake but there were no apparent injuries or reports of damage.

Exit poll predicts BJP's victory

NEW DELHI, May 8: A Hindu opposition party that promotes nuclear weapons advocates a tough stance toward Pakistan and has been critical of foreign investment, has won the most votes in parliamen-tary elections, according to an

exit poll, reports AP. The poll by the indepen-dent Centre for Developing Societies showed the Bharatiya Janata Party far ahead of the governing Congress Party. The poll predicted Congress will receive less than 30 per cent of the vote - the lowest share in its history.

The third round of the staggered election was completed Tuesday and ballot boxes will be opened Wednes-day. Officials results will be released over the following two

Because no party is likely to win a majority in the 545-seat Lok Sabha, the lower house of parliament, back-room, deal were expected to from a coalition government.

If the poll is correct, Congress would lose its place as the largest party in parlia-ment for the first time since 1977, when all the other parties combined to defeat then-Prime Minister Indira

Ghandhi. The exit poll of 17200 people had a margin of error of 4 percentage points.

But analysts said the Hindu party may have trouble finding allies because of its perceived anti-Mūslim bias.

At least 16 people were killed in election-related violence Tuesday, including two policemen ambushed by Maoist rebels in Bihar, India's least developed state. Three rebels were reportedly killed in a separate clash with police in

About 85 people have died since the campaign began in March, a lower toll than in previous years. Election fraud was reported

in several areas. In the village of Kasba in northeastern Bihar state, a television camera recorded voters being driven from the polling booth by ballot-stuffers for the Congress Party. An election official declared the

votes invalid and said a new

election would be held later.

No one was arrested. In Narvani, in Bihar, all 950 registered voters boycotted the election to protest government in action to help their impoverished area. "There is no development, no roads, no hospitals. There is no point in voting." . said Satyendra Singh, a farmer.

In some towns, police closed roads where trouble seemed likely.

One-third of India's 590 million voters could vote Tuesday. Voting was held in booths set up in the shadow of towering office blocks in Bom-bay in western India and heatseared villages in the arid south.

The turnout was about 50 per cent to 60 per cent, approximately the same as in previous elections, the Election Commission said.

Voting was held for the first time in Jammu-Kashmir, in India's extreme northwest since a Muslim rebellion erupted in 1989 and the state government was dismissed.

Police fired tear gas to disperse about 100 demonstrators in Srinagar, the seat of the rebellion, demanding a boy-



Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto (R) is welcomed by Swedish Labour Minister Margareta Winberg (L) upon her arrival in the Swedish capital on Tuesday. Benazir arrived for a two-day official visit to Sweden at the invitation of her counterpart Goran Persson. - AFP/UNB photo

Last month's attack on UN compound in Lebanon

US, Israel criticise UN report

UNITED NATIONS, May 8: The United States and Israel strongly criticised a UN report which said it was unlikely that last month's artillery barrage on a UN compound filled with Lebanese civilians was an accident, as the Israelis maintain.

reports AP. The report, released Tuesday, avoided an unequivocal finding that Israeli gunners intentionally fired on the base.

killing at least 91 civilians. But it said: "While the possibility cannot be ruled out completely, it is unlikely that the shelling of the United Nations compound was the result of gross technical and/or proce-

dural errors. In Washington, US State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns said the report made no mention of the role of Hezbollah guerillas, who the United

Nations said fired from positions as close as 200 yards (metres) from the UN compound. US officials, speaking on

condition of anonymity, said they fear the report will arouse passions and threaten the tenuous cease-fire in southern Le-

"Israel understands this was a grave mistake that cost the lives of 102 people." Burns said. "Where is Hezbollah? Have they spoken out? Is the United Nations going to ask Hezbollah for its side of the story? Why did Hezbollah station its own fighters 300 yards from the refugee camp and have them fire Katyusha rockets into Israel, to attract the fire of the Israeli military?"

US mission spokesman James Rubin said US Ambassador Madeleine Albright was

"disturbed" that the report "chose to draw unjustified conclusions about this incident that can only divide and polarise the environment rather than drawing practical lessons that can prevent such a tragedy from occurring again."

Israeli Foreign Minister Ehud Barak telephoned secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali and complained that the finding was "absurd." Barak warned that the report could damage relations between Israel and the United Nations.

I find it very difficult to find a relationship between the data and the conclusion," Is rael's acting UN ambassador. David Peleg, said. "Even if we accept this data, we don't think there is any justification or any relationship between this data and the conclusion.



A Jordanian UN soldier monitors the first cars passing over the border crossing between Croatia and Yugoslavia, at Bajakovo on Tuesday, just after the border was opened in Bajakovo on Wednesday. This is the first time that Croatian police and customs officials man a border crossing to rump Yugoslavia in five years. - AFP/UNB photo

US sees threat to Dayton peace accords WASHINGTON, May 8: The

promised peaceful reintegration of Bosnia as a multiethnic society is threatened by the refusal of rebel Serbs to permit refugees to return to their ancestral homes, the State Department said Tuesday, reports AP.

Threatening to hold back US reconstruction assistance. department spokesman Nicholas Burns said the delay could upset plans for elections in late August or early September and damage the Dayton accords, which ended three and half years of ethnic warfare in the former Yugoslav republic.

Presidents Slobodan Milosevic of Serbia, who also represented Bosnian Serbs. Frnajo Tudiman of Croatia and Alija Izetbegovic of Bosnia-Herzegovina signed the agreement

reached last November near Dayton Ohio, under US auspices and are responsible for implementing it.

"We can't let them forget that," Burns said. "Sometimes. they want us to forget that."

The chief US diplomat overseeing the settlement, Acting Assistant Secretary of State John Kornblum, completed a round of talks Tuesday with the three leaders and was on his way home

The United States and its peacemaking partners, Britain, France, Germany and Russia. have aliotted a year to implement the agreement. Some 60.000 NATO troops, including about 20,000 Americans are in Bosnia, enforcing the peace but restricting their ac-

tivities to military provisions. The fighting has stopped and Bosnian government, Bosnian Serb and Bosnian Croat troops have withdrawn behind agreed lines.

But the Dayton accords promise of a reintegrated society has not been fulfilled, with the year nearly half over

The fate of the Dayton accords hangs in the balance, former Sen. George Mitchell. who chairs a nongovernmental monitoring group, said last Saturday in Sarajevo.

. He also deplored the fact many suspected war criminals have held on to positions of power and only 57 have been indicted by the War Crimes Tribunal in The Hague, Netherlands. The two most no torious are Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Miadic, wartime political and military leaders of the Bosnian Serbs. Arresting them is not an obligation of the NATO force, the State Department says.

On Monday, Sadako Ogata, the UN high commissioner for refugees, said she saw hopeful signs that "little by little" refugees would be able to return to their homes. Burns, on Tuesday, said the

problem "gets to the basic willingness of some of the parties to the Dayton accords to comply with the major provisions of the agreements."

really ... an essential foundation," he said. "It's an essential building block of the success of these accords.

"Freedom of movement is

All of the refugees have a right to return to their homes

and to move around the coun-

try, Burns said. For a while, he said, there were logistical hurdies, such as minefields. "But in more recent weeks,

as some of those logistical is sues have been cleared away it's really an issue of the will ingness of the Serbs to allow Muslims ... to return to areas from which they were driven three or four years ago," the US official said.

While the accords effectively divided Bosnia into two sectors one under Serb control and the other jointly run by Muslims and Croats, the set tlement is supposed to pre serve Bosnia as an indepen dent country.

If refugees are unable to go home, though, the result could be three mini-states under the control of their wartime lead

China plans another N-test soon

TOKYO, May 8: In a move sure to draw international protests. China is planning to conduct another underground nuclear test as soon as late May, a Japanese newspaper reported Wednesday, reports

China is the only country among the world's declared nuclear powers that is still carrying out nuclear tests, France stopped its tests earlier this year following harsh criticism of its blasts in the South Pacific. The United States, Britain and Russia have already suspended nuclear tests.

The national Yomiuri news paper reported that Japanese diplomats in Beijing had learned that preparatory work for another blast had begun at China's remote desert testing site of Lop Nor. The article said the test could occur as soon as late May.

Karadzic rejects UN war crimes tribunal

LONDON, May 8: Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic rejected the UN war crimes tribunal in the Hague Tuesday as a court of political manipulations," and contrasted it with the Serbs own court-martials of war criminals, reports AFP.

"We have already sentenced more than 5,000 people in our own court-martials, mainly Serbs-99 per cent Serbs", he said in an interview with Bosnian Serb television monitored by the BBC.

"We have sentenced some Serbs that have been killing Muslims, we have done it without any pressure before any court in Hague was founded," Karadzic, himself indicted as a war criminal by the Hague tribunal added.

"We do no recognise this court of justice because it is not a court of justice but a court of political manipulations, Karadzic said.

18 killed in Algiers hostage Crisis

ALGIERS, May 8: Police stormed a housing project outside Algiers Tuesday where Islamic militants were holding residents hostage. Eighteen people, including one hostage and a policeman, were killed, authorities said, reports AP.

The last of several police assaults against the militants. who had been holding the undetermined number of hostages in the six-story building since Sunday, came at dawn

Officials said that only three of the original 16 militants were still alive at the time of the last assault, the others having been killed by security /forces during several previous assaults on the building.

Witnesses said one hostage an unidentified woman was killed by a lost buflet during the police attack. Policeman also lost his life during the op-

'Iran ready to confront any US aggression'

DUBAL May 8: Iran's de fence minister Mohammad Forouzandeh said in remarks published on Tuesday that Iran was ready to confront any US aggression against it in the Gulf, and denied Iran was de veloping tunnels to store missiles, reports Reuter

"Iran will make the appropriate response to any American aggression," he said in response to a question by Al-Hayat newspaper about whether he expected any US military operation against Iran Forouzandeh was speaking

to the newspaper in Qatar on a visit to strengthen ties with the Gulf Arab state. Tehran opposes the US mil-

itary presence in the Gulf and says Washington falsely accuses it of expansionism in the region to scare its Gulf Arab al lies into buying more US On Thursday US officials

confirmed a report in Jane's defence weekly quoting army general Binford Peay, chief of the US central command, as saving the United States was concerned that Iran was apparently building tunnels on its coast that could be used to launch or store long-range missiles, Iran denied the charge

To ensure orderly counting of vote!

NEW DELHI, May 8 The Delhi government has banned the sale of alcoholic thrink for three days to ensure orderly vote-counting, excise officials said today, reports Reuter.

Indian general elections, in which 590 million people were eligible to vote. are staggered over six days, between April 27 and May 30, voting in all but six constituencies ended on Tuesday. Vote counting began today and a clear picture of party strengths is expected by Saturday.

Liquor and alcohol sales were prohibited in the capital from Tuesday until Thursday with the exception of alcoholic drinks served to five-star hotel guests in their rooms, a Delhi excise official said

Hotel restaurants and bars. other restaurants and government run liquor shops were all included in the prohibition order, he said. Alcohol sales are to resume on Friday.

Pakistan blames India

8 killed, 40 hurt as bomb explodes in bus in Lahore

LAHORE, May 8 : At least eight people were killed and more than 40 injured when a bomb exploded on a bus today near here, in the second such attack in less than two weeks. police said, report AFP.

The bomb detonated aboard the bus at Sheikhupura, some 25 kms west of here.

There were conflicting reports on the casualties as a local journalist said 10 people had died while hospital sources in Sheikhupura put the toll at five dead and 46 injured. 20 of them in serious condition.

The explosion occurred at the Sheikhupura bus stand, spreading panic in the area. witnesses said. "There was a big bang and

fire", a witness said. Imran Khan has expressed

hind the explosion at his hos-

pital, and has requested the

the rear of the bus was on suspicions that government security agencies could be becountry's Supreme Court to investigate the incident.

News reports Tuesday quoted Punjab state chief minister Arif Nakai as saying that the intelligence agencies had arrested a few suspects in the two bomb blasts in April, but he declined to identify them.

A Pakistani provincial minister implicitly accused India of being behind a bomb blast on a bus near here today in which police said seven people were "A foreign hand is involved

in such terrorist activities. said Malik Mushtaq Awan, senior minister in Punjab, who is also provincial chief of the ruling Pakistan People's Party

"No one but our enemy can commit such a barbarian act".

More than 40 people were injured in the blast, which occurred on a bus in the town of Sheikhuputa, 25 kms from Lahore, the provincial capital, according to the police.

Off the Record

Cost ly kiss!

BANGKOK: A Thai man killed his wife after he saw another man giving her a kiss in a video tape of a relative's wedding, police said Wednesday, reports Reuter.

The 29-year-old man was arrested in Bangkok on Tuesday and later confessed that he had become enraged and stabbed his wife to death after watching the family video police said. The man told police he lost his temper after his wife refused to reveal the identity of the man seen giving her the kiss, police said.

Lingerie thief!

SINGAPORE: About 50 pieces of women's underwear and two wedding gowns worth a total of 7,150 dollars were stolen from a lingerie fashion show, a newspaper reported Wednesday, reports AP.

The unidentified thief dropped a pair of panties on the floor back stage while fleeing with the booty, the Straits Times newspapers reported The stolen garments made up more than half the stock of

panties, brassieres, nightwear and bodysuits meant for the show on Sunday as part of the Summer Romance Bridal Fair, the Times said. Exhibition staff discovered that the lingerie was missing about a half-hour before the show, the Times quoted the ex-

hibition's manager, Judy Ho, as saying.

Nothing gonna stop them now

LEICESTER, England: No Hindu services at St Paul's Cathedral? One couple is taking things to a higher authority. Two thousand feet (600 meters) higher, to be precise, reports AP.

Milan Chhatrisha said Tuesday the status of the London landmark as the premier Anglican church did not inhibit his plans to marry on Sunday in a plane circling above its famous "We had to get special flight permission to circle above the

cathedral, but we wanted to get married precisely there, because it is such a romantic location," he said. "I'm quite thrilled," said Kemal, his bride. "I can't wait for

Sunday. Chhatrisha, 26, and Komal, 24, will perform the initial rites of the ceremony at an Indian restaurant on Sunday in their hometown of Leicester, 100 miles (160 kilometers) north of London.

After, they will travel to an airport at nearby Coventry and head to London on a privately-owned plane, uttering their vows as the plane circles St. Paul's.

The couple married in a civil ceremony last year, but waited until they could organize the St Paul's overflight for the Hindu ceremony.



Natali Sacco of Peru (L) and Maria Jose Suarez (R) of Spain pose with a man costumed as a Roman Centurion at Caesars Palace in Las Vegas during preparations for the 1996 Miss Universe Pageant on Monday. The 1996 competition features contestants from 79 countries, and will take place May 17. - AFP/UNB photo

ANC, Nat'l Party agree

CAPE TOWN, May 8: Two rears after the end apartheid. South Africa's two main political parties have agreed on a new constitution. reports AP. The debate raged on until

the eve of Wednesday's scheduled vote to ratify the new accord, but with the white-led National Party and President Nelson Mandela's African National Congress (ANC) finally in agreement, it was virtually certain of passage.

in the end, it came down Tuesday night to an issue as specific - and symbolic - as the language of instruction at state-funded schools.

The National Party, which imposed apartheid and ruled for 46 years, wanted the right the segregation of the apartheid era. Instead, it proposed lan-

to have single-language schools guaranteed in the constitution.

the Dutch-descended white

settlers of South Africa - to

keep running schools that

teach in their own language

Afrikaans. They fear their cul-

ture will be destroyed other-

The African National

Congress, elected to power in

1994, rejected such a guaran-

tee, arguing it would mimic

That would allow Afrikaners

guage allowing for single-language schools as one of several

options in areas dominated by a single ethnic group, and the National Party eventually