A Palestinian woman, standing in her home, looks out

from a barred window as a large Israeli flag flutters

Tuesday above a District Coordinating Office, set up

China's envoy to UK summoned:

The British government Tuesday night summoned China's

ambassador in London to deliver a protest against China's

plans to crack down on democracy and civil liberties when it

Jeremy Hanley would see the ambassador Wednesday afternoon

to protest proposals by the China-appointed preparatory

committee on Sunday to abolish a series of laws on democratic

elections and civil liberties. The Chinese move to abolish 16

Hong Kong laws and make amendments to nine others would

restore sweeping police powers to control demonstrations and

ban groups from forging links with overseas political

Opposition jets bomb Kabul: Opposition

warplanes launched air raids on Kabul overnight and this

morning, hitting the airport, but causing no casualties

northeastern district of the Afghan capital, damaging the

terminal building but leaving the runway intact. Another bomb

fell on waste ground inside the perimeter of the battered airport.

used for military and civilian purposes. "The runway is

functioning and ready for flights. Airport Manager

Troops shelling MILF rebels in Philippines:

Philippine government troops continued to shell the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) rebels in southern Philippines

sending hundreds of residents to flee, the local press reported

said the military, was still conducting ground-to-ground and

aerial bombardment in Buldon, the main camp of rebel group in

Mindanao. About 300 families have already fled the area and a

Indonesia, Malaysia set for new talks:

Indonesia and Malaysia are preparing for new talks on

transferring their ownership dispute over two islands to the

world court, Indonesia's official Antara News Agency said

long-standing sovereignty dispute over the Sipadan and Ligitan

islands off Borneo to the International Court of Justice, the

main UN judicial body in The Hague. Izhar Ibrahim, Director-

General for political affairs in the Foreign Ministry, was

quoted by Antara as saying on Tuesday both countries had agree

to hod a second round of talks in Jakarta, but no date had yet

Road mishap kills 15 in China: A bus plunged over a cliff in eastern China killing 15 people and

injuring another 13, the China daily reported yesterday, AFP

from a town in eastern Zhejiang province, went out of control

along a cliff at Meiyangling in Fujian province on Monday, it

said. The risk of transport-related accidents is increasing with

Serbs refuse to extradite

leaders indicted

for war crimes

the approach of the Chinese lunar new year.

The bus, bound for the southern metropolis of Guangzhou

The two countries said last October they would submit the

Al-Haj Murad. Mligzwice chairman for Military Affairs,

They said at least three bombs fell on the airport, in a

witnesses said. Reuter reports from Kabul.

vesterday, Xinhua reports from Manila.

massive evacuation is going on, he said.

yesterday. Reuter reports from Jakarta.

reports from Beijing.

PALE. Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Jan 22: Bosnian Serbs said

Tuesday they would not extra-

dite their former leaders to an

international tribunal to face

war crimes charges, reports AP.

the chief prosecutor of the UN

war crimes tribunal in The

Hague, Netherlands, a top

Bosnian Serb official accused

the court of anti-Serb bias. It

was the first visit by Arbour, a

Canadian judge, to Bosnia since

she replaced Richard Goldstone

of the Serb sub-state making up

cials had prepared documents

proving that indictments

against former Bosnian Serb

leader Radovan Karadzic and

his military commander Ratko

indictments each against

Karadzic and Mladic for al-

The tribunal has issued two

Mladic "are not factual."

half of Bosnia, said that offi-

Gojko Klickovic, the premier

in October

Meeting with Louise Arbour,

Mizbahullah Nuri told Reuters.

organisations.

A government spokesman said Foreign office Minister

takes control of Hong Kong in July, AFP reports from London.

Reuter/UNB photo

recently where the Israeli controlled section of Hebron

meets the Palestinian controlled sector of the city.

CAIRO, Jan 22: A Saudi opposition group claimed Tuesday that Saudi Arabia will execute 30 Shiite Muslims for their role in last year's bombing that killed 19 US servicemen, re-

But the group, the Movement for Islamic Reform in Arabia, did not name its sources, and Saudi Arabia has insisted the investigation into the June 25

bombing is not yet complete.

The truck bombing of the US military housing complex in Dhahran in eastern Saudi Arabia was the second in less than a year to target the US presence in the kingdom. In November 1995, a bombing of a US-run military training complex in the Saudi capital Riyadh killed five Americans and two Indians

The London-based group said that Saudi Interior Minister Prince Nevel has informed the United States of the decision

The group's leader Saad al-Fagih, said in an interview that the Shiites are scapegoats and that those responsible are from the Sunni Muslim majority in Saudi Arabia. The government draws its support from the Sunni religious establishment and is reluctant to point to opposition within its own ranks.

Gunmen kill 24 Rwandans

KIGALI, Jan 22: Unidentified gunmen killed at least 24 Rwandans in an attack in northern Rwanda while they were on an unarmed civilian night patrol, state-run radio said Wednesday, reports AP.

The attack Monday took place in northwestern Ruhengari prefecture, 95 kilometers (60 miles) northwest of the capital, Kigali, Radio Rwanda said. Security forces were reportedly conducting a cordon and search operation to find the attackers.

Northwestern Rwanda has been the scene of increasing violence by Hutu-extremist rebels bent on destabilizing and driving out the Tutsi-controlled government which came to power in 1994.

The radio gave no further details.

Last week, suspected Hutu militiamen killed three Spanish aid workers near Ruhengari, prompting the United Nations to restrict relief aid operations in the area to daylight hours.

400 Indians fall ill breathing ammonia gas

NEW DELHI, Jan 22: Nearly 400 people were taken ill after breathing ammonia gas leaked from a road tanker which crashed into a ditch in central India newspapers reported to-

day, says AFP. The victims mainly agricultural and construction workers suffered from burning sensations in their eyes and vomiting after the accident near the town of Hosphangabad Tuesday. The

Time of India said. All were discharged after re-

ceiving first aid. Hosphangabad in the state of Madhya Pradesh is some 75 kilometres (46 miles) south of Bhopal where a gas leak from a union carbide factory in 1984 killed 1,750 people instantly and is now blamed for around

7,000 deaths. 22,000 Burundian refugees flee to Tanzania

GENEVA. Jan 22: Nearly 22,000 Burundian refugees have fled their violence-hit country for neighbouring Tanzania so far this month and the peace of their exodus is picking up, the United Nations Refugee Agency UNHCR said on Tuesday, reports Reuter.

Spokesman Pamela O' Toole told a briefing that the refugees. fleeing fighting in southwest Burundi, joined some 36,000 who fled to Tanzania in December and 98,000 in November.

Some 60,000 Burundian Hutus were forced out of east Zaire by an ethnic Tutsi rebellion and the UN human rights office says huradreds of returnees were killed by Burundi's army. Dominated by minority Tutsis and in power since a military coup in June.

In the latest reported massacre earlier this month, Burundi troops killed 126 Hutu returnees expelled from Tanzania, prompting a UNHCR appeal to Tanzania to halt the deportations.

US expresses concern over fighting

Qatar pledges support for Sudanese govt

re-taken control on the ground

DOHA, Jan 22: Qatar's Emir on Tuesday expressed support Sudan considers the fighting for Sudan's government, faced as a plan by the United States to with fierce fighting in the east destabilize Khartoum, which is on Washington's list of counof the country, after meeting here with Sudanese Vice Presitries allegedly sponsoring terdent General Al-Zubair Mo-

hammad Saleh, reports AFP. Sudanese rebel leader John "Water supports Khartoum Garang claimed in a statement issued in Asmara to have killed and supports the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Su-1,260 government troops during dan," said Sheikh Hamad Ibn clashes in eastern Sudan between January 12 and 16. He Khalif a Al-Thani, according to the official Qatari news agency. added that his guerillas were pressing on towards a strategic Saleh arrived in Qatar ear-

hydroelectric dam at Damazin. lier Tuesday with a message from Sudan's president. Omar However, Saleh told QNA Al-Beshir, as part of a tour late Tuesday that government forces were "in control" of the aimed at wining Arab support for the Khartoum government. situation in eastern Sudan. Doha has good relations The Sudanese armed forces

with Khartoum, maintaining

and preparations are underway permanent official contacts with Sudan and seeking emerto re-conquer positions occugency aid of around 102,000 pied by troops involved in the aggression and to push the indollars to the country. surgents out of southern Su-Khartoum accuses Ethiopia and Eritrea of involvement in

dan," he said Saleh said it was "just a mat the 10 days of fierce fighting on its eastern border, although ter of time" before the army reboth countries deny such allecaptured lost ground.

Another report adds: The United States expressed concern Tuesday over fighting in southern and eastern Sudan and called for talks between the government and rebels "and anyone else involved this fight

State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns declined to comment on claims that Ethiopia, Eritrea and Uganda may be aiding rebels in the east African country

He noted that Washington had blocked military aid to the region and had with held 15 million dollars in "Nonlethal" assistance in 1996.

"The United States is concerned by the recent fighting. Burns said. "We are urging on the Sudanese government, on the rebels, and anyone else involved in this fighting - restraint and a peaceful resolution of any differences there."

Burns said the dispute can be best resolved through talks under the aegis of the Organization of African Unity.

### Tories suffer defeat in **Upper House of Lords**

LONDON, Jan 22. Britain's ruling Conservatives suffered a defeat in a vote in the Upper House of Lords for the second successive day on Tuesday. adding to Prime Minister John Major's problems in pushing legislation through parliament reports Reuter.

But the defeat, on an amendment to a bail designed to crack down on the ownership of handguns following the Dunblane massacre, does not directly threaten Major's hold on power.

Major, with his party lagging the Labour opposition by 20 percentage points in opinion polls, is struggling to keep his government afloat until May when he must call a general election.

The main threat to his ability to do so is in the House of Commons (lower house) where he can no longer command an overall majority.

But the unelected upper chamber has this week also turned against him despite its large Conservative majority. On Monday night, peers car-

ried two opposition amendments to a bill that would have given police strong powers to counter organised crime by bugging suspects. The peers want to strengthen safeguards against abuse by insisting on prior approval by judges.

On Tuesday, the lords voted by 158 to 135 for compensation for gun clubs affected by the

clampdown on handguns. The government, responding to public outrage over gunman Thomas Hamilton who shot dead 15 primary school children and a teacher in March last year, has brought in legislation to ban most handguns and make gun clubs tighten se-

But the gun lobby has ac-

cused it of over-reacting. The government could seek to overturn the lords' amendments when the two bills are discussed by the commons.

But with feeling among its own supporters running high on both issues, it may be reluctant to risk humiliating defeats in the elected chamber.

#### Netanyahu denies report to free Hamas leader as part of Hebron deal

JERUSALEM, Jan 22: Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu denied Tuesday that Israel had agreed to free Sheikh Ahmad Yassin, spiritual leader of the militant Islamic movement Hamas, as part of the deal which led to last week's extension of Palestinian rule to Hebron, reports AFP.

On Sunday, Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat told a huge crowd celebrating Israel's withdrawal from most of the West Bank city that Sheikh Yassin "will be released very soon" along with other Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails. Asked Tuesday if the Islamic

part of the Hebron deal, Netanyahu said, "at no time in our negotiations did we make a specific commitment to free Sheikh Yassin. But he added that Israeli authorities were "constantly ex-

amining this case" because of

the poor health of the 61-year-

cleric's release was offered as

Yassin was sentenced to life in prison in 1989 for complicity in the murder by Hamas militants of two Israeli soldiers. Netanyahu did however con-

firm that Israel had committed

itself to carrying out the overdue release of 37 female Palestinian prisoners who should have been freed immediately after the September 1995 signing of the Oslo peace accord. Israeli military officials re-

fused to free three of the 37 who were accused of killing Israelis, and the others have since refused to leave jail in solidarity with the trio.

Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erakat said after meeting Monday with Netanyahu Adviser Yitzhak Molkho on the prisoner issue that the female detainees would be released by the end of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, which lasts until early February.

# Peru's hostage crisis unlikely

Participants in the meeting of SAARC Federation of University Women, held in Colombo

to end soon

known.

LIMA. Jan 22: Gunshots broke the early morning quiet Wednesday outside the Japanese ambassador's residence, where 73 hostages are being held by guerillas asking for comrades to be freed from jail.

recently.

reports AP. Three short bursts of automatic gunfire about at 12:55 am (0555 GMT) sent police scurrying for cover. The scene later returned to how they had been There was no immediate expla-

nation for the gunfire. It was the fourth time rebels have fired off shots from inside the compound in recent weeks. They have said the earlier gun-

fire was warning shots for police who were getting too close. That may have been the case Wednesday. Journalists at the

scene said police were changing shifts at the time and one group of police appeared to have walked very near the residence

On Tuesday police had taunted the leftist rebels inside the residence, tossing stones, bottles and trash over the compound wall. The rebels did not respond at the time.

Red Cross spokesman Steven Anderson said Tuesday his agency is trying to prepare the hostages for an even longer stay, despite preparation for talks to end the standoff between Peru and leftist rebels.

'We've begun long-term work with the hostages, in the sense that a solution could take longer that expected," he said.

Anderson did not explain why he thought the crisis may continue to drag on, but the deadlock between Peru and the Tupac Amaru rebels is well

less they include discussion on freeing imprisoned comrades. President Alberto Fujimori counters that he's not trading prisoners for hostages.

The rebels say no talks un-

Nonetheless one sign of hope was apparent Tuesday. Red Cross officials strolled

the tree-lined street outside the embassy residence in the affluent San Isidro district looking for a house in which to hold the mediation talks The Peruvian news media

was reporting without citing sources that a house had been located, although there was no official confirmation of that. On the other hand, signs of a

long stay were also obvious. Thirty mattresses donated for the hostages by a local manufacturer were brought to the

police staging area near the res-

### Gingrich gets public flogging

WASHINGTON, Jan 22: For this old House, it was painful business, quickly dispatched. In an hour and a half, his peers administered a public caning to Newt Gingrich, who had devoted a lifetime to becoming speaker, reports AP.

Now, two years later, he's a speaker humbled.

The white-maned conservative professor-politician, whose rhetorical and tactical skills had made him the highestranking Republican in America, was not required to be present to receive his punishment, and he chose absence and

Aides insisted he did not watch the agonizing ritual on television, one of the tools of his rise in power from backbench theoretician who had once characterized President Clinton as an "enemy of normal

people. So, this town made history

h Almost rexactly 24 hours earlier. In democracy's great rite of consecration, a president was inaugurated before a vast assemblage outside, on the Capitol steps.

for a second day.

Among those drawn by the inauguration was the Rev. Sinclair Lewis, pastor of the 2,800-member Shandon United Methodist Church of Columbia. SC with his wife, Betty.

On Tuesday, they joined school kids with backpacks in the lines in the Capitol corridors, waiting to observe the passing of judgment.

"It is a sadness," he said. "Democracy celebrates, but democracy also calls people to

responsibility." Mrs. Lewis, who teaches piano, nodděd in agreement. "l don't think anybody wants to see Newt Gingrich hanging out to dry," she said, "but he needs to be as responsible as anyone

## Off the Record

#### 3m abortions in a year!

MOSCOW: Up to three million abortions a year are performed in Russia, ITAR-Tass news agency reported Tuesday quoting a senior health official, reports AFP.

Deputy Minister of Health care Alexander Saregorodtsev announced the statistic on Tuesday at a national conference on family planning. He said unfavourable socio-economic and ecological conditions had led to a 20 per cent increase in the number of childless couples.

These same conditions were responsible for a decrease in the health of pregnant women, a high rate of maternity deaths and an overall worsening in the reproductive health of the nation's population, he was quoted as saying.

Abortions remained the main method of birth control in Russia, the deputy-minister said, noting that the nation's high abortion rate was a sign of a low contraceptive culture among

#### Man behind Elvis's stardom....

LAS VEGAS, Col. Tom Parker, the onetime carnival barker who helped guide Elvis Presley to stardom, died Tuesday of complications form a stroke. He was 87, reports AP.

Parker, a rotund, rough-around-the-edges figure with a fondness for Cuban cigars, became Presley's manager in 1955 as the young Memphis truck driver was on the verge on becoming a rock n' roll sensation, and stayed in the job until the death of The King in 1977. After that Parker all but retired.

Thomas Andrew Parker was credited with getting Presley a dlrs 35,000 recording contract with RCA Victor in the mid-1950s, when Sam Phillips of Sun Records in Memphis decided to sell the contract

He also arranged Presley's early television appearances, including three on "The Ed Sullivan Show" in 1956 and 1957 that

helped catapult the young Presley to stardom. He exercised firm control over Presley, who affectionately called Parker "admiral." The "colonel" was an honorary title

bestowed on Parker in 1948 by Gov. Jimmie Davis of Louisiana. Parker took 25 per cent to 50 per cent of Presley's earnings figures that some in the Presley circle considered too high. He they've done all they can with him, then they start picking on

Parker was a mysterious figure who preferred to stay out of the public eye. Even his birthplace was in dispute. He said West Virginia, most reference books said Breda, Netherlands,

His wife, Loanne, and longtime friend Bruce Banke said he came to the United States and served in the Army before becoming a carnival pitchman. He founded the Great Parker Pony Circus, and Colonel Tom Parker and His Dancing Chickens, an act in which he placed live chickens on a hot plate covered with sawdust. The chickens "danced" to the music

Austin, who recorded the hit "My Blu Heaven.



- Reuter/UNB photo 1997 High Fashion collection Tuesday.

## Annan's bid to convince US Congress for payment of arrears

UNITED NATIONS, Jan 22: In what may be his most important diplomatic mission of the year, Secretary-General Kofi Annan travels to Washington on Wednesday to meet strident UN critics who hold the key to his organization's future, reports AP.

Annan's mission will be to convince congressional leaders that he is committed to UN reform and that the world organization is worthy of American support.

The Republican-controlled Congress has refused to pay about dlrs 1 billion in US arrears, plunging the United Nations into a grave financial crisis. The United States contributes 25 per cent of the UN

operating budget.

Annan, a Ghanaian and career UN official, was elected to a five-year term last month after the United States vetoed a second term for Boutros Boutros-Ghali, claiming he did not vig-

legedly orchestrating mas-

sacres of Muslims in Bosnia

leaders last year, because the

Dayton peace deal for Bosnia

bans indicted war criminals

from holding public office, but

they are still at large. Karadzic

in particular is believed to re-

Arbour that the tribunal was

war crimes during the 3 1-2 year

Bosnian war that ended last

year. But Bosnian Serbs are

blamed for the bulk of them.

and the majority of the 74 peo-

ple indicted by the tribunal so

have been handed over so far.

will have to be accountable ...

for things that happened" in

Only seven of the indicted

Arbour said "some people

Klickovic said his side told

All three sides committed

main extremely influential.

The two were replaced as

and other crimes.

biased.

far are Serbs.

orously support UN reform. Although the United States did not openly endorse a candidate, US diplomats acknowledge after the vote that Annan had been their first choice for

the top UN post all along. Mindful of the demands for reform, Annan has appointed Canadian businessman Maurice Strong to put together proposals to restructure the organization by mid-summer in time for submission to the 185member General Assembly at

its fall session.

Soon after his election, Sen. Jesse Helms, the conservative chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, warmly congratulated Annan and promised that if he were serious about "real and deep-seated change," he would "find many

supporters — and even allies here in the US Congress." Annan meets with Helms others on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee Thursday

afternoon. The secretary-general's intensive schedule also includes a reception Wednesday hosted by Vice President Al Gore followed by a dinner with Rep. Tom Lantos, D-Calif, and Rep. Bill Richardson, D-New Mexico,

who has been appointed US ambassador to the United Nations.

On Thursday, he will attend a breakfast meeting with Cesar Gaviria, secretary-general of the Organization of American States: visit the State Department and call on President Clinton.

But the most important meetings will be on Capitol US officials say the Administration hopes to con-

vince Congress to agree to begin repaying the arrears in installments matched by specific steps by the United Nations toward reorganizing and downsizing.

The key will be to sell the

Foreign Relations Committee. Annan is to meet with House Speaker Newt Gingrich and Senate Majority Trent Lott on

plan to Congress.

Friday as well as the chairmen of the House and Senate appropriations committees. Annan will also outline his vision for the United Nations during a speech Friday to the National Press Club before re-

In addition to the Senate

Although the idea of UN reform is popular. UN member states disagree on the details. consolidate or eliminate such UN agencies as the UN

turning to New York.

For example, proposals to

Industrial Organization or the

UN Conference on Trade and

Denmark and Finland — submitted joint reform proposals calling for consolidating UN field operations and placing the organizating on a sound financial footing.

Development are popular in the

United States and some Western

popular in developing coun-

tries - Norway, Sweden.

But those organizations are

On Monday, Nordic coun-

countries.

"We know that developing countries have been reluctant to discuss reform for fear that reform is another word for cutting." Norwegian Development Cooperation Minister Kari Nordheim-Larsenshe said after presenting the proposals

# the population.

defended his take, saying: "I sleep very good at night. When

Parker managed country singers Eddy Arnold and Hank Snow in the 1940s and 50s. He also managed pop singer Gene