



Models present evening gowns of Charco Azcona during the winter fashion show of Pasarela Cibeles in Madrid Thursday. — AFP/UNB photo

## BRIEFLY

**Berlin film festival opens.** The 47th annual Berlin Film Festival opened Thursday, unleashing competition among 25 films from all over the world, Xinhua reports from Berlin.

Contenders for the prestigious Golden Bear Award, the highest prize of the event, include films produced by Germans, Americans, Poles, Brazilians and Chinese.

**Fire claims 39 in China.** Thirty-nine people, including three children, died when a bus engulfed in flames raced through the vehicle as it travelled along a southern Chinese highway, the Hong Kong-based Ming Pao newspaper said yesterday, Reuter reports from Hong Kong.

The paper said there was no emergency escape door on the bus which was carrying 71 passengers between Shenzhen, near the Hong Kong border, and the provincial capital of Guangzhou. Eighteen people were injured. Chinese transport officials were not immediately available for comment.

**6,000 Zairians flee towards Zambia.** About 6,000 Zairians loaded into 14 boats were trying to cross Lake Tanganyika to get to Zambia on Thursday, a UN spokesman said, AP reports from Nairobi.

Peter Kessler, East African spokesman for the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, said aid workers in the Zambian port of Mpulungu were "preparing to receive the refugees, although their direction wasn't completely clear. Since Zairian rebels launched their campaign to drive government forces from the eastern part of the country in September, several thousand Zairians have found refuge in neighbouring Zambia and Tanzania — which together with Zaire, border the world's second-deepest freshwater lake.

**ROK FM arrives in China.** South Korean Foreign Minister Yoo Chong Ha arrived Friday for talks with his Chinese counterpart to discuss the defection of a senior North Korean official at Seoul's consulate in Beijing, AP reports from Singapore.

Yoo made no statement or comment upon his arrival at Changi International Airport.

He was to meet Chinese Foreign Minister Qian Qichen at a posh Singapore hotel for 30 minutes starting at 9 am (0100 GMT), south Korean officials said. The two are in Singapore attending a previously scheduled Asia-Europe foreign ministers meeting on Saturday.

**24 Sudanese rescued from desert.** Twenty-four Sudanese returning home from Libya in a bus have been rescued after spending at least two weeks lost in the vast desert stretching across the two Afro-Arab nations, the official Sudan News Agency said Thursday. AP reports from Khartoum.

## 'DPRK's N-waste deal with Taiwan will jeopardise reactor accord'

**UNITED NATIONS.** Feb 14: Members of South Korea's National Assembly said Thursday that North Korea's plan to store nuclear waste from Taiwan poses a severe environmental threat and jeopardises a 1994 nuclear reactor accord, reports AP.

Five National Assembly delegates visiting the United Nations said South Korea might withdraw support from a deal to build replacement nuclear reactors in North Korea if the nuclear waste plan goes through.

South Korea is the main financier of a \$1.5 billion contract to build two reactors in North Korea under a 1994 accord by which the communist country has frozen its nuclear programme.

If North Korea begins storing the low-level nuclear waste from Taiwan, "it will be very difficult for politicians like us to say to the Korean people that we

have to put up that kind of money" for the reactors, National Assemblyman Suh Sang-Mok told reporters.

"If this kind of deal goes through it will create very bad public opinion in Korea," he said.

The legislators also said that North Korea is not capable of properly storing the nuclear waste and the plan violates an international convention prohibiting the import and export of nuclear waste.

North Korea does not have the technology and expertise to handle this kind of nuclear waste safely," Suh said. North Korea reportedly plans to store the waste in abandoned mine shafts about 50 kilometres (30 miles) from the border with South Korea.

The deal announced January 20 permits initial shipment of 60,000 barrels within two years, with an option to ship

## Egyptian Militants urge Muslims to 'besiege' US embassies'

**CAIRO.** Feb 14: A violent Muslim group on Thursday urged Muslims to "besiege American embassies" to win freedom for two Islamic leaders jailed in the United States, reports AP.

The statement from al-Gamaa al-Islamiya, or the Islamic Group, called for support of Sheik Omar Abdel-Rahman, an Egyptian cleric jailed in the United States, and Mousa Abu Marzouk, a leader of the fundamentalist Hamas facing extradition to Israel from America.

"The American and Zionist terrorism will only be stopped with similar or stronger terrorism," it said.

The group did not say what action it planned but urged Muslims "to besiege American embassies in their countries and demand from their leaders to shut them down."

In also warned that jailing Abu Marzouk in either America or Israel jails must not pass without a punishment of the size of the crime itself."

The statement was published Thursday in the Arabic lan-

guage Al-Hayat newspaper. A copy was made available to The Associated Press.

There was no way to independently verify the authenticity of the communiqué, but it appeared similar to earlier statements from the group.

The Islamic Group has led a five-year campaign to overthrow Egypt's secular government and replace it with strict Islamic rule. More than 1,050 people have died, many of them police and militants.

The Islamic Group led a campaign in 1994 and 1995 to try to scare foreigners from Egypt by attacking tour groups and planting small bombs at banks that maintained accounts for foreigners.

The statement followed reports from Jerusalem that Israel, Jordan and the United States are working on a deal to send Abu Marzouk to Jordan rather than extradite him to Israel.

The Muslim fundamentalist group Hamas, active in the territories, opposes Arab efforts to make peace with Israel.

## Assassination attempt on Colombian president

**BOGOTA.** Feb 14: Colombian president Ernesto Samper said on Thursday that he had survived a possible assassination attempt involving an attack on his presidential jet, reports Reuter.

Speaking in a Reuter interview, Samper said the attempt involved a bomb that exploded near the runway of the airport in Colombia's Steamy Caribbean port of Barranquilla, minutes before the presidential aircraft was due to land there Wednesday afternoon.

Initial reports said the bomb exploded up to 2.5 miles (4 km) from the airport runway and represented no real threat to Samper's Dutch-made Fokker aircraft.

Bosnian president threatens to step down

**SARAJEVO.** Feb 14: Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic has threatened to resign if international arbitrators award control of the disputed northern town of Brcko to separatist Serbs, the official press reported Thursday, says AFP.

Izetbegovic's threat was contained in a January 14 letter to the contact group for the former Yugoslavia — comprising Britain, France, Germany, Russia and the United States — press said.

The Muslim leader was elected Chairman of Bosnia's three-person collective presidency, which includes representatives of the country's rival Muslim, Croat and Serb communities.

Brcko is the only territorial issue not resolved in the 1995 Dayton peace accords, and is claimed by both of Bosnia's two entities — the Muslim-Croat Federation and the Republika Srpska.

Police said only four bodies had been retrieved from the lake by Thursday.

Six men survived by clinging to pieces of wood and other debris, a local official, William Kerario, was quoted as saying in the Daily Nation.



US President Bill Clinton receives credentials from Bangladesh Ambassador, K H Shehabuddin, February 11 in the Oval Office of the White House in Washington, DC. — AFP/UNB photo

## 34 killed as boat capsizes in Kenya

**NAIROBI.** Feb 14: A boat overloaded with passengers capsized in Kenyan waters off Africa's largest lake, killing at least 34 people, the Kenya News Agency said Friday, reports AP.

The boat was sailing from Homa Bay, a port on Lake Victoria about 300 kilometres (187 miles) west of Nairobi, when it capsized on Wednesday afternoon near Sukuru Island, the report said.

The cause of the accident was not immediately clear, though The Daily Nation newspaper said Friday the boat was caught in a storm and sank.

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"I've been in love so many times, I think I've had it," she told Walters, who then asked, "What about marriage?"

Oh God, no ... if you hear of me getting married ... slap me," Taylor said.

Taylor said she was devoting herself to her children and friends, including Michael Jackson, saying she planned to be godmother to his just-born baby son.

In the interview with Walters, taped earlier this week, Taylor said she planned to be

## PML (N) opens talks with MQM in Kenya

**KARACHI.** Feb 14: The Pakistani Muslim League PML led by premier-designate Nawaz Sharif opened talks Thursday with ethnic-based Mohajir Qaumi Movement (MQM) in a bid to forge a coalition to rule the southern province of Sindh, reports AFP.

Deposed premier Benazir Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party (PPP) is also vying to form the government in Sindh, her home province, by muster support from other groups in the Provincial Assembly.

Sharif's party secured 12 seats in the 109-member Sindh Assembly with Bhutto's party getting 35 and MQM 28. The remaining seats were won by other groups and independents.

MQM, whose support is considered crucial, is likely to prefer an alliance with Sharif, since the ethnic group was at loggerheads with Bhutto during her three-year rule.

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## Good bye to habit of marriage!

**NEW YORK.** Feb 14: At age 65, Elizabeth Taylor says she has finally broken the habit of a lifetime — marriage, reports Reuter.

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## Food aid to go to DPRK's civilians, assures UN

**UNITED NATIONS.** Feb 14: The UN food agency said Thursday that countries donating emergency food aid to North Korea can be assured the contributions will feed North Korean civilians, not the country's soldiers, reports AP.

"We monitor at each stage along the way," said Douglas Coultts, director of the New York office of the World Food Programme. "I can assure you there is no food in any of these programs going to the military."

The military has its own food rationing system, he said.

North Korea badly needs hard currency to import food and other basics. But Suh said South Korea does not intend to link the nuclear waste issue with UN appeals for food aid for North Korea, where people are reportedly starving.

"This is a different issue," he said. "We do not have the intention of linking this with the food aid."

The contributions would pay for roughly 100,000 metric tons of food for about 1.73 million adults and children considered the most at risk, the agency said. Agency staff monitor the

disbursement of aid, he said.

Without aid, the secretive communist country is expected to exhaust its food supply by May or June, Coultts said.

The United States has said it intends to contribute, but would first consult with allies South Korea and Japan.

Coultts said he hoped the food agency's newest plan would not be affected by the defection of a high-ranking North Korean official on Wednesday. Hwang Jang Yop, the most senior official ever to defect from the North, sought refuge in the South Korean consulate in Beijing. He wants to go to South Korea.

The Rome-based agency appealed Wednesday for 41.6 million dollars in emergency food aid to help North Koreans suffering the effects of two successive years of floods.

The contributions would pay for roughly 100,000 metric tons of food for about 1.73 million adults and children considered the most at risk, the agency said.

The World Food Program estimates that daily rations distributed by the government have been reduced over the past two years from 700 grams per person to between 100 and 150 grams today. That's equivalent to about half a bowl of rice, the agency said.

Mr and Mrs Jackson have requested that there be no further information other than that the baby was a boy and mother and son are doing fine," a hospital spokesman said.

The Sun said the church had made inquiries when two women complained about Wright's "improper conduct" when he was a priest 20 or 30 years ago.

The archbishop of Edinburgh and Saint Andrews, Keith O'Brien, also said that three years ago a woman in Wright's diocese had given the names of several women who had had relations with the bishop.

O'Brien said Wright, who resigned from the church this week after his elopement with 40-year-old mother-of-three Kathleen McPhee, had vigorously denied the allegations.

"We really took him at his word," O'Brien added. "That is why we have been particularly shattered by events. In all honesty, when one opens a can of worms, one just doesn't realise what's at the bottom of it."

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sexuality and there's always the possibility of other revelations."

in the delivery room when Jackson's second wife, Debbie Rowe Jackson, gave birth.

But hospital spokesman refused to give any details about the birth, including when the baby was born this week and who was with Mrs. Jackson.

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to streamline co-ordination, and plans to reduce paperwork by 25 per cent.

The Secretary General said his definition of reform is creating an efficient, leaner, relevant United Nations better able to take on the tasks member states set for it. While that may mean consolidating some services, he said, it may also mean making investments in other areas, spending money to train staff or buy new equipment.

"Reform cannot be taken on a shoestring budget," he said.

The Secretary General also said that he plans to use current UN staff, recruit "new talent" from outside the UN system, and promote competent UN officials to put his managerial team together.

"Obviously I am not going to reform the whole system in one go," he said. "We have to take

the problem in manageable chunks: so in the first phase I will focus on the secretariat and the funds and the programmes that are directly dependent on the UN. In the next phase, I will see how we can get the system to work together as a system on the economic area."

"Answering press criticism that he has paid too much attention to Washington during his first days in office, the Secretary General said that 'I think the member states have understood that it was necessary for me to visit Washington and try to clarify the misunderstanding... I do not believe any of them feels I should visit 184 member states.'