Bangladesh Ambassador to France Tufail K. Haider (L) recently presented his credentials to Federico Mayor, Director-General of UNESCO, as the new concurrently accredited Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to Paris based UNESCO.

BRIFFIY

Road mishap claims 14 in India: At least 14 people were killed and 13 injured after a bus collided with a truck on a highway in India's Northeastern state of

Assam, police said yesterday, Reuter reports from Guwahati. The accident occurred late on Sunday near Bokakhat, 75 km (46 miles) east of the state's main commercial city Guwahati, when the bus carrying 30 passengers collided with a truck headed in the opposite direction, a senior police official said. An estimated 50,000 people die each year in India in road accidents.

Mine blast kills 3 in Bosnia: Three children were killed and a 'ourth was wounded when landmines exploded Sunday at Ilifas, Northwest of Sarajevo, a

NATO spokesman said, AFP reports from Sarajevo. Major Tony White could not immediately give more details on the accident. More than a year after the end of the war in the former Yugoslav Republic landmines continue to pose a serious threat to Bosnians, after millions of the devices were laid by the warring parties.

Prisoners hold 9 hostages in Brazil: Rebellious prisoners held nine hostages Sunday at the Vitoriade Conquista jail in the northeastern state of Bahia and were demanding weapons and vehicles to flee, police said, AFP

reports from Rio de Janeiro. Inmates rebelled Saturday afternoon, and 180 troops surrounded the Vitoriade Conquista jail, police said.

strong quakes rock China: Two powerful earthquakes struck Xinjiang in northwest China on Sunday, injuring 23 people and bringing heavy destruction to a county hit by repeated strong quakes this year. AFP reports

from Beijing The quakes hit Jiashi County, about 3,200 kilometers (2,000 miles) west of Beijing. In January, two strong quakes hit the county in rapid succession and killed 12 people, and another quake on March 20 killed 24 people. A magnitude 6.3 quake struck at 7:46 am (2346 GMT Saturday), followed by a 6.4 quake at 12:30 am (0430 GMT) and numerous aftershocks, the staterun evening news reported Sunday.

William Cohen arrives in Japan: US Defence Secretary William Cohen arrived in Tokyo vesterday amid plans by Japanese Prime Minister Ryutario Hashimoto for a special law to allow US forces to stay in Okinawa despite protests from landowners. AFP reports from

Tokyo. Cohen was to spend three days in Japan on his first trip to Asia as secretary and he will fly on to South Korea Wednesday. The plight of North-Korea struggling annud desperate food shortage was to be on the agerala for talks in both capitals. https://doi.org/12.

Fiji bans turtle killing: Fiji on Monday banned the killing and molesting of sea turtles for three years except for traditional ceremonial purposes, AP reports from Suva. Fiji

Turtle meat is popular in Fiji, especially with the indigenous Fijians who harvest turtles for ceremonies. The three-year ban. announced by Fisheries Minister Militoni Leweniqila, is now in force. It follows a one-year ban to mark the international year of the turtles. In the next three years, Fiji's Department of Fisheries will research the sustainability of the turtle harvest and discus future turtle management with customary fishing rights owners.

Cargo ferry launched to repair Mir: Russia launched a cargo ship loaded with crucial oxygen generators and carbon-dioxide removal canisters Sunday to the

troubled Russian space station Mir, AP reports from Moscow. The station's three-man crew, an American astronaut and two Russian cosmonauts, need the supplies in order to continue living on the orbiting outpost. The Progress-34 ferry is due at Mir on Tuesday. The Progress, which blasted off from the Baikonur space centre shortly after 8 pm Moscow time (0400 GMT), contained three fire extinguishers to replace those used to put out a fire aboard Mir in February.

2 held with explosives in Vietnam: Aman and woman were arrested in northern Vietnam after police discovered more than 1,000 kilograms (220 pound) of explosives hidden in their boat, official media reported Monday, AP reports from Hanoi Police charged Nguyen Van Duc and Tran Thi Hue with ille-

gal possession and transportation of explosives and about 200 bomb fuses.

The Communist Party's newspaper The People reported that Ninh Binh provincial police stumbled onto the explosives as they were checking the cargo in Duc's boat.

France vetoes jt stance on China's HR record

EU FMs fail to resolve

Gowda opens 12th meet of NAM FMs in Delhi

Several NAM members back India's claim for UNSC seat

NEW DELHI. Apr 7: Several NAM countries have supported India's claim for a seat in the proposed expansion of the UN Security Council, reports PTI.

"he UN reforms, particularly the most critical aspect of expansion of the Security Council and improvement in its working methods, figured prominently during the External Affairs Minister, IK Gujral's discussions with his counterparts who have assembled here for the NAM foreign ministers meeting to be mangurated by the Prime Minister. HD Deve Gowda, today.

Gujral was assured by several foreign ministers that New Delhi was a high potential candidate for a permanent seat in the Security Council

The external affairs minis-14 raet the Foreign Minister of Syria, Rarouk al Shara, the

Poreign Minister of Cuba, Roberto Bobaina Gonzsalez, the Foreign Minister of Iran, Dr Ali Akbar Velayati, the acting Foreign Minister of Afghanistan, Abdul Rahim Ghafoorzai, the Foreign Minister of Algeria. Ahmed Attaf, the Foreign Minister of Columbia, Mataemma Mejta. He also met the Foreign Minister of Ukraine.

Gujral said the Security Council needs to be expanded to make it more legitimate and representative and the permanent category must include developing countries.

Speaking at a banquet he hosted for the UN Secretary-General last night. Gujral said there must be more discrimination in any form between developed and developing countries in the prices of UN reforms. Meanwhile, the Prime Minister. HD Deve Gowda, today made a forceful plea for accelerating the process of nuclear disarmament and exhorted the Non-Aligned Movement to exert full "moral pressure" towards arriving at a nuclear weapons convention.

Opening the 12th meeting of NAM foreign ministers, Gowda said the 113-member Non-Aligned Movement must lend dedicated and unwavering support for achieving the nuclear weapons convention in a timebound manner.

SA to host next NAM summit

Southern Africa will host the next summit of the Non-Aligned Movement in 1998, it was officially stated yesterday.



Ukrainian Foreign Minster Hennadii Udovenko (L) confers with Indian External Affairs Minster Inder Kumar Gujral during the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) ministerial conference Sunday at Vigyan Bhavan in New Delhi. The NAM began chalking out strategies by third world countries for restructuring the United Nations before a special session of its General Assembly. AFP/UNB photo

Bomb blast in Myanmar army chief's house, daughter killed

YANGON, Apr 7: A bomb exploded in the house of one of Myanmar's top officials. Lieutenant-General Tin Oo. killing his daughter, sources close to the family said today, reports

Government officials would not immediately confirm the blast, and several diplomats said they had not heard about the bombing, which the sources said occurred late on Sunday. Tin Oo is Secretary II of the ruling state Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) and Army Chief of Staff.

"We heard there was a bomb blast vesterday night at the house of Secretary II and his eldest daughter died because of the blast," one source close to the family told Reuters. Her name and age were not given.

Myanmar military government has been on top security alert since late December when two bombs exploded at a Buddhist shrine in Myanmar, killing five and wounding 17. The government blamed the attack on the Karen National Union guerilla group, which has denied responsibility.

Tin Oo is one of the hardliners in the government, and often gives speeches urging troops

and citizens to "annihilate" anyone who opposes the gov ernment and anyone seem trying to undermine the stability of the nation.

Myanmar has been rocked by unrest over recent months. with rare student demonstrations in December followed by the bomb blast at the Buddhist shrine.

In mid-March religious troubles began between Buddhist monks and Muslims and the government imposed a curfew in some areas and several restrictive measures in an effort to curb the violence and un-AP adds: The government

keeps tight control over the country's media, and news often circulates informally in street conversations. On Monday. Yangon was abuzz with talk of the suspected attack. There is already a heavy

military presence in Yangon and other Burmese cities following recent clashes between Buddhist monks and Muslims. Tensions between the military government and its democratic and ethnic opponents are high. The military also warned Burmese citizens Sunday to re-

frain from political agitation

and unrest during the upcoming New Year's festival, while officials have been told to maintain a high security alert.

The festivities, which culminate April 17, are celebrated in large part by rowdy citizens dousing each other with water.

State-controlled newspapers carried warnings from the socalled Water Festival Disciplinary Committee urging revelers to avoid actions that could threaten national unity. meaning anti-government protests or sectarian clashes.

Although there were many people going in and out of Tin Oo's home Monday morning, there was no visible signs of damage to the one-story building that could be seen from the street.

Yangon has suffered several bombings so far over the past year. A small explosive device went off in July underneath a government billboard urging citizens to crush the state's enemies. No one was hurt in that

Government officials blamed that blast on the Karen National Union, a border-based armed wing of an ethnic group seeking autonomy from Yan-

Taliban attack Dostam's Bagdhis province

ISLAMABAD, Apr 7: About 2,500 troops from Afghanistan's Taliban militia launched an attack today in northwestern Bagdhis province against rival forces of Uzbek warlord Abdul Rashid Dostam. the Afghan Islamic Press (AIP) reported, says AFP.

Fighting was underway in Bala Murghab area near the Faryab province controlled by Dostam, whose warplanes had bombarbed Taliban positions, the Independent Information Service quoted Taliban officials as saying.

At least three Taliban soldiers and six Dostam troops were killed in the fighting, the Taliban officials told AIP from Kandhar, base of the Islamic militia in southwest

Afghanistan. The Islamic militiamen had advanced five kilometres (three miles) on the Murghab frontline, seizing an unspecified number of armoured vehicles, including tanks, and capturing 25 rival troops, AIP said.

The fighting was continuing and fuller details of casualties and losses were awaited, the Taliban officials said.

Tory suffers

new blow to

blow to their re-election hopes

when a veteran BBC reporter

stepped forward to stand as an

'anti-sleaze' candidate against a

former government minister

accused of corruption, reports

leader Tony Blair was expected.

meanwhile, to try to undermine

the Conservatives by staging a

policy reverse to espouse one of

the ruling party's big ideas -

setback for the Conservative

leadership, both main opposi-

tion parties backed BBC war

correspondent Martin Bell, one

of Britain's best-known jour-

In a move seen as a serious

privatisation of state assets.

Opposition Labour Party

Reuter.

Sharma appears to be in favour of averting snap polls in India

NEW DELHI, Apr 7: Indian President Shankar Dayal Sharma wants the ruling coalition and an estranged ally to patch up their differences to avoid fresh parliamentary elections, a newspaper said today, reports AFP.

"President Sharma appears to be in favour of averting the polls," the Times of India said. Elections could become inevitable if the 10-month United Front government loses a crucial confidence vote in parlia-

ment Friday. A group of members of parliament who called on the president Saturday were told he did not favour new elections. the newspaper said quoting the MPs concerned.

India has been gripped by a political crisis since the Congress (I) Party, which had been keeping Prime Minister H D Deve Gowda's minority coalition in power for 10 months, withdrew its parliamentary support on March 30.

The United Front coalition took office in June 1996 with Congress backing after hung elections. If the coalition falls Friday and no other grouping is able to form a government, India will see a second election within one year.

No single party in the 545seat Indian parliament has the strength to form a government without outside backing. The ruling Front has some 180 members and the Congress 142. Hindu nationalists command 162 members.

Sudan to sign peace accord with rebel factions

KHARTOUM. Apr 7: Sudan announced yesterday it would sign a peace agreement soon with splinter rebel factions that promises a referendum on independence for the south in four years, reports AFP. Mohammed Al Amin Khal-

ifa. Secretary General of the Islamic Government's Supreme Council for Peace, said the agreement would also develop more powers to the states.

Speaking at a press conference. Khalif a said a decision on a date and place for the signing of the agreement would be made in the coming few days.

'US policy of arming Israel contradictory to its role as re-election hope key sponsor of ME peace' LONDON, Aprl 7: Britain's Conservatives suffered a new

CAIRO, Apr 7: The Arab League yesterday charged that the US policy of arming Israel with sophisticated weapons was counter-productive to its role as key sponsor of the peace process and encouraged Israeli intransigence, reports AFP. "The US decision to sell Is-

rael sophisticated weapons ... is incompatible with America's role as key sponsor of the Middle East peace process which guarantees the implementation of agreements between Israel and the Arab parties," said Ahmad Benhalli, head of the League's Arab affairs depart-

"This decision will encourage Israel to become more intransigent in its effort to block the peace process and will also pave the way for an armament race in the region," said Bun-"The Arab League expects the

United States to adopt a more credible, neutral and fair position if it sincerely believes in the importance of a peaceful solution to the Arab-Israeli struggle and to protect its interests in

the region," he added. The Pentagon said Thursday that it was stepping up investments in two US-Israeli anti-

missile defence programmes and a joint anti-terrorism programme aimed at maintaining Israel's military edge over its Arab neighbours. Israel receives annual military aid from the United States

of 1.8 billion dollars for the purchase of US military equipment. Meanwhile, Israeli Premier Benjamin Netanyahu held a 45-

minute bedside meting on Sunday with convalescing King Hussein of Jordan on the eve of hard-nosed talks in Washington on reviving the faltering Middle East peace process. Emerging from private meet-

ing, Netanyahu gave no details of what he discussed with Hussein, who underwent successful prostate surgery at Rochester's Mayo Clinic Saturday. The talks began shortly after

Netanyahu flew in amid a fierce snowstorm on a non-stop military flight from Tel Aviv.

Off the Record

Habitual claim

COLOMBO: Garbage collectors asked to clear fallen branches at a house in the Sri Lankan capital Colombo had demanded money to do the work, not knowing it was the home of the new mayor, a newspaper said Monday, reports Reuter.

The Independent Sunday times said Colombo Municipal Council workers had demanded 20 rupees (34 US cents) from a security guard at the home of Mayor Karu Jayasuriya when asked to clear branches from a mango tree in front of his home. The guard promptly paid the money and then told Jayasuriya, who intends to raise the matter with the municipal commissioner, the paper said.

NEW DELHI: A retired Indian police officer has been caught feeding free food provided by the government for the rural poor to his cows, a newspaper reported on Monday, says AFP. Government officials in the eastern state of Bihar made the

discovery when they paid a surprise visit to the officer's village, The Statesman said Lakhan Lal Mishra, a voluntary activists, was quoted as

was being sold illegally. "We do not like this kind of misuse," one official said.

Marriage of the year

Greenspan and NBC television correspondent Andrea Mitchell were married Sunday in what has been dubbed the capital's wedding of the year, reports Reuter.

NBC officials and a friend of the couple.

The couple's 75 guests were brought to the quaint Virginia town located about 1 and half hours away from Washington in buses stocked with champagne.

The bride's first marriage ended in divorce. The bridegroom's

nalist, to stand against former minister Neil Hamilton in the May 1 election. Hamilton, who denies receiving cash for asking parliamentary questions, has come under pressure from his party leadership to quit but local Conservatives in his Tatton Prime Minister John Major (2nd left) and Tory Party Chairman Dr Brian Mawhinney (left) constituency in northeast Enggreet Baroness Thatcher and her husband Denis, as they arrive at Conservative Central land have stood by him. Office in London Sunday, where she stepped into the election ring this weekend to deliver Bell will replace the Labour and Liberal Democrat candi-- AFP/UNB photo

Blizzard shuts down much of northern Plains in US

a battle-cry to Tory troops fighting the General Election.

BISMARCK, North Dakota Apr 7: A blizzard shut down much of the midwestern, northern Plains with blinding windblown snow and drifts up to 20 feet (6 meters) high, stranding travelers and making life miserable for volunteers sandbagging flood-threatened towns, reports AP.

Wyoming, the Dakotas. Nebraska and the eastern edge people were killed in Wisconsin.

after a winter of record snow-Schafer, who asked President Bill Clinton to declare the state

a disaster area, was snowed in Sunday. "I spent two hours shoveling out from my front door," he said. "We've got the whole state

Across the state line in westcentral Minnesota, dikes failed throughout much of Breckenridge during the night, letting the Red River pour as much as 3 feet (1 meter) deep into streets. Most of the downtown was knee-deep in water and snowcrusted ice, and parked cars were frozen in place.

Hundreds of people had been evacuated in Breckenridge because of the flood caused by melting snow from previous storms, and others were stranded by the blizzard, police Chief Dennis Milbrandt said

Sunday. Temperatures were in the 20s (-7C) and the wind-chill was below zero (-18 C).

100 miles (160 kms) southeast of Breckenridge, waves driven by 40 mph (65 kph) wind crashed against dikes along the bloated Minnesota River, splashing volunteers as they piled sandbags and coating their clothing and men's beards with ice.

Low turnout in Haiti polls

Voter turnout was light in Haiti's congressional and local elections Sunday, with the opposition boycotting the vote, reports AFP.

A total of 1,200 troops from the National Police and 300 international police from the United Nations were deployed to guard against violence.

cidents at polling places. Civil unrest during the 1995 legislative elections left several people Turnout was just 40 per cent

Lavaud, Secretary of the Provisional Electoral Council overseeing the vote. Some poling stations in Port-au-Prince had turn out as low as five per cent. Voters were choosing nine

winds in Wisconsin and Michigan cut power to thousands and ripped part of the roof off Mil-A 43-year-old suburban

his back yard that was carrying 5,000 volts of electricity. "It killed him on the spot," said Wauwatosa Police Lt. Dennis A 67-year-old Milwaukee

Most highways were closed in North Dakota. A passenger train was stranded in Fargo by signal failures. Two charter buses were

passengers about 35 miles (55 kms) north of Grand Forks. And an ambulance crew was rescued Sunday after 14 hours of being snowbound on a state highway. "It wasn't bad, really," said

Lori Oldenburg, an emergency medical technician on the ambulance. "Not being able to get up and walk, not being able to go to bathroom. But we sur-Travellers also were

stranded across most of the eastern half of Wyoming, with a main interstate road closed

China, US hold talks on Korea

State Department official met with Chinese officials' last week to figure out how to get North Korea to join peace talks, diplomats said Monday, reports

The US Embassy confirmed acting Assistant Secretary of State Charles Kartman made a low-key visit Wednesday and Thursday. Embassy spokeswoman Sara Stryker said Kartman discussed regional issues with his Foreign Ministry counterpart, Yang Jiechi, and Asian affairs expert Wang Yi.

discussions but who spoke on condition of anonymity said the Chinese put forth North Korea's position on joining fourway talks with rival South Korea, the United States and China. Secretive, Stalinist North

Korea, on the verge of famine after two years of flooding, is holding out for more food aid. said one diplomat. Washington and Seoul be-

the diplomat said. Kartman led the US side in

bribed into joining the talks.

North Korea never signed a formal pace treaty to end the 1950-53 war. The Korean the Cold War.

North Korea.

BEIJING, Apr 7: A senior US

Diplomats familiar with the

lieve North Korea should not be

discussions last month in New York with South Korea and North Korea on starting the four-party talks, a year-old proposal

peninsula has been divided ever since and remains one of the last potential flash points of China fought alongside

Misuse indeed!

saying food intended for village children and pregnant women

WASHINGTON: US federal reserve Chairman Alan

The private ceremony took place at the Elegant Inn at Little Washington in Washington, Virginia, with Supreme Court Associate Justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg officiating according to

The bride, 50, is NBC's chief foreign affairs correspondent, based in Washington, the bridegroom, 71, has been the federal reserve chairman since 1987.

first marriage was annuled. In a recent interview Mitchell said the couple would not honeymoon right away because of their hectic schedules.

foreign policy. Also, officials pointed out, a unilateral Dancommission, but the small and ish resolution, rather than one from the EU as a whole, was medium-sized countries insist they keep their seats," Kinkel bound to have less impact on Beijing.

failed to resolve differences on a number of institutional reforms designed to prepare the Union for its eastward enlargement over the next decade. In an attempt to streamline ence (IGC), fearing it had been overshadowed by the run-up to policy-making to suit a new era in which the bloc could have up monetary union and by attento two dozen members, ministion given to trouble-spots like ters largely agree that the exist-Albania.

Commission should be changed. But there is a sharp divide over the body's new look. German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel said there had been "heated debate" at a meeting of EU ministers in this Dutch seaside town over how many seats

ing 20-seat executive European

NOORDWIJK. Netherlands.

Apr 7: European Union foreign

ministers made little headway

vesterday on key reform issues

to be finalised at a mid-June

Amsterdam summit, reports

The block's 15 members

Reuter.

a new commission should have. The commission has itself proposed slimming down to one seat per country, with a maximum of 20 as the EU expands. France, however, wants to

wield the axe further. Leaving a

with all members guaranteed a

sleek, effective 10-seat body.

seat on a five-year rotation ba-"We all agree we need a smaller and more efficient

The bloc's smaller nations. such as Ireland and the Scandinaviaus, are adamant they will not give up their national voice at the Brussels high table. "All countries must have their own commissioner," said

one Finnish diplomat. The Dutch EU presidency had summoned ministers to Noordwijk in an attempt to inject fresh energy into the yearold Inter-Governmental Confer-

"The institutional questions are of vital importance for the success of the IGC, said Kinkel. We need a solution so that enlargement can be possible."

Several ministers also admitted that British elections on May 1 had slowed progress towards wide-ranging treaty reforms at the Amsterdam sum-

AP adds: Denmark said Sun-

day it will introduce a UN reso-

lution condemning human rights violations in China after France prevented the European Union from doing so in name of its 15 members. The French veto, reissued at an EU foreign ministers meeting, was another setback for the union to fashion a common

differences on reforms

Hundreds of miles (kilometres) of highways were closed in of Montana. Thousands were without electricity, and two

The blowing snow rebuilt drifts that had begun melting Even North Dakota Gov. Ed

virtually paralysed.

In Montevideo, Minnesota.

Meanwhile, 50 mph (80 kph)

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Apr. 7:

There were no reports of in-

in some areas, said Alexandre

senators of a total of 27,133 town delegates and other mu-

nicipal officers.

waukee Country Stadium, where professional baseball's Brewers open their home season Monday. The game wasn't expected to be affected. Milwaukee man died when he picked up a downed power line

Davidson. man died when his boat capsized in the Wisconsin River. Authorities had warned against boating because of high water.

stranded overnight with their

vived."

outside Cheyenne, and rescue workers fanned out on snowmobiles.