

## International

### Foreigners must produce medical certificate to marry Saudis

DUBAI, Jan 13: Saudi Arabia has decreed that foreigners wishing to marry Saudi Arabians must produce a medical certificate proving they are not carriers of genetic or infectious diseases, newspapers reported today, says Reuters.

They said the decision was made at a Cabinet meeting chaired by King Fahd on Monday night.

The cabinet has decided that foreigners who want to marry Saudis must produce a medical certificate proving they do not carry any genetic, infectious or other serious diseases or the HIV Virus, the Arab News said.

Saudi Arabian nationals are only allowed to marry fellow Muslims under the strict Sharia laws applied in the kingdom.

Saudi women need government permission to marry foreigners, apart from fellow Gulf Arabs.

### Dozens of Hamas members held

JERUSALEM, Jan 13: Israeli and Palestinian security forces have arrested dozens of Hamas members who planned anti-Israeli attacks in the West Bank and Israel, and Israeli army spokesman said today, reports AFP.

Acting on a tip from Israeli intelligence, army and police, Palestinian police recently uncovered a large amount of explosive material at a Hamas bomb-making factory in the West Bank town of Nablus and arrested several activists there, the army spokesman said.

The dozens of Palestinians arrested in Israeli and Palestinian-controlled areas of the West Bank are members of several different cells of the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, he added.

Members of the cells confessed to carrying out a recent shooting attack in the Nablus area that wounded two Israeli border police and as well as other shootings, the army said.

The militants may have been connected to Hamas movements abroad, it added.

## Police arrest 300 Sunni Muslims in Lahore

LAHORE, Jan 13: Police swept through Sunni Muslim mosques, offices and religious schools arresting hundreds of people in connection with the weekend massacre of 28 Shi'ite Muslims, police said Tuesday.

More than 300 people have been arrested, although no charges have yet been laid.

The arrests followed last Sunday's killing of Shi'ite Muslims at a walled cemetery in the heart of Lahore.

The mass killings sparked widespread protests in Lahore on Monday and in several other cities around the country.

At least 15 people were hurt, some of them critically, when thousands of Shi'ite Muslims vowing revenge and demanding the resignation of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, gathered to bury their dead on Monday in Lahore.

Hundreds of police surrounded by steel barricades and armoured vehicles stopped a mob that was trying to move toward the Punjab Provincial Parliament.

Unable to reach the Parliament building, the mob set fire to the sprawling brick provincial courthouse, built before the subcontinent gained its independence from Britain in 1947.

Dozens of young Shi'ite Muslims bared their chests and dared police to fire. "We're not afraid. Kill us," they screamed. "From today we will fight. We will not spare anyone who kills our brothers."

Shops and businesses closed down, the Karachi Stock Exchange plummeted 70.58 points and small demonstrations were reported again on Tuesday.

A military Sunni Muslim group, the Lashkar-e-Jhangvi, took responsibility for the mass killings and promised to carry out further attacks against Pakistan's minority Shi'ite Muslim community.

Using Pakistan's new sweeping anti-terrorist law, police raided dozens of Sunni Muslim establishments on Monday and early Tuesday morning arresting suspects.

A red jeep and two kalashnikov rifles used by the gunmen

were found abandoned on Tuesday about one kilometre (sixth of a mile) from the scene of the attack.

In Pakistan in the last one year at least 300 people have been killed in sectarian killings.

Dozens of militant Muslims belonging to both Islamic sects have been jailed, although few people have been convicted in courts.

Lawyers in Pakistan say judges and lawyers routinely receive death threats from militant Muslims and as a result are afraid to convict them.

Judge Arif Bhatti, the man who acquitted two Christians accused of blasphemy, was shot and killed. No one was ever arrested but police and the legal community blamed militant Muslims who had been sending Bhatti death threats.

Most of Pakistan's 140 million people are Sunni Muslims who get along with their Shi'ite brethren. But extremist groups belonging to both sects have emerged in recent years and they routinely clash.

A district court building in Lahore is set on fire Monday, mourners protesting against mass killing of Shi'ite Muslims on Sunday. Mourners burned tires, pelted police with stones and shots were fired in the air. A militant Sunni Muslim group has claimed responsibility for Sunday's massacre.



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### Diana's car was travelling at only 60 mph?

LONDON, Jan 13: The Mercedes in which Princess Diana was killed was travelling at 60 mph (96 kph), a leading British accident investigator says in a programme to be broadcast Tuesday night, reports AP.

All four occupants of the car would have survived if crash barriers had been fitted in Paris' Pont de l'Alma traffic tunnel, according to Professor Murray Mackay, head of the Birmingham Accident Research Centre and a professor of transport safety at the University of Birmingham.

Mackay said in the Channel 4 TV programme "Crash" that his conclusions were drawn from the French police investigation, as well as a visit to the tunnel.

The programme included a computer simulation of the August 31 accident that killed Diana, her companion Dodi Fayed and driver Henri Paul.

"Newspapers have talked of speeds of 120 mph (192 kph)."

"This was a severe but a survivable accident and what we now need to consider is why three people died. If the Mercedes had hit the post at 120 mph (192 kph), the whole of the passenger compartment would have been destroyed," he said.

The princess had the best chance of survival because she was sitting in the rear right seat which would have suffered the least force when the car hit the pillar and spun, Mackay said.

### 69 students feared drowned in India

NEW DELHI, Jan 13: At least 69 teenage students were feared drowned Tuesday after their bus skidded in fog and plunged into a river in India's West Bengal state, Press Trust of India news agency said, reports AP.

The bus was bringing 86 10th and 11th grade students back from a picnic in Murshidabad district, 190 kilometres (120 miles) north of Calcutta. Rescuers saved 17 students, PTI quoted police as saying. Other details were not immediately available.



Hindu Nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party President, Lal Krishna Advani, second from left, watches prime ministerial candidate, AB Vajpayee's face appear on the screen, as BJP launched a website in New Delhi Monday. This is the first ever website to be launched by any political party ahead of the general elections next month. The party spokesman Pramod Mahajan is seen on Advani's right.

## Cong urges Sonia, Priyanka to contest upcoming polls

NEW DELHI, Jan 13: The widow of former Indian premier Rajiv Gandhi has been urged by the Congress Party to contest upcoming elections from her ex-husband's constituency, newspapers reported here today, says AFP.

The once-dominant Congress passed a resolution late Monday in the northern state of Uttar Pradesh, requesting the Italian-born Sonia Gandhi and her daughter Priyanka stand as candidates.

The Uttar Pradesh chapter of the Congress said it had passed on the recommendation to the party's national leadership for approval, the Asian Age newspaper said.

The 51-year-old widow made her political debut at the weekend after agreeing to campaign

for the Congress in the February-March polls, she has not, however, announced herself as an election candidate.

The Congress said Sonia, who married into the Nehru-Gandhi family in 1968, should contest from Uttar Pradesh's Amethi constituency, once represented by Rajiv Gandhi.

It also asked Priyanka, 25, to stand from the adjoining constituency of Rae Bareilly, the seat of Rajiv's mother Indira Gandhi.

The party, in decline after ruling India for almost four decades following independence in 1947, is hoping to exploit the aura of the Gandhi name during the campaign.

Priyanka, who is not in politics, accompanied Sonia Gandhi for her inaugural ad-

dress on Sunday in the southern Indian town of Sriperumbudur, where Rajiv Gandhi was assassinated in 1991.

Sonia Gandhi, who has become an Indian citizen, appealed in her speech to Indians to vote the Congress back to power. She indicated she would not contest the elections.

The Congress was led by the Nehru-Gandhi family for most of India's 50 years since independence in 1947.

Newspapers say Sonia Gandhi is expected to play a major role for the party in the coming hustings. Analysts, however, predict a hung parliament with the country's Hindu nationalists topping the polls as the country's largest party.

## BRIEFLY

### Ex-US Army Sgt dies in prison:

Former US Army Sgt. 1st Class Clyde Lee Conrad, convicted of treason in 1990 for leaking NATO and American secrets to the Soviet bloc, died in the German prison where he was serving a life sentence. He was 50, AP reports from Koblenz.

Prosecutors in Koblenz confirmed Monday that Conrad died last Thursday, apparently from heart failure. An autopsy has been ordered, the statement said. Conrad was convicted on June 6, 1990 of masterminding an espionage ring that sold highly sensitive information to Hungarian and former Czechoslovakian intelligence agents from 1975 through 1985, when he retired after 20 years in the military.

**7 farmers killed in India:** Seven farmers were killed and six injured when police opened fire on a mob protesting over the failure of their crops in central India, the Press Trust of India reported yesterday, AFP says from New Delhi.

The news agency, quoting a senior police officer, said there were unconfirmed reports that five others had died in the incident in the town of Multai in Madhya Pradesh. The police imposed a curfew after the violence, which began when 50 police officers were attacked by stone-throwing farmers whose crops have been destroyed by unseasonal rains and hailstorms.

**Prison protest ends in Colombia:** Hundreds of inmates and their relatives ended a standoff at a Colombian prison on Monday after reaching an agreement with government negotiators on improving prison conditions and easing overcrowding, AP reports from Bogota.

Some 460 women — relatives of prisoners at the San Isidro jail in Popayan — left the prison in small groups after the agreement was signed. Their demands were just and their protest peaceful, said Jorge Munoz, the town's ombudsman.

**Cohen arrives in Indonesia:** US Defence Secretary William Cohen arrived Indonesia Tuesday as part of an Asian tour, AP reports from Jakarta.

Cohen is expected to discuss security issues with officials from the world's fourth-most populous nation, but is also expected to touch on the need for economic reform in Indonesia during his two-day stay. Just before Cohen's arrival at Jakarta's Halim Airport, US Deputy Treasury Secretary Lawrence Summers held talks with President Suharto on the Indonesia's economic crisis.

**India to launch new bullet proof car:** Facing tough competition from Japanese and European car makers, the makers of India's venerable Ambassador plan to update a car that has changed little since the 1950s, AP reports from New Delhi.

The new Ambassador range introduced to journalists Monday includes a bulletproof model that can withstand fire from AK47 assault rifles, a model that runs on low-polluting compressed natural gas, and one that can run on both compressed natural gas and more widely available regular gas. The new models are slightly sleeker than the lumbering, bulbous Ambassador, modeled on Britain's Morris Oxford of the 1950s, that for decades was the only car available in India's protected market produced by a state-owned company in collaboration with Suzuki soon took over 80 per cent of sales in India.



Members of Fleetwood Mac hold their awards after the group was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame Monday, in New York. From left, are: Peter Green, John McVie, Stevie Nicks, Christine McVie, Mick Fleetwood and Lindsey Buckingham.

### Bosnian Serb parliament fails to elect PM

BIJEL JINA, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Jan 13: Despite international warnings to stop installing the polarised Bosnian Serb parliament failed Monday to elect a new premier and government, reports AP.

The assembly did make one small step forward, it re-elected Dragan Kalinic, an ally of war crimes suspect Radovan Karadzic, as parliament speaker, and chose his deputies. That allowed the parliament to formally establish itself.

Deputies loyal to Karadzic blamed technicalities for preventing them from electing 39-year-old economist Madlen Ivanic to the premiership. Ivanic has been nominated by President Biljana Plavsic and is supported by the international community.

**China quake**  
**HK launches fund drive to help victims**

HONG KONG, Jan 13: Hong Kong has launched a fund drive to help the victims of a severe earthquake in northern China which killed 47 people and left tens of thousands homeless, charity groups said today, reports AP.

Charity groups in Hong Kong have appealed for donations from the public in addition to requesting more than 17 million Hong Kong dollars (2.19 million US dollars) from the government's disaster relief fund for those in need in Hebei province.

Meanwhile, a government spokesman said applications for the funds would be processed as soon as possible. A 12-member medical team from the Red Cross is to be despatched to the disaster scene, a spokesman for Red Cross said.

### Lankan forces move to capture key highway

COLOMBO, Jan 13: Sri Lankan forces today began the ninth month of a bloody campaign to capture an important northern highway in the hope that its seizure will soon bring victory against their Tamil Tiger foes, reports AP.

The Defence Ministry said troops had advanced further north on Sunday to take control of Kanakarayanakulam town. It lies on the highway linking the government-held town of Vavuniya with Killinochchi, further north.

Military officials said the chances of capturing the entire stretch quickly were remote and that more attacks by Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) could be expected.

"We expect fresh attacks further up the road," one senior military official told Reuters.

### US links GLA with massacre in Algeria

WASHINGTON, Jan 13: The United States said Monday that "the great majority" of the horrific attacks against civilians in Algeria are the work of Islamic hardliners in the Armed Islamic Group (GIA), reports AP.

But the US State Department conceded that the situation was "complex" and that local government self-defence groups also might be involved in the carnage.

Department spokesman James Rubin said the United States favours fact-finding efforts by a special UN rapporteur as well as non-governmental organisations and the media "to make sure that the basic facts in this area are as well known as they can be."

In the latest incident, an armed group on Sunday killed 103 people and wounded 70 others in the Algerian village of Sid Hamed.

"We believe that the Islamic extremist organisation, the GIA is responsible for the great majority of these atrocities and we condemn these terrorist atrocities in the strongest possible terms," Rubin said.

"Some personnel in local government guard groups may also be involved to some extent" he added. Rubin was apparently referring to thousands of community guards and "patriots" who are patrolling rural areas. "The situation is complex" Rubin said, "and that is why we have encouraged fact-finding missions to go in Algeria and try to clarify what is going on."

In New York, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan said no decision has been taken to halt inspections in the wake of Iraq's statement on Ritter. He noted that the chief weapons inspector, Richard Butler, was to travel to Baghdad for talks January 19.

Butler is due to talk to the Iraqi authorities about their barring the UN teams from some 60 sites, including about 40 presidential palaces, on grounds of national sovereignty.

"I hope that the Iraqi authorities will not do anything precipitous and will wait for Butler to get there to raise whatever issues they have with him," Annan told reporters.

Iraq's UN ambassador, Nizar Hamdon, said Iraq considered such a large percentage of British and American on the Ritter team to be "unacceptable."

"Iraq has insisted that the work of the Special Commis-

### Annan appoints Canadian minister as his deputy

UNITED NATIONS, Jan 13: UN chief Kofi Annan fulfilled his pledge Monday to appoint a woman to the second-highest post in the international organisation, naming Canada's deputy defence minister to the newly created position, reports AP.

Louise Frechette, the new UN deputy secretary-general, has served as a UN ambassador from 1992 to 1994.

The General Assembly created the post last month to help improve coordination and efficiency within the UN system worldwide.

Frechette, 51, told reporters that she would bring expertise in managing large organisations.

"I think the biggest challenge is to keep up with the times," she said.

### UN mission in E Slavonia ends tomorrow

ZAGREB, Jan 13: The UN administration in Eastern Slavonia (UNTAES), the last Serb-held part of Croatia, winds up its two-year mission this week after that is being hailed as a success story for the embattled United Nations, reports AP.

On Thursday, transitional administrator William Walker hands over control of the region to Zagreb in accordance with the 1995 Erdut accords, marking another milestone in the search for peace in the former Yugoslavia. "UNTAES' mandate can be judged a success even if all the commitments have not been met," local Serb leader Vojislav Stanimirovic was quoted as saying in Monday's daily Vecernji List.

### Blast in passenger bus hurts 14 in Kashmir

JAMMU, Jan 13: An explosion ripped apart a bus just after its passengers got off in Kashmir Tuesday, injuring at least 14 people, police said, reports AP.

No group claimed responsibility for the blast, but police blamed it on Kashmiri militants fighting to secede from India. The same stop was the target of a blast that killed 16 people last March in Jammu, the winter capital of Jammu-Kashmir state.

Gurbachan Jagat, the director-general of Jammu-Kashmir police, said 14 people were injured Tuesday, four seriously. He said the bus had been headed to Srinagar, the state's summer capital and heart of the insurgency, but was forced to return to Jammu because a landslide had blocked the road.

The blast occurred moments after the last passenger disembarked in Jammu.

Jagat had warned of possible explosions before a Hindu religious festival on Tuesday and India's Republic Day celebrations on January 26.

Jagat said some of the militants arrested recently had told police about attempts by Pakistan to disrupt celebrations in the state.

India accuses Pakistan of training and arming Muslim militants fighting an insurgency in Kashmir that has killed more than 15,000 people since 1989. Pakistan denies the charges, saying it lends only moral support.

Militants in Kashmir, India's only predominantly Muslim state, want independence or to join officially Muslim Pakistan.

### Closer military ties with US to help improve trust, hopes China

BEIJING, Jan 13: China hopes that closer military ties with the United States will help improve trust between the two nations, Defence Minister Chi Haotian says, reports AP.

Chi, in a meeting with former US Secretary of Defence William Perry, said that exchanges of high-ranking military officials and other contacts were helping smooth sometimes tense relations with the United States, the newspaper China Daily reported Tuesday.

Gen. Fu Quanyou, chief of the general staff of China's People's Liberation Army, told Perry that Beijing was hoping for even boarder contacts.

The general improvement in relations between China and the United States over the past year has allowed a resumption of high-level contacts disrupted by months of tension over Taiwan and other issues.

As part of the effort to increase cooperation, US Deputy Treasury Secretary Lawrence Summers was expected to visit Beijing on Thursday to discuss the Asian financial crisis.

Summers, dispatched by President Bill Clinton on an Asian tour aimed at promoting financial stability, has travelled to Indonesia and Singapore and also planned to visit Hong Kong, South Korea, Malaysia and Thailand.

### Non-Proliferation efforts of Clinton admin inadequate

WASHINGTON, Jan 13: China is the world's leading supplier of weapons technology, according to a US Senate report that contends the United States inadvertently participates in weapons proliferation because of "liberalised" export policies, reports AP.

The Republican-drafted report accuses the US government of being too reluctant to impose economic sanctions in response to clear violations of anti-proliferation laws.

The Clinton administration's non-proliferation efforts have been inadequate, says the report, directed by Sen. Thad Cochran, chairman of the Senate Governmental Affairs International Security Subcommittee.

State Department spokesman James P. Rubin said Monday the Clinton administration has made proliferation issues a top priority, pointing to the signing of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) banning nuclear testing, the permanent extension of the

Non-Proliferation Treaty, Russia's recent willingness to join the Chemical Weapons Convention and China's recent assurances to take across the board steps to prevent weapons proliferation.

Because none of the Democrats on Cochran's subcommittee signed the study, it was issued as a "Majority report" of the panel.

The report said that:

— Despite several instances of documented proliferation, including sale of nuclear technology and ballistic missiles to Pakistan and chemical and biological equipment, missile technology and nuclear reactors to Iran, the Clinton administration has imposed only limited sanctions on specific firms rather than take on the Chinese government.

— The administration approach to Russia has been to make appeals to Russian government leaders rather than impose penalties. The report said Russia is continuing its missile commerce with Iran.