day, reports Reuter.

not have fewer divorces.

such listening techniques.

marriages," Gottman said.

from London.

Times newspaper.

Britain in London.

anyone approaching.

BBC Tuesday.

wrong track.

a statement.

Off the Record

Secret of happy marriage

WASHINGTON: Men who want their marriages to succeed should just do what their wives suggest, psychologists said Fri-

John Gottman, a psychologist at the University of Wash ding-ton, and colleagues said advice to engage in "active listerding" and other interactive ways to resolve differences may be or 1 the

They said couples who tried to follow such trendy advice did

"This was the biggest revelation we've had about how con-

Gottman's team followed 130 newlyweds for six years, track-

flicts are best resolved in successful marriage," Gottman said in

ing how they handled disagreement. Many tried the "active listening" model, which calls in part for each person to re-pharase

what the other has said and to indicate they are listening with

study in which successful marriages were followed for 13 y ears.

They found the people who stayed together almost never used

common — the husband was willing to be influenced by his ; wife.

of influence from their wives are winding up in happy, stable

For a third ear ...

They compared these couples to couples followed in an older

Instead, the marriages that seemed to work had one thi ng in

"We found that only those newlywed men who are acce pting

LONDON: A Performance artist has announced in London

The 53-year-old Australian known only as Stelarc said he

"A little rubber balloon is going to be inserted under the skin

"It will be in place over the period of a month or so to leave a

Although Stelarc will not be able to hear with the ear, he said

He said his inspiration came from the Onca Mous e, which

Blind TV director!

The BBC aims to reflect all sections of society and we are

Rose has already directed a short film to be broadc ast on the

The spokeswoman said Rose receives help from ar other per-

Rose told the Sun newspaper: "I was an avid TV vi ewer until I

son describing the scene and then gives instructions to a camera

Britain's Prince Andrew and his ex-wife, Duchess of York

Sarah Fergusson, pose with their two daughters Eugenie

(L) and Beatrice, on a snowbike, in the ski resort of

Verbier, Switzerland, on Feb 19. Prince Andrew joined his

Duke of Windsor's estate

delighted to be able to offer Damon the opportunity to work in

that he is to grow a third ear, a report said Friday, AFP reports

hoped to enlist the help of plastic surgeons, according to The

behind my ear," said Stelarc at the Royal Institution of Great

packet of excess skin. Then I will put in an ear scaffold beneath

he planned to install a sound chip in it so that he can detect

scientists genetically altered to grow a human ear on it's back.

year production training course, a spokeswoman said

such a competitive industry," the spokeswoman said.

"He is already showing great promise," she said.

lost my sight at 13, I remember how it works:

the skin. What you will have is a third ear."

responses such as "I hear what you are saying."

Huge arms seized in Coimbatore: Indian police seized a huge cache of arms and explosives on Thursday in the southern city of Coimbatore, where at least 60 people have died in a series of bomb blasts since Saturday, the Press Trust of India (PTI) reported, Reuter says from New Delhi.

The news agency said the haul included 500 pipe bombs, 500 petrol bombs, 1,000 electric detonators, and 200 gelignite sticks which were found in a small shop in the city.

Blast kills 2 in Algeria: A bomb exploded yesterday near and Algiers market, killing two people and wounding 23, security services said, AFP reports from Algiers. The report came two days after the security services said 23

people were slaughtered overnight Tuesday by suspected Islamist extremists at Sidi Djillali west of Algiers. Quake rocks Indonesia: An earthquake rocked the tiny Indonesian island of Ambon, causing residents

to flee their homes and shopping centres in panic, the Antara News Agency said yesterday, Reuter reports from Jakarta. It measured 5.1 on the Richter Scale and was the second quake this month to rock the capital of the eastern Maluku islands, 1,000 km north of the Australian city of Darwin.

1 dies in UK mine mishap: One man died and 16 others were injured, up to nine seriously, in an accident late Thursday at an open-cast mine in Scotland, police and

ambulance services said, AFP reports from Dalquhandy.

The accident is believed to have happened when a train taking workers to the coalface came off its track and hit a wall, police said. The incident happened at the Dalquhandy Quarry near coalburn in Lanarkshire, south of Glassgow.

Cuba frees 299 prisoners: Cuba said on Thursday it had freed 299 prisoners, including more than 70 political detainees, in response to a clemency appeal from Pope John Paul last month, Reuter says from Havana.

But a Cuban foreign minister spokesman refused to confirm whether the pardons included well-known political dissidents.

Heating supply rationed in Russia: More than 30,000 people have been left without heat in subfreezing temperatures in Russia's Far East because local authorities are running out of heating fuel and don't have the money to purchase more, AP reports from Moscow.

The heating supply is being rationed throughout the city of Nakhodka on Russia's eastern coast, near Vladivostok. But in 90 large apartment buildings housing 30,000 residents the heat has been cut off altogether, the ITAR-Tass news agency reported.

Thailand begins repatriation

Several Thai government

have repeatedly threatened to

repatriate them against their

will. The government of former

Prime Minister Chavalit

Yongchaiyudh, sent Karen

refugees back to Myanmar and

into the path of a Myanmar

army offensive in February

Democracy and refugee ac-

tivists have expressed fears dur-

ing the past year that Thai-

land's government may use the

country's economic crisis as a

pretext for sending the Karen

back, claiming it can no longer

intensified during recent weeks

because of an illegal logging

scandal in which refugees were

alleged to have been hired by

Thai timbers companies to fell

trees in the Salween Wildlife

Sanctuary in Mae Hong Son,

650 kilometres north of

that Prime Minister Chuan

Leekpai, who has launched an

investigation into the scandal,

wants to meet with Myanmar

leaders to seek their help in the

Local papers reported Friday

Calls to send them back have

afford to shelter them.

Bangkok.

Govt negotiating release of

UN observers in Georgia

of Myanmar refugees Mar 1

BANGKOK, Feb 20: More

than 10,000 refugees from

ther be repatriated or moved to

a central refugee camp in a two-

week operation beginning

March 1, a Thai provincial offi-

Karen, will have a choice of go-

ing back to Myanmer or moving

from the 10 temporary refugee

camps in Mae Hong Son

province to one main camp

named Maehla, the official said

and other refugees from Myan-

mar are living in Thailand af-

ter fleeing Myanmer army of-

fensives or government repres-

sion. The Karen have been

fighting for autonomy from the

government in Yangon since

The Karen and aid workers

have documented human rights

abuses committed by the

Myanmar army against Karen

villagers, including extrajudi-

cial killings, torture, rapes,

forced labour and forced relo-

Last week, Myanmar oppo-

TBILISI, Feb 20: The gov-

ernment negotiated Friday for

the release of four UN military

observers, but their kidnappers

insisted on freedom for seven

suspects held in the recent at-

tempt to kill Georgia's presi-

and members of parliament ne-

gotiated through the night with

the heavily armed kidnappers.

but there was no breakthrough

as the talks dragged into a sec-

house in the western village of

Dzhikhaskari, have threatened

to kill the four UN observers

and the six civilians who were

taken hostage Thursday. Police

have surrounded the house, but

have made no attempt to use

The incident is the latest

Police have arrested seven

sign of turbulence in the former

Soviet republic, where Presi-

dent Eduard Shevardnadze nar-

rowly survived an assassina-

suspects, all of them supporters

of former president Zviad Gam-

tion attempt Feb 9.

The kidnappers holed up in a

Georgian security officials

dent, reports AP.

ond day Friday.

sition leader Aung San Suu Kyi

appealed to the Thai govern-

ment to show mercy to the

cations.

More than 100,000 Karen

on condition of anonymity.

The refugees, mostly ethnic

cial said Friday, reports AP.

Myanmar in Thailand will ei-

Annan optimistic about positive outcome of meeting with Saddam

PARIS, Feb 20: UN Secretary General Kofi Annan left Paris Friday morning aboard a French presidential jet for Baghdad on a mission to persuade Saddam Hussein to accept proposals to avoid a military strike against Iraq, reports AP.

Annan departed on a military airport south of Paris about 10 am (0900 GMT) aboard a Mystere 900 jet provided by French President Jacques Chirac.

Speaking to reporters Thursday evening after a meeting in Paris with Chirac, Annan said he hoped to return from a visit to Iraq with an agreement that all members of the UN Security Council could

Annan mission to Iraq was a last-ditch effort to convince Saddam that he must abide by UN disarmament resolutions imposed following the 1991 Gulf War.

Annan said he would not go into details about the proposals he would make to Saddam that were agreed upon by the UN Security Council.

"I hope I will be able to convince President Saddam Hussein to accept certain proposals that I will make to avoid a military strike," Annan told reporters gathered at the Elysees

Annan arrived in Paris late Thursday afternoon on the first leg of his journey to Baghdad. Chirac called Annan's mission "extremely difficult and important.

"I gave him all the support of France. And I hope, thanks to him, wisdom and reason will prevail," Chirac said.

BOMBAY, Feb 20: India's

most radical right-wing party.

in power in the country's fi-

nancial centre of Mumbai

(Bombay), has blundered badly

by firing off personalised

broadsides at Congress cam-

paign figurehead Sonia Gandhi

during national elections, ana-

The Shiv Sena (Shivaji's

Army), led by one of India's

most controversial and outspo-

ken politicians, has targetted

the Italian-born widow of as-

sassinated former premier Ra-

jiv Gandhi in an attempt to re-

tain its dominance in the west-

ern state of Maharashtra

But analysts said Bal Thack-

eray's Shiv Sena, have gone too

far with most voters now feel-

ing sympathy for the 51-year-

dia's largest states both in

terms of population and area.

goes to the polls on Sunday and

end on March 7. The Hindu na-

tionalists BJP which Shiv Sena

supports, are expected to win

most seats but to fall short of a

India's staggered elections

Maharashtra, one of the In-

old widow.

majority.

on February 28.

lysts said today, reports AFP.

The United States also wished Annan success, but made clear it reserved the right to reject any deal he makes and to attack to force Saddam to open all suspected weapons sites to UN inspectors.

President Bill Clinton said Thursday that he had made no decision on a deadline for attacking. But in preparation for a possible strike, he ordered his national security team, including Vice President Al Gore and Defence Secretary William Cohen, to postpone overseas

Maharashtra goes to polls Sunday

Anti-Sonia campaign may cost

Shiv Sena its majority

Mumbai is the country's key fi-

nancial centre and the home of

has imitated Sonia Gandhi's

Italian-accented Hindi at polit-

ical rallies and even imperson-

up to voting in Maharashtra,

that Sonia was "a foreigner, has

baptised her children and has

Christians as her key aides. Do

nar Pimple said most voters

Saw Sonia Gandhi, who has no

political experience but has

been campaigning for her hus-

band's once-dominant party, as

tional, self-effacing Indian

widow who remained dignified

the death of her husband," he

Rajiv Gandhi was assassi-

nated in 1991, Sonia Gandhi,

after concentrating on working

for charities since his death.

accepted appeals from the

Congress in January to head

"Voters see her as a tradi-

Political commentator Mi-

you want to be ruled by a for-

In recent weeks Thackeray

He said this week, in the run-

its main stock market.

ated her walk.

eigner?

a victim.

Maharashtra's capital

At the United Nations, the Security Council postponed a briefing on the progress of weapons inspections and prepared for a vote Friday to allow Iraq to more than double the amount of oil it can sell under a

UN oil-for-food plan. Both moves were seen as an effort to increase Annan's chances of negotiating a peaceful resolution.

The draft weapons inspections report to be presented to the council claims Iraq has



UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, left, met French President Jacques Chirac at the Elysee Palace in Paris Thursday to discuss his mission to defuse the current standoff with Iraq. Annan was scheduled to depart for Baghdad Friday morning. - AP/UNB photo

their election campaign.

Maharashtra accounts for

48 of the 545 seats in India's

Shiv Sena and BJP, which con-

trols the state government, won

33 seats in 1996 national polls,

with the Congress holding the

gan Bhujbal predicted his party

would win more than 30 seats

this time because "people are disgusted with the Shiv Sena-

BJP and are determined to

saying he had some admiration

for Adolf Hitler, is a veteran of

vitriolic attacks on his oppo-

Thackeray, once quoted as

The fate of his party in Indi-

The community is tradi-

a's commercial centre may also

depend on the region's Muslim

population. In Mumbai they

tionally suspicious of Hindu

nationalists although the Shiv

Sena argues it has safeguarded

minority communities and re-

duced sectarian violence by its

firm stance on law and order.

teach them a lesson.

the 12m population.

nents.

and aloof from public life after make up about two million of

Local Congress leader Chha-

Lower House of Parliament. The

failed to fully disclose its chemical and biological weapons ability or to provide information on its missile warheads.

The report by Richard Butler. the chief UN weapons inspector, also says Iraq may possess enough material to manufacture as much as 200 tons of the deadly VX nerve agent.

Saddam sent a message Thursday to Russian President Boris Yeltsin saying he remains committed to a diplomatic solution, the official Iraqi News Agency reported. Yeltsin has been loudest and bluntest among world leaders in opposing any US use of force to end the crisis

Meanwhile, the Polish Embassy, which has handled US interests in Iraq since the 1991 Gulf War, sent 10 of its diplomats and their families to Jordan. The remaining six diplomats would follow, Polish Ambassador Roman Chalaczkiewicz said, without say-

ing when. Buses carrying 29 UN relief workers pulled out of Baghdad before dawn Thursday. Another 30 were to follow Friday.

The move was a precaution "in case everything does not work out," said Denis Halliday the UN humanitarian coordinator for Iraq.

US preparations for military action intensified, with 750 infantry soldiers arriving in Kuwait — the first contingent of a 3,000-strong ground force to defend Iraq's smaller neighbour from any retaliation against a US attack.

The troops join 25,000 US servicemen and women already in the Gulf region.

LONDON: The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) has hired a blind man as a television director, it confirmed Friday. reports AFP. Damon Rose, 27, beat 350 applicants to win a place on a two-

polling began Friday in 211 polling booths in Assam while electioneering for the second phase of Lok Sabha polls for 183 seats spread over nine states and union territory of Pondicherry ends at 1700

Altogether 183 constituencies would go to the polls on February 22 after polling in Coimbatore constituency was rescheduled for Feb 28 by the Election Commission in the wake of the recent blasts.

spread over 75 Lok Sabha constituencies in Bihar. Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan, Karnataka and Manipur passed off peacefully Thursday.

SILIGURI, Feb 20: Normal life has come to a halt in West Bengal's Darjeeling district as the three-day general strike called by GNLF began today, re-

The strike has been called by GNLF president Subash Ghising to protest against alleged silences of the centre over receipt of a notice from International Court of Justice at The Hague on January 5 about its opinion on

boycott of the Feb 22 Lok Sabha elections in the district on the

In the three hill subdivisions of Darjeeling, Kurseong and Kalimpong, shops, markets. business establishments and educational institutions remained closed and vehicles

40 massacred

BOGOTA, Feb 20: Up to 40 people were reported killed Thursday in a massacre in rural Colombia, an official of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) said, reports Reuter.

Ana Linder, who represents the relief agency in eastern Meta province, said the killings had been denounced in calls to her office from residents in and around the town of Mapiripan, where dozens of suspected guerilla sympathisers were tortured and killed by right-

Linder said the latest killings were reported to have: occurred in three villages, identified as El Anzuelo, Puerto Chiare and El Rincon Del Indio, and a team of ICRC delegatess would be sent to the area today.

Repolling begins in Assam NEW DELHI, Feb 20: Re-

hours, reports PTI.

Barring two incidents of violence, repolling in 785 booths

Strike paralyses Darjeeling dist

ports PTI.

the status of Darjeeling Hills. Ghising has also called for a

did not ply.

in Colombia

wing gunmen last July.

comes under hammer for 35,000 dollars to a Los Ange-

NEW YORK, Feb 20: A 61year-old piece of wedding cake sold for 26,000 US dollar in spirited bidding in the first round of a nine-day auction of the Paris estate of the late Duke and Duchess of Windsor, re-

ports AP. Though likely very stale by now, the cake, sealed in a nearly three-inch-square white box, has the distinction of being from the 1937 wedding of Edward VIII, the former king of England, and the woman for whom he gave up his throne. American divorcee Wallis

family for his 38th birthday.

Warfield Simpson. An audience of some 1,000 at the Manhattan auction house Sotheby's who, along with telephone bidders from Los Angeles and Chicago, spent more than 1.9 million dollars on the auction's opening night. The total includes the Sotheby's commission.

A brass ashtray owned by the couple went for 1,200 dollars and a pair of glass claret jugs given to Edward by his grandmother, Queen Alexandra, was also sold. The jugs sold les buyer.

- AP/UNB photo

A portrait of the Duchess by the late British painter Cecil Beaton, was purchased for 120,000 dollars.

A ceremonial sword given to Edward in July 1911 to mark his installation as a duke, which was valued at up to 55,000 dollars was withdrawn from sale after bidding stalled at 42,500 dollars.

Up for auction in later sessions were the 18th century table on which Edward VIII wrote his abdication speech, pegged at 30,000 to 50,000 dollars and table linen bearing the monogram of Simpson, whom Edward called "the woman I

"This is the biggest auction we've ever held in the United States, and as a royal collec-

tion, more or less unprece-dented in history," said Sotheby's expert Joe Friedman. "One has to go back to the 17th century to find anything comparable — the sale of the possessions of Charles I." Opposition call

UNICEF, OAU to launch anti-land mine campaign

UNITED NATIONS, Feb 20: The UN Children's Fund and the Organisation for African Unity are launching a campaign for ratification of a treaty banning

land mines, reports AP. The executive director of UNICEF, Carol Bellamy, announced the campaign Thursday, a day before anti-land mine activists who won the Nobel Peace Prize for their work on the treaty were to open a con-

ference in Frankfurt. Bellamy discussed her recent trip to Angola and Ethiopia, where she receive assurances from the OAU that it would help pursue ratification of the treaty.

The OAU indicated that the issue would be placed on the agenda of the meeting of foreign

minister next week, she said. The treaty was signed by more than 120 countries at a conference in Ottawa last year. but must be ratified by at least 40 countries before it can go into effect.

free the seven people arrested.

Travelling in two cars, the kidnappers shelled the UN oberal hours later.

house, police said. and an observer from the Czech

sakhurdia, who was ousted in 1992 and died two years later. The kidnappers — armed

with assault rifles, machine guns and grenade-launchers said they were supporters of Gamsakhurdia and demanded that the Georgian government

servers' headquarters on Thursday and abducted the four officers and commandeered one of their cars, police said. Police tracked them down and surrounded them in the house sev-

Along with the UN observers, the kidnappers were also holding the observers' Georgian driver, a local municipal official and four of his family members living in the

The kidnapped observers are Captain Ronald Garcia and Julio Navas from Uruguay, Maj Maarten Meolgaard of Sweden Republic whose name has not been released.



Amid the tourist souvenirs in London's Carnaby Street Feb 19, are plates commemorating the life of Diana, Princess of Wales, an industry said to be worth some 100 million pounds a year (dlrs 165). British Prime Minister Tony Blair railed at the "inappropriate and tackey" commercial exploitation of Diana's memory, and urged people not to spend their money this - AP/UNB photo

US Navy's 160-year-old Antarctic exploration mission ends

CHRISTCHURCH. New Zealand, Feb 20: Declaring its 160-year mission of Antarctic exploration accomplished, the US Navy lowered the flag Friday and shut down "Operation Deep Freeze," reports AP. It is more than just a chang-

ing of the guard — it symbolises the end of an era, since naval traditions go back more than two centuries to the first expedition to Antarctica.

In a ceremony at the International Antarctic Centre, the US Naval Support Force for Antarctica, popularly known as Operation Deep Freeze, handed over its duties to the US Air National Guard detachment operating out of Schenectady, New

US Ambassador Josiah Beeman and Rear Adm. William Sutton from Pearl Harbor laid a wreath commemorating the 50 Americans who have died in Antarctica since the US Navy renewed its modern expeditions in 1955 with headquarters in Christchurch.

The US Navy has been grad-

ually winding down operations for years, turning base support and supply over to the Colorado-based civilian contractors Antarctic Support Associates, and phasing in the Air National Guard for transport.

The US Navy's "Ice Pirates" flying circus of six Bell Huey helicopters, based on the edge of McMurdo Sound, had airlifted scientists and their cargo to remote stations in the field for decades.

Priding themselves as elite pilots in the world's most challenging flight conditions, the Ice Pirates flew the Jolly Roger skull-and-crossbones flag over their base, an oddity for any US military base.

They threaded their copters through shifting winds and downdrafts in the valleys of the Royal Society mountain range. set down on thin ice near the edge of the water or on the rim of the active volcanic crater of Mount Erebus, and could fly in whiteout conditions with zero visibility.

The Navy's VXE-6 flight de-

tachment also used six aging C-130 prop-jet Hercules transport planes as the workhorses of Antarctica. They brought in supplies and people, landing on either skis or wheels, depending on whether they set down on snow or an ice runway.

Now the Air National Guard will use more modern C-130s to bring in the goods, and the scientists and support staff. The naval influence lingers at the Antarctic bases.

"While the direct influence is diminished, much of the military spirit or way of doing things remains," a civilian McMurdo staffer told the AP by Internet e-mail, on condition of anonymity.

We still call the dining hall the galley, we deploy and re-deploy, we sometimes use a latrine. But the real influence is simply in the way people think and act. There is a rigid, structured, no-nonsense attitude about life down here that is strictly a military carry-over,"

Some lost military traditions are not mourned by most of today's staff. Women, once banned from Antarctica, are now actively recruited, and make up 30 to 40 per cent of the McMurdo population of up to

1,200 in summer. The hard-drinking habits of lonely men far from home have also tempered with the changeover to a civilian society with a strong feminine streak. A crossroads in McMurdo still called "Derelict Junction"

once boasted seven saloons, and

there were more bars elsewhere on the base and out at the air-Today, McMurdo has a "fern bar" style coffeehouse, where an Irish coffee is the strongest, drink offered. Of the two real bars still at McMurdo, one is for smokers and the other bans

Ever since Capt. James Cook crossed the Antarctic Circle in 1769 and saw that a continent must lay behind the ice that blocked his voyage farther south, polar exploration has

cigarettes.

been a specialty of the navy. Decades later, the fledgling US Navy sent its first expedition south in 1838, when Lt. Charles Wilkes left to explore some 1,200 miles (2,000 km) of the Antarctic Peninsula.

America then largely lost interest in Antarctica until the 20th century, when Navy aviator Richard E. Byrd, who claimed to have flown over the North Pole in 1926, went the other direction and claimed an overflight at the South Pole in

In 1946, Byrd led the massive US Navy "Operation Highjump," a cold-weather Cold War exercise to prepare the Arnerican military to fight the Soviet Union in polar conditions. Antarctica was chosen for the mission because war games in Alaska or Canada would have been too provocative.

Byrd invaded Antarctica with 4,700 men on 13 ships and 33 aircraft, pioneering the use of helicopters and icebreakers. It is still by far the biggest expedition ever sent to the conti-

His exploits from 1928 to 1957 made the United States the most active nation in Antarctica. Today, in summer, about half of the continent's entire population of about 3,000 are

Americans.

A bust of Byrd stands outside the chalet headquarters of the US National Science Foundation at McMurdo Station, aptly symbolising the reliance scientists had on the US Navy for decades.

Other naval influences are even more haunting, harking

back to the greatest tragedy Antarctica's age of adventure. On the edge of McMurdo is the "Discovery Hut," built by British Naval Capt Robert Falcon Scott in 1901 on his first Antarctic expedition.

Overlooking McMurdo from Observation hills is the wooden cross erected in 1912 after Scott and his four companions failed to return from their doomed trek to the South Pole.

to let Zardari ISLAMABAD, Feb 20: A Pak-

istani opposition leader demanded today that jailed senator Asif Ali Zardari, husband of former prime minister Beriazir Bhutto, be allowed to attend a coming session of parliament, reports AFP.

The demand was made by Aitzaz Ahsan, Leader of the Opposition in the senate in a letter

to the Chairman of the Upper House, Wasim Sajjad. Ahsan requested that the

chairman pass a specific order to the government to allow Zardari to attend a joint session of the senate and National Assembly (Lower House) here on Monday.

Zardari who has been in jail in Karachi since his arrest in November 1996, was recently brought to the senate to take the oath of office, which means he should be able to attend the parliamentary session, Ahsan said.