

# BRIEFLY



South African President Nelson Mandela, centre, receives an honorary doctorate from Dr B S Hetzel, right, Chancellor, and Prof D Bradley, left, Vice Chancellor of the University of South Australia at a ceremony at Port Hare University at Alice in the Eastern Cape Province Thursday. — AP/UNB photo

**12 die in road mishap in India:** At least 12 wedding guests died when their van collided with a truck in northern India, the Press Trust of India reported yesterday. AFP says from New Delhi.

Nine others were injured in the overnight collision in the state of Uttar Pradesh, it said, adding the victims were on their way to the wedding.

**3 hanged in Singapore:** Singapore hanged three men yesterday for drug trafficking, a prison official said. Reuters reports from Singapore.

The official did not give names or other details of the three Singapore nationals.

**117 Nigerians held in S Africa:** South African police have arrested 117 Nigerians for drug trafficking in a suburb of the commercial centre of Johannesburg. Southern African Broadcasting Association reported Thursday. Xinhua says from Johannesburg.

From January 1997 to March this year, the majority of drug dealers in Hillbrow, a crime-laden suburb of Johannesburg, have been Nigerians, according to Sharma Maharja, a police commissioner for Gauteng province.

**8 die in Chinese building collapse:** Eight people are now known to have died when a six-storey building collapsed in Changsha city in China's southern province of Hunan, the official Xinhua news agency said Thursday. AFP reports from Beijing.

Rescue workers have now dug out the last of the victims from the rubble left by Tuesday's accident, the report said. Most of the victims were female students from a technical school who worked as interns in a garment firm in the building. Xinhua said.

**Dengue fever outbreak in Thailand:** Thai health officials are warning of the worst outbreak of mosquito-borne dengue fever in 40 years due to the El Nino weather phenomenon and poor prevention, AP reports from Bangkok.

Public Health Minister Rakkait Sukthana was cited Friday in the Bangkok Post as saying that some 300,000 people could be affected.

**4 killed in Lagos blast:** An explosion killed four people in Nigeria's commercial capital of Lagos and wounded a number of others, witnesses said on Thursday. Reuters reports from Lagos.

Police said they were unable to say what caused Wednesday night's explosion at Evans Square. "It was at about a quarter to nine. The thing just blew up. There was a man there on a motorbike and he was just blown apart," said one witness. "We are sure it was a bomb. The police came here this morning and took away a second device that did not explode."

**Indonesian student activist held:** A student activist who was reported missing last month is being held in police detention and says he was abducted, a newspaper reported Friday. AP reports from Jakarta.

Andi Ariel was among a number of anti-government activists who disappeared after a wave of student demonstrations against President Suharto began earlier this year. This week, police told Andi's lawyers and family that he was being held at national police headquarters in Jakarta, said Munir, vice chairman of the Indonesian Legal Aid Foundation.

**Georgian uranium arrives in UK:**

A US military plane carrying enriched uranium from the former Soviet Republic of Georgia for reprocessing in Britain touched down at dawn yesterday at Kinloss RAF base in Scotland, witnesses said. AFP reports from Kinloss.

It was not immediately clear if the nuclear material would be transported directly to the reprocessing centre at Dounreay. Once treated, the 5-kg of material — including just less than one kg of waste fuel — will produce two drums of intermediate level nuclear waste. Despite a public outcry, the British government said it agreed to accept the enriched uranium to prevent it falling into rebel hands in Georgia.

**Pakistani aid for Iraq:** Pakistan has decided to send 4,000 tonnes of rice to Iraq on humanitarian grounds, officials said yesterday. AFP reports from Islamabad.

Arrangements are being made to ship the rice to the Arab country, the officials added.

**Fire kills 15,600 chickens in Japan:** A fire swept through two chicken houses in Japan, killing 15,600 birds, a report said today. AFP reports from Tokyo.

The blaze broke out Thursday evening in Kawasaki, northeastern Japan, said Kyodo News Service.

## 22 executed publicly for genocide in Rwanda

KIGALI, Apr 24: Firing squads in Rwanda publicly executed 22 people Friday, the first of those convicted in the central African country's 1994 genocide, reports AP.

Rwandan leaders dismissed last-minute pleas for clemency, including an appeal from Pope John Paul II.

Thousands of Rwandans among them survivors of the slaughter, gathered at a dirt soccer field in Kigali where three men and one woman wearing pink prisoners' uniforms were put to death. Another 18 convicts were executed in the outlying towns of Gikongoro, Nyamata, Murambi and Cyasamakamba, state-run Radio Rwanda reported.

In Kigali, they were tied to posts, black sacks draped over their heads and white bands marked with targets bound to their chests. Blue-uniformed police officers shot them one by one from a distance of less than a metre (yard).

After the first shots, the crowd fell silent. When all four were dead, their heads hanging limply, applause and cheers broke out. One man cried, "God is good."

"This is justice, but it's not

enough," said a witness who refused to give his name. "It would have been better to cut off their fingers one at a time, then to kill them slowly."

Cabo Ninoytegeka of the President's Office said the executions will teach people that they cannot kill without consequences.

"We are not sadists," he said. "But there is a legacy of political ruthlessness and now justice must be done."

The systematic slaughter of more than 500,000 people, mostly Tutsis, was orchestrated by a Hutu extremist government. It ended when Tutsi rebels took over in July 1994.

At least 330 people have been tried in Rwanda on charges relating to the genocide and 116 have been convicted and sentenced to death. One-third of those tried have been convicted and sentenced to life in prison. 20 were acquitted and the rest received sentences of varying lengths. More than 125,000 people are awaiting trial.

The United Nations is conducting its own trials in Arusha, Tanzania, but has yet to conclude a single case. The gravest penalty it can impose is life in prison.

# Israeli PM threatens to annex parts of West Bank

JERUSALEM, Apr 24: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu threatened on Thursday to annex parts of the West Bank if Palestinian President Yasser Arafat unilaterally declares an independent Palestinian state, reports Reuters.

"It would be a mistake twice over," Netanyahu said in an interview broadcast on Israeli Television.

His remarks drew a sharp response from a senior aide to Arafat, who has said he will declare statehood if the two sides fail to reach a final peace accord by May 1999.

"If they enter our territories, Israeli troops will not return safely," Tayeb Abdel-Rahim, the secretary general of the Palestinian presidency, was quoted as saying by Voice of Palestine radio.

It said Abdel-Rahim had told a passing-out ceremony for special security guards that an independent Palestinian state would be proclaimed in 1999 "no matter what."

"We have different ways to respond to a step like this, including to act unilaterally on lands under our authority," Netanyahu told Channel Two tele-

vision interviewers. Asked if he was threatening to annex parts of the West Bank which interim peace deals have left under Israel's security control, Netanyahu said:

"You know very well what my intention is if we act unilaterally... we don't want to reach this situation and we don't want to take unilateral steps. We want the opposite... to advance towards a final settlement."

Interim Israeli-Palestinian peace accords which granted Arafat control of the most of the Gaza Strip and parts of the West Bank set a May 4, 1999 deadline to resolve the final status of the areas Israel captured in the 1967 Middle East War.

The interim accords have been stalemated for more than a year over Jewish settlement expansion. Muslim militant suicide attacks and long-delayed Israel West Bank troop redeployments.

The United States, trying to advance a package deal to break the deadlock, has invited Netanyahu and Arafat to separate talks with Secretary of State Madeleine Albright in London

on May 4. Senior Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat called on the United States on Thursday to go public with its plan, which news reports say calls on Israel to cede another 13.1 per cent of

the West Bank in return for Palestinian steps on security. Israel calls the reported figure unacceptable.

"We really hope that at the May 4 meeting... we will see the introduction of the American ideas officially and publicly," Erekat told reporters after a weekly Cabinet meeting in Gaza.

Netanyahu called on the Palestinian Authority to talk to Israel directly.

"The impression is that Arafat is waiting for some American dictate on our heads, a threat beneath which our government is supposed to crumple," Netanyahu said. "As long as he does this, he isn't taking the required step of direct talks."

US Middle East Envoy Dennis Ross is due in the region at the weekend to prepare for the May 4 meeting.

Erekat said Arafat would

meet Ross on Sunday and US Vice President Al Gore the following Friday. Gore is due in Israel on April 30 for celebrations of Israel's 50th anniversary.

AP adds from Tel Aviv: The secretary-general of Amnesty International on Wednesday welcomed the recent release of several Palestinians held by Israel without trial, but said Israel has a long way to go in improving its human rights record.

Pierre Sane, in Israel for a three-day Amnesty coordination meeting, said that it was time for Israel to end sanctioned and torture of Israeli prisoners.

"Shaking prisoners — that is torture. Forcing them to sit on kindergarten chairs — that is torture. And torture is wrong, whatever the circumstances, even in the name of security or in the name of peace," said Sane.

The Israeli Supreme Court has upheld the right of Israel's security forces to use "moderate physical pressure" when interrogating suspected members of militant groups.

# Fresh infighting rocks Vajpayee govt

NEW DELHI, Apr 24: Acrimony within India's coalition government reached fever pitch today after ministers belonging to a regional party told the commerce minister to "either shut up or get out," reports Reuters.

Most national dailies ran cover stories on the infighting triggered by the Tamil Nadu state party, AIADMK a key partner in the five-week-old rainbow alliance, which has demanded the resignation of ministers facing corruption charges.

Earlier this week, the Hindu nationalist-led government dropped Communications Minister Buta Singh, and said it was looking into complaints against two other ministers.

Besides Singh, the All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) has targeted Commerce Minister Ramakrishna Hegde and Urban Development Minister Ram Jethmalani. All three deny any wrong doing.

The AIADMK, which is led by Jayalalitha Jayaram, lost a minister earlier this month after an anti-corruption court ordered him to stand trial.

Hegde said on Wednesday

that if the government was going to be held hostage to the demands of the AIADMK, which has just 18 seats in the 545-member Lower House of parliament, it would be better to hold another round of elections.

Three AIADMK ministers lashed out at his comment, branding them "uncalled for, unwarranted, unjustified and unethical".

"We feel that the prime minister should advise Hegde to either shut up or get out," the three said in a joint statement released the next day.

The wrangling has raised questions over the survival of the government led by the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) which pledged to restore political stability in its campaign for the spring elections.

"If this is what they call stability, kick boxing is lullaby," ran the headline in The Economic Times.

PTI adds from Calcutta: Trinamool Congress and BJP yesterday blamed each other for breaking their alliance even as the late sought the intervention of the party leader L K Advani to clear the 'misunderstanding' between the two allies.

Sticking to her decision to go alone in the next month's Panchayat polls in West Bengal, Trinamool Congress leader Mamata Banerjee said that it was too late for the intervention of Advani.

Alleging that state BJP leadership had demanded 50 per cent seats in the three-tier Panchayat, she said that they made unjustified demand which could not be accepted.

Banerjee, however, said that this has nothing to do with her party's support to Vajpayee government.

Putting the onus solely on the Trinamool leadership, state BJP president Tapan Sikdar denied that his party had ever demanded certain percentage of seats and charged that Trinamool was out to break the alliance to accommodate the Congressmen who were joining them.

Dubbing the Trinamool's stand as "motivated," the lone BJP MP from the state said that BJP would not break the alliance.

State BJP vice-president Mujaffar Khan in an urgent message sought immediate intervention of Advani and requested him to save their alliance.

## Belgium govt faces vote of no-confidence

BRUSSELS, Apr 24: The Belgian government faced calls Friday for its resignation after the escape of an infamous child-murder suspect, despite his recapture and the subsequent resignation of two key ministers, reports AP.

Opposition parties said the resignation of the justice and interior minister did not go far enough to calm public outrage over Marc Dutroux's three-hour break for freedom Thursday.

"We have to ask if they still have the moral authority to run the country and assure public safety," said conservative opposition leader Louis Michel. "Dehaene's government no longer has that authority."

Prime Minister Jean-Luc Dehaene's centre-left administration will face a no-confidence vote Tuesday in parliament. If it passes, the motion could topple the fragile coalition government widely criticised for its handling of the Dutroux affair.

## Ranariddh threatens boycott Cambodian polls may be delayed

PHNOM PENH, Apr 24: Cambodia's July 26 election may have to be delayed three weeks as there might not be enough time to complete preparations, a National Election Commission (NEC) official said today, reports Reuters.

The official said the NEC which is overseeing all aspects of the vote, was considering recommending a postponement until August 16.

"That's one idea being discussed," said the official, who declined to be identified.

"It's because of the time constraint, for technical reasons, we have 92 days to go but so much work to do," the official said.

He said the NEC was expected to reach a decision on the timing of the vote within the next few days and would then forward its recommendation to the Cabinet.

The election is seen as a key test for the country, which was plunged into political turmoil last July when Second Prime Minister Hun Sen ousted his

senior coalition government partner and co-premier Prince Norodom Ranariddh.

Hun Sen has said he wants to see the vote to ahead on schedule, as have the Association of South East Asian Nations and the friends of Cambodia group, which includes the United States and Japan.

AP adds: Prince Norodom Ranariddh ended a brief trip to his homeland Friday in which he threatened to boycott elections slated for July unless his archival, Hun Sen, allows the opposition to campaign freely.

Ranariddh, leader of the royalist FUNCINPEC Party, said before boarding a plane for his exile home in Bangkok that he was "really happy and really encouraged" by the health of his party. He arrived safely in the Thai capital.

Thursday, Ranariddh said that FUNCINPEC and other opposition parties would decide as early as next week if they should boycott the polls if they are not allowed to campaign freely.

## 200 NC members resign protesting appointment of 'corrupt' ministers

KATHMANDU, Apr 24: Some 200 committee members of Nepal's ruling party have quit in protest against the appointment of allegedly corrupt ministers to the government, a party source said today, reports AP.

The members of the 500-strong executive of the Nepal Congress (NC) resigned en masse after new Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala appointed the five ministers on Tuesday following his victory in a parliamentary vote of confidence.

The protesters said the ministers, who served in a previous administration, had become "a liability for the NC Party," according to the source.

One of the ministers appointed Tuesday had already resigned in the face of the protest, the source said, and the committee members were calling on Koirala to sack the rest to maintain a "clean image of the NC Party in governments".

The mass resignation followed a boycott of Parliament by 44 NC deputies in protest against Koirala's failure to give them jobs and over the appointment of the ministers, some of whom are facing graft charges.

## 11 killed in Indian train collision

HYDERABAD, Apr 24: Eleven persons were killed and 30 injured, 11 of them seriously, when some bogies of a Hyderabad-bound goods train collided with the 7663-Up Mammad — Kacheguda Express at the Parli Vajjanath Railway Station in Beed district of Maharashtra around midnight, reports PTI.

According to South Central Railway (SCR) sources, the mishap occurred when some bogies of a department material train containing ballast which left the railway station paired in the section between Parli and Ghatnandur and rolled back into the station resulting in the collision with the rear portion of the stationary express train.

## 3 killed in Karachi

KARACHI, Apr 24: Police on Friday found the tortured bodies of two men, who are believed to have belonged to a minority ethnic group, the authorities said, reports AP.

The bodies of Dilshad Khan and Asif Rashid were found in Karachi's troubled eastern district of Malli, where rival members of the Mohajir Qumi Movement routinely clash.

A third person was killed Friday when a gun fight broke out, also in the eastern district of Karachi, between rival factions of the Movement.

No one has claimed responsibility for any of Friday's killings but police said they believe it was linked to the bitter infighting within the movement.

## Martin Luther King's killer dies in jail

NASHVILLE, Tenn, Apr 24: James Earl Ray, the confessed assassin of Martin Luther King Jr and a key figure in the conspiracy speculation that haunted the crime for 30 years, died on Thursday, prison officials said, reports Reuters.

The 70-year-old Ray was pronounced dead at Memorial Hospital in Nashville, where he had been taken for treatment of end-stage liver disease, a condition that had left him near death a number of times since late 1996.

His death closed one of the last wounds on the April 4, 1968, assassination. But it did little to quiet the voices of those who believe Ray was part of a plot to silence King at a crucial time in the US civil rights battles of the 1960s.

# Serbs say 'no' to int'l mediation in Kosovo

BELGRADE, Apr 24: Serbian voters gave a massively 97 per cent "no" to international mediation in the Kosovo conflict in a referendum held Thursday. Electoral Commission Secretary Nebojsa Rodic said early today, reports AFP.

Rodic said that returns from 39 of the Yugoslav Republic's 189 districts indicated a turnout of 75 per cent, a 97 per cent "no" and a three per cent "yes."

He said the 39 districts were a representative sample enabling an accurate projection to be made.

The electorate had been widely expected to vote overwhelmingly against what Serbian officials brand foreign meddling in the Yugoslav Republic's affairs.

The 90 per cent Albanian population of Kosovo are demanding autonomy for the province, favouring full independence or the status of a separate republic alongside Serbia and Montenegro in the Yugoslav federation.

The vote came a day after the expiry of a four-week suspension of a decision by the six-nations Contact Group on the former Yugoslavia unless it launches meaningful negotia-

tions with the Kosovo Albanians.

Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Russia and the United States are to meet again in Rome on April 29 to examine the situation in Kosovo.

Belgrade has already been put under an arms embargo declared by the United Nations.

The referendum was boycotted by Kosovo's ethnic Albanians.

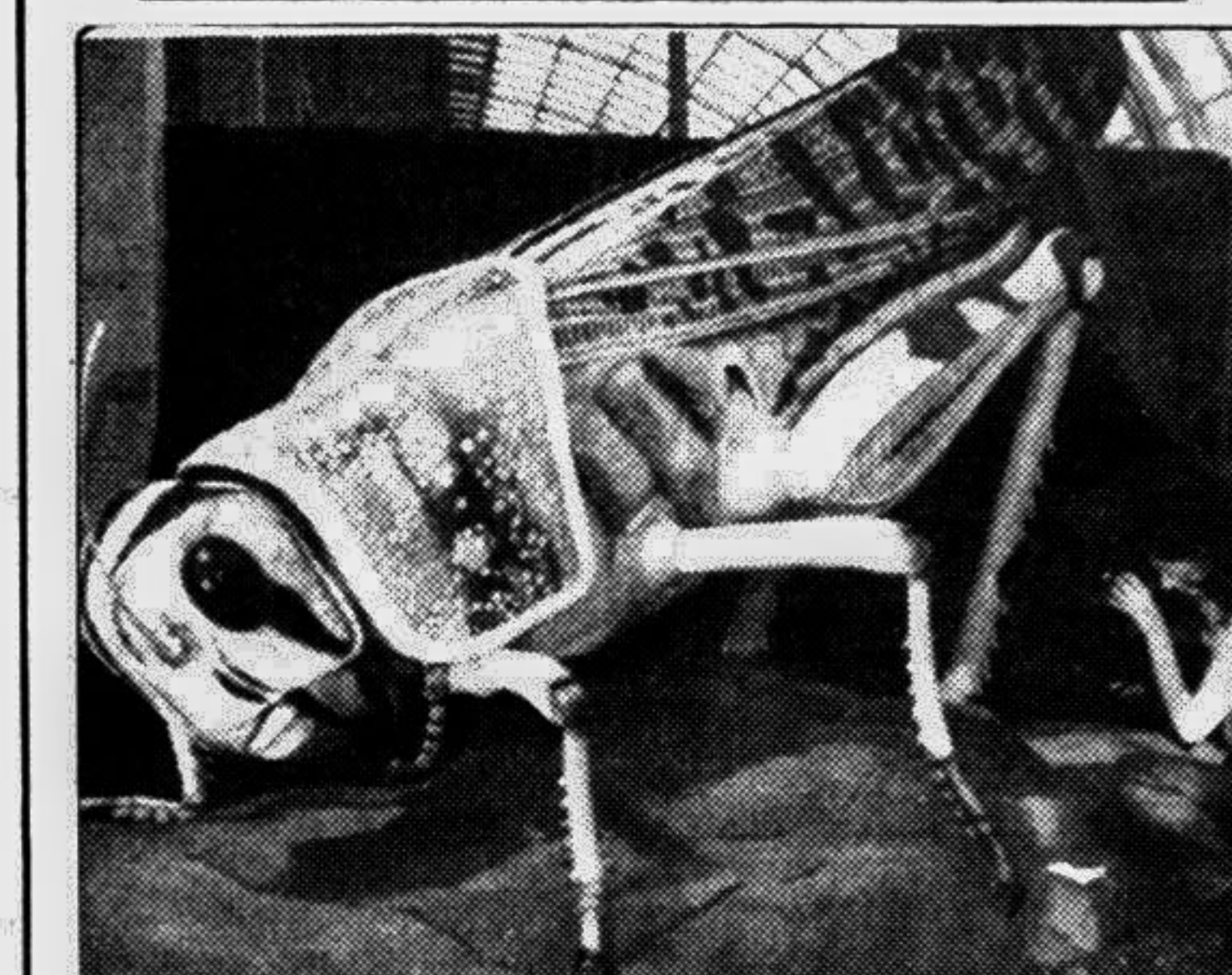
Meanwhile, at least 22 Kosovo Albanians were killed in clashes with Yugoslav Army Wednesday and Thursday as they attempted to infiltrate from Albania. Serb sources in Pristina said.

The sources, close to the army, said the final toll was expected to be higher. The action was continuing. One ethnic Albanian was injured and two were detained, they added.

The Yugoslav Army earlier said it had prevented "terrorist intrusions" in Kosovo province from neighbouring Albania.

According to an army statement quoted by the agency, the army prevented a "group of 200 armed terrorists from Albania" from entering Yugoslav territory early Thursday.

# Off the Record



A camerawoman films an oversized model of a locust at a hall of the Palmengarten Park in Frankfurt, Germany, Thursday. The computer-animated insect is part of an exhibition called "Insects — The secret rules." — AP/UNB photo

## 55-yr-old gives birth to quadruplets

SAN DIEGO: A 55-year-old woman who became pregnant by test-tube fertilisation has given birth to quadruplets, making her possibly the oldest known person in the United States to deliver four babies at once, reports AP.

The three girls and one boy remained in intensive care Thursday at Mary Birch Hospital for Women. One was in critical condition.

At the woman's request, the hospital refused to release her name. She gave birth on Saturday, the babies were two months premature and were delivered by Cesarean section. Their weights were not disclosed.

## CIA's latest targets

WASHINGTON: The US Central Intelligence Agency has unveiled a World Wide Web site aimed at introducing the spy game to the kindergarten set, reports Reuters.

The CIA's "home page for kids" at www.odci.gov/cia/clkids, features geography quizzes, interactive disguise games, and thumbnail sketches of cloak-and-dagger figures dating back to the Revolutionary War against Britain.

It also showcases "who we are and what we do," a very basic primer on intelligence-gathering and analysis.

"What we're really trying to do is encourage kids to use computers, explore geography and give them an understanding of what the CIA does," said Anya Gulsheer, an agency spokeswoman.

## Dry spell boosts bird population

KUALA LUMPUR: The prolonged dry spell in Malaysia has "sexually aroused" birds at the Penang Bird Park, which are mating more frequently and laying more eggs than usual, a report said today, reports AFP.

"Normally, they lay up to 12 eggs per season from November till March and rest for a few weeks before the next mating season," the park's managing director Gina Ool was quoted as saying in The Star Daily.

"But now, it seems they keep on producing and do not show any sign of resting," Ool said, citing one female pheasant which laid 40 eggs in the past two months, more than triple its usual 12 eggs per season.

Ool described the dry season as a "blessing in disguise" as 75 newbirds, mainly pigeons and pheasants, have been added to the park in the period.

# Rally against peace deal in Belfast

BELFAST, Apr 24: The official campaign for a 'no' vote in next month's referendum on the Northern Ireland peace deal has started with a rally by more than 1,000 people, reports AP.

The campaign, headed by Ian Paisley, the Protestant leader of the pro-British Democratic Unionist Party who boycotted the peace negotiations, kicked off Thursday night under the banner "Have a Heart for the Union."

Union Jack hearts were being sold in a bid to raise money to raise 100,000 pounds (165,000 dollars) to finance the campaign.

On Wednesday, lawmakers in Britain and Ireland approved legislation to authorize a May 22 referendum on the peace agreement. They also approved a constitutional amendment to renounce Ireland's claim on the British-ruled territory of Northern Ireland.

If the referendum passes, voters would elect Catholic and Protestant representatives to a new 108-seat Northern Ireland Assembly on June 25. The assembly's leaders would be required to pursue joint policy-making with the Irish Republic. Advocates of the agreement

are aiming for at least 70 per cent approval to give the new provisions solid backing.

Three members of Parliament from the Ulster Unionist Party broke ranks with their party leader, David Trimble, who strongly backs the peace agreement, to stand shoulder to shoulder with the protesters.

William Ross, Roy Beggs and William Thompson were given a rapturous welcome as they each lambasted the agreement reached earlier this month by eight political parties.

Together with Paisley, his deputy Peter Robinson and UK Unionist leader Robert McCartney, they make up one-third of Northern Ireland's 18 representatives to the British Parliament.

The split in the Ulster Unionist ranks could cause Trimble concern when he campaigns for a 'yes' vote because more of his party's members of Parliament will be against him than with him.

Beggs told the crowd that although there were only three Ulster Unionist politicians at the rally, three others were committed to defeating the agreement. He did not name them.



Dolly, the first-ever mammal to be successfully cloned from an adult cell, with her first lamb, named "Bonnie," at the Roslin Institute in Edinburgh, Scotland on Thursday. Dolly, who was naturally mated at the end of last year with a Welsh Mountain ram, gave birth to Bonnie early on Monday. — AP/UNB photo

# Int'l Space Station may take longer to launch

WASHINGTON, Apr 24: Technical complexity and Russia's failure to meet its pledges could delay by up to three years the International Space Station, an independent advisory board concludes, reports AP.

The board, in a report released Thursday, also said the US share of the project would climb to about 24.7 billion dollars.

## Kidnappers release Red Cross hostages in Somalia

MOGADISHU, Apr 24: Eight Red Cross workers and two pilots held hostage for 10 days in Somalia were freed Friday, despite last-minute bickering among their kidnappers, reports AP.

The nine men and one woman were hustled into a jeep at 0520 GMT and driven at high speed to a Red Cross hospital in northern Mogadishu, where they hugged each other in jubilation.

The captives included a naturalized American Somali, two Swiss, a Norwegian, a German, a Belgian, a French nurse and a Somali. The pilots are Kenyan and South African.

# Int'l Space Station may take longer to launch

The board, appointed by NASA, said the space station programme complexity, size and ambition could not be achieved within the 17.4 billion dollar cap put on the project by President Bill Clinton in 1993.

The report also found that the National Aeronautics and Space Administration was basing its cost estimates on an assumption of success and failed to take into account "critical risk elements" that could boost costs.

Plans had called for the first part of the station to be launched later this year, but that is expected to be delayed, perhaps into 1999. The board said assembly in orbit of the station will take one to three years longer than the five and half years originally estimated by NASA.

Hardware for the International Space Station is being built by 16 nations on four continents. The principal partners are the United States, Russia, Japan, Canada and the European Space Agency.

Russia was supposed to build and launch some key hardware for the station, but that effort has fallen behind, largely due to the Russian government failing to provide the needed funds.