bomb attack

GAZA CITY, Jan 2: The Israeli army closed the international Palestinian airport in the Gaza strip Monday night, following a bomb attack in the Israeli coastal town of Netanya, north of Tel Aviv, which left 20 people injured, one seriously, a Palestinian offi-

cial said, reports AFP. Palestinian officials had been informed of the decision, the source added without giving any

further details. The international Yasser Arafat airport, in the Gaza Strip, is the only one to which the Palestinians have access.

Israeli public television said Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak had also decided to close the Rafah border crossings between the Gaza Strip and the Allenby bridge between the West Bank and Jordan.

The Israeli army also blocked Karni, the crossing point for transporting goods between Gaza and Israel, the television added.

Israeli soldiers kill Palestinian farmer

GAZA CITY, Jan 2: Deadly violence continued in the Palestinian territories today where Israeli soldiers shot dead an Arab farmer after explosions at two Jewish settlements in the Gaza Strip, reports AFP.

Palestinian farmer Sabri Awad Khudr, 52, who was working his land near the Dugit settlement in the northern Gaza Strip died after he was shot by Israeli soldiers. hospital officials said.

Witnesses said the soldiers opened fire in the direction of the farmers after an early morning explosion at Dugit.

An Israeli army spokesman said an Israeli soldier was lightly injured by the blast.

Witnesses said Israeli soldiers caused other injuries with their gunsire.

Khudr's death brought to 367 the number of people who have been killed since the intifada, or uprising against Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories. started September 28.

General strike cripples Nepal for second day

KATHMANDU, Jan 2: Business activity in Nepal was severely curtailed today by a general strike called by nine leftist parties to protest against the killing of five people by security forces last week, reports DPA.

The group has called for a twoday general strike for Monday and Tuesday despite calls by press, other political parties and the business community not to

Unlike on Monday, there were a few cars and buses on the streets of the capital Tuesday but by and large, the general strike appeared to be holding.

Schools, colleges and shops were closed. Most workers had to walk to their jobs at government offices which were still open.

A government spokesman said the general strike on Monday was generally peaceful and that no major incidents took place. The nine left parties called for

the two-day general strike in protest against the killing last week of five persons during protest demonstrations against alleged anti-Nepal remarks by an Indian actor. The actor has since denied that

he ever made the remarks attributed to him, but a statement by India senior political leader Bharatiya Janata Party's K.R. Malkani, who said Nepal should have been merged with India in early 1951, has created new furor in Nepal.

According to Nepalese newspapers today, Malkani has apologised for making the remark and the Indian government and the Bharatiya Janata Party had on Sunday promptly distanced themselves from Malkani's remarks.

Palestinian airport Closed after Taiwan, China launch first direct links in five decades

today launched the first direct links since the Communists won the civil war 50 years ago, when three Taiwanese ferries crossed the narrow Straits separating the bitter rivals, reports AFP.

Two boats, "Tai Wu" and "Wu Chiang." carrying a total of 192 passengers, made the short two-hour voyage from Taiwan's fortified outlying Kinmen Island to China's booming southern port of Xiamen.

A third boat, "Talma", sailing from the Taiwan-controlled island of Matsu with 500 followers of a Taoist sea goddess on board, arrived in Mawei Island, down river from Fuzhou, the capital of Fujian province.

The voyage is crucial as it is the first direct sailing from Kinmen to Xiamen after 51 years of separation," Kinmen county magistrate Chen Shui-tsai told AFP by telephone from the Tai Wu.

"Hopefully the contact will lead to the restoration of rapprochement talks" between Taiwan and China, he said.

As he landed in Xiamen's Heping quay, he predicted: "Xiamen and Kinmen face a great economic future together.'

Chen, the highest-level Taiwan official on board, is expected to stay in mainland China dent) Chen Shui-bian, they have placed the sunshine.

XIAMEN, China, Jan 2: Taiwan and China for three nights and visit several cities in 'One China' principle before the three links."

direct links between China and Taiwan since the nationalist island split from the communist mainland in 1949 after a drawn-out and bloody civil war.

sovereignty over Taiwan, threatening to invade should it move towards formal independence.

"Mini-links" in three areas -- direct transport, trade and postal services -- between the two islands and the cities of Fuzhou and Xiamen were approved by Taiwan's governbroader relations later this year.

But China has criticised the "mini-links" for not going far enough, saying it prefers fullblown links between Taiwan and the main-

establish direct links and now with the minilinks you would think that they would be happy," Jean Pierre Cabestan, of the French Center for Research on Contemporary China. told AFP.

"But since the election of (Taiwan Presi-

On the one hand Beijing wants direct links The arrivals signalled the start of the first with Taiwan but they do not want to appear to be giving in to Chen's overtures which could lead to a deviation from their principled

stance on Taiwan, he said. He predicted however, that further links The government in Beijing still claims could be established by the end of the year. Members of the Taiwan delegation also said the mini-links were a step in the right direc-

tion for both sides. "I think if we carry on frequent exchanges, (complete links) could become a reality soon," said Chen En-tsu, a member of the Kinmen county council, who was part of the delegament last month and could develop into tion. "I have a lot of confidence in this, because it's an unavoidable trend.'

Chen Shui-tsai, the Kinmen county commissioner, also said he expected intensified exchanges in the future.

'The three small links are just the first step, "For years China has begged Taiwan to going forward we will bring about complete links," he said according to the local reporter.

The two vessels were greeted by a crowd of up to 300 people, and women from the Kinmen Island Friendship Association carrying two large bouquets of flowers, as they approached shortly before noon in sparkling



A group of Chinese display a banner to welcome Taiwanese officials from Kinmen county who are arriving by boat in the ancient port city of Xiamen, in eastern China's Fujian province yesterday. Three ferries made the first officially sanctioned crossing from Taiwan, opening unprecedented direct link between the two countries. -- AFP photo

Cambodia parliament okays Khmer Rouge trial law

PHNOM PENH, Jan 2: Cambodia's national assembly today unanimously approved a longawaited draft law for a genocide tribunal to try the leaders of the brutal 1970s Khmer Rouge "killing

fields' regime, reports AFP. Under the law, foreign and local judges and prosecutors will try the leaders of the ultra-Maoist regime

blamed for the deaths of up to 1.7 million people. "I would like to express my profound thanks to the national assembly for your clear understanding of the Khmer Rouge trial law to set up the tribunal,' State minister Sok An, head of the government taskforce on the proposed tribunal, told the assem-

The draft law was passed by all 92 lawmakers present from the 122-member lower house after only two sessions.

The parliament goes into recess on January 15 and Prime Minister Hun Sen had said he wanted the legislation passed well before then.

It was supported by Prince Norodom Ranariddh's FUNCINPEC, the junior partner in the ruling coalition, and the opposition Sam Rainsy Party.

Both parties pledged not to amend the draft law and delay what some hope -- and others fear -- could be an emotional national catharsis.

It will now be sent for approval in the upper house Senate and then signed into law by King Norodom

"After the king ratifies the bill I will meet with (UN official) Hans Correll again to prepare the article of cooperation ... and then it will be put into practice." Sok An later told reporters.

"We will try to set up the Khmer Rouge tribunal as soon as possible. I hope this will not take long," he

The Khmer Rouge tried to turn Cambodia into an agrarian utopia during its ruthless 1975-79 rule, but none of its leaders have been brought to trial.

"Today is a victorious day for all Cambodian people and the country to have a law to try the genocidal Khmer Rouge leaders," said Heng Samrin, first vicechairman of the national assembly, who presided

"Once we have this law, Cambodia will have peace and stability." Heng Samrin said. "It will fulfil all Cambodians and people of the world who do not want any more genocidal regimes.

The United Nations and United States had pressured the government to speed up the trial for one of this century's worst atrocities.



Several floats make their way down during the 112th Annual Tournament of Roses Parade on Monday in Pasadena, CA. Over one million spectators attended the annual New Year's Day event, which is broadcast on television to over 100 countries worldwide.

N Korean leader to visit Seoul this year

SEOUL, Jan 2: South Korea's President Kim Dae-Jung and North Korean supreme leader Kim Jong-Il will meet in Seoul this year, a top minister said today ending doubts that the head of the communist North would travel to the South's capital, reports AFP.

said he expects his North Korean counterpart to visit South Korea sometime in the spring, the exact venue has never been given.

Speculation had been rampant that the two Kims would hold their second summit on the South's resort island of Cheju for the safety of the North Korean leader, who has rarely travelled

But in a New Year speech to ministry officials. Unification Although Kim Dae-Jung has Minister Park Jae-Kyu, the South's chief North Korea policy maker, said: 'We should perfectly prepare the summit to be held in Seoul this year.'

of damage or casualty.

reports from Berlin.

ing as "a historic step."

Colombo.

He put a high priority on preparing the follow-up to last June's historic summit between the two Kims, the first between leaders of the rival states.

Bringing a new thaw to the Korean peninsula, the summit led to a series of rapprochement talks between the rivals.

Park said it should be the "most important task" of the New Year to consolidate improvements in relations.

Quake shakes Indonesia: A strong

earthquake measuring 6.3 on the Richter scale shook North

Sulawesi and the northeastern islands in the Malukus yesterday,

The quake, which struck at 1.57 pm (0657 GMT), was centered

100 kilometres (62 miles) under the seafloor of Sea of Sulawesi some

627 kilometres (389 miles) north of the port city of Bitung on the

northern tip of Sulawesi island, a staff of the meteorology and geo-

physics headquarters said. He said there was no immediate report

Three Afghans shot dead: Three asy-

lum seekers from Afghanistan were shot dead in their Berlin apart

ment by two unknown assailants, police said on Monday. Reuters

The men rang the doorbell and forced their way in on New Year's

Eve. They opened fire, killing a 32-year-old woman and two men

Five other people in the apartment at the time, her four children and

another woman, were unhurt but taken to hospital and treated for

Lankan army launches web site:

The military, apparently worried about the rebel media publicity,

has launched a Web site to provide information on the 17-year-old

civil war, the defense ministry said Tuesday, AP reports from

But within hours of its launch on Monday, the Web site became

almost inaccessible. An army spokesman said it may have been

overcrowded by those trying to reach it. However, the military was

checking whether the rebels have electronically sabotaged the site:

www.slarmy.org. Claiming to be one of the most combat-

experienced armies in the world, the military described the launch-

the meteorology office here said, AFP reports from Jakarta.

House of Suharto's son seized

JAKARTA, Jan 2: Indonesian prosecutors on Tuesday seized another house belonging to the fugitive son of former president Suharto to be used as a guarantee for the payment of court fines, reports AFP.

Six prosecutors, led by head of the intelligence section of the prosecutor's office A. Zainuri, confiscated the house next to the elder Suharto's residence in the well-heeled residential quarter of Menteng in Central Jakarta.

"We are confiscating this house, but we are leaving it in the care of the owner or the inhabitant for maintenance so that they can still stay there, but we have the right to come there anytime,' Zainuri said.

It was the fourth property owned by Hutomo 'Tommy' Mandala Putra to be confiscated by authorities as collateral for a 30 billion rupiah (3.23 million dollar) fine ordered by the Supreme Court in September.

Tommy's lawyer Elsa Syarif, present at the confiscation, called on the authorities to be transparent about the value of the assets seized.

'The South Jakarta district court should be open about the value of the assets owned by Tommy which have been confiscated, because a lot of assets have been confiscated already.' Syarif said.

Tommy, a 38-year-old millionaire businessman was declared a fugitive on November 3 after failing to surrender to authorities to serve an 18-month jail term for corruption.

Aceh peace talks to restart next week

JAKARTA, Jan 2: Indonesia said Tuesday it would restart peace talks with separatist leaders in violence-hit Aceh next week, raising hopes that a fragile cease-fire might be extended and a threatened military crackdown averted, reports AP. Wimar Witoelar, a spokesman

for President Abdurrahman Wahid, said government negotiations would meet representatives of the Free Aceh Movement in Geneva, Switzerland, on Jan 8, a week before the truce is due to

The talks had been slated for last month, but were canceled due to a dramatic upsurge in violence in the region, on the northern tip of Sumatra island.

Army generals and some hardline Cabinet minister have warned that the military would clamp down on rebels forces if the cease-fire is not extended.

The truce was first imposed in June last year but has proved to be little more than symbolic. At least 900 people including 130 soldiers and police were killed last year.

Poverty rising in Pakistan

KARACHI, Jan 2: Poverty is rising in Pakistan in the absence of an effective poverty alleviation programmes, a report just unveiled said, reports AP.

Poverty is projected to rise more speedily because of the International Monetary Fund's sever conditionalities and belt tightening as a result of the austerity programme which is part of \$596 million loan approved only four weeks back.

The annual review for the year 2000 of "Social Development in Pakistan Towards Poverty Reduction", by the Social Policy & Development Centre, Karachi, besides analyzing the grave phenomenon of poverty also goes through, the effects of implementing the conditionalities of the IMF for "improvement" of Pakistan's economy, that is part of the \$596 million loan.

The conditionalities and programme prescribed by the IMF will stifle the process of economic revival and exacerbate the problem of poverty," the SPDC report warns.

The number of the poor in the country will go up from the present 46 million to 60 million in the next few years. The number of poor during the last decade rose from 20 million to 46 million in Pakistan.

Kashmiri militants to continue war despite political talks

ISLAMABAD, Jan 2: Militants battling Indian India to travel to Pakistan will be a show of New soldiers in disputed Kashmir warned Tuesday that their secessionist war will continue despite political talks planned for later this month, reports AP.

warriors) will show any flexibility toward Indian ment," he said. forces," Farooq Kashmiri, chief of the militant Harkat-ul Mujahedeen told The Associated Press in a telephone interview.

army nor will we allow New Delhi to use meaningless talks as a delaying tactic. Our struggle will continue until Kashmir is liberated," he said.

Hurriyat Conference (APHC) an alliance of 23 Kashmiri secessionist groups visit Pakistan later this month for talks aimed at bringing peace to the troubled Kashmir region. The Kashmiris are expected to meet representa-

tives of Pakistan's military government as well as militant groups headquartered here.

India accuses Pakistan of arming and training rebels, a charge denied by Islamabad, which says its support is limited to political and moral aid.

visit of Kashmiri political leaders was a good begin-

ning. He said the numbers of Kashmiris allowed by

Delhi's sincerity toward the peace process.

"India should allow all leaders to come here. If they don't do this, it would show that India is insin-'There is no question that the Mujahedeen (holy cere and wants to divide Kashmir's liberation move-

Both India and Pakistan have taken steps in recent weeks to reduce tensions in Kashmir the flashpoint of two previous wars between the South "We won't reduce our attacks against the Indian Asian neighbours, both of whom now possess nuclear weapons.

India launched the peace process last month with a unilateral cease-fire offer to militants on its terri-India has agreed to let leaders of the All Parties tory. Pakistan reciprocated with a truce offer along the disputed border. India has since extended its ceasefire and Pakistan has begun withdrawing troops from the border.

> Saleem Hashmi, a spokesman for Hezb-ul Mujahedeen, one of the largest Kashmir militant groups, said he wants more information about the nature of the talks to be held in Pakistan.

He said the All Parties Hurriyat Conference members can not mediate between India and Pakistan.

Hezb-ul Mujahedeen wants three-way talks that Despite his skepticism, Farooq Kashmiri said the include Pakistan, India and Kashmiris. The group also wants India to reduce its troop strength and release militants in jail in India.

Corruption trial for Estrada resumes amid tension used to hide illegally-acquired with police stepping up their int

MANILA, Jan 2: Philippine President Joseph Estrada's landmark corruption trial resumed today amid fresh tension following a series of deadly weekend up. bombings that rocked Manila and sent local markets reeling, reports AFP.

The hearing continued with prosecutors wrapping up questioning of a senior bank executive whose devastating evidence had gripped the trial before it halted for Christmas. Equitable PCI Bank senior

vice-president Clarissa Ocampo had told the Senate tribunal she saw Estrada repeatedly sign documents to a 500 million peso (9.6 million dollar) trust account under a false name. Estrada's lawyers however refused Tuesday to cross-

examine Ocampo, whose testimony they claimed was immaterial to corruption and other charges faced by the president. Prosecutors contend that the money in the trust account was

wealth, including millions from a for those behind the successive protection racket against illegal bomb attacks that left 15 people gambling Estrada supposedly set They also submitted officially-

certified copies of Estrada's statements of assets and liabilities police amid intelligence reports which showed that president's declared wealth could not support funds of the amount deposited in the account. However Supreme Court Chief

Justice Hilario Davide, the presiding officer of the court, upheld on Tuesday his ruling that prosecutors had nonetheless to prove the money in the trust account was acquired illegally. The president has been

impeached by the House of Representatives on charges of bribery, corruption, betrayal of public trust and culpable violation of the constitution. If convicted by the Senate, Estrada would automatically be removed from office. Security forces in Manila con-

dead and nearly 100 wounded on A 200-strong contingent of soldiers were brought in to help

terror groups could strike anew. But as public offices resumed work after the long holiday break. police were merely sent on a wild

goose chase across Manila following rumours of more bombings. In one incident, ordnance experts rushed to northern Manila after a suspicious looking box was discovered on a bus.

range only to find it filled with noodles and eggs. The security concerns sent the peso to an all-time low of 52.00 to the dollar in mid-morning trade while the benchmark share index of the Philippine Stock Exchange

Time allowed for

completion of the work

60 (sixty) days.

Police took the box to a firing

lost 3.1 percent to close at tinued to be on heightened alert, 1,448.49.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh Office of the Executive Engineer,

PWD Division, Sirajganj

Notice Inviting Tender

Tender Notice No 18 (EM) of 2000-2001

Sealed tenders in BD form No 2911 are hereby invited from enlisted contractor's of PWD as noted below as per financial limit for the undermentioned work and will be received by the undersigned as well as by the Executive Engineer, PWD Division, Bogra, Joypurhat in their respective offices up to 12:00 Noon on 16-01-2001Eng, and will be opened on the same day at 12-30 PM in presence of the tenderer who may like to remain present. Each tender shall be in a separate sealed cover with the name of work superscribed on it.

Estimated | Earnest Name of work Class of contractor entitled to submit tender amount money Construction of B-5 Enlisted special type fire station at 2,84,876/ class/combined Kazipur, Sirajganj. 50 class/1st class (EM) (Sub-head: Providing contractor of PWD/ 2nd internal electrification class (E/M) contractor of and fitting fixture in c PWD Zone, Rajshahi water pump motors) have valid ABC/BC/ contractory and supervisory licence

Contract documents consisting BD form No 2911, schedule of items of additional terms and conditions etc can be seen and obtained from the office of the undersigned and Executive Engineer, PWD Divn Bogra/Joypurhat and Sub-Divnl Engineer, PWD Sub-Divn, Sirajganj, Ullapara/E/M on payment of usual charges. The tender form may be purchased by the contractor himself or his representative duly authorised by the contractor along with the original registration book on any day during office hours up to 15.01.2001 Eng. No tender form will be sold after

office hours of 15.01.2001 Eng. The tender must enclosed the original money receipt in support of purchasing tender documents, photocopy of original registration book and "VAT" registration certificate and Tax-payers Identification Number certificate (Attested by 1st class Gazetted Officer of this Department) must be submitted along with the tender, otherwise the tender will be summarily rejected.

Tender will be received on next working day if the receiving date of tender is declared to be govt holiday/closure of bank under unavoidable circumstances, the time of tender receiving and opening will remain unchanged. If more than one contractor stood lowest quoting same rate, then the lottery for the same will be

held on 24.01.2001 at 11-00 AM in the office of the undersigned in presence of tenderer if any.

The authority reserves the right to accept or reject any or all tenders without assigning any

Md Imdadul Haque Executive Engineer,

G-70

DFP-31349-21/12

reason.

PWD Divn, Sirajganj Phone No 72501

earnest money will be summarily rejected. Authority reserves the right to accept or reject any or all tenders without assigning any reason thereof.

G-19

Tender documents may be purchased from Accounts Section of TIDC, Nayarhat, Savar, Dhaka, on cash payment of Tk. 250/- (nonrefundable) per set up to 11.1.2001 in all working days during office hours. Tenders will be received in the tender boxes kept at Ministry of Textiles, Room No. 1114, Building No. 6, Bangladesh Secretariat, Dhaka and in Administrative Section of TIDC upto 10-00 AM of 12.1.2001 and will be opened on the same day at 10-30 AM in

Tender Inviting Offer From

Consulting Firms

Officer, NITTRAD, Nayarhat, Savar, Dhaka, from the interested

reputed firms for structural design, drawing & cost estimation of

proposed Laboratory building & Blow room (including warping &

sizing) building of National Institute of Textile Training Research &

Design (NITTRAD) at Nayarhat, Savar, Dhaka.

Sealed tenders are hereby invited by the Project Implementation

presence of the bidders (if any) Tk 10,000/- (Tk Ten thousand) must be submitted with the tender schedule as earnest money in the form of Bank Draft/PO in favour of NITTRAD, from any schedule bank of Bangladesh. Tender without

Dr. Md. Ismail Chowdhury DFP-31397-26/12 Project Implementation Officer NITTRAD, Nayarhat, Savar, Dhaka.