

BRIEFLY

OIC urges Iraq to avert war: The Secretary General of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) Hamid Algabdi Monday in Jeddah urged Iraq to prevent a devastating war in the name of Islam and future generations, reports AFP.

Mr. Algabdi also said he was willing to mediate a solution to differences between Iraq and Kuwait, including a border dispute that preceded Iraq's invasion of the Emirate.

Iraqi President Saddam Hussein should "act quickly to prevent the outbreak of a war in the Gulf which would have incalculable consequences and should order without delay the total and unconditional withdrawal of Iraqi troops from Kuwait, Mr. Algabdi said.

"This is a duty to be undertaken in the name of Islam for our people, the future generations and humanity," he said.

Antiwar protest in Germany:

About 500 German students staged an anti-war protest in front of U.S. Army headquarters in Berlin on Monday, the third straight day of demonstrations over the Gulf conflict, reports AP.

Further protests were scheduled later in the day in Bonn, after a weekend that brought hundreds of thousands to the streets throughout Europe.

"War cannot be the answer," said one banner held aloft in freezing temperatures in Berlin.

Most of the protesters came from nearby high schools. Some of the students climbed up the huge metal gate in front of the American compound, called the Gen. Lucius D. Clay headquarters in former West Berlin. The compound is named after the US general who organised the Berlin airlift and kept West Berlin from starving during the 1948-49 Soviet blockade.

Britons pray for peace:

Churches in Britain, which has the second largest force in the Gulf, opened their doors on Monday for two days of prayers for peace, reports AP.

Leaders of the state Church of England joined with Roman Catholics, Methodists and others in appealing to their followers to participate. Some Muslims said they would take part as well.

Britain has some 34,000 military personnel in the Gulf, the largest Western contingent after the United States.

The British government on Sunday expelled 28 members of the Iraqi embassy in London, saying the current state of Anglo-Iraqi relations did not justify such a large staff.

Britain's ambassador to Iraq, Harold Walker, arrived home Friday after receiving an order from London to leave but the Foreign Office stressed that relations with Iraq have not been broken off.

Pro-Saddam rally in Delhi:

Hundreds of Arab students and Indians, some chanting "Long live Saddam", demonstrated in New Delhi Monday against the U.S. threat to use force against Iraq, reports Reuters.

Brandishing posters of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein and Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, the Arab protesters marched to the U.S. embassy and the British High Commission.

"We are here to protest against the hostilities intended to be launched against Iraq and the Arab world," a leader of the National Union of Iraqi Students and Youth said adding "We are fully in support of Saddam Hussein's actions."

The Arab community in India opposed U.S. President George Bush's decision to force Saddam to comply with the United Nations' demand that Iraq withdraw from Kuwait, said the student leader, who declined to be named.

More Albanians seek asylum:

More Albanians poured into neighbouring Greece over the weekend despite Greek appeals that they remain home and an Albanian promise not to punish any who return, reports AP.

A spokeswoman for northwestern Ioannina province Athens said Monday that 900 Albanians crossed the border on Saturday and 641 on Sunday.

More than 6,500 Albanians, mostly ethnic Greeks, have fled their Communist country since Albania relaxed controls on its mountainous border last month.

Fewer had crossed during the last week, but police said rumors the border would close again led to the weekend rush.

Greece says at least 350,000 members of Albania's population of 3.3 million are ethnic Greeks, and has appealed to them to stay at home.

Pak N-plant underway:

The Chairman of Pakistan's Atomic Energy Commission, Munir Ahmed Khan, said in Islamabad late Sunday that he expected 1991 to be a "significant year" for the country's nuclear programme, reports AFP.

Speaking on state television, Mr. Khan said negotiations were under way with China and France over the installation of 300 and 900 megawatt nuclear plants respectively and added that this year would be "significant" for the overall nuclear programme.

Pakistani scientists are capable of designing the plants, he said, but constructing them would require large-scale investment which could only be obtained through cooperation between the public and private sectors.

Rebels kill 8 in Bogota:

Leftist rebels continued a major offensive against the Colombian government, killing seven security agents and bombing the country's main oil pipeline, officials said Monday, reports AP.

Guerillas from Colombia's two biggest guerilla groups ambushed police patrols, blew up buses and fatally shot at least five policemen and two soldiers over the past 24 hours, police and army reports said.

The guerillas are retreating for the army's capture in early December of a rebel command post in the southern Colombian jungle. Rebels of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, or FARC, say they are trying to force the army to withdraw from their headquarters.

Since the first of this year, at least 47 police and soldiers as well as 52 guerillas have died in clashes, officials said.

NATO slates Soviet action:

NATO said Monday a continued crackdown in the Baltic republics would damage East-West relations and called on Moscow to negotiate with the rebel republics, reports Reuters.

A strongly worded statement from Brussels, issued after a crisis meeting of ambassadors from the 16 allied Nations, condemned the use of force in Lithuania and said: "The continuation of these alarming developments, in particular the use of force, would have negative consequences for the political situation in Europe as a whole and on (allied) relations with the Soviet Union."

Gorbachev nominates PM:

President Gorbachev Monday nominated Finance Minister Valentin Pavlov, 53, for Prime Minister, reports Tass.

Speaking in Soviet Parliament, he also suggested four Deputy Prime Ministers.

The candidates are Vitaly Dognuzhiyev, 55-year-old chief of the government Commission on Emergencies, who was a Deputy Premier in the outgoing Council of Ministers, 53-year-old minister of heavy machine-building Vladimir Veltchikov, State Planning Committee Chairman Yuri Maslyukov, 53, and 60-year-old Nikolai Lavrov, a Deputy Prime Minister in the outgoing Government.

6 shot dead in Pakistan:

Fifteen men armed with automatic weapons shot dead six members of a family in a Pakistani village Tuesday, officials said, reports AFP.

The gunmen carried out the early morning raid on a house in a Muslim village to avenge the killing of three relatives a year ago, they said, adding that police had launched a hunt to arrest the culprits.

Baghdad living on borrowed time : US

6 US carriers with 450 fighters near Iraq

WASHINGTON, Jan 15: Six US aircraft carriers with over 450 warplanes were in position near Iraq today in the final hours before a UN deadline for Baghdad to end its military occupation of Kuwait, defence officials said on Monday, reports Reuters.

The carrier Theodore Roosevelt steamed through the Suez Canal into the Red Sea on Monday and joined the Saratoga and John F. Kennedy. The carrier Midway was in the Gulf and the Ranger in the northern Arabian sea.



SAUDI ARABIA: A British Challenger tank is transported by truck toward the Kuwaiti border on January 14. Preparations for war continue.

— AFP/UNB Photo.

Dangers of chemical wars in the desert

<p>Chemical weapons</p> <p>Agent orange-like used: Nerve gas: inhaled or absorbed through the skin. Causes drooling, vomiting, convulsion, blindness. Highly toxic, can kill in 10 minutes.</p> <p>Mustard: Causes vomiting, skin irritation and blistering, eye irritation and short-term blindness. Can be lethal in large amounts.</p> <p>Other agents: Cyanide and other blood agents: Block blood's oxygen-carrying capacity. Cause choking, eye irritation, sometimes death.</p> <p>Chlorine and phosgene: Burn lining of the lungs. Victim drowns in own fluids. Phosgene and mustard were main chemical weapons in World War I.</p> <p><small>SOURCE: Orange County Register, Marine Corps, "Advanced Technology Warfare," news reports</small></p>		<p>Desert fighting</p> <p>Heatstroke: Body's heat-control mechanism is destroyed. Appears suddenly and can cause death or lasting brain damage. Prevents sweating and makes the skin dry and red.</p> <p>Heat exhaustion: Caused by excessive fluid loss. Can result in weakness, nausea and vomiting, fainting. Soldiers must drink 6 to 10 gallons of water a day.</p> <p>Heat cramp: Caused by salt loss. Can make the abdominal and limb muscles to go into painful spasms.</p>
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Two Arafat aides assassinated

TUNIS, Jan 15: A renegade bodyguard assassinated the two closest aides of PLO leader Yasser Arafat Monday and took the wife and daughter of one hostage, PLO sources said, reports AP.

The gunman, who demanded a plane to fly him out of Tunisia, fatally shot Salah Khalaf, Arafat's second in command, and Hayel Abdel-Hamid, the PLO's security chief.

He also killed Abu Mohammed Al-Omari, Khalaf's chief bodyguard, said several sources in Tunis, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

Abdel-Hamid's wife and

Troops disarm Latvian police

Bush-Gorbachev summit may be postponed : US

WASHINGTON, Jan 15: The Soviet crackdown on Lithuania appears likely to scuttle next month's summit between US President George Bush and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, a White House spokesman said on Monday, reports Reuters.

"Clearly, the trip to Moscow is up in the air," White House spokesman Marlin Fitzwater said of the summit, planned for February 11 to 13 in Moscow.

"I think there's a general scepticism now that we would go," he said, "but the final decision has not been made and will not be made for some

time." If cancelled or delayed, it would mark the first time a superpower summit has not been held as scheduled since 1960, when Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev refused to meet with President Dwight Eisenhower after a US spy plane was shot down over Soviet air space.

Another report from Riga adds: Soviet troops briefly seized the Latvian Police Academy, disarmed a local police station and attacked vehicles blocking streets leading to Parliament early on Tuesday, a member of the Latvian Parliament said.

The early morning assaults in Riga appeared designed to sow panic in the city, rather than to take control, said Ivar Krastins, head of the Parliament's health committee. No one was seriously injured.

"This is to show the government is not in control of the situation and that it must resign," Krastins said.

The scattered attacks were part of a pattern of terror to destabilise the situation further, Krastins said.

"We are afraid the troops and the (pro-Moscow) communist party may attack US either this afternoon or later tonight," he said.

Over one million poised for Gulf war

RIYADH, Jan 15: More than a million men are poised for war in the Gulf: 540,000 Iraqis facing 400,000 Americans, 135,000 Arabs, 35,000 Britains and 11,000 French, along with units from 15 other countries ranging from Czechoslovakia to Sierra Leone, reports AFP.

Following is a breakdown of the forces in battlefield - the troops and their weapons.

According to western analysts, Iraq has 540,000 troops in Kuwait and neighbouring Southern Iraq, many of them veterans of the eight-year war with Iran. Iraq says its troops number between 600,000 and 750,000 men.

Iraq is believed to have 4,000 tanks, 2,700 other armoured vehicles and 3,000 artillery pieces, along with 700 combat planes ageing French Mirage and Soviet Mig-25S and more recent Mig-29S. It also has efficient French-made air-to-sea exocet missiles, and Soviet-made, modified ground-to-ground Scud-B missiles.

Children of BSF kidnapped

NEW DELHI Jan 15: Three Sikh militants kidnapped the son and daughters of an Indian Border Security Force Commander from their village home in Punjab Sunday night. The Press Trust of India (PTI) reported yesterday, reports AFP.

The UN deadline for Iraqi withdrawal expires at 8 a.m. Iraq and Kuwaiti time (0500 GMT) on Wednesday. If Iraq's armies are still in place then, the US-led multinational force in the Gulf is authorised to attack.

US President George Bush earlier told leaders of Congress there had been no ray of hope for a diplomatic breakthrough in persuading Iraq to give up Kuwait.

The UN deadline for Iraqi withdrawal expires at 8 a.m. Iraq and Kuwaiti time (0500 GMT) on Wednesday. If Iraq's armies are still in place then, the US-led multinational force in the Gulf is authorised to attack.

US Defence officials said six US aircraft carriers with over 450 war planes would be in position near Iraq on Tuesday.

More than 600,000 allied troops and 2,000 combat planes are in the Gulf, facing Iraq's half-million strong occupation forces backed by thousands of tanks.

The commander of Iraq's air force, Air Marshal Muzahem Saab Ijassan, hinted in a message to President Saddam Hussein read over Baghdad radio at suicide attacks against the allies.

"I have the glad tidings that guerrilla units have completed their training... and ready to launch their attacks towards targets defined for them on land, sea and in the air, the message said.

leader who is engaged in a bitter feud with Arafat, the commander said.

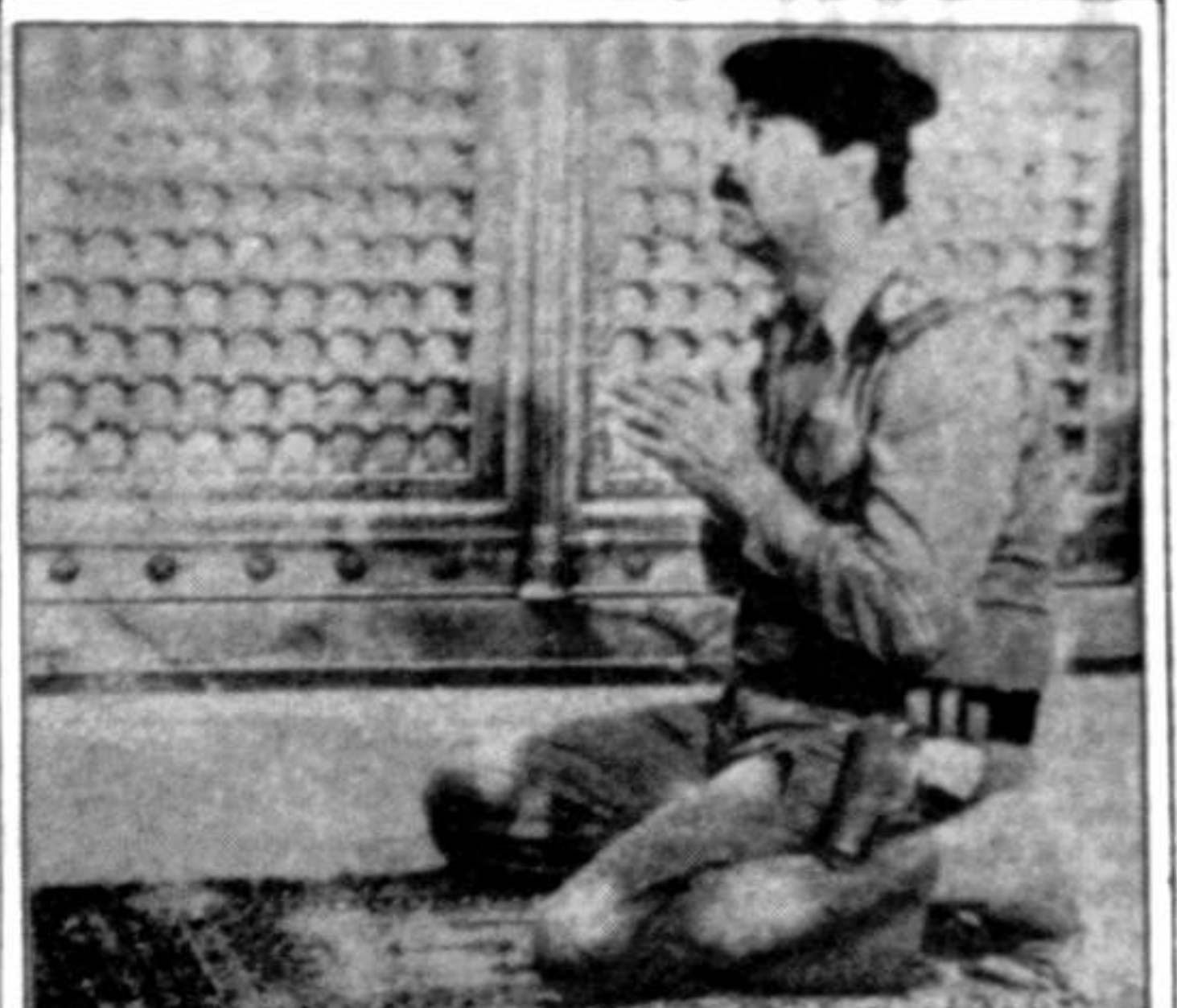
At the United Nations, PLO Ambassador "M Nasser Al-Kidwa" blamed the killings on Israel.

"The Israelis are the only ones which gain interest through such terrorist actions," he said. Arafat, who was on his way from Amman, Jordan, to Paris for talks on the Gulf crisis, was informed of the assassination by radio, the commander said.

Arafat cancelled his visit because of the assassinations, Daniel Bernard, a French Foreign Ministry spokesman, said at a Paris briefing early Tuesday morning. The PLO commander, citing security considerations, would not reveal Arafat's whereabouts.

The bodyguard had recently split from Libyan-backed PLO dissident Abu Nidal, a terrorist

Off the Record



SAMARRAH (Iraq) - Uniformed President Saddam Hussein kneeling in prayer in the Shiite mosque of Ali al-Hadji Iman here, 20 kilometres northwest of Baghdad. President Saddam has called King Fahd of Saudi Arabia as infidel and linked pullout of his troops from Kuwait to solution of the Palestinian question. Interestingly enough, while Zionists had uprooted millions of Palestinians from their homeland, Saddam has made a brotherly Muslim nation of 8,26,586 Kuwaitis homeless. —AFP/UNB Photo

Fahd an infidel, says Saddam

BAGHDAD, Jan 15: President Saddam Hussein on Monday said he was willing to give Saudi Arabia "guarantees" Iraq would not attack the kingdom but he held King Fahd responsible for every drop of blood that will be shed in the event of war, reports AFP.

President Hussein, in an "open letter" to King Fahd carried by the official Iraqi news agency (INA), also criticised Saudi Arabia for allowing the deployment of foreign troops on its territory and said King Fahd had acted contrary to "divine Muslim law."

"What you did is contrary to divine Muslim law... The occupation has exacerbated Saudi and Arab budgets at a time when destitute and famished Muslims and Arabs needed that money," he said.

He chastised the Saudi monarch for allowing "infidel" armies to deploy in the kingdom, which is home to Mecca and Medina Islam's holiest sites and urged him to reconsider his position.

Soviet papers to die

MOSCOW, Jan 15: By the middle of 1991 the Soviet Union may see many newspapers and magazines die, Vyacheslav Leontiev, Director of the Pravda Publishers, told a news conference in Moscow on January 8, reports IAN.

The reason is the need to buy paper at so-called contractual (market) prices, something that will put most of the periodicals in the red.

According to Leontiev, the producers have agreed to sell newsprint at 1,300 roubles per ton on the average. For newspapers to continue, newsprint should be available for no more than 800 roubles a ton.

Such illustrated magazines as Ogonyok, Sovetsky Soyuz and others have found themselves in predicament. The thing is they used imported newsprint and imported ink. This year due to the lack of hard currency funds the magazines will either have to be discontinued or use Soviet-made supplies, which, Leontiev claims, will send the quality down.

Robot now for Ikebana

TOKYO, Jan 15: The Japanese electronics company Toshiba has developed a robot shaped like an elephant's trunk that is so flexible and nimble it can perform Ikebana, or Japanese flower arranging, a spokesman said, reports Reuters.

The robot is made of silicon gum and nylon and is moved by air or water pressure, directed through internal tubes.

Toshiba engineers say the device could one day be reduced in size for injecting into the human body for medical purposes.

The firm hopes the new technology will be on the market by 1995, the spokesman said.

Judge challenges Emperor

TOKYO, Jan 15: A judge who ruled for the first time against official visits to war shrines by the emperor and prime minister resigned Monday, only four days after the ruling, officials said, reports AP.

Tadao Kasuya, 61, presiding judge at Sendai High Court in northern Japan, announced that he was retiring as of Monday.

"I had already decided to retire after concluding the Yasukuni shrine case," Kasuya told reporters, according to Kyodo News Service.

"Kasuya had been saying that he would retire before he turns 62 and start his second life as a lawyer in Tokyo," a court official said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Reversing a district court ruling, Kasuya ruled last week that official visits to Yasukuni Shrine in Tokyo by the emperor or prime minister would violate the constitutional separation of religion and state.

Superpower without a budget

MOSCOW, Jan 15: The USSR has lived the first week of 1991 without a national budget, reports IAN.

The fourth session of the Soviet Parliament, which resumed its work January 8, will have within seven days to rectify this situation unprecedented for the country's history.

The draft budget, handed in to the MPs, suggests that the credit side stand at 250.157 billion roubles and the debit side at 276.820 billion roubles.

The planned budget deficit will thus constitute 26.663 billion roubles. The government plans to increase expenses on servicing the national domestic debt by 6.7 billion roubles and thus bring it to nearly 12 billion roubles. As much as 45.742 billion roubles will be required to finance national economic development.

Today in History

- Today is Wednesday, January 16, the 16th day of 1991. There are 349 days left in the year, reports UNB.
- Highlights in history on this date:
- 1581 - Britain's parliament takes stern measures against Roman Catholics.
- 1925 - Leon Trotsky is dismissed from chairmanship of Russia's Revolutionary Council.
- 1971 - Swiss ambassador to Brazil, Giovanni Enrico Bucher, is freed in Rio de Janeiro after being held by kidnapers for 40 days.
- 1973 - United States and South Vietnam declare ceasefire in Vietnam War in hopes of full peace pact.
- 1979 - Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi flees Iran after new civilian government is approved in parliament.
- 1987 - Hu Yaobang resigns as head of China's Communist Party, accepting blame for policy mistakes stemming from student turmoil.
- 1988 - Iranian gunboats raid Japanese-operated tanker at entrance to Gulf, leaving it disabled.