

# BRIEFLY

**Flood leaves 22 dead in Iran :** Twenty-two people died Monday in flooding triggered by torrential rain in western Iran, the Iranian news agency Irna reported Tuesday, reports AFP from Tehran.

The downpour also did material damage in several cities in the west and northwest, notably to telecommunications facilities, homes and vehicles.

**Plea to stop Japanese aid to Burma :** Japanese opposition leaders demanding the release of detained Burmese politician Aung San Suu Kyi said Tokyo should end all aid to Rangoon and put stronger pressure on its military government, reports AFP from Tokyo.

Japan supplies more than 70 per cent of Burma's foreign aid and is its biggest supplier of imports.

**Liberals form party in Kuwait :** A group of mostly Western-educated liberals announced Tuesday the formation of the first open political party in Kuwait, striving to start fighting for free speech and the right to gather for the 1992 elections, reports AP from Kuwait city.

They said their Kuwaiti Democratic Forum resulted from the Persian Gulf War, and people who worked underground during the resistance against the Iraqi occupation are determined to operate above ground now.

**US to build schools for Haitians :** US troops will build schools and churches for more than 5,500 Haitian boat people living in canvas tents and aircraft hangars at the US military base here, officials said Tuesday, reports AP from Guantanamo Bay.

Most of the Haitians were intercepted by US Coast Guard craft as they tried to flee their Caribbean island homeland in aging, leaky fishing boats.

**Farmers-police clash in Belgium :** Several hundred Belgian farmers clashed with police and looted a shopping district Tuesday as European leaders held a summit on political and economic union, reports AP from Netherlands.

Several arrests were made, but no serious injuries were reported.

**Food riots claim 30 in Albania :** More than 30 people were killed when fire broke out after a hungry crowd rushed a storehouse, Albanian radio reported Tuesday, and a new Prime Minister was appointed to help the country deal with recent food riots, reports AP from Tirana.

President Ramiz Alia, announcing the appointment of Vilson Ahmeti as Prime Minister, said the new government's priorities would be to ensure adequate food supplies over the winter and stability until the next elections.

**US not an honest broker : Arafat**

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KARACHI : Female supporters of the Pakistan People's Party mourn the alleged rape by masked men of Veena Hayat, a friend of Benazir Bhutto during a Human Rights Day protest rally.

Sharif orders army intelligence to probe incident

## Lawyers, women protest assault on Benazir's friend

Hundreds of lawyers and women demonstrated Monday as anger grew over the alleged molestation of the daughter of a veteran politician and friend of former Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, reports AFP.

Lawyers and women held separate rallies in Lahore, capital of Punjab province, to protest the incident described by newspapers as the gang rape of Farhana Hayat, 40, nicknamed Veena, reports reaching here said.

Meanwhile, a stream of sympathisers called at the home here of Veena's father, retired politician Sardar Shaikat Hayat.

Veena told police she was assaulted at her home in southern city of Karachi on November 27 by a group of armed men who, she said, had "molested and tortured" her for 12 hours.

Political parties, human rights groups and women's organizations plan more demonstration around the country to protest against the attack, which the victim claims was politically motivated.

She said her molesters had repeatedly asked questions about her links with Bhutto, Bhutto's husband Asif Ali Zardari and the couple's political associates.

Hayat, 76, who retired from active politics in 1978 but is still respected as a colleague of Pakistan's late founding father Mohammed Ali Jinnah, told reporters he had given the government a four-day deadline to arrest the culprits responsible for the attack.

Otherwise, he said, his clan would adopt the "appropriate course", but he did not elaborate.

The veteran politician said President Ghulam Ishaq Khan had sent a reply to his letter, saying the Sind provincial government had been directed to probe the incident.

Hayat said he rejected the President's response because it "amounts to asking a criminal to sit in judgement over his crime." He was referring to the President's son-in-law and a key figure in the Sind administration, Irfanullah Marwat, who he has blamed for the assault on his daughter.

Marwat, Advisor on Home Affairs to Sind Chief Minister Jam Sadiq Ali, has denied the allegations as "absurd, baseless and fabricated" and the provincial government has ordered a judicial inquiry into the charges.

Newspapers for the second day Monday published numerous denunciations of the attack from politicians, lawyers, hu-

man rights activists and social and cultural organizations.

"The nation is sad", read one newspaper headline.

Opposition parties have blasted the President for his son-in-law's alleged repression on in Sind and have demanded his resignation.

The Veena affair follows a recent wave of arrests in Sind in what the provincial government said was a crackdown on terrorists. Bhutto has accused the government of throwing more than 2,000 of her supporters into jail.

Meanwhile Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif ordered Tuesday a speedy probe by military intelligence into the alleged molestation of a friend of former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, officials said.

In his orders from Senegal, where he is attending the sixth Islamic summit, Sharif asked the inter-services intelligence agency, the civilian intelligence bureau and the federal investigation agency to investigate the incident separately.

The three agencies have been ordered to submit their reports to the government in "24 hours", officials said, as more demonstrations were held in the country Tuesday to denounce the alleged assault.

**Itinerary changed for security reasons**

## Tibetans threaten to assassinate Li Peng

NEW DELHI, Dec 11: Death threats have forced Chinese Prime Minister Li Peng to change his itinerary for a five-day visit to India, Indian and Chinese officials said on Tuesday, reports Reuters.

Li, the first Chinese Premier to visit India since Chou En Lai in 1960, has been threatened by Tibetan rebels, a Chinese official said.

"We have received several letters from local Tibetan groups. Some have even threatened to assassinate Premier Li during this visit", the official, who declined to be named, told Reuters.

Another Indian official said

"We are taking it all very seriously, and naturally that affects the Prime Minister's public exposure", she said.

Li's visit begins on Wednesday.

A spokesman for Tibet's spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, described the assassination threat as a typical Chinese fabrication.

The charge is completely baseless, the spokesman added.

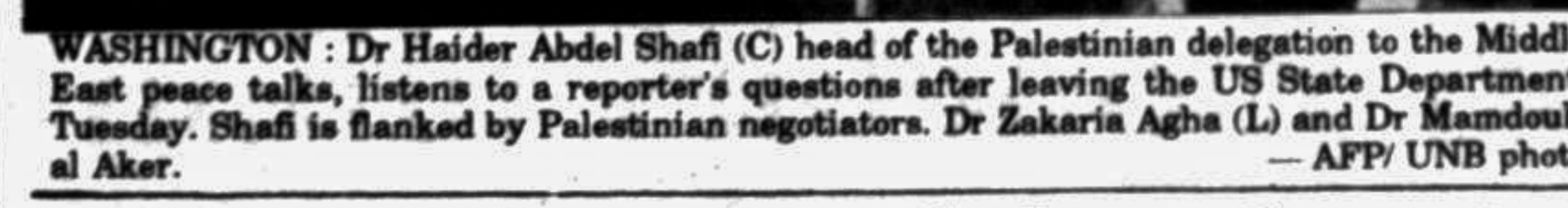
The Indian External Affairs Ministry spokesman said Li had no plans to go out of New Delhi during the five-day visit.

the Chinese leader, originally scheduled to visit the celebrated Taj Mahal monument in Agra, had changed his plans "for security reasons."

But, he said the security perception comes from the Chinese as far as we are concerned Li is safe anywhere in India.

The Chinese official said Li had cancelled a news conference scheduled after his talks with Indian Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao because of the threat to his life.

The Dalai Lama fled to India after a Chinese crackdown on a separatist Tibetan movement in 1959.



WASHINGTON : Dr Haider Abdel Shafi (C) head of the Palestinian delegation to the Middle East peace talks, listens to a reporter's questions after leaving the US State Department Tuesday. Shafi is flanked by Palestinian negotiators, Dr Zakaria Agha (L) and Dr Mamdouh al Aker.

powerful Red Army were disappearing. Shortages of food, fuel and housing for troops were undermining morale and the reliability of the forces was "dubious," he said.

At the same time, Robert Strauss, the US ambassador to Moscow, repeated warnings that the volatile situation could give rise to a nationalist, demagogic leader who would fan ethnic tensions and ignite civil war.

Strauss was due to testify Wednesday before the Armed Services Committee, which Chairman Les Aspin said is beginning yet another re-examination of US defense spending in light of the changing Soviet threat.

"The whole Soviet Union is disappearing," Aspin said after a two-hour closed-door briefing by Gates that followed a public hearing. "We're back to the drawing board."

Aspin also criticized President Bush for his reluctance to endorse a \$1 billion package of US aid to the Soviet just before Congress adjourned for the year. Bush's silence forced Aspin and other lawmakers to push through on their own a shrunken version

that provides \$400 million to help dismantle Moscow's nuclear arsenal.

The committee's senior Republican, Rep. William Dickinson of Alabama, said Gates told the panel in private that Soviet President Mikhail S Gorbachev "is losing out" as central control unravels.

Two other sources who attended the briefing, speaking only on condition of anonymity, said Gates portrayed Gorbachev as in charge only of the country's foreign relations and said even that power is eroding.

## Imelda urges court to allow return of Marcos's body

MANILA, Dec 11: Former first lady Imelda Marcos asked the Supreme Court on Wednesday to allow the unconditional return of her husband's body from Hawaii for burial in the Philippines, reports AP.

Marcos said in a petition filed with the high tribunal that the government ban on the return of body of the late President Ferdinand Marcos was a "wrongful interference" the private rights of her family.

"It is pure and simple harassment, there being no more perceivable national security threat to the return of the remains of the late president," Mrs. Marcos said.

Marcos asked the Supreme Court to stop the government of President Corazon Aquino from setting conditions on when, where and how her husband should be buried.

Marcos died in September 1989 in Hawaii, where his family fled shortly after the February 1986 uprising ousted him from 20 year in power and catapulted Mrs. Aquino to the presidency.

**Floods render 2,500 homeless in Mauritania**

NOUAKCHOTT, Dec 11: At least one person died and some 2,500 families were left homeless when a dyke collapsed after torrential rain in northern Mauritania early this week, national television said Tuesday, reports AFP.

The disaster occurred in the town of Akjoujt on Monday, after a day of heavy rains, the report said.

When the dyke yielded, water hurtled into a dried-up river bed, sweeping houses, people and cattle away in its path.

The television said rescue efforts were underway.

Mauritania, a generally arid state in northwest Africa, is one of the poorest countries in the world.

**Rafsanjani hails UN report on Iran-Iraq war**

DAKAR, Senegal, Dec 11: Iranian President Hashemi Rafsanjani hailed a letter by UN Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar blaming Baghdad for starting the Iran-Iraq War as a "historic and important achievement for the Islamic world", reports AP.

Speaking on the sidelines of a summit of the 45-nation Organization of Islamic Conference, Rafsanjani said recognition of Iraq as the aggressor in the 1980-1988 war was a victory for Iran and a reward for the resistance of his nation.

"After years of unfair judgment, the world has now realized our righteousness," Rafsanjani told members of the Iranian delegation on Tuesday.

Earlier Tuesday, Perez de Cuellar formally declared in a letter to the UN Security Council that Iran had been invaded by Saddam Hussein's army on Sept. 22, 1980. It was a judgment long awaited by Tehran which is seeking closer ties to the West.

**Gorbachev still controls N-arms of 4 republics**

MOSCOW, Dec 11: Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev still controls the nuclear weapons based in four republics, spokesman Andrei Grachev stated here Tuesday, reports AFP.

"On the questions of control over nuclear weapons and issues of guarantees of security.... no changes have taken place", Grachev said at a news conference.

Asked about Ukrainian President Leonid Kravchuk's assertion Monday that the three Slav republics, which also include Russia and Belarus, favoured joint control over the weapons, Grachev answered: "you can push a button with one finger, you don't need three."

**Off the Record**

### Alcohol is okay but after lunch

GENEVA: The United Nations told employees at its European headquarters in Geneva on Tuesday that they would not be allowed to drink alcohol before lunchtime after the new year, reports Reuter.

Administrators said in a circular to all staff that a "working party against alcoholism" had recommended restricting the sale of drink in the bars and restaurants of the UN's sprawling Palais Des Nations.

From January 1, 1992, no alcoholic drinks will be served before 11.30 am and between the hours of three and five pm.

**Apology for five minutes late**

NEW DELHI: The Minister of State for Power, Mr Kalpanath Rai, was forced to apologise in the Rajya Sabha during question hour today as he reached the House five minutes late, reports PTI.

The question hour started right at 1100 hours but the first four questions pertaining to the Ministries of Finance and Commerce were not taken up as the members who had put the questions were absent.

As soon as the fifth question was put by Mr Santosh Kumar Sahu and the Minister was found absent, there was a chorus of protests from the opposition benches who were heard remarking that ministers were ignoring the House despite cautions from the chair.

The Home Minister, Mr S B Chavan, who is the leader of the House, then hurriedly got the question and the written reply from the House Secretariat and got the permission from the chairman, Dr S D Sharma to reply. Even as Chavan stood up to answer, Kalpanath Rai walked into the House.

Immediately several members demanded that Rai apologise and the chairman concurred with them Rai stood up and said "I apologise to the House" and calm descended.

**No kissing please**

DAKAR: No kissing please, Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah sapped angrily as PLO chief Yasser Arafat rushed to embrace him — an Arab gesture of reconciliation, reports Reuter.

Saudi delegates said on Tuesday the Prince also turned his face away to avoid a handshake with Jordan's King Hussein.

Avoiding a reconciliation with both leaders is one of the reasons why King Fahd of Saudi Arabia has stayed away from the sixth summit of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) which opened in Dakar on Monday, Saudi and Arab delegates say.

Jordan and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) are keen to patch up their differences with Saudi Arabia, which until last year's Gulf crisis was their main source of financial support.

**Old-fashion big hugs await for Terry**

WIESBADEN, Germany: It was something Terry Anderson could only dream about after his kidnapping on March 16, 1985: spending Christmas at home with relatives and friends, reports AP.

After spending Christmas the six previous years chained inside a dark cell in Lebanon, Anderson flies to the United States on Tuesday for a long-awaited holiday.

"I'm coming home," an excited Anderson blurted out in an early wakeup telephone call Monday to his cousin in Long Island, N.Y.

"It was beautiful to hear his voice — no matter what time it was," said the cousin, Tom Anderson, a New York City police sergeant. "It felt so good to say 'see ya tomorrow, Terry.'"

"I'm just going to give him a big, old-fashion Anderson family hug and not let go," said Tom Anderson, speaking from his home in Valley Stream, N.Y.

**Two Koreas propose end to cold war hostilities**

SEOUL, Dec 11: Longtime rivals North and South Korea made surprise proposals for a nuclear-free Korea on Wednesday, calling for the elimination of weapons of mass destruction and an end to Cold War hostilities, reports AP.

In statements opening the fifth round of high-level talks, the prime ministers of both nations presented separate and slightly different proposals for halting their arms race.

Both have made past proposals for denuclearization, but they have disagreed on the means of going about it. This was the first time such proposals were introduced in an official face-to-face conference.

The proposals dwarfed others being considered on easing tensions they come at a time of mounting international pressure on North Korea to halt its nuclear arms development.

Both proposals called for eliminating weapons of mass destruction and banning the manufacture, possession or deployment of nuclear arms. Both also would allow inspections, including checks at US bases in South Korea, beginning as early as January.

The Korean peninsula is faced with a grave threat to the very survival of our entire people," South Korean Prime Minister Chung Won-shik told his northern counterpart, Yon Hyong Muk.

Chung told Yon that North Korea's nuclear weapons programme was well documented and urged the North to enter a new era of peace and justice.

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Chung told Yon that North Korea's nuclear weapons programme was well documented and urged the North to enter a new era of peace and justice.

"Your side maintains that you have neither the intention nor the ability to develop nuclear weapons," Chung said. "But high-tech intelligence devices have gathered solid evidence to the contrary."

"All nations of the world are thus focusing their attention on your nuclear programme and are increasingly loudly voicing their concerns," Chung said.

South Korea said nuclear reprocessing plant and uranium enrichment facilities, both believed to exist in the North, must be destroyed.

North Korea's proposal demanded a ban on US nuclear umbrella protection for South Korea and a ban on flyovers or stops by airplanes or ships carrying nuclear weapons. These demands have been rejected by the South in the past.

The North's proposal also demanded the withdrawal of US troops and a halt to joint US-South Korean military exercises.

About 40,000 US troops remain in South Korea under a defence treaty. President Bush announced in September that all US tactical nuclear weapons would be withdrawn worldwide, including from South Korea.

Official sources in Seoul said South Korea would announce the withdrawal of all US nuclear weapons before or during Bush's visit the first week of January and then put more pressure on North Korea to allow inspections.

By dramatically reducing tariffs, the accord is expected to increase trade between the two countries, which now totals \$4 billion a year, most of it US grain exports and imports of oil and precious metals from the Soviets.

"He's not going to rise from the ashes this time," said one of the officials.

President Bush on Tuesday signed into law legislation normalizing trade relations with the Soviets. Congress approved the "most favoured nation" trade status for the Soviets just before adjourning last month.

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