

# Red Army asked to swear allegiance to CIS commander

MOSCOW, Jan 4: Marshal Yevgeny Shaposhnikov, commander of the armed forces of the Commonwealth of Independent States, has suggested that members of the former Soviet army serving in the CIS should swear a double oath of allegiance, the Interfax agency reported Friday, says AFP.

Quoting military sources, Interfax said Shaposhnikov had sent telegrams to troops stationed in Ukraine and to members of the Black Sea fleet asking them to swear allegiance to himself as commander of the CIS Armed Forces as well as to Ukraine.

Ukraine is organising its own national army and other republics of the CIS have indicated their intention to do likewise. Troops of the former Soviet army began Wednesday to swear allegiance to the Ukrainian state.

The Ukrainian army comprises a round 45 per cent Russians, 40 per cent Ukrainians and 15 per cent other nationalities. The republic aims to set up an army of around 400,000 men.

The transfer of former Red Army troops to Ukrainian colours is likely to be completed by mid-January, inter-republican television reported.

Interfax said a report by the Black Sea Fleet Command showed that 90 per cent of its sailors were refusing to swear loyalty to Shaposhnikov but were prepared to declare allegiance to Ukraine.

# 'Rulers are not ready to discuss vital issues' Benazir willing to sit with govt leaders

ISLAMABAD, Jan 4: Pakistan opposition leader Benazir Bhutto has showed willingness to go into negotiations with the government provided there is an agenda for talks to promote the democratic process, reports Xinhua.

We are ready to sit around the negotiation table but only when there is an agenda for talks, she said.

Addressing a gathering in Larkana in the southern province of Sindh Friday night, Benazir Bhutto was quoted by today's local press as saying the rulers are not ready to discuss vital issues like widespread unemployment, deteriorating law and order, alarming state of economy, disqualification of tribunals, and the Sindh government's atrocities.

The former prime minister renewed her challenge for a debate on the prevailing situation on the national media.

Local press reports said today efforts are still on to arrange a meeting between Nawaz Sharif and Benazir Bhutto to hammer out a durable political reconciliation a bid to strengthen democracy.

Relations between the government and the opposition have not been in good terms for quite some time as the latter alleged the federal government has been practising a policy of political victimization against its opponents in Sindh, a stronghold of Benazir Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party (PPP), through the Sindh

time of the meeting between the two opposite, the reports said.

But asked if he thought the Palestinian delegation would appear in Washington, he said: "If you want my personal opinion, I say yes."

The United States has condemned Israel's plans to deport the Palestinians, who are accused of involvement in the killing of Israeli soldiers and other Palestinians.

Diplomats said that the Palestinian delegation had reaped public relations benefits by attacking the deportations, but in the end had little choice but to turn up for the talks.



on the principle of give and take.

National Assembly Speaker Gohar Ayub Khan, who is serving as go-between, has already met both separately and is likely to firm up the date and

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# PLO may attend ME peace talks in Washington

LONDON, Jan 4: An aide to PLO leader Yasser Arafat said on Friday he believed the Palestinian delegation would attend next week's Middle East peace talks in Washington despite Israeli plans to deport 12 Palestinians, reports Reuter.

The Palestine Liberation Organisation leadership was meeting in Tunis to decide whether the delegation should attend.

PLO aide Bassam Abu Sharif told Britain's Sky Television News from Tunis: "The discussion is very hot, you know, and I think it could take all night through."

But asked if he thought the Palestinian delegation would appear in Washington, he said: "If you want my personal opinion, I say yes."

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# Off the Record

## Biker crunches Polar ice

TOKYO: A Japanese adventurer who has already travelled to the North Pole by motorcyc has successfully biked to the South Pole from the coast of Antarctica, his Tokyo office announced Saturday, reports AP.

Shinji Kazama, 41, reached the South Pole at 0630 GMT Friday after a 27-day journey across deep snow and rugged ice, becoming the first person to bike to both poles, they said.

On arrival, Kazama was greeted by the 120-member staff of the Amundsen-Scott South Pole Station, who were in contact with his support team during the journey.

Kazama set out from the Patriot Hills, base camp on the coast Dec 8, intending to celebrate New Year's Day at the pole. But unexpectedly deep snow and sastrugi — long, wave-like edges of hard snow — delayed his arrival.

At some points, Kazama attached a ski to the front wheel of his custom-made Yamaha motorcyc.

In addition to his 1987 North Pole expedition, Kazama also has biked across a glacier on the face of Mount Everest.

## China loses last Mandarin

BEIJING: China's last known surviving Mandarin, who had to pay a rigorous imperial examination in order to serve the country's former emperors, has died at age 110, the official China Daily reported Saturday, says Reuter.

Su Juxian, who was officially honoured as the oldest man in Shanghai, died on December 30 — two days before his 111th birthday.

Su was the last known "Kiucai" scholar, who passed through the complex classical examination system imperial China used to select high officials before the fall of the Qing dynasty in 1911.

The scholar-officials, who were tested on their knowledge of the Confucian classics, were known as Mandarins.

Su, who is survived by three sons and a daughter, spent most of his life writing Chinese poetry, the newspaper said.

# BRIEFLY

## Kazakhstan seeks UN membership:

Kazakhstan has applied for full membership in the United Nations, Britain's UN Ambassador and Acting Security Council Chairman Sir David Hannay said Friday, reports AFP from New York.

The council has just received a letter requesting full membership in the world body from the former Soviet republic's President, Nursultan Nazarbayev, Hannay said.

Kazakhstan cannot gain UN membership formally until February, when the general assembly reconvenes. It is the UN General Assembly which technically votes to accept or reject new members, following a Security Council recommendation.

Once the Soviet Union disintegrated and the Russian Federation assumed the Soviet seat on the council, it was expected that former Soviet republics would request UN membership as independent states.

## US establishes ties with Russia:

The United States has established full diplomatic relations with Russia and hopes for similar ties with five other former Soviet republics, the State Department said on Friday, reports Reuter from Washington.

Russian President Boris Yeltsin agreed on December 31 to set up full diplomatic relations with Washington, said State Department spokesman Richard Doucher.

Yeltsin was responding to a December 25 proposal by President George Bush that six former republics — Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Armenia, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan — establish full diplomatic relations with the United States.

Doucher said Yeltsin responded to this proposal "formally and positively."

## Palestinian killed in armed clash:

A Palestinian was killed and two Israeli soldiers were wounded in an clash in the occupied West Bank, military sources said on Saturday, reports Reuter from Jerusalem.

Soldiers patrolling near Jenin, north of Nablus, came under fire from gunmen lying in ambush on Friday, the sources said.

The soldiers returned fire killing Mohammed Ali Madras, 20, identified by military sources as a member of the Black Panther Group, the group is linked to the Palestine Liberation Organisation's mainstream Fatah Group.

Madras had been wanted by Israeli security forces since last April in connection with attacks against soldiers and fellow Palestinians suspected of collaborating with Israeli authorities, the sources said.

## Chadian troops crush rebels:

Rebels who attacked towns in western Chad in the last few days have been defeated, the Defence Ministry said on Radio Chad late Friday, reports AFP.

The assailants were "entirely destroyed" and the Lake Chad towns of Bol and Lwa, a little over 100 kilometres (60 miles) north of Ndjamena, were back under the control of the national army, the ministry said in a communique.

The communique said that 400 rebels were killed, including their main military leaders, while several hundreds others had been taken prisoner. Sixty of the rebels vehicles had been seized and 40 destroyed, it added.

The regular army had suffered 25 dead and 70 wounded in the fighting, according to the communique.

## Judith Anderson dead:

Dame Judith Anderson, the Australian-born actress who thrilled audiences with her portrayal of the icy housekeeper in "Rebecca" died Friday. She was 93, reports AFP from California.

Anderson died at her home here, said Patricia Carlton of the Welch-Ryce Haider Funeral Home. The cause of death was not released.

Anderson moved to Hollywood from Adelaide, Australia in 1918, but failed to make a living. She next moved to New York where she made her mark on Broadway playing Lady Macbeth and in Robinson Jeffers' adoption of "Medea," the story of a woman who kills her children to get revenge on an adulterous husband.

Anderson was divorced and had no children.

## 30 rebels killed in Lanka:

Around 30 Tamil rebels were killed on Friday in Batticaloa in the eastern province of Sri Lanka, according to reports reaching here Saturday, says Xinhua from Colombo.

A large number of rebels have been wounded in a fierce battle at Kakkadicholai between government troops and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE).

The troops detected the rebels at a distance of about 50 meters Friday morning when they left their camp, and opened fire, the battle lasted for hours, the reports said.

Two soldiers died and few others were wounded during the confrontation, the reports added.

# Colombian troops killed 1,600 rebels last yr UN, ICRC turn down Hun Sen's invitation

BOGOTA, Jan 4: Colombian army staff and police officers killed an estimated 1,600 guerrillas in 1991, Radio Caracol reported Friday quoting military sources, says AFP.

The insurgents killed were members of the Communist Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, the leftist National Liberation Army, and a splinter group of the Maoist Popular Liberation Army, under the Simon Bolivar Guerrilla Coordinator Umbrella Group.

During the same 12-month period, there were 368 reported armed clashes between rebels and government authorities, 466 terrorist attacks, and 192 other incidents linked to Colombia's rebels, the radio report said.

Guerrilla forces struck 73 towns, and staged 196 attacks on its most frequent target, the country's oil-producing infrastructure, the report said.

The radio report did not specify how many rebels had been wounded during 1991, or the number of civilian victims of the violence in 1991.

# UN, ICRC turn down Hun Sen's invitation

PHNOM PENH, Jan 4: Phnom Penh Prime Minister Hun Sen blamed the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) for cancelling today's release of political prisoners, reports AFP.

The delay was caused by the ICRC, Hun Sen told AFP in an interview in which he said he was not aware of the ICRC's universal criteria for monitoring the release of prisoners.

The government is required under a peace treaty ending the civil war to release all political and war prisoners under ICRC supervision.

The ICRC and the UN advance mission here turned down a last-minute invitation to stand at prison exits with the media and watch detainees file out, calling the event a "propaganda show."

The Geneva-based organization has strict rules for monitoring detainees that apply for every government in the world.

The head of ICRC opera-

tions in Cambodia, Jean-Jacques Fresard, said he has made those guidelines perfectly clear to the Phnom Penh government in the 13 years that the ICRC has been petitioning to monitor prisoners here.

But Hun Sen said: "Right now there is a process of consultation between our government and the ICRC. Of course we don't know yet what the ICRC wanted. But I believe this delay won't be long."

He predicted the prisoners — 400 in total from two city prisons and one in Kompong Cham — could be released next week, but said that depended on an agreement with the ICRC.

The ICRC must have access to all prisoners, be able to repeat visits regularly, have unsupervised interviews with prisoners and be able to record names and full identification.



Lisbon: Lord Peter Carrington, president of the peace conference for Yugoslavia briefs the newsmen after talks with Portuguese Foreign Minister Joao de Deus Pinheiro and UN envoy Cyrus Vance at the Portuguese foreign ministry. —AFP/UNB photo

# Move to resume Y'slav peace talks

LISBON, Jan 4: Lord Carrington, Chairman of the EC conference on Yugoslavia, is to meet leaders of the six republics from the war-ravaged country next week to discuss resumption of peace talks, reports AFP.

Carrington made the announcement after a meeting with UN envoy Cyrus Vance and Joao de Deus Pinheiro, the Foreign Minister of Portugal

which has just assumed the rotating European Community presidency.

Lord Carrington said resumption of the negotiations was "possible" after the signing of the latest ceasefire, which was supposed to go in effect early evening.

Presidents of the six Yugoslav republics last met in the Hague on December 9 and said then they wanted to con-

tinue the EC peace process. The war has raged unabated since then, however.

Vance, who arrived here Friday from Yugoslavia, is to report back to UN Secretary General Boutros Ghali on his latest mission.

The UN plans to send peacekeeping forces to Croatia if the latest ceasefire turns into a lasting peace.

# US, Britain, France for sanction against Libya

UNITED NATIONS, Jan 4: The United States, Britain and France plan to ask the Security Council to impose sanctions against Libya for its alleged role in bombings of American and French airliners if milder reprimands are unsuccessful, diplomats said on Friday, reports Reuter.

A total of 441 people were killed in the two crashes.

Mindful that an immediate request for a trade embargo would fail, the three are drafting a simple resolution calling on Libya to respond to the charges and hand over the accused to the governments concerned.

The three governments have instituted criminal charges against Libyan intelligence agents.

# US presence in Asia-Pacific for peace, not war: Bush

SINGAPORE, Jan 4: US President George Bush pledged today to maintain a visible, credible military presence in the Asia-Pacific region and reached agreement with Singapore to transfer some naval facilities from the Philippines, reports AFP.

Bush, on the Southeast Asian leg of a 12-day regional swing, also announced the lifting of the US trade embargo imposed on Cambodia in 1975 but said it was premature to do so for Vietnam.

The first US President to visit Singapore reaffirmed Washington's commitment to regional security despite the closure of Clark Air Force Base and scheduled shutdown of Subic Bay Naval Station in the Philippines this year.

The closing of bases in the Philippines will not spell the

end to American engagement, Bush said in a speech to hundreds of Singapore officials, businessmen and diplomats.

We will maintain a visible, credible presence in the Asia-Pacific region with our forward deployed forces, and through bilateral defense arrangements with nations of the region.

Regional security was a key topic during Bush's talks with Singapore leaders on a 36-hour stop here, sandwiched between visits to Australia and South Korea and Japan.

At a joint news conference earlier, Singapore Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong said the island city-state had agreed in principle to transfer a US navy logistical command here from Subic Bay.

Goh said details were to be worked out but the move would have to be within the

framework of a November 1990 accord for US use of mil-



itary facilities here. The United States wants to moved here its command task

force 73, which handles supplies and other logistics for the surface ships to the US Seventh Fleet based in Yokosuka, Japan.

Up to 200 navy personnel and dependents would be transferred to Singapore.

We welcome the presence of America in terms of security in this area. Goh said in principle we have told the president that there is no problem.

The move would mark a further expansion of military cooperation between Washington and Singapore, which 14 months ago granted increased use of facilities here for US ship visits, repairs and air force training missions.

Ninety-five US personnel are currently based here with 75 more allowed in for each air force training mission. A half-dozen US F-16 fighters

are rotated in and out.

Officials travelling with Bush, who leaves tomorrow for Seoul, said negotiations were under way for use of facilities in Malaysia and Thailand.

They said the goal was to create a network of security arrangements in the region including Guam, Japan, Korea and Alaska.

Bush acknowledged that with the end of the cold war the threat to Asian nations is "way, way down" but said there was always the concern a regional conflict could erupt.

We are not in a war frame of mind. We are in a peace frame of mind, the president said. But we're keeping for eyes open.

# Croatian, Serbian forces break ceasefire

BEIGRADE, Jan 4: Croatian and Serbian forces both broke the ceasefire which was to have gone into effect on Friday, reports from Belgrade and Zagreb said, reports AFP.

Belgrade television said Croatian forces violated the ceasefire just minutes after its effective time.

The Croats fired multiple rocket launchers against Okucani, 100 kilometres (60 miles) east of Zagreb, from the town of Nova Gradiska, the television said.

The Croats opened fire a quarter hour after the ceasefire was to have gone into effect at 6 pm (1700 GMT), the television said.

Tanjung news agency said that the Croats also unleashed a rocket salvo at Lipik

ties to Indo-China.

He said the United States was lifting the trade embargo imposed on Cambodia in 1975 after the ultra-Marxist Khmer Rouge ousted a pro-western government in Phnom Penh.

Working with others, we need to turn attention to the economic reconstruction of that deeply wounded land, so its new political reconciliation has a home from which to grow, the US leaders said.

But he pegged a lifting of the trade embargo imposed on Vietnam to resolutions of overriding, compelling concerns regarding American soldiers missing in the Vietnam war.

Bush also said it was premature to discuss an end to the US trade sanctions imposed on the military regime in Burma since 1988 for alleged human rights abuses.