

# India reduces forces from its border with China

NEW DELHI, Dec 4: India has thinned out 35,000 soldiers from its disputed Himalayan border with China, a newspaper reported Friday.

Defence officials said the withdrawal reflected a new era of peaceful relations between India and China, who fought over the boundary in 1962.

But the Indian Express newspaper said some army officers feared the "sudden and massive withdrawal" could affect India's defence preparedness, leave many areas unguarded and affect India's defence strategy.

The Express said the decision would be hard to reverse. The mountainous terrain, at about 14,000 feet elevation, requires time for troops to acclimatise, and the abandoned forward positions were likely to deteriorate quickly in the harsh weather.

The report did not say when the soldiers were ordered out. The Defence Ministry spokesman declined to comment.

Officials who spoke on condition of anonymity confirmed that India had reduced its forces recently, but they declined to confirm the figure of 35,000.

# N-programme not weapons-oriented Pakistan won't abandon N-plan

ISLAMABAD, Dec 4: Pakistan denied on Thursday that it had nuclear bombs and said it would use its nuclear technology only for peaceful purposes, reports Reuter.

But Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif said in a speech that Islamabad would not bow to any pressure to abandon its nuclear programme.

The official APP news agency quoted Sharif as telling a meeting of lawyers in Lahore that "the nuclear technology achieved by the country would be used purely for peaceful purposes."

His comments followed a statement this week by US Senator Larry Pressler that Pakistan had at least seven nuclear bombs and an NBC news report that Islamabad had readied a nuclear weapon to drop on India in the spring of 1990 when the Indian army was conducting war games near the border.

APP quoted a Foreign Ministry spokesman as saying Pakistan's nuclear programme was for peaceful purposes and was not weapons-oriented.

The NBC report on Wednesday said that Pakistan's 1990 plan was to use a C-130 cargo plane to drop the device on India.

Then Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto said she was alerted to the nuclear plan by the US Ambassador to Pakistan. She protested to the military and was then overthrown.

"I have no proof for this but I feel that someone may have turned on the (nuclear) switch in the spring of 1990 to justify the dismissal of my government and, now, having done that, does not know how to turn that switch off and explain to the people who turned it on that she was right and they were wrong," Bhutto told NBC.

But Pakistan's Foreign Secretary Shaharyar Mohammad Khan dismissed her claim.

"Can you really believe that the Prime Minister is — doesn't even know that certain things are happening in this sensitive area?" he asked.

Pressler told NBC on Tuesday the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) had described the Pakistani nuclear programme to him.

"They'd have the capability within a matter of hours to have a bomb in an aeroplane and flying some places and dropping it," Pressler said.

NBC said Pakistan was able to buy sophisticated nuclear technology in the United States and Europe with the approval of the Reagan administration because of its role in helping US backed rebels in neighbouring Afghanistan.

The United States stopped all military and new economic aid to Pakistan in 1990 after President George Bush declined to certify to Congress that Islamabad did not have nuclear weapons.

# 60 killed in fresh Tajik fighting

MOSCOW, Dec 4: Dozens of people have been killed in fresh fighting between warring groups in the troubled Central Asian state of Tajikistan, Interfax news agency said today, reports Reuter.

Radical Muslim groups clashed with ex-communist forces in the southern outskirts of the capital Dushanbe and outside the town of Kofarnikhon, 25 km (15 miles) to the east.

Reports from the Tajik capital said the number of dead has reached 60, the agency said but did not make clear whether all the victims had died on Friday.

Security officials reported clashes outside Dushanbe on Thursday.

A Dushanbe resident contacted by telephone reported tanks were patrolling the capital and the airport and said gunfire could be heard in the outskirts.

It was not immediately possible to contact officials to confirm the Interfax report.

The ex-communists, who have gained the upper hand in the unofficial civil war raging through the former Soviet republic, on Thursday announced a new government.

The previous cabinet was dominated by Islamic radicals, who ruled the republic for 10 weeks in a coalition with democrats before stepping down last month.

## BRIEFLY

**Harminder Singh killed:** A top militant and member of the Panthic Committee (Dr Sohan Singh), identified as Harminder Singh Sultanwind, was among 14 militants killed in parts of Punjab since last night, police said Thursday, reports PTI from Chandigarh.

Harminder Singh Sultanwind, who carried a reward of ten lakh rupees on his head, committed suicide by consuming a cyanide capsule when cornered by policemen following a gunbattle near a canal bridge near village Kube under Khanna police district, the SSP Khanna, Raj Shehan Bedi said.

Bedi said Harminder Singh Sultanwind had close links with Pakistan and was responsible for bringing arms and ammunition into the country on a very large scale.

The militants were wanted in numerous cases of killings, bomb blasts and the attack on the Punjab Minister for Health, Maninderjit Singh Bitta, in Amritsar. The minister was seriously injured in the attack, he said.

**UK-Hungary defence pact:** Britain and Hungary signed a defence agreement Thursday which will strengthen contacts between the armed forces of both countries, reports AP from London.

Field Marshal Sir Richard Vincent, chief of Britain's defence staff, and Gen Kalman Lorincz, chief of Hungary's home defence forces, agreed to a series of exchange visits between 1993 and 1995.

The accord also provides for discussions on the process of reforms and increasing the number of civilians in the defence ministries.

Under the agreement, the chief of Britain's air staff and the director of the Royal Artillery will visit Hungary next year. There will be reciprocal visits by the chiefs of Hungary's home defence forces and home defence staff.

**14 die in Colombian blast:** A powerful car bomb went off in western Medellin overnight, killing 14 people, 10 of them police officers, police said Friday, reports AFP from Colombia.

Nineteen people were also seriously injured in the blast, which occurred at around midnight, police added.

No group has claimed responsibility for the blast, although police suspect it was the work of escaped Medellin drug cartel boss Pablo Escobar, seeking revenge for the death last week of one of his aides in a shootout with police.

The car bomb was packed with 120 kilograms (265 pounds) of dynamite and detonated by remote control, police said.

**Iran for Islamic news network:** Iranian President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani called on Thursday for the formation of an Islamic news network to challenge the West's "arrogant" media, reports Reuter from Nicosia.

In a message read at a meeting of bureau chiefs of Iran's state-run news agency IRNA, Rafsanjani said "arrogant lie broadcasting networks" distorted facts in the interest of the industrial countries, IRNA reported.

"Therefore, it is vital for the mass media of the Islamic world to set up an Islamic news network for safeguarding Muslim interests against cultural invasion and the arrogant media."

Iranian media rely heavily on western news organisations for covering world events although IRNA, one of the better organised non-western news agencies, maintains about 30 overseas bureaux.

**Mine blast kills 3 in Russia:** A methane explosion rocked a potassium mine in the Ural Mountains, killing three miners and severely burning three others, the ITAR-Tass news agency reported Thursday, says AP from Moscow.

The gas built up during drilling at the mine 370 kilometers (230 miles) north of Perm, a city on the Kama River, chief mine engineer Boris Tolmachev said.

It was the second fatal mine blast in Russia this week. On Tuesday, a methane gas explosion killed 23 coal miners in Siberia.

In the first 10 months of the year, there were 120 coal mining accidents in Russia, killing 125 people, the State Committee on Coal Mining said. In the same period in 1991, there were 93 accidents.

**18 Whites hurt in blast:** At least 18 whites were injured by a bomb explosion in a crowded restaurant. Police said Friday they suspected the attack was politically motivated, the second in a week, reports AP from Johannesburg.

The bombing just before midnight Thursday in Queenstown was about 60 miles (100 kilometers) from King William's Town, where four elderly whites were killed Saturday in a gun and hand grenade attack by black gunmen at a country club Christmas party.

The Azanian People's Liberation Army, armed wing of a radical black nationalist group, the Pan Africanist Congress, claimed responsibility for the country club attack and said it would step up a campaign against white targets.



GIRLS! GIRLS! GIRLS! Miss world organiser, Julia Morley (foreground), pleads with photographers at a photo call for the 83 finalists at Sun City on Thursday.

**Angola sets up war cabinet**

LUANDA, Dec 4: Angola's new government has set up a war cabinet, strengthening its military muscle against a UNITA rebel push for power, reports Reuter.

The ruling MPLA party said the new government would be sworn in today.

UNITA (National Union for the Total Independence of Angola) had still not confirmed whether it would accept the four minor posts offered in the new administration. Most diplomats believed it would choose instead to continue its military offensive.

Angola has been poised on the edge of war since UNITA leader Jonas Savimbi rejected the results of September 29-30 elections which failed to give him the victory he expected.

UNITA fighters have occupied more than 75 per cent of national territory in violation of May 1991 peace accords which ended 16 years of civil war with the MPLA.

A war cabinet was announced on Thursday comprising Matos and the foreign, finance, interior and prime ministers.

Diplomats expected that once the MPLA had the legitimacy of a government in place, it would probably act quickly to meet UNITA's military challenge.

AP adds: South Africa said it has withdrawn its diplomats from Angola due to the "volatile situation" in the war-torn country.

Relations have deteriorated in recent weeks amid allegations that South Africa resumed aid to the UNITA rebels, who are fighting Angola's leftist government. South African has vehemently denied the charges.

"The allegation are lies and even the United Nations observer (in Angola)... said there was no evidence of this,"

**Peacekeepers suspend flight over Bosnia**

SARAJEVO, Dec 4: UN peace-keepers suspended all international relief and logistic flights over Bosnia for 48 hours after a plane carrying their commander was hit by gunfire, reports Reuter.

The United Nations said no one was hurt and the plane taking major general Philippe Morillon from Sarajevo landed safely in Zagreb on Thursday after it was hit by six bullets shortly after take-off.

Heavy fighting raged in the Muslim suburb of Otes near Sarajevo airport, and the city's crisis centre reported 41 killed and 118 wounded in the past 24 hours, the highest daily toll for weeks.

UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) spokesman in Geneva Ron Redmond confirmed that the suspension of aid flights would be extended until "assurances were given this gunfire will stop."

"Obviously these planes flying in are at an altitude that would indicate that they're not

**MPs urge Rao to help free Suu Kyi**

NEW DELHI, Dec 4: Indian opposition members of parliament urged Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao's government today to help secure freedom for imprisoned Myanmar opposition leader and Nobel Peace Prize-winner Aung San Suu Kyi, reports AFP.

Centrist Janata Dal (people's party) MP Syed Shahabuddin said India should "intervene, influence and persuade" the Myanmar military junta to release Aung San Suu Kyi, under detention since July 1989, and restore democracy.

His demand in parliament's lower house was backed by right-wing and communist members.

"We have a moral responsibility to save her life," said Saifuddin Choudhury of the Communist Party of India-Marxist, who demanded that India snap any links it had with Myanmar's military regime.

Former Speaker Rabi Ray said New Delhi should take up the issue at the United Nations.

**Facts about US-led mission to Somalia**

UNITED NATIONS, Dec 4: Here are facts about the US-led military mission to Somalia approved Thursday by the Security Council.

SIZE — Up to 28,000 US troops and Marines, plus 2,000 French troops and an undetermined number of soldiers from other countries.

COMPOSITION — So far the United States, France and Italy. Others considering sending troops or other support include Belgium, Canada, Egypt, Kenya, Nigeria, Pakistan and Zimbabwe.

THE MANDATE — To establish all necessary means to ensure as soon as possible a secure environment for humanitarian relief operations in Somalia. The enabling resolution is vague and says nothing about disarming combatants or restoring law and order.

COMMAND — US Marine Lt Gen Bob Johnston expected to be the military chief in charge of operations. Politically, the UN secretary-general and Security Council will keep tabs on operation.

DURATION — As long as needed to establish a secure environment for delivery of assistance. Decision on pull-out expected to be made by the United States and United Nations.

FUNDING — Cost not immediately known.

**Khmer Rouge frees six peacekeepers**

PHNOM PENH, Dec 4: Khmer Rouge guerrillas on Friday released six United Nations peacekeepers who had been seized three days earlier while monitoring troop movements in rural Cambodia, a UN official said, reports AP.

"Everybody is fine, they're free," said UN spokesman Eric Falt.

The peacekeepers — three Britons, two Filipinos and a New Zealander — were handed over to a team of Indonesian peacekeepers who had brought a letter from a local Khmer Rouge military commander demanding their release, he said.

## Off the Record

### Another Christmas away from home

FORT DRUM, NY: Rhonda Young did her Christmas shopping early. She may do her celebrating late if, as she expects her husband is among the US troops heading to Somalia, reports AP.

"This comes with marrying a soldier," she said. "I'm prepared for him to go, but I don't want him to go out of our control."

Military families turned their attention away from holiday plans Thursday as the UN Security Council approved a US-led force to safeguard relief operations for famine-wracked Somalia.

At Camp Pendleton, Marines and supporting Navy personnel were told to be ready to leave at any time, perhaps as early as Friday, said Lt Kevin Bentley, a base spokesman.

"If you miss Christmas, you miss Christmas. That's part of being a Marine," Bentley said.

"My husband's unit got their shots today and were told they may want to change any pending plans," said Mrs Young, whose husband, Dan, is a sergeant.

Once the order comes down, a quick-strike unit like the 10th Mountain Division can be ready for deployment within 18 hours.

"I'm excited about going, especially for the reason we're going," Spc Barry Powell said outside a restaurant near the post 130 kilometers (80 miles) north of Syracuse. "It's sick to be stealing food from starving people."

### The royal puppets removed

LONDON: The Sun reported Friday that a Buckingham Palace complaint has led to a top department store in London's West End removing a Christmas window display featuring puppet caricatures of three of the royal family, reports AP.

The London tabloid said the window display at the up-market department store Liberty featured Prince Andrew, his separated wife, the Duchess of York, and Prince Edward.

The puppets were dressed as characters from pantomime, a traditional children's entertainment staged by British theaters at Christmas featuring age-old stories like Cinderella updated with modern jokes and songs. Some female roles are traditionally played by men and vice versa in the boisterous shows.

Andrew, 32, the second eldest of Queen Elizabeth II's four children, was Prince Charming. The Sun said. The Duchess, 33, was a fat Cinderella, and Edward, 28, the youngest of the queen's children, was one of the Ugly Sisters from the Cinderella story.

The Sun said it was understood a palace official called the store after one of the royals — it did not say which one — spotted the window display while driving past.

The Sun said store managers quickly removed the figures, which it said had been specially ordered from the company that makes the grotesque rubber puppets featured in the popular TV satire show "Spitting Image."



### Daughter Indeed

HILLSBORO, Ore.: A woman who took her Alzheimer's-afflicted father a nursing home and abandoned him at a dog track 320 miles (510 kilometers) away was convicted Thursday of kidnapping, theft and perjury, reports AP.

Circuit Judge Alan Bonebrake, who heard 10 days of testimony without a jury, also convicted Sue Gifford, 41, of unlawfully seeking public assistance.

Gifford was allowed to remain free pending her sentencing February 5. She could be sentenced to six years in prison.

Gifford's 83-year-old father, John Kingery, who suffered from Alzheimer's disease, was left with a bag of diapers next to his wheelchair on March 21 at a dog-racing track near Post Falls in northern Idaho.

The labels were cut from his clothing. A note misidentified him as John King and said he had Alzheimer's which causes memory loss.

Kingery died November 2 at a Morgantown, Ky, nursing home, where children from his first marriage had placed him. They had lost contact with Kingery until they recognized him from news reports of his abandonment.

Gifford, who lives in Hillsboro, was Kingery's daughter from a second marriage. She took responsibility for Kingery after her brother dumped her father at her doorstep in November 1990, said her lawyer, Wilbur Smith.

### IAEA happy over its inspection in North Korea

VIENNA, Dec 4: The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) said it was satisfied with the results of inspections it has been carrying out in North Korea since May this year, reports AFP.

The four missions carried out since May had gone ahead without difficulty. IAEA Director General Hans Blix Thursday told the agency's board of governors meeting in Vienna, where the agency is based.

Blix said in his report that, over 195 days, IAEA inspectors had visited seven nuclear installations and two nuclear dumps which were on a list presented to IAEA by North Korea when an inspection accord was signed on April 10.

# Troops deployment to Somalia a challenge for Clinton

LITTLE ROCK, (Arkansas) Dec 4: For President-elect Clinton, the deployment of US troops to Somalia carries both risk and opportunity, offering a major challenge in the earliest days of the new administration, reports AP.

A potential foreign policy crisis could distract Clinton from his pledge to focus on the homefront, but also provide an immediate chance to prove himself on the world stage — and as commander in chief.

President Bush hopes to have any military operation to provide famine relief completed by the time Clinton takes office. But given the anarchy in the African nation and the depths of the starvation, many senior Clinton advisers are convinced no military support operation could end that quickly.

They expect Clinton to inherit Bush's Somalia policy — and a deployment of perhaps 30,000 US troops.

"They are going to get us into this and we are going to have to get us out," said a senior Clinton transition aide who spoke on condition of anonymity.

And so Clinton and his aides watch with some trepidation as the Somalia policy unfolds — choosing their words carefully and trying not to meddle in Bush's affairs while stopping sort of any blanket endorsement.

Senior Clinton advisers are concerned that the mission has not been clearly defined. Just what would US troops do? Who would command them? What would be the rules for engaging Somalia militia units? What would trigger a withdrawal?

Because of these and other concerns, the Clinton camp terms itself "generally supportive" when asked about Bush's Somalia policy.

"We are not going to give them carte blanche," a senior Clinton aide said. "We are not going to rubber stamp any agreements they reach with the Security Council."

In brief comments to reporters Thursday, Clinton said he was withholding judgment until the proposals before the United Nations were finalised.

"I've been fully informed, but I need to let them make a final decision and to see exactly what's being done," Clinton said. "There are

some things still to be worked out, as you might imagine."

During the campaign, Clinton expressed the desire for a larger United Nations role in regional conflicts, including a permanent UN rapid deployment force for situations like the Somalia crisis.

Also, Clinton advisers are adamant that the goals and missions of any American deployment be clearly stated, so that Clinton does not inherit an open-ended US troop commitment.

Important Clinton allies in Congress echo that view.

"There will be a never-ending series of tasks that we could be called on to perform unless we know clearly where we are stopping," said Georgia Sen. Sam Nunn, chairman of the Senate Armed Service Committee.

A success for Clinton in Somalia could help the new president put to rest campaign-season doubts about his foreign policy credentials and questions about his qualifications to serve as commander in chief that were raised by the

controversy over his avoidance of the Vietnam draft.

But Clinton aides also worry that an instant foreign policy crisis, particularly one involving potential use of military force, could attract attention they would rather see focused on Clinton's economic and other domestic initiatives.

"This is the job of the president and he intends to fulfill it," Clinton communications director George Stephanopoulos said Thursday when asked if Clinton was daunted by the prospect of inheriting the Somalia crisis. "He is up to speed on the challenges and is prepared to handle them."

Still, Clinton aides had hoped for at least a brief post-inaugural period where Clinton could direct the overwhelming amount of his attention to economic and other domestic priorities — the theme of his campaign.

"Obviously, whether it's Russia or Bosnia or Somalia or the Mideast or several of these or somewhere else, there are going to be major foreign policy questions to answer early in the term," said a senior Clinton adviser.

### US, Ukraine sign maritime agreement

WASHINGTON, Dec 4: The United States and the former Soviet republic of Ukraine signed their first maritime agreement on Thursday and US officials called it "a very practical and helpful" step toward increased trade, reports AP.

The three-year agreement was signed by the United States by Transportation Secretary Andrew H. Card Jr, who said it was made possible by the end of the Cold War and signals the beginning of a new relationship between the two countries.

"The rapid changes that have come in your country have made this treaty possible," Card said.