BRIFFIY

Bush to hold talks with Major, Delors: President George Bush will hold talks on US-European affairs with British Prime Minister John Major and European Community President Jacques Delors on December 18, the White House announced on Monday, reports Reuter from Washington.

Spokesman Marlin Fitzwater said the session was the secand of the twice-yearly consultation between the United States and the EC and it will cover "a wide range of issues of common concern."

Major will take part in his capacity as the current President of the European Council. Delors is President of the Commission of the European Communities.

Fitzwater said the officials would hold a meeting and working lunch at the White House.

16 killed as Pak bus collides: At least 16 people were killed and six injured in a head-on collision Monday between a small bus and a wagon in central Punjab province, the official Associated Press of Pakistan (APP) reported, says AFP from Islamabad.

The bus was on its way from Jhang to Multan when the accident occurred near Haveli Bahadur Shah.

Thirteen people were killed instantly, while three others died later in hospital.

8 trapped in Virginia: An explosion rocked an underground coal mine, trapping eight miners about a mile (kilometre and a half) inside, and rescuers worked into the night Monday trying to reach them. A ninth miner crawled to safety, reports AP from Norton.

The rescuers, moving gingerly for fear of setting off a second explosion, had traveled about 2,800 feet (4,505) km) into by about 10 pm, said Harry Childress, head of the state department of Mines, Minerals and Energy. The blast happened about 6:15 am.

Asked if there was a chance the miners might still be alive, Childress said, "We always feel it's likely until we find otherwise." Relatives awaited word outside the mine in the heart of Appalachia.

Iraqi N-engineer shot dead: An Iraqi nuclear engineer who had tried to flee the Middle East with his family was shot dead in broad daylight on a street in the Jordanian capital on Monday, relatives said, Reuter reports from Amman. Relatives and security officials said Moayyad Hassan Naji Al-

Janabi was shot in the head as he walked with his wife and two small children through a crowded Amman neighbourhood on his way to pick visas.

"He came from behind and shot my husband - I never saw him from the front", said his wife, Wafa Subhi Ali Al-Janabi, 35, her voice breaking.

She said she and her husband along with their two children - a girl of six and boy of four - were on their way to pick up Tunisian visas for transit to Libya when he was shot.

2 die as storm lashes California: A storm pelted California with heavy rain, snow and wind Monday, spawning a tornado, derailing railroad cars, closing freeways and Disneyland and flooding homes. Two deaths were blamed on the weather, reports AP from Los Angeles.

The tornado touched down in San Diego County, destroying three earports at a mobile home park in Carlsbad, the National Weather Service said. Up to 30 inches (75 cm) of snow fell in the Sierra Nevada. Snow closed schools in Oregon and Nevada.

Heavy rain undermined the track on an overpass south of downtown Los Angeles, causing four freight cars of a train to derail. Southern Pacific Lines reported.

One of the cars contained sodium hydroxide, which the railroad described as a moderately toxic material, and the California Highway Patrol shut down part of nearby Harbor Freeway.

Iran demands rebuilding

of Babri Mosque

NICOSIA, Dec 8: Iranian

Foreign Minister Ali Akbar

Velayati on Tuesday summoned

the Indian ambassador in

Tehran and demanded the re-

building of a mosque destroyed

ready has said it will try to re-

build the Babri mosque, whose

destruction Sunday outraged

Muslims worldwide and

threatened widescale violence

among India's 700 million

Hindus' and 100 million

sador, Mohammad H Ansari,

that the mosque's destruction

"caused world Muslims' wrath

and hatred," the official

Islamic Republic News Agency

government to launch a rapid

reconstruction of the mosque,

monitored in Cyprus.

people," Velayati said.

around the world.

the agency said in a dispatch

tion of the world Muslims from

the Indian government, which

can also foil the plot to sow

discord among the Indian

tual leader Ayatollah Ali

Khamenei blamed "the enemy"

United States and the West -

- usually a reference to the

for instigating the incident to

humiliate Muslims in India and

try to rebuild the mosque and

will take "the strongest action

possible under the law against

those who destroyed it, chief

Indian government spokesman

S Narendra said Monday.

The Indian government will

On Monday, Iranian spiri-

"This is the least expecta-

He called on the Indian

Velayati told the ambas-

Muslims.

reported.

The Indian government al-

by Hindu fanatics, reports AP.

Tel Aviv seals off Gaza Strip

JERUSALEM, Dec 8: Israel scaled off the strike-bound Gaza Strip and enforced daytime curiews after the killing of three soldiers in a tense buildup tomorrow's fifth anniversary of the Palestinian uprising, army spokesmen and correspondents said today, reports AFP.

The closure came as a massive search operation continued around Gaza city for the perpetrators of the most murderous attack on the army in the occupied territories since the Intifada erupted on the strip on December 9, 1987. It was the first time three soldiers were killed in a single incident.

The deaths made 1992 the worst year for the army since the intifada began, leaving 11 soldiers dead, as many as for all the previous four years together.

eurfew on most of the refugee camps, including Jabalia where the first blood demonstration of the Intifada erupted, two Gaza city neighbourhoods and the town of Khan Yunis.

The army responded with

At dawn today soldiers closed indefinitely the cross ing points into Israel to the 750,000 Gazans, thereby throwing out of work 30,000 l'alestinian labourers who travel daily into Israel.

At the same time, the Islamic resistance movement Hamas, whose armed wing claimed responsibility for the shootings, launched a two-day general strike to mark the uprising, a correspondent re-

The Palestine Liberation Organisation, with the stron gest popular support, stages its anniversary strike throughout the territories tomorrow.

But shops and schools were already closed today and transport was off the roads as the Hamas' call was followed throughout the narrow band of land running down to Egypt.

Gaza city was effectively scaled off from the rest of the

strip by army road blocks, an AFP correspondent said.

The road blocks were set up around the city as the hunt went on, the army announced, and extra troops were brought

The attack came on the main road running north of the city when several Palestinians overtook the soldiers on patrol in a jeep, the army said. The reservists died on the spot and had no chance to riposte.

Security had been stepped up across the territories ahead of tomorrow's anniversary More troops have been de ployed and most police leave cancelled.

for Hong Kong

Tuesday for Hong Kong for husband, reports AP.

leave at 2 pm.

counts to Philippine banks.

Mrs Marcos faces 46 criminal and civil suits in the antigraft court in connection with from the 20-year rule of her

Imelda to leave

MANILA, Dec 8: Imelda Marcos said she would leave what her staff said would be discussions on the transfer of Swiss bank deposits of her late

The widow of former President Ferdinand Marcos was to leave aboard a Philippine Airlines plane at 5:15 pm (0915 GMT). Earlier, her staff had said she would

On Monday, the anti-graft court gave Mrs Marcos 20 days to travel abroad to meet her husband's trustees and foreign lawyers about transferring 356 million dollars in Swiss ac-

corruption charges stemming husband, who died in exile in Hawaii in 1989.

PLO maintains low profile in peace talks

WASHINGTON, Dec 8: Palestinians brought a small delegation to Middle East peace talks on Monday to signal their growing distillusionment with the peace process, reports Reuter.

Barbara Bush.

The Palestinian decision to send only a truncated fourmember team to Washington, instead of the previous 14 delegates, cast a shadow over round eight of the Middle East peace talks which opened at the State Department and were to last until December

The other participants sracl, Syria, Jordan and

Lebanon - showed up with their usual sizeable delega-

WASHINGTON: US President George Bush (R) watches as comedian Dana Carvey of the

US does his George Bush impersonation on Monday. Carvey and his wife Paula spent the

night at the White House as guests of President George Bush and his wife, First Lady

Palestinian spokeswoman Hanan Ashrawi said Palestinians had asked the United States to alter the form of the talks so that US officials could enter the negotiating room and join directly in the discussions.

"May be they (the United States) can work out three-way trifateral discussions in older to overcome some of the basic obstacles," she said.

At the moment, the United States and Russia as co-sponsors try to help the parties but do not take part in the actual talks. Israel quickly rejected the idea of changing this pol-

- AFP/UNB photo

"There is no substitute for direct, face-to-face negotiations," said Israeli spokesman Yossi Gal, "once a third party steps in, then all the rules of the game are different."

The rules of the current process were worked out by former US Secretary of State Tanies Baker in eight missions to the Middle East last year Neither the outgoing Bush administration nor the incoming Clinton team was likely to risk tampering with them.

"The face of communalism

(religious and ethnic animos-

ity) which we had hoped had

died down in its bitterest form

in 1947 at the time of parti-

head and it has to be con-

tion has once again arisen its

trolled because we don't want

the subcontinent to turn into

another former Yugoslavia," Ms

Bhutto told the BBC.

"We believe that if we are to live together in peace we must learn as a first step to talk to each other without intermediaries," said Yossi Gal, spokesman for the Israeli delegation

AFP adds : Israeli negotia-

tors Monday rejected a

Palestinian proposal to call in a

US mediator to break the im-

passe in their bilateral peace

in Washington, for the eigh round of talks. Throve The Palestinians had earlier told Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs Edward Djerejian they wanted the United States to join a trilateral session to help overcome their stalemate on the

occupied territories.

Spokeswoman Hanan Ashrawi said the Palestinians had rejected an Israeli proposal for joint Israeli-Palestinian control over a quarter of the occupied territories during the five-year interim period.

"We think the Americans can play a more constructive role and we proposed trilateral meetings between the Israelis, Palestinians and Americans. The Americans said they were looking into this possibility," said Ashrawi.

She said her delegation has asked to meet with Djerejian before their next meeting with the Israelis today.

Klerk vows to take action against rebels

CAPE TOWN, Dec 8: South African President F W De Klerk has vowed to take action against the armed wing of the radical Pan Africanist Congress and Nelson Mandela called the new guerilla threat to White civilians "extremely regrettable," reports Reuter.

The Azanian People Liberation Army (APLA), armed wing of the all-Black PAC, threatened in a telephone call to the south African Press Association on Monday to mount guerilla attacks specifically against Whites. Confirming APLA's respon-

sibility for two attacks that killed five Whites and wounded 38 in the past two weeks, APLA spokesman Cogo Jibril said they were "Just the beginning.

Off the Record

Never send gifts of food for Clinton

LITTLE ROCK, Ark: The Elvis stuff is neat. So are the jogging suits, the baseball caps, the T-shirts. And the plastic iguanas gave the mail room folks a chuckle, reports AP.

But stop sending President-elect Clinton gifts of food. He's not eating

"I hate to say this don't use my name - but it gots thrown out," said an aide. "Secret Service won't let him eat it."

Hundreds of unsolicited gifts are sent each day to Clinton, his family and his staff - even to his family's pet. The items are boxed up

by his staff, and an inventory list is sent to the Arkansas governor's mansion. The Clintons can sean the list and take a peek at the more interesting items.

'I think the reason they're getting so many gifts is everybody is so excited about the new President," said mail room clerk Tony Poe.

The President-elect has received a giant dollar bill, pansy seeds, underwear and handmade clock. One fan sent Clinton an artistic interpretation of his "New Covenant" campaign theme: an oil painting of an angel with ribbons reading. "Hope," "Responsibility," and "Community."

Socks, the family cat, has received several gifts, including a "tuxedo collar" for inaugural activities and a cozy Afghan, appropriate for catnapping.

But most of the packages come addressed to the President-elect.

Pictures of Clinton jogging have prompted dozens of people to send running attire.

One's trash, another's treasure

NEW HAVEN, Conn: Two doctors seeking medical supplies for hospitals in developing countries have found that one hospital's trash may be another's treasure, reports AP.

Unused but opened surgical supplies that once were discarded after each operation are being collected and prepared for redistribution under a programme developed by Drs William H Rosenblatt and David G Silverman at Yale-New Haven Hospital

In 18 months, the doctors and their fellow volunteers have recovered nearly 200,000 worth dollars of supplies for donation to charities. Most of the material has gone to Leon, Nicaragua, New Haven's sister city. A recent shipment was sent to Yugoslavia.

The supplies include surgical sponges, gowns, tubes, gloves and sutures whose packaging has been opened but which have not come in contact with patients.

The items may be resterilized but hospitals in this country will not accept the liability for using them because the manufacturers warrant the products only for single use. The warranties are voided once the packages are opened.

Workers at other hospitals have collected and donated such supplies for many years, but the programme at Yale-New Haven is believed to be the limit dermal respress system,

Since reporting their project in September in The Journal of the American Medical Association, the doctors have received calls from around the country from medical profes sionals interested in duplicating the programme, Rosenblatt said. An information packet has been prepared for them.

Gorbachev doesn't love power

RIO DE JANEIRO: Former Soviet Leader Mikhail Gorbachev said in Brazil on Monday that he does not intend to return to power, reports Reuter.

"I was never in love with power," Gorbachev said, addressing businessmen and journalists in Rio De Jeneiro. "I have not plans to return to power now. But I will stay in touch with the political process.



In the second day of a four day visit to Brazil, Gorbachev said he would not oppose Russian President Boris Yeltsin, who has been implementing a reform programme that has cut production and sent inflation soaring.

Gorbachev also praised the "new generation of Chinese leaders" for carrying out economic reforms that raised living standards. But he criticised China for failing to carry out political reforms, as the Soviet Union did.

"The economic reforms must be followed by political reform," said Gorbachev, who called himself a "democrat with socialist principles."

He defended his own reforms saying: "I only regret that perestroika did not begin sooner.

\$ 40m for Panda project!

BEIJING: China would like foreigners to give 40 million dollar in aid for a major panda protection project, an official report said Tuesday, according to AP.

The Ministry of Forestry is to begin a decade-long project later this month to build 14 more nature preserves for the giant panda, which is native only to China, the China Daily reported.

The project will cost 300 million yuan (dirs 51 million), but the central government can provide only 60 million yuan (dlrs 10.3 million).

Fan Zhiyong, the forestry official heading the project, said aid and donations from foreign and domestic sources are needed to make up the difference:

Most of the money will be spent on resettling 5,000 farmers and relocating 18 timber production enterprises, Fan

The new reserves covering 4,240 square kilometres (1,696 square miles) will be in the Chinese provinces of Gansu, Shaanxi and Sichuan, the only places where the panda is found in the wild. Only an estimated 1,100 to 1,500 pandas

remain in the wild.

Russian govt steps back from threat to resign

MOSCOW, Dec 8: Russia's beleaguered reformist gov--ernment stepped back on Monday from a threat to resign en masse unless its leaders Yegor Gaidar was confirmed as full Prime Minister by the country's supreme legislature, reports Reuter.

delivered the ultimatum to ITAR-Tass news agency on Sunday and a Gaidar aide constatements.

Iranian newspapers Tuesday strongly denounced the destruction of the Babri mosque.

The English-language Tehran Times, which often reflects the views of President Hashemi Rafsanjani, called on the central government to "build the demolished mosque and give the guarantee for the safety of this holy place," IRNA reported.

The radical, Farsi-language Abrar said Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao must deal quickly with the situation if he "does not want to have the same fate as that of Indira Ghandi and her son."

Ghali plans peace troops for Mozambique

UNITED NATIONS, Dec 8: Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali proposed on Monday the establishment of a big new UN peace-keeping operation, involving about 7,500 troops, police and civilians, to help monitor an agreement ending a devastating civil war in Mozambique, reports Reuter.

The force, requiring Security Council approval, would be called the UN Operation in Mozambique (ONUMOZ).

The United Nations has already launched major peacekeeping missions this year in Yugoslavia, Cambodia and Somalia, in addition to maintaining nine existing operations in such places Lebanon, Cyprus, El Salvador and on the Iraq-Kuwait border.

Benazir appeals for calm wrath on the minority (Hindu) with India and we opened

LONDON, Dec 8: Pakistan's opposition leader and former prime minister Benazir Bhutto appealed for calm Tuesday following continued violence in India and Pakistan, sparked by the destruction of a 16th century mosque in India earlier this week, reports AP.

Muslim hard-liners in Pakistan declared a holy war against neighboring India to avenge Sundays destruction by Hindu extremists and dozens of Hindu temples in Pakistan were damaged Monday in retaliatory violence.

"I've appealed for people in Pakistan not to take out their

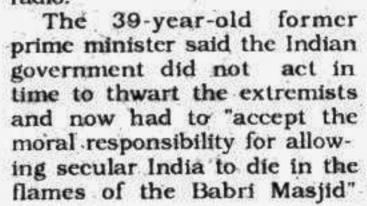
being felt here," Ms. Bhutto told British Broadcasting Corp

members in Pakistan... But lines of communication and certainly there is a lot of anger they were able to cool down the matter," Ms Bhutto told the BBC. She said the mosque burning had led to heightened The 39-year-old former tension between India and

Pakistan.

"When I was prime minister

in 1989 the forces of fanaticism at that time threatened to demolish the Babri Masjid. But we had a good rapport





KARACHI: Pakistan's main opposition leader Benazir Bhutto on Monday condemned the destruction of the Babri mosque in Ayodhya, India by Hindu extremists and urged the - AFP/UNB photo Pakistan government to review relations with India.

Clinton to lobby democrats for legislative support focusing on economic or two away, following his re-

stubbornness up here." House Speaker Thomas Folcy promised a productive partnership. He said lawmakers would move "with great effectiveness and efficiency in carrying out the programme"

offered by the new President. Clinton's visit to Capitol Hill Tuesday took precedence over and new administration.

Sen. Lloyd Bentsen, D-Texas, as Treasury Secretary. During an appearance Monday in Chicago, Clinton appeared to be seeking to dampen expectation that recent upbeat economic indica-

turn to Arkansas Tuesday

night. Perhaps the first an-

nouncements will be that of

tors spelled better times "We may or may not be Clinton said. "There are some good indicators that we are.

problems, Clinton opened his two-day visit with a brainstorming session with senior economic and health-care advisers.

The meeting at Blair House, the government guest house aeross from the White House, ran overtime Monday, and Clinton and Vice Presidentelect Al Gore-were more than a hour late for a social gathering with the 110 Democrats and Republicans newly elected to

Republicans. Instead, Clinton targeted four groups of

Democratic lawmakers: House and Senate committee chairmen, house Democrats as a whole and, separately, the freshman class of congressional Democrats.

month "with a great sense of responsibility and commitment and undertaking."

ocrats in control of Congress and the White House, "It places heavy responsibility upon us. We intend to succeed.

with lawmakers, Clinton was paying a courtesy call on Chief Justice William Rehnquist and speaking at a Democratic Leadership Council dinner before returning to Little Rock,

Apart from his meetings

joined about 300 people paying tribute to former first lady Rosalynn Carter at the 10th

anniversary celebration of a

nuclear arms-reduction group.

Singapore's Navy Chief resigns SINGAPORE, Dec 8 : The

new blood promised for Singapore's ruling hierarchy by Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong appeared Tuesday to be the former commander of the country's navy, reports AP.

who resigned from the navy Monday, is expected to run for parliament in a by-election on Dec. 19. Polling will be held only in the prime minister's four-seat Marine Parade constituency.

A government spokesman

istration will experience," Rep Pat Williams, D-Mont., said firmed that the man was au-Monday. thorised to make official "It's going to be a long

president.

easy sailing the Clinton admin-

honeymoon," Williams added. WASHINGTON, Dec 8: "Democrats on the Hill are Cautious about signs of ecostarved for someone to get nomic recovery, Presidentalong with at the White House. elect Clinton is returning to Bill Clinton's going to find no Capitol Hill to lobby congressional Democrats whose sup-

port will be crucial for the success of his legislative agenda, reports AP. Democrats said they were eager to work with the new "Perhaps the biggest surprise in store for people is the

> his efforts to build a cabinet Clinton aides said his first

appointments were just a day

ahead. coming out of our recession,"

But the long-term problems

are there.

the House. Tuesday's meeting excluded

Foley, newly re-elected to his position as Speaker, said Democrats approached the start of the new Congress next

He said that with Dem-

Monday night, Clinton and his wife, Hillary, were guests at a private dinner held by Katharine Graham, chairman of The Washington Post Co. Separately, Mrs Clinton

Local media said that Commodore Teo Chee Hean,