

## Pak opposition rally demands Sharif's resignation

**RAWALPINDI, Dec 22:** Thousands of people shouting anti-government slogans gathered in a Pakistan park on Monday for a rally at which opposition leaders demanded the resignation of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, reports Reuters.

“Goodbye, goodbye Nawaz Sharif,” the crowds shouted in the park in Islamabad’s twin city of Rawalpindi.

The opposition coalition led by former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto called the rally as part of its month-old campaign aimed at ousting a government it accuses of corruption, misuse and rigging the elections in 1990.

Bhutto did not attend the march through the city on the eve of a state of the nation address by President Ghulam Ishaq Khan.

## Koreas agree to resume talks on N-inspections

**SEOUL, Dec 22:** North and South Korea agreed today to resume talks later this week to try to resolve their dispute over mutual nuclear inspections, a southern spokesman said, reports Reuters.

“We accepted the North’s proposal to hold a working-level meeting on Thursday,” the spokesman said. The talks will take place at the border village of Panmunjom.

Talks on proposed mutual nuclear inspections broke down last week.

## Club-wielding troops on alert to fight deportees US urges Israel to take back Palestinians

**WASHINGTON, Dec 22:** The United States on Monday urged Israel to take back the 415 Palestinians stranded in a no-man’s zone between the countries, reports Reuters.

“I think Israel should take them back or find some other way at least to solve this problem, to remove them from this never-never land they’re in,” Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger said in a television interview.

“I can’t believe that they (the Israelis) can look at those people out there in the middle of nowhere, with nowhere to go, and being shot at from all

direction, and believe in the long run that this is the way to solve the problems, Eagleburger said on the MacNeil/Lehrer newshour programme.

“I cannot believe that the Israelis in the long run will be able to sustain this, he said, much as I sympathize with the problems that they face day after day after day, this is not the way to solve it.”

Two of the deportees were wounded on Monday when Israeli’s client militia, the south Lebanon army, opened fire twice with warning shots and shells on the 415 men as they tried to cross into Israeli-held territory in south Lebanon.

The Palestinians have spent four nights stranded in south Lebanon, Israel refuses to reconsider the decision to expel them while Lebanon, backed by Arab states that want to embarrass the Israelis, refuses to cooperate.

The UN Security Council has condemned the expulsion and demanded that Israel let the deportees go home.

Meanwhile Israel has put club-wielding troops on alert to fight the stranded men if they again try to return home.

On Monday two of the de-

portees were wounded when Israeli’s Client Militia, the South Lebanon Army (SLA), twice opened fire with warning shots and shells on the 415 men as they tried to cross into Israeli-held territory in south Lebanon.

Despite an international outcry, criticism at home that the expulsion is a public relations disaster, and appeals in Israel’s high court to reverse the expulsion, Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin said his government would not allow the men back.

“There is no pity in my heart for them,” Rabin said.

“Didn’t you expect this?” The opposition Likud’s Benjamin Netanyahu asked labour leader Rabin during the parliament debate, “didn’t you think you’d get stuck diplomatically and in a public relations sense?”

Lebanon — after a Rabin warning on Sunday not to try to send the men back — on Monday forbade emergency aid to them. Troops order the men to leave their camp and head southward.

The deportees have been stranded in a no man’s land since being banished last week after five Israeli soldiers were killed by militants of the Islamic fundamentalist movement Hamas.

Israeli security sources said helicopters were ready to fly troops armed with clubs to the Israeli line to push the deportees back.



ZEMRAYYA, Lebanon: Palestinian deportees leave their camp early Monday trying to cross the Israeli checkpoint at Zemrayya to return home. Pro-Israeli militiamen fired on hundreds of deportees with mortar and heavy machine gun as they tried to break through the checkpoint. —AFP/UNB photo

## Off the Record

### Jackson sues his private videotaper

**LOS ANGELES:** Michael Jackson is suing the man who used to videotape the star with his friends and family, claiming he sold the tapes without permission, reports AP.

Steve Howell, Jackson’s private videotaper until 1990, copied some tapes, sold them and pocketed the money, according to a lawsuit filed on Jackson’s behalf in federal court on Friday.

The lawsuit doesn’t say what was on the tapes, who bought them or for how much.

A message left Friday at Howell’s home wasn’t returned.

The lawsuit seeks at least 250,000 dollar in compensatory damages and unspecified punitive damages, a order forbidding Howell’s use of the tapes, and return of all tapes and copies.



### 'Sexual slavery was not a part of her job description'

**ALBANY, NY:** Penthouse magazine publisher Robert Guccione sexually harassed a former centerfold model, but the woman is not entitled to 4 million dollar in punitive damages, New York’s highest court decided Monday, reports AP.

Marjorie Lee Thoreson, the 1975 ‘Penthouse Pet of the Year,’ claimed Guccione forced her to sleep with his business associates and to appear sexually explicit scenes in his 1979 movie, ‘Caligula.’

She said she was fired from Penthouse in 1980 for refusing to accompany Guccione on a business trip.

State Supreme Court Justice Elliott Wilk had awarded Thoreson 4 million dollar in punitive damages and 60,000 dollar in compensatory damages, saying ‘sexual slavery was not a part of her job description.’

But the award for punitive damages was reversed by a mid-level state appeals court, and the reversal was affirmed by the Court of Appeals on Monday.

Bettina Plevan, a lawyer for Guccione, said the sexual harassment ruling was ‘disappointing but not surprising.’ She said it is unusual for the Court of Appeals to overrule a trial court on a finding of fact.

Murray Schwartz, a lawyer for Thoreson, said he was pleased that the court upheld the sexually harassment finding, but disappointed there was no multimillion dollar damage award.

### X-mas gift returns 50 years later

**VINCENNES, Ind:** A Christmas gift sent nearly 50 years ago has been returned—but with a nice thank—you note, reports AP.

Robert A. Azbill of Visalia, Calif., never got around to smoking the wartime gift of a pack of Camel cigarettes and thought maybe the residents of Vincennes, who sent them, would like them back for old time’s sake.

“I thought it may have been a little silly,” Azbill said, “I wasn’t sure how much value they would be to anyone there. It needn’t have worried. This is truly remarkable,” said Robert R. Stevens, the Vincennes Kiwanis Club’s treasurer.

In 1943, the club raised 635 dollar in a fund drive to purchase cigarettes for soldiers away from home during World War II.

Azbill got his pack when he arrived at the Coast Guard’s Mary Island Light Station in Alaska, about 20 miles south of Ketchikan, a few days after Christmas in 1943.

The pack is still intact with a label reading: ‘Greetings from Citizens of Vincennes and Kiwanis Club, Vincennes, Ind. Drop us a card.’

Azbill doesn’t know how the pack survived, since the smoked Camels.

He stopped smoking in 1982 and decided then to return the gift to Vincennes when 50 years had elapsed.

“This is only 49 years, Times marches on, but I will wait no longer,” he wrote. “I wish all of your citizens and the Kiwanis Club a very merry Christmas and a happy new year.”

The pack arrived in the mail last week.

“I think it’s great that someone can remember the club from that many years ago, said club president Doug McCormick. “It obviously means something to him for our club to have helped him out nearly 50 years ago.”

## NATO draws up possible ways to enforce 'no fly zone' over Bosnia

**BRUSSELS, Dec 22:** NATO military authorities have drawn up a list of possible ways Western nations could enforce a ‘no-fly’ zone over Bosnia, including shooting down Serbian aircraft and bombing airfields, sources said Monday, reports AP.

Ambassadors of the 16 nations of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization will meet Tuesday to discuss the thick options paper, which was put together at the request of UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali.

The United States and Britain intend to push this week for a UN resolution that would call for force, if necessary, to clear the skies over battered Bosnia-Herzegovina of Serbian military aircraft.

Serbia has been blamed for fomenting the violence that has killed more than 17,000 people in Bosnia. Serb fighters have seized 70 per cent of Bosnia in the conflict, with the backing of Serb-dominated Yugoslavia.

NATO sources said the document drawn up by senior military officials covers a wide variety of possibilities for enforcing the flight ban, which was imposed Oct 9 by the UN Security Council.

The options range from tighter enforcement at airports to keep helicopters and fixed-wing planes from taking off to attacking airfields and ‘targeting’ or shooting down aircraft violating the ban, said the sources, who demanded anonymity.

No recommendations were made by the alliance’s military committee, its highest military authority.

NATO ambassadors were expected to discuss the paper, then agree to send it to Boutros-Ghali for his future planning.

Boutros-Ghali recently asked NATO Secretary-General Manfred Woerner to share with me the results of any planning studies undertaken by NATO on stepped-up military measures in Bosnia.

In the letter, the UN chief mentioned possible enforcement of the no-fly zone, setting up safe havens in Bosnia and measures to prevent strife in Kosovo spilling over into Macedonia.

But the sources said the military committee’s paper focuses on halting violations of the flight edict. No enforcement measures were included when the ban was adopted.

President Bush and British Prime Minister John Major, meeting over the weekend at Camp David, Md, agreed that “it is necessary to enforce the no-fly zone.”

They set no deadline and refused to say what would trigger enforcement.

UN inspectors have detected more than 225 violations since the no-fly ban went into effect, but said none of the flights had been used for combat.

NATO foreign ministers agreed last Thursday to sup-



LISBON: Rescue workers carry a burned passenger December 21 from a helicopter after being flown to Lisbon from the crash site of a DC-10 belonging to the Dutch charter firm Martinair. The plane crashed at Faro airport in a heavy thunderstorm. —AFP/UNB photo

port enforcement of the prohibition, and the United States and the Netherlands offered aircraft to apply it.

Britain, which has some 2,700 soldiers guarding aid convoys in Bosnia, has been reluctant to expose its troops to additional risks in the war-torn region.

France has about 4,000 peacekeeping troops in Bosnia, but President Francois Mitterrand has favoured an enforcement resolution.

## BRIEFLY

**Kohl to visit Asia from Feb 18:** German Chancellor Helmut Kohl will tour Asia from February 18 to March 3, visiting India, Indonesia, Japan, Singapore and South Korea. It was announced Monday, reports AFP from Bonn.

The tour was originally scheduled for October but was postponed due to an emergency European Community summit in Birmingham, England that month.

**Peres cancels India tour:** Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres has called off his first visit to India because of Hindu-Muslim rioting. Israeli and Indian officials said on Monday, reports Reuters from New Delhi.

An Indian Foreign Ministry spokesman said Peres’ visit due next month, which would have been the first by a senior Israeli official, was postponed by ‘mutual agreement.’

An Israeli diplomat said new dates for the visit were being discussed. India and Israel established diplomatic relations in January this year.

Senior Indian officials said the visit was called off in the wake of Hindu-Muslim rioting in which more than a thousand people were killed.

**Ex-Filipino governor killed:** Gunmen ambushed and killed a former Philippines provincial governor Tuesday as he arrived to open his petrol station for the day, reports Reuters from Philippines.

Police said Francisco Abalos was about to get out of his car in Iligan city in the south when five men riding two motorcycles roared up and opened fire with automatic weapons.

Abalos was killed on the spot and another man wounded. Abalos’ wife Marietta had already left the car and escaped unhurt.

The former governor of Lanao de Norte in Southern Mindanao island lost his job in May elections.

**Bush, Yeltsin hold phone talks:** Russian President Boris Yeltsin and US President George Bush on Monday held their second telephone conversation in two days on issues linked to a planned START-2 treaty on reducing nuclear arms. Interfax news agency said, reports Reuters from Moscow.

It gave no details and no presidential spokesman was available to comment further.

Yeltsin caught US officials off guard last week when he declared that a START-2 treaty on further cuts in long-range nuclear weapons would be signed before Bush hands over power to President-elect Bill Clinton on January 20.

Bush told reporters after Sunday’s telephone conversation that the two countries had made real progress towards the treaty but it had not yet been totally agreed.

**ROK, Vietnam set up ties:** South Korea and Vietnam established formal diplomatic relations Tuesday, ending animosities that date to their confrontation in the Vietnam War, the Foreign Ministry said, reports AP from Seoul.

A statement issued jointly by the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and pro-West South Korea said the two nations would establish liaison offices in each other’s capitals on April 2.

The two former adversaries agreed to improve bilateral ties with mutual trade, investment and economic cooperation, said the statement released in Seoul. Korean businessmen and investors have been frequent travellers to Vietnam for more than a year. With higher labour costs at home, Korean businesses increasingly are moving factories and labour-intensive manufacturing to Southeast Asia.

**Bush's X-mas message to armed forces**

**WASHINGTON, Dec 22:** President Bush on Monday issued a Christmas message to the Armed Forces, praising them as proof of “the wisdom of America’s policy of peace through strength,” reports AP.

“Those of you who have served as part of NATO defence forces have helped to achieve a Europe whole and free,” it said.

Veterans of Operation Just Cause drove a ruthless dictator from Panama, and participants in Operations Desert Shield-Desert Storm liberated a small defenceless country while promoting the stability of the Persian Gulf region.

## Warring factions start moving weapons out of Mogadishu

**MOGADISHU, Dec 22:** Somalia’s two principal warring factions Monday began to move their mobile weapons out of the capital, clearing the way for an end to two years of bloody feuding that has left Mogadishu in ruins, a US State Department official said here, reports AP.

He said the evacuation was under an agreement signed by both sides two days after the massive multinational military landing here on December 9, but that the implementation was only sealed in recent days.

The evacuation, said the official, covered only the feared ‘technicals’, the civilian vehicles mounted with heavy machine guns and rocket launchers that have devastated the city.

“These are pretty threatening weapons systems, and removing them will be a big step towards getting this city back on its feet,” said the official, who asked not to be named.

The US official said the withdrawal was “a Somali operation... This is what they agreed to, this is what they want... We helped move it along.”

“Everybody wants to get the city moving again, to open the port, to open the airport, to get commerce restarted,” he said.

He said the United Somali Congress (USC) headed by General Mohamed Farah Aidid moved its technicals — about 30 — to compounds about 20 kilometres (12 miles) east of the capital on Monday.

Aidid’s chief rival, interim president Ali Mahdi Mohamed, was to pull out his technicals — also about 30 — today to compounds to the northwest of Mogadishu.

The official said evacuation routes were carefully chosen to avoid confrontation between the two sides.

The two warring factions had between them effectively divided up the Somali capital into northern and southern parts separated by a so-called green line — Ali Mahdi forces hold the north, Aidid forces the south.

The official said the removal of the technicals could signal the disappearance of the green line, where the two sides clashed and where armed independents with no affiliation regularly hijack vehicles and extort money from civilians. “We hope this action will be followed by political progress that will create a different environment here,” said the official.

He said the deal was that the technicals would remain in the compounds indefinitely, but he would not comment on what would be done if they returned calling that an operational matter.

“We do not intend to destroy these weapons,” said the official. They just have to be out of the city. That was the agreement.

A concerted information campaign was going on to make the independents aware of the new policy, he said.

## Leaders of the factions were

meanwhile reported to be in the Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa for US-brokered peace talks.

This action was reached with their full agreement, even though they were not here, said the official.

Technicals on both sides, initially dissuaded by the massive US military presence here, had renewed their activity in recent days as it seemed the US-led military role was simply to secure the port and airport.

International relief organizations complained Monday their people were being regularly terrorized and robbed by armed gunmen in north Mogadishu.

Two years of bitter factional

## French oil company decides to quit Assam

**GUWAHATI (India), Dec 22:** A French oil exploration company has decided to pull out of the northeast Indian state of Assam after receiving threats from Maoist guerrillas, a company official said today, reports Reuters.

The official of the Compagnie Generale Du Geophysique, who asked not to be identified, said the United Front for the Liberation of Assam (ULFA) sent a note threatening ‘dire consequences’ if it did not hand over 50 million rupees (1.9 million dollar).

“We cannot work in this environment of fear and the security promised to us is not adequate,” he said.

ULFA, which is fighting for an independent Assam, has frequently kidnapped businessmen for ransom to fund its war.

Police said they believed ULFA had kidnapped two Indian executives of a textile company on Monday.

Police spokesman Chinmoy Karmakar said the two men had left the synthetic plant they were helping set up in the town of Sipahjar for the 55 km (30 mile) drive to Guwahati, capital of tea-growing and oil-producing Assam.

They did not arrive and their vehicle was found abandoned.

“We have reasons to believe it is a kidnap,” Karmakar said.

Tea company executives have been a favourite ULFA kidnap target over the past few years.

The group kidnapped three tea company executives earlier this month and is still holding them. Construction magnate Pankaj Barua was kidnapped in November.

“We have pleaded with the marines for protection,” UNICEF representative Mark Thomas said. “They are aware of the problem, but they say they are waiting for more troops to arrive until they have sufficient force to address it.”

He said the nearly 30 food distribution centres operating north of the line were virtually paralyzed by the terror outside their doors, and badly needed food warehouses there were useless.

“There is a situation brewing there,” said Thomas.

## 16 killed in Delhi bus plunge

**NEW DELHI, Dec 22:** A speeding bus crashed into a roadside ditch in a village in eastern India, killing 16 people and injuring eight, a news agency reported Tuesday, says AP.

Fifteen people died on the site of the accident Monday night in the village of Banagram near Calcutta, 800 miles (1,280 kilometers) southeast of New Delhi, United News of India said.

One person succumbed to injuries on the way to hospital.

The injured were hospitalized and the condition of some of them was reported to be serious.

The wrecked bus was hauled out from the ditch by two cranes.