BRIFFIY

Ghali may visit Somalia, Bosnia:
UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Chali may visit Somalia
and Bosnia-Herzegovina during his travels to Europe and Africa during the new year holiday. UN officials said on Wednesday, reports Reuter from UN.

The Secretary-General leaves for Europe late on Wednesday and plans to be in Geneva from December 27 to 30 for a meeting on African development and discussions with political leaders of former Yugoslav states on the crisis in Bosnia.

The UN chief may make a lightning trip to Sarajevo from Geneva on December 28 or 29 but his spokesman. Joe Sills said the trip could not be confirmed.

Boutros-Ghali plans to be in the Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa on January 4 for a conference of Somali political factions and may visit Somalia and Djibouti afterwards.

Israeli President off to China: Israeli President Chaim Herzog left Wednesday for China for a state-visit aimed at sealing relations established in January.

officials said, reports AFP from Jerusalem. Herzog was accompanied by Deputy Foreign Minister Yossi Beilin. They left aboard a private plane owned by Israeli businessman Shahaul Eisenberg, who has large investments in the far cast.

China and Israel set up diplomatic ties on January 24,

Aftershock jolts Maumere: An aftershock jolted the earthquake ravaged town of Maumere early Thursday, but there were no reports of new damage or casualties, the Meteorology and Geophysics Agency reported, reports AP from Jakarta.

Residents of Maumere, a town on the eastern island of Flores that recently was flattened by a quake and tidal waves, were jolted awake by the 3:25 am (1925 GMT) aftershock, which measured 4.3 on the Richter scale, said Budi, an official at the Meteorology and Geophysics Agency.

The quake's epicentre was recorded in the Savu Sea, about 90 kilometres (56 miles) south of Maumere, at a depth of 61 kilometres (38 miles) below the earth's surface, Budi said.

Two brothers shot dead in Gaza: Soldiers shot dead two Palestinian brothers and wounded 42 people in the occupied Gaza Strip on Wednesday in a surge of unrest over Israel's expulsion of 415 Arabs, hospitals said, reports Reuter from Gaza.

Relatives said Israeli soldiers killed Ismael Abdeen, 27, when he stepped on to his balcony in the town of Khan Younis, which is under army curfew. His body fell to the street below.

Naim Abdeen, 32, enraged by the shooting of his brother, attacked soldiers with stones and was also killed, a cousin of the two told Reuters.

The deaths raised to 11 the number of Palestinians killed by soldiers since Israel expelled 415 Palestinians to Lebanon on December 17.

Angola seeks medical supplies: Angola's UN ambassador on Wednesday appealed to the world community for emergency medical supplies saying drought and warfare had devastated the country, reports Reuter from

"If relief does not come soon the results could be catastrophic," ambassador Afonso Van Dunem Mbinda told a news conference. He said food was also in short supply.

He said his government was launching an urgent appeal to humanitarian organisations around the world. He listed urgently needed medical supplies ranging from antibiotics to disposable syringes and surgical equipment such as scalpels, forceps and scissors.

Angola has been involved in a 17-year-old civil war which the world thought had ended after May 1991 peace agreements between the government and the UNITA movement.

Flood kills 7 in Indonesia: Flash flood and landslides, set off by heavy rain, have killed at least seven people in North Sumatra, a news report said Thursday, reports AP from Jakarta.

The daily Kompas said a heavy rain lasting two days started floods and landslides Tuesday in the Brastagi district, 68 kilometres west of the provincial capital of Medan, killing

seven people, injuring two and destroying 17 homes. Medan Ites 1,400 kilometres (875 miles) northwest of Jakarta.

The official Antara news agency reported that floods and landslides destroyed 59 homes in Balongga village, Palu regency. Central Sulawesi, on Tuesday.

UNGA okays \$ 150m fresh fund for peacekeepers

Responding to conflicts worldwide, the General Assembly on Wednesday unanimously approved a new 150 million dollar fund , to speed peacekeepers to crisis zones, reports AP.

The United Nations has launched 26 peacekeeping missions since 1948, 13 are under way today, most of them established in the last two

The peacekeeping budget has been especially strained by the 800 million dollar mission in Cambodia and 250 million dollar effort to bring peace to former Yugoslavia.

Operation Restore Hope for Somalia sidestepped the usually slow budgetary process for peacekeeping when participating nations agreed to pay their

UNITED NATIONS, Dec 24: - own costs for the relief opera-

Whether the world body can draw on the new peacekeeping reserve fund remains to be seen - a financial report released this week shows member states own the UN's general budget about 573 million dollar arrears for 1992, as of November 30. The US share of that bill is 295 million dol-

The assembly adopted the start-up funding measure, along with a package of other financial resolutions, on the last day of its regular annual

WASHINGTON, Dec 24:

Yugoslav planes would be open

to attack in the air or on the

ground if the UN Security

Council asks the United States

and other countries to enforce

its no-fly zone over Bosnia-

Herzegovina, US officials say,

Pentagon officials say their

first choice would be to track

violators back to their airfields,

destroying them on the

ground. Such an option would

be simpler and require fewer

planes than attacking only air-

its allies also are able to launch

an around-the-clock operation,

allowing for pursuit of airborne

some of its more hesitant al-

lies, stands ready to use its

with a broad enforcement

powers as necessary and one

which authorizes the com-

mencement of enforcement

operations as soon as possible,"

State Department spokesman

The United States, unlike

"We seek a (UN), resolution

But the United States and

reports AP.

borne aircraft.

planes.

aircraft.



protect themselves from rain December 23 in the no man's land between Israel's selfdeclared security zone and Lebanese army positions. - AFP/UNB photo

Manila frees 43 rebels

MANILA, Dec 24: The milttary Thursday released 43 former soldiers jailed for coup attempts against former President Corazon Aquino, after right-wing dissidents agreed to stop subversive activtics and begin peace talks, reports AP.

On Wednesday, seven officers, including former Lt Col Gregorio Honasan, signed the preliminary agreement with Defence Secretary Renato de Villa to begin peace talks by the second week of January.

Honasan, the best-known dissident soldier, led three of the seven coup attempts against Mrs Aquino, including the December 1989 uprising during which US jets flew air over for government forces.

The 43 former soldiers freed Thursday included three generals.

10,000 Tajik refugees flee to Afghanistan

MOSCOW, Dec 24: At least 10,000 Tajtk refugees fled across into Afghanistan today to escape forces loyal to the new ex-communist govern-ment, a senior Russian officer said, reports Reuter.

At least 10,000 people have crossed the border since the morning and the crossing is continuing at full swing," a Moscow-based spokesman for the Russian border troops said.

He said 70,000 people were massed near the Amu Darya river straddling the border after fleeing fighting on Monday between ex-commu-nist and Islantic forces near the border town of Pyanj.

The spokesman said the border troops who are under Russian jurisdiction, had not opened fire to stop the refugees.

The refugee exodus, the worst humanitarian crisis to hit former Soviet Central Asia, stems from months of fighting between rival Tajik clans whose hatreds broke into the open after the collapse of Kremlin rule.

One out of 10 of Tajikistan's five million people have been displaced by the civil war which broke out in September after ex-communist President Rakhmon Nabiyev's ouster by

Islamic militants. Islamic factions ruled Tajikistan for 10 weeks in coalition with parliamentary democrats-

On Wednesday, a senior Russian border troops' officer in the Tajik capital Dushanbe said 7,000 refugees crossed the border on that day.

The spokesman in Moscow said 2.000 crossed into Afghanistan on December 4 50,000 on December 8 and 3,000 on Tuesday.

China warns Clinton not to link trade issue with human rights

BEIJING, Dec 24: China today warned US President-elect Bill Clinton not to use the United States' large trade surplus as a lever to press for improved human rights conditions here and for democratic reforms in Hong Kong, reports

"We are opposed to linking the trade issue with other matters for this will be unhelpful to the development of economic relations and trade between China and the United States," a Chinese foreign ministry spokesman said. The spokesman was re-

sponding to Clinton's state-Taiwan's opposition alleges vote

TAIPEI, Dec 24: Opposition

politicians disrupted a National

Assembly meeting with

protests and a county magis-

trate resigned Thursday as

outrage intensified over al-

leged vote-rigging in last

week's election for Taiwan's

first popular legislature, re-

ports APatora annel and all min

opposition Democratic Prog-

ressive Party (DPP) shouted

"Shame! Shame!" at ruling

Nationalist Party deputies and

displayed banners in a chaotic

plenary session of the National

sembly chooses Taiwan's pres-

ident and handles revisions to

the constitution. It is separate

from the law-making Legis-

lative Yuan, whose 161

members were elected last

The popularly elected as-

Assembly.

About 30 deputies of the

ment on Tuesday that China's huge trade surplus with the United States - put at 15 billion dollars a year by the US government -- provided grounds to pressure Beijing on

"That the surplus should give us some ground for serious discussions about what kind of world we want to live in," he said, "what kind of freedom the people of Hong Kong are going to have, what kind of freedom the people of China are going to have.

Clinton told a news conference he would be firm with

rigging, walks out of assembly

Although the DPP won a

surprising 50 seats in the

Legislative Yuan, opposition

candidates are charging that

election officials sympathetic

to the Nationalists tampered

with the balloting to tip the

The OPP deputies later

walked out of the National

Assembly meeting and demon-

strated at the Central Election

Commission, claiming the gov

ernment agency, had har-

tional assemblyman, was

beaten by plainclothes police-

man at the commission during

a confrontation. Lai, who

fainted on the street outside

the agency, was rushed to the

hospital. His condition was

not immediately known.

Lai Kun-cheng, a DPP na-

boured the vote-rigging.

scales in several close races.

China after refterating US con eerns about Beijing's repres sion of opposition figures, use of prison labour to make export goods and alleged violations of missile and non-prolifcration agreements.

China is bitterly opposed to British plans to open Hong Kong's legislature to a wider electorate before the colony reverts to Chinese rule in 1997.

The President-elect earlier eased Beijing's fears by saying he supports continued Most Favoured Nation (MFN) status for China, which accords preferential tariff rates to Chinese

Interior Minister Wu Pah-

hsiung, who heads the elec-

tion commission, offered

Thursday to resign over the

alleged fraud, but the resigna-

tion was rejected by Premier

(112 miles) southcast o

Tarpel, County Magistrate Wu

Kno-rung told a news confer-

ence he would step down to

take responsibility for voting

found Wednesday in a recount

that the number of ballots ex-

ceeded the number of regis-

tered voters by 738 in 12 of

the 54 polling stations where

election results were ques-

manded by Huang Hsin-chieh,

of people's deputies by Viktor

Chernomyrdin, a 54-year-old

Gaidar and his team as "Neo-

Bolsheviks," defining the term

as meaning "to act unconstitu-

tionally, using violence, in the

face of the law and democratic

Gorbachev described

Soviet-Era technocrat.

procedures."

Gorbachev said.

former DPP chairman.

The recount was de-

Prosecutors in Hualien

In Hualien, 180 kilometers

Hau Pei-tsun.

irregularities.

tioned.

exports to the United States. The US congress, domi-

nated by Clinton's Democratic · Party, has voted early to attach human rights and weapons control conditions on China's MFN status, but the attempts have been vetoed by Republican President George

The Beijing leadership fears that Clinton may move away from Bush's "policy of engagement," which asserts that continued economic contact with China is the only effective way to influence the country sufuture political and social course

Somalia seeks Indian help NEW DELHI, Dec 24:

Somalia today appealed to the Indian people for help in alleviating the suffering of it's famine-hit citizens, reports

Making the appeal, the Ambassador of Somalia to India, Mohamed Osman Omar, said that big denomination cheques should be addressed to the UNICEF/Somalia emergency programme, while smaller amounts may be addressed to the Ambassador himself. Omar said every contribu-

tion, irrespective of size, would go a long way in saving the lives of thousands of Somalis facing starvation in their country.

17 killed in Egyptian bldg collapse

CAIRO, Dec 24: At least 17 people died when a building collapsed after a shopkeeper demolished a supporting wallduring renovations, newspapers reported today, reports

Rescue workers have recovered 12 bodies from the rubble of the three-storey building which collapsed Wednesday in Zagazig, northeast of Cairo. Around 100 buildings col-

lapsed when an earthquake struck northern Egypt in October.

Jakarta recalls envoy from Belgrade

JAKARTA, Dec 24: Indonesia has decided to recall its ambassador from Belgrade protesting atrocities against Muslim Bosnians by Serbs in the former Yugoslav republic, a senior official at the Foreign Ministry said today, reports Reuter.

Off the Record

Cruise, Kidman robbed of an opportunity to become parents WEST PALM BEACH, Fla: Tom Cruise and Nicole Kidman

have cancelled plans to adopt a baby in Palm Beach County, according to court documents, and have demanded an investigation into how their adoption petition became public,

reports AP. In a letter to Chief Circuit Judge Daniel TK Hurley dated December 7 attorneys for the couple

demanded an immediate investigation of this blatant breach of confidentiality and the immediate dismissal of all court personnel who were in-

volved." Cruise and Kidman "have suffered an irreparable invasion

of privacy," attorneys Natalie Shasha and J Weston Sigmond wrote in the letter, which does not name the actors, the Palm Beach Post reported Wednesday. They have been robbed of an opportunity to become par-

ents and the child has been denied an opportunity to be nurtured and cared for by these loving parents," the attorneys

The couple, who live in the Los Angeles area, met while making the 1990 race car movie "Days of Thunder" and again played opposite each other in this year's "Far and Away."s Florida law prohibits release of adoption records:

We can breathe easy for about a billion more years.

LONDON: The end of the world is nowhere near nigh, according to research published Thursday, reports Reuter. A study by Ken Caldiera and James Kasting of Pennsylvania State University reported in the British scientific journal

Nature said the planet had about a billion years left, 10 times more than forecast by other experts a decade ago. "Our prediction ought to be encouraging to humans,"

Caldeira and Kasting wrote. "We can breathe easy for about a billion more years," said

Tyler Volk of the earth systems group at New York University in a companion article commenting on the research. The same journal reprinted a forecast by scientists James

Lovelock and Martin Whitfield 10 years ago that mankind would die out in 100 million years.

170 Armenian troops killed in clashes with Azeris

LONDON, Dec 24: One hundred and seventy Armenian troops have been killed in border clashes that began Tuesday with Azerbaijani forces, Azerbaijani radio reported Wednesday in a broadcast mon itored by the BBC, reports AFP. The Armenian foreign min-

istry charged that the Azerbaijan army, with armoured and air support, had advanced 3.5 kilometers (two miles) into the Krasnoselsk region of Armenia, destroying the village of Vaan and causing many civilian casualties, the Interfax news agency said. The report made no mention of military casualties. The ministry protested to

the Azerbaijan government and denounced the reported incursion as "as an aggression against the American republic and an encroachment on its sovereignty and territorial integrity. The Azerbaijan defence

ministry said its forces had attacked Armenian positions on the border between Kedabek in Azerbaijan and Krasnoselsk in Armenia in order to check Armenian cross-border shelling.

den and swift attack, captured all the strategically important heights in the region and dealt shattering blow to the enemy, the ministry said. The Armenians lost 170

"Our troops launched a sud-

officers and men in the clashes. Tension has been acute

between Christian Armenian and Muslim Azerbaijan, both former Soviet republies.

One more black killed in S

African violence

JOHANNESBURG, Dec 24: One black man died and three were wounded in two attacks Thursday in the Orange Free State, near where whites have been killed and wounded in recent attacks, police said, reports AP.

Right-wing whites warned of retribution attacks on blacks following the killings of three white girls in the past week in the area near Ficksburg in the Orange Free State, about 4000 kilometres (240 miles) south of Johannesburg.

Police Capt Johlene van der Merwe said gunmen in a red pickup truck opened fire on a black taxi van near Ficksburg, wounding three people. The van then overturned, and 12 passengers were slightly injured.

In a separate attack, gunmen in a similar red vehicle shot to death the driver of a taxi van on another road in the area, van der Merwe said.

lar. Outstanding dues still owed for 26 separate peacekeeping budgets totalled about 935 million dollar of which Washington owes about 115 million dollar the UN account-

ing report said. session.

750 prisoners get amnesty. in Shri Lanka

COLOMBO. Dec 24: The government has offered an amnesty on Christmas to 750 convicts imprisoned for defaulting on fines and other crimes, the government announced Thursday, reports AP

The nationwide amnesty provides for the commuting of death sentences to life, which is equivalent to a 20-year prison term, a Justice Ministry communique said.

Other prisoners will get a reprieve of three weeks from their sentences for every year already spent in jail. The amnesty comes from

President Ranasinghe Premadasa who pardoned 1,500 prisoners last Christmas and on New Year's Day this year. Eight hundred prisoners were freed on the Muslim holy day of Eid in April 1992.

Richard Boucher said Wed-

The United Nations,

alarmed at the deteriorating

situation in Bosnia, is moving

to endorse enforcement of the

flight ban, and Bosnia, is mov-

ing to endorse enforcement of

the flight ban, and NATO, led

drawn up options for action.

the United States, has

Bosnian Serbs have not used

their 50-some planes to attack

Croat and Muslim rivals in

Bosnia, but they have ignored

the UN no-fly zone, taking to

the air nearly 300 times since

the ban was imposed October

9. Most of those flights were

for supply and surveillance

Dick Cheney said in an inter-

view Sunday that an around-

the-clock operation, as seen in

the air war against Iraq, would

require a large number of air-

craft including AWACS surveil-

lance planes in the air at all

went to the base or to the air-

craft on the ground and de-

If, on the other hand, "You

times and refueling tankers.

US Secretary of Defence

purposes.

nesday.

Gorbachev happy over Gaidar's removal LONDON, Dec 24: Former the past year, was replaced cight days ago in the Congress

Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev Thursday said he was glad that acting Russian prime minister Yegor Gaidar --whom he described as a "neo-Bolshevik" - had been removed, the Guardian newspaper reported today, says AFP.

"The people's trust in the Russian President Boris Yeltsin, which he was so proud of and their trust in government, have been severely damaged," Gorbachev told the pa-

"People think the leadership has lost touch with reality, so I have no doubt that the government had to be changed. Gaidar, the 36-year-old

economist who spearheaded

Russia's economic reforms of

stroyed them ... it would prob-

ably require far fewer forces

and be a simpler military oper-

ation," he said on CBS's "Face

some 60 to 70 planes on the

aircrast carrier John F.

Kennedy, stationed in the

Adriatic Sea, including F-14

Tomcat fighters and A-6 night

Aegis radar systems to track

flight activity and Tomahawk

cruise missile eapable of in-

flicting major damage on

Bosnian airfields and commu-

One Pentagon official.

speaking on condition of

anonymity, discounted any

early used of Tomahawks, say-

ing Chency is talking about de-

stroying planes, not infrastruc-

bases in Germany that field F-

16s, fighter-bombers with a

range of 3,600 kilometres

(2,000 miles). F-16s also could

be flown out of the US base at

Aviano, in northeast Italy.

The Air Force has three

The Navy also has shipboard

In either case, the Navy has

the Nation."

attack planes.

nications facilities.

essence but evolutionary in its tempo. They've broken from the evolutionary party. It was against my principles to throw people back into poverty by trying to jump forward in fits and starts splitting the country and leading to civil war,"

"I was for a process which was revolutionary in its'

Pentagon for ground attacks on planes if no-fly zone enforced

SARAJEVO: A nurse rocks a girl December 23 in the Kosovo hospital while a boy, injured during clashes in Sarajevo, sits nearby. Senior Serb, Croat and Muslim officers met December 23 under UN auspices for talks aimed at demilitarizing Sarajevo's airport sector APDATH and western suburhs

Qassimi new GCC Secy Gen ABU DHABI, Dec 24: The

six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council on Tuesday elected a new Secretary General to replace Abdallah Bishara who has served in his post since the regional alliance was set up in 1981, delegates said, reports Reuter.

The GCC heads of state meeting in Abu Dhabi since Monday elected Fahim Sultan bin Salem al-Qassimi as the new Secretary General for a four-year term.

Qassimi. 44, is from the United Arab Emirates and served as the UAE ambassador to the United Nations. He currently heads the Department of International Organisations and Conferences at the UAE Foreign Ministry.

GCC sources said the six states - Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates - have agreed that a new Secretary General would be elected every four years from different members state in an alphabeti-