

BRIEFLY

70 HIV carriers found in Indonesia:

The number of people in Indonesia who have been infected with the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) since its first diagnosis in the country in 1987 stands at 70, reports said today, says AFP from Jakarta.

The Antara news agency quoted the head of the national committee for the prevention of AIDS Gaudung Hartono as saying 21 of the 70 carrying the virus that causes Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) had died.

Another three have now developed full-blown AIDS, Hartono said, adding he believed the number of HIV carriers would double by the end of 1993.

Private TV station in China:

China's first privately run satellite television station is to start beaming throughout southeast Asia next year, breaking the government's control of all media, reports said today, reports AFP from Hong Kong.

The footprint of the Southeast Broadcasting Co, which is to begin broadcasting on New Year's day from the southeastern coastal province of Fujian, will cover Taiwan, Hong Kong, Macau and all countries in southeast Asia, the semi-official China News Service (CNS) said.

Meanwhile, Southern Guangdong province has broken the government's monopoly on higher education by authorising the setting up of the first university with investment from abroad, CNS said.

5 killed in Colombian violence:

Guerillas attacked a town in southern Colombia, police said Thursday. They said that three police officers and two rebels were killed, reports AP from Bogota.

About 100 rebels attacked the police barracks in San Pablo, about 550 kilometers (340 miles) south of Bogota Wednesday with bombs and automatic weapons. Two officers were injured in the gun battle that lasted several hours, said police.

Rebels also blew up two energy pylons Wednesday, leaving large parts of the northeastern provinces Arauca and Norte de Santander without power, the state electric company Interconexión Eléctrica S A reported.

The attacks are part of a rebel offensive that forced Colombia to declare a national emergency two months ago.

The Simon Bolívar Coordinated Guerrilla Front rebels have been attacking the state for nearly 30 years in an effort to overthrow the government and create social and economic equality for the country's poor.

Beggars rally in Delhi:

Beggars on crutches and in wheelchairs staged a demonstration outside parliament Thursday, protesting a proposed ban on begging and demanding jobs and shelter, reports AFP from New Delhi.

"We want jobs," chanted the two dozen mendicants, who included women and children.

Onlookers and police vastly outnumbered the protestors, all of whom were dressed in ragged clothes. The demonstrators also shouted slogans against a proposed ban on begging and police harassment.

They were arrested for violating a ban on demonstrations in the vicinity of parliament, which ended its winter session Wednesday, and were herded off to a nearby police station.

Jesse Jackson leaves hospital:

Jesse Jackson, prominent US civil rights and political leader left a Washington hospital Thursday evening to spend the Christmas holiday with family members, reports AP from Washington.

Jackson was admitted to Howard University Hospital on Sunday with a fever and bronchial congestion, said Sharon Robinson, a hospital spokeswoman.

Tests showed that Jackson is in "generally excellent health," said a statement released by Jackson's National Rainbow Coalition Inc.

The main problem seems to have been an exhausting schedule that had gradually and temporarily broken down some of Jackson's resistance," the statement said. "Jackson is being urged to cut back on his extremely pressing schedule and to pace himself better in the future."

Tigers kill 40 Lankan troops in ambush

COLOMBO, Dec 25: Tamil guerrillas fighting for a separate state in northern and eastern Sri Lanka killed 40 soldiers in an ambush and are believed to have lost up to 30 of their own fighters, military sources said today, reports Reuters.

A leader of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam holding the rank of major was among the rebels killed in nearly two hours of fighting on Thursday in the north-eastern Velli Oya Area, they said.

More Australian aid for Indonesia's quake victims

SYDNEY, Dec 25: Australia announced today it had increased aid to Indonesian earthquake victims to 500,000 Australian dollars (345,000 US), reports AFP.

Overseas Development Minister John Kerin said in a statement that Australia would give a further 300,000 dollars on top of the 200,000 dollars given soon after the December 12 earthquake devastated the eastern island of Flores.

UN drafting plans to take over Somalia operation

UNITED NATIONS, Dec 25: Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali's peacekeeping staff is drafting plans to take over the Somalia relief operation from the US-led task force, officials said Thursday, reports AP.

But no timetable or target date has been set for the change in command, of Operation Restore Hope, said one diplomat who attended Boutros-Ghali's meeting with Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger on Monday.

The diplomat, who spoke on condition of anonymity, was also at the UN chief's briefing of Security Council members Wednesday evening.

The shift in responsibility will be gradual and will probably involve UN peacekeepers.

Pak parliament asks India to rebuild Babri Mosque

ISLAMABAD, Dec 25: The

Pakistan parliament called upon India Thursday to rebuild the Babri Mosque demolished by Hindu fanatics and provide adequate compensation to the families of Muslims killed in rioting there, reports AFP.

A resolution unanimously adopted indignation over the December 6 razing of the 16th century Babri Mosque.

The resolution moved by Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Siddique Kanju also condemned the desecration of the mosque and the "killing of

the innocent Muslims" in the aftermath.

Calling for the reconstruction of the mosque in the northern Indian town of Ayodhya, the assembly urged New Delhi to provide "adequate compensation to the families of the Muslims martyred after the incident."

The communal violence in India had reportedly claimed more than 1,100 lives.

It urged the United Nations, the Organisation of the Islamic Conference and

other world bodies to take appropriate notice of this "sheer high-handedness."

The resolution also expressed sorrow over the destruction of temples in Pakistan in the Muslims backlash and called for the speedy reconstruction of the places of Hindu worship and compensation to those who had suffered in the violence.

Earlier winding up the debate Kanju told the House that the government would send delegations to western and other countries to "apply pres-

sure" on India to uphold the

cause of minorities. "It was deplorable that India had always violated the rights of its minorities," Kanju said adding that he "doubted" the Indian Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao would be able to fulfil his commitment to rebuild the mosque and provide compensation.

India accused Pakistan Tuesday of a "gross interference" in its internal affairs by holding the debate on the mosque's destruction.

Arab Foreign Ministers urge UN

Force Israel to take back deportees

CAIRO, Dec 25: Arab

Foreign Minister on Thursday urged the United Nations to force Israel to take back more than 400 deported Palestinians, but stopped short of threatening a boycott of the Middle East peace talks, reports AFP.

The ministers issued a final statement calling on the UN Security Council to "assume its responsibilities" by enforcing a resolution it adopted last Friday in which it ordered the immediate return of the 415

deportees.

They also called on the United States and Russia, the co-sponsors of the peace talks, to guarantee the deportees' immediate return "in order to ensure the resumption of the negotiations."

But the statement contained no explicit threat for a boycott of the talks. It said if Israel continued to ignore the resolution, "the Security Council should meet again to adopt measures under the UN charter," a reference to clauses

that allow for the use of force.

Their meeting came amid pressure from the radical Hamas Group and other Palestinian factions to boycott the next session of Arab-Israeli peace talks scheduled to take place in February after the inauguration of Bill Clinton as US President.

The gathering brought together Foreign Ministers Kamel Abu Jaber of Jordan, Faruq Al-Shara of Syria, Fares Bweiz of Lebanon, and Faruq Kaddumi of the Palestine

Liberation with Israel.

The PLO is excluded from the peace talks, but directs the Palestinian delegation.

PLO chief Yasser Arafat also joined the talks after separate meetings with President Hosni Mubarak and Arab League Secretary General Esmat Abdel Meguid.

Abdel Meguid on Tuesday called on the Security Council to sanction the use of force against Israel in line with chapter seven of the UN charter.



BETLEHEM, West Bank: Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem Michel Sabbah (C) celebrates the Christmas mass early Friday, held in St Catherine's Church adjacent to the Church of Nativity, traditional birthplace of Jesus Christ. — AFP/UNB photo

Rolland made Tagore see true face of fascism

CALCUTTA, Dec 25: Rabin-

dranath Tagore's letter to O F Andrews "On the philosophy of fascism" published in the "Manchester Guardian" on August 5, 1926, reveals that the poet realised the evils of fascism after a discussion with

Romain Rolland at his Villeneuve residence, reports PTI.

Tagore's tour to Mussolini's fascist Italy in 1926 was viewed obliquely by the rest of the non-fascist western press. During his stay in Italy he did not realise the implications of his visit.

"I put him in touch with the victims of its violence. Deeply moved Tagore publicly dissociated himself from fascism, which was exploiting his adhesion to it," the "Manchester Guardian" quoted Rolland as saying.

This was gleaned from 96 clippings from various British newspapers (1912-1942) at an exhibition on "Rabindranath and the British press" organised by the Tagore Centre, UK at the Calcutta Information

Centre here Wednesday.

The clippings of the British press on Tagore between 1912 and 1942, were claimed to be the first ever exhibition in Calcutta in concert with the West Bengal Information and Cultural Affairs Department.

The "Manchester Guardian" reported in 1926 that the poet in a letter to O F Andrews wrote, "The misunderstanding has been unfortunately created in the minds of those who are in harmony with my ideals about the problems of the present age."

But the "Daily News" London, (June 11, 1926) said that the great Indian poet, has changed his "opinions regarding fascism and its leader."

The exhibits also include a letter by Carlo Formichi, an Indologist and Professor of Sanskrit and visiting professor of Santiniketan to the editor of the "Manchester Guardian" on August 25, 1926. Formichi was the poet's guide and interpreter in Italy.

Tagore's denunciation of fas-

cism in the "Manchester Guardian" (September 30, 1926) was part of the clippings on display.

The "Times" coverage of Tagore's presence at the Royal Albert Hall, London, in 1912 during the staging of the "Daharant of Arkan", a play adopted by George Claderon from the poet's short story, "Daliya" and the staging of the "post office" by the Abbey theatre in aid of St Edna's College in 1913 by the "Irish Time" were on display.

"The New Statesman" reported in 1913 Tagore's winning of the Nobel Prize, the first to an Asian. "Especially when Thomas Hardy and Anatole France were two strong contenders that year."

The poet was deeply shocked over the Jallianwala Bagh massacre on April 13, 1919 and wrote a letter to the Viceroy condemning it and denouncing the Knighthood. His decision of the renunciation of Knighthood was published inconspicuously in "The Times" (June 19, 1919).

Pindi to buy tanks from Poland

ISLAMABAD, Dec 25: Pakistan has decided to buy 320 T-72 tanks from Poland for its armed forces, reports Xinhua.

The deal worth 450 million US dollars was clinched during a visit of Pakistan Chief of Army Staff General Asif Nawaz to Warsaw early this month, according to local press reports today.

Asif Nawaz met President Ghulam Ishaq Khan here on Thursday and discussed with him the purchase of Russian and Polish tanks and the arms need to the armed forces, the reports quoted well-placed sources as saying.

The Army Chief informed the President that there was quite a big market for Pakistan from where it can buy sophisticated weaponry with particular reference to the Russian-made T-72 tanks, the Czech heavy tanks and the French tanks, the sources said.

China executes 4 for kidnapping 74 women

BEIJING, Dec 25: Four criminals have been executed in central China for leading a major white slavery ring that was kidnapped and sold 74 women since 1987, the Legal Daily reported today, reports AFP.

The Henan Provincial Higher People's Court sentenced the four men to death on Wednesday and the executions were carried out the same day, the official newspaper said. The four — Xiong Fuhai, Fang Xiuzhen, Wu Ruihai and Li Jialuan — led a gang that kidnapped 74 women throughout northern China and sold them for a profit between July 1987 and May 1990, it said.

Accomplices of the criminals were sent to prison, the newspaper said without giving details.

The buying and selling of women as concubines and servants has made a strong comeback, especially in rural China, and is one of the "six vices" targeted in China's on-going anti-crime drive.

The other vices are prostitution, pornography, gambling, drug trafficking and feudal superstitions.

Top ten world events of '92

BEIJING, Dec 25: The following is a list of the top 10 world events of 1992 selected by the Xinhua news agency:

1. Sixty-nine per cent of Whites in South Africa voted in a referendum on March 10 to support the continuation of the current political reform in the country, making irreversible the process that would eventually terminate the apartheid system there.

2. Yugoslavia was formally dissolved in April. The ensuing ethnic war in Bosnia-Herzegovina, after steady escalation, has developed into a military conflict unprecedented in scale in post-war Europe.

3. The worst violence against racial discrimination in the United States since the civil rights movement of the 60's occurred in Los Angeles on April 29.

4. The United Nations conference on environment and development, or Earth Summit, was convened from June 3 to 14 in Rio De Janeiro, Brazil. The summit adopted the Rio declaration on environment and development and other documents of principle concerning the protection of the environment of the earth.

5. The 10th summit meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) was held in Jakarta, Indonesia, from September 1 to 6, at which NAM modified its strategy by

switching the focus in work to international economy and narrowing the gap in development between the south and north.

6. Financial turbulence erupted in Europe on September 13, enmeshing the European monetary system in its worst crisis since its establishment.

7. The 14th national congress of the Communist Party of China opened in Beijing on October 12. The goal of the economic reform under way was explicitly defined as establishing a system of socialist market economy.

8. Democrat Bill Clinton was elected the 42nd President of the United States on November 3 in an electoral victory over Republican candidate George Bush.

9. The UN Security Council adopted a resolution on December 3 for sending multinational troops to Somalia to protect the distribution of UN relief materials to refugees. The foreign troops began to land on Somalia on December 9.

10. Some Kar Sewaks (Hindu servants) on December 6 demolished the disputed Babri mosque at Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh, igniting India's worst communal violence and clashes in 20 years, a product of interwoven religious disputes, inter-party clashes and social contradictions.

Off the Record

Man appears day after his cremation

TOKYO: A 45-year-old man astonished his mourning family by turning up alive one day after his funeral, police said Friday, reports AP.

The family of the man who had been presumed dead had already cremated what they believed was his body, in keeping with Japanese tradition.

A police official who identified himself as S Yamamoto said the man's younger brother had confirmed the identity of the body, which a jogger found Dec 17. Three other relatives also had identified the body of the man.

But the man presumed dead showed up after a three-month absence and stunned his family. Police handling the case were also shocked when the brothers visited their station the next day.

"We practically fell over when we all saw him," Yamamoto said. Japanese police typically do not check finger prints or dental records of a corpse if they have a family member's identification. They still don't know the real identity of the dead man, Yamamoto said.

The names of the family and of the man presumed dead were withheld by police.

Mosquitoes help spread AIDS

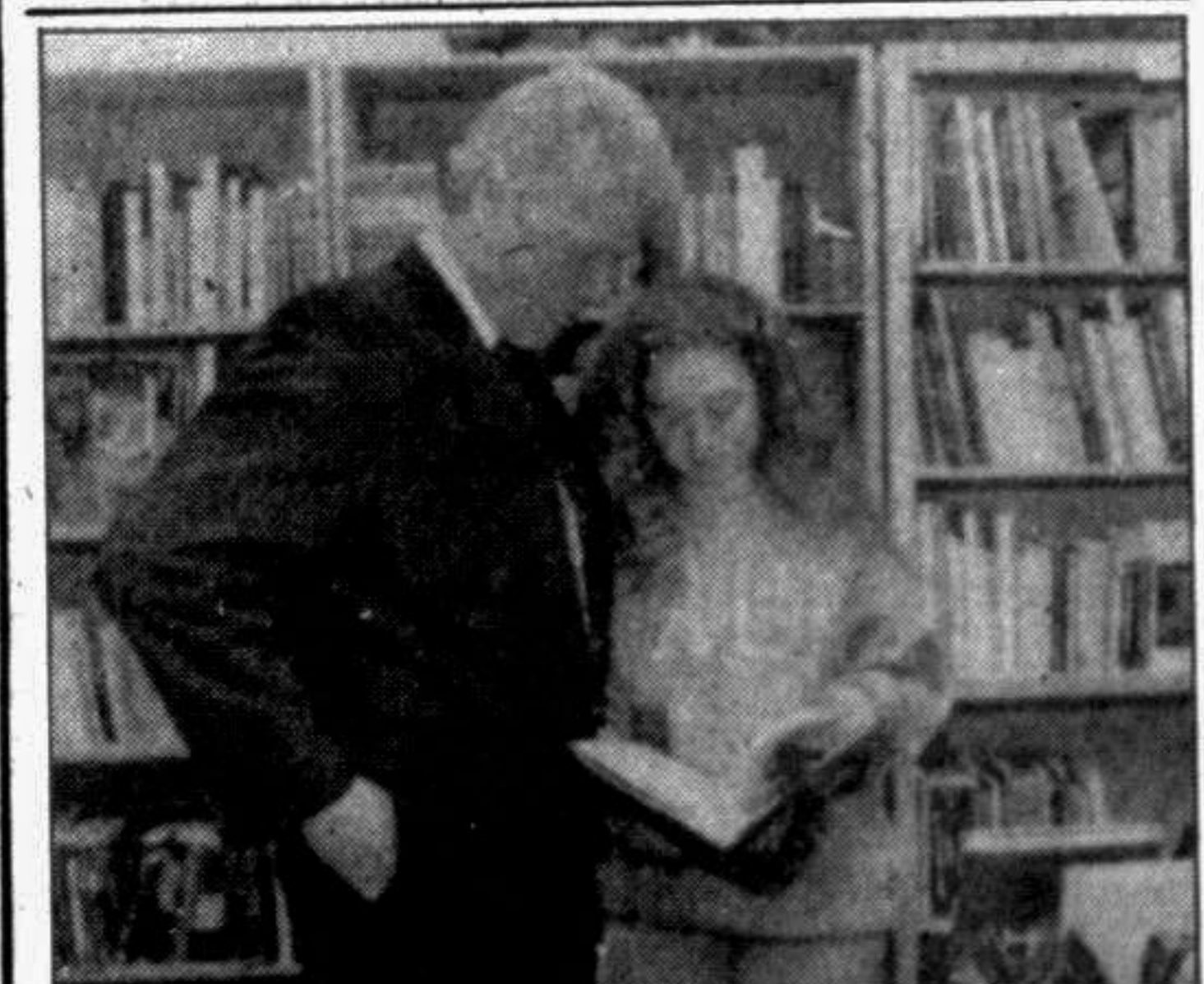
TOKYO: Half the population of Tokyo believes AIDS can be transmitted by mosquito bite despite a campaign ruling out the possibility, according to a survey Friday, reports Reuters.

The poll by the Tokyo government showed that 49.8 per cent of the 2,100 respondents feared that mosquitoes could spread the HIV virus, harbinger of AIDS, after biting a diseased victim.

The results were similar to those of a government survey last year, when 60 per cent said they believed mosquitoes helped spread AIDS.

Since then the government has mounted a campaign to educate the public about the Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome.

Yet in the latest survey, about 25 per cent replied incorrectly that the HIV virus could be caught by drinking from the same cup or sharing the same bathroom as a carrier.



LITTLE ROCK, Arkansas: US President-elect Bill Clinton and his daughter Chelsea do some Christmas shopping in a local bookstore Thursday. — AFP/UNB photo

Prosecutor criticises Bush for pardoning Weinberger

WASHINGTON, Dec 25: The special prosecutor of the Iran-Contra affair is criticising President Bush's pardon of former Defence Secretary Caspar Weinberger and five others as a sign of powerful figures are "above the law," reports AP.

Bush said Thursday he was pardoning Weinberger and the others because their actions "whether right or wrong" were motivated by patriotism, and they did not try to profit from their activities.

Special prosecutor Lawrence Walsh, who has spent six years delving into the arms-for-hostages swap, reacted with outrage. He said in a statement that "the Iran-Contra coverup, which has continued for more than six years, has now been completed."

"In light of President Bush's own misconduct, we are

gravely concerned about his decision to pardon others who lied to Congress and obstructed official investigations," Walsh said.

Walsh also said Bush was now "the subject" of the Iran-Contra probe.

"That is a step below being a 'target' of investigators — a person likely to be charged with a crime."

"It's simply an area where these activities are under, are of interest in our investigation, that's all," Walsh said on CNN.

While the statute of limitations on prosecuting alleged Iran-Contra crimes has run out, Walsh said it "can always be revived by a false statement under oath."

The President's power to pardon is absolute under the Constitution and not subject to appeal.

Bush has always denied any knowledge of the Iran-Contra



FILES: Former US Secretary of Defence Casper Weinberger (L) seen leaving the offices of his lawyer Robert Bennett June 16 this year. — AFP/UNB photo

deal while it was being worked out. He said he was "out of the loop."

The Iran-Contra scandal grew out of a scheme to sell weapons to Iran and use the money to arm the anti-government Contras in Nicaragua. Both activities were forbidden by US law.

Walsh, speaking at a news conference in Oklahoma City, added that the pardon of Weinberger, who was accused of concealing evidence, "undermines the principle that no man is above the law."

He said he would make a full report to Congress.

"It demonstrates that powerful people with powerful allies in high office — deliberately abusing the public trust — without consequence," Walsh told reporters.

President-elect Clinton said he wanted to learn more about

the pardons. He said, "I am concerned by any action that sends a signal that if you work for the government, you're beyond the law, or that not telling the truth to Congress under oath is somehow less serious than not telling the truth to some other body under oath."

Weinberger was indicted June 16 for allegedly concealing his notes about the arms shipments to Iran. Prosecutors uncovered the 2,000 pages of notes in 1991 at the Library of Congress. The material details discussions among Reagan and his top aides including then-vice president Bush — about the Iran initiative.

Walsh on Thursday made a dramatic disclosure about the President. He said investigators learned during the past two weeks that Bush kept "his own highly relevant contemporaneous notes" of the meetings.

Akihito may visit US

TOKYO, Dec 25: Japanese Emperor Akihito is expected to visit the United States following a June tour of Europe, a newspaper said today, reports Reuters.

Akihito, accompanied by empress Michiko, will tour Belgium, Germany and Italy for two weeks in June, followed some time later by a visit to the United States, said the daily Nihon Keizai Shimbun.

A Palace official refused to comment on the report.

The daily quoted a senior government source as saying officials favoured an early imperial visit to the United States — in the Autumn of 1993 or early 1994.

Akihito, who turned 59 this week, ascended to the chrysanthemum throne in January 1989 after the death of his father Hirohito.