US against use of force to settle Spratlys dispute

MANILA, Dec 3: The United States has told the Philippines it will react to any security threat in the Asia-Pacific region and will oppose use of force to settle the Spratlys dispute. Defence Chief Renato De Villa said today, reports Reuter.

De Villa, in an interview with the Manila Radio Station DZRH. did not say what specific action the United States would take in case regional security was threatened.

De Villa held talks with Pentagon officials last month during the US visit of Philippine President Fidel Ramos.

Hindu extremists plan to celebrate Dec 6

Delhi steps up security around Babri Mosque

AYODHYA, India, Dec 3: Indian security troops stepped up their vigil around the ruins of the Babri Mosque Thursday as Hindu extremists planned to launch celebrations to mark its demolition last year, witnesses said, reports AFP.

Some 1,500 paramilitary troops moved into this riverside pilgrimage town as activists of an outlawed Hindu organisation planned to kick off a week of celebrations on Monday to mark the anniversary of the shrine's December 6, 1992 demolition. Soldiers with night-vision

devices, water cannons and ri-

fles patrolled Ayodhya, 700 kilometres (420 miles) from New Delhi, as Hindu extremists and the local clergy planned to celebrate the sacrilege last year, the witnesses said.

Thousands of Hindu zealots razed the Moghul-built Babri Mosque, capping a virulent Hindu-revivalist drive against the disputed shrine, the ruins of which are fenced-off and guarded by the elite border security force troops.

A makeshift temple built hurriedly by the zealots stands atop the mounds of bricks from the collapsed Babri Mosque.

Right-wing Hindus believe that the demolished shrine was built in 1528 by Moghul emperor Babar after razing a temple to their coveted Hindu warrior-king Lord Rama.

"All Hindus here will hold a second festival of lights on December 6," said Purshottam Narain Singh, former organising secretary of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (World Hindu Council), which was outlawed after the Ayodhya sacrilege.

Hindus celebrate the annual festival in November to usher in prosperity, a good harvest and

Singh, a firebrand Hindu leader, said the celebrations would begin exactly at the same time that the third dome of the brick-and-limestone shrine crashed a year ago.

He also said some 15,000 people would attend a meeting called Hindu awakening day on Monday.

More than 2,000 people died in the Hindu Muslim riots that swept across India after the demolition, which drew angry reactions from the Islamic

Reuter from Delhi adds:

India's rightwing Hindu PV Narasimha Rao's Congress Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) installed a state government in Delhi was one of five assem-Delhi on Thursday and set its

pitted against the BJP. The sights on two other regions ruling party has scored outright where last month's polls produced hung assemblies. victories in Himachal Pradesh BJP parliament deputy and Rajasthan States. Madan Lal Khurana was sworn in as Chief Minister in Delhi The BJP has staked a claim to form governments in the where assembly elections were

> duced hung assemblies. Khurana, sworn in by Delhi's Lieutenant Governor PK Dave is the first Chief Minister of Delhi since the 1950s.

states of Rajasthan and Uttar

Pradesh where the polls pro-

stick to plans to quit later this blies where the Congress was month unless there was a

breakthrough in the Haiti crisis, reports Reuter Malval arrived at Aristide's apartment in the fashionable Georgetown neighbourhood of the US capital without saying a

Haitian PM

holds talks

with Aristide

Haitian Prime Minister Robert

Malval met exiled President

Jean-Dertrand Aristide Thurs-

day and served notice he would

WASHINGTON, Dec 3:

word to waiting reporters. But US and Haitian sources said Malval wanted a make or break meeting to end a twoyear-old political deadlock that has left the Haitian military in

Mother tells Jackson to defend allegations

BDIFI

Iran denies treaty with DPRK:

An Iranian political source in Tehran yesterday categorically

denied media reports on the conclusion of a long-range missile

test treaty between Iran and the Democratic Peoples' Republic

range Scud missiles to Tehran and would made a testing of the

signed any contract on testing or purchase of long-range mis-

siles, saying that bringing up of such issues aims to intrigue re-

gional states, the rich Arab states in particular, to purchase

Jailed Chinese newsman awarded:

Jailed Chinese journalist Wang Juntao was Thursday awarded

the 1993 prize of the Association Reporters Sans Frontiers

13-year-jail term for his activities during the Beijing spring.

Wang, editor of the banned Economic Weekly, is serving a

The prize will be handed to his wife, Hou Xiantian, here on

Ship found in Bulgaria beach:

Bulgarian naval officers on Thursday found a 5,000-tonne ship

washed up on a beach with no sign of the crew or survivors.

caught in a severe storm on Wednesday night but they had re-

miles) north of Varna, said duty officer Andrel Andreev of the

Marine Emergency Coordinating Service. An emergency team

had gone to check on any cargo and try to find the captain's log.

Typhoon claims 106 in Vietnam:

Typhoon Kyle killed at least 106 people when it lashed the

central Vietnam coast last week, the government owned

still missing and 31 were injured by the storm, which left dam-

Another 29 people in Khanh Hoa, the worst-it province, were

Prime Minister Vo Van Kiet has allocated six billion dong

Spaniard killed in Algeria: Islamic

militants killed a Spaniard in Algeria on Thursday, a day after

fundamentalists had set a deadline for foreigners to leave the

country, the official APS news agency said, Reuter reports from

term used to denote Islamic militants, as he drove his car on a

road about 85 KM (50 miles) southwest of the capital Algiers,

2 shot dead in California: A man

shot several people in a state unemployment office Thursday,

then killed a police officer, authorities said. He fled to a

neighbouring city and was shot to death by an officer, AP

ficer was killed while pursuing the gunntan following the office

Hospitals received five shooting victims. An Oxnard police of-

The gunman fled to Ventura, where he was shot and killed

The Spaniard was killed by a terrorist group, the Algerian

Vietnam News reported on Friday, Reuter says from Hanoi.

age estimated at 11.5 billion, the newspaper said.

Officials said the Volgo-Balt 38 freighter may have been

The ship was found on Bulgaria's Black Sea coast 80 KM (50

marine officials said, Reuter reports from Varna, Bulgaria.

(reporters without frontiers), AFP reports from Paris.

international human rights day on December 10.

Some western media said that the DPRK would sell long-

The Iranian source said that Tehran and Pyongyang have not

of Korea (DPRK). Xinhua report from Tehran.

WASHINGTON, Dec 3: Michael Jackson's mother urged her son Thursday to return to the United States and clear his name of allegations that he sexually molested a 13-year-old boy, reports AFP.

'You have to come home and defend yourself," Katherine Jackson said in a message to her 35-year-old son during a Cable News Network interview. adding "it seems like he's been judged before he's been tried."

She would not disclose where Jackson was but his brother, Jermaine, said they had spoken with him over the telephone four days ago and that the singer had told them; "I did not do this. I am completely innocent."

Jackson is facing a civil suit from a boy who claims he was molested by the performer. No

Nodong-1 in Iran.

more western arm.

ceived no emergency signals.

600,000 dollar) in relief funds.

Algiers.

APS said.

criminal charges have been filed but authorities are investigation

the case. Jackson cut short his world tour last month while in Mexico, saying he needed treatment for what he called an addiction to painkillers.

Jackson's family criticised his defence team, saying they were not doing enough to shoot down all of the allegation which have been cropping up with the molestation story first broke.

The latest charge came when Jackson's Chauffeur Gary Hearne said during questioning Tuesday that he had repeatedly taken the pop star to stay overnight at the boy's home.

A judge has ordered Jackson, who is believed to be in rehabilitation somewhere in Europe, to give a sworn deposition before January 31 on the civil suit.



South Korean opposition Democratic Party (DP) lawmakers forcefully close the mouth of Vice-Speaker of the National Assembly Hwang Nak-Joo on Thursday. The DP was trying successfully to block the ruling Democratic Liberal Party from railroading next year's budget bill through congress. - AFP photo

Libya wants trial of Reagan Thatcher for '86 raid

TRIPOLI, Dec 3: Libya threatened Thursday to quit the United Nations if former US President Ronald Reagan and former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher are not put on trial for a 1986 raid on

Libya, reports AFP. "If the Security Council manages to prosecute these criminal terrorists and punish them for causing the deaths of several people, Libya will admit that its position (towards the UN) was wrong," Al-Zahf Al-Akhdar weekly said.

The article appeared in a special edition to mark stiffer UN sanctions which took effect on Wednesday after Tripoli's continued refusal to handover two suspects in the bombing of a US airliner over Scotland in

"On the other hand, the oppressed people who have no right of veto (in the security council) will have to find an organisation other than the United Nations," the weekly said, quoted by the official JANA News Agency.

BOGOTA, Dec 3: Residents

of Colombia's capital gave a

cautious welcome to the news of

fugitive cocaine king Pablo

Escobar's shooting death, fear-

ing its consequences and

doubting it would end drug

Gabriel Garcia Marquez told

Reuters in an interview at Bo-

gota's El Dorado International

Airport that Escobar's end

could be celebrated only if it

That news will be really im-

But many passersby on a

portant if it's the start of peace

busy avenue in the north of the

city were reluctant to give and

opinion at all to awaiting re-

porter, mindful of the enormous

terrorist power Escobar had

out was Guillermo Pena, Mana-

One of those who did speak

brought peace to the country.

in Colombia, he said.

Nobel Prize-winning novelist

trafficking.

wielded.

Libya will have "no other alternative than to pull out of the UN if the latter does not respond to its request," the paper said. It did not say when it made the request nor gave other details.

On November 24, Libyan leader Colonel Moammer Gaddafi said Libya's Justice system wanted Reagan and Thatcher. The US raid on Tripoli and

Benghazi, which killed 37 people and wounded 93, was ordered by Reagan after the bombing on a West Berlin Disco frequented by US soldiers. Two people died in the attack.

The US fighter-bombers took off from bases in Britain.

Meanwhile, Libya accused the United States Thursday of taking Libyan prisoners from Chad with an eye toward training them for "terrorist acts" against Tripoli.

In a letter to UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, Libyan Foreign Minister Omar Al-Muntasser accused the United States of 'a policy of ag-

Many welcome Escobar's death

ger of a clothing store that was

practically destroyed by a car

bomb ordered by Escobar in a

northern shopping district last

April. He said the drug lord got

After all that he's done, it's

An elite army and police

too bad they couldn't have

force shot dead Escobar, one of

the world's most wanted crimi-

nals, in a gunfight at a house in

Medellin Thursday afternoon

after more than a year of hunt-

Escobar ordered a series of

shootings and bombing after his

escape from prison in July 1992

to force the government to ac-

cept his conditions for a second

surrender. Last April's car

bomb killed at least 13 people

hoped the Medellin cocaine car-

tel boss' death would bring

Housewife Beatriz Sanchez

and injured a hundred more.

killed his twice over, said Pena.

what he deserved.

ing him down.

gression" against Libya since the 1980s.

This policy, the Foreign Minister said, "is expressed... through outright unprecedented acts of piracy, such as the one organised by the Bush Administration, which took Libyan prisoners from Chad and brought them to the United States to train them in sabotage in preparation for terrorist acts to be directed against their own country."

"We have material proof to support these claims," the letter

"Instead of cooperating with Interpol and arresting these terrorists, the American Administration is providing them with the means for taking action against their country and their people," the Foreign Minister added.

The United States has put Libya on its list of nations that support terrorism, put an embargo on trade with the African nation and frozen Libyan government assets in US banks.

more peace to the country.

"After so much violence I

hope there will be more calm,"

said Sanchez while waiting for a

bus along a major northern av-

scribed the drug lord's death as

a small yet significant blow to

problem," said Dario Bermudez.

the problem because a lot of

people are still involved in the

drug trade," said Cesar

vending kiosk, said Escobar's

life shouldn't have ended the

live regardless of all the bad

things they might have done,"

school student disagreed.

drug trafficking.

Carreno.

way it did.

she said.

A clothes salesman de-

"It at least hit a part of the

But a 17-year-old high

"I don't believe it will solve

Estela Vasquez, sitting in her

"Everyone has the right to

Lebanon fires 18000 civil servants

held for the first time in 30

years. Delhi had been ruled by

the federal government since

seats in the Delhi Assembly.

clearly trouncing Prime Minister

The BJP won 49 out of 70

the 1950s.

BEIRUT, Dec 3: The Lebanese government fired 18000 civil servants for chronic absenteeism as part of a plan to overhaul the state administration, reports Reuter.

"There are 18000 employees in the various state sectors whose services have been terminated on the basis that they are absentees." Prime Minister Rafik Al-Hariri told reporters after a cabinet meeting late on Thursday.

"They were dismissed in line with the law stipulating that any employee absent from his work should not remain in it," added Hariri, who earlier this week announced a purge of 500 public workers accused of corruption.

The cabinet also decided that 1,500 civil servants considered incompetent or superfluous would undergo retraining before being transferred to public sectors with manpower short-

UN monitor opposes quick lifting of

sanctions on Iraq WASHINGTON, Dec 3: The

UN official responsible for monitoring Iraqi weapons programmes cautioned Thursday against moving too quickly to lift the oil embargo and other sanctions against Saddam Hussein's government, reports AP.

Rolf Ekeus, whose commission is charged with determining whether Iraq has eliminated weapons of mass destruction, said at least six months will be needed to conclude whether Iraq is complying with its promise November 26 to allow long-term monitoring of weapons facilities.

Ékeus, addressing group at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, attributed Iraq's concession to the economic pressures caused by the two-year economic sanctions, especially the embargo against Iraqi oil exports.

Hosokawa apologises

TOKYO, Dec 3: Japan's Prime Minister Morihiro Hosokawa apologised today for political disorder in the resignation Thursday of Defence Chief Keisuke Nakanishi, bringing dissonance to the coalition government, reports AFP.

"I apologise for any confusion in the committee following the statement by former defence agency chief Nakanishi," Hosokawa told a parliament budget committee, which was stalled Thursday over Nakanishi's remarks.

Nakanishi resigned Thursday after coming under fire for reportedly suggesting a day earlier that the constitution, crafted in the aftermath of World War II, be changed in order to let the Japanese military play a role on the world

Coalition members and the opposition heavily criticised his remarks.

Hosokawa appointed moderate politician Kazuo Aichi as new defence chief late Thursday.

Off the Record

Battle to rebuild face

SHEFFIELD, England: A British student had half his nose and part of his cheek bitten off during a street fight following an argument, police said on Thursday, reports Reuter.

Plastic surgeons in the northern English town of Sheffleid battled to rebuild the student's face after failing to stitch back the missing parts.

"People biting off ears and noses is quite common these days, but I have never seen it to this extent," said police inspector David Cannon.

Man bites dog

WELLINGTON: A man bit off the tip of a police dogs' ear on Thursday and received a bite in the testicles in return, reports Reuter.

Police dog handler constable Laurie McNeal said he had sent his dog Tyke into a house in Timaru, in New Zealand's south island, to disarm a man carrying a gun.

Tyke gripped the man's arm with his teeth and the offender reacted by biting off part of the dogs' ear, McNeal said. Tyke responded by releasing his grip on the arm and biting the man's testicles, ending the one-sided dispute quickly.

Police said Tyke was expected back on full duties shortly. The conditions of the man was unknown. The offender has been charged with obstructing police and cruelty to an animal



PARIS: Jill Barad, President of Mattel INC, presents on Wednesday a wax model of Barbie, on the doll's 35th anniversary. The wax Barbie will be placed in the Grevin museum, dressed by Christian Dior coiffed by Alexandre. - AFP photo

The rapist is Mandela's son-in-law

HARTFORD: A professor accused of raping one of his students has been identified in court as the son-in-law of South African black leader Nelson Mandela, reports AP.

Isaac Amuah, a 37-year-old Ghanaian-born professor at Manchester Community Technical College, is accused of sexually assaulting a student from his algebra class on three occasions in April and May at his apartment in Manchester. Amuah has been free on 10,000 dollar bond since his arrest in May. The charges against him include first-degree sexual assault and unlawful restraint.

At a hearing Wednesday in Superior Court, Assistant State's Attorney John M Massameno identified Amuah as a son-in-law of Mandela, head of the African National Congress and co-winner of the 1993 Nobel Peace Prize. Attorney Joseph A Moniz protested that the relationship should have been kept confidential for "reasons of a fair trial." He cited an agreement he said he had made with another prosecutor who had handled the case.

Massameno said he was unaware of any such agreement, and said the relationship increased the risk he might flee.

Clinton starts Europe tour on Jan 9

reports from Oxnard, California.

by police, said officer Kelly Dean.

shooting, Ventura police Lt. Don Arth said.

WASHINGTON, Dec 3: President Bill Clinton, who has not yet made an official trip to Europe since taking office, will visit Europe three times in the first half of next year, the White House said Thursday, reports

Clinton will visit Brussels on January 9 to discuss relations between Washington and Europe, White House spokesman

Dee Dee Myers said. He will attend the NATO summit in Brussels on January 10 and 11, before meeting with EC leaders. He will then meet with Eastern European heads of state in Prague.

Clinton is to visit Moscow between January 12-15, then Belarus, which has ratified the START 1 treaty on strategic nuclear weapons reduction and the Nuclear-Non Proliferation Treaty, Myers said.

Hundreds mourn victims of Bhopal disaster BHOPAL, India, Dec 3: An 20,000 in the world's worst in-

18-year-old girl, coughing incessantly, struggles toward a straw-and-rag effigy of a man in a black suit and hat. After staring at it for a moment, she suddenly Kicks it, and the 300 people standing around her begin cheering, reports AP.

Within moments they pounce on the rag doll, intended to be American businessman Warren Anderson, and rip it into tatters.

Someone sets a match to it, and the dry straw crackles as the mourners clap their hands. So began the protest Friday

marking the ninth anniversary of the day poisonous gas spewed out of the Union Carbide's pesticide plant in Bhopal, killing more than 4,000 people and maiming another dustrial disaster.

The anger against the US company hasn't died out in this central Indian city, and many of the victims are still penniless.

They have received little financial compensation, even after 17 courts have heard seemingly endless arguments on the 40,000 death claims. They have settled 1,000 so far.

Nine years after funnelling more than 75 million dollar into relief, hospitals are still overcrowded; widows of the victims are yet to get the houses the government promised them.

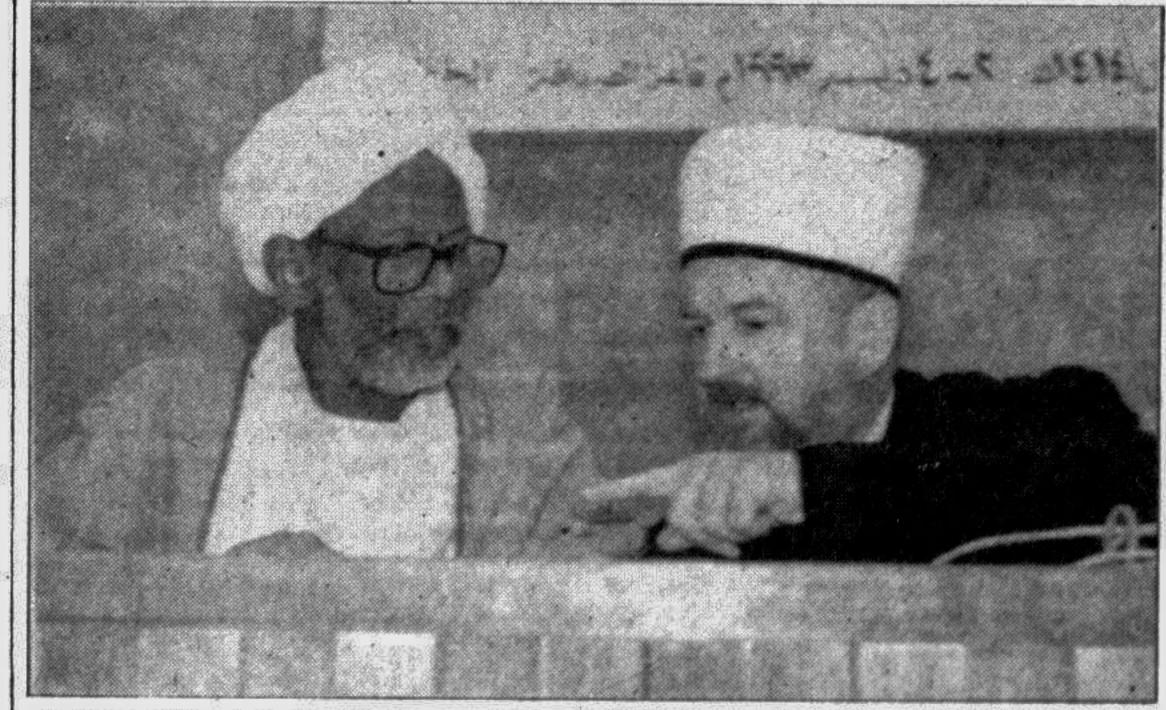
On Friday, the 300 demonstrators gathered in front of the pesticide factory, which was abandoned after the disaster. "Down with Carbide!" they

shouted before burning the effigy of Anderson, who was the chief executive of Union Carbide when the gas leaked out on the night of December 3, 1984.

Rehana Sultana, who led the demonstration, was a 9-year-old girl living in a straw hut outside the factory when the deadly methylisocyanate gas leaked out. Even though she was lucky to survive, she has been weak ever since.

Recently doctors found that she was suffering from tuberculosis. They say she may have contracted the disease because her immune system was weakened by the methyliscocyanate poisoning. She said she has spent

nearly all of the 200 rupees (dlrs 6) she receives a month to buy medicine. "Government hospitals that are supposed to dispense medicines never have any," she said.



Sudanese Islamic leader Dr Hassan Al-Turabi (L) listens to Bosnia's mufti, Sheikh Mustafa Cerchic during the opening session of the Islamic conference on Thursday hosted by Sudan for the second time in as many years. - AFP photo

IRA has never offered permanent ceasefire

BELFAST, Northern Ireland, Dec 3: The Irish Republican Army has never offered a permanent ceasefire as a condition for negotiations and never will, its supporters said Thursday in a direct rebuke to British claims about secret contacts, reports

"They say that Irish republicans are ready to surrender. That is a lie," Gerry Adams, president of Sinn Fein, told a Belfast press conference. "Our commitment to struggle is firm and undaunted." That defiant message only

added to the difficulties facing Irish leader Albert Reynolds and British Prime Minister John Major as they meet Friday in Dublin to seek agreement on principles for bringing peace to Northern Ireland.