

# Massive search to arrest Tamil rebels

COLOMBO, Jan 15: A massive joint army-police search operation has been launched in Kalpitiya area in North Western province of Sri Lanka to round up Tamil rebel cadres who may have infiltrated and sought refuge in the area, reports Xinhua.

This follows the recent attacks by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) on the Sinhalese fishing hamlets of Luankulama and Kalpitiya in the north of the island, according to local press reports today.

Sri Lankan security officials have received information that the LTTE from Mannar in the north is in the habit of coming to Kalpitiya area by boat, the reports said.

Sri Lankan navy patrols accordingly have also been strengthened in these regions. All traffic entering and leaving these areas are being searched by the police.

The police have also appealed to the fishermen to report any movements of little rebel boats, the reports said, adding that residents in these areas have been warned not to give accommodation to any strangers.

## Yemeni tribesmen free 2 hostages

SANA, Yemen, Jan 15: A Briton and Canadian held hostage by tribesmen in the north Yemen for 12 days were released Friday, the general manager of the Yemen-Hunt Oil Co said, reports AP.

George Slaughter said the two men 49-year-old Peter Jackson from Exeter, England, and 43-year-old George Hawkins from Vancouver, Canada were released along with their helicopter at around 3 pm (1200 GMT).

# Shiv Sena threatens indefinite strike Delhi plans separate army to deal with insurgency

NEW DELHI, Jan 15: India is to set up a separate armed force to deal with insurgency in the north-east states, well informed sources said here yesterday, reports Xinhua.

The sources said that a special meeting attended by Home Minister Chavan and all chief ministers of the north-eastern states would be held in the northeastern city of Shillong on January 22 to discuss related matters.

The decision was made following the stepping up of insurgent activities in Manipur and Nagaland and continued acts of lawlessness in Tripura.

Observers in north-east feel that it was not enough to pump money to the local state governments, but New Delhi

should also monitor the spending of the money and set up a separate force to help co-ordinate in operations against the insurgent activities.

Manipur was put under president's rule on the last day of 1993 in the wake of continued Naga-Kuki clashes that have rocked the northeastern state for the last one year, resulting in 1,000 deaths.

The central government has been seriously concerned about the state of drift and virtual inaction of the state government in containing insurgency.

The north-eastern region has been in turmoil for 40 years now, with at least four states — Assam, Manipur, Nagaland and Tripura — ridden with insurgency, and there is little sign of

improvement in the foreseeable future.

As the economy in the region has been in shambles, stability for economic development there is in urgent need, the sources said.

AFP adds: An Indian university in the western state of Maharashtra was renamed on Friday after a leader of lower-caste Hindus following mass protests and two suicides, the Press Trust of India said.

The Marathwada University was renamed the Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada University after the author of the Indian constitution and a leader of lower caste Hindus, the news agency said.

Socially oppressed Hindus, had stepped up a campaign in the past few months to rename the university, with two young activists setting themselves on fire.

Maharashtra Chief Minister Sharad Pawar announced the renaming of the university in Bombay which sparked immediate protests and violence by activists of the Hindu fundamentalist Shiv Sena (Shiva's army) party.

Shiv Sena members torched two buses prompting widespread arrests, reports said. A senior party legislator warned of further violence and attacks and said an indefinite strike would be launched across the state.

The Shiv Sena believes in the structured social hierarchy set forth in ancient Hindu texts.

# Off the Record

*'We must be together on this small planet'*

MOSCOW: Presidents Boris Yeltsin and Bill Clinton bade farewell to each other Saturday morning at the end of a three-day visit to Russia by the US head of state, reports Reuter.

Calling Clinton's stay an "unqualified success", Yeltsin told his guest he had had an opportunity to see for himself that Russia's "People want reform, the people want freedom and democracy."

"We must be together on this small planet," Yeltsin said in his farewell remarks in the ornate St George's hall at the Kremlin, watched by Russian and US dignitaries.

Clinton, who appealed to Russians in a television speech on Friday not to return to old-style expansionism because it would harm them again said he had been greatly impressed by Russia's "courage and vision" in undertaking free market reform.

He then headed for Ynuokovo airport with his wife, Hillary, and daughter, Chelsea, to go to Belarus for a brief visit.



## Doctor forgot his own medicine

CAIRO: A plane carrying 229 passengers from Cairo to New York turned around just 10 minutes after take-off when a doctor on board said he had forgotten his own medicine, reports Reuter.

Officials at Cairo Airport said Kazem Farage needed to take injections every four hours for a kidney complaint and would not have survived the 12-hour journey.

They said he had left his syringes in a bag belonging to his brother, who had been supposed to fly with him but had not been allowed on the flight.

The plane returned to Cairo, dropped Farage off, and took off again without him, they said.

## 176 dinosaur egg fossils unearthed

ZHENGZHOU: Chinese scientists have unearthed 176 pieces of dinosaur egg fossils in central China's Henan province, reports Xinhua.

The remarkable find has given scientists more firsthand materials about dinosaurs, following months of intensive excavations.

According to experts from the Henan provincial institute of cultural relics, the 176 eggs were unearthed in ten nests in an area of 260 square metres in Xixia county.

Experts, supported by the Chinese academy of sciences and local governments, said that the dinosaur eggs were discovered in sedimentary rocks of the cretaceous period. With the dinosaur egg fossil, they said, there were also bits of eggshell.

Among the eggs one was smaller even than a chicken egg, measuring about 4.9 centimeters long and 2.9 centimeters in diameter. It is so far the smallest found in the area.

The unearthed dinosaur eggs were oblate shaped, with slightly flat top and bottom and in dark gray or light gray. Each nest held more than a dozen and up to 30 eggs.

## Threat to castrate 100 Americans



Lorena Bobbitt reacts to cheering supporters as she leaves the Prince William County Courthouse on Friday after the fourth day for her trial on charges she maliciously wounded her husband. The trial will resume January 18 after the Martin Luther King holiday weekend. — AFP photo

QUITO: Women's groups here threatened Friday to castrate 100 Americans if Ecuadoran-born Lorena Bobbitt is convicted of cutting off her husband's penis in a widely publicised US trial, reports AFP.

A woman who identified herself as being with the Ecuadoran national feminist association telephoned AFP to say that they were awaiting the verdict before attacking Americans.

She added that the group planned a rally for Monday to protest the trial of 24-year-old Lorena Bobbitt who is accused of malicious wounding after slicing off her husband's penis.

Lorena Bobbitt has accused her husband of years of sexual abuse, claiming he raped her the night she attacked him. Mr Bobbitt was acquitted of rape in that attack at an earlier court hearing.

In Manassas, Virginia, Margaret McGary, an employee at the shop where Lorena Bobbitt worked as a manicurist, testified that she heard Mr Bobbitt make derogatory remarks about Lorena's Latin background.

"I heard him call her stupid and related that to being Spanish," McGary said.

The men targeted will be American tourists and residents of Quito, said the group.

Lorena Bobbitt's family emigrated from Ecuador to Venezuela when she was four, and from Venezuela to the United States when she was a teenager.



Pakistan's Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto (L) listens to French Defence Minister Francois Leotard after their meeting at the Premier's house January 15. Leotard arrived in Islamabad for a two-day official visit and will hold talks with Pakistani official on bilateral issues. — AFP photo.

## Rains wash away Sydney bushfire crisis

SYDNEY, Jan 15: Rain fell here Saturday, finally washing away the bushfire crisis which devastated much of New South Wales during the last fortnight, but fire authorities warned severe weather conditions could develop again as early as Monday, reports AFP.

Bushfire services commissioner Phil Koperberg said while the emergency ended Friday, firefighters remained at the mercy of the weather to an extent.

"The last 72 hours in the absence of new outbreaks have allowed crews to get on with the very difficult task of containment," he said.

"We're blessed with a prediction of another 48 hours of good weather, but Monday, however, it will be a bit more rugged and firefighters will be on the ground for a few days yet. Four people died in the fires which were said by authorities to have been the worst in two centuries.

# Indonesian embassy in Kabul hit

KABUL, Jan 15: The Indonesian embassy in Kabul was hit twice by heavy artillery fire today morning, but officials said there were no casualties, reports AFP.

A long-range, 122-mm rocket blew a huge hole in the embassy's rear wall about 10 AM (0530 GMT) and was followed almost immediately by an artillery shell which exploded after hitting a perimeter wall in the front of the embassy compound.

The shock wave of the second explosion blew all the chancellery windows in, shattering the ambassador's temporary office with glass shards, but no one inside was hurt.

A car parked inside the compound had its petrol tank ruptured, spilling fuel over a wide area, but there was no fire.

The Indonesian embassy is among the few foreign missions still open in Kabul, which has

been under siege for 15 straight days as rival factions battle the Defence Ministry forces of president Burhanuddin Rabbani for control of the capital.

Reuters from Pakistan adds: Rival Afghan factions each claimed victories as bloody battles for power went into a third week today.

Fighting between forces loyal to President Burhanuddin Rabbani and his opponents resumed in eastern Kabul after an overnight lull, with aerial attacks and shelling, a spokesman for the Hezb-i-Islami party said in neighbouring Pakistan.

The Hezb, headed by Prime Minister Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, who allied with northern Afghan warlord Abdul Rashid Dostum, who started the current round of fighting by launching a power grab in Kabul on New Year's day.

Pro-Rabbani forces recaptured the areas of Qala-i-Zaman and Deh Koidad Dhan from rival forces on Friday, official Kabul Radio said.

But the Hezb spokesman in the northwestern Pakistani town of Peshawar denied the report, saying his group's forces had advanced in the eastern suburbs and captured some government positions.

Government jets bombed rebel positions around Kabul on Friday, two days after rebel jets dominated the skies over the capital.

Kabul Radio, quoting the Defence Ministry, said on Friday night that a large number of rebel militiamen were killed or injured in the attacks.

Rebel forces fired shells and rockets into residential areas killing many people and causing extensive damage, it said.

Both sides have rejected

Pakistan's appeal for a ceasefire from Friday to allow for a negotiated settlement.

Pakistan on Tuesday shut its border at the Khyber pass, where more than 15,000 refugees had crossed since January 1 to escape battles estimated to have killed hundreds of people.

Between 1,000 and 1,500 people waiting for the opening of the border had returned to the eastern Afghan town of Jalalabad, aid workers said.

At least 50,000 people from Kabul have flocked to Jalalabad midway between Kabul and Pakistan since January 1, according to UN officials.

More than 10,000 people have been killed in battles for power in Kabul since April 1992 when the Mujahideen guerrilla parties overthrew a formerly Soviet-backed government after 14 years of civil war.

# Arms-for-Iraq inquiry Major denies significant role

LONDON, Jan 15: Prime Minister John Major has told Britain's arms-for-Iraq inquiry that he had no significant role in setting or adjusting guidelines on sales of defence-related equipment to Baghdad, the Financial Times reported on Saturday, says Reuter.

In written evidence to the inquiry ahead of his appearance before Lord Justice Scott on Monday, Major emphasised that during his time as Finance Minister and Foreign Minister he was not party to relaxation of rules, said the newspaper.

Major set up the inquiry in 1992 to investigate whether British ministers knowingly broke guidelines governing

arms sales to Iraq before the 1991 Gulf War.

His aides maintain the prime minister has nothing to fear from the inquiry which is trying to discover whether the conservative government turned a blind eye as British firms helped build Iraq's war machine in the 1980s.

Current Finance Minister Kenneth Clarke said on Thursday he would resign if the inquiry found he was at fault in signing key documents.

Asked on a political discussion programme on British television if he would stand down if the Scott inquiry found fault with his action while he was Interior Minister, Clarke

replied: "Of course I will."

But he stressed: "I believe what I did was lawful, I believe what I did was in the interests of justice."

Trade secretary Michael Heseltine on Friday joined a growing queue of ministers saying they would resign if censured by the inquiry. "If I thought that anything I had done had brought unacceptable embarrassment to the government I would resign."

Officials were quoted in the Financial Times as saying Major was "entirely convinced" the mass of government documents covering the guidelines confirmed his complete innocence of any misconduct.

## DPRK to welcome ROK opposition leader's visit

TOKYO, Jan 15: Communist North Korea said today it would welcome a visit by the head of South Korea's main opposition party, reports Reuter.

Lee Ki-Taek, chairman of the South Korean Democratic Party, visits Pyongyang, we will welcome him and openheartedly discuss with him important affairs of the nation," said Yang Hyong-Sop, alternate politburo member of the central committee of the Workers' (communist) Party.

Lee said last Wednesday he was willing to visit North Korea for talks with President Kim Il-Sung to help resolve a bitter row over the north's suspected nuclear arms programme

# US-Russian ties enter a new stage of strategic partnership

MOSCOW, Jan 15: The Presidents inked the accords, clinked their glasses and hailed their post-cold war friendship, but in two days of US-Russian summit talks they also achieved one thing that may have mattered above all: Maintaining the status quo, reports AFP.

The issues addressed by Presidents Bill Clinton and Boris Yeltsin — nuclear disarmament, economic reform, security in Europe, stability in Russian and commerce in the world — could hardly have been weightier.

But underneath the veneer of ritual importance accompanying any summit there lurked a sense that both leaders were at least as interested in not rocking the boat as they were in unveiling any stunning breakthroughs in bilateral relations.

And as Russia's new democratically elected parliament got off to a turbulent start on the sidelines of the summit, Clinton and Yeltsin seemed content to stick to a well-tested script in wary anticipation of whatever may come next.

"They noted with satisfaction that the relationship between Russia and the United States has entered a new stage of mature strategic partnership," was how the final declaration signed by the presidents summed up their assessment of US-Russian ties.

But while the summit in many ways confirmed a holding pattern for the two countries, it also yielded several formal agreements — notably a trilateral nuclear disarmament

treaty with Ukraine — that both sides hailed as historic.

The arms deal, signed by Clinton, Yeltsin and Ukrainian President Leonid Kravchuk, was significant not only because it formalised a pledge by Kiev to get rid of its nuclear weapons but because Moscow and Washington extracted that

pledge jointly. Both countries, ultimately for the same reasons, were loathe to see the emergence of a new nuclear power in Europe and especially in Ukraine, where political passions are running high and which can neither control for even maintain the weapons.

In addition, the deal in

volved complex transfers of missile material and dollars over the coming decade that seemed to offer something for everyone: Money for Russia, civilian nuclear fuel for Ukraine and weapons-grade Uranium for the United States.

But that accord, billed in large measure as the centerpiece of Clinton's trip to Moscow, was clouded by hard line lawmakers in Kiev who described Kravchuk's decision to sign it as "treason" and vowed to continue their fight to hang on to nuclear arms.

US officials said they had "no reason to doubt" that the treaty, calling for Ukraine to get rid of all 176 long range nuclear missiles on its soil within seven years, would be implemented.

In addition to the Ukrainian accord, Clinton and Yeltsin agreed to order their respective armies, by no later than May 30 of this year, to stop pointing nuclear missiles at each other's cities.

Russian and US officials sought to stress the economic nature of the summit and agreements signed Friday contained numerous "statements of intent" to ease Russian trade access to US market and back Russia's full integration into the world economy.

Clinton also announced new plans — not fresh cash for helping Russia's sagging industry and predicted that Yeltsin's continued commitment to economic reform could unlock billions of dollars in international aid for Moscow.

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## Ramos firm to reach pact with Muslims

MANILA, Jan 15: President Fidel Ramos said he was determined to reach a pact with Muslim separatist rebels to end a war that has killed more than 50,000 people in the southern Philippines since the 1970s, reports Reuter.

"We are determined to finish the peace talks in a just and honourable way without bloodshed," Ramos told leaders and officials of southern Mindanao island in a meeting late on Friday.

His remarks followed a row over bodyguards for Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) leader Nur Misuari that threatened to disrupt the talks.

## Wallach dies of cancer

WARRENTON, Jan 15: Erica Glaser Wallach, who evaded Nazis in Germany, fascists in Spain and a Soviet death sentence, has died of cancer, reports AP.

She was 71.

At the height of the Cold War, Mrs Wallach spent five years in Communist prisons on fabricated espionage charges. She was released in 1955 after the Soviets, without explanation, declared her innocent.

Her life already is the subject of a documentary a play and an autobiography. Her son, architect Robert S. Wallach, said Friday a second documentary about her life may answer some of the lingering questions about her ordeal.

## News Analysis

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