

## India to display *Prithvi* during Republic Day

NEW DELHI, Jan 24: India will display a newly developed surface-to-surface missile system *Prithvi* (Earth) during the Republic Day parade here on January 26, reports Xinhua.

Announcing this here on Sunday, Major General SC Kashyap, who would be leading the parade, said that the various aspects of the armed forces to be displayed would be more modernised than the previous year.

The *Prithvi* guided missile developed by the defence research and development organisation has a 200-kilometer range and carry a warhead of one ton.

He said that the 19-minute parade will also display an assortment of armory, representing the military might of the country.

## Benazir calls strike to show support for Kashmiris

ISLAMABAD, Jan 24: Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto called for a nationwide strike on February 5 to protest India's attempts to quell an uprising in its troubled state of Jammu and Kashmir, the flashpoint of two wars between the unfriendly neighbours, reports AP.

Nationwide protest strikes have become routine in Islamic Pakistan to show support for Muslim militants, who are into their fourth year of a violent secessionist uprising in Indian-controlled Kashmir.

Many people fear the deteriorating relationship between India and Pakistan could lead to a fourth war on the subcontinent. Some feared an outbreak of hostilities in 1990 over Kashmir, a particularly worrisome prospect because

both countries are believed to be capable of building nuclear bombs.

Benazir has repeatedly warned that Pakistan's relationship with India will continue to worsen unless the ownership of Kashmir is settled in line with 46-year-old United Nations resolution to let Kashmiris decide their fate.

Pakistan and India began 1994 with a rare meeting of senior foreign ministry officials to discuss the thorny issue of Kashmir.

Kashmir is India's only Muslim-dominated state in a country of mostly Hindus.

But, the talks ended in a stalemate, both sides agreeing the disputed Himalayan state was troublesome but neither side offering a solution.

No fresh talks were scheduled and Benazir accused India of running away from negotiations.

Kashmir was divided between India and Pakistan when the subcontinent gained its independence from Britain in 1947. Since then the two neighbours have argued over ownership of Kashmir.

They went to war over Kashmir in 1948 and again in 1965. They fought a third war in 1971 over Bangladesh or what was then East Pakistan.

Thousands of Kashmiri refugees are living in camps in Pakistan-controlled Kashmir. They have trudged through snow-clogged mountain passes to Pakistan telling harrowing tales of rampant human rights violations by Indian security forces.

Successive human rights organisations have blasted India, demanding among other things the release of hundreds of political prisoners and an end to torture in prisons.

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Reduces alleged repression in its part of Kashmir, where more than 15,000 people have been killed since a separatist uprising by Muslim militants began in early 1990.

Bhatia was quoted as saying he had discussed Kashmir with Kuwaiti officials who had said Kashmir was "a bilateral matter between India and Pakistan and should be settled peacefully by dialogue instead of resorting to power."

The same day the poll was published, several senior US officials predicted a crime bill putting billions of dollars toward hiring more police and building more prisons would be passed quickly by Congress.

President Bill Clinton is expected to ask for speedy passage of the bill in his state of the union address to Congress on Tuesday.

## Crime, violence biggest worries in US

NEW YORK, Jan 24: Crime and violence are the biggest worries in the United States, according to a New York Times and CBS television poll released Sunday, reports AFP.

Nineteen per cent of respondents cited crime or violence as their chief worry, ahead of 15 per cent who cited healthcare, 14 per cent the economy, 12 per cent unemployment and jobs, five per cent the federal budget deficit and three per cent drugs.

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## BRIEFLY

### Turksat Turkey's 1st satellite:

Turksat, Turkey's first satellite, will be launched Monday night from the French Guiana, a South American island, Xinhua reports from Ankara.

The satellite, built by aeronautics in France, has cost about 300 million US dollars. Turksat is equipped with 16 transponders and has a life span of 13 years.

Turksat will also transmit 22 channels of programmes and will relay telexes and faxes.

### Lesotho capital quiet:

Lesotho's capital Maseru was quiet as dawn broke yesterday with no sign of renewed fighting between rival army factions in the small southern African kingdom, Reuter reports from Maseru.

At least two soldiers were killed and four civilians wounded during fighting in Maseru on Sunday in which the rival factions traded artillery and mortar fire across the city, government sources said.

The fighting first broke out 10 days ago between soldiers from the Makonyani barracks, near the airport about eight km (five miles) south of Maseru, and soldiers from the defence force headquarters barracks on the eastern edge of Maseru.

### IRA claims blast responsibility:

The IRA claimed responsibility late Sunday for a bomb blast in which it said two British soldiers were injured near Ballygawley, County Tyrone in northern Ireland, AFP reports from Belfast.

In a call to local media, the clandestine Irish Republican Army claimed it had planted a bomb on the main road linking Ballygawley and Dungannon.

The IRA said the army had been told that the bomb had been planted but added that it had gone off during an attempt to defuse it.

### Drought hits Chinese province:

Some half a million people in the northwestern Chinese province of Shaanxi are without adequate drinking water due to a severe drought that could devastate the country's winter wheat crop, it was reported yesterday. AFP reports from Beijing.

Since last autumn, rainfall has dropped by as much as 60 per cent from the previous year in Shaanxi — one of China's main winter wheat producers — killing half the province's 1.2 million hectares of winter crops, the China Daily said, quoting a ministry of water resources report.

### Rains cause flood in Lanka:

Floods caused by heavy rains during the past three days have rendered thousands of people homeless in Sri Lanka's north-central province, reports reaching Colombo said yesterday. Xinhua reports from Colombo.

Polonaruwa district of the province was the worst effected area where hundreds of houses and five thousand acres of paddy field have been damaged.

Meanwhile, road traffic between the province and Colombo has been badly disrupted as several sections of the main highway have been submerged.

### Kuwait-Italian marine exercise:

Italian and Kuwaiti Naval Forces Sunday conducted joint marine exercises near the Kuwaiti waters in the Gulf, Xinhua reports from Kuwait City.

Two Italian warships arrived in Kuwait city last week and joined a number of Kuwaiti ones.

An informed source of the Kuwaiti Defence Ministry told reporters Saturday that the military exercise will use some live ammunition and highly-sophisticated equipment.

### Editor held in Punjab:

A newspaper editor in Punjab state has been arrested and charged with involvement in a plot to revive the waning Sikh separatist campaign, India's state-controlled television reported on Sunday, AFP says from New Delhi.

Gurdip Singh, Editor of the Punjabi-language daily *Aaj D' Awaz* (voice of today), was arrested by Punjab police in the city of Jalandhar late Friday, the network said. Newspaper telephone operator was also arrested.

### Tributes to Subash Bose:

The nation on Sunday paid tributes to Netaji Subash Chandra Bose and reconstituted his contribution during the freedom struggle on his 97th birth anniversary, PTI reports from New Delhi.

Several meetings, functions and exhibition were held on the occasion most parts of the country and floral tributes paid to him.

In Calcutta, the West Bengal Chief Minister, Jyoti Basu while paying deep tributes to Netaji recalled his activities during the period and said Netaji's "ideal leadership" should be a beacon to the present generation.

## Human rights situation improves in Myanmar

BANGKOK, Jan 24: Myanmar's ruling military has made 'incremental improvements' in the country's human rights, but arrests of critics, torture and unfair trials continued last year, a human rights group said in a report received Monday, reports AP.

The London-based Amnesty International said positive steps included the release of some 2,000 political prisoners between April 1992 and the end of last year and the abolition of military tribunals.

The Myanmar military, which seized power after quelling a 1988 pro-democracy uprising with guns, also has agreed to work with the International Red Cross to train military officers in international humanitarian law, Amnesty said.

"However, (Amnesty) re-

mains concerned that a system of repression is still in place which is being used to violate the fundamental rights of the people" of Myanmar, the report said.

The Amnesty report covers events in the Southeast Asian nation during the second half of 1993.

It said that torture and ill-treatment of political prisoners as well as ethnic minorities fighting the central government remained common. The report cited repressive measures against the Karen, one of the main minority groups, during anti-insurgency operations as well as inhuman treatment of porters forced to work for the military.

Amnesty renewed its earlier appeals for the release of Aung San Suu Kyi, the pro-democracy leader.

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