

## International

## India wants more talks with Pakistan to resolve crisis

## Benazir calls strike to show support for Kashmiris

## India to display Prithvi during Republic Day

NEW DELHI, Jan 24: India will display a newly developed surface to air 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.

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.

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.

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

India regularly accuses Pakistan of arming and training Muslim militants who have been waging a bloody secessionist battle on its side of the border for more than three years.

Pakistan denies the charge demanding a plebiscite be held

in the combined state offering Kashmir is union with either Pakistan or India. However, many Kashmiris would prefer independence from both countries.

Benazir said the February 5 strike call was also intended to highlight human rights abuses in Indian-controlled Kashmir.

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.

Reuters from Kuwait reports: India would like more talks with Pakistan to solve the Kashmir issue, an Indian official said in remarks published today.

"India is for dialogue and our offer to the Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto to discuss the issue bilaterally is still open," Indian Minister of State for External Affairs RL Bhatia was quoted as saying by the English-language Arab Times.

"Talks have already been held and if the proposals are accepted it may help lead to the resolution of the Kashmir issue," Bhatia said without elaborating.

Pakistan says it will not hold more talks unless India

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."

Kuwait's opposition-dominated parliament in November expressed deep concern over violence in Kashmir and called on India to take steps to prevent attacks on Muslims there.

Bhatia described his three-day visit to Kuwait as a goodwill trip. Bhatia is also to visit Bahrain and Yemen.

## 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.

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.

## 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 aerospace 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, Reuters 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.

Polonnaruwa 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.

Gurdeep Singh, Editor of the Punjabi-language daily *Aaj Di 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 recounted 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.



An unidentified 20-year-old woman (L), wife of one of the 35 people, allegedly former guerrilla members, gunned down early Sunday by heavily armed civilians believed to be leftist rebels, is comforted by family members at a local hospital morgue in Colombia. The massacre in Apartado was the bloodiest in Colombia in more than five years.

## Pak move for Afghan peace

ISLAMABAD, Jan 24: Pakistan hopes to bring Afghanistan's bitterly divided Muslim leaders together for talks to end a deadly three-week siege of the Afghan capital of Kabul, reports AP.

Since New Year's Day, Afghan Prime Minister Gulbuddin Hekmatyar and his ally, Rashid Dostum, a powerful northern warlord, have rained thousands of rockets on the capital, killing hundreds of people and sending tens of thousands more fleeing for safety.

A spokesman for Pakistan's Foreign Ministry, Mohammed Salim, said that previous peace pacts have failed because Dostum was excluded. But not this time.

"Pakistan is hopeful that this time it will succeed in bringing about peace in Afghanistan," said Salim. "Dostum's representative will be attending, which reflects a

consensus on the part of the Afghan leaders and shows how serious they are this time around."

Hekmatyar and Dostum are trying to oust President Burhanuddin Rabbani, but so far Rabbani has been able to hold on to government buildings and military sites.

But the casualties have been enormous. Entire neighbourhoods have been reduced to rubble, at least 100,000 people have fled the city, and hospital officials say more than 8,000 people have been wounded.

The latest round of fighting in Kabul has been particularly vicious and most people believe it is because Dostum has entered the fray.

Until now the fighting was usually between Hekmatyar and Rabbani.

Dostum's troops, who control much of northern Afghanistan and have a fleet of fighterjets, are known for their

ruthlessness both on and off the battlefield.

Since entering the conflict they have been bombing Kabul, blasting residential areas and government buildings, and rocketing indiscriminately.

Pakistan closed its border with Afghanistan about one week ago after 18,000 Afghans, arriving with little more than the clothes on their back, sought refuge.

Pakistan still houses about 1.5 million Afghans, who fled the Soviet invasion of their homeland in 1979.

At the height of that war more than 3 million Afghans were refugees in Pakistan and another 2 million were living in exile in Iran.

When the Muslim leadership swept the communists from power in 1992, Pakistan prepared to send its refugees home, dismantle hundreds of refugee camps and return thousands of acres of land to desperately needed farmland.

## Yeltsin's military adviser sacked

MOSCOW, Jan 24: President Boris Yeltsin dismissed his military adviser Gen. Dmitry Volkogonov on Monday because of Volkogonov's election to parliament, Yeltsin's office announced, reports AP.

Yeltsin also removed Volkogonov as co-chairman of a joint US-Russian committee investigating the fate of American POWs and US soldiers missing from World War II and the wars in Korea and Vietnam.

Volkogonov's successor was not named.

Legislators in the parliament's lower house, the State Duma, cannot hold government jobs except as Cabinet ministers. Volkogonov was elected to the Duma in the December 12 elections as a deputy of the pro-reform Russia's Choice block.

The 65-year-old military

historian has served as Yeltsin's adviser since March 1991.

Meanwhile, President Yeltsin met with his prime minister Monday to discuss filling the key post of finance minister, which reformer Boris Fyodorov relinquished in a Cabinet shakeup last week that left conservatives in charge.

Fyodorov said in an interview with Russia's Independent Television on Sunday that he hoped to discuss his future with Yeltsin on Monday, but the president's office said no such meeting was scheduled.

The Interfax and ITAR-Tass news agencies said Yeltsin met instead with Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin.

Fyodorov made his return to the government conditional on

the removal of conservative Central Bank Chairman Viktor Geraschenko. A proponent of tight anti-inflation measures.

Fyodorov has frequently criticised Geraschenko for granting credits to ailing state enterprises.

The finance minister resigned last week when Yeltsin and Chernomyrdin named a new government dominated by Soviet-era managers who favour a slower transition to a free-market economy.

Chernomyrdin has said Geraschenko will stay. Fyodorov's resignation has not been formally accepted and he has continued to negotiate with the prime minister.

Fyodorov's step followed the resignation of First Deputy Prime Minister Yevgeny Gaidar, the architect of Yeltsin's free-market reforms.

## Ultimatum to Arab militants

ISLAMABAD, Jan 24: Pakistan said on Sunday it had given Arab militants staying in the country up to January 31 to leave or be extradited, reports Reuters.

Interior Minister Nasirullah Babar told parliament that Pakistan would not allow foreign nationals to use its territory to conspire against any other country.

Thousands of Arab militants came to Pakistan during the 14 years of the civil war in neighbouring Afghanistan to help the mujahideen guerrillas in their fight against a Soviet-backed government that fell in April 1992.

Many of them stayed on after the mujahideen took power in 1992, although most went to Afghanistan or to other countries after Pakistan ordered them early last year to leave or face prosecution, Pakistani officials say.

## Bouteflika may become Algerian president

ALGIERS, Jan 24: A veteran of Algeria's war of independence against France, Abdelaziz Bouteflika, is favoured to become the next Algerian president, national newspapers said today, reports Reuters.

A former Foreign Minister, Bouteflika was born in 1935 and was one of former president Houari Boumedienne's few intimates.

He was a senior officer during the eight-year war which freed Algeria from 130 years of French rule and became Foreign Minister in 1963, the year after Algeria's independence. He held the job until 1979.

The presidency, or high state committee, is due to step down at the end of this month.

## Aftershocks keep Indonesians fearful

KAO, Indonesia, Jan 24: Aftershocks, striking this remote corner of Indonesia kept villagers fearful today, three days after an earthquake killed several people and destroyed hundreds of homes, reports Reuters.

Dozens of aftershocks which shook building and sent residents onto the street were still being felt on the Moluccan island of Halmahera.

Friday's quake, which measured 6.8 on the open ended Richter scale, was the most serious of several to rock Indonesia in recent months.

"I am still too scared to go home," said Sri, one of around 3,000 people evacuated to the Kao Airstrip, around 3,000 km (2,000 miles) northeast of the Indonesian capital Jakarta.

## Off the Record

## Daughter wants Stalin's reburial

MOSCOW: Svetlana Alliluyeva, daughter of Soviet dictator Josef Stalin, wants her father to be reburied at his birthplace in the Georgian town of Gori, reports Reuters.

"Let them move him to the beautiful hillside at Gori... that's his homeland, his home town," Alliluyeva, now known as Lana Peters, said in an interview in London with Commonwealth television broadcast on Sunday.

Moscow officials are already considering plans to mark the break with the Soviet past by removing state founder Vladimir Lenin from his mausoleum in Red Square.

Lenin's mummified corpse is expected to be reburied beside his mother in Russia's second city, St Petersburg.

But officials have so far given little thought to a final resting place for Stalin, the longest ruling Soviet leader, whose body has lain beneath the Kremlin wall at the back of the Mausoleum since 1961.

## Horse racing as degree subject

LONDON: A British university is offering students a chance to study horse racing as a degree subject, reports Reuters.

Students at Bristol University, southwest England, will be touring British racecourses and meeting top trainers and owners as part of the course, the first of its kind. But their main task will not be to study racing form and find winners. Instead, the accent of the science degree will be on the racehorse itself and what makes it tick, a university spokesman said.



17-year-old Ekaterina Sheulovskaya is all smiles after winning the 'Miss Moscow' contest in Moscow late Saturday. Ekaterina won the contest against some 30 young Russian women, aged between 16 and 18.

## Harijan woman paraded naked

NEW DELHI: Four policemen were suspended Monday for failing to take action against villagers who stripped an 'untouchable' woman and paraded her naked through the streets, the Press Trust of India (PTI) said, reports AFP.

The 50-year-old woman from the 'Harijan' or 'untouchable' community, was involved in a land dispute in Dauna village in the northern state of Uttar Pradesh, the news agency said.

On Friday, she was beaten by a gang of youths, forced to strip at gunpoint and paraded naked through the streets of the village, it said.

## US, ROK hold talks on DPRK's N-issue

SEOUL, Jan 24: US Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Tom Hubbard held working level talks here on the North Korean nuclear issue with South Korean Foreign Minister Han Sung-Joo, foreign ministry officials said today, reports AFP.

The officials said Hubbard, who flew into Seoul on Sunday and was scheduled to leave later today, had also met Sunday with other senior officials on the nuclear impasse, which is dragging on in talks between Pyongyang and the international Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

North Korea on Saturday argued that it was not subject to regular checks of its suspected nuclear facilities by the UN nuclear watchdog as it had

not returned fully to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

The IAEA said Thursday the North was posing unacceptable limits of its proposed inspections.

There was no immediate indication of the contents of the talks between Hubbard and Han, which followed a visit to Seoul last week by central intelligence agency chief James Woolsey.

Washington has been leading the effort to persuade Pyongyang to open its nuclear installations to outside inspections and resume talks with the Seoul government before it offers to improve its own ties with the rigidly isolationist state.



The bodies of five of the six children killed Saturday by a mortar in the Alipasma Polje neighbourhood of Sarajevo lie in the city's main morgue on Sunday. The body of the sixth child is in another morgue.