

BRIEFLY

Snowstorms hit Japan: Heavy snowstorms hit central and northern Japan Saturday, dumping unusual amounts of snow on Tokyo and disrupting land and air transportation. AP reports from Tokyo.

Weathermen said a cold air mass moved over Japan overnight, bringing up to 100 centimeters (40 inches) of snow to northern Japan.

In temperate Tokyo, snow began falling before dawn, and by midday up to 20 centimeters (8 inches) had accumulated. It was the first time in two years that a snowfall exceeded 10 centimeters (4 inches) in the capital.

Benazir to visit Britain: Pakistan Prime

Minister Benazir Bhutto will visit Britain in June to attract foreign investment in Pakistan, the official Associated Press of Pakistan (APP) reported Friday. AFP says from Islamabad.

Quoting Yusuf Raza Gilani, speaker of the lower house of parliament, the news agency said the prime minister had been invited by investors in Britain.

"The visit will help stimulate British investment in Pakistan," it said.

Cubans clash with police: Hundreds of Cubans clashed with police as they tried to enter the US diplomatic representation in Havana Friday, apparently after hearing that the United States was offering visas, witnesses said. AFP says from Havana.

About a dozen people were arrested in the failed attempt to get into the US interests section, witnesses said. No injuries were reported.

A spokesman for the US representation said the visas rumor was false and had probably been spread to cause a disturbance. No one got into the building, which is guarded by US marines, the spokesman said.

Akihito in Iwojima Island: Japan's

Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko arrived at a local airport on Iwojima island yesterday to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the return of the island to Japan by the United States, AFP reports from Iwojima.

During their trip the imperial couple will pay their respects at a memorial for the dead on the island, where some 20,000 Japanese and 7,000 US soldiers died in bitter fighting during World War II.

It is the emperor's first trip to the island in the western Pacific some 1,000 kilometers (650 miles) south of Tokyo.

Actor William Conrad dies: Actor William Conrad, the star of two hit television series and a long-running radio show, died of a heart attack Friday. He was 73. AFP reports from Los Angeles.

Conrad became ill at his home and died at the Medical Centre of North Hollywood, a hospital spokeswoman said.

The portly actor played district attorney J. L. "Fatman" McCabe on the 1987-1992 TV series "Jake And The Fatman" and the detective in the TV detective series "Cannon," which ran from 1971 to 1976.

Quake rocks Japan: A moderate earthquake, measuring 4.5 on the Richter scale, rocked large areas of eastern Japan yesterday but there were no immediate reports of casualties or damage, the meteorological agency said. AFP reports from Tokyo.

The epicenter of the quake, which occurred at 2:50 am (1750 GMT Friday), was located 100 kilometers (62 miles) northeast of Tokyo.

The agency also said there were no fears of Tsunami Seismic tidal waves from the earthquake.



African National Congress President Nelson Mandela stands out of the window of the prison cell he occupied for much of his 27-year incarceration during a visit to Robben Island Prison Feb 11.

— AFP photo

Rabbani accepts OIC call for ceasefire

ISLAMABAD, Feb 12: Afghan President Burhanuddin Rabbani has accepted an appeal for a ceasefire in factional fighting during the Muslim Fasting month of Ramadan, the Afghan ambassador to Pakistan said on Friday, reports Reuter.

The appeal for an unconditional ceasefire during Ramadan, which began on Friday, was made by the secretary-general of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC), Hamid Al-Gabid, during a visit to Pakistan to meet the representative of warring Afghan factions.

Afghan ambassador Sardar Mohammad Roshan told Gabid in Islamabad that Rabbani had accepted his appeal. Pakistan's official APP news agency reported.

It quoted Gabid as saying at the end of his trip that he hoped other factions would also accept his appeal. There was no immediate information about the response of Rabbani's opponents, led by Prime Minister Gulbuddin Hekmatyar and northern warlord general Abdul Rashid Dostum.

Red Cross officials say some 800 people have been killed and more than 10,000 injured in the latest round of factional fighting that erupted on the new year's day in the Afghan capital Kabul.

Both sides have ignored previous appeals for truce from the United Nations, the OIC and neighbouring countries.

More than 10,000 people

ping into the wrong turf or even unsolicited looks that were once settled behind the school with epithets or fists are now drawing gunfire in school halls.

Last month, a student entered a chemistry classroom at Dunbar High School in Washington and asked the teacher if he could use the pencil sharpener and then pulled out a gun and fired on a student in the back row.

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