

BRIEFLY

12 die in Java road mishap: A multiple collision in Puncak hill resort, south of Jakarta, has killed 12 people and seriously injured six others, the Antara news agency said on Monday. AFP reports from Jakarta.

Antara quoted a witness as saying that the accident happened when a bus hit a minibus with nine people on board, which then collided with another car after its brakes failed.

Turkish violence kills 6: An armed clash between two groups killed a town mayor and five other people on Sunday in an area of southeastern Turkey dominated by ethnic Kurds, the Anatolia news agency said. AP reports from Batman.

Armed men raiding a house in Yicebag where the mayor was staying were met with gunfire, the news agency said. The six were killed in the gun battle. No reason was given for the fighting.

US surgeon gen steps down: US Surgeon General Joycelyn Elders, forced to resign because of her blunt talk, says she told the truth from the perspective of the poor, whose outlook is "very different from someone who plans a trip to Europe every summer," AP reports from Washington.

President Clinton demanded Elders' resignation on Friday after learning that she had told reporters at an AIDS conference that masturbation should be discussed in schools as part of human sexuality.

Int'l drug confce in Bangkok: Fighting the international problem of narcotics by reducing demand is the theme of a United Nations-sponsored international conference that opened on Monday. AP reports from Bangkok.

More than 600 people from 100 countries are expected to attend the 1994 Non-Governmental Organisation World Forum on Drug Demand Reduction, being held with the support of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme.

US officer dies in Pakistan: The US embassy is investigating the death of an US air force sergeant who fell from his fourth-floor hotel room window, embassy officials said on Sunday. AP reports from Islamabad.

Staff Sgt. Mark Shearer, 28, died early Friday, the officials said, speaking on condition of anonymity. The embassy refused to say whether foul play was suspected or whether it was an accident.

3 killed in Manila church: A suspected drug-crazed man killed three church workers before he was shot to death by policemen inside a church in Manila early yesterday morning. Kinsha reports from Manila.

The suspect who remained unidentified suffered multiple gunshot wounds and died on the spot at third floor of the San Roque church annex on Blumentritt St, Manila, police said.

S Lebanese clash claims 5: Guerrilla fighters ambushed an Israeli military patrol in south Lebanon on Sunday, killing an Israeli soldier. Security sources said four guerrillas also were killed, AP reports from Marjayoun.

The Shi'ite Muslim group Hezbollah, or Party of God, claimed responsibility for the roadside bomb attack and said as many as 25 Israeli soldiers were killed or wounded. The Israeli army confirmed the one fatality and said seven troopers were wounded.

Polish WWII commander dies: Maj Gen Stanislaw Maczek, believed to be the last surviving senior allied commander from World War II, is dead at 102. AP reports from London.

Maczek's death was announced by the Polish consulate-general in Edinburgh, Scotland, where he lived. Maczek died on Sunday, a consulate statement said. Maczek enlisted in the Polish army in 1918 and was promoted to Major-General in 1939.

1 held for newsman's murder: Police have arrested a Cambodian army colonel in the gunshot slaying of a Cambodian journalist last week in eastern Kompong Cham province. Information Minister Ieng Mouly said yesterday. Reuter reports from Phnom Penh.

Army Colonel Sath South was arrested Sunday afternoon. "The suspect (Colonel South) is being detained by local authorities in Kompong Cham," the minister said, adding he would soon face murder charges in connection with the drive-by killing of Chan Dara, 28, correspondent of the Koh Santepheap (Island of Peace) newspaper in Kompong Cham.

Chinese economist Yao dies: Yao Yili, a former Chinese vice premier and a conservative economist, died on Sunday of illness. He was 77, AP reports from Beijing.

The official Xinhua news agency announced Yao's death late Monday, but gave no details. Yao disappeared from public view for months in 1991, reportedly due to illness, and has not been seen in public since he retired from his last official post in 1992.

Mail bomb kills 1 in US: A bomber who has killed one person and injured 23 others over the last 16 years appears to have struck again, this time killing an advertising executive with a mail bomb, the FBI said on Sunday. AP reports from Newark, New Jersey.

Thomas J. Mosser, 50, was killed on Saturday in his kitchen in suburban North Caldwell when he opened a small package addressed to him and delivered by the postal service, FBI agent Barry Mawn said.

Ancient Iranian tower damaged: Torrential rain has damaged one of Iran's most ancient sites, a 3,000-year-old zigzag or stepped tower near the Iraqi border, newspapers reported on Sunday. AFP reports from Tehran.

Part of the Tshogha-Zanbil brick tower, dating from the 13th century BC, was damaged and a section of the surrounding wall collapsed. An underground hall in the complex was flooded, the reports said.

Swiss avalanche kills 4: Four people were killed and two were injured when an avalanche struck members of a youth mountaineering group, AP reports from Schwyz, Switzerland.

Six young men and four young women were exploring the east face of the Saentis mountain on Saturday, the third day of a four day mountaineering course, when they were hit by a 40-meter-wide avalanche which carried the group down the mountainside. Six of the group were able to free themselves, but four were buried by the mass of snow.

Eastern manuscripts stolen: Book thieves have stolen a collection of ancient Eastern manuscripts worth 100 million dollars from a St. Petersburg library, the ITAR-Tass news agency reported on Monday. AP says from St. Petersburg.

Officials from the State Public Library said the alarm system was not working when the books were stolen late Sunday night. The manuscripts included works of Chinese, Mongolian, Tibetan and Near Eastern philosophy, the news agency said.

Leftists suspected in Tokyo fire: Ten cars were destroyed on Monday by a fire, police suspect may have been set by radical leftists opposed to the expansion of Tokyo's international airport, AP reports from Tokyo.

Incendiary devices, including batteries and cables, were found under the burned vehicles, mostly passenger cars, parked at a lot owned by the New Tokyo International Airport Corp, a local police officer said.

US troops arrest 400 Cubans: American troops arrested about 400 Cuban refugees on suspicion of inciting the riots that injured hundreds of soldiers and refugees last week, the US Southern Command said. AP reports from Panama City.

International

Bad weather halts Russian offensive in Chechnya

MOSCOW, Dec 12: Thick fog in Chechnya has halted Russian military operations in the separatist Caucasian republic, the Russian Information Centre said today, a day after Russian troops went in to subdue the Chechens' three-year-

old bid for independence, reports AFP.

"It has not been decided for the moment to pursue military operations because of a deterioration in weather conditions," said a communiqué issued from the special information

bureau at Mozdok in the Republic of North Ossetia which borders Chechnya.

"Under present conditions, Russia fears all kinds of provocations against its troops," said the communiqué without specifying whether the pursuit

of operations would have involved aircraft.

The information bureau said the Chechens "are going ahead with military preparations" and at a meeting Sunday night of the Chechen security council "decided to declare war on Russia".

The communiqué said Chechen forces had been deployed around Grozny, the Chechen capital, to counter an eventual attack by the Russians who sent several hundred tanks into the rebellious republic on Sunday.

The Russian armoured vehicles have advanced to within a few dozen kilometres of Grozny, according to latest reports.

Chechen authorities have set up a command post near the military airport about six kilometres (four miles) from Grozny.

Meanwhile, Russia confirmed today that 47 of its servicemen had been captured when its troops entered the Chechnya on Sunday.

A spokeswoman for a special government information centre on Chechnya said the servicemen had been captured inside the breakaway territory, near the border with the semi-autonomous republic of Dagestan.



— AFP photo

Nepal wants to impose border controls with India

NEW DELHI, Dec 12: Nepal wants to impose border controls with India to keep out illegal immigrants and anti-Indian militants, the Himalayan kingdom's new prime minister was quoted today as saying, reports Reuter.

"If we do not have any work permit system, Nepal will be swamped by Indians, posing a big problem for us," Man Mohan Adhikary was quoted by the Times of India as saying in an interview.

Currently, Indians can cross into Nepal without a passport or visa. Adhikary said a regulated border would help India by checking activities aimed against it.

Adhikary, 72, said he would like to visit India in January to work out details of a fresh approach to bilateral issues.

Deputy Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal recently said the new Communist government wanted to end a tilt towards India.

Nepal told Reuters the Communist wanted to rewrite a "four-decade-old" bilateral treaty that allows Indians to

buy land in Nepal and would place the kingdom under India's defence shield in the event of external conflict.

"Because of an open border with India, some undesirable elements cross over the indulge in anti-India activities.

"We want to control this by regulating the border," the newspaper quoted Adhikary as saying.

Adhikary did not explain what these activities were, but India recently arrested Yakub Memon, a key suspect over bomb blasts in Bombay in 1993, after he crossed over from Nepal.

Indian officials have said Pakistani agents have used Kathmandu as a base for militant activities in India. Pakistan denies the charge.

"We do not have any definite information about a particular country or any agency's involvement. But we would like to assure India that Nepal would not allow any activity which may pose danger to its security," Adhikary was quoted as saying.

Adhikary's Communist unified Marxist-Leninist Party beat the Nepali Congress in November's general election, the second poll after an anti-monarchist movement brought multi-party democracy four years ago.

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India will have at least 30 million HIV infections, killing 10,000 of them everyday," the Press Trust of India (PTI) quoted I S Gilada, secretary general of the Bombay-based private Indian Health Association, as saying.

Gilada said the rate of HIV infection today among housewives in Bombay was the same as it was among the city's prostitutes eight years ago.

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