

# BRIEFLY

**Blast claims 3 in France:** Three people were killed on Monday in an explosion at an ammunition factory in southwest France, rescue officials said. AFP reports from Tarbes.

The blast, the cause of which was not immediately clear, occurred in a production area for detonators in a factory run by the ammunitions firm Giat Industries in Tarbes.

**5 held in Iranian crash probe:** Iran has arrested five suspects in connection with the October 12 crash of an airliner in which 66 people were killed, state-run Tehran Television reported on Monday, AP says from Nicosia.

The broadcast quoted an unidentified judicial official as saying the arrests were made in Tehran and the central Iranian city of Isfahan.

**3 cops shot dead in Egypt:** Unidentified gunmen shot dead three policemen in Egypt's southern tourist province of Luxor, the Interior Ministry said yesterday. Reuter reports from Cairo.

A ministry official said the gunmen attacked a police station on the outskirts of the village of Naziat Al Aish just after sunset on Monday killing Sergeant Hassan Mohammed Al-Sayid and two guards, Saad Muawwad and Ahmad Abdulbasit. The gunmen escaped after the shooting the official said.

**NATO names new military chief:** Germany's chief of defence staff General Klaus Naumann, was named on Monday to take over as chairman of NATO's military committee, the alliance said in a statement. Reuter reports from Brussels.

Naumann, who will replace Britain's Field Marshall Sir Richard Vincent in early 1996, is the committee's 12th chairman and the third German to occupy the post.

**Turkey appoints new FM:** Turkey deputy prime minister was appointed acting foreign minister on Monday after the post was vacated in a policy feud, the government announced, AP reports from Ankara.

Murat Karayalcin, 51, who is also the leader of the Social Democrat Party in the coalition government, succeeds Muntaz Soysal, who resigned two weeks ago.

**Piot to lead UN AIDS agency:** A Belgian physician was appointed on Monday to head a joint UN programme seeking solutions to the world AIDS epidemic, AP reports from United Nations.

Dr. Peter Piot, former president of the International AIDS Society and chief organiser of the International Conference on AIDS, will head the new UN outfit that is expected to begin operation in January 1996. He will head the UN Programme on HIV/AIDS, which combines the efforts of six UN Organisations.

**Smith to replace Rose in Bosnia:** The United Nations on Monday announced that Major General Rupert Smith, who distinguished himself in the Gulf War, would take over command of the UN forces in Bosnia from Lieutenant General Micheal Rose on January 24. Reuter reports from United Nations.

**More troops sent to Cuban camps:** The United States sent 630 more soldiers on Monday to reinforce troops guarding Cuban refugee camps where rioting broke out last week, AP reports from Nuevo Emperador.

US Army Capt. John Leggett, spokesman for Operation Safe Haven housing some 8,500 Cuban refugees, said the new soldiers from two battalions would reinforce 2,000 troops guarding four Cuban encampments.

**S Africa rejoins UNESCO:** South Africa rejoined UNESCO on Monday, 38 years after quitting the organisation in the face of other members criticisms of apartheid, AP reports from Paris.

Nelson Mandela, elected president in April in South Africa's first free elections, formally renewed his country's membership, the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation said in a communiqué.

**Peruvian politician killed:** One politician was killed and three others wounded when police mistakenly shot at a car they thought was carrying fleeing robbers, authorities said on Monday, AP reports from Lima.

The police admitted their mistake but said the victims — all members of the opposition Aprista Party — also were to blame for Sunday night's shooting in Zana outside Chiclayo, 410 miles (660 kms) northwest of Lima.

**12 die in Chinese hotel fire:** Twelve people were killed and 37 injured when a blaze swept through a hotel in Binzhou, Shandong province in eastern China two weeks ago, the Legal Daily reported yesterday. AFP reports from Beijing.

The blaze, which destroyed 10 rooms of the Yingu Hotel, occurred November 30 and was caused by staff negligence, it said.

**Ex-French PM Pinay dies:** Antoine Pinay, who served France in two World Wars and later as a popular prime minister and finance minister, died on Tuesday at his home in central France. He was 102. AP reports from Paris.

The mayor's office in Saint-Chamond, southwest of Lyon, said Pinay had been weak since being hospitalised for several days in October for a lung infection.

**Kenyan jailed in NZ:** A New Zealand court yesterday found a Kenyan guilty on six charges relating to having unprotected sex while knowing he had the HIV virus which can cause AIDS. Reuter reports from Auckland.

Peter Mwai, a 29-year-old musician, was convicted of causing a woman grievous bodily harm. He was also found guilty on five counts of endangering her life and that of four other women by failing to tell them he had the virus. He faces a jail sentence of up to 12 years.

**Brazil's SC acquits Collor:** Brazil's Supreme Court on Monday acquitted former President Fernando Collor de Mello of corruption charges, citing a lack of evidence, AP reports from Brasilia.

The eight-judge panel voted 5-3 to absolve Collor of charges that he benefited from a kickback ring that skimmed millions of dollars from builders for government favours and funnelled the money into secret bank accounts.

**US opens files on Nazis:** Nearly 50 years after the end of WW II, officials of the US national archives made public on Monday the first batch of an estimated 22 million cards, files, dossiers, forms, sheets and lists of members of Nazi party organisations, AP reports from Washington.

They are the biographic detail held by the Berlin Document Centre that US forces set up at the end of World War II. Some of the microfifms show signs of charring on the originals, evidence of an attempt to burn them.

**Aristide signs electoral decree:** President Jean-Bertrand Aristide's government announced on Monday it was taking steps to speed up parliamentary elections and solidify Haiti's fledgling democracy, AP reports from Port-au-Prince.

Aristide signed a decree last week establishing a nine-member provisional electoral council to run legislative and local elections next year, his government said on Monday.

**China jails 5 for factory fire:** A Chinese court sentenced two firemen on Tuesday to prison terms of 10 and 17 years in connection with a toy factory fire that killed 87 workers, AP reports from Hong Kong.

The Zhili Handicraft Factory's Chinese director was sentenced to six years, the Hong Kong owner to two years and the Hong Kong manager to three years, said a local government spokesman in Shenzhen, a southern (China) boomtown bordering Hong Kong.



Nobel Peace Prize laureates PLO leader Yasser Arafat (L) and Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres (R) flank Swedish Prime Minister Ingvar Carlsson (C) during a joint press conference December 12. Arafat arrived Tuesday in Stockholm where he will hold further talks with the Israeli Foreign Minister on the redeployment of the Israeli army in the West Bank. — AFP photo

## Sindh CM repeats offer of talks with MQM

KARACHI, Dec 13: Police said today six more people were killed in Karachi despite the provincial Chief Minister's offer of talks with the ethnic Mohajir National Movement (MQM) to halt violence in Pakistan's largest city, reports Reuter.

"I again offer them... to hold dialogue and will myself talk with them," Abdullah Shah, Sindh Province Chief Minister, said on Monday on television.

Police said the six new victims, three of them children, raised the death toll to 86 since army troops withdrew from the city, the Sindh provincial capital on November 30.

More than 650 people have been killed this year in Karachi, a hotbed of sectarian ethnic and factional feuding.

Talks between the ruling Pakistan People's Party (PPP) led by Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto and the MQM have sputtered on for months without making much headway.

Shah urged the people of Karachi to foil the "Nefarious designs of enemies," who he said were "bent on damaging not only Karachi and Sindh, but the whole country."

He did not identify the "enemies" but Pakistani officials often accuse arch-foe India of stirring up tension in the provincial capital city.

Police blame much of the disorder in Karachi on a vendetta between the MQM led by Altaf Hussain in self exile in London and the splinter MQM (Haqiqi) group.

The MQM, which is fighting for the rights of Karachi's majority Mohajir community argues it is a victim of attacks by the security forces as well as the splinter MQM (Haqiqi).

The insecurity has hit trading at the Karachi stock exchange, whose 100-share index touched its lowest point this year on Monday, ending at 2,075 points compared to 2,170 on January 2 and its peak of 2,661 on March 22.

## Russia may join NATO soon, says Washington

WASHINGTON, Dec 13: In spite of Russia's aversion to NATO expansion, the Clinton administration predicted Monday that Moscow will formally link itself to the alliance — perhaps as soon as early next year, reports AP.

The forecast came a week after Russian President Boris Yeltsin surprised the White House by accusing the United States and its NATO allies of excluding and isolating Moscow, "Why show the seeds of mistrust?" Yeltsin asked at a gathering in Hungary, as President Clinton sat nearby.

Yeltsin's remarks raised questions whether Russia still intended to participate in a US plan to slowly draw former Eastern Europe foes into the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation. The plan, called Partnership for Peace, is a step toward expanding NATO with Hungary, Poland, the Czech Republic and Slovakia expected to be among the first new members.

Since the Budapest speech, Yeltsin and Clinton exchanged letters on the dispute. Although administration officials refused to characterize the correspondence, they insisted a new that the disagreement will not harm overall US-Russia relations.

"There are issues where we disagree... but there are more issues we agree on," Press Secretary Dee Myers said last.

Vice President Al Gore's trip to Moscow, which is part of an effort to implement past US-Russia agreements, is a perfect example of the nation's fruitful ties, officials said. He leaves Tuesday for three days of meetings.

Briefing reporters about Gore's trip, a senior administration official speaking on condition of anonymity said the White House still expects Yeltsin to formally join the partnership, perhaps in a couple of months.

Gore's trip will focus on the nuts and bolts behind implementing agreements already initiated by Yeltsin and Clinton. After their first summit, the leaders established a commission to follow up on their talks.

## US asks DPRK to stop sale of missiles

WASHINGTON, Dec 13: The United States will not agree to full diplomatic relations with North Korea until the communist regime stops exporting ballistic missiles and pulls back the troops it has massed near its border with South Korea, a senior U.S. official said on Monday, reports AP.

Assistant Secretary of State Robert Gallucci said implementation of the agreement under which North Korea has halted its nuclear programme "so far has gone extremely well."

International inspectors have confirmed that so far the North Koreans have kept their commitment to freeze their nuclear programmes.

A U.S. delegation will go to Pyongyang early next year to examine potential sites for an office. The official ties will be at the lowest diplomatic level.

## Kashmir leaders to attend OIC summit

SRINAGAR, Dec 13: Two leaders of the anti-India separatist movement in Kashmir left on Tuesday to attend a summit meeting of Muslim countries for the first time since the Kashmiri insurrection erupted five years ago, reports AP.

Omar Farooq and Abbas Ansari, of the Huriyat (Freedom) Council, boarded a flight in New Delhi for the meeting in Casablanca, Morocco of the 52-nation Organisation of Islamic Conference. Previously, Indian authorities refused to give passports to Kashmiris who were invited to attend the annual summit of Muslim countries.

The Huriyat, an umbrella of more than 30 professional and political organisations in Kashmir.

## Japan won't join peacekeeping in Golan

TOKYO, Dec 13: Japan is reluctant to join a UN peacekeeping mission in the Israeli occupied Golan Heights because of the high risks, Japanese Foreign Minister Yohhei Kono said today, reports AFP.

Kono quoted by Kyodo news agency said most of the cabinet last week spoke out against sending a team to the contested area next week to pave the way for such a mission.

Government spokesman Kozo Igarashi, told reporters that no decision had been taken about a Japanese presence in the Golan, which has been under Israeli occupation since 1967.

The United Nations has asked Japan to take responsibility for a number of logistical tasks in the heights currently carried out by Canadian peacekeepers.



Maria Rosa Luna Henson (C), a former comfort woman from the Philippines, reads her statement during a press conference in Tokyo December 13 while Lee Yong-Su (L) from South Korea looks on. Five former comfort women, one from the Philippines and others from South Korea, will bring a letter to Japanese Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama asking the government for an apology and individual compensation. — AFP photo

## Russian jets buzz Chechen capital

GROZNY, Dec 13: Russian jets buzzed the Chechen capital and gunfire crackled on the outskirts Tuesday as negotiators began a second day of talks on ending the military confrontation in the breakaway republic, reports AP.

Russian and Chechen delegates said both sides wanted an agreement, but they remained at odds over Russia's demand that Chechen forces put down their weapons. Chechnya insists that Moscow withdraw its forces first.

Fighting has flared intermittently since up to 40,000 Russian troops poured into Chechnya over the weekend to end its secession from Russia. Talks were being held in Vaidikavkaz, in the neighbouring North Ossetian region.

The fact that the Russian and Chechen sides are at the negotiating table at all is positive, said Vyacheslav Mikhailov, the leader of the Russian delegation.

Despite differences, "there is a desire to resolve the extremely complex problem of disarmament and cessation of bloodshed in Chechnya," he told the ITAR-Tas news agency.

Chechen officials, who reluctantly entered talks after Moscow sent in its troops, demanded a Russian pullback.

"We agree to disarmament provided a withdrawal of the Russian troops from the territory of Chechnya be launched immediately. It is useless to speak with the Chechen people in the language of ultimatum. Chechen representative Tamaz Aduadakarov was quoted as saying Monday.

While the delegates talked, Russian and Chechen forces fought in the mountains outside the Chechen capital, Grozny. A Russian rocket attack on a nearby village Tuesday morning injured two women.

Russian jets buzzed Grozny in an apparent attempt to pressure the population. But

Russian military officials denied residents' reports that the planes dropped bombs.

Russian officials on Tuesday issued their first casualty report in the Chechen campaign, saying nine servicemen were killed and 14 were wounded in the past three days of fighting.

Russia's most outspoken general, Alexander Lebed, joined those criticizing President Boris Yeltsin's handling of the crisis. In an interview with the Interfax news agency, he blasted the "military crusade against the Muslim people" and said "sniveling, inexperienced boys" had been sent to fight.

Lebed is commander of Russia's 14th Army, based in the former Soviet republic of Moldova.

Despite widespread opposition and several anti-government demonstrations in Russia, there was no sign Moscow was easing up in its biggest military action since the invasion of Afghanistan in 1979.

Yeltsin's credibility and political support have been seriously undermined by the offensive. Only four months ago, he said forceful intervention in the volatile Caucasus Mountains republic was "out of the question."

Thousands of hardliners, communists and liberals protested his actions Monday at snowy rallies in Moscow and St Petersburg and moderates renewed calls for him to be impeached.

Yeltsin lashed out at his critics in an address to both houses of Parliament, saying the Chechen crisis "demands an urgent solution."

"It is impossible to use it for instigating tension in society, flaring up contradictions between the branches of authority, for searching for industrial profits," he said. "It is irresponsible to use the tragedy of the Chechen people, the pain of all Russia, for pre-election battles," he said.

## ROK, China sign accord on N-safety

SEOUL, Dec 13: South Korea and China, both eager to defuse any nuclear threat from neighbouring North Korea, signed today an agreement tightening rules on mutual atomic safety, reports Reuter.

The new protocol calls for cooperation in monitoring radioactivity and obliges the two nations to notify one another in the event of a nuclear accident, said an official at South Korea's Science and Technology Ministry.

Seoul and Beijing, which established diplomatic ties in August 1992, will also exchange experts and information under the agreement.

South Korea and China, which is one of North Korea's last major allies, signed a pledge in October to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and to comply with the provisions of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the U.N nuclear watchdog body.

Both countries have eyed with concern North Korea's nuclear programme, which the West suspected shielded development of a military atomic arsenal.

But Pyongyang's nuclear programme has come to a halt under a U.S.-North Korean deal signed in Geneva in October.

The North froze its atomic programme in exchange for a planned 4 billion US dollars package of safer nuclear technology, to be bank rolled mainly by South Korea, Japan and the United States.

## Off the Record

### Trapped in elevator for 3 days

AUCKLAND: Embarrassed Auckland authorities mounted an investigation yesterday into how a 69-year-old woman became trapped in a car park elevator for three days, reports AFP.

Moiria Poor not only suffered a 67-hour ordeal without food, water or warm clothing, once out, she had to pay a penalty to get her car out as car park attendants would not believe she had been trapped.

As Poor recovered at home, city Mayor Les Mills said his council, owners of the building, was clearly in the wrong. He told Television New Zealand an inquiry would be held.

Poor's cries for help went unheard or were ignored. Doctors believe she could have died.

She told TVNZ she entered the lift at an Auckland city council car park on Friday afternoon and did not get out until Monday morning.

She said the lift suddenly stopped between floors. The emergency alarm did not work because the batteries were flat and there was no telephone.

Poor was carrying nothing but her handbag. She slept on the floor at night and spent the day standing, often yelling for help.

After 67-hour the lift suddenly started working.

### Dog condemned to death

LONDON: Pet lovers in the United States and animal rights activists Brigitte Bardot joined the campaign on Monday to win a reprieve for Dempsey, a pit bull terrier condemned to death in London, reports AP.

Dempsey was condemned in July 1992 under the Dangerous Dogs Act, after her muzzle was removed in a park to allow her to vomit. The dog never bit anyone.

The 1991 law, instituted to control certain breeds including the pit bull after several people were savaged by dogs, requires that pit bulls be muzzled in public places.

Owner Diane Fanneran took her case to the highest court of appeal — The House of Lords — to no avail.

Home Secretary Michael Howard has rejected a request for a pardon, saying there were no grounds, but he is considering a new application to allow the dog to be exported.

Trevor Cooper, a lawyer trying to save the animal, appealed to Howard to allow Dempsey to be sent abroad — and announced two foreign offers for the animal.

### Woman gives birth to quintuplets

COLUMBUS, Ohio: Mary Scott gave birth — and gave birth — and gave birth — and gave birth — on Monday, reports AP.

When she was done, doctors at the Ohio State Medical Centre had delivered three girls and two boys by Caesarean section.

Scott, 32, was doing fine afterward but the conditions of the quintuplets were not immediately available, said hospital spokesman David Crawford.

The quints' weight ranged from 1-pound-15 ounces (889 grams) to 2-pounds-9 ounces (1,148 grams) Crawford said.

Scott wasn't due until March 1, but began having contractions last month. Doctors said then that the babies would have a much better chance of survival if the births could be held off at least until this week.

Scott and her husband, Roger, had a son, Thomas, in 1989 using in vitro fertilization.

### Patrol on skis!

ASPEN, Colorado: Snowmass is a peaceful ski area, popular with families and generally free from the problems that plague resorts closer to cities. The manager hopes to keep it that way with police patrolling on skis, reports AP.

"If people see police on the slopes, they'll say this isn't the Wild West. This is a civilized place," Snowmass mountain manager Doug Mackenzie said on Saturday.

Snowmass may be the first ski area in the United States to be patrolled on a regular basis by police. Spokesmen for the National Ski Areas Association and resorts in California and Colorado, including some close to major cities, said they had never heard of police ski patrols.

Jim Felton, a spokesman for Breckenridge ski area, about 70 miles (112 kilometers) west of Denver, said undercover cops do watch its base area to try to catch ski or snowboard thieves. And Vail police sometimes plant expensive skis in stinging operations.

The Aspen Skiing Co. which owns Snowmass, is paying nearby Snowmass village 15 dollars per hour for the patrols.

## US commanders planned N-strikes against China

WASHINGTON, Dec 13: US military commanders planned nuclear strikes against China to protect South Korea and French-ruled Indochina from aggression during the watershed year of 1954, newly-released documents showed on Monday, reports Reuter.

The joint chiefs of staff, the nation's top brass, laid out their plans in a previously classified April 17, 1954, memorandum titled "analysis of possible courses of actions in Korea."

In their instructions to a unit known as the joint strategic plans committee, the military leaders adopted draft plans saying they did "not contemplate a massive atomic strike against communist territory and its population."

"Rather, it is intended that conventional as well as atomic strikes, as appropriate, will be employed against military tar-

gets in Korea and against targets in Manchuria and China which are being used by the Communists in direct support of their operations in Korea."

The document, its top secret markings crossed out, said the same US military response would apply "in the event of Chinese Communist overt aggression in Indochina," the area made up of present-day Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia.

The memo was released at the national archives in the first phase of a bulk declassification that will eventually make public about 44 million pages of once secret records, under orders from President Clinton.

It was written 10 months after the June 26, 1953, truce brought an uneasy halt to the 1950-1953 Korean war in which Chinese and Soviet-backed north Korean forces invaded the south.