

BRIEFLY

Perry to visit India, Pakistan: US Defence Secretary William Perry leaves Washington next week to visit Egypt, Israel, Pakistan and India. The Defence Department announced on Friday. Reuter reports from Washington.

Perry will leave next Friday and return to Washington on Saturday, January 14, it said.

Rao gets poor rating: Indian Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao scored only 5.61 out of a possible 10 in an opinion poll in which respondents were asked if he was "clean" or honest, a leading newspaper reported Saturday. AP says from New Delhi.

Finance Minister Manmohan Singh scored more than Rao with 6.30 marks and topped the list of seven ministers who were chosen for the poll, jointly conducted by MODE, a leading research group and The Times of India newspaper.

Karnataka HC bans fox-killing: Indian animal rights activists are struggling to block the ritual torture and killing of dozens of red foxes in two southern Indian villages. AP reports from New Delhi.

The All Indian Animal Welfare Association of Bombay recently persuaded Karnataka state's High Court to outlaw the annual killings. But activists fear police will be unable to stop the ritual when the full moon appears Jan 16.

Chile may resume ties with Cuba: Chile is planning to resume full diplomatic relations with Cuba in January, bringing to an end a 21-year break, a senior government official said on Friday. Reuter reports from Santiago.

The government will make a formal decision on renewing ties before January 15, said the source, who declined to be named.

Picasso's heirs file lawsuit: The heirs of Pablo Picasso have filed a lawsuit against a Beverly Hills man accusing him of ripping off the late artist by reproducing his works on T-shirts, neckties and watches. AFP reports from Los Angeles.

The Administrator of Picasso estate, Claude Picasso filed the lawsuit Wednesday against Neil Normal saying that he was illegally cashing in on the artists' celebrity.

2 killed in Turkish attack: Four people killed two passengers and wounded 25 others in a machine-gun attack on a coach in northwestern Turkey's Kacaeli region early yesterday, the Anatolia news agency reported. AFP says from Ankara.

Three men and a woman forced the driver to stop the vehicle which was going from the capital Ankara to Istanbul, made other passengers move to the back of the bus, opened fire on them and threw a hand grenade. An 18-year-old woman and 25-year-old man were killed in the 4:00 am (0200 GMT) attack near Hereke.

5 die in ROK road mishap: Five people died and more than 60 were injured when two buses collided head on in South Korea yesterday, the domestic Yonhap news agency said. Reuter reports from Seoul.

The accident happened near the remote eastern town of Samchok when a bus skidded on ice into the path of the second oncoming bus. Yonhap said.

Kim gets Luther King award: South Korea's King Young-Sam, the country's first dissident politician turned president, has been awarded the 1994 Martin Luther King Jr. Non-Violent Peace Prize, the government said yesterday. AFP reports from Seoul.

The announcement was made December 30 by the King Centre in Atlanta, Georgia, citing Kim's "uncompromising dedication to the principle of non-violence in pursuit of human rights and democracy."

19 executed in C China: Nineteen criminals were executed in the central Chinese city of Xian in December for crimes ranging from murder, theft and arson to rape, the Shanxi Daily reported yesterday. AFP says from Beijing.

The criminals were executed over a 10-day period beginning December 17 after being sentenced to death by the Intermediate People's Court in Xian, the capital of Shaanxi province, the report said.

3 Filipinos stabbed to death: An elderly couple and their daughter were stabbed to death yesterday by a worker in their family bakery in the Philippine capital, police said. Reuter reports from Manila.

They said the couple's three-year old grand-daughter was spared and later alerted relatives to the killings.

150 held in Colombia: Colombia on Friday launched a major crackdown on drug and arms trafficking that resulted in 150 arrests and 23 aircraft grounded at eight airports around the nation. AFP reports from Bogota.

Some 8,000 personnel took part in "Operation Swallow" carried out by Colombian police backed by the US Drug Enforcement Administration and Interpol, General Luis Enrique Montenegro of the Colombian police said.

2 killed in Belgrade blast: Two people were killed early Friday when a hand grenade exploded in a private Belgrade apartment. Tanjug news agency reported. AP says from Belgrade.

Police said that an investigation was under way into the Zemun district blast. No other details were available.

3 hostages rescued in India: Anti-terrorist commandos rescued three hostages who were held by a notorious gang of ivory poachers and sandalwood smugglers in southern Indian jungles, police said on Saturday. AP reports from New Delhi.

The gang led by Koosie Muniswamy Veeerappan held the hostages, including a senior police official, for four weeks. There was no ransom demand, but in the past Veeerappan had used hostages as human shield against police attack.

1 dies in Istanbul blast: A bomb exploded in a central Istanbul hotel on Friday, killing a Turkish woman tour guide and injuring two men, hotel officials said. Reuter reports from Istanbul.

Bilke Gureli, general manager of the five star Marmara Hotel, told Reuters the bomb was left in the pocket of a coat hanging in a cafe at the hotel entrance.

Hutus kill 10 in Rwanda: Hutu extremist militiamen killed 10 villagers who had refused to follow them into exile in Tanzania in an attack in southeastern Rwanda, state-run Rwandan Radio said, Reuter reports from Nairobi.

The radio, monitored by the British Broadcasting Corporation, on Friday night quoted reports from the southeastern town of Kibungu saying nine members of the ousted former government's Interahamwe militia attacked people in Kigarama village near Akagera Park, which borders on Tanzania.

Fireworks claim 7 Filipinos: Seven people were killed in New Year's Eve accidents triggered by fireworks explosions in the Philippines yesterday officials and radio reports said. AFP reports from Manila.

Six people burned to death when a fire caused by a firecracker blast gutted a market in the town of Calamba, south of Manila, officials said, while in the capital, a bystander was killed and six people were injured when pyrotechnic sparks caused an acetylene tank to explode. Radio DZXL reported.

JKLF wants Pakistan to back idea of independent Kashmir

ISLAMABAD, Dec 31: The leader of a militant group fighting Indian rule in Kashmir asked Pakistan on Friday not to oppose the option of total independence for the disputed Himalayan region, reports Reuter.

Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) Chairman Amanullah Khan told a news conference that a 1949 United Nations resolution stipulating Kashmir's accession to either India or Pakistan was flawed because he said it restricted Kashmiris' right to self-determination.

New Delhi regards the whole of divided Kashmir as an integral part of India, which rules two-thirds of the region. But Islamabad, which controls the remaining third of Kashmir, says the predominantly Muslim Kashmiris must decide in a UN mandated plebiscite whether to join

Islamic Pakistan or secular but Hindu majority India.

Amanullah Khan, who is based in Pakistan, said the idea of an independent Kashmir was gaining appeal and he wanted Islamabad not to oppose the third option.

He said the JKLF would hold rallies on January 5 in both parts of Kashmir and abroad to press for the third option.

"We are not cattle or sheep that we were only given the choice of accession, we demand that right to be totally independent," he said.

More than 17,000 people have been killed in four years of a separatist revolt in the Indian-ruled part of the region, over which the two countries have fought two of their three wars since independence from Britain in 1947.

Amanullah Khan said the JKLF was not opposing the options for accession but wanted the third option to be also recognised as a possible choice.

"If Pakistan and the world community did not accede to Kashmiris' right of complete independence besides the options of accession, then the JKLF would start a movement for independence to be the only option."

"Denying this demand will be immoral, unjust, undemocratic and contrary to the internationally recognised... interpretation of the right of self-determination of subjugated nations."

Another report adds: At least 1,000 people have been stranded on an expressway linking the summer and winter capitals of Jammu and Kashmir after heavy snowfall, the United News of India (UNI) said on Friday.

The national highway connecting Srinagar, summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir state, and Jammu. The state's winter capital was shut for the fifth day due to heavy snowfall in the higher altitudes of the Kashmir valley and the Ladakh region bordering China, UNI said.

It quoted an official spokesman as saying the Chenab river was blocked by a glacier between Dachan and Marwal in Jammu's Doda district and residents had been cautioned against venturing out.

The villages in the area faced a threat of floods if the glacier failed to move in the next 48 hours, the spokesman was quoted as saying.

UNI said the paramilitary Rashtriya Rifles Force and army units were providing relief to those stranded on the expressway. The army's help has been sought to get the roads cleared of snow, it said.



A Chechen woman cries December 28 as she walks past one of the main streets of Grozny destroyed by heavy bombardments of Russian warplanes. — AFP photo

Chinese CP to nurture young elite as next leaders

BEIJING, Dec 31: China's Communist Party will nurture a young elite as its next leaders to ensure its grip on power into the next century and to prevent the re-emergence of another gerontocracy like the one now headed by Deng Xiaoping, reports Reuter.

The ratio of young leaders in the party central committee and in central government will be "significantly enlarged" by the year 2000, the Xinhua news agency said on Friday.

"A considerable amount of talented leaders in their 30s and 40s will be embraced by the party and government bodies above the country level," it quoted an official of the organisation department of the central committee as saying.

In the late-1980s, paramilitary leader Deng Xiaoping spearheaded a drive to rejuvenate China's leadership by persuading old guard revolutionaries to retire to make way for new blood.

As part of that agonisingly long campaign, Deng stepped down from his last official post as head of the powerful Central Military Commission in 1990.

Even though he no longer holds any official position, Deng remains the final arbiter of power in China as underlined when he emerged dramatically out of formal retirement to launch a campaign to push economic reforms in 1992.

Believed to be in failing health, he is still respected as

the most influential man in China but also as a man who failed to change a centuries-old system of reposing power in one man until death.

The fostering of a young elite, honed by facing hardships that test their abilities, will ensure a pool of fresh blood to take over from current leaders, the party official said.

The traditional lifetime tenure of leaders has been abolished, time limits for terms of office and age limits to retirement have been set, and procedures and standards for appointing leaders have been established," Xinhua quoted the central committee official as saying.



French inhabitants of Louvigny, northwestern France, push December 30 a canoe to a safe haven to prevent it from drifting away with the waters of the Orne river which overflowed its banks rapidly following heavy rainfalls. — AFP photo

Format of future US-DPRK talks yet to be decided

WASHINGTON, Dec 31: The United States and North Korea failed to agree on a format of future talks to prevent a repeat of the recent downing of a US helicopter in North Korea, the top State Department East Asia expert said on Friday, reports Reuter.

The two countries left the question vague in an agreement which led to the release on Friday of the helicopter pilot, Bobby Hall, said Winston Lord, Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs.

"Neither side would agree to the other's position, so we resorted to creative ambiguity," Lord said in a telephone interview. "We would have preferred a more precise formulation but it was not possible to agree on that."

Lord also said that with Hall now released, the United States planned to go ahead on schedule with a delivery of heavy oil to North Korea under an October agreement that froze Pyongyang's nuclear programme.

In an understanding with Pyongyang concerning terms for the release of Hall whose helicopter was downed on December 17 just inside North Korea, the United States agreed to "contacts in an appropriate forum" to prevent such incidents in future.

Lord said the United States insisted this should be within the Military Armistice Commission (MAC), which oversees the armistice that ended the 1950-53 Korean War, but North Korea was demanding purely bilateral contacts.

At issue is North Korea's desire to establish links with the United States that bypass South Korea. At the MAC, North Korean officers nominally meet the United Nations command which includes

South Korean as well as US officers.

Lord said no specific meetings had been scheduled to clear up the dispute. "We would like to meet at some stage, but how soon will depend on North Korean reasonableness," he said.

He made clear that — as in the past — such meetings need not always include South Korean representatives, but that US officers would be taking part "using the UN hat. MAC meetings take place at Panmunjom on the North-South border."

US leaders have maintained that no concessions were made to North Korea over Hall's release, negotiated in Pyongyang by Lord's deputy Thomas Hubbard. In the deal, the United States expressed "sincere regret" over the helicopter incident.

6 killed in Indian train mishap

NEW DELHI, Dec 31: At least six passengers of an express train were killed and 60 wounded when six cars of the Bangalore-bound train jumped off the track on Saturday, railroad officials said, reports AP.

The Udayan Express was carrying about 800 passengers when the accident occurred at Yelahanka, near the city of Bangalore, said the officials. The cause of the accident was not immediately known.

The deceased were two men and four women. Their identities were not immediately available.

The accident site in the southern Karnataka state is about 2,000 kilometers (1,240 miles) south of New Delhi.

Russian army officer killed in Dushanbe

DUSHANBE, Tajikistan, Dec 31: A Russian tank battalion commander was shot dead by an assailant in Dushanbe, the Tajik capital, news reports said Saturday, reports AP.

Lt Col Vladimir Dolmatov, 37, was shot in the back of his head Friday night and died en route to hospital, the Interfax news agency said.

A total of 11 Russian servicemen have died in the former Soviet republic this year at the hands of assassins, Interfax said.

The ITAR-Tass news agency also reported the killing, but said the motive might be criminal rather than political.

Thousands of Russian troops are helping the government of Tajikistan in its fight against Islamic rebels and guerrillas from neighbouring Afghanistan.

Fresh clashes in Liberia

MONROVIA, Dec 31: Renewed clashes between Liberia's armed factions were reported less than 24 hours after a ceasefire came into effect to end five-year-of civil war, UN sources said Friday, reports AP.

However, a UN official put the incidents down to a "communication problem" and said there was "no need for alarm" as some fighters may not yet know about the ceasefire.

"It will take some time for all the fighters to be informed," the official said.

Clashes were reported Thursday in the southeastern Rivercess county between Charles Taylor's National Patriotic Front (NPPF) and the Liberia Peace Council (LPC), several hours after the ceasefire came into effect at midnight Wednesday.

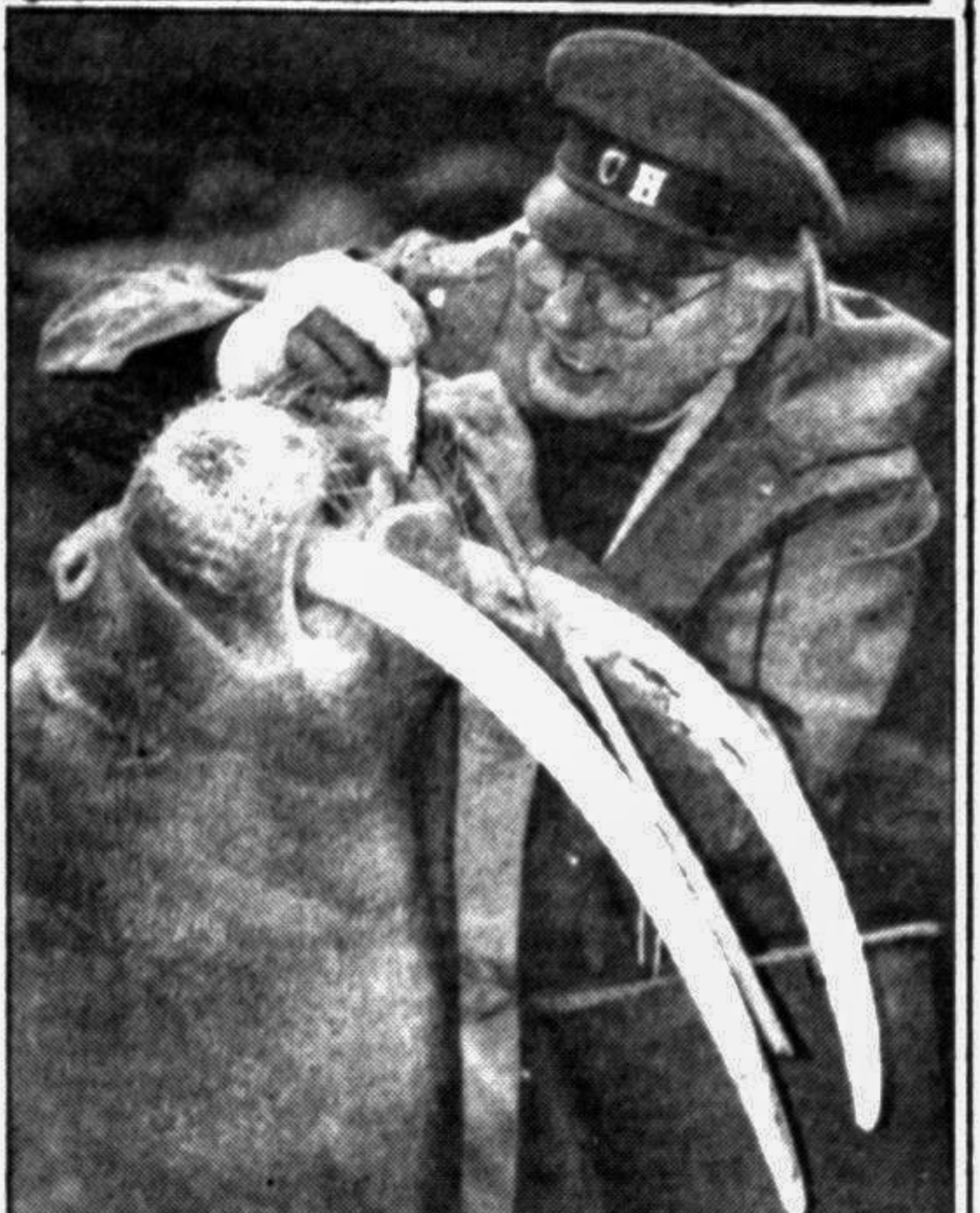
Pakistan, US to explore ways to promote ties

ISLAMABAD, Dec 31: Pakistan and the United States will explore ways to enhance cooperation in defence and other fields during US Defence Secretary William Perry's planned visit in January, a Foreign Office spokesman said on Thursday, reports Kyodo.

He told a weekly briefing that the two sides will discuss Kashmir, security in South Asia and the broadening of defence cooperation within the framework of a US Congressional moratorium on military and economic assistance to Pakistan.

An opposition resolution earlier this week called on the government not to sign any multilateral agreement, like the comprehensive test ban treaty and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, without adequate safeguards for Pakistan's security.

Off the Record



Zookeeper Heino Susott uses a small fish to draw the attention of walrus Antje before measuring her tusks during the yearly stock taking at the Hamburg Hagenbeck Zoo December 30. The tusk of the 18-year-old Antje has grown to measure 75 centimetres. — AFP photo

Good news for transsexuals and transvestites

SAN FRANCISCO: San Francisco Mayor Frank Jordan signed into law on Friday a city measure barring discrimination against transsexuals and transvestites, reports Reuter.

Several other cities have similar laws but San Francisco's is the toughest in the nation.

It prohibits discrimination based on gender identity in employment and housing. Companies breaking the law could be banned from city contracts.

San Francisco now joins the ranks of Minneapolis, Seattle and Santa Cruz (California) in taking steps to eliminate discrimination based on gender identity, Jordan said in a statement.

If discrimination is tolerated against one group it becomes acceptable against others and devalues the quality of life in any community he said.

The measure, sponsored by Supervisor Terrence Hallinan, was unanimously passed by San Francisco's governing Board of Supervisors on December 19.

Michael Fay beats Clinton as top newsmaker!

SINGAPORE: Michael Fay, the American teenager who was caned for vandalism, has been voted the top newsmaker in Singapore for the year, beating US President Bill Clinton who came in fifth, reports Reuter.

The Straits Times newspaper yesterday published the results of a poll of 19,770 readers. A cash prize was awarded to the reader who picked the top five newsmakers from a list of 10 candidates.

Fay grabbed more than 80 per cent of the votes, the newspaper said.

Other top five newsmakers included fourth ranked Ashaari Muhammad, leader of the banned Malaysian Islamic sect Al Arqam and second-ranked Michael Vana, the Czech soccer player charged with match-fixing in Singapore, who jumped bail and fled to Prague.

The last name in the top five was Alan Yeo, chairman of beverage conglomerate Yeo Hiap Seng, who faced fierce boardroom battles during the year.

Other candidates who failed to make it to the top five included British Prime Minister John Major and Roberto Baggio, the Italian soccer player who missed a crucial penalty kick in this year's world cup final.

Sarajevo marks 1000th day of siege

SARAJEVO, Dec 31: Fascism is the greatest threat to world order, Bosnia's Prime Minister said today in a bitter attack on European indifference towards the 1,000-day siege of Sarajevo.

"In Europe at the end of the 20th century, on television armed people are free to kill unarmed people," Prime Minister Haris Silajdzic told Reuters.

"People are unwilling to talk about the revival of fascism. The virus is still around. It's home made, it's made in Europe. They are happy to talk about Muslim fundamentalism but not about biological fundamentalism."

Sarajevo marked its 1,000th day under Serb siege on Saturday with little fanfare.

More than 10,000 residents have been killed and another 50,000 wounded since separatist Serbs rebelled against Bosnian independence from former Yugoslavia in 1992 and laid siege to the capital city.

Every so often, audio research produces the unexpected.

The Bose Lifestyle 5 Music System

Experience the stereo of tomorrow. Today. Hailed by Time magazine as one of the "10 Best Products" of 1993, the only audio product to make the list. It's acclaimed for its small size, and ease of use. But most of all, for what you'll hear: rich Bose sound.

NEW ASIA LTD.

ABC BUILDING, 8 KEMAL ATATURK AVENUE, BANANI, DHAKA-1213. PHONE: 831931, 833940.

OPEN THURSDAY TUESDAY 1200 NOON TO 0800 PM WEDNESDAY CLOSED.