

BRIEFLY

Clinton to visit Canada in Feb:

President Clinton will make a state visit to Canada next month for discussions with Prime Minister Jean Chretien on trade, international security and other issues. AP reports from Washington.

The White House said on Tuesday that Hilary Rodham Clinton will accompany the president to Ottawa for the two-day visit beginning February 23.

The agenda for talks between Clinton and Chretien also includes jobs, the environment and the upcoming economic summit in Halifax, Nova Scotia, of the world's seven largest industrial democracies.

Shi'ite Turks storm TV centre:

Hundreds of Shi'ite Turks stormed a private television station on Tuesday after a game show host made a sexual joke about their faith. AP reports from Istanbul.

An undetermined number of people were injured and some were arrested, said the station, Iptar Star TV. Police had no immediate comment. The host, Guner Umit, joked with a woman pretending to be pregnant during his show on Monday evening. When she said the supposed father was her own father, Umit said, "Are you a kizilbas?" — a derogatory term for Turkish Shi'ites.

Cholera claims 100 in Nigeria:

Around 100 people have died in a cholera epidemic in drought-stricken eastern Nigeria, a news report said on Tuesday. AFP says from Lagos.

The epidemic in Nigeria's eastern Enugu state was "sporadic" and its attacks had been too swift to allow its victims to be hospitalised, official News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) quoted state military administrator Colonel Mike Torey as saying.

Rubin gets Senate approval:

The Republican-controlled US Senate approved Robert Rubin as treasury secretary on Tuesday and the 99-0 vote came without debate for President Bill Clinton's nominee to replace Lloyd Bentsen. AFP reports from Washington.

The senators praised Rubin's background and said the quick vote came to allow him to take over for Bentsen as soon as possible. Bentsen announced his resignation last month to return to his home state of Texas.

UN Confce on crime from Apr 29:

The next United Nations Conference on Crime Prevention will take place in Cairo from April 29 to May 10, a UN spokesman said in New York on Tuesday. AFP reports from United Nations.

About 150 countries were scheduled to attend the conference, reports published in Egypt said. It will be the ninth UN Conference on Crime Prevention.

39 more rebels held in Egypt:

Egyptian security forces arrested 39 suspected Islamic militants on Tuesday as part of a massive security operation underway in upper Egypt, police said. AFP reports from Cairo.

The arrests in northern Asyut province brought to 126 the number of Islamic fundamentalist suspects detained over the past 48 hours in the south of the country.

US House historian fired:

The speaker of the US House of Representatives fired his new House historian after learning she complained in a 1986 document that a school course on the Holocaust failed to present Nazi and Ku Klux Klan views. AP reports from Washington.

Hired less than a week ago, historian Christina Jeffrey charged Tuesday that she was "fired in the press" because of "slanderous and outrageous" allegations. Democratic sources gave reporters materials Monday about Jeffrey's review of the Holocaust course eight years ago.

Floods claim 3 in Sumatra:

Floods caused by heavy rains have killed three people in one week and forced thousands to flee their homes in southern Sumatra, an official said Wednesday. AP reports from Jakarta.

About 3,000 people have been evacuated from Indragiri Hulu, 870 kilometres (545 miles) northwest of Jakarta. Muhammad Nasri, a spokesman for Riau province, said in a telephone interview.

Quake shakes Hokkaido Island:

A moderate earthquake with a preliminary magnitude of 5.3 shook parts of Japan's northern main island Wednesday, but police said there were no reports of damage or injuries. AP reports from Tokyo.

The quake, at 4:48 PM (0748 GMT), originated about 60 kilometers (36 miles) undersea off Urakawa on Hokkaido Island. It said, Urakawa is about 800 kilometers (480 miles) northeast of Tokyo.

6 killed in Chiapas violence:

Six people, including a police chief and his deputy, were killed on Tuesday after some 300 peasants stormed the town hall in this remote Chiapas village, police said. AP reports from Chicomuselo.

Police chief Hernan Sepulveda Fernandez was shot three times in back, while deputy Moises Ramirez Ramos was hacked to death by machete-wielding protesters after both were taken hostage before dawn. Four others, including two

2 Israeli troops hurt in blast:

Two Israeli soldiers were injured by an explosion in an apparent guerrilla attack yesterday at an entrance to the Palestinian-ruled Gaza Strip, the army said. Reuter reports from Jerusalem.

"Two soldiers were lightly wounded last morning in an explosion, apparently a terrorist bomb, near a checkpoint at the Kisufim entry point to Gaza," an army spokesman said.

3 die in Japanese mishap:

Three people died and 27 were injured in a 29-vehicle pile-up on an icy highway in western Japan, police said yesterday. Reuter reports from Tokyo.

The accident happened on Tuesday night after a station wagon skidded and turned sideways on a bend, other vehicles behind it crashed into each other. A bus driver and two truck drivers were killed, and four of the 27 injured were in serious condition.

Murayama calls on Fulbright:

Japanese Prime Minister Tomichi Murayama began his US visit paying homage to J W Fulbright, the American whose name has become synonymous with foreign study. AP reports from Washington.

The prime minister visited the retired US senator at his Washington home hours after arriving Tuesday on an overnight flight for talks with President Clinton, and minutes after laying a wreath at Arlington National Cemetery.

3 Rwandan army officers held

NAIROBI, Jan 11: Three Rwandan military officers have been arrested and face court martial for a shooting attack that killed 13 people and wounded 36 others at a refugee camp, a U.N. official said Wednesday. reports AP.

Saturday's attack in the camp near Remera on the border with Burundi was the worst single act of violence in the camps either inside Rwanda or in Tanzania and Zaire.

Twelve people initially died in the shooting Saturday. A child, evacuated to an Australian military-run hospital in Kigali with five other seriously wounded victims, died Sunday.

Dry cough, breathlessness have links to heart diseases

CALCUTTA, Jan 11: A radical new finding on dry cough and breathlessness and their link to heart diseases, announced at the 82nd Indian Science Congress here, may have far-reaching consequences in management of life-style related heart diseases, reports PTI.

The former director general of the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), Dr A S Paintal, has reported that dry cough and breathlessness are produced by stimulating a group of receptors called 'J receptors' which are also involved in the functioning of the heart. 'J receptors' are sensory

receptors similar to pain and touch receptors. Dr Paintal's studies at the Vithalbhai Patel (VPI) Chest Institute in Delhi show that stimulation of 'J receptors' located deep in the lungs produces a sensation of breathlessness. This temporary breathlessness sensation is due to increased pumping of blood by the heart and an indicator that the heart is functioning well.

One can avoid expensive coronary bypass surgeries needed for advanced heart diseases by simply exercising sufficiently till one becomes breathless, which in turn indicates that the heart is functioning well, Dr Paintal

said. Physicians can no longer regard dry cough as inconsequential symptom but must view it as a serious complaint in patients with lung diseases and potential heart diseases, he said.

The three symptoms of dry cough, breathlessness and muscle weakness are of great significance in heart and certain lung diseases, Dr Paintal warned, while delivering the Dr S K Moitra Memorial Oration Lecture at the science congress today.

Evidence linking these condition to stimulation of 'J receptors', has been published in the January 1995 issue of the International Journal of Physiology, he said, adding that the finding has been accepted by international physiologists 19 years after it was first proposed by him.

So far doctors believed that dry cough is due to stimulation of a group of cells nerve endings called irritant receptors or Rapidly Adapting Receptors (RAR) located in the wind pipe and voice box.

Dr Paintal, who has all long contested this theory, has now produced conclusive evidence that 'J receptors', located near the alveoli-millions of tiny thin-walled air sacs in the lungs-produce certain sensation in the throat and upper chest, leading to dry

cough. In a comparative study conducted over the past four years Dr Paintal and his colleagues injected cats and men with a substance called lobeline, a mixture of alkaloids that is a respiratory stimulant and behaves like nicotine.

He said the best stimulus for 'J receptors' is accumulation of fluid in the lungs (also called pulmonary oedema) that usually results from the failure of the left side of the heart.

Studies by his team also establish that the difficult and obstructed breathing — a condition called dyspnoea — in certain heart and lung

Perry arrives in Delhi today Defence ties to top agenda

NEW DELHI, Jan 11: US Defence Secretary William Perry arrives here from Pakistan on Thursday for a three-day visit aimed at forging an Indo-US strategic and military relationship in the post-Cold War era, reports AFP.

Sales of US defence equipment to India's Soviet-equipped armed forces, joint military exercises and India's role in UN peacekeeping missions are expected to figure high on the agenda for Perry's talks here, US officials said.

They said Perry, the first Pentagon chief to visit the sub-continent since 1988, would stress that with the end of the superpower rivalry, Washington is looking for "even-handed" defence relations with New Delhi and Islamabad.

Persistent tensions between India and Pakistan over the disputed Himalayan territory of Kashmir and US concern over India's nuclear programme would be put on the back-

burner, they said. In Islamabad a US spokesman today said Perry and his Pakistani counterpart, Aftab Shaban Mirani, had agreed to revive a 10-year-old bilateral forum to discuss security and military relations on a regular basis.

The forum will meet alternately in Washington and Islamabad and deal with issues ranging from joint military training to global security and the two countries' roles in peace keeping missions.

Speaking ahead of Perry's departure for Islamabad and New Delhi, a senior Defence Department official in Washington said Perry's visit "is not to address" conflicts between the South Asian rivals.

"We are not going to get into Kashmir and other such contentious regional issues," he said. "The purpose here is to build a defence relationship and build it on a new basis:

The Cold War is now over."

"We believe both Pakistan and India are important countries, in their own right and to the United States, and we do not want to see a policy which tilts in the direction of one country or another," the Pentagon official said.

The United States had been Pakistan's main arms supplier until a 1990 cutoff because of suspicions Islamabad was developing a nuclear bomb and New Delhi has long complained of a US bias towards its traditional South Asian rival.

The equator has changed, however, with the demise of the Soviet Union and a cooling in ties between New Delhi and Moscow. The liberalisation of the Indian economy has also shifted Washington's focus to economic cooperation.

The United States is the largest foreign investor in India and US Commerce Secretary Ron Brown arrives here on Saturday on the heels

of Perry, accompanied by a large business delegation.

US officials said that while India's nuclear programme would not be a focus of the visit, Perry would raise nuclear non-proliferation issues with Indian Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao, who holds the defence portfolio.

The Clinton administration has urged India to freeze deployment of a short-range missile, the Prithvi, and stop development of an intermediate-range weapon, the Agni.

Newspapers here reported today that Prime Minister Rao was expected to present the Pentagon chief with an Indian "threat assessment" scenario focusing on Indian security concerns beyond Pakistan.

The Indian Express said the "threat assessment" briefing for Perry would cover Indian concern over the strategic weapons buildup in northern neighbour China and nuclear proliferation in central Asia.



An unidentified member of the Muslim fundamentalist group "Gamaa Islamia" (C) leaves on Tuesday the High Military court at Huckslep base north of Cairo after being condemned to death for attempting to kill Egypt's Nobel Prize winning author Naguib Mahfouz. — AFP photo

India to buy 8 Russian jet fighters under \$ 220m deal

NEW DELHI, Jan 11: India has decided to buy eight Russian jet fighters and two trainer planes in a dramatically scaled down defence deal worth about 220 million dollars, an Indian newspaper reported today, says Reuter.

The Business Standard said the two long standing military partners had been negotiating over the past six months for New Delhi to buy 30 Mig 29M and 35 SU-30 fighters worth 1.8 billion dollars.

The proposed deal was cut back after technical level talks between the two sides broke down, the newspaper said. The Indian government balked at the larger order because

Moscow was unwilling to agree to a complete transfer of technology, it said.

Indian and Russian officials familiar with the deal could not be reached by telephone.

The aircraft will be delivered over three months against a special credit arrangement negotiated during a visit by Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao to Moscow in June 1994.

India's Air Force pressed the government to buy the planes as it badly needs to replace its earlier Mig 29 aircraft, the predecessor to the Mig 29M which has fly by wire flight control system and is built for ground attack and in-

terception.

The SU 30 is a bigger version of the Mig 29M and can carry more weapons, the daily said. It has an advanced phased array radar enabling it to track multiple targets and each plane costs 10 million dollars more than a Mig 29M.

An ally of the former Soviet Union during the Cold War, India still depends heavily on Russian military equipment but has been trying to diversify its purchases.

US Defence Secretary William Perry was due to arrive in New Delhi on Thursday for a three-day visit, but no major arms deals were expected during his stay.

Pak police crack down on bandits

HYDERABAD, Pakistan, Jan 11: Pakistani police and paramilitary troops have launched an operation against bandits holding six hostages in the forests of Dadu district, in the southern province of Sindh, police said today, reports Reuter.

They were pursuing gunmen who had held up traffic for two hours on the main Indus highway, linking Sindh with Punjab province on Monday night in the first attack since troops withdrew from Sindh at the end of November.

The gang shot and wounded at least five motorists, robbed dozens of others and kidnapped more than 20 people.

Police said they had surrounded several villages and detained 80 people for questioning on Tuesday.

The army withdrew from Sindh after a 29-month operation aimed at cracking down on gangs of bandits and kidnappers hiding out in the forests along the Indus river

US still opposes easing sanctions against Iraq

UNITED NATIONS, Jan 11: Stepping up its campaign to thwart any easing of sanctions against Iraq, the United States presented evidence to the Security Council on Tuesday that Baghdad was holding on to the thousands of items of military and civilian equipment looted from Kuwait during the Gulf War, reports Reuter.

The data, including satellite photographs, was circulated by U.S. Ambassador Madeleine Albright as the Council was about to conduct a 60-day review of the sanctions it imposed on Baghdad shortly after its August 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

The sanctions, which include a ban on Iraqi oil sales, have remained intact since they were first enacted and no change is expected at the review scheduled for Thursday.

But Russia and France, supported by some other Council members, have been

active in urging acknowledgment of Iraqi cooperation with a U.N. special commission which oversees the scrapping of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction and monitoring of its weapons potential. They argue that lifting of the oil embargo is linked to weapons demands only and not to other requirements.

The United States and Britain take a tougher line towards any easing of sanctions, saying Baghdad must demonstrate a pattern of compliance with all Council resolutions.

U.S. spokesman James Rubin told reporters, Iraq had retained some 9,000 items of military equipment, ranging from armoured personnel carriers, trucks and jeeps, Tow and Frog 7 missiles, plus some 6,000 civilian items. Baghdad should have returned them under a 1991 Council resolution.

Buddhist temple damaged in Sri Lanka

COLOMBO, Jan 11: Unidentified attackers set fire to a shrine room and damaged statues of the Buddha today at a temple outside Sri Lanka's capital Colombo, a day after a Catholic church was attacked in incidents linked to Pope John Paul II's visit next week, reports Reuter.

The shrine room was set on fire and statues of the Buddha inside were damaged in the attack at around 3 a.m. (2130 GMT), a spokesman for the Federation of Buddhist Organisations. The federation is leading protests against the Pope's visit following controversial comments he made on Buddhism in a book.

Police said they were checking the incident which occurred as the pontiff prepared to leave Italy today on an 11-day trip to the Philippines, Papua New Guinea, Australia and Sri Lanka.

The temple at the Raddoluwa, Housing Scheme near Negombo, north of Colombo, belongs to a Buddhist monk named Kusala, who has been in the forefront of a campaign against the papal visit.

Threat to bomb US plane during Pope's Manila visit

MANILA, Jan 11: Philippine authorities have warned of a possible bombing attempt against US airlines over the Pacific during Pope John Paul II's visit this week, U.S. sources said Wednesday, reports AP.

Police found a bomb Wednesday at a police post in the densely populated Quiapo district, about a kilometre (half-mile) from the presidential palace.

The police bomb squad detonated it. The Pope arrives Thursday for a five-day visit. He will also visit Papua New Guinea, Australia and Sri Lanka during his Asian tour.

US troops in Haiti transfer authority to UN in Mar

WASHINGTON, Jan 11: The military intervention in Haiti has gone even more smoothly than anticipated, and US troops will transfer authority to a United Nations force by mid-March, Clinton administration officials say, reports AP.

But there will be so much overlap between the two forces that it won't be easy to tell the difference once the handoff takes place, the officials say.

The whole object is to make this a seamless transition, one official said on Tuesday. "We want to make it a non-event."

At the height of the intervention last fall, there were 21,000 US soldiers in Haiti, and about 6,000 remain in the 8,000 member multinational force.

Off the Record

Charles' no to love, yes to throne

LONDON: Is it better to be married to the love of your life — or be king? Prince Charles says 'king', according to Wednesday's Sun tabloid, reports AP.

The Sun said the prince told friends he has no plans to marry his mistress, Camilla Parker Bowles, after she divorces.

Lawyers for Camilla Bowles, 47, and her husband, Brigadier Andrew Parker Bowles, 55, announced Tuesday that they have begun divorce proceedings to end their 21-year-old marriage this month.

The Sun said aides and members of Queen Elizabeth II's Privy Council of advisers had warned the 46-year-old heir to the throne, who is separated from Princess Diana and expected to divorce eventually, against planning to marry Camilla. It said they feared more anti-monarchy backlash if he did.

The paper quoted what it described as a well-placed source as saying, "The prince does not believe there is any prospect of a marriage to Camilla. He fully understands that public opinion would be against him and his principal aim is to become king" on the death of his 68-year-old mother.

Charles and Camilla will continue to be great friends and to see each other privately, the Sun quoted the source as saying.

Moose stomps man to death

ALASKA: A man was stomped to death at the University of Alaska by a moose that was being harassed by students as it roamed the campus with its calf, reports AP.

The animals were outside the gym when 71-year-old Myong Chin Ra arrived on Monday to use the sauna.

"He tried to just kind of slip by them," said campus police officer Jim Milne, "but that didn't work."

The moose charged, and Ra ran toward a clump of trees. He fell on a slippery walkway, said Shane Harvey, a student.

"She'd get on her front legs and kick with her back legs," Harvey said. "He probably got stomped about a dozen times."

People had harassed the moose and its calf for hours, and the animals were agitated when Ra arrived, witnesses said.

There were people standing around throwing snowballs, yelling, whistling, shouting, trying to get their attention," said Ann Gross, a director at the university's day care center.

Actress Bardot a friend of pigeons

TOULOUSE: Brigitte Bardot, the former actress turned animal rights activist, Tuesday threatened officials of a village with a law suit if they go ahead with plans to kill off pigeons in a church steeple, reports AP.

Bardot called for a demonstration Thursday, the day of the pigeon shoot in Bessieres, in the southwest near Toulouse. A pigeon shoot held last Thursday netted about 100 birds despite a small 'commando' sent by Bardot to stop the project. There other pigeon shoots were planned for this month.

Bardot targeted Bessieres Mayor Jean-Paul Seguela for declaring war with a universal symbol of this fragile peace: The dove.

In an open letter to the mayor, she proposed providing him with a specialised team that could chase birds away with an 'inoffensive laser gun' or giving him a ton of grain, laced with contraceptives for a 'pigeon sterilisation campaign.'

Should he refuse the offer, Bardot said she would bring a law suit against those responsible for firing at living pigeons.



Britain's WW II forces sweetheart Dame Vera Lynn holds a large replica of the new two pound coin on Tuesday after Royal Mint launched the coin to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the end of the World War II. The design depicts an image of a dove with inscription "1945 in Peace Goodwill 1995" — AFP photo

Israeli choppers rocket Hizbollah post

JBA A, Lebanon, Jan 11: Israeli helicopters blasted a Hizbollah guerrilla post in hills in south Lebanon on Tuesday night, causing four casualties, security sources said today, reports Reuter.

They said the helicopters fired five rockets at a post of the pro-Iranian Hizbollah (party of god) near Jba a village in Iqlim al-Toufah, a ridge 40 km south of Beirut-used by the group to attack Israel's occupation zone in the south.

The sources did not specify what the Hizbollah casualties were.