6 cops killed in Colombia: Leftist rebels attacked police stations in several towns killing six policemen and three other people, authorities said on Saturday. Twentyone people were injured in the assaults. AP reports from

Guerillas raided two towns early Saturday in a major cocagrowing region about 155 miles (250 kilometres) south of the capital Bogota. The government says rebels belonging to the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia are allied with drug traffickers who operate in the area.

Scottish opera founder dead: sur Alexander Gibson, the founder and former music director of the Scottish Opera Company, died on Saturday aged 68, AP reports from London.

He died at St Mary's Hospital in London of complications following a heart attack, said his manager, Diana Rix, Gibson founded Scottish Opera in 1962, and was its music director until 1987 when he was given the honorary title of Conductor Laureate to the company.

Quake shakes S Japan: The southern Japanese island of Kyushu and surrounding areas were shaken by a strong earth tremor yesterday, a Japanese television station reported. Reuter reports from Tokyo.

Ashahi television said the quake was strongest in islands 900 km (540 miles) south of Tokyo but said there was no danger of tidal waves. There was no immediate indication of the quake's magnitude.

24 killed in Thai bus mishap: Twenty-four teachers on a weekend outing were killed on Saturday when their bus lost control on a mountain road in northwestern Thailand and plunged into a ravine, police said, Reuter reports from Bangkok.

Twenty-two others were injured, some seriously, in the accident near the town of Mae Sot. 400 km (250 miles) northwest of Bangkok. Police said 18 of those who died were women. They were on an outing from a Bangkok Christian

Communists win Uzbek polls: Uzbekistan's communists won a crushing overall victory in the second round of general elections and will hold at least 231 of the new parliament's 250 seats, the daily "People's Word" said on Saturday. AFP reports from Tashkent.

The state-controlled daily said 243 seats have been allocated following the December 25 and January 8 elections. The remaining seven seats will be decided in a delayed poll on January 22, because voter turnout fell short of the minimum 50 per cent in these constituencies.

10 killed in Liberian rioting: At least 10 people died in the Liberian capital Monrovia on Saturday after a peace demonstration involving thousands of people degenerated into rioting and looting, several reliable sources said. AFP reports from Monrovia.

Among the dead, all civilians, were a child and five demonstrators killed by the African peacekeeping force ECOMOG. the sources said

Robbery at US Casino: Three masked gunmen emptied cash from the drawers of a castno's cashier counter early Saturday and escaped in a car, police said. AP reports from Reno. Nevada.

The men hopped the counter at Harrah's Reno about 12:15 a.m. and ordered nearby employees and patrons to get down on the floor. They were gone in less than a minute. There were no injuries.

Opposition wins Niger polls: Opponents of President Mahamane Ousmane have won Niger's parliamentary elections by a short majority of seats, electoral commission officials said on Saturday, quoting final results. AFP reports from Niamey

Presidential supporters gained 40 of parliament's 83 seats. while opponents won 42 in Thursday's election.

Fires claim 21 in US: Ptres trapped four families inside their homes early on Saturday in Minnesota. Ohio, suburban Chicago and Washington state, killing 16 children and five adults. AP reports from New York.

In Burbank, Illinois, a smoke alarm was still blaring as firefighters rushed into a burning split-level home just after 3 a.m. A 62-year-old man and six children, ages 3 to 16, were trapped on the top floor. The seven were pulled from the house alive but died at the hospital. Fire Lt Timothy Kaufmann said. Alls suffered burns and smoke inhalation. The cause of the fire was not immediately known.

Chinese immigrants worry Fiji: After failing for more than a century to come to terms with an influx of Indian immigrants, many indigenous Fijians are alarmed by a plan to admit up to 30,000 Hong Kong Chinese AP reports from Suva.

On Tuesday the Cabinet will discuss whether to approve the scheme which promises to bring investment and a new entrepreneurial spirit to this largely laid-back South Pacific

Journalist killed in Algeria: Sus pected Muslim guerillas abducted and killed an Algerian journalist working for the government-controlled newspaper El Chaab, the paper said on Saturday. Reuter reports from

Abdel Hamid Yahiaoui, 33, was seized on Thursday as he was leaving his home in the Aigiers suburb of Baraki to meet a friend. El Chaab said. His body was found the next day with two bullets in the head about 100 metres from his home.

Train mishap kills 4 in Florida: A train slammed into a van carrying five people returning from a funeral Saturday, killing four passengers and injuring a fifth,

AP reports from Florida. The van was on the tracks as the freight train sped through during strong winds and rain. The crossing gate was broken, but police did not know if the van had crashed through it, or if it had been ripped off by the wind. The crash was under investigation.

Israel imposes curfew in Hebron

HEBRON (West Bank), Jan 15: The Israeli army imposed a curfew on Palestinians living in Hebron today after an anti-tank missile slammed into a settler's house, military officials said, reports AFP.

It was not immediately clear who fired the missile, an unarmed law, which crashed through a window and damaged a wall inside the home.

First reports said soldiers accidentally unleashed the missile during a training exerelse, but settlers accused Palestinian extremists.

Tensions were running high in the city after troops on Saturday used tear-gas to halt clashes between Palestinians and Jews. Trouble erupted after settlers tried to force Arab shopkeepers to close to observe the Jewish holy day.

LOS ANGELES, Jan 15: The movie menu for 1995: More of the same may be a little bigger. Hollywood plans to stick to the same formulas that won its biggest box-office year in 1994: Fast action, famous names, farout comedy. That combination sold 5.4 billion dollar worth of tickets in US theaters last

ports AP. "Fortunately or unfortunately. 1995 will bring nothing new." predicted Bill Mechanic. president of 20th Century Fox. Bigger being considered better, you will see a lot of films of large scale."

year, a 200 million dollar in-

crease over 1993's record, re-

The proliferating delivery systems for entertainment cable, cassettes, etc - are providing moviegoers the opportunity to get stuff after the fact," said Robert Shaye, chairman of New Line Cinema. "The only thing they're missing is the theatrical experi-

"So it looks like the big stuff, the exciting stuff, the fun

BRIEFLY Republicans for revival of Regan's 'star wars' plan

WASHINGTON, Jan 15: A bill to promote the only foreign policy goal of the Republicans' "Contract with America" would curb UN peacekeeping and support expansion of NATO without Russia. reports

The proposed "National Security Revitalisation Act" also would revive former President Reagan's "Star Wars" defence against ballistic missiles. Deploying a major antimissile system would break a treaty signed with the Soviet Union in 1972.

The Republican manifesto signed by 367 candidates before the November 8 election includes only one incomplete sentence dealing with foreign policy:

"No US troops under UN command and restoration of the essential parts of our na-

airport January 11.

WASHINGTON, Jan 15:

Russian President Boris Yeftsin

has made a tragic mistake in

the conflict with the break-

away Republic of Chechnya and

is paying a befty price. US

Secretary of State Warren

Christopher said Saturday, re-

very considerably in world

opinion. I believe that what

they've done is set back their

progress toward democracy/

Christopher said in a CNN

Geneva on Monday for a meet

ing with Russian Foreign

Minister Andrei Kozyrev and

the crisis in Chechnya will top

NEW DELHI, Jan 15: India

has asked Pakistan to with-

draw 15 officials from its high

commission (embassy) here,

the Pakistani envoy said today.

calling it a retaliation for the

closure of the Indian consulate

quest on Friday to restore par-

ity in the number of staff

posted in both country's mis-

sions in line with a bilateral

agreement, Pakistan's High

Commissioner Riaz Hussain

Indians in the Indian high

commission in Islamabad, and

the 110 Pakistanis in Delhi

were being beefed up by

He said there were 410

New Delhi made the re-

in Karachi, reports AFP.

Khokhar said.

Christopher is travelling to

Television interview.

"I think they're suffering

ports AFP.

tional security funding to strengthen our national defence and maintain our credi-

bility around the world." The other nine points, outlined with similar brevity, deal with domestic matters such as crime, taxes, and limits on the terms of legislators.

Hearings on the House bill will be held in the next few weeks before the newly renamed House National Security Committee, a committee aide said. Under the Democrats, it was the Armed Services Committee.

The bill introduced by Republican Fred Sperice. committee chairman, spells out the intentions of the House leadership. Its provisions follow House Speaker Newt Gingrinch's "Contract with America.

In this photo released by the University Hospital of Cartagena, Leonor Delgado (L) poses with

her niece Erike Delgado, 9, and Erika's doctor (C) and psychologist 14 January. Erika was the

sole survivor of an Intercontinental Aviation plane that crashed on approach to the Cartagena

Chechnya, a tragic mistake

for Yeltsin: Christopher

He said he would tell his

Russian counterpart that the

"Indiscriminate killing of

women and children, the ex-

cessive use of force are all

things that are of great con-

cern to the world community."

spoken with Kozyrev by tele-

that he admitted that the vio-

lence in Chechnya was 'an aw-

ful situation, a tragic situation

- and he indicated he was

charge of the proposal from

other European countries and

the United States to arrange

for mediation by officers of the

organisation for security and

Pakistan asked to withdraw

15 officials from Delhi

around 20 compatriots from a

closed mission in Bombay

Pakistan closed its con-

sulate in Bombay in March

1994, saying New Delhi was

not handing over a promised

estate in the city for the mis-

were expecting. Khokhar told

AFP, referring to the latest

ation for the Pakistani closure

of the Indian consulate in

Karachi last month on charges

that its staff was to blame for

the growing violence in the

"It is a form of retaliation."

port city.

Obviously, it is a step we

Khokhar said it was a retali-

when the indian plea came.

Kozyrev had taken personal

looking for a way out."

phone earlier in the week and

Christopher said he had

the agenda.

Gingrich has promised to

bring all of the provisions to a vote in the first 100 days of the new House.

Republicans also have introduced legislation to reduce foreign aid, but that is not part of the candidates' signed mani-

Any proposed change inforeign policy faces several obstacles. In the Senate, a strong Democratic minority could delay or prevent a vote on any bill. The President, who has primary responsibility for foreign policy, could veto any measure, and neither House has a strong enough Republican majority to override him.

Rep Spence's bill calls for: - A ban on putting US troops under UN command. though with loopholes that would allow the president to act in an emergency if he de-

- AFP photo

cooperation in Europe.

But despite the criticism.

Christopher again reiterated

was part of Russia and that

Moscow had sole authority

over it's 89 Constituent

break up, if each one of those

could split off . . . we'd really

have the disintegration of

Russia and we would have a

very serious problem with the

25,000 nuclear weapons." he

was still fully in control in

Moscow saying 'he'll find ways

over the next few weeks to

make it clear that he's in

he said. The Indians could

have asked that their staff in

Karachi be posted in

Islamabad. They could have

had an extra 20 staff in

course, we are for parity in

They did not want it ... of

Khokhar said the 15, all

"The decision does have a

non-diplomats, has been asked

certain amount of impact on

bilateral relations." Khokhar

said. "But both sides have the

capacity to live with these

fought three wars since their

independence in 1947.

India and Pakistan have

to leave India in one month.

Karachi

things."

numbers, he said.

charge ... as we think he is."

And he insisted that Yeltsin

If they were to begin to

cides that would be in the US national interest.

- Limits on US contributions to UN peacekeeping, including a ban on the use of money appropriated for the Pentagon.

- Revival of former President Reagan's "Star Wars" plan, dropped by President Clinton, for a defence of the continental United States against incoming missiles.

A book explaining the "Contract with America." copyrighted by the Republican National Committee, says the Russians want the United States to freeze its anti-missile defences.

"Republicans are committed to a defence against missile attacks from terrorist states such as North Korea, Iran and Libya," the book says.

1200 US troops arrive in Panama

PANAMA CITY, Jan 15: The first of 1,200 American troops arrived in Panama City on Saturday to reinforce security and prepare to move nearly 8,000 Cuban refugees out of Panama, US military officials here said, reports Reuter.

About 350 soldiers from the airborne division at Fort Campbel. Kentucky arrived at Howard Air Force Base in Panama on a military transport plane, a US military spokeswoman told Reuters.

The soldiers are part of a US effort to ensure a peaceful transfer of the Cubans, who rioted in December and injured about 230 American soldiers to

Guantanamo naval base in Cuba. . Panama has said the United States can keep the refugees here no later than March 6. and US military officials here says they plan to begin the transfer in early February.

Haiti likely to be declared secure tomorrow

NEW YORK, Jan 15: The United States and United Nations could declare Haiti a the US position that Chechnya stable and secure environment" as early as Tuesday, and begin transferring military authority from American to UN forces. The New York Times reported Sunday/reports AP.

The decision comes despite the killing of an American soldier by a former Haitian Army officer last Thursday at a checkpoint in Gonaives.

Some military officers and diplomats say the hand-off is being rushed because of pressure by Congress for the United States to withdraw from the mission, which has cost an estimated dirs 765 million since October 1993. the Times reported.

Iran urges OIC to send team to Russia

TEITRAN Jan 15: Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati on Saturday urged the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) to send a delegation to Russia to discuss the war in Chechnya, reports

AFP. Velayati made the request in a meeting with OIC Secretary General Hamid Algabid, here to attend a seminar on food security and agricultural development in the Islamic world. Tehran radio

Algabid said his organisation was concerned over the "violation of human rights" in Chechnya, where Russia sent troops last month to crush its three-year-old independence

Off the Record

All you need is: love

AMSTERDAM: If you're Dutch and your heart is broken, someone will listen to your problems. In fact, a nationwide television audience will eavesdrop, reports AP.

Once a week. "All You Need Is Love" airs the hopes. dreams and disappointments of the lovelorn and love-shorn all to the oohs and aahs of a voyeuristic studio audience.

Now in its third season. "All You Need" runs the gamut from heart-pounding, first-date excitement to heart-rending anguish that can make the casual viewer cringe.

Singles go on the show to be matched with dream dates. wounded rejects tell their gut-wrenching stories and hope to

be reunited with their lost loves. . The show skims the surface of human emotions and avoids

any deep exploration of participants problems. Tears flow and the audience sighs, but the weekly show's producers reject any suggestion they're exploiting the lonely for their 20 or so per cent of the TV viewing audience.

A king is a king in Jordan

AMMAN: Britain's monarchy is haunted by the spectre of the government cutting the family's allowances, while its European cousins ride about on bicycles cultivating the image of the common man, None of that for King Hussein, reports

In Jordan, a king is still a king. He doesn't need elections or wrangling among politicians to decide on the next prime minister. He appoints one.

"You have always served as my companion even in darkest days since we started the task of building the nation." the king wrote in defining the duties of Jordan's new prime minister, his friend and relative Sherif Zeid bin Shaker.

More than seven decades after his grandfather Abdullah founded the kingdom of Jordan, King Hussein's Hashemite family members remain the unquestioned rulers. His younger brother has been designated as successor and a family council is to decide who follows him to the throne.

> Britons prefer William to Charles as king

LONDON: The bad news for Prince Charles is that most Britons would prefer to see his son - or even his sister - on the throne, according to a poll published Saturday. The good news is that an increasing number wouldn't mind a Queen Camilla. reports AP. The poll, commissioned by the Sunday Express newspa-

per, said that 54 per cent of Britons would prefer that Prince William assume the throne if he is at least 18 by the time his grandmother. Queen Elizabeth, dies or abdicates. Against were 42 per cent.

William is 12. Queen Elizabeth is a healthy 68 and has indicated she will not abdicate. Charles is first in line to the throne, and his son is second.

An even larger number of those polled - 56 per cent said they would prefer seeing Charles sister. Princess Anne, as monarch. Charles, 46, had the support of 37 per cent.

Anne. 44, has consistently proven the most popular royal in recent years, although she once endured the same indignities that have undermined public support for Charles: a much publicised recriminative marriage breakdown.



Mary MacKillop (1842 1909), portrayed in a painting by Mary Brady in this undated photographic reproduction, is destined to become Australia's first saint when she is beatified by Pope John Paul II in Sydney on 19 January. Mother MacKillop was excommunicated from the Roman Catholic Church before founding the Order of the Sisters of Saint Joseph of the Scared Heart. - AFP photo

Hollywood movie menu for '95

stuff the emotion-provoking January," said AD Murphy, fi pockets, struck gold with Jim Bacon as astronauts); "Judge stuff will be what captures the audience's imagination and motivates them to go to the movies. People really want to go out. They just want to get their money's worth."

You want big? How about Universal's "Waterworld," due July? Starring Kevin Costner, it reportedly has hydroplaned past the 135 million dirs mark, by far the most expensive movie ever.

Last year, 10 films made at least 100 million dollar at the box office - eight in the summer and two in December. "The Santa Clause" and "Interview with the Vampire." And two of the summer films. "The Lion King" and "Forrest Gump," are approaching 300 million dollars.

The changes for 1995 look better because of more pictures being released in

nancial expert at The Hollywood Reporter. "It used to be that nothing of impor tance came out until Washington's birthday. But many of the Christmas films were released at Thanksgiving. and most of them are played

Among the films due this month: director John Singleton's "Higher Learning": "Murder in the First." starring Christian Slater and Kevin Bacon: "Bad Company." with Laurence Pishburne and Ellen Barkin; and "Before Sunrise." with Ethan Hawke.

The new year is likely to bring more films to the marketplace. The reasons in creased prosperity for the ma jor companies: growing importance of the so-called minors. New Line, which now has

access to Ted Turner's deep

Carrey in "The Mask" and "Dumb and Dumber." The aggressive Miramax, now in the Disney fold, clicked with "Pulp Fiction." "We may have to change our

thinking about which companies are majors," commented John Krier, whose Exhibitors Relations Co charts box-office grosses. Krier expects the number

of 1995 films from the major companies to exceed last year's total of 141. Along with "Waterworld," the big-buck projects include:

'Die Hard: With a Vengeance' (again with Bruce Willis): "First Knight" (Sean Connery as King Arthur, Richard Gere as Lancelot), "Rob Roy" (Liam Neeson as the Scottish hero): "Goldeneye" (with a new James Bond, Pierce Brosnan): "Apollo 13." (Tom Hanks and Kevin

Dredd' (Sylvester Stallone in futurist action): "Batman Forever," (Val Kilmer subs for Michael Keaton, Tommy Lee Jones and Carrey supply the villainy). "Bigness can be dangerous."

Mechanic cautioned. "More is not always better: The Santa Clause proved that. It all comes down to story. If you have an interesting idea and you do it well, you'll succeed. If you just have effects, you'll fail.

The studios continue reworking old material. The year will bring 'The Brady Bunch,' Mission: Impossible" (Tom Cruise), "Kiss of Death" (David Caruso, Nicolas Cage), "The Nutty Professor" (Eddie Murphy), "Sabrina" (Harrison "Highlander III" (Christopher Lambert) and "The Saint."

Plus two versions of Jekyll-

Hyde: "Mary Reflly." with Julia Roberts and John Malkovich and 'Dr Jekyll and Ms Hyede' starring Sean Young and Tim

Film critic Richard Schickel of Time magazine expects 'the same kind of mix' in US films in 1995 - 'the usual action movies, the usual not-very-well-done comedies.

"Jim Carrey aside. I would say that the most disappoint ing aspect of 1994 was come dies, especially those that attempted to be in the old fashioned romantic vein and fizzled. Like 'Speechless' and T.Q. Nice premises, but they don't work out the third act. Schickel said.

"If I were to hope for a genre revival -- because I love them - it would be classic romantic comedies, wonderfully well made. The actors are there to do them studios used to do them. don't suppose people were any smarter in the '30s than they are in the '90s.'

4 killed in Bihac's UN safe area

ZAGREB, Jan 15: Four people were killed and at least four others wounded by a shell which slammed into the UN designated safe area of Bihac in northwestern Bosnia on Saturday, a UN spokesman said, reports Reuter.

"Four people were killed and at last four injured by a single impact around noon near thé bridge in Bihac town," UN spokesman Chris Gunness told Reuters. He said UN officials were trying to find out where the shell was fired from.

Gunness said the attack followed a night of "fairly heavy shelling" of the Bihac area that started around midnight and went on until morning.

He said the United Nations' had recorded a total of 20 im-

Gunness said the United Nations could not say who was responsible for the attack.