

International

BRIEFLY

Kidnapper executed in Karachi: A 32-year-old man was hanged in a Karachi jail yesterday for kidnapping and raping a college student in the second execution in Pakistan within four days police said. AFP reports from Karachi.

Rafiuddin Babli was sent to the gallows around 6:30 am (0130 GMT) amid tight security at the city's central prison. An accomplice in the 1997 kidnapping Abdul Malik was sentenced to 10 years hard labour. Babli's appeal was rejected by a military appellate tribunal last week.

Romantic hero Manners dies: David Manners, who played the romantic hero in such classic horror films as "Dracula" and "The Mummy," died on December 23. He was 98. AP reports from Santa Barbara.

Although he appeared in more than three dozen films, Manners was best known for playing the stalwart hero or the love interest in the horror films of the 1930s. He played Jonathan Harker to Bela Lugosi's Dracula in the 1931 film and fought to keep his lover from the clutches of Boris Karloff in 1932's "The Mummy."

KLA to launch radio station: In a move to reinforce their independent image, Kosovo's ethnic Albanian rebels announced Sunday they were establishing a new radio station and news agency to promote their ideals, AP reports from Pristina.

The Kosovo Liberation Army, in a statement to ethnic Albanian journalists, said the station would be known as "Kosovo e Lire," or "Free Kosovo." The news agency would be called Kosovo Press. The statement did not say when the station would begin broadcasting or where it would be based. No frequency was given.

5,000 homes destroyed in Tajikistan: Hurricane-force winds that struck northern Tajikistan destroyed 5,000 homes and left several thousand people homeless, the committee for emergencies said yesterday. AFP reports from Dushanbe.

The storm struck late Thursday in an area around Leninabad, tearing down houses and causing an estimated one million dollars in damages. Committee chairman Makhmadrizi Iskandarov said. No one was reported hurt.

28 die as rocket hits bus in Somalia: At least 28 people were killed and 10 others wounded when an anti-tank rocket was fired at a bus near the southern Somali town of Baidoa, the newspaper Xoggal reported yesterday. AFP reports from Mogadishu.

The paper said that the bus was transporting civilians from Baidoa to Mogadishu at the time of the attack, which it said was carried out by the Rahanwein Resistance Army (RRA). The wounded and those who died were taken back to the main hospital in Baidoa, a nurse at the hospital said two of the wounded had died in Baidoa overnight while three others remained in a critical condition.

Japan's 'Mother Teresa' dies: Yaeko Nakamura, a woman adored as Japan's "Mother Teresa" for her dedication to orphans and the elderly, has died, relatives said yesterday. She was 93. AP reports from Tokyo.

Nakamura died on Saturday at a hospital in the western Japanese city of Osaka where she had been suffering from the effects of a stroke in June 1997. Nakamura, joined by her husband Haruka, began her activities for the disadvantaged in 1931 by caring for the children of fishermen and others making their living on the waterfront near Osaka.



Iraqis wait to get their yearly food and medicine ration cards, which are allocated by the government, in front of the Al Muatasim centre in Baghdad on Sunday. Under the UN's oil-for-food programme Iraq can sell 5.2 billion dollars worth of crude every six months to buy basic food and medicines.

— AP/UNB photo

Anti-military riots leave

13 dead in Indonesia

independence left two people dead.

The separatist activists were fatally shot during an attack Sunday on a security post occupied by military-backed civilians near the East Timorese capital of Dili, the army said.

Violence had recently escalated in Aceh province, where the military suspended a decadelong campaign against rebels in the province at the northern end of Sumatra island and apologised for human rights abuses.

But the military conducted dawn raids around the town of Lhokseumawe and arrested 132 people after villagers and suspected rebels killed seven soldiers.



Police inspect site of a bomb explosion near Lahore, Pakistan, Sunday. Four people were killed when a time bomb exploded on the bridge near Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's residence, just before Sharif was due to pass over the bridge. Police described the bomb attack as an assassination attempt.

— AP/UNB photo

Senators oppose Clinton's State of Union address under trial



WASHINGTON, Jan 4: Senators from both parties say President Bill Clinton should not deliver his annual State of the Union address to Congress if the scheduled date conflicts with his impeachment trial in the Senate, reports AP.

The Jan 19 date for the speech thus provides a concrete deadline for senators now searching for a way to bring a quick end to the impeachment trial.

I think it would be unseemly and distracting for the president to be giving a State of the Union address to Congress while he was under trial in the Senate, Republican Sen Slade Gorton said Sunday on NBC's television show "Meet the Press."

Gorton and Democrat Joseph Lieberman are proposing a plan that could end the trial after four days.

Lieberman, also on NBC, agreed that Clinton's annual speech to outline his legislative goals for the year is "another reason why we have a very short window here to try to

work out a procedure for this trial. If we don't, we are going to descend. I fear, to the kind of partisan rancour that characterised the House proceeding." Judiciary Committee hearings that resulted in the first impeachment of a president in 130 years.

The speech must be postponed, Democratic Sen Robert Torricelli said, because as long as the trial continues, "The state of the union from the perspective of his administration is unclear."

And Republican Sen Phil Gramm said Clinton might resort to the practice of earlier presidents and submit his report in writing.

White House spokesman Jim Kennedy had no immediate comment on whether the president would deliver the speech as planned if the trial is still under way on Jan 19.

Congress convenes on Wednesday. The Senate's first order of business is to determine the shape of the trial on House-passed articles of impeachment, which charge the president with perjury and obstruction of justice in the Monica Lewinsky affair.

A two-thirds majority is needed to remove the president from office. While most senators are reluctant to say how they would vote, even Republicans who favoured conviction admitted they don't have the vote.

Momentum was building for the Gorton-Lieberman approach. Under that, from Jan 11 the House prosecutors and the White House would each have one day to present their

cases. Senators would then have a day to ask questions. Then, on the fourth day, they would vote whether charges against the president, even if true, were grave enough to remove him from office. If a two-thirds majority isn't reached, the Senate could adjourn the trial with a simple majority, then move to a possible censure motion against the president.

Senators on the Sunday

news programmes generally agreed that any resolution to censure the president for his affair with the former White House intern should not include a fine, a move that many view as constitutionally suspect.

Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott, a Republican from Mississippi, in an interview with Time magazine, said the Gorton-Lieberman idea was a "fair start." He said he would be

criticized no matter what is decided from the left, which is demanding an end to the proceedings, and from the right, which wants a full trial with witnesses.

Republican leaders worry that a protracted trial interfering with legislative business would again cast the party as more interested in punishing the president than addressing the nation's problems.

The decision is a "first step" towards a possible campaign for the Republican presidential nomination, a close adviser told the magazine.

Giving up her job is a "non-political event," according to the adviser, however, it will allow Dole time to raise money for a possible presidential bid before key primaries in March 2000 in California, New York, and the southern United States.

Dole's husband, Bob Dole, 74, was along time US Republican senator from Kansas who made three unsuccessful presidential bids, the latest in 1996.

Chilean govt to insist on holding Pinochet's trial in his country

SANTIAGO, Jan 4: The Chilean government plans not to defend Augusto Pinochet personally but rather argue that the former dictator must be judged in the country where his alleged crimes were committed. Chile's acting foreign minister said in an interview published on Sunday, reports AFP.

The daily El Mercurio reported that Chile will ask on Thursday to be heard in a January 18 hearing in which British law lords will decide whether the 83-year-old Pinochet should remain under arrest while the extradition process takes place or whether he can return to Chile.

Chile has contended since Pinochet's October 16 arrest in a London clinic that the senator-for-life has diplomatic immunity from prosecution.

Acting Foreign Minister Mariano Fernandez told El Mercurio that the "Principle of penal territoriality" will be one of the points on which lawyers will try to get Pinochet to be allowed to return home.

Sihanouk willing to stand trial with Khmer Rouge

PHNOM PENH, Jan 4: Stung by reminders in the press of his past support of the notorious Khmer Rouge, King Norodom Sihanouk reiterated Monday that he is willing to stand trial alongside the architects of Cambodia's genocide, reports AP.

In a statement faxed from Beijing, where the ailing king is receiving medical treatment, Sihanouk said he would renounce his royal immunity from prosecution to allow a tribunal to judge whether he was involved in atrocities committed during the murderous reign of the Khmer Rouge.

"As I said and written several times, I am ready to appear in front of a tribunal (Cambodian or international) in charge of judging the Khmer Rouge and their real or supposed accomplices," the king said.

Critics select 'Out of Sight' as best film of '98

NEW YORK, Jan 4: "Out of Sight," a film starring George Clooney as a hapless bank robber who falls for a federal agent, garnered best picture and best director honours from the National Society of Film Critics on Sunday, reports AP.

The movie co-stars Jennifer Lopez as the agent who has more brains and is just as daring as the crooks she deal with. Director Steven Soderbergh, who also directed the 1989 hit "Sex, Lies, and Videotape," beat out Terrence Malick ("The Thin Red Line") Steven Spielberg ("Saving Private Ryan") for best director awards.

The National Society also honoured "The Thin Red Line" with best cinematography honours and named "Taste of Cherry," an Iranian film, as the year's best foreign language film.

ROK govt accused of spying on opposition legislators

SEOUL, Jan 4: The main opposition party claimed Monday it has evidence that President Kim Dae-jung's government illegally spied on opposition legislators, reports AP.

The ruling camp vowed to bring criminal charges against opposition members who broke into a room in the parliament building last week and seized government intelligence documents.

The break-in followed allegations by an opposition legislator that room 529 in the National Assembly building was used by government intelligence agents to spy on opposition politicians.

Opposition legislators seized several dozen documents from the room, which had been used by members of the Agency for National Security Planning, the main government spy agency.

Now Elizabeth Dole seems aspirant

WASHINGTON, Jan 4: Elizabeth Dole, the wife of former republican presidential candidate Bob Dole, is taking the first steps towards what seems to be run for the US presidency in 2000. Newsweek magazine reported.

Dole, 62, plans to announce today that she is resigning her job as president of the American Red Cross, the magazine reports in its January 11 edition.

In a June 1998 USA Today-CNN-Gallup poll, Elizabeth Dole tied with vice president Al Gore in a hypothetical presidential race.

The decision is a "first step" towards a possible campaign for the Republican presidential nomination, a close adviser told the magazine.

Giving up her job is a "non-political event," according to the adviser, however, it will allow Dole time to raise money for a possible presidential bid before key primaries in March 2000 in California, New York, and the southern United States.

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Sen Patrick Leahy, left, and Sen Chris Dodd, talk about the upcoming impeachment trial of President Clinton on the set of the CBS talk show "Face the Nation" on Sunday in Washington.

— AP/UNB photo

NASA launches Mars Polar Lander

CAPE CANAVERAL, Florida, Dec 4: A Mars lander equipped with an arm and shovel blasted off Sunday on a 756 million-kilometre quest to uncover frozen water near the planet's South Pole, reports AP.

NASA's Mars Polar Lander soared aboard a Boeing 747 at exactly 3:21 pm (2021 GMT). The rain that managers had feared stayed away, allowing NASA to meet the instantaneous launch window despite an overcast sky.

The Polar Lander is bound for the frosty fringes of Mars' south polar cap. It's due to arrive in December when it's late spring and the sun never sets.

It will be virgin territory. No spacecraft has ever ventured so far south of Mars. As a result, scientists' expectations are high.

Their goal is to find water ice in the Martian soil. Where

there's water, NASA's top space scientist says, there could be life.

You've got to follow the water if you're looking for life," says Ed Weiler, head of NASA's space science division.

We have a lot of reason to believe there's water on Mars in the form of ice," he added. "But until you actually land there and find it and measure it, you can't say for sure. That's one thing I think this mission will demonstrate."

The Polar Lander — 3.5 feet (about 1 metre) tall and 12 feet (3.6 metres) wide — has three legs as well as a 6.5-foot (2-metre) robot arm with a scoop on the end to scrape beneath the Martian surface. The collected dirt will be heated, allowing any water that's present to vaporise and be detected by a laser.

It carries no life-detection

equipment. The only real way to confirm life on Mars, Weiler says, is to fetch rocks and soil. NASA plans to launch a soil-return mission in 2005; the samples would reach Earth in 2008.

The Polar Lander also is equipped with a pair of probes that will peel away minutes before touchdown and slam into the Martian surface at 640 kph to 850 kph, some 100