

BRIEFLY



Two young boys embrace each other after Eid prayers on the first day of Eid-ul-Fitr at the Jama Masjid in Srinagar Tuesday.

—UNB/AP photo

Blast kills 1 in Vietnam: One fisherman was killed and two others were seriously injured in a dynamite-fishing accident near Ly Son island off Vietnam's central coast, a local police officer said yesterday. AP reports from Hanoi.

Duong Len, 33, died en route to the island clinic. His two colleagues are being treated at the clinic for injuries suffered when the grenade they were using exploded before the could throw it overboard from their small boat, officer said. He said dynamite fishing is very popular around the island because poor fishermen cannot afford to buy trawlers for off-shore fishing.

Former Argentine ruler held: Argentina's last military ruler in the country's 1976-1983 dictatorship was arrested Wednesday for allegedly conspiring to steal babies from political prisoners, officials said. APF reports from Buenos Aires.

Retired General Reynaldo Bignone, 71, is the seventh general and Junta member, and the ninth military officer arrested by investigating Judge Adolfo Bagnasco in his two-year investigation of the missing children.

21 killed in tornado in SA: At least 21 people were killed when a tornado hit the rural areas around the small town of Mount Ayliff in South Africa's Eastern Cape province, police told AFP on Tuesday in Mount Ayliff.

He said about 225 people had been admitted to the Mount Ayliff Hospital after the tornado hit on Monday afternoon. Other injured people had been transferred to hospitals in the neighbouring KwaZulu Natal province. The Sapa news agency reported that the injured included about 100 children who were critically hurt.

25 feared dead in avalanches in India: At least 25 people were feared dead following heavy snow and avalanches in the northern Indian state of Uttar Pradesh, AFP reports from New Delhi.

The Times of India newspaper said the dead included 15 labourers doing road-mending work in the state's mountainous northern reaches.

20 killed in Burundi clashes: Twenty people have been killed in two armed clashes, in southeastern Burundi and near the capital Bujumbura, official radio said in a broadcast monitored in Nairobi on Tuesday, AFP reports from Nairobi.

In an attack blamed on Hutu rebels in the southeastern province of Makamba, 17 people were killed, the radio aid, without elaborating. In Kanyosha, just a few kilometres from Bujumbura, three rebels died in clashes with soldiers of the Tutsi-dominated army.

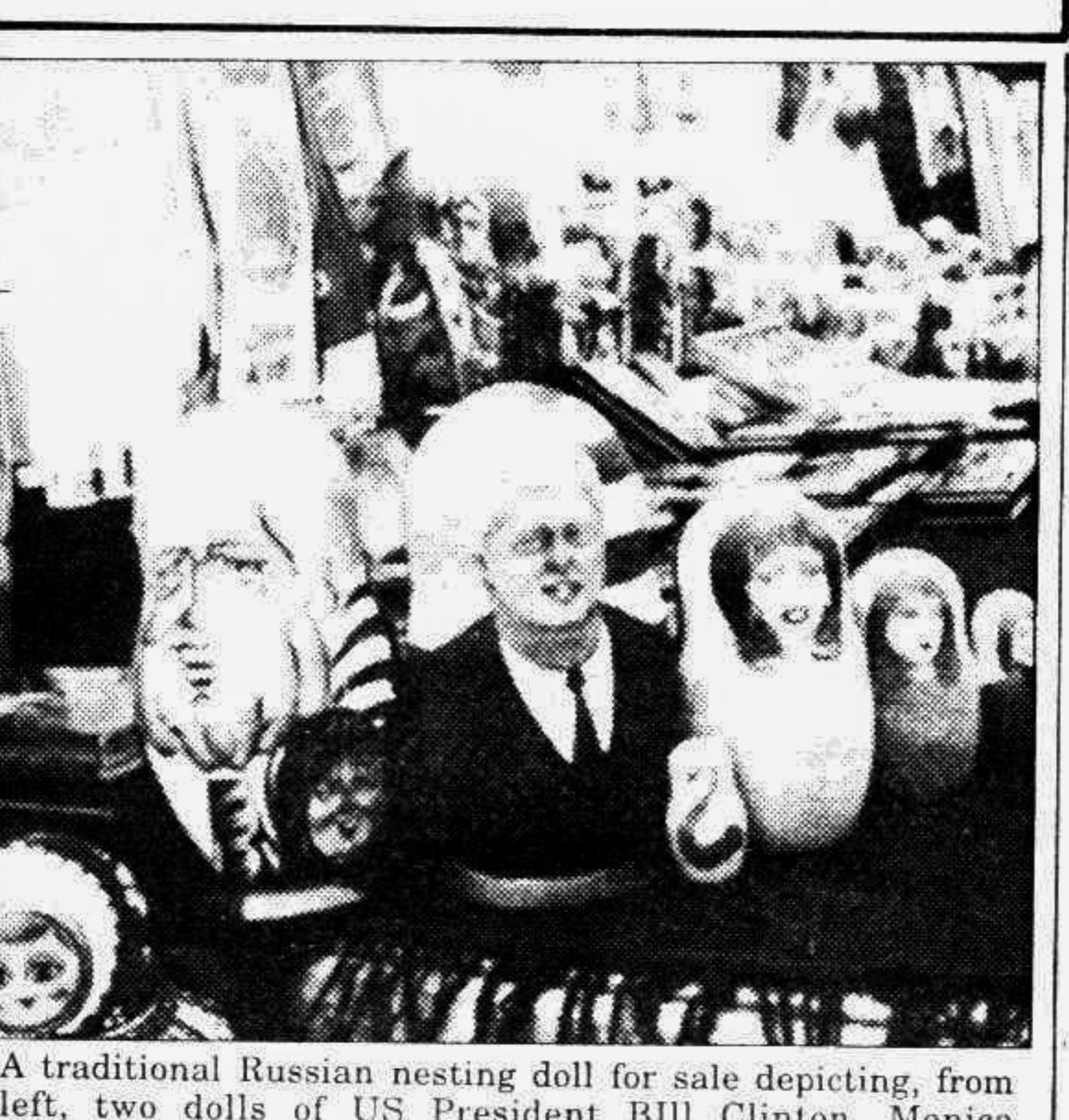
Quayle to run for US presidency: After sitting out the 1996 presidential campaign, former Vice President Dan Quayle is taking the first step toward seeking the top spot on the Republican ticket in 2000, AP says from Washington.

"I've thought about this for a long time. I've wanted to be president for a long time, and the year 2000 is looking like my opportunity," Quayle said Thursday night on CNN's "Larry King Live." He intends to file a formal statement of candidacy next week, the first step in his bid for the presidency.

21 die in bus accidents in Philippines: Twenty-one people were killed and 32 injured after a bus plunged into a ravine in the northern Philippines police said Thursday, AFP reports from Manila.

The bus was travelling on Wednesday from the town of San Fernando to the northern mountain city of Baguio when its brakes failed at the town of Sablan and it fell into a 12 metre ravine, said chief inspector Edgar Pajatan.

ROK changes spy agency's name: South Korea's spy agency became known as the National Intelligence Service from yesterday, a name change meant to enhance its tarnished image and reflect its new mandate. AP says from Seoul.



A traditional Russian nesting doll for sale depicting, from left, two dolls of US President Bill Clinton, Monica Lewinsky, Paula Jones, Linda Tripp, and a small saxophone in front, on a market stall in Kiev, Ukraine, on Wednesday. The set of nesting dolls costs 80 hryvney (about drs 20).

—UNB/AP photo

Bid to kill Sharif Two Muslim militants held

LAHORE, Pakistan, Jan 22: Two Muslim militants have been arrested and confessed to engineering an attempt to kill Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, official sources said Friday, reports AFP.

The suspects, both Pakistanis, have admitted they planted a powerful bomb that blew up a bridge on the road to Sharif's farmhouse at Raiwind on January 3, the sources said.

Three people were killed when the bomb went off shortly before Sharif was due to cross the bridge in a motorcade on the way to the family estate, 20 kilometers (12 miles) south of Lahore, capital of central Punjab province.

The suspects belong to Lashkar-i-Jhangvi, an underground extremist group from the country's majority Sunni Muslim community, they said. The group is blamed for a spate of sectarian killings in the country.

Ravi Shankar wins int'l prize for media music

BONN, Jan 22: Sitar Maestro Ravi Shankar has been nominated for the International Prize for Film and Media Music for 1999 in recognition of his special achievements in increasing the significance of music in the audio-visual media, reports PTI.

Ravi Shankar would receive the award personally on June 12 at a special function here, Dr Bernd Busch, director of the German government's prestigious Forum of Art and Exhibition told reporters here today.

The 79-year-old Indian virtuoso is the third recipient of the award instituted by the forum in 1995 in connection with the centenary celebrations of the birth of film.

The prize is the only one of its kind which exclusively pays homage to special achievement in the sphere of music in the audio-visual media.

Plan to bomb US Embassy Pakistan denies Indian media allegations

ISLAMABAD, Jan 22: Pakistan on Thursday denied charges of complicity in a plot to blow up the US Embassy and two consular offices in India, saying that the allegations are the 'most sinister fabrications designed solely to malign' the country, reports AP.

Indian newspapers said Wednesday that police arrested four people, including a suspected Pakistani spy, who allegedly planned the bombing plot.

The accused have been linked to Osama Bin Laden — a Saudi dissident.

In a statement, Pakistan's Foreign Office charged that the news reports "aimed at undermining our relations with the United States."

The Indian government never officially raised such allegations with Pakistan, he said.

The ringleader of the bombing plot was identified as Sayed Abu Nasir, 27, said to be a Bangladeshi working for Pakistan's spy agency, an Indian police official was quoted by the Indian Express as saying.

6-month-old puppy survives open heart surgery

CAPE TOWN, Jan 22: Milo, the six-month-old puppy, was on Thursday recovering from a six-hour long heart operation by surgeons who normally operate on human beings, reports AP.

The brown and white Jack Russell terrier had defects in all four chambers of his heart, an unusual and potentially lethal condition called 'Tetralogy of Fallot' that is more commonly found in human children.

"We've generally adapted the operation to the anatomy of the dog, which is slightly different from humans," said Dr Jolani Brink of the University of Cape Town Medical School.

The success or failure of the procedure would be known over the next 24 to 48 hours, Brink said. The operation took place in an animal laboratory using a heart-lung machine and other specialised equipment.

The owner of the dog, Cheeky Lombardi, cried when she got the news the puppy had survived the operation, APTN reported.

With the success of the operation, the dog is expected to make a full recovery.

Among NATO fire-power already in the region, some air-

craft have been outfitted with long-range cruise missiles.

Others possess air-to-ground and air-to-air fire missiles.

US warships and submarines are also equipped with cruise missiles.

The other NATO forces in the region are: — Eight German tor-

nado-ECR fighters arrived in Piacenza, Italy, on Thursday,

— The other NATO forces in the Adriatic with an arsenal of 18 fighters, including 14 super-

endard equipped with laser-

guided bombs, and four Estandard reconnaissance aircraft.

— The Netherlands has sent eight F-16s and has a frigate sailing in the Mediterranean.

— Britain has four fighter bombers and a refueling aircraft.

— Belgium has deployed six F-16 fighters at the airbase in Amendola.

— Denmark has sent to Italy six F-16 aircraft and 100 sol-

— Norway has deployed six F-

16s and 230 and 230 soldiers.

— Portugal has sent three F-

16 and two Hercules C-130 aircraft to the US air base in Aviano, Italy, with a third C-130 scheduled to arrive on Friday.

The rump Yugoslavians' forces include 79 MiG fighters — 47 MiG-21F, 17 MiG-21U and 15 MiG-29 — according to the International Institute of Strategic Studies (IIS) in London.

Serbian forces command ground-to-air missile batteries deployed in eight different sites, equipped with about 100 Sam missiles with a range of up to 16

kilometres, the Institute said.

At the height of tensions between Serbian forces and rebel Kosovar Albanians, NATO had 430 aircraft close to the Balkans — some already there on Bosnian peacekeeping duty.

Most aircraft were redeployed when Belgrade agreed to NATO demands to reduce Serbian forces in Kosovo.

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