

BRIEFLY

3 wounded in Pakistan : At least three people received bullet wounds on Sunday when police repulsed an attack by Shi'ite Muslims on the state owned radio station in Karachi, a government doctor said, reports Reuter.

A Shi'ite leader said the three were wounded after police opened fire at what he called a peaceful religious procession as it passed the Radio Pakistan building. Police said they fired teargas to disperse a mob which started the building and later set a truck and a jeep on fire.

Palestinians to meet Baker : PLO Chief Yasser Arafat on Sunday gave Palestinians in Israeli-occupied territories the go-ahead to meet US Secretary of State James Baker later this week, Reuter reports from Nicosia.

The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) said in a statement sent to Reuters in Cyprus that Arafat made the decision during a meeting of the leadership in Tunis.

It would be the second meeting in a month between Baker and Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza Strip, captured by Israel in the 1967 war.

14 die in Nigerian accident : Fourteen people were killed and 33 received serious burns when a petrol tanker rolled over Saturday and burst into flames near a village in Nigeria's north-eastern Gongola state, the official news agency of Nigeria reported Sunday, AFP says from Lagos.

Quoting an eye-witness, the news agency said the driver of the tanker lost control of the vehicle while trying to avoid hitting an elderly woman crossing the road.

The accident occurred near the village of Densa.

Suzuki wins re-election : Tokyo Governor Shunichi Suzuki won triumphant re-election on Monday, dealing a stinging blow to leaders of Japan's ruling party who had tried to unseat him, reports Reuter from Tokyo.

After counting of eight per cent of the votes cast on Sunday, Suzuki had built up an unbeatable lead over his nearest rival, the candidate backed by Premier Toshiki Kaifu and his Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) machine, NHK public television said.

Official returns so far showed Suzuki with 220,319 votes, almost double those counted for the LDP-backed Hisanori Isonuma, a popular television presenter. Commentators said the result could threaten the positions of Kaifu and LDP Secretary-General Ichiro Ozawa.

3 Puerto Rico prisoners escape : Three convicted drug-traffickers escaped from Puerto Rico's state prison on Sunday morning, when accomplices stole a helicopter and forced the pilot to fly to a prison basketball court and pluck the convicts to freedom, Reuter reports from San Juan.

One of the prisoners and two of his accomplices were captured later after a gun battle on a highway outside San Juan, police spokeswoman Maria Bon said.

The daring escape began early on Sunday when four friends of the convicts stole a helicopter from Las Piedras Construction Co.

Georgia President warns Kremlin : Soviet Georgia's Nationalist President has warned Kremlin leader Mikhail Gorbachev of a general strike in his Republic if Moscow does not withdraw troops from a disputed area, Reuter reports from Moscow.

Georgian government spokesman said President Zviad Gamsakhurdia, whose Nationalist alliance ended 70 years of communist rule in November elections. Sent a letter to Gorbachev on Saturday saying workers would strike if troops were not withdrawn from the south Ossetia region. He did not say when the action might start and how long it would last.

Women may get political rights

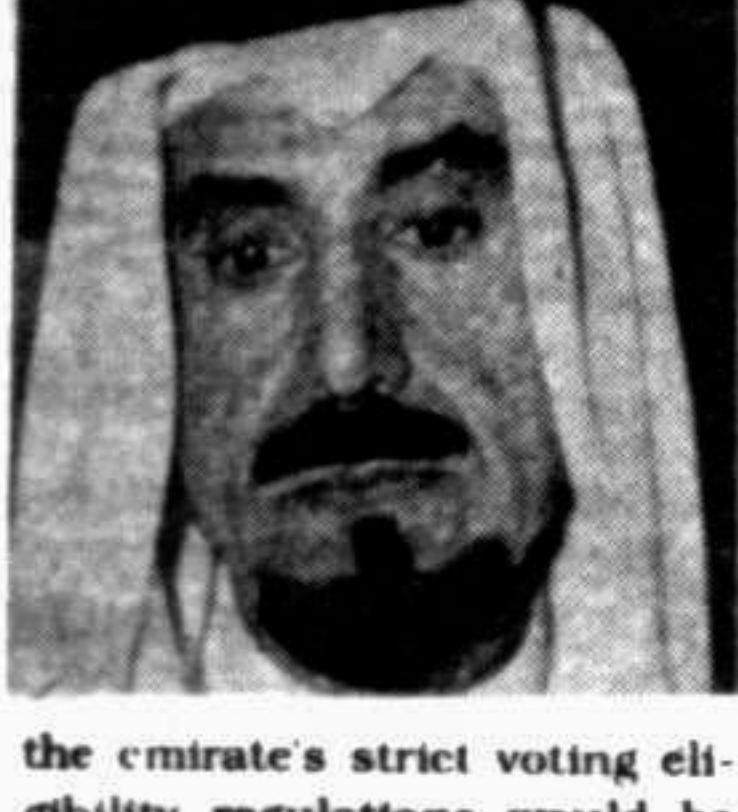
Kuwaiti emir to restore parliamentary democracy

KUWAIT CITY, Apr 8 : The emir of Kuwait said Sunday he would restore parliamentary democracy and hold elections by the end of 1992, a pledge which was greeted with a mixture of optimism and pessimism by opposition figures, reports AP.

Sheik Jaber al-Ahmed al-Sabah, in his first public address since the allies ousted Iraqi occupation forces, said Kuwait remained in danger from a possible "mad act" by Iraqi President Saddam Hussein. Without mentioning any country by name, the emir asked Kuwait's "brothers and friends" to keep their forces in the emirate.

The emir's nationally televised announcement came hours after the main Islamic fundamentalist group, the Islamic Constitutional Movement, demanded elections within six months and restoration of the constitution and parliament. Leaders in some Western nations, including the United States and Britain, had also urged the ruling family to allow greater democracy.

The emir also said he would study the possibility of extending political rights to women, who now have no vote. He said



the emirate's strict voting eligibility regulations would be eased to allow more people to cast ballots.
Abdullah al-Nabari, a leader of the opposition Kuwaiti Democratic Forum coalition, welcomed some of the emir's announcements. However, he said the opposition would be upset if the election were not held until the end of 1992. The coalition seeks restoration of the suspended constitution and appointment of an overhauled Cabinet. Democratic Forum spokesman Issa al-Sarras said reaction to the speech within the coalition was mixed. "Some are optimistic," he said "They see this as an opening for the start of political wrangling. And they were

NICOSIA, Apr 8: Iran said almost 700,000 Iraqi refugees had reached its territory by Sunday evening and queues of would-be arrivals stretched for miles, reports Reuter.

Tehran radio, which reported earlier on Sunday that Iran could not accept any more people, said 698,000 had crossed the border by 5 local time.

It said 10 air force c-130 aircraft and a jumbo jet had transported 170 tonnes of food, clothing, tents, blankets,



KUWAIT CITY: Men working for the US company "Boots and Coots" succeeded for the first time in extinguishing the flames from one of the many oil wells set ablaze by the Iraqis, by injecting air and nitrogen into a pipe held over the flame with the help of a crane in the Ahmadi oilfield some 20 km away from Kuwait City April 7. — AFP/UNB photo

dried milk and other supplies to border provinces.
At least 280,000 Iraqi Kurds and others have fled to the Turkish border, where a major international relief effort has begun. Iran has so far received little foreign aid.
"At present hundreds of thousands of refugees are massed across the border, waiting to enter the Iranian soil. But unfortunately lack of food, bedding and clothing make it impossible to accept more," suggested that Iran's

borders were still open despite the earlier announcement.
Relief for Kurdish refugees
AFP from Turkey adds: Thousands of open-mouthed Kurdish refugees watched entranced on Sunday as four white parachutes carrying life-saving relief goods flared down close by but on the Iraqi side of the border.

As shouts went up of 'parachute parachute', men rose to their feet and women quietened bawling infants in Uludere camp where hundreds of thousands of Iraqis mostly Kurds, have taken refuge just across the Turkish border.
An American plane circled and dropped another four cases behind a snowy peak so

near and yet so far. An international airlift had commenced, but the people in this camp in southeast Turkey had to face another day of hunger and thirst.
This was because the international community had decided to give top priority to the thousands of families cut off in the inaccessible mountains in northern Iraqi Kurdistan.

Help for those who crossed the peaks into Turkey must come first from the government in Ankara and then, hopefully, from international airlift being set up with European governments.
A first convoy of 46 tons of food and medicine donated by France arrived early Sunday at the foot of the hills from Diyarbakir airport.

But bulldozers were still working on widening the narrow mule-track leading up to the camp, with only tractors from neighbouring Kurdish villages able to negotiate the narrow path, so the French goods had to await distribution on farm carts this morning on Sunday, Turkish Red Crescent volunteers brought in bread—a hazardous business with the starving refugees fighting and bawling, nervous soldiers firing in the air without managing to calm the crowds.
"Bread is fine when you can get it, but we are dying of thirst," cried an old woman who no longer had the strength to get up her son, 24-year-old Iraqi.
Army deserter Suleiman explained "You see this huge plain, these thousands of people, there's not a single well

nothing." He went on: Okay well look for some snow to eat further up it's a four-hour hike. The other solution is to go back to Iraq just behind the mountain range. One tiny well and hours to queue up."
Women and children clutching makeshift containers do in fact return two kilometres (over a mile) across the border marked with the Iraqi flag to a far smaller camp.
Those who stayed there did so because there was water.

But 32-year-old Nureddin, who spent a day there on his way from the Iraqi town of Zakhro and is proud of being a member of the Iraqi engineers union, explained: "I think that if they're going to look for people to take them to Australia, it's got to be on the Turkish side."

International

Queues of arrivals stretch for miles

7 lakh Iraqi refugees reach Iran

Twin rebellions crushed : Saddam

NICOSIA, Apr 8 : Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein says he has crushed twin rebellions against his rule but the rebels, their families fleeing Iraq with tales of death and misery, say they will fight on, reports Reuter.

US Secretary of State James Baker, who will visit the Turkish border on Monday and meet refugees, said Washington was determined to help victims of civil strife in Iraq but could not "go down the slippery slope of being sucked into a civil war."

Stung by criticism of inertia, the United States launched a three-day operation on Sunday to drop food to tens of thousands of Iraqi Kurds fleeing Saddam's wrath and heading for Turkey.

Iraq's Vice-President, Taha Mohamed Ma'rouf, said the airlift was not needed because Kurds were safe in their homes and had been encouraged to flee by the United States and its Gulf war allies.

Tens of thousands of Shi'ite Muslim Iraqis fearing reprisals for their challenge to Saddam's rule in southern Iraq fled to Iran which said it could barely cope with the numbers.

Up to two million people, mostly Kurds, fled in panic from northern Iraq when Saddam's defeated Gulf war army crushed their revolt last week.

Iran said almost 700,000 Iraqi refugees had reached its territory by Sunday evening and queues of others seeking refuge stretched for miles. At least a quarter of a million Kurds have fled towards Turkey.

President George Bush suggested on Sunday that the United Nations might help restore order in Iraq without playing policeman in the fractured country.

20 burnt to death in Burma
RANGOON, Apr 8: Fire has swept through a town in northern Burma, killing at least 20 people and destroying more than 6,000 homes, witnesses said today, reports Reuter.

The witnesses, contacted by telephone from Rangoon, said about 30,000 people were left homeless by the blaze which began late on Sunday in a shop in the central market of Meiktila, 300 miles (480 km) north of the Burmese capital.

The town's railway station, a cinema and a primary school were also destroyed.

India, Pakistan agree to normalise ties

NEW DELHI, Apr 8 : India and Pakistan have agreed to pursue measures to normalise bilateral relations soured by military and other thorny disputes, officials said here today, reports AFP.

A joint statement issued after three-day talks ended here between Indian Foreign Secretary Mukund Dubey and his Pakistani counterpart Shahrar Khan said they had drawn up a plan to improve relations.

India and Pakistan have drawn up an elaborate plan for discussions in coming months to ease tensions between the two countries and build mutual confidence, Indian officials quoted the joint statement as saying.

Dubey and Khan agreed to meet in Islamabad in late August or in September, the statement said adding that they expressed satisfaction at talks between Indian and Pakistan military experts, which ended here Thursday.

The Foreign Secretaries discussions were the latest round in a dialogue that began last year.

The statement said the two officials agreed in principle to resume dialogue on Stachen Glacier a vast stretch of icy

Himalayan wasteland which both countries regard as militarily strategic and have fought to control.

They also agreed to reopen talks on cross-border drug smuggling in July, demarcation of boundaries in disputed zones in August and on other priority issues in the coming months, the statement said.

The talks were held in a cordial atmosphere and the two sides covered the entire range of bilateral issues and also exchanged views on international issues of mutual interest, the officials said.

The plans to ease bilateral tensions emerged a day after Dubey and Khan signed agreements to swap information on troop movements and to prevent airspace violation.

Under one pact, the two neighbours will inform each other's military headquarters before conducting military exercises, maneuvers and troop movements.

The accord aimed at preventing military tensions of the kind which erupted in 1986, when Pakistan sent troops and armour to the border in response to a massive Indian army exercise code-named Operation Brasstacks.



The Nobel Peace Prize winner Mother Teresa meets an Albanian girl in Tirana during a visit to her native country to open a charity home.

Off the Record

Schwarzkopf to make money

NEW YORK, Apr 8 : The Commander of Allied forces in the Gulf war, General Norman Schwarzkopf, plans to retire next summer and make money on the book-and-lecture circuit, according to Newsweek magazine, reports Reuter.

In its April 15 issue, Newsweek says Schwarzkopf was offered the job of US Army Chief of Staff by President George Bush, but declined.

Quoting unnamed friends, the magazine says Schwarzkopf—known widely as Stormin' Norman—plans instead to retire and write his memoirs.

A book deal could bring the war hero memoirs an advance of as much as 4 million Dollars, according to Newsweek. And, if he hits the lecture trail, Schwarzkopf could command 60,000 Dollars a speech, the magazine estimates.

But despite his public popularity, the magazine says, the General's refusal to accept the top Army job brought a sigh of relief at the Pentagon, where some who have served under him remember him as being brusque towards subordinates.

The current US Army Chief of Staff, General Carl Vuono, is due to step down from the post in June.

The Pentagon's duty officer said he had no comment on the Newsweek report.

Kennedy questioned in rape case

McLEAN (Virginia), Apr 8 : US Sen. Edward Kennedy was questioned by Palm Beach police Sunday regarding the alleged rape at the family compound in the Florida resort during the Easter holiday, the Senator's spokesman said, reports AP.

Kennedy and his son, Patrick, are not suspects in the case, spokesman Paul Donovan said.

Kennedy's nephew, William Kennedy Smith, has agreed to a police request to turn over hair and blood samples, his attorney Mark Schnapp told the New York Newsday newspaper. He declined to say when the samples would be given.

The three men were at the Kennedy mansion early on the morning of March 30 when a guest, a 29-year-old woman, alleged she was raped.

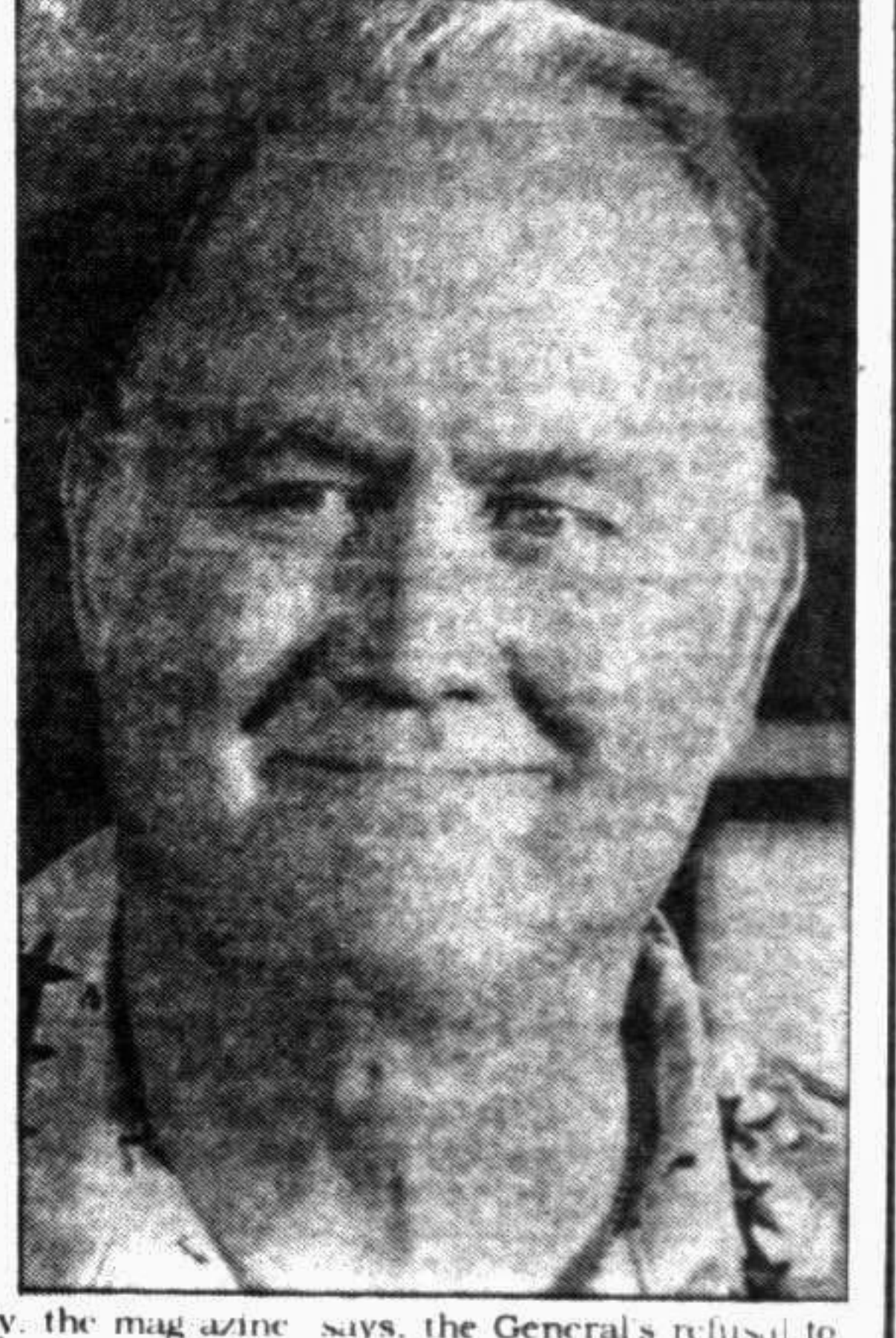
Police have identified Smith, 30, a medical student at Georgetown University in Washington, as a suspect. Smith has denied he "was involved in any offense."

A court can order a suspect to turn over samples, but Schnapp said Smith "will voluntarily comply." A message left Sunday with Schnapp's law firm was not immediately returned, and no one answered the phone at his Key Biscayne home.

Kennedy, 59, was questioned by investigators for about 30 minutes Sunday at his home in Suburban Washington, Donovan said.

"The official from the Palm Beach Police Department indicated that neither Sen. Kennedy nor his son Patrick is a suspect in the investigation," Donovan said.

Donovan said police did not seek any bodily samples from the senator.
Patrick Kennedy, 24, a member of the Rhode Island legislature, was not present at Sunday's interview. He met with Palm Beach police in Washington on Saturday, Donovan said.
The woman who said she was raped was taken to a Palm Beach hospital about 10 hours after the incident. Semen, hair and clothing samples taken from her are now with police, Newsday reported Sunday.
The police report remains sealed.



Communists sweep Albanian polls

TIRANA, Apr 8: Albanian communists on Sunday won a two-third majority in a round off election in which Prime Minister Fatos Nano avoided President Ramiz Alia's fate at the hands of Albania's electorate when he was elected to a parliament seat, reports AFP.

Nano, 39, is considered a reformist within the party. He will be one of the few top government leaders with a place in the 250-seat parliament.

He was elected in Tirana, where Alia and several other senior leader lost to the opposition Democratic Party in last Sunday's first round.

A total of seventeen seats were at stake in Sunday's election one seat will be decided next Sunday because of irregularities in the voting last week.

The Communist Party of labour won six seats, pushing them beyond the two-third majority with 168 seats, while the democrats won 10, for a total of 75. A Greek Ethnic Party won the last seat, to a total of 100. A tiny pro-Communist Party won one seat last Sunday.
In the central city of Berat, a Democratic Party leader, Abdi Baleta, won a seat in another closely watched race. Baleta is a former Ambassador to the United Nations.
Democratic Party leader Sali Berisha accused the communists of vote-rigging, saying that soldiers who had cast their ballots in the district of Nano been allowed to vote several times.
The Communist Party of Democratic Party