

## BRIEFLY

**Bush ahead of Perot, Clinton:** President Bush edged barely ahead of rivals Ross Perot and Bill Clinton in the latest national poll of likely voters released Thursday, reports AP from Washington.

The ABC News-Washington Post poll of likely voters showed Bush with 35 per cent, Clinton with 30 per cent and Perot with 30 per cent. The survey had a margin of error of plus or minus 3 percentage points.

Bush gained six points from an ABC-Post survey a week ago. Perot held steady and Clinton lost a little of the boost that had him at the top of last week's poll.

Perot, who has not yet announced his independent presidential candidacy, still appears to be drawing support about evenly from Clinton and Bush. He now has the support of 26 per cent of Democrats and 25 per cent of Republicans, as well as 38 per cent of independents.

**8 Sikhs shot dead in Punjab:** Security forces Thursday shot dead eight Sikh separatists in the Indian state of Punjab, while militants beheaded a villager and his two daughters for allegedly being police informers, police said, reports AFP from New Delhi.

The eight militants were killed in four separate gunbattles in Punjab, where Sikh militants are fighting to set up an independent homeland called Khalistan, the Press Trust of India (PTI) reported.

Two of them were shot dead in the Sikh holy city of Amritsar when they ambushed a police patrol proceeding to a Sikh shrine following a tip off that a group of militants was holding a secret meeting.

Three other militants were killed elsewhere in Amritsar district, which borders Pakistan, PTI said. Two Sikh separatists were killed in Jalandhar town, and another in Sangrur district.

**38 Chinese held in Japan:** Police have arrested 38 men, believed to be Chinese, suspected of entering Japan illegally this week by boat, a police spokesman said Friday, reports Reuter from Tokyo.

"There might be more of them, as they tend to come in groups of about 50," he said.

Hundreds of Chinese try to enter Japan each year, attracted by what are for them high wages, and are routinely arrested and sent home.

This week's search began on Thursday when a railway worker at Shimoda, on the Izu Peninsula in Central Japan, reported seeing suspicious people he believed were Chinese.

Police rounded up 22 men, aged between 20 and 30. Only one had a passport and that lacked a valid entry visa.

**Unmanned rocket blasts off:** An unmanned European rocket blasted off Thursday on a mission to deploy a multipurpose Indian satellite and a European telecommunications satellite, reports AFP from Kourou.

The Ariane 44-L rocket roared away from the jungle launch pad in this French overseas department on the northern coast of South America at 22:42 GMT.

It was to deploy the Insat-2A satellite for the Indian government and the Eutelsat-II-F4 for the European organization Eutelsat.

**Body to write Afghan Constitution:** Afghanistan's new Islamic rulers named an eight-man commission on Thursday to write a new Constitution of the country, the official Kabul Radio said, reports Reuter from Islamabad.

The broadcast, monitored in the Pakistani capital Islamabad, said the commission started its work immediately after being appointed by the country's leadership council, headed by President Burhanuddin Rabbani. It named Maulvi Hanza as commission president.

## Lawmakers want to make Cuba more democratic

MEXICO CITY, July 10: Cuban lawmakers are getting ready to make their country less hostile to religion, more hospitable to capitalists and — by officials' accounts — more democratic, reports AP.

In a session beginning Friday, the National Assembly is expected to give rubber-stamp approval to changes in at least 34 articles of the constitution.

With the collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe and Africa, Cuba has been left politically isolated and economically strapped. Its economy had depended on cheap oil imported from the Soviet Union and subsidized trade with the East Bloc.

Cuban officials vow the one-party Communist system will remain intact, but National Assembly members, now chosen by regional groups, will be directly elected under one of the changes to be enacted.

Cuban officials have indicated that independent candi-

dates may be able to run for the parliament. But Cuban President Fidel Castro has stressed that it won't mean a multi-party system or the abandonment of communism.

"They probably won't explain in the constitution how the candidates will be selected and how the campaigns will be conducted," said Gillian Gunn, director of the Cuba Project at Georgetown University.

"It could mean only minor tinkering with the status quo... or it could mean quite a fundamental shift."

Another constitutional change will be to enshrine freedom of religion.

Cuban leaders hope direct elections and tolerance of religious belief will broaden socialism's appeal at a time when Cuba's 10 million people are struggling with the worst depression in decades.

## Crisis deepens as Mandela refuses to meet Klerk

JOHANNESBURG, July 10: Deadlock over South Africa's political crisis had deepened with Nelson Mandela's refusal to meet President F. W. de Klerk to discuss how to revive democracy talks, reports Reuter.

Mandela, leader of the African National Congress (ANC), rejected De Klerk's appeal for an urgent meeting, saying the President had failed to act on black township violence and lay the groundwork for transition to democracy.

"To call for face-to-face talks in such a situation is entirely unacceptable," Mandela

told a news conference Thursday.

He also said in a statement formally responding to De Klerk's proposal: "Find a way to address the demands we have placed before you with regard to the deadlock and those relating to the violence so that negotiations can become meaningful."

Mandela withdrew last month from talks which began in December on a multi-racial constitution, accusing the government of complicity in a township massacre of 43 blacks.

De Klerk told Reuters the government would have to find another way forward if efforts to relaunch the talks failed.

"The real road forward is through negotiations... but if we are faced with an enforced deadlock, then we will have to take the matter further in an orderly and well-planned manner."

Constitutional Development Minister Roelf Meyer said Mandela had raised issues of justifiable concern but agreed there were scarcely any points of convergence.

He expressed concern at the ANC's threat to use mass action to press its demands over the violence which has claimed 6,000.

## Gamsakhurdia men kidnap Deputy PM

MOSCOW, July 10: Supporters of ousted Georgian President Zviad Gamsakhurdia kidnaped Deputy Prime Minister Alexander Kavtsadze on Thursday in a new show of resistance to the country's leadership, Interfax news agency reported, reports Reuter.

Vakhtanga Goguaдзе, spokesman for the ruling state council, told local journalists that Kavtsadze's car had been blown up while he was in the West of the Caucasian republic.

# Ban on MQM likely

## Sharif rules out imposition of federal rule in Sind

ISLAMABAD, July 10: Pakistan's Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif today ruled out the imposition of federal rule in the southern province of Sind, where an army operation against crimes has triggered a political crisis, reports AFP.

The Sind assembly will neither be dissolved nor suspended, he told reporters after a one-day visit to the province's capital, Karachi, which is rife with speculation that an army take over is imminent.

Sharif had rushed to Karachi on Wednesday after 24 MPs from the Mohajir Qaumi Movement (MQM), one of the partners in his ruling coalition, resigned to protest the army crackdown, claiming that many activists from their party had been arrested.

MQM deputies and the party's top leaders have also gone into hiding to escape arrest.

Benazir Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party has meanwhile demanded that the Sind assembly go into session to verify the claim by the province's Chief Minister, Syed

Muzaffar Hussain Shah, that he continues to command a majority.

The House is due to meet Tuesday, but without Speaker Abdul Raziq, a member of the MQM who has also resigned.



Sharif who held a series of meetings with MPs, political leaders, editors and city leaders, said there had been no crisis in Sind, and that rumours were being spread by people with ulterior motives, referring to reports that the assembly could be dissolved if Shah's government fell.

Sharif said he had hinted that major decisions on Sind would be made soon, including

a possible ban on sectarian and ethnic organisations.

The MQM represents Urdu-speaking migrants who settled in the province after the 1947 partition of the subcontinent.

"You will hear a good news from me in the next three, four days," Sharif was quoted as saying when asked if he would ban religious or language-based organisations.

He said his government could not be pressured and the ongoing army operation aimed at rooting out banditry, kidnapping, murder and looting in Sind would continue until its objectives were achieved.

He said there was no political motivation behind the operation, and that growing lawlessness in the province had reduced investment to zero.

Press reports here said there had been some resentment in Pakistan's ruling Islamic Democratic Alliance (IJI) over the handling of the Sind situation which some ministers considered the operation lopsided because it was targeting only the MQM.

Informed sources said some

new legislation was also being discussed to provide immunity for the army during its operations in the troubled region.

MQM leaders, speaking to newspapers by telephone from their hideouts, said Sharif could find a way out of the present crisis by speaking to MQM Chief Altaf Hussain, who lives in London.

Another report says: Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif assured Afghan Premier Abdul Saboor Fared on Thursday of Pakistan's full support for his new government in Kabul.

In a message to Fared, who arrived in the Afghan capital on Monday, Sharif expressed his confidence that the "special relationship and close brotherly ties between our two countries" would be further strengthened under the premier's leadership, officials here said.

He assured Pakistan's full support in restoring peace and stability in Afghanistan.

Pakistan is ready to extend "All possible assistance in the important task of rehabilitation and reconstruction of Afghanistan," Sharif said.

# Arafat urges rival Palestinian groups to end bloody clashes

TUNIS, July 10: Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat threw his weight late Thursday behind an appeal for an end to bloody clashes between rival Palestinian factions in the Israel-occupied territories, reports AFP.

He made his appeal as clashes once more flared in the Israel-occupied Gaza Strip in which Palestinian sources reported 25 injured.

Arafat, who leads one of the warring factions, Fatah, exhorted Palestinians to close ranks in his traditional message marking the anniversary of the 1987 start of the uprising in the territories.

He pointed out that in 'the delicate circumstances being experienced by the Palestinian cause' the clashes between Fatah, the main component of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), and the Islamic Resistance Movement (HAMAS) were 'regrettable, illogical and unjustifiable.'

Most of the new casualties were injured by iron bars and rocks.

The worst incident took place in Gaza city, where 15 of the Palestinians were injured. Ten more were hurt in the refugee camps of Jabalia and Maghazi, near the town of Rafah, the sources said.

Witnesses said Hamas militants provoked the incidents by attacking Fatah supporters.

The Chairman of the PLO spoke following an appeal issued by Hamas and Fatah representatives in the Jordanian capital, Amman, calling on both sides to cease fighting immediately and renew dialogue.

The appeals came during a general strike and curfews in the occupied territories aimed at dampening repeated inter-Palestinian confrontations which have claimed the life of a 19-year-old Fatah militant and left at least 64 people injured.

Arafat called on Hamas 'to commit itself to a democratic dialogue and clearly explain its point of view' to end the fighting.

The rival Palestinian representatives in Amman again called on their supporters to exercise 'restraint' for 'an immediate and permanent stop to their confrontation,' and a 'united front against the Israeli occupation.'

They also called for the resumption of a dialogue and the re-launch of a 'pact of honour' agreed in September 1990. This follows an abortive attempt to honour the pact in June.



ARKANSAS: Democratic US presidential candidate Gov Bill Clinton (L) waves to the crowd with Senator Albert Gore of Tennessee Thursday after announcing Gore as his vice-president nominee. The announcement came during a ceremony at the governor's mansion. — AFP/UNB photo

## Missing Russian diplomat found in Himachal Pradesh

NEW DELHI, July 10: A Russian diplomat missing in New Delhi for three days was found on Thursday in a Himachal Pradesh area, PTI news agency said, reports Reuter.

It said police found Alexander Ganich, 41, in the house of a man identified as Bulbul Singh near the popular tourist resort of Manali in the Indian state of Himachal Pradesh.

Ganich, a First Secretary at the Russian Embassy, was taken to a government guest house in the area before being brought back to New Delhi, PTI said.

No other details were immediately available.

Police launched a massive search around the Manali area earlier on Thursday after Ganich's car was found, Delhi Police Commissioner M B Kaushal said.

# Riot in Manhattan continues: 14 held

NEW YORK, July 10: Seven police officers were injured late Thursday and fourteen demonstrators were arrested as protests in mostly Hispanic Washington Heights continued over the shooting death of a man a week ago, reports AFP.

Skirmishes between protesters and police were mostly instigated by "outside agitators", said police spokesman Andrew McInnis.

Five police officers were injured in the clashes and two others were wounded earlier when a firecracker went off next to their patrol car, McInnis said.

The unrest in this sector of northern Manhattan began a week ago after police shot and killed 23-year-old Dominican National Jose Garcia, who police suspected of being a drug dealer and of carrying a weapon.

Mayor David Dinkins has ordered an investigation into Garcia's death.

Thursday's disturbance followed two nights of unrest Monday and Tuesday, when hundreds of demonstrators pelted police with rocks and bottles and a man fell to his death from a rooftop while allegedly being chased by police. Police made 139 arrests.

A relative calm returned late Wednesday with only a few

peaceful demonstrations in the neighbourhood, prompting authorities to believe the worst was over.

Dinkins, who visited the troubled area twice earlier this week to call for an end to the violence, told reporters before the disturbances broke out Thursday: "Thank God the situation is calm."

Dinkins, like other New York Democrats, is concerned that the disturbances could mar next week's Democratic National Convention, to be held in Manhattan's Madison Square Garden.

## Kenya to free 10,000 prisoners

NAIROBI, July 10: More than 10,000 petty offenders will be freed from prisons Friday under an amnesty granted by President Daniel Arap Moi, reports AP.

In announcing the amnesty Thursday, Moi said it was meant to coincide with an on-going registration of voters for Kenya's first multiparty elections in 22 years.

No date has been set for the balloting, but under the Constitution Moi must set presidential and legislative elections before next April.

## Off the Record

### Minister gives birth in office

PARIS: Sports and Youth Minister Frederique Bredin has become the second French government Minister to give birth in office, radio stations reported on Thursday, reports Reuter.

Bredin, 35, had a right to privacy, declined to confirm the news.

"We will talk to you about Mrs Bredin's work but not her private life," said a ministry spokeswoman.

Last month, Environment Minister Segolene Royal gave birth to her fourth child, a girl called Flora.

Royal, 38, was less publicity shy. She let television crews into her hospital room soon after the birth.

### Biggest Black Hole detected

WASHINGTON: Scientists have detected a Black Hole with a density one billion times that of the sun and about 30 million light years from earth, Astrophysical Journal reports in its latest issue, reports AFP.

The Black Hole, believed to be 100 times larger than any of its kind, was discovered by John Kormendy and Douglas Richstone of the universities of Hawaii and Michigan respectively, the Journal says in its issue, due out Friday.

Scientists use the term Black Hole to describe an intense gravitational field from which neither light nor matter can escape, possibly composed of the remains of a collapsed star.

### Is Charles-Diana trouble a crisis or circus?

LONDON: The tabloids are in a tizzy over the royal marriage, and Prince Charles and Princess Diana go about their daily routine under the relentless gaze of a curious public, reports AP.

But is it a crisis or just a circus? Experts seem to agree no constitutional crisis is at hand. "It could be damaging to the monarchy if it came to divorce," said London School of Economics lecturer John Barnes. But "nothing actually touches on the queen herself," and Charles is probably many years from the throne.

If the royal family is discredited and alienates the people, "it may spill over into a feeling that we shouldn't have a monarch at all," said George Jones, professor of government at the London School of Economics. But it hadn't yet reached that pitch, he said. "I don't think our monarchy is under threat or in any sort of crisis."

Oxford historian Colin Matthew says, "What we ought to be looking at is the pathology of the British press rather than the state of the royal marriage."

### Judge rules kid may seek divorce from parents

ORLANDO, Fla: In a significant victory for children's rights advocates, a judge ruled Thursday that an 11-year-old boy can legally seek a "divorce" from his parents so he can be adopted by a foster family, reports AP.

Circuit Judge Thomas S Kirk, acting in his capacity as a juvenile judge, said the boy identified only as Gregory K has the same constitutional right to protect his fundamental interests in court as an adult.

The ruling means Gregory and his lawyers can argue their lawsuit demanding his freedom from his natural parents. "To my knowledge, this is the first such ruling nationally," said Jerri Blair, the lawyer who filed the lawsuit on behalf of Gregory.

The boy wants to sever all legal ties to his mother so he can be adopted by a Lake County family with whom he has been living for nine months. His lawsuit, which will be heard in Circuit Court, said he has been neglected and abused by his natural parents and has spent all but seven months of the past eight years in the custody of the state, his father or foster parents.

Gregory's parents are divorced and both live in St Louis, Mo. His mother is fighting the lawsuit, but his natural father has agreed to the adoption.

### Feather study for better ecology

WILMINGTON, Del: It may sound a little flighty, but it's serious business for Du Pont Co, reports AP.

Company researchers are collecting clean, healthy feathers to help in the recovery of sea birds caught up in oil spills worldwide.

Their feather library will be used primarily by New York-based Tri-State Bird Rescue and Research Inc, a company that specializes in the cleaning and rehabilitation of oil-contaminated wildlife.

"Feathers are incredibly intricate structures... when oil or cleansing agents get matted in those feathers, they can't protect the animal anymore," said Lynne Frink, Tri-State executive director. "We feel if we can understand the feather structures, we can better clean the birds."

Tri-State responds to spills around the world and teaches volunteers to clean oiled birds. But once a bird is clean, its feathers might still be damaged.

A notebook of enlarged, detailed photos of undamaged feathers will allow bird rescuers to make comparisons before releasing clean birds. Du Pont, which has been involved in research with Tri-State since 1985, will keep the library of photos.

## Amnesty report says

# 32 US soldiers jailed for refusing to take part in Gulf War

LONDON, July 10: More than 30 members of the US armed forces were jailed for refusing to participate in the Gulf War in 1991 while more than 2,500 prisoners, including juveniles, remained on death row in the United States, Amnesty International said, reports AFP.

In its annual report released today, the London-based Human Rights Organization expressed concern at the increasing use of the death penalty and continuing ill-treatment of those in prison or police custody in the United States.

At least 32 members of the armed forces went to prison for refusing to take part in the military operation to evict Iraqi troops from Kuwait.

Military personnel could apply for exemption on conscientious grounds only after their units were deployed in the Gulf, it said, adding that most of those jailed were court-martialed and sentenced to four to 30 months imprisonment.

Nineteen people were executed in the United States between January and May 1992, compared with only 14 for the whole preceding year, the report said, while four states reinstated the death penalty after more than two decades.

Noting that one juvenile offender was executed in Texas, the human rights group counted the United States among only six countries in the world that sentence offenders under the age of 18 to death.

Juveniles, mostly from acutely deprived backgrounds, accounted for 31 of some 2,500 death row prisoners in mid-1991, the report said.

On violence in custody, amnesty reported that a Haitian asylum-seeker accused an Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) guard of raping her in January while she was held at a Florida refugee-processing centre.

It said authorities were investigating the charge, along with that of another Haitian asylum-seeker whom its border guards allegedly beat in July.

In Burundi at least 1,000 extrajudicial executions were committed while in South Africa hundreds of government opponents were extrajudicially executed with the acquiescence or direct involvement of government security forces.

"Governments in Africa and throughout the world often use the violence of opposition groups as an excuse for lifting their security forces get away with human rights violations," Amnesty said.

Extrajudicial killings and "disappearances" continued in the Americas here sweeping Amnesty laws in a number of countries had let state killers go free.

Death squads killed hundreds of street children in Brazil in 1991, hundreds more were killed by the army or paramilitaries in Colombia and more than 300 people "disappeared" and at least 60 were extrajudicially killed in

Peru. More than 2,500 were on death row in the United States where 14 executions were carried out during the year.

Hundreds of thousands of people were held without charge under administrative detention in China, where the use of the death penalty was rising with at least 1,000 executions in 1991.

More than 1,500 political prisoners were held in Myanmar.

In Europe, fighting in Yugoslavia led to a large scale human rights violations including torture and massacres of civilians by all sides in the conflict, while political killings took place in Turkey, mainly among the Kurdish population in the South East.

France, Greece and Switzerland held hundreds of prisoners of conscience-objectors to military service while in Britain reports of ill-treatment during interrogation in northern Ireland continued.