

BRIEFLY

Two killed in Sarajevo : Two people were killed and at least 15 were wounded in overnight shelling of Sarajevo, hours before a convoy of women and children was due to leave the besieged Bosnian capital, reports Reuter.

Journalists in the city said six people were wounded on Sarajevo's main pedestrian precinct during heavy bombardment of the old town before midnight.

By morning the street was littered with tree branches, power lines and masonry brought down by the shelling. Several mainly Muslim districts were also shelled, hours before some 300 women and children were due to be evacuated from the city which has been under siege by Serbs opposed to Bosnian independence for more than four months.

United Nations peace-keeping forces in the city were due to provide an armed escort for the convoy, at least to Sarajevo's city limits.

The convoy was expected to set off from UN headquarters in Sarajevo at 0900 GMT.

4 candidates in Estonian polls: Estonian President Arnold Ruutel is to face off against three other candidates in Presidential elections slated for September 20, the Estonian news agency ETA reported Tuesday, says AFP from Stockholm.

The other Presidential hopefuls are ex-Foreign Affairs Minister Lennart Meri, currently Ambassador to Finland, former anti-communist activist Lagle Parek, and Rien Taagepera, who teaches in a Californian University.

The four candidates gathered the minimum 10,000 signatures necessary for nomination by the Tuesday closing date, the agency said.

Voters are also to elect deputies to the Tallinn parliament Sept 20.

Radio Kabul fails to broadcast news: State-owned Radio Kabul went off the air Tuesday evening as fighting raged in the Afghan capital, AFP reports from Islamabad.

The radio failed to broadcast its main news bulletin and monitors here said there was complete radio silence.

Earlier, Mujahideen sources quoting radio messages from party offices in Kabul said rockets had damaged installations at the main transmission centre.

The Afghan television was hit Monday, forcing it to suspend broadcasts.

Envoy of Sahara defects to Morocco: The Ambassador in Algiers of the self-proclaimed Western Sahara Republic, Brahim Hakim, told AFP late Tuesday he was defecting to Morocco, reports AFP, from Rabat.

The Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic was set up in 1976 by the Polisario Front which rejects Morocco's annexation of the former Spanish Sahara.

Hakim, a member of the Polisario executive, told an AFP journalist at a secret location in Rabat that his arrival here was "a reply to the appeal by King Hassan II to all Saharawis to return to their native land."

He added: "I consider this decision to be my contribution to solving the Sahara problem, which has been going on for too long."

Palestinians kill a fellow Arab: Masked Palestinians in the occupied Gaza Strip shot to death a fellow Arab Tuesday suspected of collaboration with the Israeli authorities, reports AP from Jerusalem.

Abdel Wahab Ghattas, 49, of Deir El-Balah was shot in his car while driving to work in the morning, the army reported. Another man riding with him was shot in the legs, Arab sources said.

An enforcement squad affiliated with the PLO's mainstream Fatah wing claimed responsibility for the killing, Arab reports said.

Ghattas used his connections with Israeli authorities to run a business in which he helped Palestinians obtain permits to visit Jordan and Egypt, the reports said.

Ghattas death brings to 613 the number of Palestinians killed by fellow Arabs during the 4 1/2-year uprising against Israeli rule in the occupied territories. Most of the victims have been accused of collaboration with Israel.



KENNEBUNKPORT, Maine: US President George Bush (L) listens while Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin answers a question at a press conference August 11 at Bush's Kennebunkport home. Bush announced \$ 10 billion loan guarantees for the Jewish state to help with resettlement programmes. — AFP/UNB photo

Communist insurgency costs 21000 lives in Philippines

MANILA, Aug 12: The 23-year-old Philippine communist insurgency has cost more than 21,000 lives, a newspaper reported here today as President Fidel Ramos continued to offer peace to the rebels, reports AFP.

The daily Inquirer, quoting armed forces and Defence Department officials, said a total of 10,789 guerrillas of the communist New People's Army (NPA) had been killed in the past seven years alone, when the rebellion reached its peak.

On the other hand, some 11,000 soldiers, policemen, militiamen and civilians have been slain since the NPA, the armed wing of the banned

Communist Party of the Philippines estimated to be 10,000 to 15,000-strong, launched its struggle in 1969.

The rebellion peaked in the mid-1980s, declining toward the turn of the decade after the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos was ousted and former President Corazon Aquino came to power in 1986. Infighting and the decline of communism worldwide contributed to the rebels' decline.

Ramos, a retired General who once led Manila's counter-insurgency campaigns, has offered, a peaceful settlement to all armed rebels, including Muslim separatists and rightist military coup plotters, but has

Former republics to face painful future if CIS fails: Gorbachev

MOSCOW, Aug 12: Mikhail Gorbachev, recalling the August coup that led to his downfall as Soviet President, said Tuesday the former Soviet republics faced a painful, uncertain future if their fragile commonwealth collapsed, reports Reuter.

"What happened last August is still painful influencing events in the countries of the former Soviet Union and in Russia itself," Gorbachev told reporters in Moscow.

The former President, speaking eight days before the anniversary of the failed communist putsch that led to the collapse of the Soviet Union, said "Revolutionary changes" he had set in motion had been thrown off course by the coup.

"The Putsch last year was aimed at stopping this process of dealing a final defeat to the

totalitarian regime and establishing freedom and democracy here," he said.

Gorbachev's voice hardened when he spoke of the eight-man emergency committee, including his own hand-picked Vice-president, the Prime Minister and head of the KGB, which imprisoned him for three days at his Crimean holiday dome.

"Now some people want to make virtual heroes of them. Above all, they were striking a blow against the reform process," he said.

"Before you stand the President whom they locked up and seized power from, taking over his functions by coercion".

Although Gorbachev survived the bungled coup, it paved the way for the disintegration of the Soviet Union last December and the creation of

Shevardnadze declares war against enemies

TBILISI, Georgia, Aug 12: Georgia's leader Eduard Shevardnadze declared war on his opponents Wednesday after militants backing ousted President Zviad Gamsakhurdia took government officials hostage, reports AP.

"We have the right to ask our people to take to the streets, to the squares, and demand from us, and support us in attacking our enemies in declaring a struggle against our enemies, against the enemies and traitors of Georgia," Shevardnadze said in an emotional television appeal Wednesday.

Interior Minister Roman Ovtensadze, Shevardnadze's national security adviser David

a new Commonwealth of Independent States in which there was no role for the former President.

Gorbachev, a frequent critic of the Russian government's tough free-market reform programme, said its attempts to make up for lost time were not working.

He said there could be no attempt to turn back the clock and prevent the former Soviet republics from consolidating their independence. But they could only do so if the fractious commonwealth survived.

"The emergence of the independent states must be carried through to the end. There is no other way," Gorbachev said.

"But I'm telling you that this process won't end favourably because it's run up against the most painful issue: What about

Bush denies he spent 'romantic night' with female aide

WASHINGTON, Aug 12: President Bush of Tuesday called a published report that he and a female aide spent a romantic night together in a Swiss cottage in 1984 a lie.

He later refused to answer a broader question on whether he'd ever had an affair, reports AP.

Bush found himself confronted with questions about his personal life twice during the day.

"I'm outraged," the president said when asked about a New York post report on the alleged Swiss episode during a news conference at his Oceanside home in Kennebunkport, Maine.

A Bush campaign official later accused Democrat Bill Clinton's campaign of planting the story. A Clinton aide de-

nied it.

- Later, in an NBC interview in the Oval Office, Bush was asked directly by correspondent Stone Phillips: 'Have you ever had an affair?'

"I'm not going to take any sleazy questions," Bush said in an interview taped for the show 'Dateline NBC.'

"You're perpetuating the sleazy by even asking the question, to say nothing of asking it in the Oval Office. And I don't think you ought to do that and I'm not going to answer the question."

The questions were prompted by an account in the book 'The Power House' by Susan B Trento that alleges a liaison between Bush and longtime aide Jennifer Fitzgerald, now a State Department official. The ac-

New Moroccan Govt formed

RABAT, Aug 12: King Hassan II named members of the new interim Moroccan government Tuesday headed by Mohamed Karim Lamrani, who takes the role of Prime Minister for a third time, reports AFP.

Lamrani, 72, known to colleagues as the "Bulldozer" for his forceful economic policies, served as Prime Minister in 1971-1972 and 1983-1986.

The new government consists wholly of technocrats with no party affiliations, and will act as caretaker until general elections towards the end of the year. The elections will be called after a referendum on a new constitution likely to be held in early September.

King Hassan said he wanted to free those ministers who are members of political parties to allow them to campaign for the poll.

Leading ROK dissident freed

SEOUL, Aug 12: Leading South Korean dissident Kim Keuntae walked free today after serving a two-day prison term for violating the Draconian National Security Law, a dissident spokesman said here, reports AFP.

The winner of the 1987 Robert Kennedy Human Rights Awards was released from Hong Seung prison in South Chung Chong province, some 90 kilometers (50 miles) southwest of Seoul, according to the National Alliance for Democratic Movement, Chonminnyon.

Kim had been imprisoned since May 1990 under anti-communist national security law for leading anti-government protests and criticizing the policies of the ruling Democratic Liberal Party.

A former member of the standing committee of Chonminnyon, Kim was jailed from 1985-1988 for pro-democracy activism against then military strongman Chun Doo-hwan.

New Zealand for revival of ANZUS defence pact

WELLINGTON, Aug 12: New Zealand security needs would be best served by a return to the US-dominated Anzus defence pact, defence Minister Warren Cooper said today, reports Reuter.

Cooper told New Zealand army officers in a speech that the country's defence needs should be met through a working relationship with the United States and Australia.

New Zealand split Anzus (comprising Australia, New Zealand and the United States) when a labour government introduced legislation in 1985 barring ships carrying nuclear weapons or those powered by nuclear reactors from its waters.

The Anzus council has not met since 1984, but the current conservative government

is seeking to re-establish ties with Washington.

Cooper said the presence of nuclear weapons on US ships was no longer an issue since a decision was taken to remove them and the issue of nuclear propulsion was being examined by an independent commission.

Off the Record

Bush loves gays

WASHINGTON, President George Bush said on Tuesday he would offer love and support if one of his grandchildren were homosexual, but said he did not consider it "an appropriate lifestyle", reports Reuter.

Bush was asked about the issue during an interview broadcast on the television programme 'Dateline: NBC' which also touched on the President's views on abortion.

Reporter Stone Phillips raised the question after noting that some considered the Bush campaign's emphasis on "family values" to be an indirect condemnation of other ways of life.

"Let me ask you this, if in a few years (a grandchild) came to you and said 'I'm gay?' Phillips asked.

"I'd put my arm around him and I would hope he didn't go out and try to convince people that this was the normal lifestyle, that this was an appropriate lifestyle, that this was the way it ought to be," Bush responded.

"But, you know, for me, I think the Bible teaches compassion and love.

"I would say, I hope you wouldn't become an advocate for a lifestyle that in my view is not normal and propose marriages of same sex marriages as a normal way of life. I don't favour that."

They starved son to death

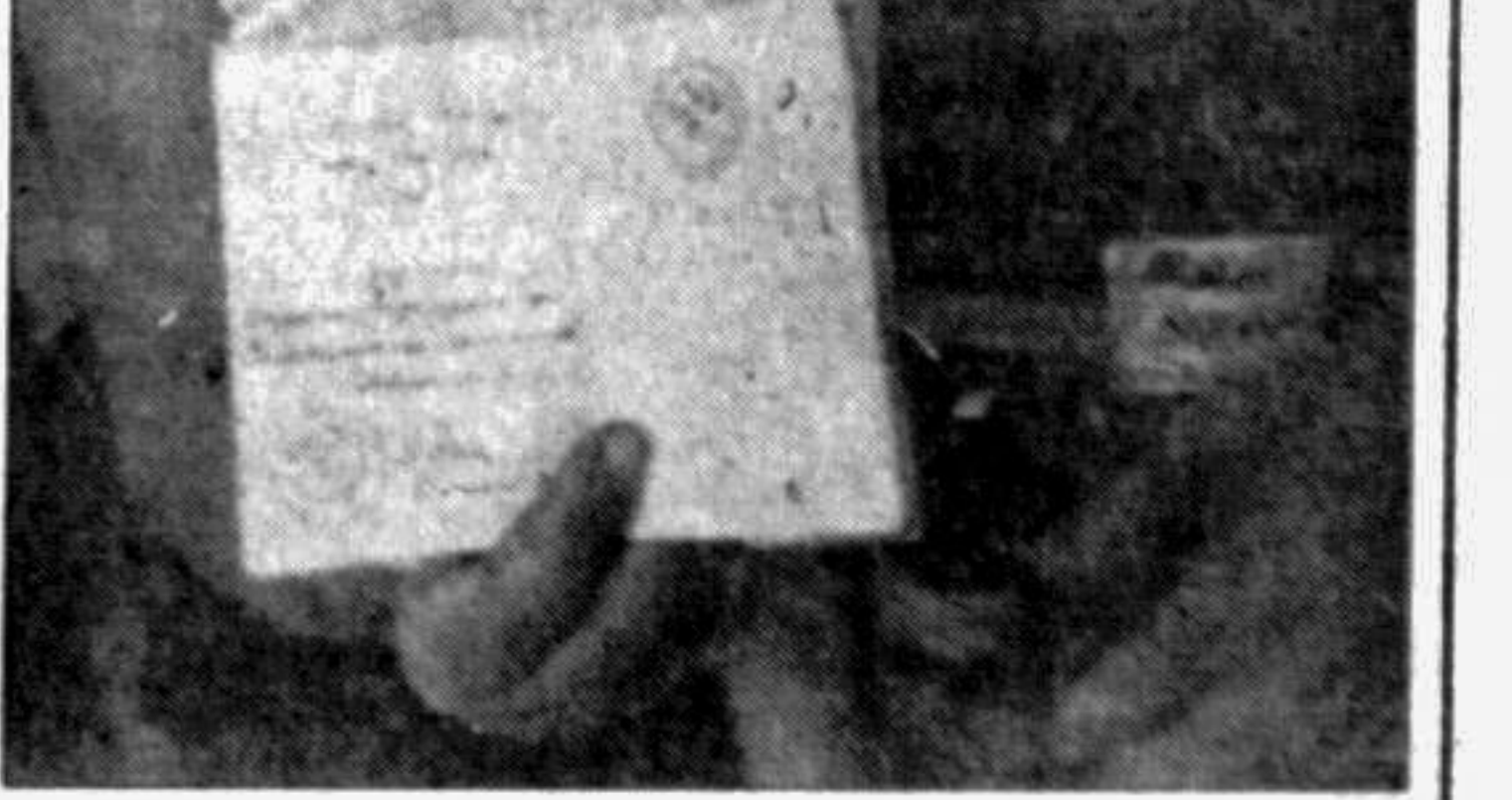
GALVESTON, Texas: A couple was convicted Tuesday of starving their 13-year-old son who was kept chained up in their house until he died last year, reports AFP.

Jurors deliberated for 45 minutes before handing down a guilty verdict to Jay and Linda Hill, whose son Stephen was found in cardiac arrest by paramedics last November, weighing just 55 pounds (25 kilograms).

Authorities accused the couple of starving the boy to death and chaining him up in their suburban Texas home.

The couple's other son, 12-year-old Douglas, had testified he believed his parents intended to harm his brother and said they beat Stephen with a feather-duster handle.

The couple was convicted of causing injury to a child and faces life in prison.



PIATNISCA, CIS-Ukraine: American John Yarema, 74, shows his Russian passport August 9 as his granddaughter looks on here. Yarema was born in New York in 1918 and moved with his parents to Poland. After the start of World War II he was prevented from claiming his official papers from the American embassy in Warsaw and found himself a residents of the Soviet Union. — AFP/UNB photo

70 Sikh militants lay down arms

AMRITSAR, Aug 12: Seventy Sikh militant surrendered their weapons to police Wednesday, accepting a government amnesty that allowed them to return to their villages, police said, reports AP.

In Chandigarh, another militant who had been based in England and Pakistan also gave himself up to the chief minister of Punjab, the state's highest elected official, in a public ceremony.

Reading a 16-page speech, Gurdeep Singh Sivia said he had given up hope that the Sikhs would get political support from the United States and the West, or that Pakistan would go to war to help the Sikhs gain independence.

He said he also had grown disenchanted with the violence in Punjab, where an average of one person is killed every hour.

"Terrorism has no place in the world today," Sivia said to a crowd of 600 army and police officers, state politicians and journalists.

He accused Pakistan, which he said supplied and trained Sikh militants, of manipulating the movement to create tur-

Israeli Jews, Muslims protest 'bloodbath' in Bosnia

JERUSALEM, Aug 12: Israeli Jews and Muslims on Tuesday protested what they called the "bloodbath" in Bosnia-Herzegovina when they gathered in the Arab-Israeli village of Tira, reports AFP.

"It is important that Jews and Muslim Arabs unite to end the bloody fighting," said Hadass Stetf, the demonstration's organizer.

"We call on the world not to repeat its tragic error, after the revelation to the world of the holocaust," she said.

Israeli Arabs, villages mayors and Muslim dignitaries also protested in murder of Muslims in Serbian concentration camps.

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"You're perpetuating the sleazy by even asking the question, to say nothing of asking it in the Oval Office. And I don't think you ought to do that and I'm not going to answer the question."

The questions were prompted by an account in the book 'The Power House' by Susan B Trento that alleges a liaison between Bush and longtime aide Jennifer Fitzgerald, now a State Department official. The ac-

count was prominently featured in Tuesday's the New York Post under the headline "The Bush Affair."

Bush campaign spokeswoman Torie Clarke said, "It came from the Clinton campaign. The New York Post has succumbed to what has been an all-out effort to get someone to print this trash. For several weeks they have been faxing portions of that piece of trash book to news organizations all over the country."

George Stephanopoulos, communications director for the Clinton campaign, disputed Clarke's statement as "simply not true."

Bush was asked about the alleged Swiss episode during a news conference in Maine with Israeli Prime Minister

Yitzhak Rabin.

Cable News Network reporter Mary Tillotson asked about the Post report and noted that Bush has "said that family values, character are likely to be important in the presidential campaign."

Bush shot back: "I'm not going to take any sleazy questions like that from CNN."

"I don't like it and I'm not going to respond other than to say it's lie," he added.

Barbara Bush, who stood by grim-faced as her husband answered the question, later told a reporter: "Fortunately, I did not see the New York Post story."

Combat training for US female marines

WASHINGTON, Aug 12: Women being trained as Marine Corps lieutenants will soon be charging ashore at beachheads and practicing with hand grenades and M-16 rifles alongside men, reports AP.

The women will be given full combat training, beginning with the class that embarks on a rigorous 23-week course at the Quantico Marine Corps Base in Quantico, Va, next Monday.

Breaking with longstanding tradition and in the face of a law that bars women from direct combat roles, corps officials say they are making the change because of the nature of the modern battlefield, as demonstrated in the Gulf War and other conflicts.

Democratic nominee Bill Clinton, who earlier this year denied tabloid allegations that he had a 12-year affair with a former nightclub singer, said he felt "Bush when he heard of the published account.

"I didn't like it. I don't think it has a place in this campaign. I don't approve of it. I didn't like it when it was done to me, and I don't like it when it's done to him," Clinton said.

Mary Malin, Bush's deputy campaign manager, said in an interview with CBS that the allegation was "beyond a flat out lie. It's total trash."

She accused Democrats of peddling this trashy book to many reputable newspapers,

Fields was quoted as saying she reported by her office to be out of the country on official business.

The allegation about Bush is contained in a footnote to Chapter 14 of "The Power House," a book about lobbying in Washington. The footnote alludes to an interview of former disarmament negotiator Louis Fields conducted in 1986 by Trento's husband, Joseph, a former investigative reporter for CNN.

Fields was quoted as saying that, while he was ambassador to disarmament talks in Geneva, he arranged for Bush and Fitzgerald to use a guest house.

"It became clear to me that the vice president and Ms Fitzgerald were romantically involved and this was not a business visit," Fields was