

BRIEFLY

Cameroon polls in Oct: Cameroon President Paul Biya Tuesday announced the holding of early Presidential elections in October, AFP reports from Yaounde.

7 newsmen hurt in Sarajevo: At least seven journalists have been wounded during fierce fighting between Muslims and Serbs in the Bosnian capital of Sarajevo since Monday, the press rights group reporters Sans Frontiers said on Tuesday, Reuters reports from Paris.

Carrington resigns as EC broker: Lord Carrington is stepping down as the European Community's negotiation for peace in the former Yugoslavia, the British Foreign Office said Tuesday, reports from London.

Bush wants unity to ban N-weapons: President George Bush said on Tuesday he hopes all the countries of the world will approve a treaty by the end of the year banning production possession and use of chemical weapons, Reuters reports from Chicago.

India discloses Pak officer's death: India's defence minister has disclosed that a Pakistani brigadier was killed this month when Indian forces shot down a helicopter intruding into Indian air space, AP reports from Bombay.

Czech leaders resume talks: The leaders of Czechoslovakia's two largest political parties, Vaclav Laus and Vladimir Meciar, resume talks today on the future shape of the 74-year-old republic, Reuters reports from Prague.

UN urged to protect relief work in Somalia UNITED NATIONS, Aug 26: UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali urged the United Nations to send 3,500 armed troops to Somalia to protect relief workers distributing aid to starving Somalis and to establish a ceasefire.

Five UN officers hurt in Sarajevo ZAGREB, Aug 26: Five UN officers were hurt Tuesday in Sarajevo as they were relieving colleagues at an observation post on a Serb artillery position, the UN protection force spokesman said, reports AFP.

Four killed in gun battle in Jerusalem JERUSALEM, Aug 26: Two Palestinian gunmen, an Israeli officer and an Arab housewife died Wednesday in a seven-hour gun battle between a paramilitary police undercover squad and wanted Palestinians, the army announced, reports AP.

Bush defends Gulf decision, Clinton faces veterans over Vietnam; CHICAGO, Aug 26: Bill Clinton appealed to veterans Tuesday to oppose his presidential candidacy just because he avoided serving in Vietnam. President Bush pointedly reminded them that when his time came to serve in World War II, "I was scared but I was willing," reports AP.

S African govt, ANC resume talks CAPE TOWN, Aug 26: Chief negotiators for the South African government and the African National Congress (ANC) met in secret on Tuesday in a bid to revive deadlocked all-race democracy negotiations, reports Reuters.

Pakistan warned against violating Indian air space

NEW DELHI, Aug 26: India warned Pakistan on Tuesday against any intrusion into Indian air space and said violations would be severely dealt with, the United News of India (UNI) reported, reports Reuter. Defence Minister Sharad Pawar was quoted by the news agency as saying that troops opened fire on a Pakistani brigadier who flew an army helicopter into Indian territory two weeks ago.

Relations deteriorated sharply when revolt erupted in Indian-ruled Kashmir in early 1990. Pawar said Indian soldiers downed the helicopter which fell on the Pakistani side of the frontier. Skirmishes between troops deployed along the line of actual control had increased just before the scheduled talks between the two officials. Pawar said that Pakistan's casualties were heavy. India accuses Pakistan of training and arming Kashmiri militants.



LONDON: Britain's Prime Minister John Major(R) greets UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali Tuesday as he arrived at Lancaster house. At rear is the UN envoy to Yugoslavia, Cyrus Vance. — AFP/UNB photo

ME peace talks yield no concrete results

WASHINGTON, Aug 26: Palestinians and Israelis negotiated over the future of the occupied West Bank on Tuesday in the most cooperative atmosphere yet witnessed in the Middle East peace talks, reports AP. Though the session produced no concrete results, "Our hearts are open, our minds are open," Elyakim Rubinstein, the chief Israeli negotiator, said after a 2 1/2-hour session at the State Department.

she said of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's decision to halt construction of some 6,000 planned housing units in the occupied territories while allowing more than 10,000 already being built to be completed. "We are going to bring you back to reality and tell you that settlements cannot disappear for the agenda unless they disappear from the ground," Ashrawi said at a news conference.

He told reporters Israel had proposed the election of an administrative authority by the Palestinians and "it is up to our counterparts to say if they want to pursue this road or another way. The chief Palestinian negotiator, Haidar Abdul Shafi, said his side would consider the latest Israeli position papers. "We come with a renewed commitment to the peace process," he said.

She also urged Israel to respond to Palestinian proposals for elections in the territories. Rabin's reported plan for Palestinian self-rule involves electing an administrative authority through which the Palestinians would run their day-to-day affairs. The Palestinians are demanding greater controls and election of a legislative body to run their affairs.



CHICAGO: President George Bush tries on a hat given to him Tuesday during his appearance at the 74th American Legion Convention. Democratic hopeful Gov Bill Clinton also spoke to the group. — AFP/UNB photo

Terrorist kills one Algerian policeman

ALGIERS, Aug 26: An Algerian policeman was shot dead Tuesday, the latest victim of a wave of terrorist attacks attributed to Islamic fundamentalists in which more than 130 police and soldiers have died this year, reports AFP.

The policeman was walking to work at Berrouaghia 100 kilometers (60 miles) south of Algiers when he was waylaid by two masked men who shot him before making their escape, Algerian Radio reported. A local government official was murdered in an Algiers suburb on Sunday and another escaped a similar attack on Friday near Constantine.

In another incident, four members of the banned Islamic Salvation Front robbed an Algiers bank of 10 million dinars (about 500,000 dollars) on Sunday night, PS news agency said in a report Tuesday.

Meanwhile, in the first development of its kind in Algeria, the authorities at El-Eulma in the Setif region demolished on Monday evening a mosque reputed to be a stronghold of the fundamentalist opposition. The radio said preachers in the El-Sunna mosque had delivered virulently anti-government sermons which were a threat to national security.

Lebanese FM threatens to resign

BEIRUT, Aug 26: Lebanese Foreign Minister Fares Bweiz threatened to resign from the pro-Syrian government Tuesday unless the next stage of the general election is postponed for three weeks, reports AFP.

He also told a press conference that he would withdraw as a candidate for Kesruan, in the Maronite Christian heartland of mount Lebanon, and not take part in the election, scheduled for five days time. Many Christian groups have already called for an election boycott.

Bweiz, a son-in-law of President Elias Hrawi, said that at Tuesday's cabinet meeting he called for the announcement of the results of the first stage held Sunday, joining a call by Parliamentary Speaker Hussein Hussein who has submitted his resignation in protest at alleged vote-rigging in the Bekaa Valley. Most voters are expected to boycott the second stage of the election in the mainly-Christian areas of Beirut and mount Lebanon because of the continued presence of Syrian troops in the area.

'Jerusalem issue key to peace settlement'

TUNIS, Aug 26: Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat said on Tuesday the issue of Jerusalem was central to a peace settlement in the Middle East, reports Reuter.

"This round of talks (in Washington) is the most important... involving Arabs and Israelis, the chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) was quoted as saying by the Tunisian news agency TP. Arafat, who held talks with Tunisian president Zine Al-Abidine Ben Ali at Carthage palace, near Tunis said.

"As for us Palestinians, Arabs, Muslims and Christians, this issue (of Jerusalem) is the starting point for any negotiating process."

Israeli and Palestinian negotiators met on Tuesday in Washington for their first session of talks since Yitzhak Rabin's Labour Party took power in Israel promising to speed up the Middle East peace process.

Arab East Jerusalem has been occupied by Israel since the 1978 Middle East war.

Off the Record

It bit me so I swallowed it KUALA LUMPUR: A Malaysian man, angered by a snake that bit him, swallowed the reptile and is now in hospital with a severe stomachache, the Star newspaper reported today, days Reuter. Doctors in the southwest town of Seremban said x-rays have confirmed that the 30-cm (12-inch) snake inside M Krishnan, 45, is dead but the snake swallower is not so sure. "I can still feel something moving in my stomach and I am afraid the snake may be alive," he said. "I caught it but it bit me so I got so angry that I swallowed it. I had a stomachached and neighbours sent me to the hospital."

Fonda in love with body

LOS ANGELES: Jane Fonda said Tuesday she has quit her acting career to devote more time to her fitness business and savor life with husband Ted Turner, reports AP. "Yes, I'm in love. I'm in a life that is fun," Miss Fonda said in a telephone interview from Boulder Colo. "I won't be in movies anymore. I walked away with nary a glance back. I did it for 30 years.

"It never occurred to me that I could walk away from a career and not miss it." Her last film was "Old Gringo" in 1988. Miss Fonda, 54, said Hollywood has changed, and she doesn't miss it. Branded the quintessential 1960s sex kitten after her movie "Barbarella," she now finds fault with sex and violence in movies.

"Barbarella" now seems modest," she said. Politically, Miss Fonda says she's still active, although not as publicly as before she married Turner, who is chairman of Turner Broadcasting System, Inc. parent of Cable News Network. "I'm still there. I'm just not out," she said. "I host receptions, that sort of thing. But I'm not part of a grassroots organization like I was in California."

She said she's still a Democrat — "I think it would be good for the country to have a Democratic president". Miss Fonda was promoting her 16th fitness video "Jane Fonda's Step Aerobic and Abdominal Workout". It marks her 10th anniversary in the exercise video business. She opened an exercise studio in 1979.



PROTEST OVER COLOMBUS: This undated file photo shows a bamboo raft sponsored by the association of threatened peoples and manned by Rudiger Nehberg (top L) and Christina Haverkamp (bottom L) as they prepare to leave on their journey of protest over Columbus' discovery of America and the subsequent treatment of the indigenous people. The pair and the raft had set off from Jamaica en route to the Florida Keys and has been reported missing in the path of Hurricane Andrew. — AFP/UNB photo

Shells land every five seconds in Sarajevo

SARAJEVO, Aug 26: Serb attackers unleashed the worst artillery bombardment in weeks late Tuesday and early Wednesday, rocking the city with shell blasts every few seconds, reports AP. Hundreds of rockets, mortar shells and anti-aircraft heavy machine guns blasted the city from the encircling Serbian positions.

Shells landed every five or six seconds, sometimes faster, as the city's defenders battled Serb fighters to the north, south and west of the city. Independent radio news said Serb forces were attacking Bosnian positions at a bridge just south of the Holiday Inn. Sarajevo radio warned people to stay in cellars or shelters, and the lack of people on the street appeared to be keeping casualties low.

Kosevevo Hospital, the city's largest, reported 11 wounded during two of the most intense hours of the bombardment. Dr Nevan Knezevic explained the light number of casualties by saying only "fools and reporters" were out in the streets.

Bosnia's Muslim-led government claimed some successes Tuesday in their drive to break the Serb siege of Sarajevo, but a UN officer said it appeared the offensive was sputtering. Bosnia's Muslim, Serb and Croat factions have been trying to strengthen their positions before the Wednesday start of the peace conference in London, which is being sponsored by the European Community and the United Nations. The EC's chief negotiator for the crisis, Lord Carrington, quit Tuesday, saying he did not have the time that would be needed to mediate a peaceful settlement in the former Yugoslav federation. All the truces reached during Carrington's year of peace efforts collapsed. NATO leaders, meanwhile, delayed a decision on sending 6,000 soldiers to guard relief shipments into Bosnia-Herzegovina. The Western allies were wary about becoming embroiled in the conflict, and a NATO source said the alliance wanted to see what happened at the peace talks. However, the surge in fighting dampened already modest hopes for the conference. Similar efforts have failed to end the carnage, which began when Bosnia's majority Muslims and Croats voted for independence on Feb 29.

Four killed in gun battle in Jerusalem

JERUSALEM, Aug 26: Two Palestinian gunmen, an Israeli officer and an Arab housewife died Wednesday in a seven-hour gun battle between a paramilitary police undercover squad and wanted Palestinians, the army announced, reports AP.

Two Arab toddlers, ages 1 and 3, and another woman were seriously wounded in the shootout, the army said. It said the Israeli officer lay seriously wounded for several hours while his troops tried to rescue him and storm the gunmen's hideout. The incident could upset the improved atmosphere at Middle East peace talks.

Bush defends Gulf decision, Clinton faces veterans over Vietnam;

CHICAGO, Aug 26: Bill Clinton appealed to veterans Tuesday to oppose his presidential candidacy just because he avoided serving in Vietnam. President Bush pointedly reminded them that when his time came to serve in World War II, "I was scared but I was willing," reports AP. The presidential rivals appeared two hours apart before an American Legion convention, first Bush extolling his experience as a wartime fighter pilot and commander-in-chief, then Clinton trying to bury the controversy over his Vietnam-era draft status. "You know I never served in the military; you know I opposed the war in Vietnam," the Arkansas governor said. "But I want you to know this: I was

never against the heroic men who served in the war." "If you choose to vote against me because of what happened 23 years ago, that's your right and I respect that," Clinton said. "But it is my hope you will cast your vote while looking toward the future with hope rather than remaining fixed to the problems of the past." The veterans applauded. In raising the matter before a veterans group, Clinton hoped to blunt it as a campaign issue. He compared his action to John Kennedy going before the Greater Houston Ministerial Association in 1960 to face head-on the issue of people voting against a candidate because of his Catholic religion.

"If I should lose this election on the real issues, I shall be satisfied that I tried my best and was fairly judged," Clinton said. Bush, too, used his appearance to defend himself — in the president's case against accusations that he stopped the Gulf War too soon rather than sending troops into Baghdad to crush Saddam Hussein's government. "We are not in the slaughter business," Bush said, raising his voice. "We were in the business of stopping aggression and I don't like these historical revisions. We did the right thing." Bush, who also was applauded by the Legionaries, said his top military advisers as well as Gen Norman

Schwarzkopf on the scene, had told him the battle had been won and it was time to stop. In other campaign developments Tuesday: —Bush flew to Detroit where he told a rally in suburban Canton that a Clinton proposal to increase car mileage standards would "throw American auto workers out of their jobs." Dozens of auto workers protested Bush's visit, waving pink slips to suggest his policies were responsible for layoffs in the industry. Clinton's running mate, Tennessee Sen Al Gore, said of the president's charge: "It is ironic because under the Reagan-Bush-Quayle approach there have been 250,000 auto jobs lost and 600,000 jobs in related industries," Gore said

in a telephone interview. —Vice President Dan Quayle whistled across North Carolina by train, deriding Clinton as "Tax Hike Bill" and contending he had raised taxes repeatedly in Arkansas and would do the same in Washington. —Gore toured a supercomputer center in Columbus, Ohio. He ridiculed Bush's new job-training proposal, saying it was "designed to save only two jobs" — those of Bush and Quayle. In Chicago, both Bush and Clinton lavished praise on the veterans and were well-received in return; Clinton was far more detailed in his promises to support veterans' programmes and causes, and he received the most applause.

S African govt, ANC resume talks

CAPE TOWN, Aug 26: Chief negotiators for the South African government and the African National Congress (ANC) met in secret on Tuesday in a bid to revive deadlocked all-race democracy negotiations, reports Reuters. An ANC spokesman said constitutional development minister Roelf Meyer met ANC Secretary-General Cyril Ramaphosa, adding no details of their talks would be released until the men had reported back to their groups. "I can confirm that they have met, but no details of the meeting will be released until they have reported to their principals."