

# BRIEFLY

**Yeltsin visits China Dec 17:** Russian President Boris Yeltsin is to make an official visit to China from December 17 to 19, Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev announced Tuesday. AFP reports from Moscow.

Kozyrev also said the Russian President would receive a visit from German Chancellor Helmut Kohl on December 15 in Moscow.

He said a visit by Yeltsin to Japan was still planned for next year, although no date has yet been set.

The two countries "first have to solve several difficult questions, but we feel that territorial issues should not become the most important of these," Kozyrev said.

**ANC for halting N-shipment:** The African National Congress called Tuesday for a ban on shipping radioactive materials because of the chance of an accident or terrorist attack, AP reports from Johannesburg.

It joined a growing list of South African groups opposed to a Japanese ship carrying more than a ton of toxic plutonium that is expected to round the tip of southern Africa this weekend.

The 3,800-ton Akatsuki Maru, traveling from France to Japan, was reportedly off the west coast of Africa on Tuesday and headed south-southeast. Its route has been kept secret, but environmental groups are tracking the ship's progress.

The plutonium is to fuel nuclear power plants in Japan.

"All global transportation of radioactive materials and nuclear wastes must cease in view of the catastrophe that could result from an accident or the material falling into the wrong hands," said the ANC, the nation's leading black group.

**Danish Cargo ship sinks:** Three sailors from a Danish cargo ship were known to have drowned and five were missing in La Coruna Tuesday after the vessel went down in heavy seas off the northwestern coast of Spain, rescue officials said, AFP reports from La Coruna.

A helicopter from a nearby Dutch warship winched four survivors, all of them Filipinos, off the vessel, which was believed to have gone down after its cargo shifted in bad weather early on Tuesday.

One of the survivors was injured, the officials said. The bodies of three dead sailors, two Danish nationals and one Filipino, were also picked up by the Dutch warship.

**CIS-TV chief sacked:** President Boris Yeltsin sacked the head of Commonwealth television on Tuesday, attacking his coverage of ethnic conflicts and accusing him of violating reporting restrictions, in troubled north Ossetia, AFP reports from Moscow.

Yegor Yakovlev, dismissed under a decree by Yeltsin published by ITAR-Tass news agency, reported with a charge that Moscow had imposed one-sided coverage of Russia's first serious ethnic rebellion of the post-Soviet era.

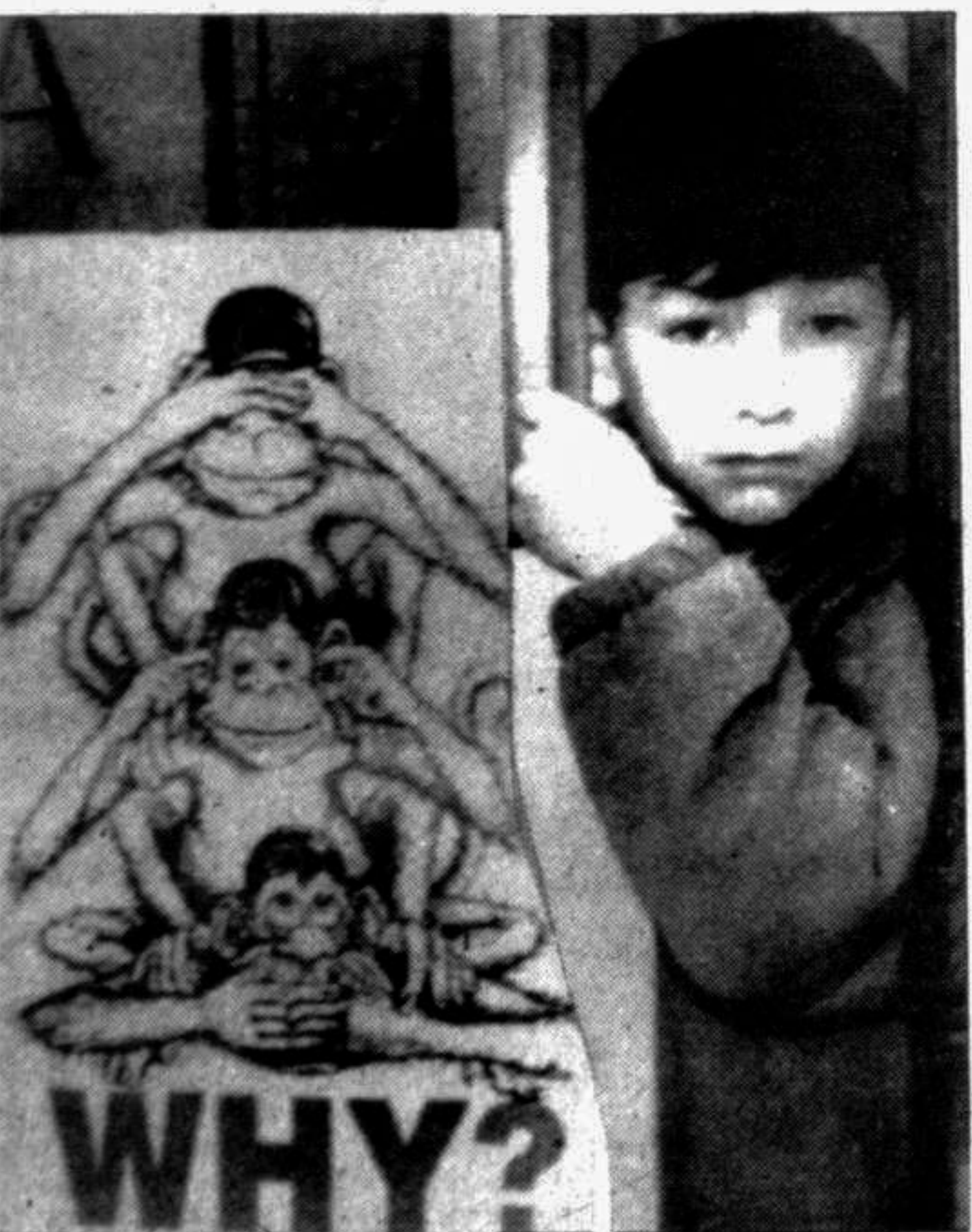
Yeltsin's spokesman Vyacheslav Kostikov told Interfax News Agency Yakovlev had come under fire at a meeting of regional leaders by the head of north Ossetia, scene of the first ethnic rebellion of the post-Soviet era in Russia.

North Ossetia and the neighbouring region of Ingushetia are now ruled from Moscow under a state of emergency which also imposes tight reporting restrictions. Journalists must obtain clearance from Moscow's provisional governor for any reports from the region.

**3 killed in China ship capsizes:** A Chinese military vessel capsized after being rammed by an unknown cargo ship early Wednesday off Hong Kong waters, rescue officials said. Three bodies were found and three others were missing, AP reports from Hong Kong.

Fifteen members of the 21-person Chinese crew were plucked out of the sea by the US Navy ship William H Stanley approximately 17.3 miles (27.6 kilometers) east-southeast of Hong Kong, said Capt Ravi Dewan of the Hong Kong Marine Dept.

One man had a broken arm and another was experiencing hypothermia, Dewan said. All 15 were still being treated by a US Navy doctor.



**SARAJEVO:** A boy stands near a poster November 24 issued by the Bosnian army denouncing the passivity of the United Nations in the Yugoslav conflict. Meanwhile, Bosnia's top Serbian separatist commander warned November 24 that international military intervention in Bosnia-Herzegovina could touch off a "large-scale conflict" that should spill outside the former Yugoslavia. — AFP/UNB photo

## Move for peace in South Africa

**JOHANNESBURG, Nov 25:** South African political and labour leaders met on Tuesday to explore ways of setting up a multi-party peace summit to try to halt endemic violence in the country's black townships, reports Reuters.

Representatives of all 19 signatories to a national peace accord drafted in September last year turned up on Tuesday evening for the Johannesburg meeting sponsored by the National Peace Committee.

Constitutional Development Minister Roelf Meyer represented the ruling National Party, the African National Congress sent its International Affairs Director, Thabo Mbeki, and the rival Inkatha Freedom Party sent National Chairman Frank Mdlalose.

"The committee will have to decide on the basis of its report whether to try to set up a summit," she said.

# UNGA tells US to repeal its trade embargo on Cuba

**UNITED NATIONS, Nov 25:** In a major setback for the United States, the General Assembly on Tuesday repudiated the tightened US trade embargo on Cuba and urged the United States to repeal it, reports AP.

The stinging defeat for the United States came the first time the assembly has ever voted on the issue. It was seen as a big victory for the Communist government of Cuban President Fidel Castro, which sponsored the resolution.

Most nations viewed the US measures as infringing on their sovereignty and violating their rights to free trade and navigation.

Cuba withdrew a similar resolution last year in the face of ferocious US lobbying, largely absent this year.

The vote in the 179-nation assembly, the world's parliament, was 59-3, with 71 abstentions. Other nations were not present or did not cast votes.

Many of America's closest allies and friends abstained, like Britain, Germany, Japan, Australia. Some, like France and Canada, supported repeal. Most Latin nations vigorously opposed the strengthened embargo. Also abstain-

ing was Russia. The now defunct Soviet Union was Cuba's main ally.

Only the United States, Israel and Romania voted against the resolution, titled: "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba."

US Ambassador Alexander Watson termed the resolution "a propaganda exercise." He said the US government understands the concern of other states, but "believes that these concerns are best addressed in normal, bilateral channels, and certainly not in a General Assembly resolution."

Unlike Security Council measures, General Assembly resolutions are not legally binding, but they carry considerable moral weight as the expression of the international community's will.

The 31-year-old US embargo affects indirect as well as direct trade. It was strengthened last month.

President Bush signed the "Cuban Democracy Act of 1992" into law with the stated aim of hastening a transition to democracy in Cuba, but it seeks to apply US law to other countries.

Subsidiaries of US companies based abroad

now may be prosecuted if they trade with Cuba. Previously they were exempt. Ships carrying cargo to or from Cuba are barred from US ports for six months.

The resolution "calls upon all states to refrain from promulgating and applying laws and measures" which limit their freedom of trade and navigation.

It "urges states which have such law or measures to take the necessary steps to repeal or invalidate them as soon as possible in accordance with their legal regime."

It expresses concern over the US measures "strengthening and extending the economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba."

Cuban Ambassador Alejo Gadea Huidobro said the embargo has cost his Caribbean island nation more than 38 billion dollars and cited hardships, including lack of imported medicine and medical equipment.

In a speech largely devoid of rhetoric, he looked forward to the incoming Clinton administration and said: "The major responsibility for the situation today lies with the government that is ending in Washington, but another is taking over."

British Ambassador Thomas Richardson, speaking on behalf of the European Community, denounced the US embargo as "a violation of the general principle of international law and the sovereignty of independent nations."

Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico and Venezuela were among nations supporting the Cuban resolution. Argentina abstained.

Mexican Ambassador Jorge Montano said indignantly in Spanish, "It is for the government of Mexico, and for it alone, in full exercise of its sovereignty, to decide with whom it will engage in trade relations, and the modalities of such relations."

In an effort to win more votes, Cuba watered down the draft by eliminating two specific references to the United States in the text.

The Cuban American National Foundation, a major Cuban exile group based in Miami, called the resolution "a desperate attempt by Castro to divert world attention from the human rights abuses and tyranny to which he has subjected the Cuban people over the last 33 years of his ruthless dictatorship."

## Seven killed in Vietnamese copter crash

**HANOI, Nov 25:** A Vietnamese military helicopter crashed during a rescue mission to the site of a passenger plane wreck, killing all seven people on board, a Ho Chi Minh City newspaper said here today, reports AFP.

The new tragedy occurred on Sunday in the mountains above the beach resort of Nha Trang, the Saigon Oai Phong (liberated Saigon) daily reported in its Tuesday edition.

All seven people aboard the Soviet-built Mi-8 helicopter, including two military doctors and two Vietnam airlines personnel, were killed.

A Vietnam airlines spokesman here would neither confirm nor deny the report.

Both military and civilian helicopters participated in the search and rescue effort.

# Delhi deploys troops to protect Babri Mosque

**NEW DELHI, Nov 25:** Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao's government began deploying troops to a site in India's north where Hindu militants plan to resume building a temple near an ancient mosque. New Delhi wants to protect, reports AFP.

Paramilitary Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) men began rushing late Tuesday to Ayodhya, 700 kilometres (420 miles) southeast from here, where Hindus plan to resume building their temple next month, officials said here today.

They said so far 300 busloads of CRPF troopers have been sent, adding that another 700 vehicles were waiting to ferry more men to the opposition administered state of Uttar Pradesh, where the mosque town of Ayodhya is located.

Some 1,000 troopers are

already in Ayodhya, where millions of Hindus plan to resume building the grand temple to their Lord Rama from December 6 at a site adjacent to the 16th-century disputed mosque. New Delhi is adamant to preserve.

Hindus claim Moghul Emperor Babar built the Ayodhya mosque after razing a Rama temple already there. Muslims, India's largest religious minority deny the claim, but do not dispute the site where Hindus plan to build their temple.

"We have said that the BJP does not plan to dismantle the mosque, so why send in forces," said party MP, B L Sharma today, backing his leader, Lal Krishna Advani's argument that New Delhi was trying to sow confusion.

Newspapers today saw the troops deployment as a confrontation looming between New Delhi and Uttar Pradesh's

ruling hardline Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP Indian People's Party) government which backs the Hindu campaign.

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Kalyan Singh Tuesday accused the federal government of creating a "civil war-like situation" by deploying troops to his state saying his government would back the Hindu drive, newspapers said.

"We are committed to constructing the temple as the people gave us a clear mandate... we are going to honour it," the dailies quoted Singh as saying amid reports of widening rift between RAO and the hardline BJP.

The Supreme Court has set today as a deadline for an assurance from the Uttar Pradesh government that it would prevent its non-political ally, the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) from spearheading the temple building

drive.

The Ultra-militant VHP, or World Hindu Forum, installed the Rama temple's foundation on the 2.77-acre (1.108-hectare) site adjacent to the mosque this summer, but suspended the drive in July following Rao's intervention.

Paramilitary troopers began leaving for Ayodhya a day after an assembly of political and non-political groups -- the National Integration Council -- authorised Rao Monday to prevent the powderkeg drive and avert communal flareups.

Some 30 people died when police opened fire twice in October and in November of 1990 when thousands of Hindus stormed the mosque to try and dismantle it.

Hindu-Muslim clashes over the communally sensitive issue has left hundreds of others killed in the past two years after the BJP-VHP combine accelerated the temple drive.



**MOSCOW:** Russian President Boris Yeltsin (L) welcomes Chinese Foreign Minister Qian Qichen in the Kremlin November 24. Questions related to an official visit of the Russian president to China, planned for the second half of December, will be discussed. — AFP/UNB photo

# UN Council to maintain sanctions on Iraq

**UNITED NATIONS, Nov 25:** The UN Security Council decided Tuesday to maintain its embargo on Iraq, rejecting an appeal by Baghdad that the Gulf war-era sanctions be lifted or eased, reports AFP.

The decision was formally announced by Hungarian Ambassador Andre Erdos, who holds the rotating presidency on Iraq attended by Iraq's Deputy Prime Minister Tareq Aziz, the Security Council's 15 members declared that Baghdad had not fulfilled the conditions for even a partial lifting of the embargo.

"In the view of the Security Council, while there have been

some positive steps, the government of Iraq not yet complied fully and unconditionally with its obligations, must do so and must immediately take the appropriate actions in this regard," Erdos said in a statement on behalf of the council.

The decision came on the second day of a special council session reviewing the 28-month-old international trade embargo, in which Aziz insisted that Iraq had complied with all UN resolutions and called accusations of non-compliance "an arbitrary approach to continue imposing the embargo."

The Security Council said it

"regret the lack of any indication" in Aziz's statements of how the Iraqi government intends to comply with the resolutions.

The council also rejected "the baseless threats, allegations and attacks launched" by Aziz against the Council and other UN agencies.

Earlier Tuesday, Aziz responded point by point to questions posed by Council members, who had enumerated a list of Iraqi failures to comply with UN resolutions, at a special Council session called at Baghdad's request.

## Gaddafi protests police attack on Benazir's march

**CAIRO, Nov 25:** Libyan ruler Moammar Gaddafi has protested to Pakistan's leaders what he termed savage police treatment of Pakistani anti-government demonstrators last week, reports AP.

Libya's official news agency JANA reported Tuesday that Gaddafi sent a protest cable to President Ghulam Ishaq Khan and Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif in his capacity as "leader of the World Islamic Popular Leadership." The agency report was monitored in Cairo.

"I was extremely concerned about the treatment meted out to the ordinary Pakistani citizens by police on the 20th as shown on television," the cable said.

"I am convinced that you agree with me that such savage practices have a negative effect on us Muslims in the eyes of the world."

**SC refuses to free 7 FIS leaders**

**ALGIERS, Nov 25:** The Algerian Supreme Court on Tuesday refused to temporarily free seven top leaders of a fundamentalist movement whose election bid was crushed in January, a judiciary source said, reports AP.

The leaders of the banned Islamic Salvation Front were convicted in July and sentenced to jail terms ranging from 4 to 12 years.

The convictions sparked a new round of violence in the North African nation, where fundamentalist attacks have killed more than 100 members of the security forces this year.

Lawyers for the leaders, who include Abassi Madani and Ali Belhadj, the Front's president and vice president, introduced a motion October 27 to temporarily free them, said the judiciary source, speaking on condition of anonymity.

There was no elaboration on the proposed terms of their freedom. The release request was denied Tuesday, the source said.

The seven were convicted of sedition July 15 by a military tribunal in Blida, 30 miles south of Algiers.

Fundamentalists were thwarted from establishing an Islamic republic in January, when the military toppled president Chadli Bendjedid and cancelled parliamentary elections the Salvation Front appeared headed to win.

A state of emergency was declared a month later, sparking a terror campaign by the fundamentalists aimed mainly at security forces.

# Off the Record

**Five days alone**

**WASHINGTON:** President Bush and his wife, Barbara, are spending a long Thanksgiving weekend at their seaside retreat at Kennebunkport, Maine, reports AP.

They were leaving the White House on Wednesday afternoon and were scheduled to return to Washington on Sunday.

The President spent five days on vacation in Florida last week.

Aides said the President and Mrs Bush planned to spend their five days in Kennebunkport alone. Their usual holiday gathering with family members is at Christmas.

The Bush Thanksgiving menu included roast turkey, bread stuffing, sweet potatoes, green beans with almonds, cranberry sauce, mixed green salad and pecan pie.



## Female officers to help ease stress among male convicts

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Women officers would be posted to men's prisons throughout Malaysia next year to help ease emotional stress among male convicts, news reports said today, reports AP.

However, female officers would be restricted to duties that exclude contact with hard-core criminals, Prisons Department Director-General Mohamad Yassin Jaafar was quoted as saying.

Yassin said a survey by his department showed that women have helped create harmony in men's prisons, adding that the move would also give an avenue for promotion of women wardens now restricted to supervising female penitentiaries.

"In Japan and England it has been found that there were fewer incidents of violence and tension in prisons with women wardens," Yassin said.

He said the department was now selecting suitable candidates and that the response from women was "highly encouraging."

"All precautionary measures would be taken to avoid any untoward incident," Yassin said.

## Madonna's marathon

**LONDON:** US pop star Madonna's latest film, *Body of Evidence*, has been given an X-rating by British film censors because of its explicit sex scenes, reports AP.

The film, which is part courtroom drama, part sex romp, shows Madonna playing a woman accused of killing her rich, elderly lover during a lovemaking marathon. In one scene the 34-year-old star strips hot candle wax over her lover's naked chest.

*Body of Evidence* will be released in the United States after Christmas but will not be screened in Britain until March 1993.

The release of the film will follow her recent controversial coffee table book *Sex*, which featured her in a series of sadomasochistic shots.



## They dance, eyes shut and hands move like snakes

**NEW YORK:** Shortly after midnight, in a warehouse on the west side of Manhattan, teenagers wearing backpacks and stocking caps slowly filled a dark dance floor, reports AP.

Swaying to a hypnotic, throbbing beat, they danced either in clusters or by themselves, eyes shut, hands moving like snakes in the air. It was early yet -- most would stay until 8 or 9 am.

They may look as if they're dancing, but that word is rarely used at the impromptu parties that pop up every night in large cities across the country. They are "raving."

Set against a background of rap-influenced techno or house music, raving is a growing social movement that first surfaced in England about five years ago.



**SUN CITY:** Asian Miss World contestants pose before a gala ball at Sun City November 22. From (L to R) Thailand Metinee Kingpayome (20), Malaysia Fazira Wan Chek (18), Sri Lanka Ishara Alakolange (18) and India Celine Lopez. The pageant takes place on December 12. — AFP/UNB photo

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All seven people aboard the Soviet-built Mi-8 helicopter, including two military doctors and two Vietnam airlines personnel, were killed.

A Vietnam airlines spokesman here would neither confirm nor deny the report.

Both military and civilian helicopters participated in the search and rescue effort.