

BRIEFLY

4 Muslim rebels shot dead in Java: Indonesian police shot dead four members of an extremist Muslim sect who killed a police chief in West Java earlier this week, the official Antara news agency reported yesterday.

Landslide kills 3 in Manila: Monsoon rains triggered explosions of superheated debris from the Mount Pinatubo volcano, spraying volcanic ash on the former U.S-run Clark Air Base and nearby towns, scientists said Friday.

Myanmar troops kill Thai national: Myanmar soldiers killed one Thai villager and wounded four others on Thursday when they started shooting without warning across a small river marking the frontier.

Beijing may ban fireworks: The streets of Beijing may be silent next Chinese New Year for possibly the first time in centuries if the city government approves a proposal to ban fireworks.

Ghali calls for immediate ceasefire in Lebanon

WASHINGTON, July 30: The United Nations lead a world-wide condemnation Thursday of Israel's assault on southern Lebanon and urged an immediate halt to fighting in the region.

League's Secretary General, said in Cairo that "the international community must assume its responsibility toward the Israeli aggression... as such actions threaten the peace process."



TYRE: Khadijah Chalhouh and her one-year-old daughter Sarah, are being treated at Jabal Aamel Hospital. They were wounded during Israeli shelling of Koulaila, a village in South Lebanon on Thursday.

Tories suffer defeat in by-election

LONDON, July 30: Prime Minister John Major's Conservative government, its political fortunes tumbling, on Friday lost a south England's parliamentary stronghold to centrists in a record-breaking special election defeat, reports AP.

Senior Conservative blamed the historic defeat on voters' anger over Britain's slow economic recovery — unemployment remains stubbornly above 10 per cent — and on party infighting over the treaty on European union.

Defence agency report US military presence in Japan vital to East Asian security

TOKYO, July 30: The Defense Agency said Friday a continued US military presence in Japan remains vital to East Asian security, potentially threatened by North Korea's missile and suspected nuclear programme, reports AP.

North Korea, which claims its nuclear programme is peaceful, banned international inspectors from two suspected nuclear waste sites earlier this year and said it was dropping out of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Japan's defense officials earlier reported that the missile was tested in the Sea of Japan "with considerable accuracy" in late May.

Khmer Rouge fires mortars at Dutch unit

PHNOM PENH, July 30: Khmer Rouge guerrillas fired mortars on Friday at a Dutch unit of the United Nations peacekeeping force in northwest Cambodia, a UN spokeswoman said today, reports Reuter.



ZAGREB: Ekrema Brkic cries as she holds her six-year-old son for the first time in 16 months after he was transferred from the Serbian besieged town of Velika Kladusa to Zagreb for family reunion Thursday.

WASHINGTON, July 30: An end to military operation in Somalia could bring a return of lawlessness and famine, administration officials said Thursday in defending the UN peacekeeping force in the African nation, reports AP.

WASHINGTON, July 30: An end to military operation in Somalia could bring a return of lawlessness and violence and a return of famine.

China executes 10 highway bandits

BEIJING, July 30: A group of 10 highway bandits was executed in Chongqing, in China's southwestern Sichuan province, for robbing passengers on long-distance buses outside the city, the China news service reported today, says AFP.

Uruguay to accept Bosnian refugees

MONTEVIDEO, July 30: President Alberto Lacalle said Thursday that Uruguay would be willing to accept children who have become war refugees from the Bosnia-Herzegovina conflict if other countries do the same, reports AP.

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Off the Record

Diana spends marriage day without Charles

LONDON: Princess Diana spent her 12th wedding anniversary Thursday away from her husband and her country, introducing her 8-year-old son to the royal duties which she may relinquish, reports AP.



Man fathers child after vasectomy

LONDON: DNA tests helped prove that a man had fathered a child despite having had a seemingly successful vasectomy, the British Medical Journal reported Friday, says Reuter.

Minister hires whores to attend dinner party

BANGKOK: A coalition of human rights, pro-democracy and women's groups Friday demanded the resignation of a Cabinet member accused of offering prostitutes as party favors at a dinner for lawmakers, reports AP.

Lankan navy fires at boat: 9 killed

COLOMBO, July 30: Nine Sri Lankan civilians were killed when the Navy fired at a boat crossing a forbidden lagoon in the northern Jaffna peninsula, residents said today, reports Reuter.

Ramos seeks truce with church over birth control

MANILA (Philippines), July 30: President Fidel Ramos is seeking a truce with the influential Roman Catholic Church over the government's controversial programme to curb this country's spiralling population, reports AP.

Although the programme is modest compared to strategies used by China and India, population control has emerged as a major issue in this country, where 85 per cent of the people are nominally Catholic.

US admn defends UN operation in Somalia

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Fujimori proposes life sentence for drug barons

LIMA, Peru, July 30: President Alberto Fujimori proposed establishing the life prison sentence for drug traffickers and kidnapers Wednesday in a speech to mark his third anniversary in power and his 55th birthday, reports AP.

Peacekeepers view air strikes in Bosnia as last resort

SARAJEVO, Bosnia-Herzegovina, July 30: Although NATO is ready to bomb Serb forces who attack UN troops in Bosnia, the peacekeepers view air strikes as a last resort, reports AP.

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