

## BRIEFLY

**Bomb blast in Bombay:** A crude bomb exploded yesterday in the Bombay Stock Exchange building, but no-one was hurt in the blast, the Press Trust of India (PTI) reported, AFP says from Bombay.

Firefighters told PTI that the bomb exploded on the third floor of the stock exchange building around 1:00 pm (0730 GMT).

**Court fines Gorbachev:** A court ordered former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev to pay a second successive fine of 30 roubles (three US cents) yesterday for failing to turn up to answer libel charges, Itar-Tass news agency said.

Tass said it was the fourth time Gorbachev had failed to show up in court to answer the defamation charges levelled against him by Moscow Mayor Yuri Luzhkov.

Gorbachev received an initial 30 rouble fine on August 12, but this remains unpaid, Tass said.

**US pilot killed in Somalia:** A US pilot ferrying aid to Somalia died from gunshot wounds on Thursday after bandits attacked a relief camp in Kenya 100 km from the Somali border, relatives in South Africa said yesterday, Reuters reports from Cape Town.

Pilot Jeff Butler's brother-in-law Don Shay told Reuters that Butler, 28, was one of several people wounded in Thursday's attack on Wajir Camp. He died in a Nairobi hospital.

**4 missing as Russian ship sinks:** Four Russian sailors were missing after a marine research ship sank off the far eastern peninsula of Kamchatka early yesterday, Itar-Tass news agency said, Reuters reports from Moscow.

The MKR-450 ran around and sank in Vilyuchinskaya Bay just south of Kamchatka's main town, Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky.

Rescuers took off 38 of the 42 crew but the other four were unaccounted for, Tass said.

**Boiler blast kills two in Japan:** Three people were killed and one injured when a high-pressure boiler exploded in a glass factory west of Tokyo, a police spokesman said on Thursday, Reuters reports from Tokyo.

He said the explosion caused the boiler's lid to fly 50 metres (54 yards) to crack the wall of a building in the factory's neighbourhood in Yokohama.

It was not yet clear what caused the accident, he said.

**Several hurt in Irish bomb blast:** Several people were injured early on Friday when a bomb exploded near the courthouse in Armagh, northern Ireland, in a further escalation of violence in the troubled British province, police said, Reuters reports from Belfast.

Both police officers and civilians were hurt in the blast just after midnight but none of the injuries was thought to be serious. The courthouse was badly damaged. No group immediately claimed responsibility.

**18 Kurdish rebels killed:** Turkish troops have killed 18 separatist Kurdish guerrillas in clashes in the southeast, security officials said yesterday, Reuters reports from Ankara.

A statement from the emergency rule governor's office in Diyarbakir said 15 Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) fighters have been killed in the mountainous Goeretepe region in Bingol province on Thursday.

Three other guerrillas were killed in two separate clashes in Bingola and Sirmak provinces, the statement said.

More than 7,000 people have been killed in Turkey since he PKK launched its secessionist war in 1984.

**One shot dead in Belfast:** Gunmen based in Northern Ireland's Protestant community claim their fourth victim Friday, a Roman Catholic shopkeeper who was fatally shot while he slept next to his wife, AP reports from Belfast.

The Ulster Freedom Fighters, in an anonymous statement to the media, said its gunmen killed the man and claimed he was a member of the Irish Republican Army, which has fought to end British rule in the province.

The Royal Ulster Constabulary did not release the dead man's name, but identified him as a 39-year-old Roman Catholic father of six who ran his own shop.

## Taipei Defence Ministry accuses China building army strength near border

TAIPEI, Sept 3: The Defence Ministry on Friday accused China of building up its military strength near Taiwan, in contradiction of its claim to be acting to relax tensions, reports AP.

It said that following the collapse of the Soviet Union, China had shifted much of its northern military force to the southeastern provinces, about 200 kilometers (120 miles) across the sea from Taiwan.

"We see no signs that China has revised or adjusted its longstanding position that it will not renounce the possible use of force" against Taiwan, it said in a statement.

On Tuesday, China issued a policy paper reasserting its claim to Taiwan and its opposition to the island's bid to rejoin the United Nations. Although it spelled out terms for peaceful reunification, it reiterated its right as a sovereign state to resort to force if necessary.

Taiwan's nationalist government, which fled to this island in 1949 after losing a civil war, still claims to be the sole legitimate ruler of all of China. Beijing considers Taiwan a breakaway province to be reunited with the mainland.

**Democratic govt takes office in Haiti**

PORT-AU-PRINCE, HAITI, Sept 3: A democratic government cautiously assumed office Thursday, but the weapons often used to determine power in Haiti remained with a restive and repressive military, reports AP.

Hundreds of joyful Haitians surrounded the National Palace, chanting the names of ousted President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, who will return to power by October 30 under a UN plan, and new Prime Minister Robert Malval.

# Benazir blasts Sharif for ruining Pak economy

ATTOCK, Pakistan, Sept 3: Former Premier Benazir Bhutto has drawn thousands at the start of her party's election campaign which she has kicked off with bitter attacks on her arch foe Nawaz Sharif, reports AFP.

Addressing a rally here late Thursday, Bhutto accused Sharif, who resigned in July midway through his five-year term as prime minister, of ruining Pakistan's economy during

his rule.

Sharif, an industrialist turned politician, quit along with President Ghulam Ishaq Khan under an army-mediated end to their power struggle, paving the way for fresh polls under a neutral caretaker government.

"He plundered national wealth and left the economy in shambles, said Bhutto, son of a wealthy land-owning family and the country's first woman

premier from 1988 to 1990.

Bhutto's Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) and Sharif's Pakistani Muslim League (PML) are seen as main contenders in the elections for a 217-member National Assembly scheduled for October 6.

The polls for four provincial legislatures are to be held three days later.

The PPP leader started off her campaign from populous Punjab, Sharif's home province

and the politically most strategic region with 115 seats in the Federal Assembly.

The launching coincided with a strike in some major cities at the call of fundamentalist Jamaat-i-Islami which is spearheading a protest against recent hikes in fuel, gas and electricity rates by the interim government.

As Bhutto blasted Sharif, caretaker premier Moeen Qureshi said in a statement in Islamabad that when he assumed office the country was in the grip of the most serious economic crisis in over 40 years.

"Qureshi, who also devalued the Pakistani rupee to shore up falling exports and initiated steps to cut administrative expenditure said the reforms were needed to save the country from insolvency.

The PPP leader said the pronouncements of the caretakers were a testimony to the "gross mishandling" of the economy by the Sharif administration.

"Our economic agenda is designed to serve the socio-economic needs of the poor and down-trodden," Bhutto said.

The party released Wednesday a manifesto which promises "revolutionary" changes in the administrative and economic spheres including a system of business enterprises based on public private partnership.

PPP officials said Bhutto would travel to Saudi Arabia to perform a pilgrimage at Islam's holiest shrine in Mecca before resuming the campaign from her home province of Sindh on Saturday.



PAKISTAN: Benazir Bhutto, co-chairperson of Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and arch rival of former premier Nawaz Sharif, speaks at an election rally in Taxila 35 km from Islamabad September 2.

## Fatah sharply criticises Arafat's quiet diplomacy

TUNIS, Sept 3: Leaders of Yasser Arafat's mainstream PLO faction sharply criticised him for not consulting them about the months of secret talks that led to the landmark agreement with Israel, PLO officials said Friday, reports AP.

But despite the attacks at a late-night meeting of the faction's central committee, there was no indication that Arafat would be unable to muster support for the deal. The talks ended early Friday, but were to resume later in the day.

Arafat needs the endorsement of Fatah, the PLO's biggest and wealthiest faction, before he takes the accord to the powerful PLO Executive Committee and the Palestine National Council, the

Palestinian parliament-in-exile.

Israeli officials have said the deal both the autonomy plan and the agreement for mutual recognition could be signed within days. Foreign Minister Shimon Peres said Palestinian self-rule in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank town of Jericho could start immediately.

In a sign that the PLO was preparing to assume power, Arafat ordered his commanders in Yemen to start training their guerrillas as police for duty in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

"You will see the PLO back in its homeland," Arafat told a gathering at Bir Zeit University in the West Bank in a letter faxed Thursday from his headquarters in Tunis. "We will go together to our Jerusalem."

But tension persisted in both south Lebanon and the occupied territories.

Shi'ite Muslim guerrillas who oppose the talks were locked in machine-gun and mortar exchanges with Israel's surrogate militiamen in south Lebanon Friday. It was the second day of battles, but no casualties were reported.

Arafat convened the meeting of Fatah late Thursday. Palestine Liberation Organization officials, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the heaviest criticism of Arafat came from committee member Abbas Zaki.

He said Arafat ignored key issues such as the status of Jerusalem and Israeli settlements.

## Akihito starts Europe tour

TOKYO, Sept 3: Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko left Tokyo, today for Rome where they will meet with Pope John Paul II, their first official engagement on a two-week European tour which also takes them to Belgium and Germany, reports AP.

The meeting with the Pope will be the first between the nominal head of the Shinto religion in Japan and the head of the Roman Catholic Church. Akihito met Pope Pius XII in 1953 when he was crown prince.

The imperial couple then go on to Florence, Stenna and Pisa before returning to Rome where they will meet President Luigi Scalfaro and Prime Minister Carlo Azeglio Ciampi.

They will then visit Milan before going on to Brussels on Thursday as guests of Belgium's King Aalebert.

## Tigers raid ICRC office in Lanka

COLOMBO, Sept 3: Tamil Tiger guerrillas raided an office of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in northern Sri Lanka, seriously blocking the main life line to the region, officials sources said today, reports AP.

Fighters of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) removed communication equipment from the ICRC at Point Pedro forcing it to suspend the unloading of food and medicines at a strategic pier there, officials said.

"The ICRC stopped operations because it was directly affected. Another reason was the LTTE attack (Sunday) on navy gunboat just off Point Pedro. The two attacks coincided," an official close to the ICRC said.

It was the first known case of a direct LTTE action against the ICRC which has been providing humanitarian assistance in Sri Lanka's embattled northern and eastern regions in the past three years.

The ICRC itself has made no comment on the attacks but officials sources said the Red Cross has been negotiating with the LTTE to ensure there will be no more attacks in Point Pedro if unloading of food was

to continue.

"So far the LTTE was only given a lot of excuses. These are not acceptable to the ICRC. They want a hundred per cent guarantee that there will be no attacks either against them or their staff.

"They should also not be used for launching attacks against the military," the official said adding that talks between the LTTE and the ICRC so far have made no progress.

The military confirmed that the ICRC brought down its flag and suspended its humanitarian operations in Point Pedro after the LTTE sank an Israeli-built fast attack craft just off the coast of Point Pedro, killing 12 sailors aboard.

"We have told the ICRC that if there are attacks in the area we might have to respond. If the ICRC is not in Point Pedro, government food ships might not want to go there," military spokesman Brigadier Nalin Angamuna said.

Food cargoes sent to the Jaffna peninsula are unloaded in mid-sea to small barges which take the supplies to a small pier at Point Pedro. Hundreds of Tamil dockers work there under ICRC protection.

## Typhoon hits Japan: 4600 flee homes

TOKYO, Sept 3: Japan's strongest typhoon in more than three decades lashed the country's southwest on Friday, triggering floods, disrupting travel and leaving tens of thousands of people without electricity, reports AP.

One person was reported missing and 16 others were injured as Typhoon Yancy tore through Kyushu, the southernmost main island, with torrential rains and winds of up to 213 kilometers (133 miles) per hour.

Hundreds of homes and businesses were flooded, thousands of homes were without electricity in and around the Kyushu area, and 208 homes and businesses were destroyed or damaged, the National Police Agency said.

In Kagoshima, 1,000 kilometers (600 miles) southwest of Tokyo, about 4,600 people were forced to flee their homes because of the danger of floods and landslides, a town official said.

## Off the Record

### 'Marriage vows do not cover shaves and showers'

SANTA ANA, California: Most marriage vows cover better or worse, sickness and health, but does that mean shaves and showers, too? Not necessarily, according to an appeals court, reports AP.

Brenda Joyce Johnston complained that her husband, Donald, turned into a slob after the wedding and she sought an annulment on grounds of fraud. A lawyer temporarily sitting as a superior court judge agreed with her, letting her take sole possession of the couple's Anaheim home.

But appeals court Justice Sheila Prell Sonenshine and her colleagues ruled this week that sloven habits aren't grounds for annulment based on fraud. They granted Johnston a divorce instead, saying premarital deceit or a false assertion had to be shown to prove fraud.

"He never promised her he would take showers," said Johnston's lawyer, Donald P. Bebercia.

Under the divorce ruling, the house is community property. Johnston, a driver for a car rental agency, said the slob scenario wasn't accurate.

"It's not a picture of my life at all," he said.

### Unit-commander described as upstanding

NORFOLK: The commander of a unit that had strippers visit their hotel room during the tailhook convention was described Thursday to a Navy panel as moral and upstanding, reports AP.

Cmdr. Robert E. Stumpf took five junior officers from his squadron of F-18 Hornets to the convention in September 1991. Dozens of women say they were molested by drunken aviators at the convention.

Stumpf's group rented two rooms at the Las Vegas Hilton, and on the night of September 7, 1991, two strippers showed up at one room, witnesses said. Witnesses told Pentagon investigators that one woman performed oral sex on a junior officer.

A three-member fact-finding panel at the Norfolk Naval Base is hearing testimony on whether Stumpf permitted misconduct by others. Stumpf has denied knowing about the incident.

Lt. Carl Trahan, one of the junior officers in Stumpf's squadron at the convention, said he remembered seeing Stumpf in the room before the women arrived, but could not remember seeing him there later.

### 'Three yrs jail for stealing ice-cream too harsh a penalty'

THOMASTON: A white judge who sentenced a black high school student to three years in jail for allegedly stealing ice cream is reconsidering his action after groups protested that the punishment was too harsh, reports AP.

Dehundra Caldwell was an acclaimed student, and he was eager to return to high school for his junior year. Instead, on the day classes started the 17-year-old was sentenced to three years in jail.

He had pleaded guilty to breaking into a school and stealing a box of ice cream bars.

Wednesday night, after the NAACP a black rights group and an organisation of black lawyers complained and Caldwell denied that he committed the crime, the teenager was freed temporarily while the judge reconsiders the sentence.

In an interview from jail Wednesday before he was freed, Caldwell said a police officer twisted his statement and made it into a confession. But Caldwell, signed it. "I thought he wrote down everything I said. I didn't think there was any need to read," he said.

He said he pleaded guilty because he thought he would be held responsible for being with his 15-year-old brother and a 16-year-old friend, who walked into Upon-Lee Middle School after him through an open door in July. The other two boys admitted they took the box of ice-cream bars.

### Kids unearth 2000-yr-old egg

PERTH (Australia): Three children on Friday dug up a 2,000-year-old egg that they had secretly re-buried after government officials barred them from selling it to a foreign buyer, reports AP.

The Western Australian state government has promised, in turn, to raise 160,000 dollars (dollars US 109,000) for their education.

The fossilized egg, believed to be from an extinct elephant bird, will be displayed at the Western Australian state museum. Jamie Andrich, 9, and two cousins Kelly, 8, and Michelle Rew, 6 — found the egg in a sand dune while on vacation in January at Cervantes, about 155 miles (250 kms) north of Perth.

A foreign collector offered them 150,000 dollars (dollars US 102,000) for it, but state government officials barred the sale, saying the egg was public property because it was found on state-owned land.

Angered, the children reburied the egg last week near where it was discovered.

"I'm glad it was still there," Jamie said Friday after digging it back up.

The flightless elephant bird lived in Madagascar until about 400 years ago. Scientists theorize the egg was washed out to sea and floated across the Indian Ocean to Australia.

## HK repatriates 109 Vietnamese to China

HONG KONG, Sept 3: A first group of 109 Vietnamese boat people who entered Hong Kong from China in July was repatriated to the Chinese mainland today, offering no resistance, reports AP.

The group, mostly young people, was handled over to China at the border checkpoint in Sha Tau Kok, watched by about 50 police and immigration officials deployed to counter any resistance.

Their repatriation came after an agreement was reached between Hong Kong and China on August 24.

## Old medicines as aid for Sarajevo do more harm than good

SARAJEVO, Sept 3: In hospitals so needy that doctors sometimes must sterilize cotton gauze for surgery, tons of antibiotics and other drugs are gathering dust awaiting destruction, reports AP.

Sarajevo's plea for medicine has sometimes been answered by donors who, under the guise of providing humanitarian aid, are dumping medicine so old that to use it would do more harm than good.

The worthless medicines represent just a small percentage of the medical aid the besieged city receives from around the world. But they take up precious space on relief convoys and airlifts and delay deliveries of other urgently needed medicines.

They also cost aid organizations tens of thousands of dollars to buy and ship.

"We have the feeling some companies are just

cleaning out their warehouses and dumping the useless medicines on us, said Pasa Schovic, a pharmacist whose job is to take inventory of medical aid for Sarajevo's Kosevo Hospital.

In one case, the hospital received 12,000 boxes of the antibiotic Ampicillin that expired 14 years ago, said Schovic, standing in a basement surrounded by 6-foot-high (1.8-meter) stacks of outdated drugs.

Schovic said the hospital has at least 22 tons of useless medicine, as well as tons of other outdated supplies for use only in emergencies after being tested.

Sarajevo ran out of medical supplies a year ago and has relied since then on donations from around the world, said Dr. Bakis Nakis, who heads the Ministry of Health's Committee on distribution of medical supplies.

Nakis said most of the worthless medicine is sent by small, private aid organizations that possibly were duped into delivering it.

The independent aid organizations try to help us, but they get donations from companies who want to get rid of their outdated stocks by sending us a present, said Nakis.

A recent shipment from the United States included 8,600 tubes of a topical antibiotic used for skin ailments and infected wounds — all with expiration dates of 1984 or 1986.

Schovic said someone had painstakingly ripped the expiration-date labels off cartons visible through the packing crate, which was shipped by Relief International, a private aid organization based in Santa Monica, Calif.

Relief International's associate director, Pirooz Hanlou, said in Santa Monica that staff in Europe were aware the antibiotic had expired.

But they had it inspected by two doctors, who said it could be used for another 20 years.

Hanlou said that the Bosnian embassy in Zagreb, Croatia, was advised that the expiration date had passed but officials there still wanted the antibiotic. He could not explain how or why the labels were torn off the cartons.

The Bosnian government wants to assign pharmacists to the United Nations main logistical centers in Zagreb, Croatia, and Ancona, Italy, to stop such shipments and set priorities for the delivery of others.

Now, hospitals often receive months of supplies of one drug while they wait for others they urgently need.

But so far, Nakis said, the government cannot get the necessary UN approval to fly pharmacists out of Bosnia and assign them to the centers.