

# BRIEFLY

## Mitterrand ends ROK tour :

French President Francois Mitterrand left for the former Soviet republic of Kazakhstan Thursday after a three-day visit to South Korea, Reuter reports from Seoul.

During his stay, Mitterrand agreed with South Korean President Kim Young-Sam to boost economic cooperation and cultural exchanges between the two countries.

Mitterrand also pledged to support Seoul's efforts to resolve its bitter row with communist North Korea over nuclear inspections.

**Blast kills 12 in China :** Twelve workers were killed as they slept, and three were injured when an explosion flattened their dormitory at a quarry in Guangdong Province in southeastern China, the China News Service said, AFP reports from Hong Kong.

Initial investigation showed the blast could have been caused by burning mosquito coil.

Of the casualties, three people including a woman were killed instantly, while another nine were crushed under the collapsed dormitory.

**PLO allowed to open office in Bern :** The Swiss government has granted permission to the Palestine Liberation Organisation to open an office here in the capital, the Foreign Ministry announced, AFP reports from Bern.

The Ministry said Wednesday the PLO would be allowed to open an office in Bern. The organisation already has a bureau in Geneva, where it is accredited as an observer to the United Nations.

Switzerland intended to support the Israeli-PLO autonomy agreement, signed in Washington Monday, by contributing to the reconstruction of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, the Ministry spokesman added.

**Drugs seized in Philippines :**

Police seized illegal drugs worth 40 million pesos (1.43 million) during a raid at a house near a former US air base, police said Thursday, AP reports from Philippines.

Senior Inspector Generoso Galang, police intelligence chief, said the raid took place Wednesday in Angeles city near the former Clark Air Base. The base was abandoned by the Americans at the height of the eruption of Mount Pinatubo in June 1991.

During the raid, police seized more than 1.14 kilograms (3 pounds) of high grade cocaine, 600 grams of marijuana and several plastics of hashish, a stronger derivative of marijuana, Galang said.

**3 more black commuters killed :** A gunman with an assault rifle opened fire at a township railway station Thursday, killing at least three black commuters and injuring five, police said, AP reports from Johannesburg.

The attack in Daveyton, east of Johannesburg, was the fourth on black taxi riders in a week. The motive was not known, but the attack was similar to others blamed on political rivalries among black groups.

Political violence has increased since black and white negotiators announced an April 27 election date, and major negotiating groups blame anti-reform forces for the bloodshed.

**\$3.3m hashish seized in Pakistan :**

The Pakistan Narcotics Control Board said Thursday its officials seized 10 tonnes of hashish, worth 3.3 million dollar locally, in a raid on a container at Karachi Port, reports Reuter from Karachi.

One suspect had been arrested after Wednesday's seizure, board official Arshad Islam said.

The drug was brought from northern Pakistan and packed in small packages for shipment abroad.

In May narcotics agents seized a container carrying 12 tonnes of hashish bound for Montreal, Canada.

## Delhi considers federal rule in Manipur

GAUHATI, Sept 16: India on Thursday considered imposing federal rule in a remote north-eastern state where separatist guerrillas raided a village and massacred 90 tribespeople, reports AP.

The attack on Tuesday was the latest clash involving guerrillas fighting for a homeland in Manipur state for Naga tribespeople, who dominate the hill region bordering Myanmar.

Entering a village at dawn, the insurgents gunned down members of the rival Kuki tribe.

The attack raised to 300 the number of tribespeople who have been killed in Manipur in recent months. That includes an attack Monday that left 15 Kuki tribesmen dead.

Kuki militants on Thursday avenge the massacre by setting ablaze an entire village of about 25 homes inhabited by Nagas.

There were no immediate reports of casualties.

The federal government responded by asking Manipur Governor V.K. Nayyar on Thursday to submit an assessment report so New Delhi can decide whether to take control of the state, a top Manipur government official said on condition of anonymity.

For four decades, the Naga

## Executions in US have reached highest level

WASHINGTON, Sept 16: Executions in the US have reached their highest level in more than 30 years, reports AFP.

So far this year 32 prisoners have been executed. Only 31 people were executed in the whole of 1992.

The execution of a murderer in Virginia's electric chair late Tuesday was the 220th since 1976, when the US Supreme Court ruled that capital punishment was constitutional under certain guidelines, ending a 10-year hiatus on capital punishment.

Opponents of capital punishment blame the quickening pace of executions on the courts, swamped by capital punishment disputes and appeals.

"We're seeing more and more cases tossed out of the courts, especially Federal Courts, that would have been heard five years ago," said Leigh Dingerson of the national coalition to abolish the death penalty.

The death penalty is the violent response of a violent society to the violence it both fears and is fascinated by," said Herman Schwartz of American University in Washington.

## International

# UN elects 8 judges to try Bosnia war criminals

UNITED NATIONS, Sept 16: The General Assembly on Wednesday elected eight of 11 judges for a UN War Crimes Court that will try those accused of atrocities in the former Yugoslavia, reports Reuter.

The court will try those accused of murder, rape, torture, "ethnic cleansing" and other atrocities committed since 1991, when the Yugoslav Federation began to break apart.

The judges elected so far include one woman, former US Federal Court Judge Gabrielle Kirk McDonald of Texas. She was that state's first black federal judge before returning to private practice in 1988.

She obtained the largest number of votes on the Assembly's first ballot, when seven judges were chosen.

No candidate obtained the required majority of 94 votes on the second or third ballots. But

on the fourth ballot the Assembly elected Sir Ninian Stephen, who retired from the Australian High Court in 1982 to serve until 1989 as Governor-General of Australia.

In addition to McDonald, who obtained 137 votes, and Stephen, who received 37, the following were elected to judge:

— Jules Deschenes of Canada, who in the 1980s headed a commission of inquiry on alleged World War Two war criminals living in his own country (125 votes);

— Italian international law professor Antonio Casese (123);

— Georges Michel Abi-Saab of Egypt, who is a law professor in Geneva (116);

— Li Haopei, Legal Adviser to the Chinese Foreign Ministry (111);

— Germain Le Foyer de Costill of France, Presiding

Judge of the Court of Major Jurisdiction of Nanterre (107 votes); and

— Lal Chand Vohra of Malaysia, a senior high court judge (96 votes).

The judges were elected from among 22 candidates, winnowed by the Security Council last month from a list of 41 nominated by various governments. The Council had originally selected 23 candidates but one, a Swede, later dropped out.

Eligible to vote were all 184 members of the General Assembly and two non-member states with UN observer status — the Holy See and Switzerland.

The war crimes tribunal may impose prison sentences but not the death penalty. Sentences are to be served in countries chosen by the court from a list of those offering prison facilities.

## Ogata calls for aid to rebuild Afghanistan

MASHAD, Iran, Sept 16: The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Sadako Ogata (Japan) called Wednesday for a major international effort to rebuild Afghanistan so three million refugees still in Iran and Pakistan can return home, re-

ports AFP.

After a visit to the Iranian frontier town of Dogharun about 200 kilometres (120 miles) from here, Ogata said she would strive to mobilise international help for Afghanistan.

"If we want the movement of refugees home to continue, the international community must step up its aid for reconstruction in Afghanistan," she told journalists.

Ogata admitted that drumming up financial aid for the Afghans might be "difficult" at a time when international attention is riveted on the Middle East, Yugoslavia and Cambodia.

But she said she hoped her visit would help refocus attention on the plight of the Afghan refugees.

Ogata began her three-day visit to Iran on Tuesday at the start of a fact-finding tour to assess the situation of Afghan refugees.

## North Korea agrees to hold talks with IAEA

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Washington warned North Korea it would not continue high-level talks with Pyongyang unless it resumed nuclear talks with South Korea and the IAEA in a bid to settle the dispute.

Yonhap said the US house of representatives was urging President Bill Clinton and the UN Security Council to exert economic pressure on North Korea to stay in the Nuclear non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) which requires signatories to allow IAEA inspection.

## Somali gunmen kill 2 Italian peacekeepers

MOGADISHU, Sept 16: Somali gunmen shot dead two Italian soldiers jogging in Mogadishu port on Wednesday and fired mortar bombs into the United Nations compound, injuring 11 staff, reports Reuter.

The Italian soldiers were killed while they jogged around the UN port after dark as Rome's contingent was withdrawing from the capital after a row over UN policy in Somalia.

## Off the Record

### Monroe's dresses stolen

NEW YORK: Dresses once worn by Marilyn Monroe, including the one that rode up around her legs as she stood on a grating in the film "The Seven Year Itch," have been stolen from a New York warehouse, police said Wednesday, reports Reuter.

Also stolen was the clinging sequin dress the star wore when she sang "happy birthday" to President John F Kennedy at Madison Square in New York in 1962.

Police said the robbery at a building at West 28th St in Manhattan where memorabilia were being stored was discovered on Monday. Apart from the two dresses, the thieves took letters written by the actress.

Anna Strasberg, executor of the Monroe estate and widow of actor's studio founder Lee Strasberg, estimated the value of the stolen items at 10 million dollar.

### American students read too poorly

WASHINGTON: Many American students read too poorly to understand simple written passages, federal education officials said Wednesday in a report that offered yet another indictment of the nation's schools, reports AP.

But Education Secretary Dick Riley said parents share much of the blame for allowing kids to watch too much TV.

"Children who read poorly overdose on television," Riley said in releasing the report. "Reading Report Card for the Nation and the States."

The report showed that a quarter of high school seniors, nearly a third of eighth graders and 40 per cent of fourth graders tested in 1992 read so badly that they could not understand material that should have been simple for students at their respective levels.

The results were released a week after the Department of Education reported that nearly half of adult Americans have such weak reading and math skills that they are unable to perform tasks any more difficult than filling out a bank deposit slip or locating an intersection on a street map.

The department reported two weeks ago that few US students can solve math problems that require more than an educated guess.

### New heart missed for want of phone

TOPEKA, Kan: Richard Miller spent three years on a waiting list for a new heart then missed a chance for a transplant because he couldn't afford to pay his telephone bill and service was cut off, reports AP.

"The good news was they found me a heart," Miller said Tuesday. "The bad news was I didn't get it because they couldn't contact me."

The heart became available Tuesday morning at the University of Kansas Medical Centre in Kansas City.

The 60-year-old Miller suffered three heart attacks in 1989, then was told he could no longer work. He began receiving Social Security payments of dls 434 a month. But bills piled up and Miller could not meet his payments.

"Things got so tough, I went out and got a job" as a forklift operator at a warehouse. Doctors told him that "under no circumstances was I to go to work."

Miller quit the job and the bills piled up even higher. One of the unpaid bills — for telephone service — totals 608 dollar.

He ran up the phone bill when he learned he needed the transplant. Miller, who's divorced, called his four children, and they called him — usually collect.

He said they have no money to help him. Neither does his sister. The telephone company has told him that it will restore service if he pays half of his bill.

Officials at the medical centre called his sister shortly after 9 am Tuesday and left a message at her home answering machine. The hospital called police and asked officers to go to Miller's house.

Miller's sister, who works a split shift, arrived home about 9:30 am, raced to her brother's house and found a police officer knocking on the door.

## PLO-Israeli accord may inspire India, Pakistan to bury hatchet

publicity are more productive than much publicised sessions where delegates tend to posture for the benefit of respective constituencies back home," K. Subrahmanyam, India's leading military expert, wrote in the Economic Times.

"Events occurring close to the region are bound to have an effect on India-Pakistan relations, if not immediately, definitely in the short-run," said Bhabani Sengupta, an international relations expert at the Centre for Policy Research, a New Delhi-based think tank.

Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation have been enemies for as many years as South Asia's two foes. If Rafat and Rafat can do it, why not us, some analysts are asking.

The agreement proves that "such direct talks undertaken in secret without the glare of

separation from Hindu-dominated India create their own independent country, and in the last three years they have waged a guerrilla war that has left more than 7,500 people dead. Pakistan, which New Delhi accuses of arming the Muslim rebels, says that Kashmiri people should be allowed to decide in a referendum whether they want to remain in India.

But India says it will always keep Kashmiri and accuses Islamabad of occupying about one-third of the territory now known as Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir, a province governed from Islamabad.

"If the PLO can settle for autonomy and abandon its demand for independence, why can't the Kashmiris discuss with New Delhi how the state can enjoy real autonomy?" Sengupta said.

The stalemate between the

two countries has created the need for an outside moderator to solve the dispute, argues Sengupta.

"If we can achieve peace through US-aided negotiations in the Middle East, we should be able to do so in a problem much less complicated," said Sardar Abdul Qayum Khan, the Prime Minister of Pakistan-held Kashmir.

Hashim Kureshi, a