

BRIEFLY

Landslide kills 10 in Bombay:

At least 10 people were killed and about 25 trapped under rocks and mud in a landslide in a Bombay suburb Thursday caused by torrential rain, police said. Reuter reports from Bombay.

"The death toll could be higher," a police spokesman said as rescue workers tried to pull people out from under mounds of debris in the suburb of Saki Naka. Another 16 people were injured.

The rain, which began on Wednesday night and lasted for nearly six hours, flooded most of the city's low-lying areas, paralysing road and rail services and affecting flights at Bombay Airport.

UN envoy meets PLO official:

Madeleine Albright, the US Ambassador to the United Nations, met Wednesday with the Palestine Liberation Organisation representative here for the first time and discussed ways of cooperating in the Middle East peace process, AFP reports from United Nations.

"The meeting was professional and businesslike," said a statement from Albright following her meeting with Nasser Al-Kidwa. "We view this as an important step in an historic process in the interest of both the Israelis and Palestinians, as well as the entire region."

The meeting, the first official encounter between Palestinian and US diplomats at the UN was the result of the September 13 peace accord signed by the PLO and Israel.

Three miners killed in S Africa:

A rock slide killed three miners and injured six Wednesday, and one man was missing underground, mine officials said, AP reports from Johannesburg.

It was the second accident in two days at an Anglo American Corp mine. The slide was triggered by a mild earth tremor and occurred about 2.5 kilometers (1.55 miles) underground at a mine near Carletonville, west of Johannesburg.

On Tuesday, two men died in a rock fall at an Anglo American mine near Welkom, about 250 kilometers (155 miles) south of Johannesburg.

Hillary returns to Mt Everest:

Edmund Hillary returned to Mount Everest's base camp on Wednesday, 40 years after he and Tenzing Norgay made history by becoming the first to climb the world's highest peak, Reuter reports from Kathmandu.

The famous New Zealander 74, attended the opening of a restored Buddhist monastery located at 13,500 feet (4,130 m), officials said.

Nepal's Prime Minister Girtija Prasad Koirala inaugurated the 80-year-old building whose main edifice was destroyed by fire in January 1989.

Hillary, who was New Zealand's ambassador to India and Nepal in the 1980s, helped to raise nearly 400,000 dollars for restoration works at the monastery.

Palestinian killed in Gaza:

Israeli troops shot dead a Palestinian in the occupied Gaza Strip on Wednesday in clashes following the arrest of three wanted Palestinian activists in the PLO's mainstream Fatah Group, Palestinian said, Reuter reports from Jerusalem.

The army confirmed it arrested the three wanted men along with two other Palestinians is said to have aided them, but said it would have to check reports a Palestinian was killed.

ROK seeks global support to block DPRK's N-plan

SEOUL, Sept 23: South Korean Foreign Minister Han Sung-joo was setting off Thursday on a key diplomatic tour aimed at increasing international support to block North Korean nuclear weapons development, reports AP.

Han's 11-day itinerary includes a three-day stop in Japan, a visit to Washington, and talks at the United Nations with foreign ministers and heads of state from two dozen nations.

South Korea regards Han's trip as crucial as tensions grow over North Korea's continued refusal to open its controversial nuclear sites to international and inter-Korean inspections.

Han will try to arrange summit talks between South Korean President Kim Young-sam and leaders in Japan, China and the United States. He will make a UN speech focusing on nuclear concerns and will present South Korea's bid for non-permanent membership of the UN Security Council.

South Korea wants the United Nations to consider further pressure on North Korea to resolve concerns that the reclusive Stalinist state is developing nuclear arms, despite its denials.

The Korean peninsula was divided in 1945 into the Communist North and pro-West South.

Egyptian bodyguards for Arafat

TUNIS, Sept 23: Egypt has sent bodyguards to Tunisia to help Palestinian and Tunisian officials protect PLO chief Yasser Arafat, the target of death threats from Palestinian radicals, a reliable source said Wednesday, reports AFP.

The 15 Egyptians arrived last week in Tunis, headquarters of the Palestine Liberation Organisation, where the authorities have also boosted security for Arafat and his aides, said the source, who requested anonymity.

The measures were taken following the signing of the PLO-Israel accord in Washington on September 13.

Tunisian police have deployed reinforcements around the PLO headquarters and the interior Ministry has placed on high alert a special unit charged with protecting Palestinians in Tunisia.

Roadblocks, many of them just 100 metres (yards) apart, have been erected across the

city, namely around the offices and homes of the PLO chief and those of this key aides in the residential districts of Mutuelleville and El-Menzah.

Tunisian security forces carry out mobile patrols overnight.

Controls have also been stepped up at the Tunis-Carthage airport, where travellers entering Tunisia are subjected to close scrutiny.

A Palestinian family from the occupied territories was stopped for several hours at the airport before being cleared.

Radical Palestinian factions have issued death threats against Arafat over the PLO-Israel autonomy accord, charging the agreement was a sell-out.

The PLO Chairman's protection was previously restricted to hand-picked Palestinians working "in close cooperation" with Tunisian authorities, the source said.

Germany invites Arafat

BONN, Sept 23: Germany has invited Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat for consultations on European support for Israeli-Palestinian peace efforts, Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel said today, reports Reuter.

Kinkel also said he had urged Iran, a staunch opponent of the peace efforts, to adopt a "constructive" attitude to the Gaza-Jericho accord.

In a policy speech to parliament, Kinkel said Bonn and its European Community partners must provide political and economic aid to shore up the Israeli and PLO rapprochement.

Sihanouk returns home to ratify constitution, ascend throne

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia, Sept 23: Prince Norodom Sihanouk returned to Cambodia Thursday to ratify the country's new constitution and ascend the throne, hopping to bring peace to a country wracked by decades of war and unrest, reports AP.

"To be a king again is not important for me, but it's good for Cambodia to be reunited and to achieve consensus — by the people and for the people — by the royal regime where the king reigns but does not govern," Sihanouk told reporters. "I think that we can be proud of being, from now on, a genuine liberal democracy, where the people will be the only masters

International
Israeli parliament okays accord with PLO

JERUSALEM, Sept 23: Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin won Parliament approval for the Israel-PLO accord Thursday after three days of raucous debate marked by screaming, walkouts and violent protests, reports AP.

The agreement was approved 61-50, with 8 abstentions. One member of the 120-seat Parliament was abroad.

Rabin has staked his prestige and the future of his government on winning Thursday's vote, saying it would constitute a vote of confidence in his government's peace policies.

Israel law doesn't require Parliament to ratify the accord signed September 13 on the White House lawn, but it is customary and considered necessary for the legislature to give a nod of approval on issues of historic consequence.

The agreement provides for

limited Palestinian self-rule in the Israeli-occupied territories, starting with the Gaza Strip and the West Bank town of Jericho. Israeli opponents say it will eventually create a Palestinian state and endanger Israel's existence.

Rabin owed his large approval margin to the ultra-religious Shas party, which abstained. Three members of the hard-line opposition Likud bloc also abstained.

Likud head Benjamin Netanyahu had invoked party discipline, barring party members from voting in favour of the plan.

One of Likud dissidents, Meir Shitreet, said on Israeli army radio that Likud was making a mistake by taking a stand against peace and that even if the agreement had flaws, the majority of Israelis were in favour.

Assad, a Druse Likud member who also abstained, said Wednesday night he was "torn between my loyalty to my party... and my conscience towards my people and the non-Jewish voters."

Assad told Netanyahu, "forgive me for obeying the dictates of my people, of my conscience."

The marathon parliamentary debate which began Tuesday was punctuated by shouts and angry walkouts by opponents and supporters of the plan.

In Jerusalem, thousands of Israelis protested against the accord starting Tuesday, and hundreds of police were deployed around Knesset, or Parliament, to keep order.

Violence against the plan persisted in the occupied territories, where two Palestinians were killed in overnight clashes with Israeli security forces, and

Jewish settlers were evicted Thursday from one of two new settlements they tried to establish on the occupied West Bank.

On Thursday, Likud opposition members assailed the peace plan and demanded early national elections.

"This is the only one way to save ourselves," said former Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir.

The last speech was that of foreign Minister Shimon Peres, and it touched off furious screams and shouts by Likud lawmakers. Peres shouted back, at one point telling his opponents to "shut up" and "get out of here."

"You did nothing! You did not bring peace!" Peres told Shamir, his hands shaking with anger, as the former premier jumped to his feet and shouted in protest.

"You are a liar!" screamed Likud's Yehoshua Matza.

China pledges continued support to PLO

BEIJING, Sept 23: China pledged today to Yasser Arafat its continued political and material support for the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) in the wake of last week's Israeli-PLO peace accord, reports AFP.

National People's Congress Standing Committee Chairman Qian Qunli told the visiting PLO leader the agreement—providing for Palestinian autonomy in the Gaza Strip and West Bank town of Jericho—"represents a major breakthrough" in the Middle East peace process, Xinhua reported.

Arafat said the Palestinian people would never forget China's "sympathy and support" at all the "different stages and aspects" of Palestine's struggle for liberation.

He also appealed for further assistance in reconstruction under partial autonomy, a Foreign Ministry official was quoted as saying.

CIS PMs meet in Moscow postponed

MOSCOW, Sept 23: A Moscow meeting of Commonwealth of Independent States Prime Ministers, scheduled for this afternoon, has been postponed until Friday morning, a Russian government spokesman said, reports Reuter.

The meeting will be followed by a full-scale summit of the Presidents of the 10 member states, already scheduled for Friday, which is going ahead despite the political turmoil in Russia.

Azerbaijan is also due to rejoin the grouping of former Soviet Republics and Georgia, where prominent politicians are recommending membership, is sending its Prime Minister.

The spokesman gave no reason for the postponement.

South African violence claims 126 in a week

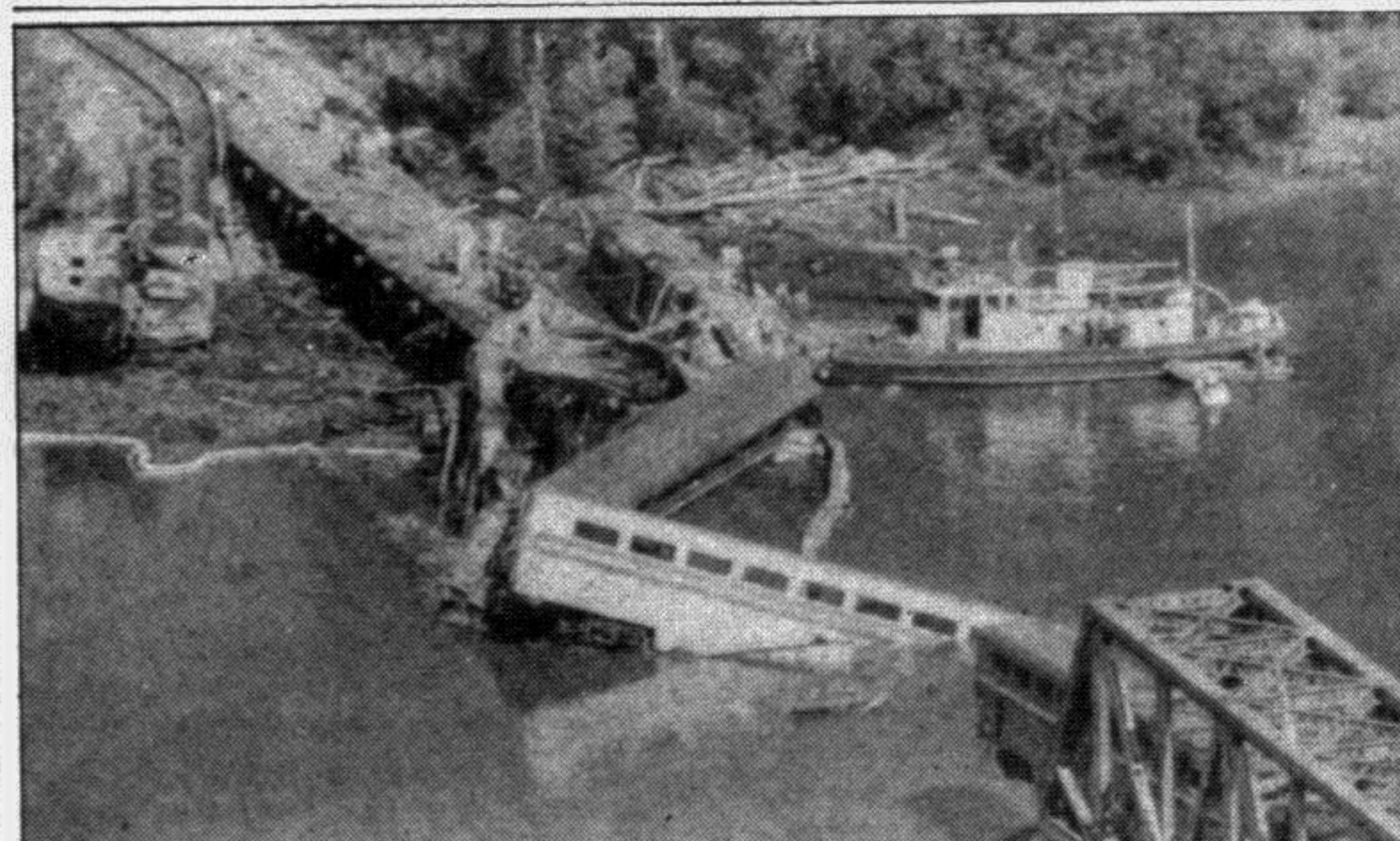
JOHANNESBURG, Sept 23: At least 126 people died violent deaths in South Africa during the past week, with 72 of them losing their lives in the Johannesburg area, the watchdog human rights commission said Wednesday, reports AFP.

The black townships east of Johannesburg remained the worst trouble spots, where violence claimed 63 victims, including 24 people moved down by gunmen in two attacks Tuesday.

In the worst attack 18 people were gunned down in an attack on taxi commuters and pedestrians near Tokosa township east of here.

The shootings occurred hours after a similar attack in the same area killed six people.

"After an encouraging fall-off of the national toll during the previous week from 121 to 89, the figure climbed to 126," the commission's report said.



A portion of the Sunset Limited, an Amtrak express train running from Los Angeles to Miami, lies submerged in a bayou about eight miles north of the city of Mobile in Alabama Sept 22. There were 153 confirmed survivors and 10 to 15 people still unaccounted for of the 210 people known to be on the train. — AFP photo

Rao rejects third country's mediation in Kashmir issue

NEW DELHI, Sept 23: Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao has rejected mediation by third country over the Kashmir row between India and Pakistan, the Press Trust of India (PTI) reported Thursday, says AFP.

"We can do something on our own if there is a will on both sides," the news agency quoted him as saying.

Rao's comments followed talks on Kashmir with Iranian leaders, who expressed concern over the fate of Muslims in the Indian state, where militant Muslims are waging a bloody separatist campaign.

All Akbar Nategi Nuri, Speaker of the Iranian parliament,

however declared that Iran had "no intention of interfering" in the internal affairs of India, a Hindu-majority country, PTI said.

India and Pakistan dispute the ownership of Kashmir and both hold parts of the province.

India accuses Pakistan of arming and training the militants. Islamabad denies the charges, but supports the campaign diplomatically, describing it as a legitimate struggle for self-determination.

Rao, the first Indian Premier to visit Iran since the 1979 Islamic revolution there, said ties between India and Pakistan

could improve only after "irritants" like Islamabad's support to Kashmiri militancy stopped.

"We can really have model neighbourly relations. But the obstacle confronting it is very deep," Rao said, and added: "and so long as it is there, other things are becoming difficult."

Rao said Iranian leaders felt that the Kashmir issue should be settled soon in the interests of the state's Muslims.

The Indian Premier described his visit to Iran as "satisfying", adding that Iranian leaders were able to have "a better perception of India's stand on various issues."

Hole appears in ozone layer over NZ

WELLINGTON, Sept 23: A hole appeared in the ozone layer over the southern part of New Zealand last week and the abnormal event may occur within weeks, the National Institute of Water and Atmosphere warned today, reports AFP.

In a statement it said ozone levels measured at the Institute's lauder site in central Otago, southwest of here, showed ozone levels in the atmosphere were the lowest ever recorded in New Zealand in September. On Friday and Saturday they were nearly 25 per cent below the average.

The institute said New Zealanders' health had not been threatened by the low amounts of ozone.

The ultraviolet radiation in central Otago during clear skies was still less than half what could be expected in similar conditions in summer.

"Nevertheless the intrusion of such low ozone amounts

over New Zealand in spring, and this year's early development of the Antarctic ozone hole are an ongoing reminder of the threat to the ozone layer posed by CFCs and Halons released by humans."

Researcher Sylvia Nichol said the ozone hole appeared over the lower half of the south island. The Antarctic hole had been squeezed into an ellipse which extended over that area, she said.

"The ozone hole moves around over the Antarctic but its shape can change depending on motions in the atmosphere. It does wobble around," she said in an interview.

Last year it extended over South America which had also been unusual.

The appearance of the hole over New Zealand in September did not necessarily mean ozone depletion was worsening.

Int'l confce to raise \$ 3b for ME peace accord October 1

WASHINGTON, Sept 23: An international conference aimed at raising 3 billion dollars to support the Israeli-PLO peace agreement has been set for October 1 at the State Department, US officials said on Wednesday, reports Reuter.

Foreign and finance ministers from Europe, Japan, Canada, the Nordic countries, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, Syria, Lebanon and Jordan have been invited, along with the Israelis and Palestinians, State Department spokesman Michael McCurry said.

The World Bank and United Nations will also play "a major role" in the funding effort, said Assistant Secretary of State Edward Djerejian.

Djerejian, who is in charge of Near East affairs and is selected to become US ambassador to Israel next year, said invitations were sent out late on

Tuesday by Secretary of State Warren Christopher and Treasury Secretary Lloyd Bentsen.

"The international community must move immediately to see that the agreement produces tangible improvements in the security and daily lives of Palestinians and Israelis," Djerejian said at a luncheon at the Washington Institute for Near East policy.

He said immediate action was needed in the areas of employment, roads, schools, hospitals and housing in the impoverished Gaza Strip and West Bank, where Palestinians are to get self-rule under the PLO-Israeli pact.

The World Bank has estimated that the plan for Palestinian self-rule in the West Bank and Gaza Strip will require 3 billion dollars over 10 years.

Off the Record

Girlfriend on lap hides nudity of trouserless driver

JOHANNESBURG: A man charged with public indecency for driving while wearing only a shirt avoided conviction by explaining his girlfriend was sitting on his lap, reports AP.

Rishard Plant, 29, was arrested by two traffic officers who saw his car swerving and found him undressed from the waist down.

He admitted to a magistrate Wednesday he was driving without trousers or under-wear, but said his girlfriend's presence on his lap prevented his nudity from being visible to the public.

The magistrate agreed, ruling there was insufficient evidence to convict him.

2,000 condoms found in 53-man German submarine

COPENHAGEN: What did a 53-man German submarine crew, off the coast of Denmark at the end of World War II, need with 2000 condoms and hundreds of bottles of wine? reports AP.

Those items — along with hundreds of wet and muddy documents — seem to be the primary contents of the submarine, raised August 23 from the bottom of the Baltic Sea.

The salvage operation was prompted by the possibility that the U-boat — sunk by British planes on May 5, 1945 — might have contained treasure.

"We have found boxes with a considerable amount of wet and muddy documents, including the log books, but we don't know anything about their content yet," Jonathan Wardlow of the Danish Salvagers' Team said Wednesday.

Historians and Defence Ministry officials are emptying the submarine in a dry dock at the northwestern port of Hirtshals, where the U-boat is to be the focus of a museum.

The documents will be freeze-dried for two months, then they can be read, said Wardlow.

"We have found an enormous amount of condoms. Up to 2,000 of them," Wardlow said. Although German submarines in World War II normally carried a box or two of condoms, "the amount is ridiculously high," in the recovered submarine, he said.

Several hundred bottles of German red and white wine have also been found.

Baby weighs 12.9 ounces

SARASOTA, Fla: When she was born, she weighed just 12.9 ounces (360 grams) about as much as three sticks of butter, reports AP.

Four months later, Caci Renee Burke was allowed to go home Tuesday from Sarasota Memorial Hospital, even though she weighed just 3 pounds, 7 ounces (1.6 kg).

"I'm on cloud nine," said father Avery Burke, 34. "For a while there, we weren't sure this would happen."

When she was born May 7, three months premature, Caci was a mere 9 inches (22.9 cm) long.

"I knew she was small, but they wouldn't tell me how small," Burke said. "When they did, I was shocked. And scared, too. But she's a real fighter."

For weeks, Caci's head and body fit into her father's palm. She ate a quarter of a teaspoon of mother's milk mixed with water every three hours. Special premature baby diapers had to be cut down for her. Hospital volunteers made all her clothes.

Now she wears doll clothes. Her mother, Tina Smith, 34, suffers from chronic high blood pressure. She and her husband had been trying to conceive for the five years of their marriage.

Dinosaur skeleton of Triassic Age unearthed

JOHANNESBURG: Paleontologists in South Africa have unearthed a rare complete skeleton of a dinosaur which lived in the Triassic Age, more than 200 million years ago, says Reuter.

Johann Welman, head of Bloemfontein National Museum's Paleontology Department, said on Wednesday he believed the remains were the first of a complete euscelosaurus to be found.

The mud-encased, 4.5-metre (five-yard) skeleton, unearthed at the weekend at a farm in the orange free state, was unusual because the bones were still joined with the skull attached.

The euscelosaurus, a four-legged, barrel-shaped animal which grazed on leaves and grasses, was one of the first browsers.

Dr Uton M Rafei nominated as WHO S-E Asia Director

Dr Uton Muchtar Rafei (Indonesia) was Tuesday nominated as the Regional Director of the WHO South-East Asia Region by the Regional Committee now in session in New Delhi, says a press release.

Dr. Uton will succeed Dr U Ko Ko on March 1, 1994 after the nomination is confirmed by the WHO Executive Board in January 1994.

Dr Uton, who has been Director, Health System Infrastructure since 1988 in WHO's regional office for South-East Asia joined WHO in 1981 as Regional Adviser in Primary Health Care.

will give him significant powers over the judiciary, executive and legislative branches, even though he did not run in the May election.

But Cambodian leaders see as more important the support for the monarchy by the Khmer Rouge guerrilla group, the country's last obstacle to peace. The group sees Sihanouk as conciliatory.

The Khmer Rouge was among the four factions that signed the 1991 peace accord. But it backed out of the agreement, boycotted the election and violated the cease-fire by continuing to skirmish with government troops in the countryside. When two of the

tions until he was toppled in a 1970 coup. He has spent the years since then as a prisoner of the Khmer Rouge and as a guerrilla leader, living in exile for much of the time in North Korea and China.

In 1991, Sihanouk helped broker the peace accord that authorized the UN-organized elections. The party led by Sihanouk's son, Prince Norodom Ranariddh, won the most seats and has been working ever since on a constitution to return Sihanouk to power as king.

Assembly members and democracy advocates privately protested Sihanouk's assumption of the throne because it

was a return to monarchy.

"We have full confidence in the Cambodians' ability to take into their hands their destiny under the leadership of the king and of the elected representatives of the government," said the head of the US mission in Cambodia, Charles Twinning.

Sihanouk's ascension to the throne will be his second. He was first crowned in 1941.

He abdicated the throne in 1955 to enter politics and ruled the country in a variety of positions

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