

# BRIEFLY

**Next C'wealth summit in NZ:** Auckland will host next year's Commonwealth heads of government meeting. New Zealand Prime Minister Jim Bolger said yesterday. Reuter reports from Wellington.

New Zealand was chosen last year to host the biennial meeting of Commonwealth leaders.

Wellington parliament members and others had lobbied for the meeting to be in the capital, but Bolger said only Auckland had the necessary capacity for the 1,500 delegates.

**40 die in Indonesian bus plunge:** Forty people died and 10 were injured when their bus plunged into a ravine in north Sumatra, police in the provincial capital of Medan said yesterday. AFP reports from Jakarta.

The bus, packed with passengers, mostly traders, fell into a 75 metre (247 foot) deep ravine near Siholbung village on the road linking the northern Sumatran towns of Padang Sidempuan and Gunung Tua in the early hours of Thursday, north Sumatra police spokesman Lieutenant Colonel Leo Sukardi said.

A total of 37 people died on the spot, three others died later Thursday at a nearby hospital, seven people were severely injured and three others lightly hurt, Sukardi said on the phone.

**UK crime report not correct:** A study released by British Home Office yesterday suggests that there may be 16 times more racial crimes committed in England and Wales than police figures show, Xinhua reports from London.

The study estimates that in 1991 there were 130,000 crimes of racial victimisation or threats against the Black and Asian population in England and Wales.

The findings are substantially higher than those provided by British police, who registered less than 8,000 such crimes in that year.

**Iran's move to stem flow of drugs:** Iran is building an "Iron curtain" along its eastern border with Pakistan and Afghanistan in a bid to stem the flow of drugs from the two countries, which has grown to alarming proportions in recent years. AFP reports from Tehran.

Iranian Interior Minister Ali Mohammadi Besharati said Tuesday 840 kilometers (504 miles), or nearly one-third, of the country's eastern border had been sealed off in the war against drug traffickers, which has been waged since 1989.

**Myanmar destroys poppy fields:** Myanmar authorities have destroyed some 230 acres (92 hectares) of poppy fields in northeast Myanmars over the past two weeks, state-run radio Yangon reported in a broadcast monitored in Bangkok Thursday. AFP reports from Bangkok.

The poppy fields — near the town of Theini in Myanmar's Shan state — were destroyed by soldiers and civilians.

Theini is located near to Myanmars section of the Golden Triangle, the world's largest heroin producing area which also comprises areas of northern Thailand and southwest Laos. Western anti-narcotics officials estimate that the region produces over 2,000 tonnes of opium a year.

**Gunmen kill McGlinchey:** Dominic McGlinchey, the much feared former head of the Irish National Liberation Army, died Thursday night as he predicted in a 1983 interview — by assassins' bullets, reports AP.

McGlinchey, who claimed he'd killed 30 people in 11 years of bombing, shooting and robbery and at one time was hunted both sides of the Irish border by security forces and rivals alike, was slain by gunmen in Drogheda 30 miles (50 km) north of Dublin.

**Kennedy Onassis has cancer:** Former

First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis has non-hodgkin's lymphoma, a treatable form of cancer of the lymphatic system, and has been undergoing chemotherapy for about a month, the New York Times reported in its Friday editions, Reuter says from New York.

The newspaper said Onassis, 64, had not interrupted her personal routines or her duties as a book editor.

"She is undergoing a course of treatment and there is every expectation that it will be successful," the newspaper quoted Onassis' spokeswoman Nancy Tuckerman as saying.

**Discovery's landing delayed:** Five

astronauts and a cosmonaut aboard space shuttle Discovery headed home Friday after eight days in space, although had weather at the Florida landing site threatened their plans, AP reports from Houston.

Forecasters said rain, low clouds and high winds were possible at the Kennedy Space Centre in Florida, where Landing was scheduled for 12:44pm EST (1744 GMT) Friday.

Mission control kept open the possibility of sending Discovery to Edwards Air Force Base in California later in the afternoon. The shuttle also could stay up an extra day if Florida weather looked better for Saturday.

**Court refuses to release Abdel-Rahman**

NEW YORK, Feb 11: A federal judge refused Thursday to release Sheikh Omar Abdel-Rahman temporarily so that he can deliver religious sermons and lectures during the Islamic holy month of Ramadan, reports AP.

Abdel-Rahman is among 15 men charged in a conspiracy to harm the United States through a series of bombings, assassinations and kidnappings. Attacks on the United Nations, the federal building housing the FBI and New York commuter tunnels and a bridge were allegedly planned.

Abdel-Rahman had proposed through his legal adviser that he be allowed to live under house arrest with US marshals on the premises. The 55-

**Nobel laureate Temin dies of lung cancer**

MADISON Feb 11: Nobel Prize winner Howard Temin, a cancer researcher who campaigned for years against cigarette smoking, died on lung cancer. He was 59, reports AP.

Temin, a University of Wisconsin-Madison professor who specialised in cancer and AIDS research, made a brief public announcement in 1992 to discuss his illness and to note that he had never been a cigarette smoker.

He won the Nobel Prize for physiology in 1975 when he was honoured with two other scientists for their research into possible links between viruses and cancer.

## US plans to get rid of excess Cold War property

GERMERSHEIM (Germany), Feb 11: The Cold War is over and a lot of US troops in Europe are going home. But what to do with the tens of thousands of tanks, trucks and other vehicles that made the troops mobile? reports AP.

First, you park them like cabbage rows on the equivalent of a large farm, and then parcel them out to allied countries, to US embassies in former Soviet republics, to scrap mills.

Some go to civilians at bargain sales, although tanks and other deadly stuff is off-limits to them.

Need an old desk, book shelves or dishes? At a recent sale in Nuremberg, a vast amount of such damaged goods went for one mark (57 US cents) an item.

All are painted in military green or camouflage colours

Buyers are advised they should repaint them and they must remove the military markings.

Unless you're an Allied country, tanks and other military gear are not for sale. If there's no takers, such items are sold for scrap.

Hirschman said buyers are closely watched to ensure the items are "demilitarised" or cut up to make sure they're no longer dangerous.

Need an old desk, book shelves or dishes? At a recent sale in Nuremberg, a vast amount of such damaged goods went for one mark (57 US cents) an item.

We don't make any money at one mark apiece, but we're

avoiding the cost of taking it to a landfill, which is quite expensive in Germany," Hirschman said.

For more than 40 years of Cold War, the United States spent hundreds of billions of dollars on equipment to be ready for war and to keep hundreds of thousands of troops and their families in Europe.

Now with arms reduction treaties between the United States and Russia and the US troop strength in Europe being cut from 313,000 in the late 1980s to 100,000 by the end of 1996, there's a huge backlog of excess property. It's mainly in Germany where most troops

were based.

Only about 20 per cent of the vehicles will go back to the United States for use by the military. It takes about 200 US Army people to keep track of what comes and goes at the vehicle depot, 56 kilometers (35 miles) south of Heidelberg.

Last year we shipped out more than 12,000 pieces of rolling stock and took in 6,500 pieces," said Col. William Kyle of the army's 29th Area Support Group.

What they can't sell or give to friendly nations goes to the Army's marketing organisation, which has 28 offices in Europe to organise sales to civilians.

The US Army isn't the only

## Off the Record

### Dog survives death penalty

HACKENSACK (New Jersey): A dog accused of biting a 10-year-old girl was released from death row Thursday on the condition that it leave the state and never return, reports AP.

Taro, a 50-kilo (110-pound) Akita owned by Lonnie and Sandy Lehrer, had been held by the county sheriff since early 1991 after it injured the couple's niece on Christmas, 1990.

Howorth town officials said Taro bit the girl's lip and demanded that it be put down. The Lehrers said the girl had teased the Akita as it slept and that the girl had been only scratched, not bitten.

An estimated 100,000 dollars in legal fees and three years later, New Jersey governor Christine Whitman signed an executive order saying the dog could be freed, if it left the state.

The dog is going to the home of a New York woman who has promised the Lehrers unlimited visits.

### Because their bones are less dense

BOSTON: Women who smoke cigarettes have a greater risk of fractures because their bones are less dense, a study to be released Thursday said, reports AFP.

The report in the New England Journal of Medicine by Australian researchers John Hopper and Ego Seeman of the University of Melbourne found compelling evidence of an association between smoking and reduced bone density in women.

Although the study did not reach a conclusion on why smoking reduced bone density, the researchers speculated that tobacco can interfere with estrogen production in the body.

Earlier studies have found similar links between smoking and fractures in men. But brittle bones, or osteoporosis, pose a greater health risk for women.

An editorial published with the study said the findings should encourage doctors to continue to emphasise the risks of smoking.

Whether the prospect of a dowager's hump of a disability due to a hip fracture will provide a stronger incentive to stop smoking than the prospect of long cancer is unknown, said the editorial by Dr Charles Slemmons of Indiana University.

### Schmidt seeks apology for quoting from Hitler

OTTAWA: Werner Schmidt stood up in the Canadian parliament Thursday to apologise for quoting Adolf Hitler in his electoral district party newsletter, reports Reuter.

The unfortunate reference in the newsletter's famous quotes section reproduced the Nazi leader's words: 'What luck for rulers that men do not think.'

The quote sparked a public outcry by the Jewish community. Schmidt is a member of the right-wing Reform Party.

"I was not aware of, nor do I condone the inclusion of the quotation in the newsletter," Schmidt told the House of Commons. "This will not happen again."

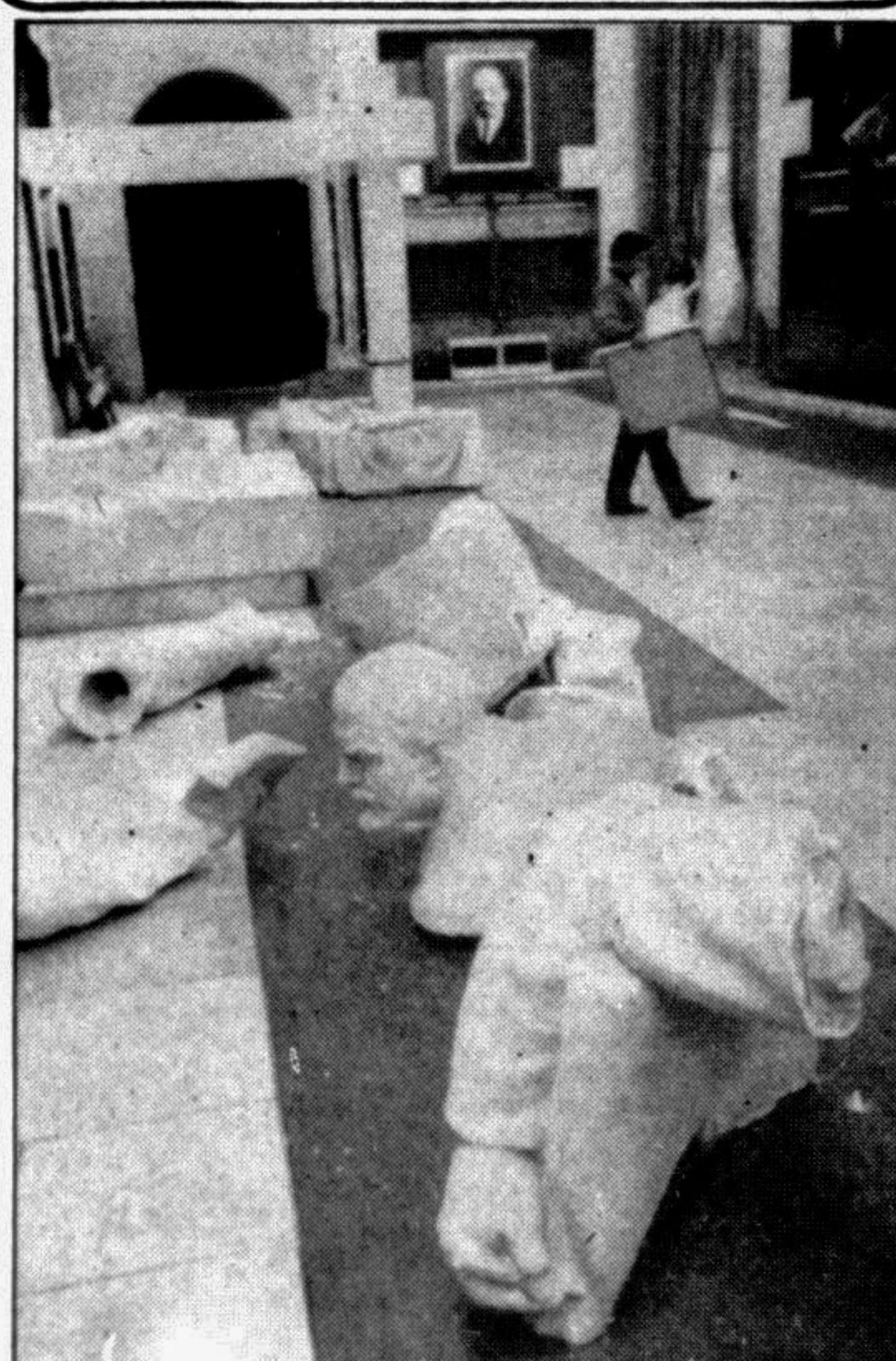
Schmidt is a member of parliament for Okanagan Centre in British Columbia, where he won the elections in November for the new Reform Party led by western populist Preston Manning.

### Doctors able to discover sex of foetus

LONDON: British doctors reported on Friday they were able to discover the sex of a foetus as early as four weeks and five days after conception, reports Reuter.

Many women do not even realise they are pregnant at this early stage and the sex of the baby is not usually determined until about 16 weeks into pregnancy.

Writing in the Lancet medical journal, a team at St Mary's Hospital Medical School in London said their test involved looking for DNA sequences from the Y chromosome in foetal cells present in the mother's blood.



A museum's worker, carrying removed picture frames, walks behind a disassembled statue of Lenin at the former Lenin's museum, in Moscow on Thursday. All statues, pictures and other Lenin items have to be removed from this building but officials are encountering one major problem — where to find a large enough store-house to keep them.

— AFP photo

## 3 Asian films nominated for Academy Awards

BEVERLY HILLS, California Feb 11: Three Asian films were nominated for best foreign film Wednesday for the Academy Awards to be handed out next month, reports AFP.

The nominations were

"Farewell, My Concubine" (Hong Kong), a tale of life in the Beijing opera, "The Scent of Green Papaya" (Vietnam)

about a girl growing up in Vietnam during the war, and

"The Wedding Banquet" (Taiwan), a comedy about a gay man who marries in order to hide his homosexuality.

Other nominations included

"Belle Epoque" of Spain and "Hedd Wyn," a Welsh-language film from the United Kingdom.

The Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences will present the 66th annual Academy Awards in Hollywood on March 21.

## Leghari calls for national consensus

LAHORE, Feb 11: President

Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari today said that all political leaders should develop a consensus of opinion to resolve issues of national security, economy and education to crane out the nation from crises that it has been facing due to perennial neglect and inattention, reports AFP.

The German government is auctioning off vehicles and other property Germany paid for in support of US, British and French forces over the years in West Berlin. The Berliner Zeitung newspaper reported Wednesday that an old Volkswagen van sold for 860 dollars at a recent auction.

Addressing as chief guest at the inauguration of Akhwan Science College in the suburban area of Punjab capital, the president said that abysmally poor literacy rate is the basic hurdle towards national development.