

# BRIEFLY

**Colombian violence claims 25:** At least 25 people were killed in violence at the weekend in the provinces of Atlantico, Bolivar and Antioquia in Colombia, official reports said on Monday. Xinhua reports from Bogota.

In Barranquilla, capital of Atlantico, 11 people were killed in isolated incidents between Friday and Sunday while seven others died and more than 20 were injured in violence in Cartagena in the department of Bolivar.

According to another report, seven people were assassinated in the municipality of Bello and northeastern Medellin. Colombian authorities blamed the killings on members of the popular militias.

**Storm kills 9 in China:** Nine people were killed and 279 injured in a hailstorm which lashed China's southern province of Jiangxi on April 7, the Workers' Daily said yesterday. AFP reports from Beijing.

The storm in Boyang County damaged 50,000 houses, the paper added. More than 10,000 hectares (24,700 acres) of crops were also destroyed.

**Egypt extends emergency law:** The Egyptian parliament extended emergency law for three years on Monday after the overwhelming majority of members accepted the government's argument that it need the law as a weapon against political violence. Reuter reports from Cairo.

Emergency law, which gives the security forces broad powers of arrest and detention, has been in force since Muslim militants assassinated President Anwar Sadat in 1981.

Twelve of the 458 members voted against the extension on the grounds either that it was unnecessary or that the government used the law against its non-violent opponents.

**94 Rwandan orphans reach Paris:** Ninety-four Rwandan orphans rescued by soldiers from a home near Kigali arrived in Paris Monday night on a military evacuation flight, airport authorities said. AFP reports from Paris.

The children were evacuated Sunday by French paratroopers from their orphanage in Masaka near the Rwandan capital, the scene of ethnic bloodletting which has claimed thousands of lives since Thursday.

French families have already come forward to adopt some of the children.

**3 Algerian militants to die:** Three Islamic fundamentalist militants were sentenced to death in absentia yesterday by a special court in the eastern city of Constantine, judicial officials said, reports AFP from Algiers.

Another 23 Islamic militants were given life sentences—22 of them in absentia.

Sixteen, including two still at large, were jailed for between one and 20 years.

## ROK seeks int'l support to resolve N-crisis

SEOUL, Apr 12: Foreign Minister Han Sung-joo left for Japan, Russia and Western Europe Tuesday, seeking help in resolving the North Korean nuclear crisis, reports AP.

Han's first stop was Tokyo to meet with Hans Blix, director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

South Korean officials declined to disclose details of Tuesday's meeting with Blix, who is in Tokyo attending an international nuclear conference.

The UN agency's inspectors were barred from a North Korean nuclear facility in March, prompting the IAEA to refer the issue to the UN Security Council, which adopted a non-binding statement urging North Korea to allow full inspections.

US and South Korean officials say the Council may take stronger action, such as adopting a binding resolution if North Korea refuses to comply within a month or so.

Communist North Korea's refusal of full inspections has deepened suspicion that it is developing nuclear weapons.

**Iran praises NATO's air strikes against Serbs**

ISLAMABAD, Apr 12: In a rare compliment to the West, Iran on Tuesday praised NATO's air attacks against Bosnian Serb positions outside the embattled city of Gorazde, reports AP.

"We are happy with this attack," said Iran's powerful Parliamentary Speaker, Ali Akbar Naezi Nouri. "But how far it will go to stop the aggression remains to be seen."

Addressing a heavily guarded news conference at the end of a two-day official visit to Pakistan, Nouri said Iran is waiting to see how far NATO is prepared to go to protect the UN-designated safe havens in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Twice in as many days, US fighter jets under NATO command have struck at Bosnian Serb forces attacking Gorazde in eastern Bosnia.

The Clinton administration also announced that it was preparing to extend its NATO role to other "safe areas" in Bosnia.

Nouri said Iran's offer to send 10,000 soldiers to Bosnia-Herzegovina to participate in the UN peacekeeping force has been turned down.

"Unfortunately the international society because of the ability of the Iranian forces has rejected that offer," he said through an interpreter. He did not elaborate.

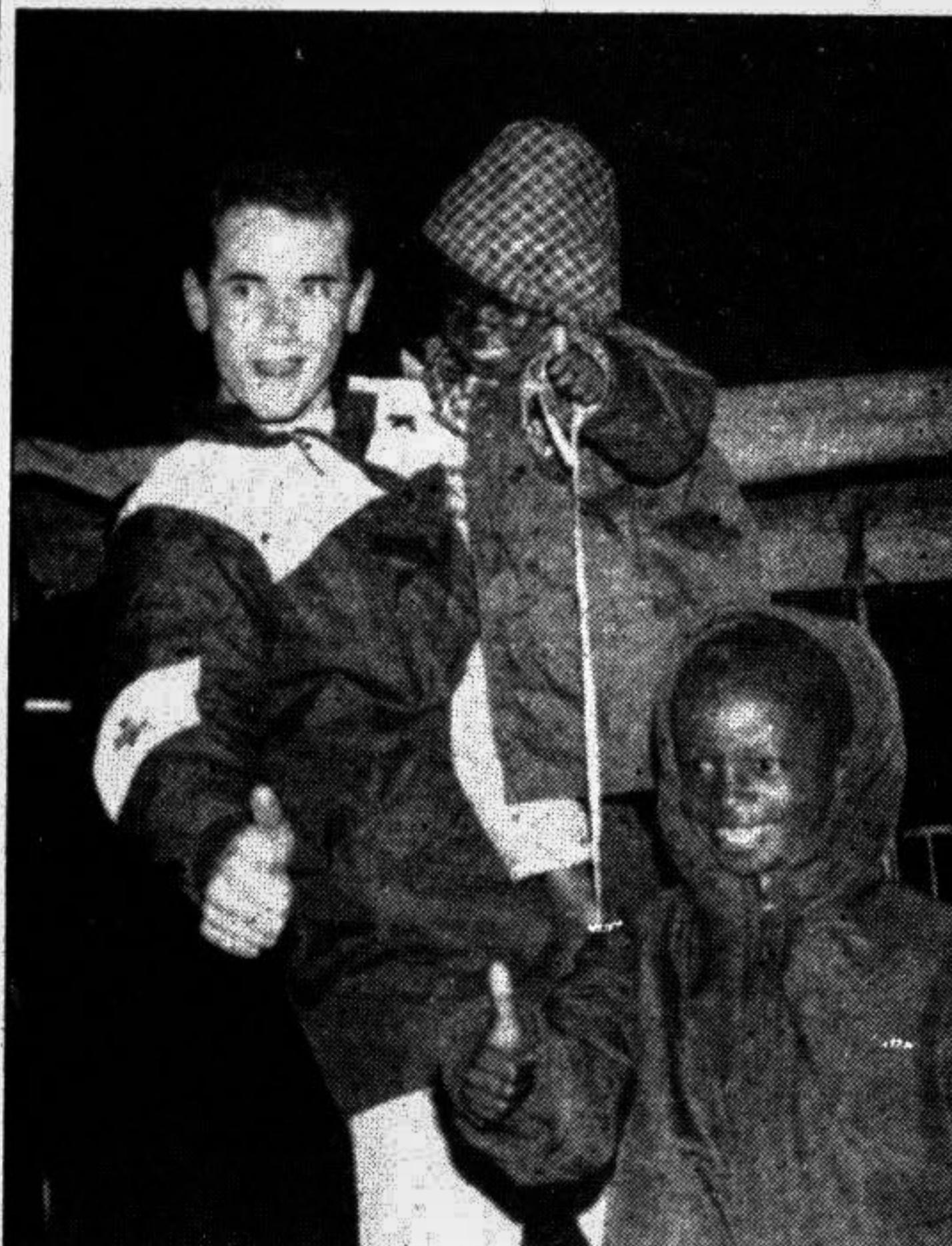
The United Nations has been cautious about accepting Muslim peacekeepers fearing a backlash from Serbs, who are waging a vicious battle against the Muslim-dominated Bosnian government.

Pakistan is sending 3,000 soldiers to Bosnia to participate in the peacekeeping op-

# International

Ethnic warfare leaves 20,000 dead in a week

## UN fails to broker ceasefire in Rwanda again



A red cross worker hugs a Rwandan orphan as his comrade flashes a victory sign following their arrival at Roissy airport, Paris Suburbs late Monday. They were part of 94 orphans rescued by French paratroopers from their orphanage in Masaka near the Rwandan capital, the scene of ethnic bloodletting, which claimed thousands of lives since Thursday.

— AFP photo

KIGALI, Apr 12: UN efforts to broker a ceasefire between the rebels and the army failed again in Rwanda, as grisly reports of vicious massacres and rampant lawlessness continue to pour out of the Central African country, reports AP.

Nearly a week of ethnic warfare has left an estimated 20,000 dead, and the air was heavy with the stench of thousands of corpses and smoke from villages burned by marauders.

The rebel Rwandan Patriotic Front told Africa No. 1 Radio its forces had advanced into Kigali and would not sign a truce.

"We have not signed any ceasefire agreement and we don't intend to do it," said Christine Omotonyi and Bosco Butera, members of the RPF's political bureau in Kampala, Uganda.

The RPF's Radio Muhabura, monitored by the British Broadcasting Corp, said the rebels could not sign an agreement with a government it does not recognise.

The bloodshed that began last week is a grisly outgrowth of a decades-long feud between majority Hutus and minority Tutsis. The violence, which erupted after the presidents of Rwanda and neighbouring Burundi died in a plane crash Wednesday, has ruined a fragile peace between the Hutu-led government and the Tutsi-led rebels.

The two groups' hatred runs so deep that marauders

have attacked hospitals, slaughtering people as they lay on their cots.

Automatic weapons fire echoed through Kigali on Monday, and rebel troops at a stadium and government troops at the parliament building exchanged mortar and machine-gun fire.

"From the roof of the French school, while evacuees were being loaded on trucks, you could look across a valley and see people, especially women, being hauled out of houses and being beaten to death on the road," Mark Huband, a reporter for the London guardian, said by telephone.

The fighting has also spread outside the capital.

In Butare, Rwanda's second-largest city 50 miles (80 kms) south of Kigali, refugees from the countryside told of gangs of men setting fire to villages and hacking residents to death with machetes.

Hutu gunmen killed "several hundred" Tutsis at the Seventh Day Adventist University of Central Africa in Gisenyi, 60 miles (90 kms) north of Kigali, a church spokesman said Tuesday in Paris.

All foreign students, about 300 of them, plus 39 foreign teachers and the American dean, Robert G. Pierson, were evacuated Sunday toward Zaire, and 50 missionaries were evacuated to Burundi, he said.

## Court orders arrest of Imelda on graft charges

MANILA, Apr 12: An anti-graft court today ordered the arrest of former Philippine First Lady Imelda Marcos following the filing of two new criminal cases for allegedly pocketing 100 million pesos (3.6 million dollars) in public money, reports AFP.

The latest order by Justice Francisco Garchitorena, however, is not likely to put the widow of deposed dictator Ferdinand Marcos in prison as government prosecutors recommended a 200,000 peso bail for her temporary freedom.

Garchitorena was the same judge who convicted her last September of up to 24 years in jail on another set of graft charges.

But the 64-year-old widow, who faces dozens of other cases for allegedly helping her husband loot the Philippines during a 20-year rule, remains free while her lawyers appeal the verdict.



Imelda Marcos

## Russia, Ukraine start talks on Black Sea Fleet

KIEV, Apr 12: A high-level Russian delegation began talks in the Ukrainian capital Tuesday to defuse a conflict over control of the Black Sea Fleet and the takeover of a naval base in Odessa, reports AP.

Russia accused Ukraine on Monday of storming the Odessa base, beating civilians and arresting three officers. Ukraine acknowledged taking over the facility but denied using violence, calling Moscow's claims "open lies."

Although the incident raised tensions, both former Soviet republics appeared to be trying to resolve it quickly. The Black Sea Fleet, which consists of about 300 small and medium-sized ships, was the pride of the Soviet navy and is now jointly controlled by Ukraine and Russia.

## Off the Record

### Zhirinovsky spits at Jewish students

STRASBOURG, France: Russian nationalist leader Vladimir Zhirinovsky on Monday spat and hurled stones and dirt at Jewish students demonstrating against anti-Semitism, and for good measure threatened them with an "atomic pistol," reports Reuter.

Some 100 protesters from the French Jewish students union assembled outside the Russian consulate in the eastern city of Strasbourg, where Zhirinovsky earlier railed against the West in a speech to the parliamentary assembly of the council of Europe.

"I'll break your heads," he screamed in French from behind the fence of the consulate where he is staying as many of the demonstrators chanted: "Zhirinovsky, neo-Nazi."

Zhirinovsky spat in the faces of some of the demonstrators before picking up pieces of earth and gravel from the garden of the consulate and hurling them at the students.

"I'll kill you with my atomic pistol," he shouted.

France has warned Zhirinovsky he faces expulsion if he makes trouble. To show its displeasure at his presence in the official Russian delegation, Paris has told him he may only stay for the one week of the session and may not leave Strasbourg.

### Mother loses bid to get son back from gay couple

SEATTLE: A woman who gave up custody of her son, then tried to get him back after he was placed with homosexual foster parents, has no grounds for her case, a court ruled Monday, reports AP.

The three-judge state Court of Appeals ruled unanimously that Megan Lucas of Orcas Island lacked standing to file a petition to adopt the 3-year-old boy because she had already given up custody.

The decision reversed a ruling by a lower court judge, Steve Mura, who said the boy could be placed with Lucas while the state evaluated whether she could adopt him.

Lucas an unmarried teen-age mother, surrendered her parental rights on September 8, 1992, after a history of child neglect, drug and alcohol abuse. She filed a request to reverse the decision on September 9, 1993—a day too late under state law. That left adoption her only chance.

### Police asked to say 'cheese' all the time

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### Octavia ceases to live in captivity

LOS ANGELES: A giant octopus was found dead in an empty tank at a sea aquarium after the animal apparently pulled out a drain pipe during the night, reports AP.

"We thought for sure that this would be well beyond her capabilities," said Mike Schadt, exhibits director at Cabrillo Marine Aquarium.

The 58-pound (826-kg) sea creature with 12-foot (4-meter) arms was found dead Monday in its 600-gallon (2,300-litre) tank, which was about 6 feet (2 meters) wide and 4 feet (1.3 meters) high.

The drain pipe was a 2-inch (5-cm) diameter tube extending from the bottom of the tank to near the top to catch overflow.

"She actually pulled the drain pipe out of her tank and it drained the water out of her tank. This happened last night some time," Schadt said.

The pipe had been glued in place, he said.

Animal-rights activists blamed the stress of captivity for the death of the sea creature they had named Octavia.

"We warned the aquarium that this would happen ... that the stress would be too much for her," said Lisa Lange, spokeswoman for People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals in Washington.

The organisation demanded an independent examination of the carcass, claiming that before the octopus' death, its usual orange-red colour had given way to white in what they said was a sign of stress.



Undated file picture of the British aircraft carrier HMS Ark Royal which, it was revealed on Monday, was targeted by Greek terrorists armed with anti-tank rockets while docked in Piraeus recently. The rockets failed to ignite, possibly because rain fouled the timers. It is thought that the ultra-nationalist November 17 guerrilla group was behind the thwarted attack, which could be linked with Britain's support for strikes against Bosnian Serbs. — AFP photo

## Khmers reject Hun Sen's call for truce

PHNOM PENH, Apr 12: One of Cambodia's co-premiers has called for a ceasefire to mark the Cambodian New Year, but a spokesman for the Khmer Rouge group rejected the idea Tuesday, reports AP.

Second Premier Hun Sen, in a videotaped message shown on state television Monday night, said his government was seeking an unconditional ceasefire starting Wednesday—New Year's Day—to allow people to celebrate.

If the Khmer Rouge leaders don't agree, we would like Khmer Rouge officers and soldiers to lay down their weapons and come to take part in Ang Kunk and Chhok Choung (traditional festive plays), said Hun Sen.

A spokesman at the Khmer Rouge office in Phnom Penh

told The Associated Press his group could not accept a ceasefire.

A statement issued Tuesday by the Khmer Rouge office in Phnom Penh, purporting to summarise military activity over the previous three days, claimed that its forces had "completely liberated" the area from Pailin west to the Thai border.

It also said the group had captured 350 government soldiers and retaken Sala Kao village, 10 kilometers (six miles) north of Pailin town.

The Khmer Rouge claims were impossible to verify. The group's assertions in the past have often proved to be exaggerated or untrue.

The government's success last month in capturing Pailin—a vital economic lifeline for the Khmer Rouge since it serve as a center for the export of logs and gemstones to Thailand—called into question the group's strength.