

BRIEFLY

Arab League to mediate Yemen war:

The Arab League will send a delegation soon to mediate between the warring parties in Yemen and stop the current hostilities, a League official said on Sunday. Xinhua reports from Cairo.

In a statement issued on Sunday, the Arab League Assistant Secretary-General for Military Affairs said the situation in Yemen is grave but he remained optimistic about the new mediation attempt.

He added that solving the Yemen crisis is an Arab common responsibility, highlighting the Arab League resolution adopted at the emergency session in Cairo Saturday.

US to reverse policy on Haitians:

President Bill Clinton announced Sunday the United States would reverse its policy toward Haitian refugees and allow them to be screened for political asylum before they are repatriated, AFP reports from Washington.

Clinton also said Washington was stepping up diplomatic efforts to end the political standoff sparked by the September 1991 army ouster of Jean-Bertrand Aristide, Haiti's first democratically elected President.

The US president said he was naming Bill Gray, a former Pennsylvania Congressman, as his special envoy for Haiti.

Christopher in Mexico City:

US Secretary of State Warren Christopher arrived in Mexico City Sunday evening on his first official visit to Latin America and said US-Mexican relations are at an historic high point, AP reports from Mexico City.

Citing the recently enacted North American Free Trade Agreement, Christopher said the US-Mexican relationship is "stronger and better than it's ever been."

Christopher is here for a meeting of the US-Mexico Binational Commission, a Cabinet-level grouping that examines a broad range of cross-border issues each year.

Cuban pilot seeks asylum in US:

A Cuba commercial airline pilot diverted a Bahamian-bound plane carrying about 16 passengers, including Britons and Canadians, to Miami, where the pilot asked for political asylum Sunday, federal agents said, Reuter reports from Miami.

The plane landed about 5:15 pm (2115 GMT) at Miami International Airport, where federal agents were still interviewing those on board. Investigators said most of the passengers would probably be placed on another Nassau-bound flight, possibly late Sunday.

Many of the 16 or 17 people aboard the plane were vacationing British and Canadian citizens, who were on their way from Havana to Nassau, Bahama, the agents said.

Storms kill 165 Chinese:

Tornadoes and torrential rains killed at least 165 people in eastern China this month, including six farmers battered to death by hailstones as big as grapefruit, the official China daily said, reports Reuter from Beijing.

The storms, which swept across Jiangxi and Fujian provinces from May 1-3, displaced hundreds of thousands of people and caused an estimated 1.4 billion yuan (160 million dollar) in economic losses, it said.

Twenty-two farmers were struck dead by lightning working in their fields. Six others were killed directly by hail, 15 centimetres (six inches) in diameters, the paper said.

5 more Tamil rebels killed: Government troops killed five Tamil guerrillas in an ambush in Northeast Sri Lanka, a military spokesman said yesterday, AFP reports from Colombo.

Troops surprised the five guerrillas from the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in Kattaparichan, Trincomalee district, late Sunday, the spokesman said. There were no casualties among troops in the brief firefight. Two automatic weapons were seized from the guerrillas.

The army ambush came a day after LTTE rebels killed seven security personnel in two separate attacks in the island's north which is largely controlled by the Tiger rebels.

2 French killed in Algeria:

Gunmen killed two French nationals on Sunday in an Algiers marketplace, security services said, AFP reports from Algiers.

They were identified as Henri Verges, 64 and Paul Heleve Raymond, 67. The security services said they worked as librarians. Islamic fundamentalists late last year warned foreigners to leave Algeria or face death.

The country has been torn by political violence since the army intervened in January 1992 to cancel second-round elections that the now-banned Islamic Salvation Front was poised to win.

Karens end fighting

YANGON, May 9: The Karenni National People's Liberation Front, an ethnic minority group, gave up their fight against the government in a formal ceremony Monday, the government news agency said, reports AP.

The front had about 1,800 fighters operating in Kayah State, which borders Thailand in the east. The news agency said more than 300 rebel officers attended the ceremony in Loikaw, the state capital 220 miles (350 kilometres) north-east of Yangon, where top officers of the ruling junta received them.

The report said the front's leader, Tun Kyaw, shook hands with government military commanders, then sat down with junta officer Lt. Gen. Khin Nyunt to plan how the two sides would jointly develop the area.

The front is the 11th rebel group to give up fighting, allowing the junta to solidify its control of the country. The junta came to power after crushing pro-democracy demonstrations in 1988.

One of the most powerful groups, the Kachins, made peace with the government in February. Two smaller ethnic minority rebel groups, the Mons and another Karenni group, are engaged in peace talks with the government.

Yangon to attend ASEAN meet

YANGON, May 9: Myanmar has accepted an invitation to attend the ASEAN foreign ministers meeting for the first time, diplomatic sources said Monday, reports AP.

The invitation leader was handed over in April by Thai Foreign Minister Prasong Soonsiri, chairman of the ASEAN standing committee. Myanmar's Foreign Minister Ohn Gayaw is expected to attend the ASEAN meeting, to be held in July in Bangkok, Thailand, Thailand, Indonesia, the Philippines, Malaysia, Brunei and Singapore make up the association of Southeast Asian Nations.

He will be sworn in before, Pretoria's union buildings — a monument to faded white power — on Tuesday.

His 27 years behind bars, mostly on notorious Robben Island penal colony, made him the world's most celebrated political prisoner and a leader

of almost superhuman stature for millions of black South Africans shackled by apartheid. He stood on the steps to the scaffold for fighting apartheid, but was condemned to a lifetime in jail instead. His aged mother and elder son died while he was in prison and he was not allowed to attend their funerals.

The stress of the long struggle against white minority rule contributed to the breakdown of his marriage to the love of his life, Winnie, and they parted tearfully with victory — and an old age alone — beckoning.

"The wounds you cannot see are the most painful," he told Reuters during a visit to Robben Island that was the emotional highlight of his election campaign.

Almost everyone who meets Mandela remarks on his amazing lack of bitterness over



Russian President Boris Yeltsin (L) shares a laugh with Defence Minister Pavel Grachev (C) after laying a wreath on Monday at the tomb of the unknown soldier next to the Kremlin in Moscow. On the right, wearing a general's uniform, is Alexander Korzhakov, chief of the presidential security. — AFP photo

Police on high alert in Jerusalem

JERUSALEM, May 9: Police were on high alert Monday to prevent attacks by Arab extremists as thousands of Jews thronged Jerusalem, celebrating the 27 years Israel has ruled the entire city, reports AP.

"I see Jerusalem united and as Israel's capital and under Israeli sovereignty for as long as one can see," Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin said at the opening of Jerusalem Day celebrations Sunday night.

Rabin reaffirmed Israel's claim to Jerusalem as its "eternal capital." Israelis marked the capture of the eastern part of the city — including the Western Wall, the holiest site in Judaism — in the 1967 Mideast war.

The celebrations came as Palestinian police prepared to enter the Gaza Strip and Jericho in the West Bank as the first step in the Israel-PLO self-rule accord.

Palestinians hope the accord will to their own state, with Jerusalem as its capital. Over 2,000 police and paramilitary border police took up posts throughout Jerusalem to protect the crowds visiting the predominantly Arab eastern half, police spokeswoman said.

At the Western Wall, Jewish seminar students danced "hora" circle dances and waved blue and white Israeli flags. Some slept on the ground, cradling assault rifles in their arms after night of dancing and prayer.

"Standing here I said to myself, 'could they give this back?' They could never do it because there would be such

an outcry," said Ahinoam Levinson, a 17-year student from Kefar Pines in central Israel.

Thousands of Jewish settlers are scheduled to march along the city's main Jaffa Road to the Western Wall later Monday for a fireworks celebration.

Arab merchants kept their shops shut as Palestinians held a general strike to mark the monthly anniversary of the start of their revolt against Israeli rule in the occupied territories. It began December 9, 1987.

Israel and the Palestinians have left Jerusalem as among the last issues to be negotiated in their peace talks. The Palestinians say east Jerusalem is their cultural and religious capital, noting it includes the Al-Aqsa mosque, the third

holiest site in Islam. Rabin has said before that Jerusalem is not negotiable, but in recent months opposition critics have slammed the government for allowing the Palestinians to set up political institutions in the city.

The police kept worshippers from praying at the Western Wall on several occasions to prevent violent attacks on Jews following the February 25 Hebron mosque massacre, in which Jewish settler massacred 30 Palestinian worshippers.

Palestinians have complained that closure in effect since wave of attacks on Israelis last month has cut West Bank and Gaza residents off from Jerusalem's religious sites, schools, political institutions and hospitals.

ing Arnulfista Party was in second place with 28 per cent, the tribunal said. She is the widow of the late Arnulfo Arias de la Madrid, a popular president elected three times and thrown out every time by coups.

Salsa singer-actor Ruben Blades, who campaigned by holding concerts featuring his popular music and calling for a break with past politics and parties, was in third with 18.1 per cent of the vote. He said he would not concede until final numbers were in.

Ruben Dario Carles, a former government comptroller, was in fourth place with 16.7 per cent of the vote.

Each of the other three candidates garnered less than 2 per cent.

George Peppard

LOS ANGELES, May 9: Actor George Peppard, whose career stretched from "How the West Was Won" to television's "The A-Team," died Sunday of respiratory complications. He was 65, reports AP.

Peppard died at the University of California, Los Angeles Medical Center, said his publicist, Cheryl J. Kagan.

Peppard's television career included starring roles on the NBC detective show "Banacek" from 1972-74 and the NBC medical drama "Doctors Hospital" from 1975-76. He played military mercenary Hannibal Smith on NBC's "The A-Team" from 1983-87.

He starred opposite Audrey Hepburn in the film "Breakfast at Tiffany's," and appeared in "How the West Was Won" and "Damnation Alley."

He was twice married and divorced from actress Elizabeth Ashley, who co-starred with him in "The Carpetbaggers."

Peppard is survived by his wife Laura, and children Julie, Brad and Christian.

ANC members of Parliament, including the proposed Minister of Defence Joe Modise (R), Minister of Sport Steve Tshwete (L) and Winnie Mandela (C) chat in the Assembly Chamber in Cape Town on Sunday

the past. His devotion to racial reconciliation to heal the scars of apartheid is real. In conversation he will often look past the uniforms of his jailers to note their humanity. He sees good sides to people the more radical freedom fighters cannot bear even to look at.

Friends adore him. Political opponents find it hard to fault him. People talk of his humanity, kindness, attention and dignity. His memory for faces, names and incidents and his apparent caring impress people who have only met him fleetingly.

Many wonder at his energy. Unable to shake the habits of his younger years as a heavy weight boxer, he gets up between 4 and 5 am and works out on his exercise bicycle. He works till late, often past midnight. He drinks little alcohol, eats healthily with a lot of fruit in his diet and is a mili-

tant anti-smoker. Some friends fear he works too hard, but Mandela shrugs them off. He once told a western diplomat friend his body had not been used for 27 years so it had plenty of wear left.

Mandela cuts a lonely figure, balanced unsteadily between political party leader and icon of the world's huddled masses.

Some outside critics question his leadership saying he often seems to go with the stream. Insiders say Mandela shows steel when necessary, that he can be stubborn in his convictions.

Charged with capital offences in the infamous Rivonia trial his long statement from the dock became his political testimony.

Accused of being a communist and a terrorist, he said he was an African patriot whose basic struggle was for

Russia celebrates WW II victory

MOSCOW, May 9: Russia marked the World War II victory over fascism Monday amid fading memories of wartime glory and fears the enemy has arisen this time from within, reports AP.

As President Boris Yeltsin presided over official ceremonies at Victory Park on the edge of Moscow, thousands of hard-liners conjuring up visions of Weimar Germany gathered for a peaceful downtown rally.

"Victory or death!" demonstrators chanted. Many carried red Soviet flags and portraits of Josef Stalin.

"Hitler's plans to destroy the USSR have been fulfilled by Yeltsin and other politicians," one banner said.

Yeltsin, praising veterans as people who "reject hysterics, panics and cheap demagoguery," acknowledged the past few years "have been most difficult for all of us."

Rabin has said before that Jerusalem is not negotiable, but in recent months opposition critics have slammed the government for allowing the Palestinians to set up political institutions in the city.

The police kept worshippers from praying at the Western Wall on several occasions to prevent violent attacks on Jews following the February 25 Hebron mosque massacre, in which Jewish settler massacred 30 Palestinian worshippers.

Palestinians have complained that closure in effect since wave of attacks on Israelis last month has cut West Bank and Gaza residents off from Jerusalem's religious sites, schools, political institutions and hospitals.

ing Arnulfista Party was in second place with 28 per cent, the tribunal said. She is the widow of the late Arnulfo Arias de la Madrid, a popular president elected three times and thrown out every time by coups.

Salsa singer-actor Ruben Blades, who campaigned by holding concerts featuring his popular music and calling for a break with past politics and parties, was in third with 18.1 per cent of the vote. He said he would not concede until final numbers were in.

Ruben Dario Carles, a former government comptroller, was in fourth place with 16.7 per cent of the vote.

Each of the other three candidates garnered less than 2 per cent.

George Peppard

LOS ANGELES, May 9: Actor George Peppard, whose career stretched from "How the West Was Won" to television's "The A-Team," died Sunday of respiratory complications. He was 65, reports AP.

Peppard died at the University of California, Los Angeles Medical Center, said his publicist, Cheryl J. Kagan.

Peppard's television career included starring roles on the NBC detective show "Banacek" from 1972-74 and the NBC medical drama "Doctors Hospital" from 1975-76. He played military mercenary Hannibal Smith on NBC's "The A-Team" from 1983-87.

He starred opposite Audrey Hepburn in the film "Breakfast at Tiffany's," and appeared in "How the West Was Won" and "Damnation Alley."

He was twice married and divorced from actress Elizabeth Ashley, who co-starred with him in "The Carpetbaggers."

Peppard is survived by his wife Laura, and children Julie, Brad and Christian.

ANC members of Parliament, including the proposed Minister of Defence Joe Modise (R), Minister of Sport Steve Tshwete (L) and Winnie Mandela (C) chat in the Assembly Chamber in Cape Town on Sunday

the past. His devotion to racial reconciliation to heal the scars of apartheid is real. In conversation he will often look past the uniforms of his jailers to note their humanity. He sees good sides to people the more radical freedom fighters cannot bear even to look at.

Friends adore him. Political opponents find it hard to fault him. People talk of his humanity, kindness, attention and dignity. His memory for faces, names and incidents and his apparent caring impress people who have only met him fleetingly.

Many wonder at his energy. Unable to shake the habits of his younger years as a heavy weight boxer, he gets up between 4 and 5 am and works out on his exercise bicycle. He works till late, often past midnight. He drinks little alcohol, eats healthily with a lot of fruit in his diet and is a mili-

tant anti-smoker. Some friends fear he works too hard, but Mandela shrugs them off. He once told a western diplomat friend his body had not been used for 27 years so it had plenty of wear left.

Mandela cuts a lonely figure, balanced unsteadily between political party leader and icon of the world's huddled masses.

Some outside critics question his leadership saying he often seems to go with the stream. Insiders say Mandela shows steel when necessary, that he can be stubborn in his convictions.

Charged with capital offences in the infamous Rivonia trial his long statement from the dock became his political testimony.

Accused of being a communist and a terrorist, he said he was an African patriot whose basic struggle was for

US official for Indo-Pak talks on Kashmir issue

KARACHI, May 9: Consul General of the United States at Karachi Richard C. Faulk said on Sunday that both Pakistan and India should initiate a dialogue to solve the outstanding Kashmir issue, reports AP.

Faulk was speaking at a farewell lunch hosted by Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) in his honour at a local hotel.

Faulk in reply to a question said America was equally concerned about reports of human rights violation in Kashmir. He said during recent visit the US Secretary of State had persuaded both the countries to initiate a dialogue to solve Kashmir issue.

He said that his country was equally concerned about nuclear proliferation issue in this part of the world and wanted to solve it.

Meanwhile, Xinhua reports from New Delhi: Indian former prime minister Chandra Shekar has said that it was not very dignified for the prime minister to visit the United States at the moment since the US administration had been blatantly interfering in the internal affairs of the country.

Addressing a press conference in Calcutta on Sunday, Shekar said that reports indicate that Prime Minister Narashimha Rao would be under tremendous pressure of the US to sign the Non-Proliferation Treaty of nuclear weapons during his visit from May 16.

He also castigated the government for not resisting the sustained US campaign against India and said that it would be disastrous for the country if it succumbed to these pressures.

Off the Record

Dog bites Teresa

CALCUTTA: Mother Teresa, learning that not every creature responds well to human kindness has been given a rabies shot after being bitten by a dog, reports AP.

"It's not much. I have been given an injection by my physician," she said Monday, reached by telephone.

Last week, she bent over to pet a mongrel that normally sleeps outside the gate of the headquarters of her Missionaries of Charity, a worldwide organisation to help the poor.

The dog bit her on the finger.

Former Prime Minister Chandra Shekar first disclosed the incident Sunday when the Nobel laureate failed to attend a ceremony releasing a book about her.



Censors want love scene cut in 'Schindler's List'

BANGKOK: Moviegoers in Thailand, which has a huge sex industry, may not have a chance to see "Schindler's List" because the Police Censorship Board wants a brief love scene cut, reports AP.

Steven Spielberg's tale of heroism and the Holocaust, which won the Academy Award for best picture, was supposed to premiere in Bangkok last Saturday.

But the censorship board then wanted deletion of a scene showing Schindler making love with his mistress.

The premiere was rescheduled for May 14 while the distributor, United International Pictures, asked the board to reconsider.

If the board doesn't yield, the film will not be shown in Thailand because Spielberg has demanded that it either be shown in its entirety or not at all, said the marketing manager for United International Pictures, Surachit Chanowan.

The censorship board's decision may come on Wednesday, Surachit said Monday.

The board, which either deletes entire scenes or smears them with vaseline, is widely seen as out of touch with reality in Thailand, where prostitution and sex shows are widespread, and hard-core pornographic videos are easily bought on major streets.

Impotent men hide their 'disorder' from wives

JAKARTA: Eighty per cent of Indonesian men suffering from impotency are ashamed to let their wives go with them to therapy, the Antara news agency said Monday, reports Reuter.

Psychologist Darmanto Yatman, quoted by the agency, said most impotent men hid their "disorder" from their wives out of shame. He did not say how many Indonesians were impotent.

"If this condition continues, partial impotence may end up in total impotence," Yatman said.

He urged sufferers to bring their wives along to therapy.

Mississippi most restrictive state for abortion?

JACKSON, Mississippi: With the state's busiest abortion doctor suspended at least a year and his two clinics shut down, Mississippi may now be the most restrictive state for women seeking to end their pregnancies, reports AP.

The state now has only one operating abortion clinic, here in the capital city, but abortion foes are not easing off.

The noose is tightening on the one abortionist and the one clinic in the state, said Roy McMillan, who heads an anti-abortion organisation called the Christian Action Group. "We would like to see Mississippi as the first abortion-free state."

Just two other US states — North Dakota — and South Dakota — have only one licensed abortion clinic, according to the Alan Guttmacher Institute in New York. But Mississippi's population is twice that of the Dakotas combined.

In a two-day hearing last month, the Mississippi State Medical Licensure Board stripped the medical license of Dr Thomas Tucker II, who claims he performs 60-70 per cent of the 7,000 abortions done in Mississippi each year.

The board found him guilty on 32 of 34 counts involving falsified paperwork and faulty procedures at his clinics.

Lebanese PM boycotts govt meetings

BEIRUT, May 9: Lebanon's Prime Minister Rafic Hariri decided on Sunday to boycott government meetings in protest at the small numbers of Christian members represented on the body, reports AP.

A source close to Hariri said he will boycott government and parliament sessions for the time being, stressing that he was not resigning.

Hariri's boycott might trigger the country's first political crisis since he was appointed in October 1992.

His decision was taken after plans for a cabinet reshuffle to include more Christian figures were opposed, the source said.

Hariri, a Muslim Sunni, hopes to appoint more Christians in a bid to satisfy demands by the head of the Maronite Church, Monsignor Nasrallah Sfeir.

300 arrested in Karachi raids

ISLAMABAD, May 9: Some 300 persons were arrested in Saturday night raids in Karachi, a southern port city in Pakistan, following the recent turmoil which claimed dozens of lives, according to local press reports today, says Xinhua.

Police and other law enforcing agencies conducted raids on the offices of the Mohajir Qaumi Movement (MQM), a strong political party, which is responsible for the recent violence.

In some areas, the army and the police conducted house-to-house search, the reports said. Official sources claimed that they had arrested only those persons who were involved in the recent incidents of violence and disturbance in the city.

Meanwhile, about 35 youngsters were also arrested in Hyderabad.

From prison to presidency — a long march to freedom for Mandela

PRETORIA, May 9: From prison to the presidency, Nelson Mandela has reached the end of a long march to freedom, reports Reuter.

Along the way he acquired a special aura that put him in the pantheon of freedom with India's Mahatma Gandhi and America's Martin Luther King.

Unlike them, he will take office at the head of his liberated people — with all the risks that entails.

Entombment for a third of his life in apartheid's jails undoubtedly qualified Mandela for the role of South Africa's first black president.

He will be sworn in before Pretoria's union buildings — a monument to faded white power — on Tuesday.

His 27 years behind bars, mostly on notorious Robben Island penal colony, made him the world's most celebrated political prisoner and a leader

of almost superhuman stature for millions of black South Africans shackled by apartheid. He stood on the steps to the scaffold for fighting apartheid, but was condemned to a lifetime in jail instead. His aged mother and elder son died while he was in prison and he was not allowed to attend their funerals.

The stress of the long struggle against white minority rule contributed to the breakdown of his marriage to the love of his life, Winnie, and they parted tearfully with victory — and an old age alone — beckoning.

"The wounds you cannot see are the most painful," he told Reuters during a visit to Robben Island that was the emotional highlight of his election campaign.

Almost everyone who meets Mandela remarks on his amazing lack of bitterness over