

# BRIEFLY

## Jiang Zemin to meet Yeltsin:

Chinese President Jiang Zemin will meet Russian President Boris Yeltsin on September 2 in Moscow, China's official Xinhua news agency said yesterday. Reuter reports from Beijing.

Chinese Foreign Minister Qian Qichen announced the summit meeting's date at a Moscow news conference on Tuesday, Xinhua said.

Qian said the summit would focus on "furthering bilateral good-neighbourly and friendly relations" that he called "beneficial for peace and stability in the Asian-Pacific region and the rest of the world."

## Landslide claims 13 in India:

Thirteen persons including five women and six children were killed in a landslide near Parmachi village in the Varanda Ghat, about 18 kms from Mahad in Raigad district of Maharashtra last night, PTI reports from Alibag.

A total of seven houses were destroyed following the landslide, the district officials said.

The Raigad district collector Satish Gaval and district police chief Madhav Karve have rushed to the site while a platoon of State Reserve Police Force (SRPF) has entered in rescue operations, the officials said.

## Blast kills 2 in China:

A worker put a match to a gasoline leak, sparking an explosion that killed two, injured 33, and blew a taxi with three passengers 13 feet (4 meters) into the air, an official newspaper said Wednesday, AP reports from Beijing.

The China Daily said the gasoline was leaking into a stream in the southern city of Canton last Sunday. A migrant worker set a match to the stream, sparking a fire that travelled to an underground canal, igniting gas and methane, it said.

The explosion damaged surrounding buildings and knocked down a makeshift house, killing a 70-year-old woman inside, the newspaper said.

## 30 feared drowned in Bihar:

At least 30 people were feared drowned in the eastern state of Bihar in a weekend boat accident, Press Trust of India (PTI) said Tuesday quoting police sources, Reuter reports from New Delhi.

PTI said the boat was carrying 40 people when it capsized midstream in the Bagmati river on Sunday.

The agency said 10 people swam to shore and that six bodies have been recovered.

## Russian military jet crashes:

A Russian Sukhoi military aircraft crashed in a field of sugar beets in central Russia. Both crew members bailed out safely, but a local resident was lightly injured, a news agency reported Wednesday, AP reports from Moscow.

The Su-24 two-engine fighter bomber was flying to an air force base for planned maintenance, when it slammed into the ground and exploded Tuesday about 500 kilometers (300 miles) south of Moscow near the city of Voronezh, the ITAR-Tass news agency said.

A local resident was slightly injured with a minor concussion from shock waves from the aircraft.

## Quake jolts Tokyo:

A moderate earthquake jolted Tokyo and surrounding areas with a preliminary magnitude measurement of 5.3 Wednesday morning, the Central Meteorological Agency said, AP reports from Tokyo.

Railway officials said shinkansen or "bullet" trains linking Tokyo and northern Japan were temporarily stopped as workers checked tracks for damage. Officials at Tokyo's Haneda Airport were checking runways.

## DPRK stops propaganda against ROK president

SEOUL, June 29: A day after agreeing with its rival South Korea on a summit aimed at easing a half-century of bitter animosity, North Korea has halted its propaganda attacks against South Korean President Kim Young-sam, reports AP.

South Korean officials said Wednesday that North Korea's official radio and propaganda loudspeakers had stopped calling the South Korean leader a "traitor," "bandit," and "thief," in what they described as an encouraging sign for efforts to ease tensions between the two Koreas.

The Defence Ministry officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said the North halted the personal attacks just hours before it agreed Tuesday on a summit meeting of North Korean leader Kim Il Sung and the South Korean president.

The meeting is planned for July 25-27 in Pyongyang, North Korea's capital. The two presidents are to arrange the second session during their Pyongyang talks.

Summits have been proposed before and never actually held, and there was no guarantee this time would be different. The two Koreas are still technically at war since no peace treaty was signed at the end of the 1950-53 Korean War.

Still, hopes were high the presidents of the two Koreas would finally hold their first face-to-face talks since the division of the peninsula into communist North and capitalist South in 1945.

The two Koreas also agreed Tuesday to refrain from any actions that could ruin the atmosphere of the summit, and on Wednesday, North Korea

appeared to be observing that pledge.

The North's broadcasts did, however, continue programme criticising South Korea's capitalist system and protesting Seoul's handling of labour unrest.

News reports of the North's official Korean Central News Agency, which often carry vitriolic attacks against the South Korean government, on Wednesday carried mild, unembellished reports of the plans for the summit.

The dominant theme was "unity".

"Nothing can be an unsurmountable obstacle in reunifying the North and South as one nation and one state," it said.

## Ukraine to submit N-facilities to IAEA

VIENNA, June 29: Ukraine has agreed in principle to submit its nuclear facilities to the United Nations nuclear safeguards regime, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) said today, reports Reuter.

The draft agreement commits Ukraine, which has yet to sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) to use nuclear power solely for peaceful purposes and to open its facilities to regular IAEA inspection.

An IAEA spokesman called the agreement a "significant political step" but said Ukraine could not yet become a party to the NPT, which the safeguards regime supports, because it possessed atomic warheads.

## Inter-ministerial body to fight AIDS in Indonesia

JAKARTA, June 29: Indonesia, facing a growing spread of the deadly AIDS virus, said today it had set up an inter-ministerial commission to coordinate the fight against the disease, reports Reuter.

The official Antara news agency quoted Suyono Yahya, secretary at the office of the coordinating minister of People's Welfare, as saying the commission had been set up by President Suharto to "fight the spread and not the victims" of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome.

# OIC team rushes to Islamabad with Afghan peace plan

ISLAMABAD, June 29: A delegation from the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) has rushed to Islamabad with a draft plan for solving the conflict in Afghanistan, officials here said today, reports AFP.

Their arrival coincided with the end of the 18-month terms in office of President Burhanuddin Rabbani and his rival, Prime Minister Gulbuddin Hekmatyar.

The OIC team plans to invite all Afghan leaders to talks about a future administration for the country, the sources said.

Rabbani has refused to leave office and his forces have captured three key Kabul Bases from troops of Hekmatyar and his ally Uzbek warlord Abdul Rashid Dostum in weekend clashes.

Pakistan's Foreign Minister Sardar Assef Ahmed Ali told

reporters late Tuesday that Pakistan, Iran and Saudi Arabia had given their support to the OIC proposal for solving the crisis. But he did not elaborate on the plan.

The three countries were guarantors of the March 1993 accords that allotted Rabbani and Hekmatyar to rule for 18 months until June 28.

Asked whether Pakistan recognised Rabbani and Hekmatyar as the legitimate president and prime minister of Afghanistan, Ali said, "It is not a question of their recognition by Pakistan, anything that happens in Afghanistan after June 28 has no legitimacy."

He said the power should now be relegated to the leadership council comprising chiefs of the nine main Mujahideen factions who fought an anti-communist war for 14 years until the Najibullah regime collapsed in

April 1992 and different factions occupied Kabul.

Asked about a venue for talks on the country's future, Ali said Afghanistan was the best place, but Pakistan would be ready to host a conference if asked.

He appealed to Afghan leaders to stop fighting and sit down together to resolve their differences peacefully.

Official sources here said the OIC team will hold preliminary talks with leaders pending a full session later with Hamid al-Gabid, Secretary General of the 51-nation OIC, who is to arrive here next week.

Reuter reports: Afghan President Burhanuddin Rabbani called for a ceasefire today as his jets bombed opposition forces. He also urged Afghans to convene an assembly to decide the future government of the war-shattered

nation. "First of all I am announcing a general ceasefire as from tomorrow," Rabbani said in a radio address broadcast overnight. "I hope the other side will not fire rockets and mortars on the residential areas of Kabul."

Rabbani's speech came just hours after the Supreme Court, backed by leading Islamic clerics, decided he should remain in office for six months.

The court defended its decision saying an assault by forces loyal to Prime Minister Gulbuddin Hekmatyar on Kabul in early January to try to topple Rabbani had abrogated an agreement in May 1993 allowing each a one-year term.

The move to extend Rabbani's term followed four days of battlefield triumphs by presidential forces that have swept his opponents from positions in the capital.



Ricardo Mazalan, 29, an Argentinian photographer for AP, is treated by a Tunisian UN soldier and a friend before being transported to a hospital in Kigali on Tuesday. Mazalan was wounded by gunfire in his hotel room which is located near the frontline of fighting between Rwandan rebels and government forces.

— AFP photo

## Iran asks UAE to retract claims over Gulf islands

TEHRAN, June 29: Iran today urged the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to retract claims of sovereignty over three strategic Gulf islands to avoid tension, the official news agency Irna said, reports AFP.

A Foreign Ministry spokesman warned that "baseless claims" over the islands of Abu Mussa, Greater Tunb and Lesser Tunb were in the "interest of foreign powers and could mar regional stability," Irna reported.

UAE Foreign Minister Sheikh Hamdan Ben Zayed al-Nayhan said his country would never give up its claim to the islands, adding the row with

Iran had created an "obstacle to normalising relations."

The UAE should "avoid its territorial claims and respect the full sovereignty of neighbouring Iran" over the islands, the spokesman Mahmud Mohammadi said.

The islands lie at the entrance to the Hormuz Strait, through which one-fifth of the world's crude oil is shipped.

Mohammadi called for bilateral negotiations with the UAE over the issue "rather than publicising it," and for improving ties and cooperation.

Sheikh Hamdan challenged Iran to present historical doc-

uments to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in the Hague "proving its sovereignty over the islands."

The UAE has accused Iran of annexing Abu Mussa in 1992 which since 1971 had been jointly administered by Tehran and the Emirate of Sharja.

Negotiations opened in September 1992 in Abud Dhabi, but broke down after Tehran refused to discuss the status of the Tunbs.

Iranian President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani recently said "Enemies would have to pass through a sea of blood to get at the island."

## Arafat goes to Gaza tomorrow

CAIRO, June 29: PLO leader Yasser Arafat will go to Gaza on Friday and stay until about July 6, PLO official Nabil Shaath said today.

"Arafat will come to Cairo tomorrow and we will go to Gaza together on Friday," Shaath told Reuters.

"He will be there until his Paris appointment on the 6th," he added. "He will probably go to Jericho for a short time."

Arafat would travel to Gaza by road through the Rafah crossing point between Egypt and the Gaza Strip, he added.

Shaath, Minister of Planning and International Cooperation in the Palestinian National Authority, did not say why Arafat had taken such a sudden decision to make his long-awaited visit to the Palestinian self-rule areas. "He gave me the orders and I'm carrying them out," he said.



## 100 North Yemeni troops in India for treatment

NEW DELHI, June 29: About 100 North Yemeni troops wounded in the country's civil war have arrived in the western city of Bombay for medical treatment, an official said Wednesday, reports AP.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Arif Khan said India acceded to a request for medical help received from the North Yemen authorities.

The wounded troops arrived in a special North Yemen aircraft, Khan said.

India is ready to provide similar facilities to South Yemeni troops, he said.

India offered to help after the United Nations made an appeal for humanitarian assistance involving medical aid in war zones in different parts of the world, he said.

## Three Russian kidnappers arrested

MOSCOW, June 29: Three kidnappers who took some 40 people hostage on Tuesday and fled with a ransom of millions of dollars were caught after a chase in the breakaway Russian Chechnyan region today, a police spokesman said, reports Reuter.

"We got the money back, the hostages, and the participants in the operation are unharmed," an Interior Ministry spokesman in Moscow said.

The spokesman said the hijackers had tried to flee after flying their helicopter from the town of Mineralniye Vody where the drama started on Tuesday to Chechnya.

He said police got back the ransom they had been given, slightly more than two million US dollars originally the hijackers had demanded 5.8 million US dollars but it appeared they settled for a lesser sum.

A Mineralniye Vody police officer said on Tuesday the kidnappers had killed one hostage.

## US task force heads back to Somalia

WASHINGTON, June 29: A four-ship US task force is headed back to Somalia in case increased fighting between factions there requires evacuation of Americans, the Defence Department said Tuesday, reports Reuter.

Spokeswoman Kathleen Delaski said no evacuation was anticipated but the ships led by the amphibious helicopter landing ship USS Guam should arrive off Somalia in less than a week on a contingency basis.

"We want them to be there, in case they need to be called upon to do any kind of evacuation of US personnel," Delaski said.

"That doesn't mean we think it's going to happen, but we feel we ought to be ready for that contingency," she said.

## Ex-Contras seize Colombian mission in Managua

MANAGUA, Nicaragua, June 29: Unarmed former Contra rebels Tuesday occupied the Colombian embassy and an office of the Organisation of American States, detaining diplomats and aides and demanding government compliance with four-year old accords, officials said.

"I understand they are complaining about compliance of the government regarding the 1990 (demobilisation) ac-

ords above all for the legalisation of lands they have had since then," Interior Ministry official Salvador Talavera told Reuters.

Colombian Ambassador Jorge Enrique Villamizar and embassy staff were being detained inside by about eight former guerrillas, government spokesman Fernando Quarezma told Reuters.

The OAS building houses a mission charged with helping former combatants from the war integrate into civilian life.

Mission Director Sergio Caramagna and his staff were being held captive by some 25 Contras, Quarezma said.

Phones went unanswered at

both offices Tuesday morning. As of midday the government had not communicated with the former Contras, as the rebels were known, Talavera said.

The Contras were the US-financed rebel army that fought the former Sandinista government in the 1980s. The leftist Sandinistas were defeated in a 1990 election by President Violeta Chamorro.

## Russia stable, says Yeltsin

MOSCOW, June 29: President Boris Yeltsin told representatives of top foreign companies at a meeting at the Kremlin on Tuesday that investors no longer faced risks over political instability in Russia, reports AFP.

Yeltsin said that fears among investors about the political situation were "outdated" and that stability was being restored to the country, creating a favourable climate for foreign investment, the presidential press service said.

## Off the Record

### Animal breeders on hunger strike

TAIPEI, Taiwan: Some 20 animal breeders began a hunger strike Wednesday outside a government building, and said they would stop feeding their animals too, because of a ban on the sale of endangered species of animals, reports AP.

They said that if the government refuses to lift the ban on the breeding and sale of such animals as tigers, masked palm civets and cobras, the hunger strike would continue for five days in front of the government's Agriculture Council building.

In a statement, the protesters said they began breeding animals before 1989, when the government passed legislation to ban the sale of endangered species.

They called on the government to buy their animals or compensate them for their losses.

Officials warned animal owners that if they starve their animals on purpose, they face a maximum sentence of one year in prison or fines of 30,000 Taiwan dollars (US dlr 1,111).

### Britons prefer candies to vegetables

LONDON: Britons spend more on candy than on vegetables, with potentially disastrous results for their teeth, the British Dental Association said on Tuesday, reports Reuter.

Britons ate 4.2 billion pounds (6.5 billion dollar) worth of chocolates and other confectionery in 1993, but spent only 4 billion pounds (6.2 billion dollar) on vegetables.

"Figures going back to 1986 show more spending on confectionery than on vegetables, and the gap is widening," said Andy Fleming, a spokesman for the central statistical office.

### Teenager hired boyfriend to kill her parents

FORT WORTH, Texas: Kristi Koslow's lawyers say police coerced the scared 17-year-old into falsely confessing that she hired her boyfriend and another teenager to slaughter her parents for their money, reports AP.

Her millionaire father — who survived though his throat was slashed — says his adopted daughter deserves to die.

If Koslow, now 19, is convicted of capital murder, the same jury must decide whether to sentence her to life in prison or death. No woman has been executed in Texas since 1863, when one was hanged for murdering a horse trader.

The case was expected to go to the jury after closing arguments Wednesday.

Jack Koslow testified that he was awakened early on March 12, 1992, by the buzz of his home burglar alarm and the scream of his oil heiress wife, Caren: "They're in the house."

Two men broke down the door of the dark bedroom. Jeffrey Dillingham beat the couple unconscious with a metal pry bar and Brian Salter cut their throats, the 19-year-olds told authorities.

## Yemenis fail to agree on ceasefire

UNITED NATIONS, June 29: Envoys of warring North and South Yemen held their first meeting here Tuesday but failed to agree on a ceasefire, reports AP.

Planning Minister Abdul Karim al-Iryani, from the North, and Haider Abu Bakr al-Attas, prime minister of the secessionist South, met with the United Nations' special envoy.

Al-Attas told reporters that they nearly agreed on a ceasefire monitoring mission of Arab, African and Asian troops. He said al-Iryani lacked full authority to discuss the timing of a ceasefire and other issues.

Al-Iryani told reporters he was waiting for instructions from his government. He said the United States and France

should be primary participants in any ceasefire monitoring group.

The United States, however, opposes UN involvement and wants regional ceasefire observers.

UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has recommended that the Security Council demand an immediate ceasefire in Yemen's nearly 2-month-old civil war.

The 15-member Security Council considered a resolution Tuesday calling for a ceasefire and regional monitors, and condemning the North's attacks on the southern stronghold of Yemen.

The council could vote on the draft resolution as early as Wednesday.

## US warns Bosnian factions against pushing for battlefield gains

WASHINGTON, June 29: The United States Tuesday warned Bosnian warring factions against pushing for battlefield gains as fighting surged and the big powers readied a take-it or leave-it peace plan, reports Reuter.

"We are very concerned about some of the comments we've seen from a variety of parties in the former Yugoslavia, that they believe that there's something to be gained at this point on the battlefield," State Department spokesman Mike McCurry told reporters.

"We feel, to the contrary, that this war has gone on so long, exhausted the resources

of the parties, and that the only avenue available now to reconciliation and reconstruction is through a peace settlement," he said.

McCurry added "We've made that very clear to the parties, and we are frankly mystified that any of the elements of the fighting going on in Bosnia would find advantage at this point in further military action."

He referred to worsening clashes in central and northern Bosnia that threatened a fragile truce and prompted the top UN official in former Yugoslavia, Yasushi Akashi, to warn on Tuesday that he might call in western air

strikes. The United States has been a major force behind development of the peace plan, which aims to divide Bosnia ethnically, assigning 51 per cent to Muslims and Croats and 49 per cent to Serbs who now hold 72 per cent of the territory.

Senior officials of the United States, Russia and the European Union, who met Tuesday in Paris, made progress towards completing a map seen as the key to a political solution to Bosnia's bitter ethnic war, French officials said.

The UN military chief in Bosnia, Lieutenant General Michael Rose, accuses the

Muslim led Bosnian government — with which the United States has been closely allied — of provoking most of the ceasefire violations in recent weeks.

The Bosnian side has been the most hostile to the peace process and constantly breaching the ceasefire, he said, adding "the danger is that they will provoke a massive Serb response."

Another report adds: the main UN relief agency has launched a campaign to restore war-damaged utilities in central Bosnia by delivering badly needed spare parts. UN officials said on Tuesday.

Peter Kessler, spokesman

for the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), said a 47-truck convoy left the Croatian town of Metkovic to deliver 190 tonnes of spare parts for a power plant in Muslim held Kakanj in central Bosnia.

"The convoy has passed the Bosnian border and is spending the night in Kiseljak, Vitez and Zenica," Kessler told Reuters.

"It should arrive at its destination tomorrow," he said.

The UNHCR has been trying to revive the shattered Bosnian economy and open of the first steps was to provide enough electricity.

The power plant in Kakanj,

one of the biggest in Bosnia, supplied electricity to the central Bosnian region before the war, including the capital Sarajevo. It is now working only at a fraction of its capacity.

The spare parts for the Kakanj plant, located north of Sarajevo, had been waiting in Metkovic for over a year, due to objections on the part of Bosnian Croat militia.

Bosnian Croats have often been accused of obstructing aid convoys in their territory, especially after they fell out with their former Muslim allies in April last year and started fighting them for land.

## Fires ravage California

WASHINGTON, June 29: Fires caused by lightning and arson ravaged large areas of California forestland from Los Angeles to San Francisco and are still out of control, authorities said Tuesday, reports AFP.

The fires have destroyed ten homes since Saturday and threatened more than 100 others which were evacuated Monday night. Damage is estimated at three million dollars.

Two dozen firefighters have been injured, most suffering from heat exhaustion. Federal, state and local crews worked 12 hour shifts in more than 100-degree Fahrenheit (38-degree Celsius) to subdue the flames.