

## BRIEFLY

**Major to visit Hague, Berlin:** British Prime Minister is to visit The Hague and Berlin in mid-week. Downing Street said on Tuesday. AFP reports from London.

After lunch with his Dutch counterpart, Socialist Wim Kok, Major will set out his vision of future of the European Union in a speech at the University of Leiden.

**Iraq's denial:** Iraq's deputy prime minister has denied reports that Baghdad has had contacts with Israel at making peace with the Jewish state in return for the lifting of UN sanctions. AP reports from Nicosia.

In a signed article in Wednesday's edition of the London-based Al-Quds al-Arabi daily, Tariq Aziz said: "There is no basis for the claims about contacts between Iraq and Israel."

**Tajik list of extremists:** The former Soviet Republic of Tajikistan has handed over to the United Nations a list of seven Islamic militants which it claims are mercenaries, according to a document released on Tuesday. AFP reports from United Nations.

The list included citizens of Iraq, Algeria, Afghanistan and one national simply identified as "Arab". Tajik ambassador Lakim Kayumov claimed that more than 100 fighters from 10 countries have backed Muslim opposition forces in their guerrilla warfare against the pro-Communist government in Dushanbe.

**Mexican leader shot dead:** An opposition political party said one of its leaders was shot and killed on Tuesday and another detained in southern Chiapas state, AP reports from Mexico.

Both leaders belong to the Democratic Revolutionary Party, whose supporters say their gubernatorial candidate was robbed of victory by fraud in last month's election.

**Hurd to visit Japan:** British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd will visit Japan from September 16 to 19 for talks with Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama and Foreign Minister Yohei Kono, the Foreign Ministry said yesterday. AFP reports from Tokyo.

Hurd will visit Tokyo on the last leg of his Asian tour, which also covers Thailand, Vietnam and Hong Kong. He will discuss bilateral and international affairs with Japanese leaders, the ministry said.

**China, Ukraine sign accords:** Chinese President Jiang Zemin and Ukrainian counterpart Leonid Kuchma, meeting in Kiev, on Tuesday signed several agreements to boost bilateral ties. Interfax news agency reported. AFP says from London.

The agency, in a dispatch monitored in London by the BBC, said the two leaders signed a joint political statement as well as an agreement covering cooperation between Ukrainian and Chinese law enforcement agencies and a protocol on an exchange of information at the level of foreign ministers.

**Fire claims 8 in Taiwan:** A fire swept through a dormitory housing members of a troupe of performing artists in southern Taiwan early yesterday, killing eight people including a two-month-old baby, state radio reported. Reuter says from Taipei.

The blaze engulfed the building in the early hours of Wednesday. The eight occupants — two men, five women and the baby — were quickly overcome by smoke and were unable to escape, the radio quoted firefighters as saying.

**ROK journalist visits DPRK:** A reporter from a pro-opposition newspaper in Seoul has arrived in Pyongyang, becoming the first South Korean journalist to visit the North since Kim Il-Sung died in July, the daily's spokesman said yesterday. AFP reports from Seoul.

Chong Yon-Ju, 48, Washington correspondent of Hankyoreh Shinmin, arrived in Pyongyang late Tuesday aboard the North Korean national flag carrier Korean Airways linking China's Beijing to the North Korean capital, the spokesman said.

**Haitian lawyer shot dead:** A Haitian lawyer working for a prominent law firm was shot and killed in front of the courthouse next to an army barracks on Tuesday afternoon, witnesses said. Reuter reports from Port-Au-Prince.

Haitians gathered in the street around the body said the dead man was Charles Jean-Baptiste, a lawyer in his early 40s.

**Discovery blasts off Friday:** The space shuttle Discovery was cleared for launch this week after engineers ironed out several mechanical problems. NASA said on Tuesday. AFP reports from Cape Canaveral.

"We think we've got three clean engines and we're ready to give it a try on Friday," said commander Richard Richards. "We've made a lot of progress with Discovery over the last couple of weeks." Discovery is to blast off Friday at 4:30 pm (2030 GMT) on a nine-day mission to study the earth's atmosphere with lasers.

**Russian plane crashes:** A MIG-23UB fighter jet crashed in central Russia on Wednesday, killing both air defence pilots aboard, the ITAR-Tass news agency reported. AP says from Moscow.

The plane, a two-seat training version of the standard Russian air force fighter, took off for a routine flight and crashed in the Yaroslavl region after reaching cruising altitude, the agency said.

**6 held from Yangon brothels:** Myanmar authorities have raided a high class brothel in Yangon, detaining the owner and six women, state-run Radio Yangon reported on Tuesday. AFP says from Bangkok.

The raid, August 25, took place at a motel in a wealthy part of the city, the Radio said in a report monitored in Bangkok, adding that clients were charged more than 13,000 kyats (2,000 US dollars) for sex with a prostitute.

**Rao in Singapore:** Indian Prime Minister Narasimha Rao arrived in Singapore yesterday for a three-day official visit. AFP reports from Singapore.

Rao was received at Singapore's Changi Airport by Information and Health Minister George Yeo. Singapore Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong will formally welcome the 73-year-old Rao at a ceremony at the Istana, official residence of Singapore President Ong Teng Cheong, today before talks.

**Canada to send N-experts:** Canadian nuclear specialists will work full-time in nuclear plants in Russia to improve safety practices and engineering designs. The Canadian embassy in Moscow said yesterday. Reuter reports from Moscow.

It said the specialists would be sent to Russia under a protocol agreement launching a joint nuclear safety and engineering programme.

**Beijing confce in Oct:** Chinese premier Li Peng and the foreign ministers of Australia, South Korea and Indonesia are to attend a high-powered conference in Beijing next month on Asia-Pacific issue, organisers said yesterday. AFP reports from Hong Kong.

Thai Deputy Prime Minister and Trade Minister Supachai Panitchpakdi, Chinese Vice Premier and Economic Czar Zhu Rongji and a very senior member of the US administration are also expected, according to the draft programme.

**13 arrested in S Korea:** Prosecutors have broken a South Korean drug ring and arrested 13 people for smuggling, trafficking or taking drugs, prosecution officials said yesterday. Reuter reports from Seoul.

An official at the Suwon district prosecutor's office said Cho Sung-Soo, 38, and seven others had been charged with smuggling 450 grams (one pound) of amphetamines into the country between May and July and trafficking the drugs. Suwon prosecutors also arrested five others, including the president of a medium-sized company, on charges of taking the drugs on a regular basis.

## International

# LTTE attack on Lankan army ahead of peace talks

COLOMBO, Sept 7: Tamil Tiger guerrillas attacked an army outpost in northeast Sri Lanka, killing one soldier, as the Colombo government prepared to initiate a peace dialogue to end ethnic violence, military sources said. reports AFP.

Gunmen of the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) launched the overnight assault on an army unit at Padavaya and escaped after killing the soldier and wounding several others, a military spokesman said.

The government of Prime Minister Chandrika Kumaratunga has already received an invitation for the LTTE supremo Velupillai Prabhakaran to visit Jaffna or send a representative to open negotiations.

All previous attempts to politically and militarily end the

conflict have ended in failure and often led to increased fighting between the Tigers and government forces.

Defence sources said the government was considering restoring electricity to LTTE held areas. It was also planning to free some LTTE suspects held by security forces to strengthen the peace process.

Both sides have been making reciprocal gestures in the past week giving momentum to the peace effort begun by Kumaratunga who came to power following last month's parliamentary election.

Meanwhile Reuter reports: The government will respond to Tamil rebel leader Prabhakaran's call for peace talks by asking him to name an emissary. Deputy Defence Minister Anuruddha Ratwatte

said today.

"We will respond by asking them to nominate someone we can talk to. We are very keen to go ahead with talks."

He said the new People's Alliance (PA) government regarded a facsimile message signed by Prabhakaran as a direct invitation for negotiations.

According to a rebel newspaper, Prabhakaran has asked Tamilchelyam, head of the group's political section, to deal with the PA government which was voted into power last month after 17 years of United Nations Party rule.

For the past 11 years, Sri Lankan security forces have been fighting a fierce war with the LTTE, who want a separate state in the north and east for the 2.5 million Tamil minority community.

# UN suspends aid flight to Sarajevo

SARAJEVO, Sept 7: Aid flights to Sarajevo were suspended Wednesday after two planes were hit by gunfire, deepening frustration in a city already angered over the Pope's decision to cancel his visit, reports AP.

Pope John Paul II on Tuesday cancelled a visit to the Bosnian capital because of increased firing over the past few days around the airport and extensive Bosnian Serb violations of an exclusion zone for heavy weapons around Sarajevo.

The two aircrafts were hit Monday and Tuesday, as Serbs and government troops exchanged gunfire in the airport area. No injuries were reported, and UN spokesman Maj. Dacre Holloway said the bullet holes weren't found until the planes returned to Zagreb.

"Akashi should be tried as the worst criminal," the newspaper Oslobojenje quoted res-

ident Franjo Cvitanovic as saying.

The Serbs have repeatedly thwarted visits by world figures. US Defence Secretary William Perry called off a trip last month because of Serb threats. US official Richard Holbrooke abandoned plans to fly in this week after Serbs shot at a UN helicopter.

The Serbs have been tightening the siege of Sarajevo, closing the road over Mount Igman to the Southeast that is the only land route out.

The two aircrafts were hit Monday and Tuesday, as Serbs and government troops exchanged gunfire in the airport area. No injuries were reported, and UN spokesman Maj. Dacre Holloway said the bullet holes weren't found until the planes returned to Zagreb.

UN military flights were continuing Wednesday.

## Off the Record

### Devi sues 'Bandit Queen' makers

NEW DELHI: Reformed "bandit queen" Phoolan Devi is suing the makers of a highly-acclaimed movie on her life as an outlaw in the badlands of northern India, her lawyer said yesterday, reports AFP.

The suit was filed in the Delhi High Court on Tuesday, charging that Devi's right to privacy had been violated by the film "Bandit Queen" and seeking damages which could run into millions of rupees. Pravin Anand said.

Director Shekhar Kapur, producer S S Bedi, author Mala Sen, whose book about Devi was the basis for the screenplay, and Britain's Channel 4 Television, which commissioned the film, were named as defendants.

"Broadly what she says is that her right to privacy has been violated by the film, which shows graphic details of sexual encounters which she never authorised them to show, gang rape, for example," Anand told AFP.

"Under the Indian Penal Code, even the name of a rape victim cannot be disclosed by another even in writing. That in itself is a punishable offence," he said.

The film, which was applauded at this year's Cannes Film Festival and at Preview in India, has not been shown to Devi despite repeated requests and the former outlaw was not consulted during its making, he said.

"A film made on her gets to be made and screened without her being interviewed a single time. They did not show her even a rough cut of the film," Anand said.

"Richard Attenborough made a film on the life of Mahatma Gandhi. Can you imagine... if Gandhi had been alive, would he have made it without talking to him once?"

Damages would depend on the money-spinning potential of the film, he said. "Since it is a global venture, they could run into millions of rupees."

"Bandit Queen," her lawyer said, was a "radical departure from her true life story."

### Kingly Charles naked in sunshine

BONN: Germany's mass-circulation daily The Bild yesterday broke new ground in the media's obsession with intimate pictures of Britain's royal family by printing a posture of a nearly nude Prince Charles on its front page, reports Reuter.

"Kingly Charles naked in the sunshine" blared the headline next to blurred photograph, apparently taken with a telephoto lens of the bronzed heir to the British throne standing wearing nothing but a folded white dressing-gown draped over his left shoulder.

The soldiers, who harbour hopes of making the majority of people detained since Friday under the ISA, which provides for indefinite imprisonment without trial, have been ordered to stop renewing the passports of suspected Al Arqam members, he said.

Al Arqam claims to have branches in Thailand, Indonesia, Singapore, Australia, France, Egypt, Iraq, Germany, India, Pakistan, Uzbekistan, Japan, Jordan and elsewhere.

Meanwhile, Zabidi Mohamad, legal adviser to the sect, was reported to have been detained by police Tuesday night. Police declined to confirm the report in Wednesday's Star Daily.

Officials said the sect was banned for deviationist teachings, including claims that Ashaari talked regularly to the Prophet Muhammad (SM), founder of Islam, and that Ashaari was the modern messiah.

Human rights groups in Malaysia and Thailand and Malaysian parliamentary opposition leader Lim Kit Siang have criticised the arrests and called for trials.

Officials said the sect was banned for deviationist teachings, including claims that Ashaari talked regularly to the Prophet Muhammad (SM), founder of Islam, and that Ashaari was the modern messiah.

The new Tutsi-led government, installed by the victorious Rwandan Patriotic Front in July, sent about 150 soldiers Tuesday into a protection zone set up by French troops in Rwanda's southwestern corner as a haven for Hutus fleeing the rebel forces.

The French withdrew from the zone last month, leaving control of the area to a reluctant United Nations.

It said Charles was spending a solitary holiday walking, swimming, painting, driving around in his range rover and getting irritated only by the attentions of intrusive photographers.

It said Charles was spending a solitary holiday walking,

swimming, painting, driving around in his range rover and getting irritated only by the attentions of intrusive photographers.

It said Charles was spending a solitary holiday walking,

swimming, painting, driving around in his range rover and getting irritated only by the attentions of intrusive photographers.

It said Charles was spending a solitary holiday walking,

swimming, painting, driving around in his range rover and getting irritated only by the attentions of intrusive photographers.

It said Charles was spending a solitary holiday walking,

swimming, painting, driving around in his range rover and getting irritated only by the attentions of intrusive photographers.

It said Charles was spending a solitary holiday walking,

swimming, painting, driving around in his range rover and getting irritated only by the attentions of intrusive photographers.

It said Charles was spending a solitary holiday walking,

swimming, painting, driving around in his range rover and getting irritated only by the attentions of intrusive photographers.

It said Charles was spending a solitary holiday walking,

swimming, painting, driving around in his range rover and getting irritated only by the attentions of intrusive photographers.

It said Charles was spending a solitary holiday walking,

swimming, painting, driving around in his range rover and getting irritated only by the attentions of intrusive photographers.

It said Charles was spending a solitary holiday walking,

swimming, painting, driving around in his range rover and getting irritated only by the attentions of intrusive photographers.

It said Charles was spending a solitary holiday walking,

swimming, painting, driving around in his range rover and getting irritated only by the attentions of intrusive photographers.

It said Charles was spending a solitary holiday walking,

swimming, painting, driving around in his range rover and getting irritated only by the attentions of intrusive photographers.

It said Charles was spending a solitary holiday walking,

swimming, painting, driving around in his range rover and getting irritated only by the attentions of intrusive photographers.

It said Charles was spending a solitary holiday walking,

swimming, painting, driving around in his range rover and getting irritated only by the attentions of intrusive photographers.

It said Charles was spending a solitary holiday walking,

swimming, painting, driving around in his range rover and getting irritated only by the attentions of intrusive photographers.

It said Charles was spending a solitary holiday walking,

swimming, painting, driving around in his range rover and getting irritated only by the attentions of intrusive photographers.

It said Charles was spending a solitary holiday walking,

swimming, painting, driving around in his range rover and getting irritated only by the attentions of intrusive photographers.

It said Charles was spending a solitary holiday walking,

swimming, painting, driving around in his range rover and getting irritated only by the attentions of intrusive photographers.

It said Charles was spending a solitary holiday walking,

swimming, painting, driving around in his range rover and getting irritated only by the attentions of intrusive photographers.

It said Charles was spending a solitary holiday walking,

swimming, painting, driving around in his range rover and getting irritated only by the attentions of intrusive photographers.