

## BRIEFLY

**Major in South Africa:** British Prime Minister John Major arrived in South Africa yesterday at the start of a three day visit, the first by his country's premier in 34 years. Reuter reports from Cape Town.

Major was met at Cape Town's DF Malan Airport by South Africa's two deputy presidents, F W de Klerk and Thabo Mbeki. Foreign Ministry sources said Major, the first British head of government to visit the country since Harold MacMillan in 1960, will also be offering help to rebuild a country ravaged by 340 years of white rule.

**HK prison protest ends:** Prison officers in riot gear moved into a detention camp Tuesday and herded dozens of protesting Vietnamese boat people into dormitories. An official said at least 11 Vietnamese were injured. AP reports from Hong Kong.

The protest at the High Island camp erupted Monday when authorities tried to move 26 Vietnamese who have been told they will be forcibly sent home this week. Dozens of helmeted prison officers, carrying riot shields and batons, moved into the camp in driving rain Tuesday morning.

**China campaigns against AIDS:** Worried by a widespread lack of awareness among the Chinese about AIDS, the government plans a major new campaign to help prevent the spread of the deadly disease. AP reports from Beijing.

Television programmes, newspapers, magazines and exhibitions will be used to help spread information about AIDS, the magazine Outlook Weekly said in its latest issue, seen in Beijing Wednesday.

**Taiwan team aborts China trip:** A Taiwanese media delegation has decided to cut short a tour to China to protest Beijing's hostility to Taiwan President Lee Teng-hui attending the Asian Games, an official report said Tuesday, according to AP from Taipei.

Twenty-three news organisation executives and other officials arrived in China last Thursday for a 10-day visit that was meant to highlight the growing detente between the rival Chinas.

**Bill to control newsmen:** A congressman has proposed a law that would compel journalists to reveal their sources to protect government officials. AP reports from Manila.

Rep Edmundo Amante's bill, filed Monday, would require editors, publishers, reporters and columnists to reveal their sources "when public interest so demands." The existing law requires revealing sources only in cases involving national security.

**Former minister held in Italy:** Antonio Gava, a former interior minister and once one of the most powerful politicians in Italy, was arrested on Tuesday on charges of collusion with the Camorra, news reports said. AP says from Naples.

Prosecutors issued more than 150 arrest warrants in one of the biggest sweeps in years against the Naples version of the Sicilian Mafia, state television said. Other political figures and leading businessmen in the Naples area were also arrested, RAI-TV said.

**3 Thai boys die in blast:** Three boys in southern Thailand were killed and seven other people injured when a hand grenade they found exploded, police said yesterday. Reuter reports from Bangkok.

The three, aged 12, 14 and 15, were killed on Monday after they found the M60 grenade on land behind their houses in the southern town of Soukha, police said.

**Colombian Congressman killed:** Leftist guerrillas gunned down a ruling party congressman and his driver on Monday and then left behind their insignia — the red-and-black flag of the rebel National Liberation Army, police said. AP reports from Medellin.

The rebels threw a grenade and then opened fire as Liberal Party Congressman Arlen Uribe Marquez headed to his car in a parking lot of the University of Medellin, where he taught law, a student witness told Radio Caracol. Uribe Marquez, 35, was hit several times and suffered fatal head wounds. His driver was also killed, police said.

**Ex-lawyer executed in US:** A former lawyer who killed two prosecutors during a courthouse shooting rampage was executed by lethal injection early Tuesday, only 18 months after being sent to death row. AP reports from Huntsville, Texas.

George Lott, who represented himself at trial and through the appeals process, filed no documents to halt the execution, the second in Texas within a week. He made no final statement and was pronounced dead at 12:19 am.

**Fashion designer Moschino dies:**



This recent undated file photo shows Italian fashion designer Franco Moschino with two of his creation. — AFP photo

Franco Moschino, the ironic "enfant terrible" of Italian fashion who once designed a ball gown of garbage bags, died of cancer, his spokeswoman said on Monday. He was 44, AP reports from Annone Di Brianza, Italy.

Moschino died on Sunday of an intestinal tumor at his lakeside villa in the Brianza region north of Milan, said spokeswoman Romana Rocchi.

## Bubonic plague claims 64 in India

**NEW DELHI, Sept 20:** An outbreak of bubonic plague in an earthquake ravaged area of western India has spread to more villages, newspapers reported today, says Reuter.

The Pioneer quoted K K Dutta, Director of the National Institute of Communicable Diseases (NICD), which sent an expert team to investigate reports of plagues, as saying the number of suspected deaths has risen to 64.

The areas hit by fears of an epidemic are close to Latur, in the western state of Maharashtra, hit a year ago by India's worst earthquake in half a century. More than 10,000 people were killed.

## 56 sailors feared dead as LTTE attacks Lankan ship

**COLOMBO, Sept 20:** Tamil separatist rebels attacked a navy patrol ship off Sri Lanka's northwestern coast on Monday night and 56 sailors are feared dead, military sources said.

They said four of the boat's crew were rescued on the K. K. sea this morning.

The ship M V Sagarawardene was on a routine patrol when it is believed to have been attacked by a bomb or a suicide rebels squad, the vessel is reportedly sinking.

The rebels are fighting for separate homeland in the north and the east for their 2.5 million minority Tamil community.

The attack may jeopardise proposed peace talks between the New People's Alliance government and the rebels.

AP says: The fate of 40 sailors on board was not clear, military officers said, and there was no immediate report on rebel casualties. The attack occurred shortly after mid-

night Sunday off the coast of Mannar Island.

The ship was set ablaze, and rebels were able to board it and loot its weapons, according to intercepted rebel radio messages, said a naval officer in condition of anonymity.

The attack came as the Tamil Tiger rebels and the new government of Prime Minister Chandrika Kumaratunga were setting their terms for negotiations to end the fighting that has cost 34,000 lives.

The Tigers have sought a cease-fire, but the military has advised the government against it, fearing that the rebels would use a truce to rebuild their forces.

The navy lost communication with the ship, the 330-ton patrol vessel Sagarawardene, before intercepting Tiger radio accounts of an attack at sea. Other ships and air force planes were sent to look for survivors.

Details of the attack were still sketchy, but it clearly was

the worst of several incidents that have occurred since Kumaratunga's leftist government took office in mid-August.

In the past few weeks, minor skirmishes were reported in the disputed northern and eastern provinces of Sri Lanka in which a handful of security forces and about two dozen rebels were killed.

In a gesture to the rebels shortly after taking office, the government partially lifted an embargo on goods entering the rebel-controlled Jaffna Peninsula. The Tigers responded by releasing 10 policemen who had been held captive for four years and saying they, too, were ready to talk.

In pre-negotiation contacts, the Tigers have urged the government to "create a conducive climate for peace talks" by ending the embargo and allowing Tamils to freely cross from the mainland to the peninsula. The government has not yet replied.



Haitians greet a US soldier with cheers at Port-au-Prince's harbour on Monday as hundreds of US troops arrive by helicopter in one of the Haitian capital's strategic facilities. — AFP-photo

## 'Reports of over 1000 arrests in S Arabia exaggerated'

**NICOSIA, Sept 20:** Saudi authorities have cracked down on small demonstrations protesting the detention of an outspoken opposition Muslim cleric, diplomats said today, reports Reuter.

But reports of over 1,000 arrests at the demonstrations were exaggerated, said the diplomats speaking from Saudi Arabia.

There were small demonstrations and arrests, but the reported number of arrests is highly exaggerated, one said. "It is not a major issue and there is no tension or upheaval in Saudi Arabia," he added.

A London-based opposition group, the Committee for the Defence of Legitimate Rights in Saudi Arabia, said on Monday Saudi security forces had cracked down on supporters of detained cleric Sheikh

Salman Al-Audah, and arrested over 1,000 people.

There was no official Saudi comment on the report, which pushed up world oil prices.

The committee says Audah was arrested on September 13 and police rounded up his supporters last week after a series of protests in the northern city of Buraida, 325 km (200 miles) northwest of Riyadh, and one in the capital.

"At this time there are now over 1,000 detainees in Buraida alone, 250 in Riyadh and nearly 50 elsewhere in the Arabian peninsula," the committee statement said, quoting what it said were sources in the Saudi police.

Diplomats said it was not clear how much popular support Sheikh Audah enjoyed in the Kingdom.

"It is difficult to know ex-

actly what happened," said one diplomat. "Sheikh Audah is a well known cleric who has been in and out of trouble for years for his strong views against the government."

Diplomats said the relationship between the committee and Audah was not clear.

Based in London, the group campaigns against Saudi Arabia on human rights issues and has become a mouthpiece of Saudi fundamentalist dissent.

It said police and troops had "succeeded in putting (Buraida) under siege" after several days of protests, involving up to 8,000 people, sparked by Audah's arrest last week.

Another protest in the capital Riyadh on Wednesday drew 1,000 people of whom 70 were arrested, it added.

## Taiwan wants representation at UN

**UNITED NATIONS, Sept 20:** Taiwan, ousted from the United Nations 23 years ago, began a fresh campaign on Monday to regain some kind of role in the world body reports AP.

"We on Taiwan have 21 million people and a powerful world economy," Jason Hu, a Taiwan government spokesman, told a news conference. "It is not right that we are not represented."

Taiwan is asking the General Assembly to set up a committee to study now it could be represented. Even status as a non-voting, non-governmental organisation has not been ruled out.

## Volcanoes continue to raze Papuan city

**PORT MORESBY, Papua New Guinea, Sept 20:** Volcanoes continued to devastate the abandoned port of Rabaul on Tuesday, dumping about a meter (three feet) of thick ash over the city and filling the air with dense black smoke and poisonous fumes, reports AP.

Volcanologists said two volcanoes, Tavurvur and Vulcan, have produced a huge cloud of ash and dust rising kilometers (miles) into the air.

After its eruption, Vulcan produced three separate craters, all spewing out huge amounts of debris.

Witnesses said the surface of Rabaul harbour was covered

in ash and floating volcanic pumice rock. There were reports of water boiling in some sections from hot vents on the harbor floor.

Heavy ash was also mixing with rain to form thick mud which threatened to collapse houses under its weight.

Prime Minister Sir Julius Chan declared a state of emergency in the province of Milne Bay, 800 kilometers (500 miles) northeast of the capital Port Moresby.

Authorities said they were preparing a possible food and shelter for up to 70,000 people in the area near the eruption zone.

## UNGA convenes to debate int'l issues

**UNITED NATIONS, Sept 20:** Overshadowed by the US landing in Haiti, the UN General Assembly convenes Tuesday to debate the international community's role everywhere from the Caribbean to Bosnia to Rwanda, reports AP.

This 49th General Assembly will also consider disarmament and human rights issues, and will see Ivory Coast Foreign Minister Amara Essy elected to the largely ceremonial post of president.

The opening of the General Assembly has been eclipsed in recent years by the Security Council's consideration of security issues, such as the US-led involvement in Haiti.

The assembly has no legal power, unlike the Security Council of 15 nations. But the assembly is a parliament of nations and its resolutions, although not legally binding, carry considerable moral weight.

The parade of world leaders begins next week, with President Clinton and Russian President Boris Yeltsin speaking on Monday. At least 178 speakers, including princes and prime ministers, are scheduled to address the world body.

## Sino-British talks begin

**BEIJING, Sept 20:** Sino-British diplomatic talks on technical aspects of Hong Kong's 1997 return to China opened today in Beijing, with both sides hoping for progress, reports AP.

But the three-day meeting of the joint liaison group (JLG) was expected to make little if any headway on the latest dispute over Hong Kong's future — the fate of its much-needed ninth container terminal, known as CT9.

China's official Xinhua news agency quoted Chinese JLG team leader Guo Feng Min as saying that both sides planned to "further exchange views on all items on the agenda."

It also quoted Feng and British counterpart Hugh Davies as hoping they would be able to make, in Xinhua's words, "joint efforts for further progress."

## Zulu King severs ties with Buthelezi

**NONGOMA, South Africa, Sept 20:** The Zulu king severed ties with a nationalist leader on Tuesday, and, as if to underline his anger at Mangosuthu Buthelezi's politicisation of the monarchy, cancelled celebrations honouring the legendary King Shaka, reports AP.

Matters came to head late Monday after President Nelson Mandela was greeted by jeering young members of Buthelezi's Inkatha Freedom Party at the royal palace. About 100 youths threw stones at the royal palace and at Mandela's helicopter.

Mandela had travelled to rural Natal to try to resolve a dispute over his plans to attend Shaka Day celebrations this weekend. Mandela cancelled his plans, but that seems only to have increased King Goodwill Zwelithini's anger at Buthelezi.

## Sinn Fein rejects offer for referendum

**BELFAST, Sept 20:** Sinn Fein leader Gerry Adams on Monday attacked a British commitment to hold a referendum on any proposed constitutional change in Northern Ireland, reports Reuter.

Adams, President of Sinn Fein, the political wing of the Irish Republican Army (IRA), dismissed the poll idea as "premature and presumptuous" in a statement released in Belfast.

Prime Minister John Major made the commitment during a visit to the province's capital last Friday. It was welcomed by Protestant politicians.

## Off the Record

### Criminal complaint against Sushmita Sen

**NEW DELHI:** A lawyer has filed a criminal complaint in a court here against Miss Universe Sushmita Sen saying she "insulted and dishonoured the national flag by hoisting the tricolour at her horse drawn carriage during a ceremonial procession here recently," reports PTI.

Advocate Ravinder Kumar said Sushmita Sen was not legally entitled to use the national flag during her "joy-ride" through Delhi's diplomatic enclave when she was passing gestures stylishly, standing near the tricolour, and blowing kisses to the spectators.

Metropolitan magistrate Dinesh Kumar Sharma on Monday took cognizance of the case under Sec 190 of CR PC and fixed October 22 for recording evidence of the witnesses, including some press photographers, listed by the complainant.

The magistrate will decide, on that date, whether a prima facie case is made out to summon Sushmita Sen to the court. Ravinder Kumar alleged that Miss Universe had willfully and deliberately insulted the national flag which was an offence under the prevention of insult to the National Honour Act, 1971.



### Sheep's hormone promising contraceptive vaccine for men?

**NEW DELHI:** A hormone obtained from sheep has emerged as a promising contraceptive vaccine for men and it has been tested in 19 volunteers at three centers in India, the World Conference on Biochemistry and Microbiology was informed on Monday, reports PTI.

This is believed to be the first human trial of a birth control vaccine for males.

The phase-II clinical trial conducted in a bovine (sheep derived) follicle (OFTH) caused no side effects and did not affect the libido, Dr N R Moudgal of the Indian Institute of Science told the delegates.

He said that human trials in Delhi, Jaipur and Bangalore were taken up following successful results with bonnet monkeys and before that, rats.

Dr Moudgal said that vaccine worked by neutralising the Follicle Stimulating Hormone (FSH) produced by the pituitary gland.

"The disruption of endogenous FSH leads to a man infertile by reducing the sperm counts," he said.

### Rearrested for making crank calls

**TOKYO:** A man already given a suspended prison sentence for making thousands of crank calls has been arrested again, this time for pestering his former employer with 6,500 calls in one month, police said Tuesday, reports AP.

Between August 9 and his arrest on Monday, Suzuki, 46, allegedly made as many as 1,200 calls from public phones to the company that had fired him, year ago, said police in Takasaki, about 100 kilometers (63 miles) north of Tokyo.

He faces charges of interference in business, they said.

Suzuki had been sentenced to one year in prison, suspended for three years, for making 8,500 crank calls in 1993 to the Takasaki Municipal Office, which once had turned down his job application, police said. The sentence meant Suzuki could stay out of prison if he maintained a clean record.

In March, they said, he began calling a company executive's residence and then switched in August to calling the company itself. In all, the calls probably totaled 10,000, they said.



Models Sophie (R) and Clara wear dress designed by Belgian. "This Is Not a Fashion Show" in London. — AFP photo

## Critics see Haiti deal as ambiguous, potentially dangerous

**WASHINGTON, Sept 20:** Haiti is likely to be a trouble spot for months to come, bedeviling President Clinton with a myriad of problems raised by the 11th-hour compromise that headed off a U.S. invasion, reports AP.

A day after the deal was struck to peacefully restore deposed President Jean-Bertrand Aristide to power, critics on Monday quickly attacked the accord as ambiguous and potentially dangerous.

Its seven briefly stated provisions leave open questions ranging from the ultimate status and living arrangements for Haiti's coup leaders to the relationship between the Haitian military and the civilian population to the flow of U.S. reconstruction aid.

Aristide himself was stubbornly mute Monday. An aide said the exiled Haitian leader has "severe problems" with the agreement reached this weekend in Haiti and is outraged at official statements indicating he approved it.

Burt Wides, counsel to Aristide, said the populist Roman Catholic priest believes the October 15 deadline for the Haitian military to leave office leaves pro-democracy forces in Haiti at their mercy for almost a month.

Aristide has often been at odds with the Clinton administration and his future actions or comments could throw a wrench into U.S. plans.

accord:

— The provision for a "general amnesty" by the Haitian parliament raises the prospect that military officers may be held blameless for a raft of rape, torture and killings that Clinton has called a "nightmare of bloodshed."

U.S. officials said the parliament would have to determine the scope of the amnesty — whether it should just cover involvement in the 1991 coup, as originally envisioned by Aristide, or would extend to human rights abuses.

"An amnesty that includes human rights crimes would be disastrous because it would fail to break the cycle of impunity that has given us one murderous regime after another," said Ken Roth, head of Human

Rights Watch.

— The independence and legitimacy of the Haitian Parliament is disputed, with several Senate members elected in what the United States considered illegal elections held after Aristide's ouster. With Lt. Gen. Raoul Cedras still in power while the parliament debates the amnesty, a free discussion could be constrained.

If efforts are made to reconstitute parliament with Aristide backers who have gone into hiding, it is unclear whether they would be willing to return before Cedras is gone.

"It is not a stretch to see that if (Parliament) is not convened and therefore fails to pass such an amnesty, Cedras

will use that as a pretext to refuse to step down," said Randall Robinson, head of the TransAfrica lobbying group and a key Washington supporter of Aristide.

— Requirements of the military leaders are limited to a provision for "certain military officers" to consent to "an early and honourable retirement" by October 15.

The Clinton administration earlier had insisted the military leaders leave the country. U.S. officials insist they will leave for practical reasons. But there is no assurance they might not continue to wield influence or lead a resistance.

Robinson called it a "total, impractical folly to allow these people to stay in this country with their assets and with

amnesty after they step down."

He likened it to letting Adolf Hitler, had he lived, remain in Germany after World War II.

Clinton on Monday insisted the accord nonetheless "dramatically increases the chances of a peaceful transition of power," but said "I cannot answer all the questions about what will happen in the future, what decisions people will make in the future, and where they will wind up living."

Administration officials were hard-pressed to answer other vexing questions.

— For instance, will the Haitian military leaders and their supporters have access to financial assets held in the United States?

### China to sign N-convention

**BEIJING, Sept 20:** China will sign the convention on nuclear safety at the 38th conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the Xinhua news agency reported today from Vienna, says Reuter.

It quoted Jiang Xin Xiong, head of the Chinese delegation to the conference, as saying that China will make an extra donation of one million dollars to the agency to finance model projects for other developing countries.

China reiterated its position that it supports the complete prohibition and through destruction of nuclear weapons, and it does not advocate, encourage or engage in the proliferation of nuclear weapons.