

International

BRIEFLY

Lankan clash leaves 7 dead: Seven soldiers, Tamil rebels and civilian guards have been killed in separatist violence in Sri Lanka, military and police sources said yesterday. Reuter reports from Colombo.

In the eastern Trincomalee district, rebels fired at an army observation post on Wednesday, killing three soldiers, also in the Trincomalee district on Wednesday, troops ambushed and killed two rebels, a military spokesman said.

W Bengal begins film festival: India's West Bengal state government has launched a year-long "centenary of world cinema (1895-1995)" celebrations with the screening of several films of yesteryears and holding exhibitions, seminars, Satyajit Ray memorial lectures and film workshops. Xinhua reports from New Delhi.

Efforts are also on to screen a large number of significant films produced both in India and abroad over the century, of official sources said in New Delhi yesterday.

330 killed in Afghan war: A week of fighting between rival Shi'ite Muslims in the Afghan capital has killed as many as 330 people and wounded 1,100, a Red Cross official said Wednesday. AP reports from Kabul.

The figure was much higher than previous estimates of the dead. Most of the casualties were taken to the Red Cross-run Karte Se Hospital, which has been cut off by fighting, said Mohammed Naheen, a medical officer for the International Committee for the Red Cross.

Anti-Yeltsin rally in Moscow: About 5,000 Russians marched through central Moscow on Wednesday in angry commemoration of President Boris Yeltsin's decision one year ago to dissolve the old Russian parliament and call elections for a new legislature. Reuter reports from Moscow.

Banners compared Yeltsin with an old-style Russian Tsar. "The regime is on its deathbed," read one poster. The crowd chanted slogans like "put Yeltsin's gang on trial" and "Soviet Union".

30 feared drowned in India: About 30 people were feared drowned when a country boat capsized in river Damodar near Durgapur on Wednesday. PTI reports from Calcutta.

The boat was ferrying passengers between Ramprashadpur Ghat near Ondal and Mejia in Bankura. About six persons managed to swim to the bank.

Iran cabinet okays proposal: The Iranian cabinet has endorsed the incorporation of Qazvin into Tehran province following riots in the northern city last month. Iranian television reported. AP says from Nicosia, Cyprus.

The cabinet session, chaired by President Hashemi Rafsanjani, approved a proposal Wednesday to shift jurisdiction over Qazvin, a city of 750,000 located 80 miles (130 kilometers) northwest of the capital Tehran, from Zanjan province, the television said.

Bush slates Castro: Former US President George Bush, giving a seminar speech on Wednesday in Spain, said Cuban leader Fidel Castro was "going against the current and his days were numbered." Reuter reports from Valladolid, Spain.

"Castro cannot sustain the Communist model in Cuba much longer," he said. "The future of the island lies in its integration with the political models of the rest of the Latin American countries."

2 mass graves in Rwanda: UN troops operating in southwest Rwanda have discovered two mass graves overflowing with around 4,000 rotting bodies, a spokesman for the UN assistance mission in Rwanda said on Wednesday. AFP reports from Kigali.

Major Jean Guy Plante said the dead, who appeared to have been killed in "old incidents" had been discovered on Tuesday in two sites in the Gafunzu region, close to the edge of Lake Kivu, bordering on Zaire.

Pak soldier shot in Somalia: A Pakistani soldier serving with the United Nations operation in Somalia was wounded by a stray bullet fired in clashes between clans in the southern sector of Mogadishu, UN officials said on Wednesday. AFP reports from Mogadishu.

Meanwhile the Irish aid group Concern temporarily suspended its operations in Somalia, as the Somalis leaders of the group Mohamed Ahmed Farabi said.

Ex-US envoy to Myanmar dies: David Osborn, a former US ambassador to Myanmar who used his mastery of Japanese and Chinese to help resolve several diplomatic crises, has died. He was 73, AP reports from San Diego.

Osborn, nicknamed "the bicycle ambassador" during his years in Myanmar because of his love of cycling, suffered head injuries during a recent bicycle accident and never recovered. He died on Friday, his wife, Helena, said.

Mozart statue unveiled: London's first statue of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was unveiled by Princess Margaret, sister of Queen Elizabeth, on Wednesday near the house where the composer wrote his first two symphonies in 1764 at the age of eight. Reuter reports from London.

The bronze sculpture by Briton Philip Jackson stands on a triangle of land in Pimlico, a district of central London west of the houses of Parliament.

Japan welcomes Myanmar talks: Japan on Wednesday welcomed the talks in Yangon between Myanmar's leading opposition figure, Aung San Suu Kyi, and top leaders of the ruling junta, the Foreign Ministry said. AFP reports from Tokyo.

"Japan hopes that this dialogue will make a substantive progress in future toward an early solution of Suu Kyi's house arrest," the ministry said in a statement. It added that Tokyo also hoped that "further progress will be made toward the improvement of the human rights situation and the realisation of democratisation" in Myanmar.

Youths wane interest in army: Malaysian youth, who once used to flock to join the military, no longer think it is a glamorous job, the army chief says. AP reports from Kuala Lumpur.

The waning interest, although not critical, has become a pressing problem and could jeopardise the country's security in the long run, Gen. Ismail Omar said on Wednesday night.

TV cameras out of US courtrooms: After a three-year experiment, a judicial panel has ordered all TV cameras out of US federal courtrooms — a decision that was met with dismay by advocates of greater press freedom. AP reports from Washington.

The vote announced on Wednesday by the policy-making Judicial Conference of the United States rejects a policy that 47 states have adopted for non-federal courts. It also rejects favourable findings in a 3 and a half year experiment that allowed cameras in a small number of federal courts. The conference sets policy, and only Congress has the power to reverse it.

Leghari in Turkey: Pakistani President Farooq Leghari said in Turkey on Wednesday that his country was continuing its efforts to lift the UN arms embargo on Bosnian Muslims. Reuter reports from Ankara.

"We stand side by side with our Muslim brothers in Bosnia because they defend a just cause," Leghari told Anatolian News Agency on the first day of a three-day visit.

Militant killed in Egypt: Police on Thursday killed an Islamic militant wanted for allegedly slaying a Spanish youth in an attack on a tourist bus, the interior ministry said, reports AP from Cairo.

Police acted on a tip that Ahmed Mohammed el-Simman was hiding on a farm in Qena, 280 miles south of Cairo. They cordoned off sugar fields and shot el-Simman as he tried to shoot his way out, a ministry statement said.

Police found a submachine gun and forged identity card near his body.



Bangladesh author Taslima Nasreen (2nd L) talks with her German publishers Dr. Peter Priskil (R) and Beate Mittmann of the Abirman-Verlag of Freiburg at the first day of the symposium on freedom of expression in Stavanger, Norway on Wednesday. — AFP photo

China continues close military links with Pakistan

BEIJING, Sept 22: China, continuing its close military links with Pakistan, has delivered six jet trainer aircraft to the Pakistani air force, the official China Daily said today. reports Reuter.

The handover of the jets worth more than 20 million dollars marked the export debut of the K-8 trainer, designed, made and tested at China's Nanchang aircraft manufacturing company.

China has built 21 of the K-8 so far, and Pakistan is interested in buying more of the planes, which were developed under a 1986 pact between the two countries, the newspaper said.

Pakistan has openly bought Chinese arms since the 1980s, but both sides have firmly denied US allegations that Beijing may have sold M-11 missiles or their components to Islamabad in violation of the missile technology control regime.

AFP from Karachi adds: The Pakistan army for the second day on Tuesday continued a house-to-house search operation to recover illegal weapons in one of the city's troubled districts, officials said.

Security agencies have so far recovered 74 unlicensed weapons, including handguns and automatic rifles, and over 900 rounds of ammunition in the congested lines area, officials said. Three people have been arrested on charges of possessing unlicensed weapons.

The army, paramilitary troops and police launched a joint operation Monday morning to "arrest criminals who are involved in ethnic and sectarian violence and recover illegal weapons," officials said.

The four square kilometre (1.6 square mile) area, was cordoned off by security personnel and house-to-house

surveillance.

Police and army have also been targeted, with armed attacks on police stations and mobile units since March. More than 45 security personnel have been killed this year in Karachi.

The army has been deployed in southern Sindh province since June 1992, in an effort to curb ethnic and sectarian violence and a growing crime rate.

The crackdown comes in

UN Council may ease sanctions against Serbia today

UNITED NATIONS, Sept 22: The UN Security Council is expected Friday to ease sanctions against Serbia for closing its frontier with Bosnia and to impose sanctions against Bosnian Serbs for rejecting a peace plan, reports AP.

The 15-nation council also is expected to adopt a third resolution condemning the latest ethnic violence by Bosnian Serbs against Muslims in Banja Luka, Bijeljina and other areas.

They are to be denied visas, except in connection with the peace process and states are to reject any political talks with them, according to the plan. Their bank accounts are to

ferry passenger line to operate between the Adriatic Sea port of and the Italian port of Bari.

Since the Bosnian Serbs, based in Pale, repeatedly have rejected peace plans and partition maps, they are to be punished with financial and travel sanctions against the key leader, Radovan Karadzic, and other political and military figures.

A draft resolution on "ethnic cleansing" condemns the "abhorrent and systematic practice" and demands that Bosnian Serb authorities immediately cease their campaign of ethnic violence.

Belgrade is being rewarded because the Yugoslav government has permitted border monitors to ensure that it has sealed its border and no longer is sending arms and war material to fellow Serbs in Bosnia. It has ended its support for the military campaign and now is sending only humanitarian assistance.

Belgrade is subject to a virtual total trade embargo, but the Security Council only will suspend certain sanctions for 100 days. It will permit resumption of civilian air traffic from Belgrade, and the resumption of international sporting and cultural contracts. It also would permit a

land-based civil nuclear power plants and seeks to avert accidents such as the 1986 explosion at Chernobyl, the world's worst civil nuclear disaster.

Members of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) began signing the safety agreement on Tuesday, led by the United States, Russia, China, France and Britain.

Officials at the Vienna-based IAEA, the nuclear arm of the United Nations, said enough countries had now signed the International Convention on Nuclear Safety to bring it officially into force.

National parliaments also have to ratify the document.

The convention applies to

land-based civil nuclear power plants and seeks to avert accidents such as the 1986 explosion at Chernobyl, the world's worst civil nuclear disaster.

Ukraine, which now owns Chernobyl following the collapse of the Soviet Union, signed the convention on Tuesday.

Clinton asked to declare immigration emergency

SAN DIEGO, Sept 22: Gov. Pete Wilson asked President Clinton on Wednesday to declare an immigration emergency in California, reports AP.

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