

## BRIEFLY

**Benazir to visit France:** Pakistan's Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto is to make an official visit to France from November 2 to 5 to boost bilateral cooperation, the French Foreign Ministry announced on Friday. AFP reports from Paris.

Bhutto will be welcomed by President Francois Mitterrand who visited Islamabad in February 1990, and Premier Edouard Balladur, as well as leading members of the French cabinet and businessmen.

**Nepali Congress Party man slain:** An activist of the Nepali Congress Party was killed in the first reported case of election-related violence during campaigning for the Nov. 15 polls, party officials said on Saturday. AP reports from Kathmandu.

Himal Pokharel died of head injuries on Thursday, one day after he was attacked by unidentified people as he was returning home from campaigning in Dang, a town 300 kilometers south of Kathmandu, Raj Kumar Sharma of the Congress party said.

**8 killed in N Delhi blast:** A truck carrying chemicals to a warehouse exploded, killing eight people and the blast destroyed half a dozen cars parked nearby, a news agency said on Saturday. AP reports from New Delhi.

Five workers died instantaneously when the nitrocellulose barrels they were unloading exploded on Friday. Three others died in hospital on Saturday, Press Trust of India said.

**Kim Jong-Il's message to N Koreans:** Kim Jong-Il, heir-apparent to late North Korean President Kim Il-Sung, has sent a message to the North Korean people, pledging to do his best for the country, a report from Pyongyang said on Saturday. AFP reports from Tokyo.

"I will, as ever, devote my all to the country and the people, bearing deep in mind our people's absolute trust in and expectation for our party," the junior Kim said on Friday, according to a Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) report monitored here.

**IA pilots observe strike:** Hundreds of passengers were stranded at airports nationwide on Saturday when pilots of the state-owned Indian Airlines refused to fly to protest management policies, AP reports from New Delhi.

More than one-fourth of the flights had been cancelled because pilots called in to say they were sick and could not fly, an airline spokesman said.

Junior pilots of the Indian Airlines began the protest on Friday against the policy to reinstate pilots who had quit to join private airlines to increase their salaries threefold.

**257,000 refugees in Kenya:** The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) yesterday announced that the number of refugees in Kenya now runs at 257,000. Xinhua reports from Nairobi.

In an interview with the Kenya News Agency at the Kakuma refugee camp in Turkana district of Kenya on Friday, the UNHCR representative Albert Peters said that the reduced numbers of refugees have resulted in the closure of six refugee camps in the country.

**Guerillas attack Israeli posts:** Muslim militant guerrillas attacked four Israeli posts in south Lebanon yesterday and the Israelis fired back, security sources said. Reuter reports from Marjayoun.

They said the posts at Ali Taher, Dabshah, Suweida and Touhra on the edge of Israeli occupation zone in south Lebanon came under machine-gun and anti-tank rocket fire from guerillas outside the zone. There was no initial report of casualties.

**Uranium seized in Russia:** Customs officials confiscated 160 tons of unrefined uranium ore being transported across Russia without proper documentation, news agencies said on Saturday. AP reports from Moscow.

The ore, packed in nine containers, was being shipped from Tajikistan to the United States, the ITAR-Tass and Interfax news agencies said, quoting officials of the Ministry for Emergency Situations.

**26 UNITA rebels killed:** Angolan government forces killed 26 UNITA rebels in fighting off a rebel attack in central Angola, Angop news agency, monitored in Lisbon reported on Friday. AFP reports from Lisbon.

Brigadier General Simione Mucune, commander of the central Angolan Bie region, said the clashes occurred on Thursday in the town of Kikema, near Kuito, Bie's main city.

**Art theft in Zurich:** Paintings by Raphael, Van Dyck and Brouwer, possibly worth millions of dollars if genuine, have been stolen from a private art collection in Zurich, police said on Friday. AP reports from Zurich.

However, art experts in the city believe the stolen oil paintings may be fakes. The break-in at a private house took place a week ago but authorities did not release the information until Friday.

**Quake rocks Taiwan:** A major undersea earthquake measuring 5.7 on the Richter scale rocked Taiwan yesterday but no damage or casualties were immediately reported, the Central Weather Bureau said, AFP reports from Taipei.

The tremor, which struck at 7:51 am (2351 GMT), rattled windows and shook high-rise buildings as commuters travelled to work, the bureau said.

**France expels Turkish Imam:** France deported a Muslim imam to his native Turkey on Friday saying he belonged to an extremist Islamic group with ties in Germany and Algeria, officials said. Reuter reports from Strasbourg.

A spokesman for the local prefecture identified the expelled imam as Osman Sahina and said he was arrested at a car factory in eastern France where he worked and was put on a flight to Turkey.

**Chinese team off to Antarctica:** A modern ice-breaker imported from Ukraine has set sail for Antarctica, significantly extending the reach of China's polar research, the official Xinhua news agency said yesterday. Reuter reports from Beijing.

The 17,900-horsepower, 10,500 deadweight tonne "Snow Dragon," China's first ice-breaker, left Shanghai on Friday with a group of Chinese polar scientists on board. Xinhua said.

**Japanese aid for Rwandans:** The Japanese government plans to provide four million dollars to buy food and medicine for refugees in Rwanda. Jiji press said yesterday. AFP reports from Tokyo.

It will be the first official Japanese financial aid for the refugees within Rwanda.

## US troops will leave Haiti within months

WASHINGTON, Oct. 29: President Clinton, signing a congressional resolution on US policy toward Haiti, said Friday he expects US troops to leave there in a matter of months, reports AP.

"The Haitian people no longer live in fear; they now have hope," Clinton said in a statement released by the White House press office.

"We expect that within months, the bulk of our military personnel will leave Haiti, transferring responsibility to the United Nations, the state ment said.

## Indira still an idol for Cong, but her political legacy fades

NEW DELHI, Oct. 29: Ten years after her assassination, former Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi remains an idol for the ruling Congress (I) Party, but her political legacy has been given a quiet burial, reports AP.

Indira Gandhi, who ruled the world's largest democracy for sixteen years, is now remembered solely on the anniversaries of her birth and death by a party she twice saved from political death.

Her Machiavellian qualities, which she used to remain on top in the unpredictable world of Indian politics, now invite ridicule and scorn from commentators.

Even the Congress avoids looking back at her 20-month "emergency rule" of 1975-77, during which constitutional rights were suspended and thousands of opposition activists jailed.

Her pro-Arab and pro-Soviet foreign policy was shattered by the end of the Cold War. And the present government's free-market policies have overwhelmed her socialist rhetoric and her distaste for laissez-faire economics.

The Congress, India's oldest political party, of course denies it has forgotten Indira who was shot by her Sikh bodyguards on October 31, 1984.



Indira Gandhi

"We still believe in her legacy," Congress spokesman Vithal Gadgil said. "We are not departing from her policies."

Few political pundits agree with the claim. Chandra Shekhar, a former Congress stalwart who broke ranks with Indira in 1975 after 10 years as a loyal supporter, said the party has firmly turned its back on the slain prime minister.

"Her social and economic policies are still valid because India is facing the same problems," said Shekhar, who was premier for nearly seven months until June 1991, when P.V. Narasimha Rao took office. "But the present adminis-

trators do not seem to have the same wisdom," he said in an interview at his farmhouse on New Delhi's outskirts.

"We have all but forgotten Indira Gandhi," said a prominent Rao critic in the ruling party, who spoke on condition of anonymity. "Rao is trying his best to wipe away her memory."

Indira, the only child of India's first prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, was considered a political novice when she became premier in January 1966.

The "dumb doll" — as she was known — quickly mastered the ropes, however, and took on her powerful detractors. In

## US presents resolution to lift UN arms ban on Bosnia

UNITED NATIONS, Oct. 29: The United States asked the UN Security Council Friday to lift the arms embargo against the Bosnian government despite staunch opposition from France, Britain and Russia, reports AP.

In a resolution, the United States proposed that arms supplies to Bosnian government troops be resumed in six months unless the Bosnian Serbs accept an international peace plan.

But three permanent members of the security council — Britain, France and Russia — already have voiced opposition to any easing of the arms embargo, arguing that such a

move would lead to an escalation in the fighting.

European diplomats here said the measure stood virtually no chance of garnering the nine votes required for passage.

In presenting the resolution, US Ambassador Madeleine Albright acknowledged that the proposal was "not supported by all members and only two of the 15 members of the council — Pakistan and Oman — said they backed the proposal."

Bosnia's UN Ambassador Muhammed Sacirbey welcomed the measure and rejected opposition to the resolution by asking "what other

options do they offer."

Earlier in Washington, a State Department official said President Bill Clinton planned to hold talks with member of Congress on the possibility of unilaterally lifting the arms embargo if the UN effort failed. "Our primary concern is for the Bosnian government to be able to defend itself, State Department spokesman David Johnson said.

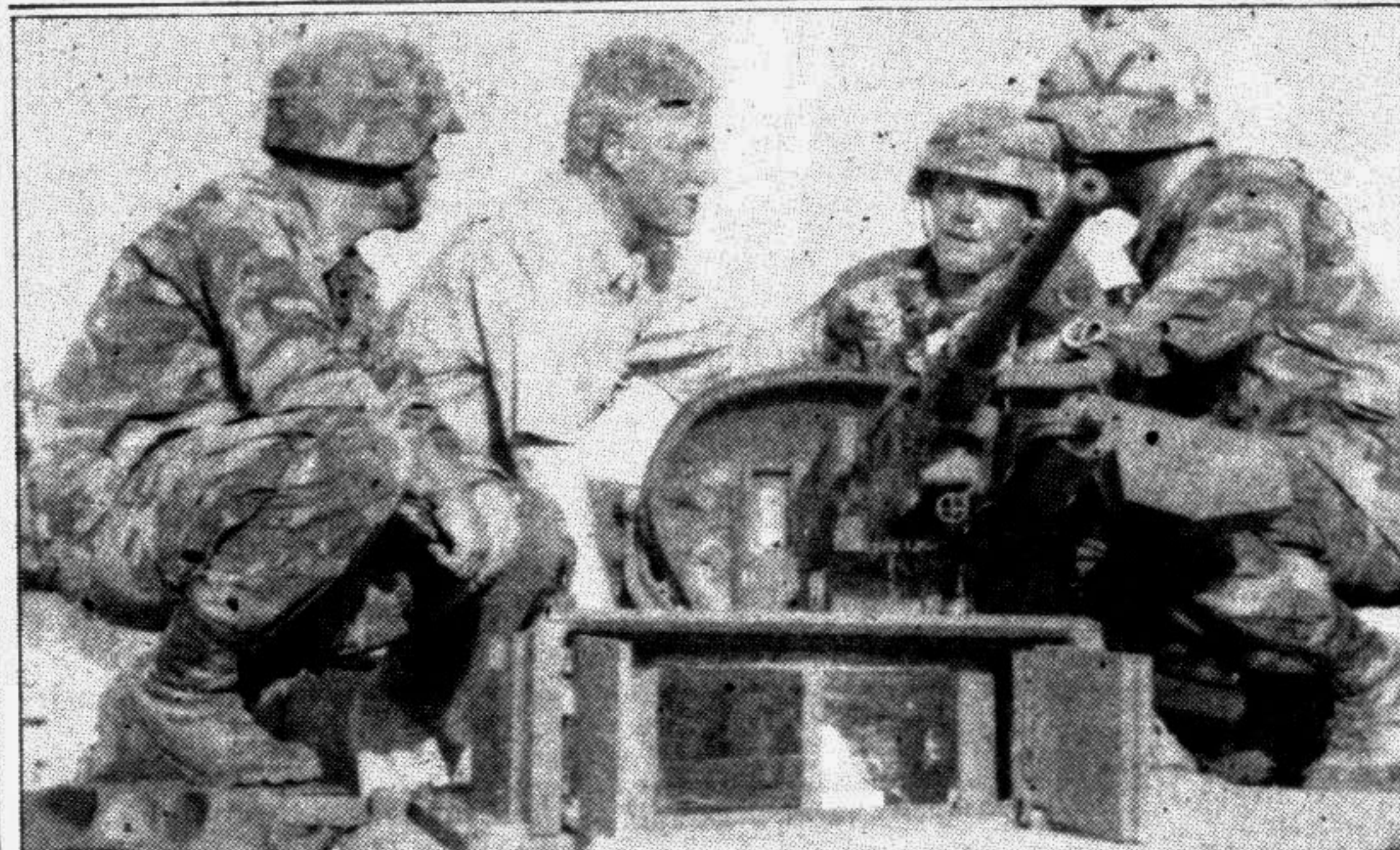
In the resolution copies of which were distributed to the media, the United States asserted that the September 1991 embargo slapped on the former Yugoslav republics "has not brought peace and stability and has resulted in a military

imbalance" to the disadvantage of Bosnian troops.

The move was in line with Clinton's pledge earlier this year to push for an end to the ban on military deliveries to Bosnian troops following a resolution in congress calling for the embargo to be lifted.

It also came on the heels of the approval at NATO headquarters in Brussels of new guidelines on the use of air power in Bosnia, which would end detailed "tactical" warning before strikes were carried out.

A US diplomat said here that he hoped that discussion on the embargo resolution will begin next week.



US President Bill Clinton chats with US troops atop a M-1 tank on Friday at Liberty Bridge in Kuwait, some 50 km from the Iraqi border. — AFP photo

## Clinton, Fahd pledge to work for progress in ME peace

HAFAR AL-BATIN, Saudi Arabia, Oct. 29: President Bill Clinton has ended his tour of the Middle East where he witnessed the end of 46 years of war between Jordan and Israel and warned Iraq it would never be allowed to threaten Kuwait, reports Reuter.

Clinton held late night talks on Friday with Saudi King Fahd in the northern military city of Hafar Al-Batin where the king awarded him a medal which Saudi official said was the highest honour in the kingdom.

The US president, exhausted after a four-day six-nation tour, flew back home without making any statements.

Clinton had been expected to seek Saudi Arabia's help in breaking the impasse in direct negotiations between Syria and Israel, the last obstacle to a comprehensive Middle East peace.

A joint statement issued after the talks said the two leaders discussed the peace process in the Middle East and "stressed their commitment to exert all efforts to achieve progress especially on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks."

It said the two men talked about the Iraqi troop movements near the Kuwaiti border earlier this month "which asserted the lack of good intentions by the Iraqi government and its continued threat

to the security and stability of the Gulf area."

"They asserted the need to take all necessary steps to ensure that such a threat does not occur again," it added.

The statement said the two leaders "voiced their belief that lifting sanctions against Iraq was premature unless Iraq abides totally with all Security Council resolutions."

US officials had said Clinton and King Fahd would discuss the cost of the US military buildup in the Gulf to deter the Iraqi troop movements.

Saudi Arabia paid about 55 billion dollar to cover part of the cost of the 1990-91 Gulf War which put a huge strain on its finance.

## Bosnian govt troops attack Serb targets

SARAJEVO, Oct. 29: Muslim-led Bosnian government troops launched an attack on Bosnian Serb army positions from a disputed demilitarised zone outside Sarajevo today and United Nations peacekeepers were sent to intercept them, reports Reuter.

UN spokesman Herve Gourmelon told reporters the government attack in the direction of the settlements of Savorak and Lukavac was supported by a 122 mm gun deployed in the zone.

The attack spread a Muslim offensive against the Serbs to the Sarajevo area after heavy fighting in northwest Bosnia in which Muslim forces made big gains.

UN peacekeepers had unsuccessfully tried to force the Muslims to leave the Sarajevo demilitarised zone.

**Russian FM may hold talks with Assad in Damascus**

MOSCOW, Oct. 29: Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev is expected to hold talks in Damascus next week with Syrian President Hafez al-Assad, sources close to the Foreign Minister said today, reports AP.

The sources said Kozyrev would "very probably" travel to the Syrian capital Tuesday after attending a three-day Middle East economic conference opening Sunday in Casablanca, Morocco.

The meeting would follow talks in Damascus Thursday between Assad and US President Bill Clinton, who reported some progress but no breakthrough in efforts to broker an Israel-Syria peace agreement.

## Iraq keen to improve ties with France

PARIS, Oct. 29: Iraq Friday called on France to open an interests section in Baghdad without delay to improve relations, following the recent crisis over Iraqi troop movements close to Kuwait.

Khaled Al-Rashid Al-Janabi, an advisor to President Saddam Hussein, told AFP the crisis early in October, when Iraqi troop movements led to fears that Baghdad was about to invade Kuwait for a second time, should "encourage and not slow down the establishment of such relations" with France.

"The absence of ways of exchanging points of view in this delicate period between the Iraqi leadership and France is regrettable," Janabi said.

He added "we are anxious to

find natural means of contact between our two countries, which could be achieved by the opening of a French interests section in Iraq."

Iraq opened an interests section in Paris in October 1993.

Janabi, who addressed a colloquium on the United Nations embargo against Iraq held at the French senate Thursday, was not scheduled to have any official meetings with French leaders during his stay in France.

He told the seminar that Iraq was keen on reestablishing "solid relations" with France, adding "we are confident that the efforts undertaken for the reestablishment of these relations will rapidly bear fruit."

## Off the Record

### Police raid brings them together

LONDON: A British couple who met when tied up by the police during a drugs raid have married. The Daily Star newspaper reported on Saturday, says Reuter.

Truck driver Dominic McDonnell, 35, was playing pool and Cathy Snelson, 29, was waiting to meet a blind date when police raided the bar they were in at Herne Bay in southern England.

They spent two hours chatting on the floor with their hands tied behind their backs before police decided they were innocent and released them.

The couple had never seen each other before, but two weeks later McDonnell proposed and they married in July.

"We didn't invite any of the police at the raid to our wedding," Snelson told The Daily Star "but I suppose we should have done as they brought us together."

### 40 years with pin in brain!

BEIJING: Doctors in China have extracted a rusty pin that was embedded in a woman's brain for 40 years, affecting movement of her arms and legs, an official report said Saturday, reports AP.

The operation on Zhang Meihua, 41, was performed in Jinan, in coastal Shandong province, at the No. 148 Military Hospital, the Xinhua News Agency said.

Zhang, who has no memory of being stuck in the head with a pin, began experiencing periodic problems with her arms and legs about 20 years ago. All treatment failed until early this month when doctors at the military hospital did a cranial CAT scan and found a pin-like object.

They operated and extracted the rusty pin, the shaft of which was embedded in Zhang's brain.

### Pain relief at the press of a button

LONDON: Pain relief at the press of a button could soon be available for women in labour, a leading medical journal said on Saturday, reports Reuter.

Dr Richard Morey and colleagues at Queen Charlotte's hospital in London tested a system called Patient-Controlled Epidural Anaesthesia (PCEA) on 15 women having their first babies.

"PCEA provided satisfactory pain relief in 14 of the 15 women," Morey wrote in a letter to the Lancet.

The women were given a combined spinal epidural anaesthesia, which blocks the spinal nerves in the epidural space by injecting a local anesthetic through a plastic catheter inserted through a special needle.

The catheter lets the block be augmented as it wears off.

## Russian border guards kill 20 Tajik rebels

DUSHANBE, Oct. 29: Russian border guards killed at least 20 Tajik rebels trying to cross into Tajikistan from Afghanistan, the commander of the Russian troops, General Anatoli Chechulin, said Saturday, reports AP.

The clashes, which took place Friday and lasted four hours around the border post near the town of Kholov, in the Borno Badkhechan area, in eastern Tajikistan, were the most serious violation to date of a ceasefire which came into force on October 20.

The former Central Asian Soviet Republic has been in the throes of civil war for two and a half years between a neo-communist regime backed by

Russia and an Islamic opposition based in neighbouring Afghanistan.

Friday's attack coincided with ongoing UN-mediated peace talks in Islamabad between the government and the opposition.

The UN mediator, Ramiro Prizic-Ballon told journalists in the Pakistan capital after Friday that the two sides had agreed to establish a UN controlled corridor between Afghanistan and the Tajik province of Badkhechan allowing food, clothing and medicine to be delivered to opposition forces.

The Islamic opposition is estimated to have 1,000 to 2,000 guerillas in pockets within the province.

The opposition had presented Wednesday two other conditions for renewing the ceasefire which expires November 6, when the former Soviet Republic in Central Asia holds presidential elections.

These are the release of more prisoners and the creation of a "security zone" controlled by Commonwealth of Independent States peacekeepers in the Garm valley, an opposition bastion.

The UN mediator said the government and submitted counterproposals to the two demands.

### 6000 AIDS cases in Nepal

KATHMANDU, Oct. 29: More than 6,000 AIDS cases have not been reported in Nepal, according to a clinical professor, reports Xinhua.

Dr. James Chin from the University of California revealed this on Friday while presenting a paper on epidemiological situation and AIDS projections in Nepal at a function organised by the AIDS control and prevention project.

### French schools give ultimatum to Muslim girls

PARIS, Oct. 29: Many French high schools have issued an ultimatum to Muslim girls to remove their Islamic headscarves in class and the number of young women expelled from school has reached 25, the French Education Ministry said Thursday, reports AP.

The ministry said 860 girls were still wearing the scarves across France in spite of a September 20 directive by Education Minister Francois Bayrou banning "ostentatious religious insignia," but that many schools had set a deadline for the scarves to be removed by November 2.

1969, she split the Congress over her socialist policies, sending a rival faction into limbo.

Two years later, Indira was at the peak of her career, leading India to a decisive military victory over arch-enemy Pakistan, whose eastern wing emerged as independent Bangladesh despite US opposition.

In 1974, she oversaw the test explosion of a nuclear bomb, which took Washington by surprise and sparked a nuclear race in South Asia that continues today.

The next year, she annexed Sikkim, a country that bordered Nepal and China.