

# BRIEFLY

**Seoul mayor offers to quit:** An official appointed as Seoul's new mayor when a city bridge collapsed offered to resign on Tuesday after being accused of ignoring warnings about bridge safety. AP reports from Seoul.

President Kim Young-Sam is expected to accept the resignation of Woo Myung-Kyu in an effort to calm mounting public criticism of the government's handling of the October 21 tragedy, which killed at least 32 people and shook the nation, aides said.

**Youths attack Gaza patrol:** Palestinian youths hurled stones at a joint Israeli-Palestinian patrol between the Burej and Nusseirat refugee camps in the autonomous Gaza Strip on Monday, Palestinian sources said. AFP reports from Gaza City.

Witnesses said about 100 youths attacked two jeeps - one Israeli and one Palestinian on the Gaza-Rafah road. The Palestinian police fired shots in the air and arrested one boy who was throwing stones. No one was hurt in the clash.

**UN summit on social dev Mar '95:** Russian President Boris Yeltsin and French President Francois Mitterrand are among world leaders who have agreed to come to Copenhagen next March for a UN summit on social development, Denmark said on Monday. Reuter reports from Copenhagen.

More than 10,000 delegates from 187 countries are expected to gather in the Danish capital for a conference from March 6-12, 1995 which will climax with the two-day UN World Summit for Social Development.

**Ariane rocket lifts off:** An Ariane rocket lifted off on Monday, carrying a communications satellite for European television. AFP reports from Kourou, French Guiana. The launch, the 69th of an Ariane rocket, was at 9:47 pm local time (0037 GMT) yesterday. The Astra-1D satellite, owned by the Societe Europeenne de Satellites de Luxembourg, was scheduled to be put into orbit 20 minutes after the launch.

**SA clash leaves 2 dead:** At least two people were killed and four wounded when members of two rival minibus taxi companies, warring for the past several weeks, exchanged gunfire at a Cape Town taxi rank on Monday. South African public radio reported. AFP says from Cape Town.

One man was shot dead at the taxi rank, while the second man died of his wounds after being admitted to hospital. Three of the wounded are in a critical condition. South African Broadcasting Corporation radio news reported.

**Crackdown on drug gangs in Rio:** Brazilian President Itamar Franco has ordered a military-led crackdown on drug gangs terrorising Rio de Janeiro. Reuter reports from Brasilia.

Justice Minister Alexandre Dupeyrat, accompanied by Rio Governor Nilo Batista, said the military would oversee a joint command of police forces in the city, to provide "operation support" and tackle the smuggling of drugs and arms.

**5 US soldiers hurt in Panama:** Five US soldiers and three Cuban refugees were injured during a stone-throwing confrontation at one of the Cuban refugee camps in Panama, the US military said on Monday. Reuter reports from Panama City.

A group of about 50 to 75 Cuban refugees threw stones at US soldiers and tore down a gate late on Sunday at one of four camps where the United States holds about 9,000 Cuban boat people. US military officials said.

**Cop shot dead in S Egypt:** Suspected Islamic militants shot and killed a policeman in southern Egypt as he was going to work on Monday, police said. AFP reports from Cairo.

Police launched a manhunt for the gunman.

**Philippine bus robbers kill 5:** Armed robbers killed five persons, including a policeman, in a hold-up on a bus in the central Philippines, a bus company official said yesterday. AFP reports from Bacolod.

The hold-up began in Calatrava town on Negros Island on Monday when one attacker seized the rifle of a policeman riding the bus, said bus dispatcher Mario Lintorio. The policeman and a companion were killed. The bus conductor and the bus inspector were gunned down when they did not immediately heed orders of the robbers, to lie down, he added, while a woman passenger was also killed when she panicked.

**Tajik ceasefire extended:** Tajikistan's communist government and the Islamic opposition agreed in Islamabad yesterday to extend a ceasefire in the two-year-old civil war by three months, official sources said. AFP reports from Islamabad.

After 12 days of talks, brokered by the United Nations, the two sides also agreed to set up a joint commission to monitor the ceasefire, the sources said.

**Army begins lifting WB closure:** The army began lifting an 11-day closure of the West Bank and Gaza Strip on Tuesday by issuing 8,000 permits to Palestinian construction workers, reports AP.

But the labourers were not expected to get past army checkpoints before Wednesday, once all the permits are handed out, a military spokeswoman said.

**4 bandits to die in Vietnam:** A court has sentenced to death four leaders of a bandit gang which held up buses, cars and trucks on Vietnam's main north-south highway and robbed passengers, newspapers reported yesterday. Reuter reports from Hanoi.

The gang stole 360 million dong (33,000 US dollar), small gold bars and 150 watches in more than 60 robberies along the central stretch of the highway between early 1992 and their arrest last July, the court in Danang heard.

**Haiti travel warning lifted:** The US State Department has cancelled its general travel warning to Americans on Haiti, but cautions that crime and disease are still risks to travellers. AP reports from Washington.

"Foreigners in Haiti are at risk from criminal attacks, particularly in urban areas, owing to their relative affluence," the department said in an information sheet distributed on Monday.

**German robbers free hostages:** Two armed fugitives released a wounded man, his wife, and a third hostage early Tuesday after racing across Germany ahead of police in a wild hostage-taking, bank-robbery crime spree. AP reports from Frankfurt.

The hostages were left in a meadow near Limburg, north of Frankfurt, around 4:30 am. The fugitives apparently were still at large. Police had said they lost track of the gunmen and hostages in the darkness.

**American held in SA:** An American man had a four-hour standoff with police on Tuesday before surrendering on suspicion of weapons charges. AP reports from Cape Town.

A woman inside the house and her 4-year-old child also were taken into custody. The South African Press Association reported the woman was wanted in the United States for fleeing with the child after a court ordered her to hand the boy over to his father. Police refused to disclose the identities of the three.

**92 inmates escape in Haiti:** As many as 92 prisoners are at large after an unprecedented jailbreak from Haiti's national penitentiary that may have involved complicity by Haitian guards, officials and police monitors said on Monday. Reuter reports from Port-au-Prince.

International police monitors in Haiti to oversee the restructuring of the Haitian police said prison officials told them that as many as 100 people may have tasted freedom in Sunday afternoon's break out.

# US won't join any NATO air strikes against Bosnia

WASHINGTON, Nov 1: The United States, more forthcoming than ever in support for recent Bosnian Muslim military advances, on Monday effectively ruled out joining NATO air strikes against Muslim forces that might be called by UN officials, reports Reuter.

State department deputy spokeswoman Christine Shelly told reporters Bosnian Muslim military gains could be what is needed to finally persuade rival Bosnian Serbs to accept a peace plan for the ex-Yugoslav Republic crafted by the United States, France, Britain, Germany and Russia.

She also said the administration would like to have the UN Security Council vote on its resolution to lift a UN arms embargo on Bosnian Muslims by about mid-November.

The United States has strongly supported special safe zones in Bosnia that are supposed to enjoy a guarantee of UN intervention to prevent artillery attacks against civilians.

They include the Bosnian capital of Sarajevo and the Muslim enclaves of Zepa, Srebrenica and Gorazde to the east and the town of Bihac in northwest Bosnia.

Shelly said the United States "of course, would like to see the exclusion zones respected." But asked if Washington would support NATO air strikes against

Muslims to enforce the zones, as UN officials suggested might be needed, she said: "It's, I think, hard to imagine the US participating in that kind of an action against Bosnian government forces when they clearly have been the overwhelming victim in the aggression by the Bosnian Serb forces."

While acknowledging some threats by UN officials to punish the Muslims, she called such a move hypothetical and said the UN peacekeeping command "has not asked for any kind of action."

Shelly reiterated full US backing for the "very difficult and very dangerous mission" undertaken by UN peacekeepers in Bosnia.

But she stressed that "the overwhelming majority of aggression has been undertaken by the Bosnian Serbs creating... a very frustrating situation for the Bosnian Muslims."

Meanwhile another report from Belgrade says: Bosnian Serb leader Rodovan Karadzic on Monday threatened a counter offensive against the Muslim-led Bosnian government army which would inflict "enormous casualties."

Karadzic said the Serbs would not use this "Muslim defeat" for propaganda purposes. "But all those corpses will nevertheless be filmed and shown to Muslim mothers and all Muslims so they can realise where the policy of war is taking them."

# Lanka rejects UNP request for adjournment debate

COLOMBO, Nov 1: Sri Lankan parliament speaker K B Ratnayake today rejected an opposition request for an adjournment debate on the situation following October 23 bomb blast here which killed 54 people, reports Xinhua.

When parliament met here this morning for the first time following the bomb tragedy, the opposition United National Party (UNP) group pressed for an adjournment debate today in view of what they called issues of national importance developing in the wake of the blast.

They also told the parliament that supporters of their party are being harassed by elements of the ruling People's Alliance (PA) after the bomb blast which killed parliamentary opposition leader and

presidential candidate Gamini Dissanayake and several other UNP parliamentarians.

This behaviour by ruling party supporters has led to a situation that will prevent a free and fair presidential election on November 9, they alleged.

While rejecting the UNP charges, the government benches counter charged that it was factional struggle within the UNP that created difficulties for the opposition.

Speaker Ratnayake, disagreeing with the UNP spokesman and former information minister Tyrone Fernando's submissions on the country's situation, ruled that no debate shall be held.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Chandrika Kumaratunga who resumed her presidential

# Gorbachev convicted of slander

MOSCOW, Nov 1: A court has found former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev guilty of slander after he called a Moscow official corrupt, reports AP.

Gorbachev called Vladimir Resin, the head of the Moscow city government construction department, a "shining example of a corrupt government official," in an interview with the Komsomolskaya Pravda newspaper.

A Moscow municipal court on Thursday fined Gorbachev one million roubles (325 dollars) for the comment, and ordered the newspaper to print a denial of the charge, the daily Moskovsky Komsomolets reported.

The former Communist Party general secretary failed to appear at the first trial and was fined 30 roubles (a penny).

Justice Minister G.L. Peiris had earlier announced that the government did not want the emergency to continue throughout the country.

However, he said emergency regulations would remain effective in the island's embattled northern and eastern regions where separatist Tamil Tigers are fighting for an independent homeland.



American tourist Bela Josef Nuss who was released by his captors on Monday, tells journalists yesterday about his 12-day ordeal as hostage of Kashmiri militants. — AFP photo

# Indians rescue 3 Britons held by Kashmiris

NEW DELHI, Nov 1: Indian police rescued three British hostages held by Kashmiri militants after a pre-dawn gun battle Tuesday. Two policemen and a kidnapper were killed, a police spokesman said, reports AP.

Police found the house where the hostages were kept after receiving information from an American who was freed from iron shackles Monday and from a kidnapper captured at a nearby roadblock.

Three kidnappers escaped during the gunfight, which occurred about 3 am (2130 GMT Monday) in a village outside the northern Indian town of Saharanpur, about 150 kilometers (90 miles) north of New Delhi, police officials said.

The hostages were unharmed, police said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

In New Delhi, police raided "suspected terrorist hideouts" and detained a large number of people for questioning.

The Indian government called the abductors "foreign mercenaries and Pakistani agents." It said they belonged to two known groups operating in Kashmir, the Hizbul Mujahedeen and the Harkat al-Ansar.

The kidnappers made their demands in hand written letters to the BBC and the VOA. The notes were accompanied by photographs of the hostages being held at gunpoint and copies of their passports.

It was the first time Westerners had been taken hostage from the Indian capital, New Delhi, since the armed uprising began in the northern state of Kashmir five years ago.

The Britons were identified as Paul Ridout, 26, Miles Croston, 28, and Rhys Partridge, 27.

# Angolans wary of latest peace deal

LI SAKA, Zambia, Nov 1: Hoping to end 19 years of civil war, Angola's warring rivals initiated a new peace agreement despite fighting back home that has raged throughout their talks, reports AP.

There was little reaction on Tuesday in Angola to the announcement Monday night in Lusaka, Zambia, where 11 months of talks produced the agreement scheduled to be formally signed on Nov. 15.

Stung previously by peace treaties that fell apart, Angolans in Luanda, the capital, said they would wait for proof.

"The hearts of the Angolan people cannot bear any more false hope," policeman Joao Malicia told The Associated Press. "We'll know when there is peace... and everyone will cry."

Portuguese Foreign Minister Jose Manuel Durao Barroso commended the government and National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) rebels, but added: "... We have to be cautious and see it become concrete."

"It's an important step, but it is far from the end of this marathon the Angolan people have been subjected to," he said.

By approving the pact, both sides signalled their acceptance of a cease fire to take effect two days after the formal signing in two weeks.

Fighting has continued throughout the peace talks, increasing recently with the government's seizure of a key petroleum centre at Soyo, 300 kilometers north of Luanda, over the weekend and its advance on Huambo, the rebel stronghold 480 kilometers

southeast of the capital.

UNITA, which controlled the coastal town of Soyo for almost two years, complained the government was trying to grab territory before the cease fire.

It was not immediately clear if President Jose Eduardo dos Santos and rebel leader Jonas Savimbi would attend the signing ceremony in Lusaka.

The war — one of Africa's longest — erupted on the eve of independence from Portugal in 1975 and has killed half a million people while devastating the economy and infrastructure of the oil- and diamond-rich nation.

It became a proxy battle of the Cold War, with the Marxist government backed by Cuba and the former Soviet Union facing off with South African

and US-backed UNITA.

A 1991 peace agreement set up elections the following year, which Santos and his party won. But Savimbi rejected the results as fraudulent and fighting resumed.

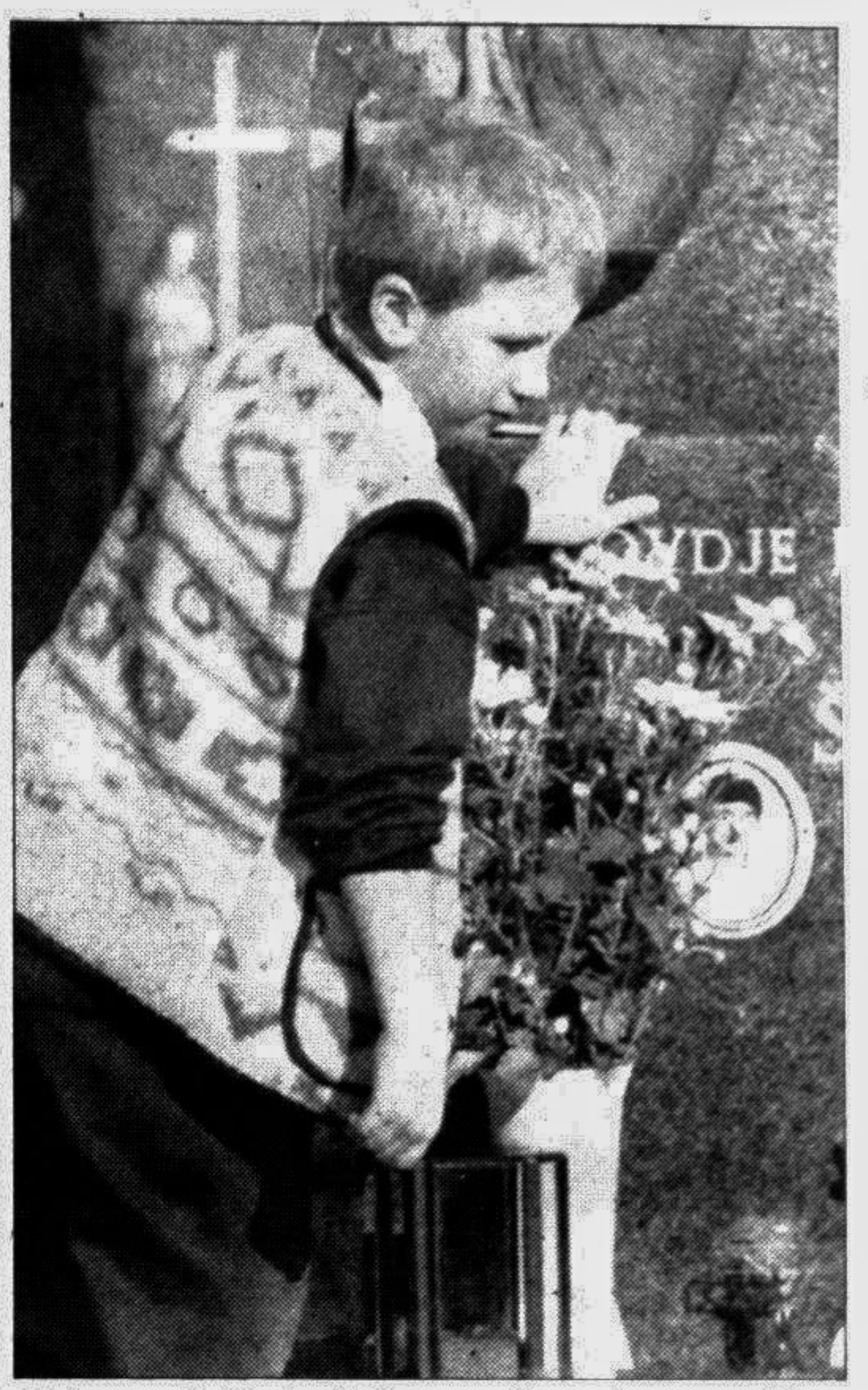
The new peace agreement was announced by UN special envoy Aloune Blondin Beye at a brief ceremony. Eugenio Manuavakola of UNITA and Faustino Muteka of the government initiated the pact, then sipped champagne.

"Peace in Angola, thanks to Zambia," Beye said, adding the agreement would be formally signed in 15 days.

It calls for a halt to fighting, eventual demobilisation of all UNITA fighters, who will be sent home or incorporated into the national army, some government posts for UNITA



Major Muhammad Ibrahim Abu Daka adjusts the picture of PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat at the Rafah border crossing between the Gaza Strip and Egypt on Monday. The Palestinian authority took over from Oct. 31 parts of the border control from the Israelis. — AFP photo



Five-year old Marko Skripac stands at the grave of his father, a Croatian soldier killed in 1992 in the second year of the war against Serbian aggression. More than 7000 Croats were killed in the conflict. Thousands of relatives visited graveyards throughout traditionally — Catholic Croatia and in its occupied territories on All Souls Day to remember their war dead. — AFP photo

# Off the Record

**"Mr 6 per cent"**

ROME: Newspapers called him "Mr 6 per cent" and with his movie star looks and attractive American companion he seemed like the most glamorous of the fugitives in Italy's nearly 3-year-long corruption scandal, reports AP.

Now that investigators tracked him down after an 18-month long search and arrested him near the Boulevard Saint-Germain in Paris as he was buying Italian newspapers at a kiosk, it appears that life on the run wasn't so fascinating after all.

Ferdinando Mach Di Palmstein 47, faced five Italian arrest warrants in connection with scandals when he was picked up in Paris Sunday. He was indicted October 14 with 43 others for the alleged diversion of millions of dollars in Third World aid for Socialist Party coffers and personal use.

He changed hideouts every 20 to 30 days. The newspaper La Stampa on Tuesday quoted an Italian police official in Paris as saying:

**Too old to marry?**

ZAFFERANA, Sicily: Two 83-year old lovebirds who were married in this town near Mount Etna at the weekend said on Monday that cries of shame would not prevent them living happily ever after, reports Reuter.

The Sicilian town's main street was blocked on Sunday by citizens outraged at the wedding. They felt Savatore and Maria Catenna, both of whose spouses had died, were too old to marry again and were letting down their families.

"I am sorry not everyone has understood us it is the one blemish on our happiness," Savatore, commenting on the absence of his wife's seven children from the wedding and reception, said in a toast.

"But one thing is certain-Maria and I are head over heels in love," he told the newspaper La Repubblica.

**Imperial photographs to substitute cigarettes**

TOKYO: Bowing to pressure from anti-smoking campaigners, Japan's imperial household agency has decided to strike cigarettes off of its list of commemorative gifts. Kyodo news agency reported on Monday, says Reuter.

The agency said cigarettes will be replaced with an album of colour photographs of the imperial family.

"Tobacco has its ardent supporters, but the overall trend is for a growth in the anti-smoking movement," Kyodo quoted a palace spokesman as saying.

There is also the opinion that anything of a commemorative nature should be lasting, he added.

**Dali's Isis stolen!**

ST PETERSBURG: Thieves have stolen a 50,000 US dollar gold and amethyst statuette by surrealist artist Salvador Dali from an art sale in St Petersburg, police said on Monday, reports Reuter.

Spokesman Igor Komisarov said the 20 cm (eight inch) tall statuette, called Isis, was stolen from the city's exhibition hall last week.

But he said he could not confirm a report in last Friday's Vecherny Petersburg newspaper that the thieves had threatened to beat up the German organiser of the art sale unless he kept quiet about the theft.

The newspaper said the thieves had also threatened to create customs problems for the organiser, who was planning to take dozens of unsold Dali sculptures and prints back to Germany.

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The visit, which comes at the end of a year long review of US policy towards Myanmar, has fuelled speculation that the United States is attempting to

upgrade relations with Yangon which have been cool since the 1988 coup that put the junta in power.

The United States cut off aid after the military suppressed pro democracy demonstrations in 1988. It has been an outspoken critic of the junta's detention since 1989 of opposition leader and Nobel Peace Prize winner Aung San Suu Kyi, as well as other human rights abuses and has not sent an ambassador to Myanmar since 1989.

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# New parliament to be elected in Maldives Dec 2

MALE, Nov 1: The tiny Indian ocean archipelago of the Maldives will elect a new parliament on December 2, the elections department said today, reports Reuter.

It said in a statement that 242 candidates would contest 40 seats in the 48-seat Majlis (parliament). The constitution gives the president the power to appoint the remaining eight.

Candidates are elected as individuals in the Maldives, where political parties are banned.

Officials said 20 candidates were competing for the two seats allocated for the capital island Male.

President Abdul Gayoom, who has led the country since 1978, has said he is not opposed to a multi-party system but feels the country is not ready for it.

# US delegation meets Myanmar officials

YANGON, Nov 1: A senior US official met Tuesday with Myanmar's military intelligence chief during a visit aimed at giving Yangon an opportunity to improve relations with Washington, officials said, reports AP.

US Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia and Pacific Affairs Thomas Hubbard, leading the first high-level US delegation to visit Myanmar since the army took power six years ago, met strongman Lt Gen Khin Nyunt, Myanmar officials said.

The two reportedly discussed human rights, democracy and the fight against drug trafficking.

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