

# BRIEFLY

### 10 girls die in Iranian mishap:

Ten schoolgirls were killed and eight others seriously wounded when a school minibus collided with a tanker truck in southern Iran, newspapers reported yesterday. AFP says from Tehran.

The accident happened on a road in the Kuar region in Fars province, they said, adding that the minibus caused the crash after it suddenly veered to the left.

### Nepal goes to polls tomorrow:

Electioneering ended in Nepal on Saturday and politicians from across the spectrum spent the last moments canvassing the Kathmandu valley, AFP reports from Kathmandu.

The polls are scheduled for November 15. Activists from all political parties, including the ruling Nepali Congress (NC) party, and the main opposition, Nepal Communist Party-United Marxist and Leninist (NCP-UML), held rallies in the streets of the Nepalese capital and outlying districts to appeal to voters.

### Albania's highest medal for Bush:

President Sali Berisha on Saturday awarded George Bush with Albania's highest medal and called the former U.S. president a fighter for freedom. AP reports from Tirana.

Bush, accompanied by his wife Barbara on the one-day visit, was decorated with the Golden Order of Scanderbeg for his support of developing democracy in Albania and other former communist states in Europe.

### Jordanian girl dies in Israel:

Peace came too late for Heba Shaban. The 12-year-old Jordanian girl died in an Israeli hospital late Friday, just days before a life saving bone marrow transplant. AP reports from Jerusalem.

Heba died of massive internal bleeding in the lungs, her doctor, Shlomo Slaviv of Jerusalem's Hadassah Hospital, told Israel army radio.

### King Gustav goes to Seoul today:

Sweden's King Carl Gustav arrives in Seoul today on an unofficial visit to South Korea with a group of businessmen to promote technological cooperation between the two countries. Reuter reports from Seoul.

During his six-day stay, King Gustav is to meet South Korean Prime Minister Lee Yung-Dug for talks on bilateral relations.

### 1500 arrested in Peru:

Police have arrested at least 1,500 people in a sweep targeting suspected rebels and drug traffickers in the town of Huaraz, authorities said on Saturday. AFP reports from Lima.

Among those detained in the town 400 kilometers (250 miles) northwest of Lima were several high ranking guerrilla leaders, police said. President Alberto Fujimori, who is seeking reelection in April, has pledged to wipe out the Maoist Shining Path insurgency by 1995.

### Cocaine seized in Britain:

British customs officials and Dutch police confiscated more than half a tonne of cocaine with an estimated street value of 50 million pounds (80 million US dollar), a spokesman said on Saturday. Reuter reports from London.

British customs tracked the consignment after it arrived in Britain from Curacao, off the Venezuelan coast, on November 10.

### Chretien in Jakarta:

Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chretien arrived in Jakarta yesterday to attend a summit of the 18 leaders of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum. AFP reports from Jakarta.

Chretien and his wife, Aline Chaine, who arrived on a Canadian defence force Airbus at Halim Perdanakusumah airbase, were met by Indonesian Minister of Public Works Radinal Mochtar.

### Japanese chopper crash kills 2:

A helicopter chartered by Tokyo's Fuji Television network crashed yesterday in Southern Japan's Kagoshima prefecture, killing the pilot and a photographer, news reports said. AFP reports from Tokyo.

A Fuji Television sports director was hospitalised with serious injuries following the accident on Amami Oshima island, where the helicopter crashed after hitting a rock, the reports said. The three were covering a women's triathlon event when the accident occurred.

### 1m Ugandans to die of AIDS:

Nearly a million people out of Uganda's 17.5 million population will die from Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) by 1998, the Uganda AIDS Commission said in a report released on Saturday. AFP reports from Kampala.

The commission, which was established by the Uganda government to help boost public awareness on AIDS, said that 565,000 adults and 250,000 children, almost five per cent of the population, will have died from AIDS during the period.

### Caribbean forces in St. Kitts:

A 45-member Caribbean security force arrived in this small nation on Saturday to help overwhelmed police round up about 150 inmates who escaped during a riot and fire that destroyed the only prison. AP reports from Basseterre, St. Kitts.

The inmates at Her Majesty's Prison downtown rioted on Friday to protest the release of the deputy prime minister's sons, who had been arrested on drug and weapons charges. More than 100 inmates stayed in the vicinity of the prison compound in downtown Basseterre, but an unknown number were at large, the government said.

### Grenades blast in Netherlands:

Three grenades exploded in the Dutch city of Rotterdam on Saturday, one of which was manufactured in former Yugoslavia, Dutch police said. AFP reports from Rotterdam.

Two hand grenades blew up during the early morning in an industrial area in the south of the town but caused no damage. A half hour later a third blast on a commercial street in the town's centre shattered several shop windows. None of the blasts caused injuries.

### 6 die in Colombian clash:

Six heavily armed leftist rebels sleep into a northern Colombian town on Saturday and clashed with authorities, leaving six people dead and 10 injured, radio reports said. AFP says from Bogota.

About 200 troops with the revolutionary armed forces of Colombia moved on the town of San Pedro De Uraba in the banana growing northwestern Uraba region, triggering a two-hour firefight, the reports said.

### One killed in Baghdad blast:

Two bombs exploded in Baghdad on Saturday killing one person and injuring three, the state-run Iraqi News Agency reported. AP says from Nicosia.

One bomb exploded near a downtown hotel, killing the person who was believed to be carrying it when it exploded, the report said. The agency, monitored in Cyprus, said the explosion occurred at 1 p.m. (1000 GMT) close to the Baghdad Hotel on Abu Nawwas Street.

### 14 shot dead in Rwanda:

Rwandan government soldiers shot dead 14 people and wounded at least 17 others in two incidents in south western Rwanda at the end of last week. United Nations officials said Sunday, reports AFP from Kigali.

Stephane Greiner, military spokesman for the UN Assistance Mission in Rwanda (UNAMIR) said soldiers of the Rwanda Patriotic Army (RPA), the armed wing of the ruling Tutsi-led Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF), had opened fire Thursday in a camp for displaced persons at Musanze near Gikongoro.

### Swedish referendum on EU:

Sweden's 8.5 million voters set out yesterday in sunny, whirly weather to decide whether or not their nation should join the European Union as of January 1, 1995. AFP reports from Stockholm.

A last-minute Demoskop opinion poll published on Sunday in the daily Svenska Dagbladet showed a clear majority in favour of EU membership after several weeks when the margin of difference had been too close to predict the outcome.

# Tigers to retaliate only if attacked LTTE declares 7-day truce

COLOMBO, Nov 13: The leader of the Tamil Tiger rebels announced a unilateral ceasefire just hours after the inauguration of Chandrika Kumaratunga as Sri Lanka's first female president, reports AP.

Rebel leader Velupillai Prabhakaran said in a message broadcast on Saturday over the Tigers' clandestine radio station that the guerrillas should retaliate only if attacked, military intelligence officials said.

Prabhakaran did not give any reason for declaring the seven-day ceasefire, but said it would be with immediate effect, said the officials, who monitored the broadcast.

Brig Gemunu Kulatunga, a military spokesman, said he had not heard of the rebel

ceasefire. But he said no attacks were reported overnight. The rebel's unilateral declaration of a ceasefire could be an effort to push the government to resume the peace process which was suspended following the assassination of presidential candidate.

The military has been wary of a ceasefire, since in the past the rebels have used cessation of hostilities to build up their defences.

There have been several ceasefires in the past, the last was broken in July 1990, when the 13 months of peace talks with the previous regime were scuttled.

Kumaratunga won Wednesday's election with a record 62 per cent of the vote on a

pledge to end the 11-year ethnic war with Tamil rebels.

"We will continue our quest for peace, recognising that the path is a difficult and tortuous one," Kumaratunga said in a television address after taking the oath of office on Saturday before hundreds of people in a rainstorm.

She succeeded President Dingiri Banda Wijetunga of the United National Party (UNP) who did not compete in the elections.

Since the election results were announced on Thursday, there have been only a few minor skirmishes between government troops and rebels in the north and east of the island nation. Eight rebels and a soldier were killed in the

clashes.

The election campaign was torn by the assassination of Kumaratunga's main opponent, Gamini Dissanayake, who was killed along with 56 others by a suicide bomber suspected of being a Tamil rebel. Peace talks with the rebels were suspended after the October 24 killings.

Dissanayake's wife, Srimala, took his place but finished far behind Kumaratunga in the voting.

Tamils make up about 3 million of the country's 17 million people and accuse the majority Sinhalese of discrimination. The Tamil Tiger rebels want a separate Tamil nation in the north and east of this island. More than 34,000 people have been killed in the war.



Riot police stop some 500 leftist anti-US demonstrators on Saturday in Manila as President Bill Clinton arrives for an overnight visit.

## Filipino leftists burn US flag

MANILA, Nov 13: Hundreds of leftists shouting "Death to imperialism" burned American flags near the palace where Presidents Bill Clinton and Fidel Ramos met Sunday, reports AP.

Police blocked the protesters about 300 meters (yards) from the Malacanang Palace compound. No violence was reported, and the demonstrators dispersed peacefully after several hours.

The rally was led by the May First Movement, the largest left-wing labour federation in the country. It opposes US influence and a reported plan to allow the US military to stockpile weapons in the Philippines.

Clinton, who arrived Saturday night, will attend the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation forum in Indonesia on Monday.

The United States is the Philippines' largest trading partner, and Clinton and Ramos said at a news conference at the palace that they will work hard to continue that.

Clinton also denied claims by demonstrators that US forces had left toxic waste at Subic Naval Base and Clark Air Base when the sailors and soldiers left them in 1992.

In another demonstration in Manila Sunday, 300 people burned a large effigy of a Pepsi bottle and asked for Clinton's

help in a class-action lawsuit they have filed against Pepsico Inc. Fireworks in the effigy exploded, but no injuries were reported.

The protest against Pepsico concerns a 1992 sweepstakes fiasco that saw thousands of people buy Pepsis with the winning number inside the bottle cap. Pepsi said a computer glitch had duplicated the number, and it refused to pay. The winners have sued Pepsi and asked Filipinos to boycott its products.

In February, a man who filed his own lawsuit against Pepsi won a decision from a regional court ordering it to pay him 39,285 dollars. Pepsi has appealed the ruling.

## Timorese demand independence

DILI, Indonesia, Nov 13: Thousands of East Timorese rampaged through the streets of Dili on Sunday, looting shops, burning cars and smashing windows in protest against Indonesian rule, reports AP.

No injuries were reported in the riot, which followed a small, peaceful parade demanding independence for East Timor, a former Portuguese colony annexed by Indonesia.

Hours earlier, about 40 pro-independence activists shouted "Viva Bill Clinton" and "Free Timor" at a noisy but peaceful demonstration for human rights and independence in Dili.

The incidents followed the third anniversary Saturday of the massacre of unarmed civilians by Indonesian troops on November 12, 1991.

They also coincided with Saturday's sit-in by 29 East Timorese students, who climbed over a fence and sat in the grounds of the American Embassy in Jakarta, 1,500 miles to the west. The unrest comes as leaders from Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum are assembling in Jakarta for a summit scheduled to begin on Tuesday

and demonstrators spread through the East Timorese capital burning debris, stoning police and breaking store windows, hundreds of Indonesian riot police cordoned off the town of 30,000 inhabitants. The rioters were armed with clubs, bricks, rocks and bottles.

At one point, about 150 riot police charged the protesters, but turned and fled when the youths stoned them and beat them with clubs.

### Egyptian varsity bans leggings

CAIRO, Nov 13: A university in northern Egypt has banned its female students from wearing fashionable leggings, reports AP.

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor of Tanta University, halfway between Cairo and Alexandria, Mohammed Al-Shirbini, has decided to turn away any student wearing leggings, according to official daily Al-Gumhuriya.

The move is likely to restart debate on female dress codes in Egyptian schools and universities. Students have so far won their legal battle to wear the Muslim veil in universities, following a ban by Egyptian authorities.

## Suez Canal under threat from ME peace process

ISMAILIYA, Egypt, Nov 13: The Suez Canal, as it turns 125 years old this week, is under threat from the peace process which is carving a new Middle East and opening up alternative routes.

Peace brings with it competition. I hope that economic problems will not replace political problems," the chairman of the Suez Canal authority, Mohammad Ezzat Adel told AFP.

Since the PLO-Israel autonomy accord signed in 1993 and the Israel-Jordan peace treaty in October, the Middle East is rife with projects for new bridges, highways and oil pipelines.

They could cost the canal dearly as the Arab-Israeli conflict since the creation of the

Jewish state in 1948 draws to a close and opens new perspectives.

Already the revenue of the Suez Canal, so vital to Egypt's economy, has fallen by between three and four per cent this year compared to the 1.98 billion dollars of 1993, mainly because of an oil transportation crisis, said Adel.

But this could be the prelude to other problems for the canal, which was opened on November 17, 1869 after French Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte's expedition to Egypt.

Several pipelines from the oil rich Gulf to the Mediterranean - closed since 1948 because of various crises, including the 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait - could reopen

and others be built.

Despite a 35 per cent reduction in rates for shipping its natural gas through the canal, Qatar is negotiating with Israel for the construction of a pipeline.

Israel's project to build a canal between the Dead Sea and the Jordanian port of Aqaba on the Red Sea is also of concern to Egypt, although Adel was confident it would be "unsuitable for navigation".

The Suez pipeline to the Mediterranean, Samed, owned half by Egypt and the rest by Gulf states, is also competition for the canal. Opened in 1977, its capacity has risen from 80 million tonnes per year to 120 million tonnes.

Adel, however, insisted the Suez Canal was "in a very good

## Russia may sell SU-27 jets to Pakistan

ISLAMABAD, Nov 13: A team of the Russian air force and officials from the Ministry of Defence will visit Pakistan on November 27 for exploring possibilities of selling SU-27 air fighters to Pakistan, local press reported here today, says Xinhua.

The report said that this was the first time that Russia agreed to consider selling the most advanced military aircraft to Pakistan.

The report quoted Pakistan Defence Minister Aftab Mirani as saying that the number of the aircraft which Pakistan intended to buy would depend on the price of the jets and the cost of the related support infrastructure.

## TNSM leader disowns revolt

PESHAWAR, Pakistan, Nov 13: Islamic militants fought Pakistani paramilitary forces with rockets in a remote northwestern area yesterday, but their leader disowned the revolt calling it a mischief, officials and witnesses said, reports Reuter.

They said the militants of the Tehrik Nifaz Shariah-e-Mohammadi (TNSM) group, entrenched on hilltops, also shelled villages in an adjoining area and blocked a section of the Karakoram highway to China for the fourth consecutive day.

TNSM leader Sufi Mohammad, who has urged followers to end their revolt after authorities ordered enforcement of Islamic laws in the Malakand division area of the North West Frontier Province last week, disowned their present campaign yesterday.

## Cubans march in US to lift ban

WASHINGTON, Nov 13: Thousands of protesters marched on Saturday in front of the White House demanding the United States lift its embargo against communist Cuba, reports Reuter.

The crowd estimated at 2,200 by the police and at 7,000 by organisers fled past the presidential residence shouting "Cuba si, bloqueo no," (Spanish for Cuba yes, blockade no) before gathering at a park across the street.

"We've come here to deliver a message to the reactionaries who won on November 8, the American people don't want this blockade against Cuba to go on, one of the organisers, Lucius Walker Jr. said in a speech.

He was referring to polls on Tuesday in which Republicans won dominance of both houses of Congress from the Democrats. President Bill Clinton is a Democrat.

Walker's group pastors for peace is staging in Washington this week, the final of a nationwide campaign to collect donations of food and medicines to take to Cuba via Canada.

## Serbs equip Muslims to fight Bosnian govt

ZAGREB, Nov 13: Rebel Serbs from Croatia are mobilising Muslim refugees and equipping them to fight against Muslim-led government forces in the Bihac pocket. United Nations sources said on Saturday, reports Reuter.

Serb authorities in Croatia's breakaway Krajina region have set a November 13 deadline for all able-bodied men in two massive refugee camps on their territory to be mobilised for an attack on the Bihac enclave.

"Some 1,000 Muslim refugees who were already mobilised were given fatigues and were transported somewhere in trucks," a United Nations official said.

More than 30,000 people fled the Bihac pocket after Bosnian troops crushed a revolt by local leader Fikret

Abdic last August. The Bihac refugees were not let into Croatia and were forced to stay in the self-proclaimed republic of Serb Krajina.

Most are living in appalling conditions - 16,000 in a former chicken farm at Batnoga and 12,000 in the deserted frontline village of Turanj.

Croatian radio said 700 mobilised Muslim refugees left the camp at Turanj on Friday night in 10 buses and headed towards Kordun in Krajina Serb territory.

It said the mobilised men are participating in Serb attacks on the Bihac pocket in northwestern Bosnia.

Those drafted were believed to include former members of Abdic's defeated army UN sources said.

## Off the Record

### Dimbleby's book infuriates Charles' ex-girlfriend

LONDON: Amanda Knatchbull, the woman who turned down a marriage proposal from Britain's Prince Charles, is furious about a book which revealed details of their relationship, reports Reuter.

The Sunday Express newspaper said the granddaughter of Earl Mountbatten of Burma was shocked when their romance was recounted in Jonathan Dimbleby's biography of the prince.

"I hate anything being written about me. I never ever wanted a single thing said about me publicly," the newspaper quotes her as saying.

"I live down here (southern England) with my family and that's all I want out of my life. I don't enjoy this sort of unwanted attention."

Dimbleby's book said the heir-to-the-throne noticed that Knatchbull had "grown into a very good-looking girl" when he visited her parents in the Bahamas in 1973.

When Charles proposed, Dimbleby said her refusal was "considered, gentle and immediate" but the newspaper claimed she laughed when the prince popped the question.

"What a funny idea," she is quoted as saying. Knatchbull, 37, is married to property dealer Charles Ellingworth and has two young sons.

### 'Interview With the Vampire'

NEW YORK: There are pitfalls with vampire movies. They can be so campy that they become a comical blur of incisors and black capes, or so big on style that substance is nowhere to be found, reports AP.

Nail Jordan, thankfully, avoids both traps in his intelligent and amusing 'Interview With the Vampire'.

Jordan's stylish movie boasts outstanding performances by Brad Pitt and Kirsten Dunst, and good support from Antonio Banderas, Christian Slater and Stephen Rea.

But it appears all who criticised the casting of Tom Cruise were right: He turns in a rather tepid portrayal of the Vampire Lestat. He tries hard and really throws his heart into it, but simply lacks the depth to deliver the dramatic colourings and philosophical torments of the vampire's existence.

The movie truly belongs to Pitt and Dunst. In fact, 'Interview With the Vampire' doesn't really come alive until Dunst enters the picture.

### 'Frankenstein' returns

NEW YORK: "Frankenstein" never dies - it's just remade. The classic tale, like the monster himself, keeps lurching back to haunt us, reports AP.

The latest celebration of the fabled creature is Kenneth Branagh's sumptuous movie, 'Mary Shelley's Frankenstein', starring the Irish-born actor/director himself as Victor Frankenstein and Robert De Niro as his stitched-together creation.

While the story still concerns a man who creates a being from cadavers and brings it to life, Branagh's rendering uses more on romance and aims to be a gothic fairy tale. It's also quite faithful to the original text by giving us a highly articulate creature who reads Milton and is ultimately maddened by the world's - and his maker's - rejection.

The creature's suffering lends a universality to this ripping yarn and is one reason why it endures. But its attraction goes beyond mere sentiment. It tweaks our fears of death as well as science and technology touches forbidden desires, illustrates how life has ramifications.



A young woman pretends to eat a chocolate-coloured rose named "Leonidas" after the famous Belgian chocolates, by its creator, French rose grower Meilland, on Saturday in Le Cannet des Maures, France. In just a few days, this rose has become the most expensive in Europe. — AFP photo

## US pullout from Haiti begins

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Nov 13: The first light infantry unit to leave Haiti since helping secure the safe return of ousted President Jean-Bertrand Aristide left the Caribbean nation on Saturday, a US military official said, reports Reuter.

The 300 foot soldiers flew back to their base at Fort Drum in New York. Lieutenant Jeff Gordon said.

It is significant because it is the first light infantry unit to be redeployed to the United States, Gordon said.

The withdrawal is part of a major pullout of US forces from Haiti. President Bill Clinton has promised some 6,000 troops will return home before December 1.