

## BRIEFLY

**Rabin, Clinton meet next week:** President Clinton and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin will concentrate on Middle East peace-making at the White House next week even as attacks by Muslim militants threaten to stall expansion of Palestinian self-rule. AP reports from Washington.

Clinton and Rabin share declining political fortunes. They also share a commitment to the process that has brought a peace treaty between Israel and Jordan and PLO administration of Gaza and the West Bank town of Jericho.

**2 Thai agents shot dead:** Two suspected drug smugglers shot dead two narcotics agents in Thailand's northern Chiang Mai province yesterday, police said. Reuter reports from Bangkok.

The agents, attached to the paramilitary border police, were shot as they approached the suspects' car.

**German terrorist on trial:** A member of the terrorist Red Army Faction went on trial on Tuesday, charged with the murder of three Americans killed in a car-bombing at a US Air Force base and the shooting death of a German policeman. AP reports from Frankfurt.

Birgit Hogefeld, 37, was arrested last year after a shoot-out at an east German train station that left her boyfriend, terrorist Wolfgang Grams, and a policeman dead. She is charged with four counts of murder and 10 of attempted murder.

**Myanmar destroys opium fields:** Myanmar destroyed more than 24 hectares (60 acres) of opium poppies in northeastern Shan state at the start of this year's opium harvest, Myanmar state television said. Reuter reports from Bangkok.

**8 die in Algerian jail mutiny:** At least eight inmates were killed and 60 injured on Monday in a mutiny started by Muslim fundamentalists at Berrouaghia Prison, 80 kilometres (50 miles) south of Algiers, the press reported yesterday. AFP says from Algiers.

One paper gave the number of dead as 11 after the security forces intervened. The mutiny began Sunday when some 20 inmates armed with knives, forks and other sharp weapons, tried to seize control of the prison, notably by setting fire to their bedding.

**Sino-CIS border talks end:** The 14th session of border talks between the working groups from China and Russia, Kazakhstan, Kirghizstan and Tadzhikistan concluded in Beijing yesterday, reports Xinhua.

During the 11-day session the working group of the Chinese delegation and the working group of the combined delegation of the four members of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) discussed border alignment between China and the four countries.

**Egyptian rebels kill 2 cops:** Suspected Muslim militants killed two policemen and wounded a third in the southern Egyptian province of Minya yesterday, police said. AFP reports from Minya.

The attack took place as a police car drove through the town of Malawi, 250 kilometres south of Cairo. Police said the assailants opened fire from a pickup truck parked in an alleyway.

**HR conference in Kazakhstan:** Russia, several former Soviet republics and the United States started a conference on human rights in the Kazakh capital Alma Ata yesterday. Itar-Tass reported. AFP reports from Moscow.

The US-sponsored international conference, to be attended by about 150 delegates, will cover the development of democracy and human rights protection by independent organisations, Itar-Tass said.

**2 burned alive in S Africa:** A crowd of people burned alive two elderly persons in a village near Pietersburg after accusing them of sorcery. South African police said on Monday. AFP reports from Pietersburg.

The two victims, a man of 77 and a woman of 85, were killed by a crowd of youths at Gasekgo in the former blacks only reservation of Venda. No one was arrested.

**Atlantis returns:** Space shuttle Atlantis landed in the Mojave Desert on Monday, bringing home a wealth of data on the ozone layer along with 10 pregnant rats that were immediately taken away for Caesarean sections. AP reports from Edwards Air Force Base, California.

The six astronauts, including Frenchman Jean-Francois Clervoy, ended the 11-day flight at Edwards Air Base because Tropical Storm Gordon made a landing at Cape Canaveral, Florida, impossible.

**MSF to leave Rwandan camp:** A leading relief organisation announced on Monday that it would leave Rwandan refugee camps in eastern Zaire because of the poor security there. AP reports from London.

In a statement issued in London, Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF) or Doctors Without Borders, said members of the former Rwandan authorities were policing the camps and brutalising refugees who want to return to Rwanda through "intimidation, arrest or assassination."

**Sunday Times editor quits:** The mercurial editor of a leading British newspaper broke ties with Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation on Monday because of his disappointment over the collapse of a planned Fox Network current affairs show, AP reports from London.

Andrew Neil, appointed editor of The Sunday Times in 1983 when he was 34, said his departure from Murdoch's media empire was "not divorce, it's an amicable separation."

**Lithuanian N-plant closed:** A reactor at a Chernobyl-type nuclear power plant in Lithuania has been shut down following terrorist threats at the facility, a government official said on Monday. AP reports from Tallinn.

The head of nuclear power safety inspections, Povilas Vaishnis, said one of the two 1,500-megawatt reactors at the Ignalina plant was turned off on Sunday night to enable Swedish and Lithuanian experts to check the system against sabotage.

**Cocaine seized in Beirut:** Customs officers seized at least 100 kilograms (220 pounds) of cocaine base from Colombia with a street value of up to six million dollars at Beirut port on Monday, officials said. AFP reports from Beirut.

**Celestial blast shakes Sudan:** A powerful explosion in the night sky shook part of eastern Sudan, sending scared villagers running into streets to come under a hall of stone-like objects, a government newspaper said on Monday. Reuter reports from Khartoum.

Al-Sudan Al-Hadith said the explosion appeared to be caused by something from space striking the atmosphere over the remote Halfa Al-Jadida community, some 250 km (150 miles) southeast of the Sudanese capital Khartoum.

**Blast near Turkish embassy:** A booby-trapped car exploded yesterday near the Turkish embassy in Belgrade, killing the driver of the vehicle, officials at the embassy said. AFP reports from Belgrade.

A diplomat at the embassy, who asked not to be named, said he did not think the embassy was the target. The car blew up around 20 metres from the embassy, in front of the headquarters of a Belgrade company, Interkom.

**Gubernatorial polls in Brazil:** Brazilians went to the polls yesterday to choose 17 new governors in a second-round election runoff that will define the mandate of President-elect Fernando Henrique Cardoso. AP reports from Brasilia.

Cardoso's allies hold wide leads in Brazil's five most populous states, where support from governors is crucial to push through Congress reforms to fight inflation, speed up privatisation and reduce bloated government.

## International

## UNSC renews sanctions despite Iraq's recognition of Kuwait

UNITED NATIONS, Nov 15: The UN Security Council renewed sanctions against Iraq on Monday despite Baghdad's formal recognition of Kuwait, a key condition for lifting the four-year-old sanctions regime, reports AFP.

The council has asked me to tell you that we met, reviewed the sanctions regime and decided to continue it without change," said US Ambassador Madeleine Albright.

The 15-member council met in informal session after

Iraq's Deputy Prime Minister Tareq Aziz handed over documents on Iraq's official recognition of Kuwait to Albright, the council's current president.

Aziz expressed hope that the council would act "in a

positive manner to this important step on the side of Iraq," arguing that his government had now fulfilled the conditions for lifting the sanctions regime.

The question of Iraq's recognition of Kuwait was taken up at a separate council meeting later in the day, but no decision was reached on how to respond, the Security Council president said. Further discussions were to be held on the issue today.

To rebut Iraq's argument that the sanctions had caused its population undue suffering, Albright showed council members satellite pictures of constructions of Iraqi pleasure palaces, diplomats said.

"They were pretty impressive, frankly," commented British Ambassador Sir David Hannay, who said the pictures of Iraqi presidential retreats showed "a pretty extraordinary expenditure on these buildings."

"They are a great deal closer to Versailles than to anything else."

The CIA estimates that Iraq has spent as much as a billion dollars in rebuilding palaces and presidential retreats, according to a New York Times report.

Aziz called the report "rubbish."

They called it an accident. Sun said it appeared un-



Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tareq Aziz (L) and UN Secretary General Boutros Ghali pause for photographs before their meeting on Monday in the United Nations.

— AFP photo

## 100 Haitians killed in storm

PONT-AU-PRINCE, Nov 15: Heavy rains and flooding from Tropical Storm Gordon swept across Haiti on Monday, killing at least 100 people, leaving thousands homeless and posing yet another challenge to the young democratic government, reports AP.

Communications were down through most of rural Haiti, and rescue workers feared the nationwide death toll was much higher.

President Jean-Bertrand Aristide flew over his battered Caribbean nation in a US military helicopter to survey damage from the 1994 Atlantic hurricane, season's deadliest storm, which triggered landslides and washed away makeshift homes overnight.

"I didn't save anything, only myself," said Lekeas Dorvillier, 35, who jumped out the window of his two-room home minutes before it crumbled into a ravine. Many of the victims lived in flimsy tin shacks in slums on hillsides in the capital.

By noon, the main morgue in Port-au-Prince had received 18 victims of the flooding. Argentine police monitors un-

loaded one body caked with sand from their jeep.

US and Haitian authorities were assessing how to help the thousands of people who were left homeless. Haiti will likely rely heavily on the US forces, since the police and government are barely functioning.

"Obviously we will do what we can to help the Haitian government," said Col Barry

Willey, spokesman for the about 15,000 American soldiers in Haiti.

The American troops flew in September to help restore the elected government of Aristide, who was ousted in a September 1991 coup. Aristide returned October 15.

In Port-au-Prince, hundreds of terrified people fled rickety homes in darkness early Monday as floodwaters poured in.

Some spent the night huddled on their rooftops in the down-

pour.

A mudslide collapsed a wall in one neighbourhood, killing a woman and three children, the Haitian Red Cross said.

Hours after the skies had cleared, the bodies of several flood victims lay in the sun in some Port-au-Prince neighbourhoods. One young boy whose house was washed away while he was sleeping lay on a rocky shore, his body lacerated by stones.

There was exasperation among some residents in the capital, who are emerging from three years of harsh military rule. "It's time for Haitians to get rid of this misery!" said one man.

## NATO proposes strategic treaty with Russia

WASHINGTON, Nov 15: The incoming president of NATO's parliamentary body has proposed a strategic treaty with Russia and full membership for all European countries that wish to join the military alliance, reports AP.

The treaty would recognise Russia's role as a nuclear power and permit NATO to negotiate cuts in weapons and work out restrictions on the spread of nuclear technology with Moscow.

Russia is special and we should respect that, the new NATO leader, Karsten Voigt, said Monday. Voigt, who also is foreign policy spokesman for Germany's Social Democrats, predicted the North Atlantic Assembly meeting here this week would approve expansion of the alliance.

Clinton said the plan — providing North Korea with alternative fuels and new light-water reactors for giving up its nuclear programme — would "require a lot of efforts on several fronts."

Perhaps the thorniest question is how to divide the estimated 4 billion dollars cost of the deal. Japan and South Korea are expected to shoulder most of the burden.

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China, South Korea and Japan already had endorsed the North Korean agreement, but Clinton showcased the issue because many details of how to implement the pact over 10 years remain to be worked out.

## Palestinians get control of tourism in WB

BETHLEHEM, West Bank, Nov 15: Israel turned over to the PLO today authority for tourism in the still-occupied West Bank, the latest phase of expanding Palestinian self-rule beyond the Gaza Strip and Jericho, reports Reuter.

"We have waited for this day for many years," said Elias Freij, a member of the Palestinian authority running Gaza and Jericho whose brief is tourism. He is mayor of the West Bank town of Bethlehem, a tourist focus as the birthplace of Jesus Christ.

Israeli officials were also to hand over responsibility for social welfare in the West Bank on Tuesday.

Palestinians took full responsibility for most of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank town of Jericho in May.

Transfer of five areas of authority in the rest of the West Bank, called "early empowerment," began in September with education, and includes taxation and health.

Israel and PLO negotiators are still far from agreement on the implementation of the next major phase of their peace deal on self-rule — election of a Palestinian administrative council.

Clinton wins support to keep pressure on DPRK

JAKARTA, Nov 15: In an orchestrated show of unity, President Clinton won pledges from China, Japan and South Korea to keep the pressure on North Korea to freeze its suspected nuclear weapons programme, reports AP.

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The coming year may prove no less eventful. British law allows a couple to divorce by mutual consent two years after formally separating. In Charles and Diana's case, the two-year mark will pass on December 9.

What might have been the only cheering birthday news for Charles was a revelation in the Daily Mail newspaper that Andrew Parker Bowles — husband to his lover, Camilla Parker Bowles — had developed not just one, but two extramarital relationships of his own.

Continued fighting in Angola, with government forces overrunning the rebel stronghold of Huambo, caused the rebels to balk at proceedings.

Agreement on a ceasefire by the Angolan government and the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola, or UNITA, rebels would remove the last major obstacle to the elusive treaty that took a year to negotiate with help from the United States, Russia and Portugal.

Previous accords in the war

that began in Angola's independence from Portugal in 1975 have fallen through. But political dynamics has changed with Savimbi's rebels, losing virtually all foreign support in recent years, and government forces now scoring significant victories on the battlefield.

The rebels appeared ready

to accept limited power shar-

ing instead of continuing a war

they appeared more and more

likely to lose.

## Taiwanese shells hit Chinese mainland

BEIJING, Nov 15: The Chinese government on Tuesday strongly condemned the reported shelling of a village in southeastern Fujian province by Nationalist troops stationed on a Taiwan-controlled island, reports AP.

China's state-run television and Xinhua News Agency reported early Tuesday that Taiwan troops had fired at least a dozen artillery shells at Tatou village, in the suburbs of Xiamen (Amoy), Monday morning, wounding four people.

We express grave concern over the incident," a spokesman for China's Taiwan Affairs Office said in a statement carried by Xinhua. The spokesman called the shelling a "vicious incident that sabotaged the peaceful atmosphere across the Taiwan Straits."

In Taiwan, Defence Minister Sun Chen told the Legislature Tuesday that Taiwan troops had fired short-range artillery near Quemoy during a routine drill. The island also is called Jinmen.

Military officials in Taiwan confirmed that troops had fired 40 mm air-defence artillery in tests Monday morning and that some shells might have failed to explode and fallen in Chinese territory, just 2.3 kilometers (1.4 miles) away.

They called it an accident. Sun said it appeared un-

likely that shells could have hit Chinese territory, but he has ordered an investigation.

The shell-lobbing, such reported since 1979, could worsen tensions between Beijing and the Nationalist government in Taiwan, which fled the Chinese mainland in 1949 after losing a civil war to the Communists.

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