

## BRIEFLY



Leader of the former communist Bulgarian Socialist Party 35-year-old economist Jean Videnov, smiles during a press conference in Sofia on Monday after the announcement of the results of Sunday's early parliamentary elections in Bulgaria. The Socialist Party will control an absolute majority of the seats in the next parliament. — AFP photo

### Bus mishap claims 8 in Brazil:

Eight people, six of them children, were killed and 17 were injured when a bus carrying a school group slammed into a truck and burst into flames in southern Brazil on Monday, police said. Reuter reports from Rio de Janeiro.

"It must have been a driving mistake because the collision was head on," said Joao Machek, the head of highway police in Porto Alegre, Rio Grande Do Sul state. The dead also included a school teacher and the driver of the bus. The group was on an excursion to a nearby beach.

### Dispute over statue of Mao:

The Chinese government and a local auction house are locked in dispute over whether a statue of the late chairman Mao Tse Tung can be auctioned, the China Youth Daily said yesterday. Reuter reports from Beijing.

It said that when the Hubai provincial government's propaganda department asked Beijing for advice on the planned auction, it was told that statues of national leaders cannot be auctioned as relics because that would be "extremely unseemly."

### Kukis ambush convoy, 11 killed:

At least eleven persons — seven Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) jawans and four civilians — were killed when suspected armed Kuki militants ambushed a CRPF convoy at Dulen Kuki village area in Manipur's Tamenglong district Monday afternoon. PTI reports from Imphal.

### Animal rights activist jailed:

An animal rights activists who planned attacks on shops, sabotaged trucks at an abattoir, and planted explosive devices at a battery chicken farm was jailed for 14 years on Monday. AP reports from London.

The judge described Keith Mann, 28, as a leader of a shadowy extremist group, the Animal Liberation Front, with terrorist style tactics.

### Thai monk wins UNESCO prize:

A Buddhist monk and writer from Thailand, Prayudh Payutto, has been awarded the 1994 UNESCO Prize for Education for Peace, the UN organisation announced on Monday. AFP reports from Paris.

The award is accompanied by a cash prize of 25,000 dollars, and was to be given to him in a ceremony yesterday by UNESCO Director-General Federico Mayor.

### US convicts Colombian hitman:

A US federal jury on Monday convicted a Colombian drug cartel hitman for bombing an Avianca Airlines jet in 1989, killing 107 people, and on charges of drug trafficking conspiracy and murder, Reuter reports from New York.

In the second trial of Dandene Munoz-Mosquera, the jury in Brooklyn Federal Court convicted Munoz on all 13 counts after deliberating over the weekend and Monday.

### China deports 100 for bird theft:

China has fined and deported more than 100 foreigners for capturing rare birds for export, an official report said Monday. AP reports from Beijing.

Since September, there have been numerous cases of foreigners posing as tourists to capture Chinese wild animals in Xinjiang, Ningxia, Qinghai, Inner Mongolia and other provinces, the People's Daily reported.

### Czech police seize 3 kg uranium:

More than three kilograms (6.6 pounds) of weapons-grade uranium believed to have come from Russia has been seized and three men arrested, police said. AP reports from Prague.

An International Atomic Energy Agency spokesman said it wasn't enough uranium to build an atomic bomb, but the seizure underlined concerns about dangerous materials being smuggled out of the former Soviet Union.

### Collor's brother dies:

Pedro Collor de Mello, whose accusations of corruption led to his brother's resignation as Brazil's president, died on Monday. He was 42. AP reports from New York.

Collor was undergoing treatment for a brain tumor at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in New York. Collor, who ran his family's media interests in Brazil, denounced a corruption scandal in 1992 that led to the impeachment and resignation of his brother, President Fernando Collor de Mello.

### Beijing bans luxury projects:

China's central government has banned luxury projects such as building golf courses and five-star hotels during all of 1995, the official press said on Tuesday. AP reports from Beijing.

Construction of villas, office buildings and race tracks also will be forbidden in the coming year as part of government efforts to steer investment funds into infrastructure projects, the China Daily reported.

### 8 Tutsis killed in Burundi:

Gunmen in army uniforms killed eight people, almost all members of Burundi's Tutsi minority, in a suburb of the Burundian capital, cutting the head off one of the victims and tearing his heart out, witnesses said on Monday. Reuter reports from Burundi.

They said gunmen wearing uniforms of the Tutsi-dominated army killed the eight on Sunday night in the southern suburb of Musaga. Security sources said the gunmen were extremists from the Hutu majority loyal to Leonard Nyanngoma, a former interior minister.

### HK repatriates 369 Vietnamese boat people

HONG KONG, Dec 20: Hong Kong repatriated 369 Vietnamese boat people Tuesday — the largest group to volunteer to return home since the programme started in March 1989, reports AP.

The Vietnamese who flew home on a chartered Boeing 747, had been detained in camps in Hong Kong because they did not qualify as political refugees. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees said.

This month 792 Vietnamese have volunteered to go home on UNHCR flights.

### Efficiency of US-ROK air defence system questioned

SEOUL, Dec 20: The downing of a US Army helicopter in North Korea raises serious questions about the efficiency of the US-South Korea air defence system, local media said Tuesday, reports AP.

They said the incident vividly shows the lack of cooperation between the US and South Korean armed forces, despite assurances that their combined defence system is foolproof.

US officials have called the incident a worst-case scenario in which everything that could go wrong did: fresh snow made the mountainous terrain difficult to read and covered

navigational placards, while the helicopter flew so low that absence of radio or radar contact was not alarming.

No matter what excuses they make, it clearly shows that serious defects exist in the South Korea-US air defence system, the influential newspaper Chosun Ilbo said in an editorial.

The paper said in a separate analysis that if a few South Korean ground troops hadn't seen the chopper fly across the border into North Korea, it was too late for the guards to fire warning shots, the paper said. The South Korean military also waited hours before finding out that the craft was a US chopper.

It took hours for the US military to determine the exact time the unarmed OH-58C

Kiowa Warrior, carrying two crewmen, crossed into the communist North across the heavily fortified border.

According to the Chosun Ilbo newspaper, the South Korean unit on duty along the border was not informed in advance of the training flight. By the time they saw "something" fly into North Korea, it was too late for the guards to fire warning shots, the paper said. The South Korean military also waited hours before finding out that the craft was a US chopper.

It was unclear what happened to the chopper after it crossed the border, whether it made an emergency landing or was shot down, as North Korea has claimed. One pilot died and the other, reportedly uninjured, was taken captive.

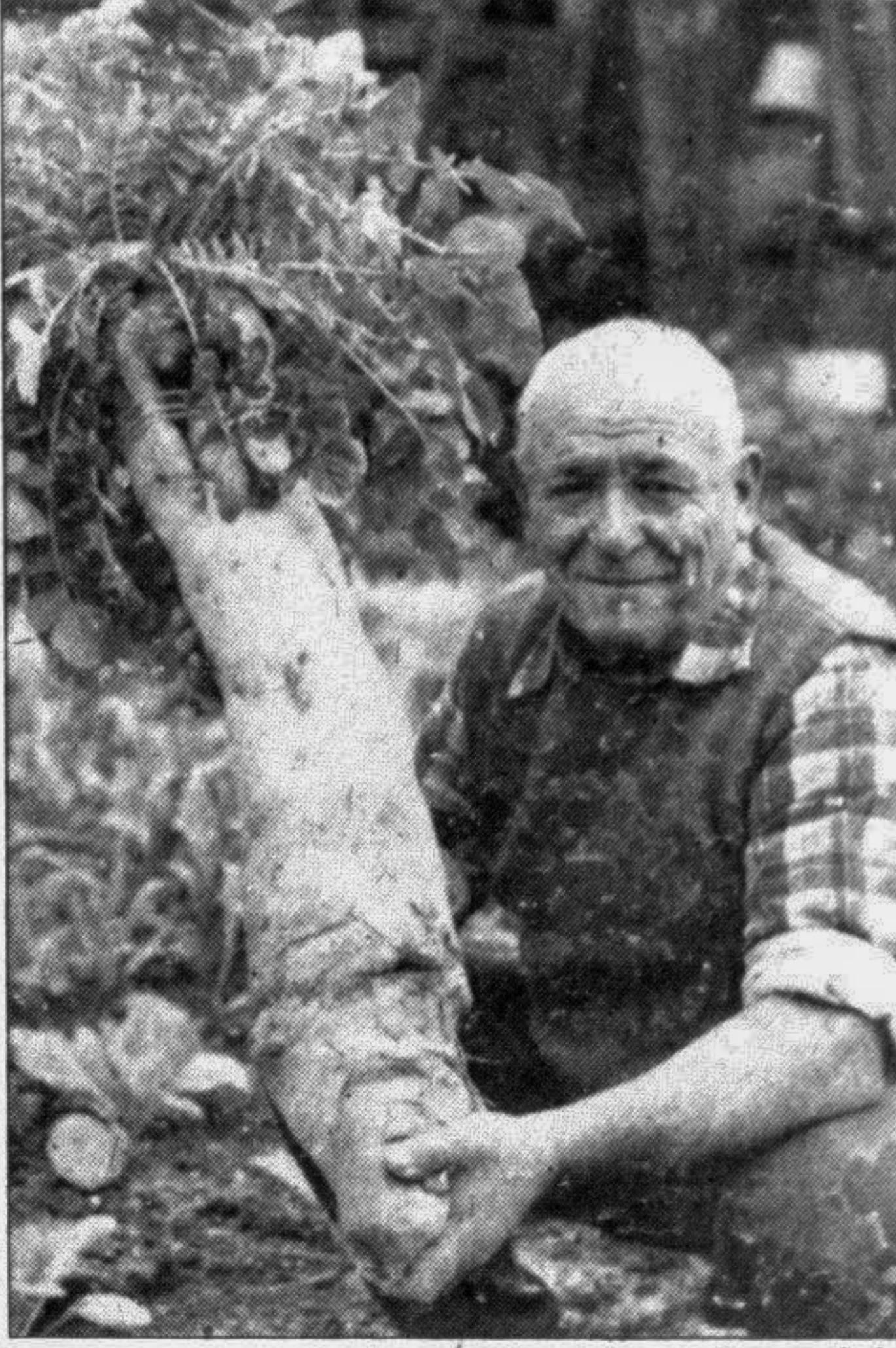
The South Korean newspaper

Chosun, quoting South Korean officials, said the aircraft might have landed and tried to take off, prompting North Korean troops to open fire.

South Korean officials reportedly came to that tentative conclusion because the helicopter stayed in North Korean territory for about 30 minutes, during which it covered only 20 kilometres (12 miles), it said.

The pilots, apparently realizing something went wrong, landed their helicopter and then tried to take off. Chosun quoted one unidentified official as saying

### Off the Record



Oscar Wittmer, 71, shows off a giant white radish, weighing 11 kilos and measuring 80 cms, he harvested on Monday in his vegetable garden in the eastern French town of Selestat. The gardener says he used seaweed fertilizer to grow such an unusual radish. — AFP photo

### Musical feat of endurance

MADRAS: A light music troupe — 'Lakshman-Sruthi' — completed a 36-hour non-stop music performance here Sunday night in a bid to enter the Guinness Book of World Records, reports PTI.

The 45-member group, comprising mostly students, rendered over 4,000 Tamil film songs starting from 0900 hrs on December 17, ending their feat of endurance at 2205 hrs on Dec 18.

Music maestro Ilayaraja congratulated the members of the troupe on their achievement and handed over mementoes to them.

Lakshman, who heads the group, said the troupe would claim entry into the Guinness book.

The continuous programme had been recorded by a private television company and the customs collector had also issued a certificate on the performance, fulfilling a requirement for entry into the Guinness book, he added.

### Politicians' "sensitive" details on sale!

JERUSALEM: Computer disks containing sensitive information about Israel's political leaders and security service officials are on sale to the public for up to 3,000 dollars, Israeli television said on Monday, reports AFP.

The Interior Ministry had given the disks to political parties during last year's municipal elections so they could send correspondence as part of their electoral campaigns state-run television said.

Some of the parties failed to return the disks as promised and they were discovered on the open market at prices ranging from 500 to 3,000 dollars.

Through the disks it is possible to find out the personal address of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin or army chief of staff Ehud Barak, as well as details of their shares portfolios, the names of all their neighbours and the ages of their wives.

The television said it had also discovered all details of the head of Shin Beth, Israel's secret service, whose identity is supposed to be kept secret.

Haim Gluckman, director general of the Justice Ministry, said a complaint had been made to the police about the violation of privacy law.

### Bomb episode clouds N Ireland talks

BELFAST, Dec 20: A bomb explosion overshadowed a second round of talks Monday between Sinn Fein, the IRA's political partners, and British officials, reports AP.

After four hours of talks, British officials and Sinn Fein said they will meet again mid-January, with the most pressing immediate issue of surrendering or decommissioning IRA weapons unresolved.

The Catholic-based Irish Republican Army denied responsibility for the bomb planted outside a furniture store. It contained two pounds (about 1 kg) of semtex explosive, which only the IRA is known to use in Northern Ireland.

Protestant politicians said they did not believe the details by the IRA, which declared a ceasefire six months ago.

"We are now in a totally new era and I regard the particular incident as being of no great significance," McGuinness told reporters after the talks.

"Round table talks will not

### Oman for stern action against extremists

MANAMA, Dec 20: Oman has called on the Gulf Arab summit in the Bahraini capital to take a stand against religious extremism, officials said today, reports AFP.

Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) foreign ministers drafting the final communiqué were studying the Omani proposal, the official told the Kuwaiti news agency Kuna.

It calls for the summit to denounce religious extremism and fanaticism, which divides Gulf Muslim societies, and distorts Islam which advocates tolerance and coexistence between religions.