

**BRIEFLY**

**2 UN soldiers jailed in Bosnia :** Two French UN peacekeepers have been jailed for killing a Bosnian soldier by drunkenly lobbing hand grenades, the United Nations said on Thursday. AP reports from Sarajevo.  
Bosnian soldiers on Monday mined the entrance to a section of the Marshal Tito barracks where the French soldiers live, in an angry reaction to the death on Sunday of the soldier, Nermin Durmic. The mines were cleared a day later after a UN investigation was promised.

**Russian polls in June '96:** Russia's presidential election is to go ahead as planned in June next year, after the parliament's Upper Chamber, the Federation Council approved the necessary legislation on Thursday, AFP reports from Moscow.  
The law, though approved on its first reading by the Duma (lower house), had been initially rejected by the upper house on the grounds that the number of signatures needed by each candidate 1.5 million — was too high.

**Oklahoma death toll now 168 :** Rescue crews ended their search for victims of the Oklahoma City car bombing last month, with the death toll standing at 168, authorities said early yesterday. AFP reports from Oklahoma.  
The remains of the last nine victims of the April 19 blast were pulled from the rubble of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building, said Deputy Fire Chief Jon Hansen.

**2m to perform Hajj this yr :** About two million Muslims have arrived in Makkah and Medina for this year's pilgrimage which begins next week, authorities said Thursday. AFP reports from Jeddah.  
More than one million pilgrims arrived from abroad before a Wednesday midnight deadline (2100 GMT) joining around 750,000 Saudis and foreigners living in the Kingdom, according to official figures.

**74 m rounds of bullet seized in US :** More than 74 million rounds of ammunition seized from a California business house may have been smuggled from China by way of Russia, investigators said on Thursday, Reuter reports from San Francisco.

**5 foreigners killed in Algeria :** Five more foreigners — two French, a Canadian, a British and a Tunisian were killed Friday in Algeria, along with an Algerian citizen, authorities announced. AP reports from Algiers.  
Security forces said the victims were killed in the desert town of Ghardala, where there have been few reports of violence in the past.

**UK quits as auditor to WHO :** Britain has resigned as auditor to the World Health Organisation (WHO) because the international body's management refused to cooperate with a fraud inquiry at its African regional office, the Independent said yesterday. AFP reports from London.  
John Bourne, head of the British National Audit Office (NAO) which has been external auditor to WHO since 1978, said he could not continue working with WHO Director General Hiroshi Nakajima, according to the paper.

**51 Kurds held in Germany :** Fifty-one Kurds were arrested near the British Consulate in Hamburg on Thursday, where they unsuccessfully tried to deliver a protest resolution against expulsion of a Kurd from England, then clashed with police. AP reports from Hamburg, Germany.  
Police said about 150 Kurds showed up at the British Consulate demanding a diplomat accept the protest resolution. When personnel at the consulate refused to meet with them, the protesters started fighting with police.

**6 die in Mexican prison riot :** The state's secretary general has blamed federal police for the death of six inmates during the suppression of a riot at an overcrowded prison. AP reports from Guadalajara, Mexico.  
The riot took place in the 2,400-inmate Cerezo Centre for Social Rehabilitation in Guadalajara, the nation's second most populous city, 450 kilometres (280 miles) northwest of the capital.

**15 Irish cops hurt during VE Day :** Fifteen Northern Ireland police officers were hurt on Thursday night when rioting erupted after a parade to mark the end of World War II in Europe. Reuter reports from Belfast.  
Two hundred were involved at the height of the trouble, a police spokesman said eight were arrested, including one accused of looting. The trouble came after a parade by the Protestant Orange Order to mark VE (Victory in Europe) day. The spokesman said the rioters "were not part of the parade. They attacked police."

**Rebels' rockets hit N Israel :** Guerrillas in Lebanon fired Katyusha rockets into northern Israel early Friday lightly wounding several people, security sources said. Reuter reports from Jerusalem.  
They said several rockets slammed into northern Galilee after midnight hours after Israel independence day ended marking 47 years of statehood.

**23 die in Thai bus-lorry collision :** Twenty-three Thai factory workers, most of them women, were killed yesterday when the bus taking them to work collided with a lorry, police said. Reuter reports from Bangkok.  
Police said 45 other workers were injured in the crash in the central Angthaya province. Many are in a serious condition. All but four of the five dead were women workers. The driver of the lorry was also killed, police said.

**60 kg heroin seized in Canada :** Authorities say it's largest shipment of heroin to Canada they have intercepted yet — 60 kilograms (132 pounds) destined not only for Canada but also the East Coast of the United States. AP reports from Milton, Ontario.

**Croatian troops violate UN accord**

ZAGREB, May 5: Croatian troops have violated an accord reached with the United Nations (UN) by holding 1,000 Serbs captive in the town of Pakrac in eastern Croatia, a UN spokesman said here Friday, reports AFP.  
A spokesman for the United Nations peacekeeping force in Croatia here said the detention of the Serbs, civilians or separatist fighters, by Croatian troops who seized Pakrac Thursday was clear "ethnic cleansing and a blatant violation" of the ceasefire agreed Wednesday.

Observers from the European Union stationed in Pakrac confirmed that all adult Serb males had been separated from their families and forced to board buses which took them to one or several camps at Varazdin, northeast of Zagreb.

**Arabs give cool response to US embargo against Iran**

CAIRO, May 5: Arab countries gave a cool response on Thursday to the US embargo on Iran and said Washington should condemn Israel's land seizures in East Jerusalem before seeking support for its sanctions against Tehran, reports AFP.  
Adnan Omran, Deputy Secretary General of the Arab League, said Washington would have to be more precise in its accusations linking the ban to Iran's alleged support for terrorism and attempts to develop nuclear weapons.  
"If it talks about terrorism, it will have to present sufficient evidence to get our support. If it talks about the resistance in South Lebanon, that is a sacred duty," said Omran.  
"If it talks about Iran wanting to obtain nuclear weapons, while allowing evil countries to

have them, it should talk to Israel," he added.  
"The Arabs have other fish to fry, even if they cannot agree with Iranian policy. For them, the burning question is Jerusalem," said an Arab diplomat who did not wish to be identified.  
The diplomat said Arab countries agreed with European countries who have rejected the American call for support. "The American embargo may complicate things and will not result in stability in the Gulf."  
US President Bill Clinton announced a ban on US economic ties with Iran at a meeting of the World Jewish Council on Sunday.  
Earlier on Thursday, an Egyptian governmental daily condemned the US decision as a front to support Israeli inter-

est in the region.  
Clinton "made the wrong decision at the wrong time and announced it at the wrong place, providing the wrong justifications," Al-Gomhoriya said in an editorial.  
It added the aim of the embargo was "to weaken Muslim Iran for Israel's benefit, so Israel can remain the sole nuclear power in the region to impose peace as it wishes."  
The United States "punishes Iran for terrorism, but doesn't punish Israel for seizing Palestinian lands and breaking Palestinian bones under the nose of peace," it added.  
The paper was referring to the Israeli decision to seize 53 hectares (131 acres) of Palestinian lands in East Jerusalem to build homes for Jews.

**Lanka seeks India's military help to face LTTE offensive**

NEW DELHI, May 5: Sri Lanka has sought military help from India following a renewed offensive by Tamil separatist guerrillas which shattered a fragile three-month long truce, diplomatic sources said Thursday, reports AFP.  
The request has been made at the highest levels of the two Governments, a source said, indicating it may have come during Sri Lankan President Chandrika Kumaratunga's visit to New Delhi for a South Asian summit on Tuesday.  
The exact nature of the request was not known, an Indian source said it may be related to training for the Sri Lankan Defence forces, arms and increased naval surveillance of the narrow strip of sea dividing the two countries.  
Indian officials could not be immediately reached for comment. Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar, now here, told AFP: "I cannot comment on bilateral matters."  
A diplomatic source said the Sri Lankan request for assistance had been expected.  
"Any president as besieged as her (Kumaratunga) would naturally ask for Indian help," the source said. "It is one country she will turn to... there is nothing to be surprised about."  
India, which once harboured Tamil guerrillas and according to Colombo armed and trained them, is now training elite guards who protect Kumaratunga, who has visited New Delhi twice in the past month.

Sri Lankan army officers have also been trained in India for years.  
Indian troops sent to Sri Lanka's northeast under a 1987 bilateral peace pact to crush Tamil separatism, ended up fighting the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) after the rebel group refused to put down its arms.  
The Indian army returned home in March 1990 after a 32 month acrimonious stay during which it lost about 1,200 soldiers to the LTTE whose supreme Velupillai Prabhakaran has spent years in India.  
AP adds: Using a carrot and stick policy with the Tamil rebels, the government said Friday it would continue efforts to find a political solution, but would respond militarily to rebel attacks.  
"If there is a military action (by the rebels) there has to be a military response," Justice Minister Lakshman Peiris told reporters.  
He declined to reveal the government's specific plans, but said: "We will discuss our peace proposals with other Tamil Parties, but as of now there are no negotiations with the LTTE."  
Tamil rebels broke off peace talks and ended a three-month truce on April 19 claiming the government had not met their demands. Since then, they have shot down two military planes with missiles, destroyed gunboats and attacked military bases. The fighting has killed at least 240 people, including 183 soldiers.



Leader of the British Labour Party Tony Blair (L) speaks on the phone, next to his wife Cherie at the Labour Party headquarters during the counting of the local council elections results late Thursday. — AFP/UNB photo

**Tory suffers setback in local council polls**

LONDON, May 5: British Prime Minister John Major headed for electoral disaster as early results from local council elections pointed to huge gains for Tony Blair's opposition Labour Party, reports Reuter.  
BBC television said initial results from Thursday's voting for 12,000 council seats in England and Wales suggested that the Conservatives could lose more than half of the 4,000 seats they were defending.  
This is a terrible night for the Conservatives, said Pollster Peter Kellner, analysing the early results for the BBC.  
He said the middle classes, increasingly disenchanted with 16 years of Conservative rule appeared to have deserted Major's party in droves and relegated it to the fringes of power in local government.  
Extrapolating the early results the BBC forecast that the Conservatives would win just 24 per cent of the popular vote — a record low — compared with 49 per cent for Labour and 23 per cent for the centrist Liberal Democrats.  
A similar voting pattern at the next general election, which must be held by May 1997, would result in a landslide for Blair's resurgent Labour Party.  
But ministers were quick to play down the significance of the results, even though Conservatives had admitted

privately before the vote that the loss of 2,000 seats could revive speculation about a challenge to Major's leadership.  
Employment Secretary Michael Portillo said the results were "not a dress rehearsal" for the general election.  
"I don't think that the prime minister is under threat as a result of this added Local Government Minister David Curry.  
As well as being a verdict on the Conservatives battered by rifts over Europe and a string of corruption allegations the elections were also, a test of the appeal of the moderate policies Blair has pursued since he became leader last July.  
Blair, who won an important victory last Saturday when he persuaded his party to abandon its 75-year-old commitment to nationalisation said the results were extremely good and showed Labour was reestablishing a bond of trust with voters after losing the last four general elections.  
"It's not simply that it's a bad night for the Conservatives, it is a night when the Labour Party is showing the people of this country that we've got support in all parts of our nation and that increasingly we are the mainstream majority party in Britain in today, Blair said.

**Jyoti Basu for repeal of TADA**

CALCUTTA, May 5: The West Bengal Chief Minister Jyoti Basu, yesterday reiterated his government's stand on repeal of the Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (prevention) Act (TADA), saying that terrorism could best be tackled by strengthening other criminal laws, reports PTI.  
Talking to newsmen at the Calcutta Airport before leaving for Delhi to attend the chief ministers' meeting on Friday Basu said that the centre had sent several papers to the state government on changes it wants to make in several sections of the dreaded act.  
Asked to comment on a similar stand taken by the State Youth Congress (I) president, Mamata Banerjee, Basu said, "we are running a government and we raised the demand long back."  
Asked for his views on the BJP leader, L. K. Advani's remark that Basu should reply to the ousted CPI (M) leader, Nripen Chakraborty's allegation, the chief minister declined to comment, saying, "what Advani said, I don't bother."  
The Royal Nepal Army is a

**Nepal's army chief quits amid corruption scandal**

KATHMANDU, May 5: Nepal's army chief has resigned, owing moral responsibility for a corruption scandal that led to the sacking and imprisonment of army officials, including senior officers, officials said today, reports Reuter.  
The Defence Ministry of the Himalayan kingdom announced that Prime Minister Man Mohan Adhikari's government approved an army court martial decision to sack four officers and jail two of them.  
General Gadul Shumsher Rana resigned on Thursday after the decision in order to uphold the dignity of the Royal Nepal Army, a communique from King Birendra's Narayanhity Palace said.  
"General Rana submitted his resignation on moral grounds to maintain the image of the Royal Nepalese Army as well as the prestige and dignity of the office of the Chief of Army Staff in the context of the case of corruption and financial irregularities," the statement said.  
The King accepted his resignation, it said.  
The Royal Nepal Army is a

**Anti-govt rally in S Korea**

TAEGU, South Korea, May 5: About 35,000 students filled an outdoor soccer field with songs, slogans and drums overnight, vowing to fight the government, reports AP.  
The student activists from across the country were demonstrating solidarity at Taegu's Kyongbuk National University before they launch a new leadership of their umbrella group Hanchongryon on Friday.  
Police authorised Friday's rally and a march planned for Saturday, but feared the events might turn into fierce anti-government demonstrations. Such rallies turned violent in past years.  
"Let's Throw Out the (president) Kim Young-sam Regime!" the students shouted. The soccer field echoed with similar anti-government slogans.  
"The incompetency of the Kim Young-sam government has been proved. Farmers suffer because of the Uruguay Round (of world trade talks). Citizens fear disasters," a student leader, Park Yong-son, said in a speech.

**Clinton visits Moscow next week US to raise Russia's HR violations in Chechnya**

WASHINGTON, May 5: President Bill Clinton will express concern about human rights abuses in Chechnya when he travels to Moscow next week but a prominent Russian human rights advocate said Thursday that might not be enough, reports AFP.  
Sergei Kovalyov, Russia's human rights champion who has denounced atrocities committed by Russian troops in Chechnya, suggested at a news conference that the administration might be too soft towards President Boris Yeltsin.  
"The people with whom I met told me that the situation concerns them and they will express their concern," Kovalyov said following four days of meeting here with senior administration officials.

"In my opinion, it is not enough to express concern," he said, adding that the "usual western politeness" might not be the correct approach to the situation.  
"Our Russian politicians don't always understand westerners who are very polite and reserved," he said.  
Kovalyov met with Secretary of State Warren Christopher, Clinton's national security adviser Anthony Lake and was scheduled to hold talks with Vice-president Al Gore later in the day.  
The rights advocate who presented US officials with evidence of Russian barbarism in Chechnya said it was not clear to him whether the administration might decide to toughen its stand if the war in Chechnya drags on.

**Off the Record**

**Art connoisseur pigeons**  
LONDON: The birds may not be art critics yet, but Japanese psychologists say they have taught pigeons how to tell a Picasso from a Monet, reports Reuter.  
Shigeru Watanabe and colleagues at Keio University in Tokyo say they have taught their pigeons how to distinguish a cubist style painting one of Pablo Picasso's most famous genres — from a Claude Monet style impressionist work.  
New scientists magazine quoted the scientists as saying the birds pecked the right painting with 90 per cent accuracy.  
They could not, however, tell a Cezanne from a Renoir, the psychologists said.

**Wine prolongs life!**  
LONDON: Health-conscious drinker should stick to wine and cut out cocktails, a large Danish study suggests, reports AP.  
Investigators found that people who drank three to five glasses of wine a day lived longer than those who abstained. Hard liquor drinkers died sooner, but beer had no impact.  
The findings will be published in Saturday's issue of The British Medical Journal.  
Despite a slew of studies exploring the effects of alcohol, the evidence is still not clear that the benefits outweigh the risks. The vast majority of studies indicate that, if anything, any kind of alcohol is beneficial, not the particular drink.  
Unlike previous research, the new study examined all causes of death, including cancer and accidents, not just heart disease.  
"I wouldn't want to recommend never-drinkers to start drinking, but it (the study) does indicate that if you drink spirits (such as vodka or gin), you might want to change to wine," said Dr. Morten Gronbaek, the leading investigator at the Institute of Preventive Medicine in Copenhagen.  
Investigators surveyed 13,285 men and women. After 10 years, they found that those who drank three to five glasses of wine a day were half as likely to die in any particular year from all causes — cancer, heart disease, and accidents — compared to those who did not drink.

**Angolan govt cancels peace summit**

LUANDA, May 5: Angolan President Jose Eduardo Dos Santos cancelled a peace summit with UNITA opposition leader Jonas Savimbi, until the last minute no one knew if he intended to arrive, Reuter reports.  
Patricio told Portuguese TSP radio, Patricio also accused Savimbi of "completely altering the agenda for talks agreed upon in advance by the two parties and the United Nations."  
The cancellation would be the latest in a series of setbacks to ending the 20-year civil war and showed the acrimony between Angola's two most powerful leaders.  
Friday's talks were expected to provide the go-ahead for UN forces to move in to maintain order in Angola while Savimbi's National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) fighters disarm. The breakdown throws the UN operation into doubt.  
Savimbi flew to Lusaka early Friday morning from Kinshasa, Zaire, was whisked by helicopter-guarded motorcade to a government lodge, said UNITA official Isaias Samakuva.



Amra Husic (L) carries her one-year old boy Jesmin, suffering from malnutrition, into Sarajevo's Kosevo hospital after both were evacuated with 20 others by Norwegian UN soldiers from the eastern Muslim enclave of Srebrenica late Thursday. Srebrenica is surrounded by Bosnian-Serb force since 1993. — AFP/UNB photo

**China okays third nuclear power plant**

BEIJING, May 5: China has approved the construction of its third nuclear power plant, to be located in northeastern Liaoning province with technology and loans from Russia, Xinhua reported today, says AFP.  
The official news agency quoted sources as saying the four-million-kilowatt plant would be situated near the City of Wafangdia in southern Liaoning, some 50 kilometres (30 miles) from the Bohai sea.  
Investment in the plant is to total 27 billion Yuan (3.2 billion dollars), made up of Russian government loans, as well as inputs from the China National Nuclear Corp. (CNNC), the Liaoning provincial power group and the northeast power group corp., the report said.  
Russia is to take charge of the plant's technical installations.