

## BRIEFLY



Princess Diana stands with Lt Gen Sir Anthony Denison-Smith (R) as she watches Saturday the colour parade of the second Battalion of the Princess of Wales' Royal Regiment at Howe barracks in Canterbury, Kent. It was one of the rare official assignments of the Princess of Wales.

— AFP/UNB photo

**Les Aspin hospitalised:** Former US defense secretary Les Aspin was hospitalised in critical condition Saturday after suffering a stroke, a spokesman for George Town University Medical Centre said. AFP reports from Washington.

"Upon admission he was awake, lucid and speaking," said hospital spokesman Michael Tebo. "The next several days will be critical, but his doctors are hopeful for a good recovery."

Aspin, 56, who has a history of heart problems and was fitted with a pacemaker in 1993, was listed in critical condition.

**12 die in Indian road mishap:** Twelve persons were killed and three were injured in a road mishap at Govani village under Jagadia police station in Broach district on Saturday, police said yesterday. PTI reports from Ahmedabad.

The accident occurred when a jeep, which was proceeding to Gunamad village, was involved in a collision with a three wheeler and a scooter, police added.

**8 Kurd rebels killed in Turkey:** Turkish security forces killed eight Kurdish guerrillas in three separate clashes in Southeastern Turkey on Sunday, the regional governor's office said. AP reports from Diyarbakir, Turkey.

The clashes occurred in the provinces of Sirmak, Bitlis and Mardin, it said. The guerrillas of the Kurdistan Workers Party have been fighting for autonomy in southeastern Turkey since 1984. More than 15,000 people have died so far.

**Brazilian oldest man turns 125:** Brazil's oldest man celebrated his 125th birthday with a surprise party, local Globo Television reported on Saturday. Reuter reports from Brazil.

The man, who lives in the southern state of Parana, entered the Guinness Book of Records as one of the oldest men in the world when he was 124 years old.

**DPRK air chief leaves for Europe:** South Korean Air Force Chief of Staff General Kim Hong-Rae left Seoul Sunday for Europe and Russia for talks on military cooperation, the Defence Ministry said. AFP reports from Seoul.

The Ministry said Kim would visit Russia, England, Italy and Spain on the four-nation tour, during which he would also discuss pending bilateral military issues.

**14 poisoned to death in Multan:** At least 14 people, all Hindus, died after drinking poisoned liquor at a wedding near the central Pakistan city of Multan, police said yesterday. AFP reports from Pakistan.

Four other people were in serious condition, according to police, who said the home-made drink was served at late night function in Bahawalpur, 95 kms south of Multan on Friday.

**Princess Margriet visits Ottawa:** Princess Margriet of the Netherlands inaugurated a tulip garden in Ottawa Saturday as part of ceremony paying homage to Canada's role in the liberation of her country during World War II. AFP reports from Ottawa.

Her visit was the highlight of a vast programme by the Netherlands to plant 80,000 tulip bulbs in Canada to mark the 50th anniversary of the end of the war.

**ROK soldier blows himself up:** A young South Korean army soldier on the run from military police blew himself up with a grenade near an apartment building in western Seoul, newspapers said yesterday. AFP reports from Seoul.

The Korea Herald said 20-year-old private Lee Jong-Min went absent without leave (AWOL) from his army barracks north of the capital Friday night and was carrying a rifle and a grenade.

## Chandrika reshuffles military command Colombo prepares for all-out war with Tamil Tigers

COLOMBO, May 21: President Chandrika Kumaratunga reshuffled her military command Saturday in preparation for an all-out war with Tamil rebels, military officials said, reports AP.

Maj Gen Rohan Daluwatte, an officer believed to be close to the president, was given command of all military operations in the war zones, replacing Maj Gen AMU Seneviratne, who was appointed only three weeks back.

The president had told senior military officers on Thursday that she was unhappy with the loss of 263 soldiers since hostilities resumed on April 19, when rebels broke off peace talks and a truce, said an official, who spoke on condition of anonymity. The military says 215 rebels had also been killed since then.

Deputy defence minister Anuruddha Ratwatte told parliament last week that the gov-

ernment was planning a new offensive against the rebels who are fighting for an independent nation for the Tamil minority in the north and east of Sri Lanka.

Since April, the guerrillas have escalated the 12-year war by using anti-aircraft missiles to destroy transport aircraft. They also have destroyed two big naval gunboats.

Sri Lanka has asked many countries, including India for help to fight the guerrillas. On Saturday, India's Junior Foreign Minister Raghunandan Lal Bhatia said India had not responded to Sri Lanka's request.

India had sent troops to Sri Lanka in 1987 to help the army fight the Tamil rebels. But troops were withdrawn two years later.

On Thursday, Justice Minister Lakshman Peris said many countries had assured the government support and help-

Foreign government have assured help in tangible material ways when the need arises," said Peris. He did not name the countries.

The fighting has dimmed hopes of an early solution to the war that Chandrika Kumaratunga promised when her Peoples' Alliance was swept to power in August. More than 34,000 people have been killed in the war since 1983.

AFP adds: Renewed fighting in Sri Lanka's embattled northeast has prompted President Chandrika Kumaratunga to put off indefinitely the ceremony marking National Heroes' Day on Monday. It was announced here today.

The national awards ceremony which is held annually on May 22 was put off because of the escalation of the ethnic war in the northeast, a statement from her office said.

It said Kumaratunga's decision was made after "having

given consideration to the appropriateness of holding a ceremony of this nature in the present context."

Holding such a ceremony would be inappropriate because "both the people and the security forces are undergoing much hardship in conflict areas," the statement said.

Kumaratunga was to have given away medals at the national awards ceremony, which has been held annually to honour Sri Lankans, who have done yeoman service to the country.

The rebel Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) ended a three-month-old truce on April 19 to renew their campaign for a separate state in the northeast for Sri Lankan minority Tamils.

Since then, an estimated 246 government troops and 228 LTTE guerrillas have died in violence.

### Russia resumes shelling of Chechen bases

MOSCOW, May 21: Russian forces renewed shelling of rebel positions in the south, southeast and west of break-away Chechnya today. ITAR-Tass news agency said, reports Reuter.

The agency, in airport from the Chechen capital Grozny, gave no details of the fighting.

The Russian troops, sent to the southern Russian region on December 11 to end its independence drive, are trying to wipe out the last pockets of rebel resistance in the lowlands before heading for the mountains where the separatists are based.

Interfax news agency quoted unidentified sources in the Chechen military command as saying 29 rebel fighters were killed and 50 were wounded in fighting in the south of the region on Saturday. The report could not be independently confirmed.

**Milan prosecutor applies to summon Berlusconi**

MILAN, May 21: The Milan prosecutor on Saturday applied to summon former Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi to court to answer charges of complicity in corruption, Rai television said, quoting judicial sources here, reports AFP.

No official confirmation could be obtained but Berlusconi himself later confirmed the report by rejecting the move, saying the authorities were acting on the basis of a "theorem without proof."

The 'clean hands' judges want the former premier tried on alleged illicit payments to finance inspectors by three companies belonging to his Fininvest Group, the television said in a report also carried by the Agi press agency.

### Pope apologises for crimes to non-Catholics

OLOMOUC, Czech Republic, May 21: Visiting lands bloodied centuries ago by Christian conflicts, Pope John Paul II issued a solemn declaration Sunday asking forgiveness for crimes committed against non-Catholics, reports AP.

The statement came as the Pope canonised a Catholic priest martyred in 1620 during the Counter Reformation and who symbolises the bitter Catholic-Protestant rivalry in Moravia to this very day.

Today I, the pope of the Church of Rome, in the name of all Catholics, ask forgiveness for the wrongs inflicted on non-Catholics during the turbulent history of these peoples," John Paul said in his homily.

## Army on alert as Kashmiris call to observe 'martyrs' day'

SRINAGAR, May 21: Security forces lifted a curfew in the Kashmir Valley today, but they remained on alert after a call to observe 'Martyrs' Day' in memory of civilians who died during the five year separatist insurgency, reports Reuter.

The curfew was first imposed in the Kashmir Valley following the destruction of a 15th century shrine to the region's patron saint during clashes between Indian forces and Muslim separatists on May 11, triggering widespread unrest.

The streets of Srinagar, summer capital of India's only Muslim majority state of

Jammu and Kashmir, returned to life today with the sounds of traffic and children playing.

The All-Party Hurriyat (freedom) Conference (APHC), a coalition of 30 political and cultural groups, declared today a "Martyr's Day" in memory of all Kashmiris — 20,000 according to police and hospital sources — who have died during the insurgency.

"We will pray for all those who have died, but more especially the innocent people the Indian army killed at Charar-e-Sharif," said Umar Farooq, the chairman of the APHC.

The APHC accuses the

Indian army of killing a number of civilians in its operations at the shrine to Sheikh Nooruddin Wali, and the surrounding township of Charar-e-Sharif, much of which was razed to the ground by fire.

Farooq said there were four civilians, including a woman, among the 14 bodies the army handed over to police after it finished operations at the shrine.

The Indian army says guerrillas razed the shrine and several hundred surrounding homes. But many people in the valley believe the army started the fires.

Sunday marked the fifth anniversary of the assassination of former Hurriyat leader. Authorities, fearing an outbreak of violence after mid-afternoon prayers at a city memorial, posted militiamen at major junctions.

Shops were open for people to stock up on necessities. There were fears the curfew would be reimposed on Monday to foil plans by APHC leaders to visit Charar-e-Sharif, 30 kms (20 miles) southwest of Srinagar.

"For over a week, the authorities have prevented us from going to the town to examine the damage that was caused," the APHC's Farooq said. "We are determined to go there tomorrow."

Fire service sources said there were 12 fires overnight on Saturday. A factory in Badgam district near Srinagar and the deserted homes of seven migrant Kashmiris at Jogi Nagar and Chanpoora in the city were destroyed.

## 'World becoming warmer, crowded, unstable'

WASHINGTON, May 21: The world is growing warmer, more crowded, and more unstable, according to a report by the Worldwatch Institute released here Saturday, reports AP.

Average global temperature in 1994 was 15.32 degrees Celsius (59.58 Fahrenheit), up sharply from 15.20 degrees (59.36 Fahrenheit) a year earlier, Worldwatch said in its annual "Vital Signs" report, published in 14 languages.

Global population meanwhile grew by 88 million people — the equivalent of two new South Korea's — with 79 million in developing countries, the Washington-based groups said. Some 58 million births occurred in Asia.

That pushed total world

population to 5.64 billion last year.

But Worldwatch said global population growth seems to have reached a plateau, at least temporarily, with increases between 86 million and 90 million people for each of the last 10 years.

In a concrete gauge of social stress, the number of refugees rocketed upwards to 23 million in 1994, Worldwatch said, including three million Afghans, 2.7 million Bosnians, 2.1 million Rwandans, and 848,000 Liberians.

A record four million people meanwhile contracted the virus that causes AIDS in 1994, pushing the total number of cases to 26 million.



White House Press Secretary Mike McCurry (L) checks President Bill Clinton's (C) credentials before Clinton photographed White House News Photographer Association (WHNPA) President Ken Blaylock (R) at the WHNPA dinner in Washington Saturday.

—AFP/UNB photo

## Off the Record

### Chinese can't get married easily

BEIJING: Beginning June 1, Chinese who might pass on serious hereditary ailments cannot get married until they take long-term or permanent measures to prevent pregnancy, an official report said Saturday, reports AP.

The measure is part of the new Maternal and Infant Health Law that goes into effect next month, the Beijing Youth Daily reported.

The law requires couples to pass a strict battery of health tests before they can get permission to be married. Those with sexually transmitted diseases, including syphilis and AIDS, should postpone marriage. Violators are subject to legal punishments, which the report did not explain.

People with serious hereditary diseases that prevent them from taking care of themselves and have a high probability of being inherited are not allowed to get married until they begin long-term contraceptive measures or have surgery to prevent pregnancy.

Those with mental illnesses including schizophrenia and manic depression should not get married until they have been successfully treated the report said.

The new law, passed by the legislature last fall, codifies policies and practices that already were in place in many areas.

Earlier drafts had generated controversy because they contained even stricter measures and used the words "eugenics" and "inferior births." In some parts of China, local authorities tried to implement eugenics policies by sterilizing mentally retarded people.

### Tiny art work!

BEIJING: Chinese artist Wang Baohai has produced a painting of chrysanthemums the size of a match head that he plans to submit to the Guinness Book of World Records, it was reported Sunday, reports AP.

Wang, a painter from northeastern Liaoning Province, practiced miniature paintings for five years before producing the tiny artwork, the official Xinhua News Agency reported.

Wang's mini-painting is the first of its kind in China and unique in the world as well," renowned artist Quan Xianguang wrote on a certificate of authentication, Xinhua said.

It said although ink and paper presented little problem, creating a brush small enough for the painting was difficult. Once he managed to develop a microscopic brush, Wang tried 1,000 times over the past five years to perfect his work, the report said.

### Biased mother

NEW YORK: In a startling demonstration of how it pays to be good-looking, a new study says cute babies get nicer treatment, even from mothers, reports AP.

Mothers of cute newborns showed more affection toward their infants than mothers of homely babies did, as measured by such things as holding the child close, patting him or her and cooing things such as "Hi, cute baby, you're such a cute baby."

In contrast, mothers of the unattractive babies spent more time than cute-baby moms did paying attention to other people and performing chores like checking diapers.

"We're not suggesting that parents are not completely in love with their babies even if their babies are unattractive," researcher Jean Ritter said. "All these mothers treated their babies positively and generally saw their babies in a favourable light."

But the study follows others that suggest good-looking people are seen and treated by others as more popular, smarter and better at dealing with other people. The new findings, she said, demonstrate that these "appearance cues" are so powerful that they exist even between mother and child.

### Artist's eccentric attitude!

LONDON: A painting created by naked female models dragging their paint smeared bodies across a canvas could fetch up to 800,000 pounds (1.13 million) Christie's auctioneers said on Wednesday, reports Reuter.

La Grande Bataille's by controversial French artist Yves Klein was painted by three models who dragged each other across the canvas in a live performance where Klein "conducted" their movements to the accompaniment of a small orchestra.

The painting comes up for sale in London on June 29. Klein, who died in 1962 aged 34, began using his models' bodies as human brushes in 1960. The term anthropometry was created to describe his work.

"The anthropometres were an example of his eccentric attitude towards art making and they diverged greatly from the kind of art being celebrated within the art world at that time," wrote Sidra Stutch in the catalogue for major exhibition of Klein's work now showing at London's Hayward Gallery.

## Asia-Pacific nations to reveal defence policies

TOKYO, May 21: Asia-Pacific nations, including the United States, Russia, China and Japan, are likely to make public their basic defence policies and military strength to build regional confidence, it was reported today, says AFP.

The measure is expected to be agreed upon by the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) to be convened in Brunei in August with foreign ministers from 18 countries and organisations, the leading economic newspaper Nihon Keizai said.

The ARF, including the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), will work out the framework of the agreement at talks to open in Brunei on Monday, the newspaper quoted Japanese government sources as saying.

ASEAN groups Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand. The second annual

ARF meeting will also involve Australia, Canada, China, Japan, Laos, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Russia, South Korea, the United States, Vietnam, and the European Union.

Japan has advocated such a measure to enhance the transparency of each country's defence policies and capabilities to promote dialogue and cooperation on security in the region, the newspaper said.

Most of the ARF members have been reluctant to expose their defence postures in full while China's military buildup and nuclear testing remain worrisome to the region, the newspaper said.

It added that the ARF members were near an agreement to state their basic defence policies and military strengths in general terms, the Nihon Keizai said.

### Vietnamese boat people clash with HK troops

HONG KONG, May 21: Fierce fighting between Vietnamese boat people and Hong Kong security forces left hundreds injured on Saturday before order was restored to most parts of a detention centre here, reports AFP.

Police and prison officers used tear gas, armoured cars and helicopters to quell the Vietnamese who were protesting against the threat of mandatory repatriation.

A government spokesman said 168 officers and 27 Vietnamese required medical treatment, most for minor injuries.

## Female stars dominate Cannes Film Festival limelight

CANNES, France, May 21: Whatever problems women may face in some parts of the film industry, strong females have come out on top as the real stars at this year's Cannes Film Festival, reports AP.

From jury chairwoman Jeanne Moreau to actress-turned-director Diane Keaton, women have made all the running on the Croisette, where the movie world has gathered for the world's biggest annual filmfest.

Strong female roles, the lack of which is so often lamented, are for once in abundance, with three films focusing specifically on female leads within the first five days of the festival.

One of the most powerful

films so far in competition, John Boorman's "Beyond Rangoon," is a virtual personal tribute to female Myanmar democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi.

The one African film in competition tells the story of a young girl's Odyssey from a South African township through half the continent to adulthood and emancipation.

Moreau set the dominant female tone from the very start of the festival, stunning the opening ceremony last Wednesday with an impromptu duet with French singer Vanessa Paradis.

To the surprise of the assembled stars, Paradis appeared from the wings to sing "Le tourbillon de la vie" ("the

whirlpool of life"), made famous by Moreau in Truffaut's 1961 classic "Jules et Jim".

"It was a moment of strong emotion which we rarely achieve. It is entirely down to Jeanne's presence and power," said festival director Gilles Jacob afterwards.

From there on women have continued to dominate whether on screen or off at Cannes 95, where there has been little talk of a lack of strong female roles.

The most obvious is in Boorman's "Rangoon," where Patricia Arquette plays a mother whose husband and child have been killed and who finds strength to overcome her grief while caught up in 1988 student rights in Myanmar.

Her identity with Aung San Suu Kyi, who has defied military authorities for six years of house arrest, is almost physical.

In "Waati," by Malian filmmaker Souleymane Cisse, the story of Nanji and her journey from township destitution to adulthood could hardly provide a stronger model of courage over adversity.

Yet another female-centred work premiers on Sunday, when Emma Thompson portraying Bloomsbury-era painter Dora Carrington and her eccentric relationship with the homosexual writer Lytton Strachey.

Its director, Christopher Hampton, was inspired to write the movie after reading a

biography of Strachey, but decided to focus instead on Carrington, who "seemed to me to be an unprecedented figure."

Overall on the Croisette this year female stars have dominated the limelight — from Arquette and Thompson to patsy Kensit Greta Scacchi and Sharon Stone.

And all the good news for women actors and stars, it is something of a disappointment that the list of 24 films competing for the golden palm does not include a single female director.

Keaton, one of the most highly-respected figures on the Croisette, was for one not fazed by this fact, as she presented her debut feature

### Lebanese MPs want Hariri back as PM

BEIRUT, May 21: Billionaire Rafik Al-Hariri was poised to return for a second term as Lebanon's prime minister after most parliamentary deputies consulted by the country's president on Saturday said they wanted him back, reports Reuter.

Forty-eight out of 66 deputies who visited President Elias Hrawi up to mid-afternoon told reporters they wanted Hariri, who resigned on Friday after 31 months in office, to return.

Amin al-Havez, 69-year-old head of parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee and briefly prime minister in 1973, was Hariri's only rival with the backing of eight deputies.