

BRIEFLY



Children watch as men of the 19th Regiment Royal Artillery, prepare a 105 mm gun under a sea king helicopter before they leave their headquarters on Wednesday in Colchester, UK to prepare for embarkation to Bosnia. The men are part of a front line Rapid Reaction Force and are Britain's contribution to NATO's Multi-National Division. — AFP/UNB Photo

Confce on drug abuse ends: A European conference on the prevention of drug abuse in schools ended in Helsinki on Wednesday with a call on international organisations to take actions against drug abuse among young people. Xinhua reports from Helsinki.

A statement issued at the end of the three-day meeting said the abuse of narcotic drugs has become a global problem, whose solution requires joint efforts by nations across the world.

Beijing to ban smoking in public: China's capital, Beijing, will ban smoking in major public places from October, officials announced in a resolution to mark World No-Smoking Day on Wednesday. Reuter reports from Beijing.

The ban by the municipal government would make the city China's fourth to weed out the habit in public. Xinhua news agency said.

Afghan govt frees 20 Pakistanis: Afghan authorities on Wednesday released 20 Pakistanis arrested for fighting on opposition forces of former Prime Minister Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, the official Kabul radio said. Reuter reports from Islamabad.

The broadcast, monitored in Islamabad, said they were handed over to Saudi Intelligence Chief Turki al-Faisal during his meeting with former Afghan Defence Minister Ahmad Shah Masood, the main military commander of President Burhanuddin Rabbani.

Norway asked to halt whale hunt: The International Whaling Commission asked Norway on Wednesday to stop hunting whales immediately. AP reports from Dublin, Ireland.

Norwegians are hunting minke whales for a third consecutive year despite an international moratorium on commercial whaling since 1986.

6 Somalians beheaded in KSA: Six Somalians accused of murder, theft and taking drugs were beheaded on Wednesday in the Western part of Jeddah and their bodies placed on crosses in a public place, the Interior Ministry said. AFP reports from Riyadh.

The six were said to have murdered two Saudis and an Egyptian after robbing them, the ministry said in a statement quoted by the official agency SPA.

China frees dissident Wang: Veteran Chinese dissident Wang Xizhe, arrested on May 16 for protesting against civil rights restrictions, has been released in the southern city of Guangzhou, according to reports yesterday. AFP says from Beijing.

Wang, 45, a former democracy wall protester (1978-79), was arrested in Beijing and taken by police to Guangzhou a week later and held at a police station.

"Police have released me with a warning not to leave Guangzhou," he said by telephone.

Christopher likely to visit ME: Secretary of State Warren Christopher is expected to travel to the Middle East June 7 to 12 in connection with regional peace negotiations, a senior US official said Wednesday. AFP reports from Washington.

Police-mob clash in Kashmir

SRINAGAR, June 1: At least 20 people were injured in clashes between club-wielding riot police and stone-throwing anti-Indian demonstrators here today, police and witnesses said, reports AFP.

The Indian authorities imposed a shoot-on-sight curfew in the Matusuma area in the heart of this Kashmir summer capital following a two-hour street battle between police and Kashmiri Muslim youths.

The clashes broke out following a march called by a Muslim separatist group, the Daughters of the Nation, to protest against alleged molestation of Kashmiri women by Indian troops, witnesses said.

WASHINGTON, June 1: Countries that could be relied upon in the past to provide refuge to the persecuted are closing their doors to victims of war and political persecution, an independent US research group revealed today in Washington, reports USIS.

In their 1995 "World Refugee Survey," the US Committee for Refugees (USCRI) describes the condition of refugees and displaced persons in 116 countries, and found that a total of 16,267,000 refugees and asylum seekers are currently in need of protection and assistance.

The survey shows that in 1994 the bulk of the refugees — nearly six million — were found on the African continent. A chief trouble spot was Rwanda, where nearly two million people fled their homes due to civil war between the

Ghali proposes options for peacekeepers

UN rejects Serb conditions, demands release of hostages

SARAJEVO, June 1: The United Nations today rejected conditions set by the Bosnian Serbs and demanded the "immediate and unconditional" release of the more than 350 troops and observers they are holding hostage, reports AFP.

The immediate and unconditional release of all blue helmets and military observers held by the Bosnian Serbs is the only solution acceptable to the current crisis," said UNPROFOR spokeswoman, Captain Myriam Sochacki.

That was also the substance of a message sent Wednesday by the commander of UN forces in Bosnia-Herzegovina, General Rupert Smith, to the Bosnian Serb commander, General Ratko Mladic, the spokeswoman said.

In Paris, a French Foreign Ministry spokesman said today the first step in any dialogue with the Bosnian Serbs must be the release of all the UN

troops and observers.

The Bosnian Serbs on Wednesday said they were prepared to open "immediate" negotiations with the international "contact group" on Bosnia to release the peacekeepers in return for security guarantees.

In a letter to Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, dated May 30 and made public Wednesday, Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic made three demands to avoid a further escalation in the conflict:

He demanded the immediate demilitarisation of all the safe zones in Bosnia, a guarantee of no further use of force, and an immediate halt of arms shipments to Bosnian Muslims.

The letter drew a sharp response from the UN special envoy to ex-Yugoslavia, Yasushi Akashi, who reiterated today that he would not consult the rebel Serbs on any modifica-

tion of the UN peacekeeping mandate.

The UN Security Council is due to redefine the mandate of the UN peace force in Bosnia-Herzegovina over the next few days to make its troops less vulnerable.

Meanwhile, saying the UN Security Council is facing a "truly defining moment," Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali outlined four principal options for the UN Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in Bosnia.

1. Withdrawal of the UN Protection Force (UNPROFOR): He rejected this as tantamount to "abandonment of the people of Bosnia and Herzegov-

ina.

2. Retention of the status quo.

He rejected this as further eroding UNPROFOR's ability to provide humanitarian aid and achieve diplomatic progress.

3. Replacement of UNPROFOR by a multinational force:

He said if additional troops intended to use force to carry out the UN mission, they should not be under a UN command. Instead a multinational force should replace UNPROFOR. Key council members are against this option.

4. Scale down the mandate, regroup and eventually reduce the force, an option Boutros-Ghali prefers.

Peacekeepers would negotiate and monitor agreements between combatants, not use force except in self-defence in Muslim enclaves, operate Sarajevo airport and support humanitarian operations.

Reuter adds: Following are four options Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali presented to the Security Council on Wednesday on the future of the 22,400-strong UN force in Bosnia:

Blast outside Sindh assembly

KARACHI, June 1: Powerful car bomb exploded within the premises of the Sindh provincial assembly here today, with another bomb blast reported near the Pakistani navy residential quarters in another area, officials said, reports AFP.

No one was hurt in the two explosions, both caused by devices placed in cars, they said.

A bomb planted on a grey car parked on the premises of the provincial assembly building was detonated with a timer, bomb disposal expert Moeenuddin said.

The other exploded in a taxi near the naval residential area.

Witnesses said that sharpnel from the car-bomb at the Sindh Assembly premises was scattered over several hundred yards, some of it landing near the Sindh High Court building across the street.

A tyre from the car flew across the street and became tangled up in an overhead electric pylon. Parts of the wrecked car smouldered near the crater caused by the explosion, witnesses said.

Kazakhs destroy Soviet-era N-devices

SEMIPALATINSK, Kazakhstan, June 1: Kazakhstan destroyed the last of its Soviet-era military nuclear devices on Wednesday, blowing it up with conventional explosives 130 metres (425 ft) below ground, reports Reuter.

The destruction of the unstable plutonium charge buried underground since 1991 ended an era at the Semipalatinsk range, which served from 1949 as the Soviet Union's main nuclear test site.

Blue helmets again arrive in Angola

LOBITO, Angola, June 1: Lightly armed but with plenty of bravado, the first contingent of UN blue-helmeted infantrymen arrived Wednesday to face a daunting mission — to help end two decades of fratricidal bloodshed in Angola, reports AP.

It was the United Nations second try to halt Angola's 20-year war.

The 380 Uruguayans were met with cheers and back slaps by 650 British technical troops who have been preparing the devastated coastal town to be the launching point for an advance into rebel territory in the central highlands.

"It's a good sign that the first in-country troops are here," said Georgina Yates, spokeswoman for the British



Britain's Prince of Wales (L) shares a joke with Irish Prime Minister John Bruton and his wife Finola, as he arrives at the Governmental Buildings in Dublin late Wednesday. It is his first visit by an heir to the British throne since Ireland was partitioned in 1922 and became a republic. — AFP/UNB photo

Malaria still threatens 40pc of world's population

ABIDJAN, June 1: While the world watched with a shiver as the deadly Ebola virus stalked Zaire, a much more familiar disease quietly killed one victim every 12 seconds, reports Reuter.

Malaria, which helped earn Africa the nickname "White man's grave", still threatens over 40 per cent of the world's population across Africa, Asia and Latin America.

After decades of research, scientists in the early 1990s were dismayed to find that the plasmodium parasites that cause the disease were growing resistant to drugs.

But now there are signs that science is lighting back.

"We think vaccination is the hope of today," says Dr Louis Penati, a malaria specialist in Ivory Coast where the disease for many is a part of everyday life.

Penati, who works for France's Prestigious Pasteur Institute, is hoping that Ivory Coast will be chosen for further tests of the world's first anti-malaria vaccine.

Malaria, a disease as old as humankind, is caused by parasites which are transmitted from person to person by the female Anopheles mosquito

and then invade and destroy red blood cells. The falsiparum form kills by attacking the brain.

Symptoms include fever, chills with sweating, headache, aching limbs, vomiting, bleeding gums and loss of appetite.

Each year, according to World Health Organisation (WHO) estimates, malaria kills 1.5 to 2.7 million people — many of them children in some of the world's poorest countries.

"In Africa malaria is a disease of children," says Dr Anatoly Kondrashin, WHO malaria specialist in Geneva.

Israeli army sets Nov. 1 target to pull out from West Bank

JERUSALEM, June 1: The army has set a November 1 target date for starting a troop withdrawal in the West Bank which would set the stage for Palestinian autonomy there, a newspaper reported Thursday, says AP.

The Haaretz daily said the army also was asking for an unspecified funding to pave 110 kilometers (60 miles) of roads to patrol West Bank areas outside of Palestinian population centres. The army has already received 100 million diris for the project.

The November 1 date seemed to clash with Palestinian plans to hold elections

by September, or two months after an agreement is to be signed with Israel in July. Palestinians want Israeli soldiers withdrawn before the polling is held.

Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and PLO leader Yasser Arafat will probably meet later this month to resolve this difference, a senior Israeli official said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Meanwhile, Saeb Erakat, the Palestinians chief negotiator on the elections, rejected an Israeli proposal to pull troops out of only six West Bank towns.

The deal would exclude He-

bron, which is the West Bank's second-largest Palestinian city. Israel wants to keep troops in Hebron to protect 450 Jewish settlers who live there.

Erakat told Palestinian radio that the Israeli withdrawal should respect "geographic unity" and that the proposal to leave soldiers in certain towns violated the September 1993 Israel-PLO accord.

"Redeployment means in irreversible pull out," he added. "Israel is launching test balloons. We reject them absolutely."

In the past, Israeli officials said they wanted to pull out of only one town at a time with a two-month test period.

Off the Record

Act like princess

LONDON: How to get yourself out of a parking ticket, lesson one: act like a princess. Of course, being a princess helps, reports-AP.

Princess Diana bolted out of a cafe when she saw a traffic cop (flicking her black convertible parked illegally on yellow lines in Kensington, the London borough where she lives, the Today newspaper reported Wednesday.

The tabloid featured photos from Tuesday of Diana, in a casual baby blue woolen suit, sprinting across the street to beg a little leeway from Shahreman Daraee.

"I am just having a cup of coffee across the road," Today quoted the smiling princess as telling Daraee.

Daraee couldn't resist. "Don't worry," he said, "you can have another five minutes to finish your drink."

"Oh, thank you very much," she smiled. She would otherwise have been liable for a 60 pound (dir 96) ticket.

Diana cooled slightly, though, when Daraee asked her if she knew of any available security positions that would get him off the streets. "Have a look in the classified section," she was quoted as saying.

She then returned to the cafe — the Today photo shows her grinning a smile that can only be described as triumphant — and sat down to finish her coffee.

Daraee may not have known it, but that took 30 minutes.

Tibetan panacea

BEIJING: A man suffering from paralysis who had contracted a disease six years ago and had not responded to any of the many Western and Chinese medicine treatments he could find, was told to try Tibetan medicine, reports Xinhua.

The farmer Zhaojun, was sent to the Beijing hospital of Tibetan medicine three months ago, and can now walk and take care of himself.

Wu is only one of number of Beijing-goers who have received treatment at the hospital, which was built in 1992 with joint efforts of the China Tibetology Research Institute and a local hospital of Tibetan medicine.

Over the past two years, more than 50,000 people in Beijing and other parts of the world have been treated using Tibetan medicine, and over 92 per cent of them have recovered.

In Tibetan medicine, which goes back 2,300 years, doctors exam patients by checking the tongue, feeling the pulse, and testing the urine, and give the patient various kinds of medicinal herbs, somewhat similar to traditional Chinese medicinal herbs as well as acupuncture and bathing with medicinal herbs.

To improve the quality of treatment, the hospital has also started using some types of modern diagnostic equipment and combined Tibetan medicine with Western and traditional Chinese medicine.

Easy trick!

ATLANTIC CITY: A ring of counterfeiters played the casino well, passing about 20,000 dollars in fake bills over the Memorial Day weekend, reports AP.

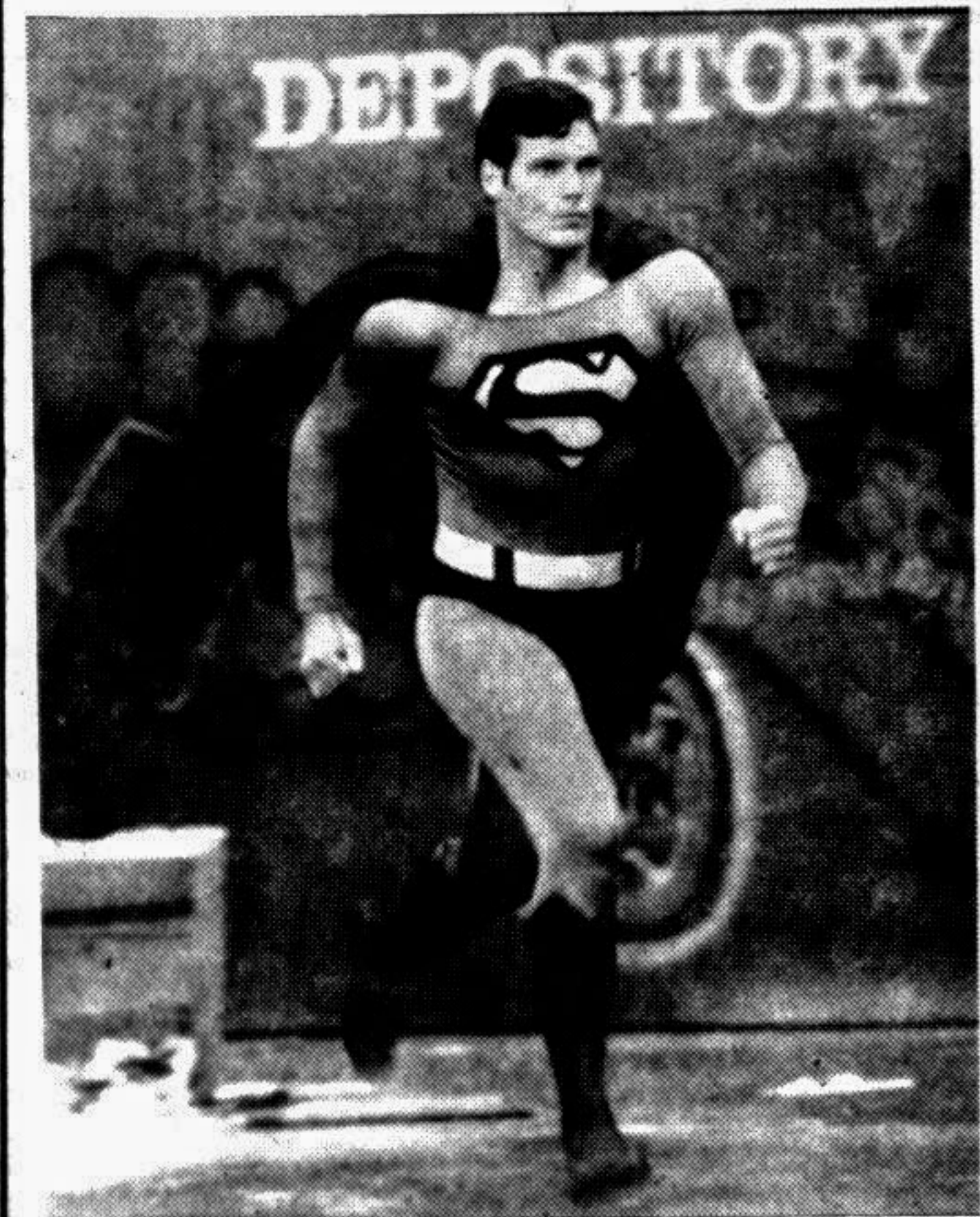
But it wasn't such an easy trick when one of them sought the services of a prostitute. The woman took police to a motel room where they allegedly found seven men with 17,400 dollars in bogus 100 dollars bills.

"She was very upset that this guy had stiffed her with three 100 dollars bills," said Robert Pochopin, special agent in charge of the city's US Secret Service office. "She didn't want to pass those 100s dollars. She knew that was against the law. It's a strange turn of events."

The woman, whose name was not released, didn't recognise the bills as counterfeit when she was paid for her services, Pochopin said.

But when she bragged to her colleagues about the "easy trick" and showed them the bills, they noticed all three had the same serial number. "That's when the older hookers laughed at her and called her some stupid names," Pochopin said.

The prostitute led police Sunday to the motel room where she had spent time with one of the counterfeiters. She was not charged.



This undated file photo shows US actor Christopher Reeves in a scene from one of the "Superman" movies. Reeves fell from his horse during an equestrian event in Virginia on Saturday and broke his neck, and he is paralysed and cannot breathe on his own, according to his doctor. — AFP/UNB photo

thousands. However, with only a few notable exceptions, most European countries continued to treat the exodus from Bosnia as temporary. Europe liberally employed restrictive asylum criteria, contributing to a five-year low in the number of new applications for asylum filed on the continent.

East Asia and The Pacific - In February 1994, the Steering Committee of the Comprehensive Plan of Action (CPA) for Indochinese Refugees set December 1995 as a target date for the end of the CPA. First asylum countries finalised the screening of Vietnamese asylum seekers and introduced restrictive measures aimed at prompting Vietnamese determined not to be refugees to repatriate. Vietnamese asylum seekers in Hong Kong and Indonesia protested plans for their repatriation.

Europe - The war in Bosnia and Herzegovina continued, uprooting additional tens of

Greece ratifies Int'l Law of Sea

ATHENS, June 1: The Greek parliament approved early this morning an international treaty allowing Greece to extend its territorial waters, an act Turkey says would prompt war between the two NATO allies, reports Reuter.

Parliament unanimously ratified by voice vote the Law of the Sea convention allowing Greece to expand its waters from six to 12 miles. Turkey opposes the treaty, saying it would make the Aegean Sea between the two feuding neighbours a Greek lake.

Greece has not said it will actually enforce the treaty and extend its territorial waters but it has made clear it has the right to do so whenever it pleases.

Doors closing to refugees worldwide

country's ethnic Hutus and Tutsis.

"The world is changing," said Roger Winter, director of USOCRA, "but if our approach (toward refugees) is going to be effective, we must account for the human dynamics. People must have some place to go when circumstances warrant it. If they do not," he warned, "people will flee anyway."

Winter concluded that failure to deal with issues of state instability, conflict, and refugees at a political level simply continues the pattern of failure. "Humanitarian aid can provide only bandages. The cure is something that requires the will of the international community," he said.

The following summaries and facts are excerpted from the 1995 World Refugee Sur-

vey. **Middle East** - It was a year of flickering hopes for refugees in the Middle East. For Palestinians, a peace accord between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation and the beginnings of a Palestinian self-rule authority caused a glimmer of light to appear at the end of the long tunnel of Palestinian exile. Hopes for a safe and dignified Afghan repatriation were nearly eclipsed by continuing civil war in Afghanistan: Iran began coercing Afghans to leave, despite the dangers. Civil war in Yemen, though short-lived, created both internal displacement and a new flow of refugees, as well as putting Somali refugees in Yemen in the direct line of fire. Kurds in northern Iraq were made in-

creasingly vulnerable not only by the continuing threat of Iraq's central government, but also by the continuing threat of Iraq's central government, but also by cross-border incursions from Turkey and the escalation of internecine fighting among the Kurds themselves.

South and Central Asia - Continued fighting between rival Mujahedih factions in Afghanistan displaced hundreds of thousands of people and forestalled further significant repatriation. Many of the Afghan refugees who did return home did so under pressure from Iran. Little progress was made on finding a solution for Bhutanese refugees in Nepal; Tibetan refugees continued to risk a hazardous journey to Nepal and India;

and peace talks between the new government of Sri Lanka and Tamil rebels raised hopes for Sri Lankan refugees and internally displaced persons.

Africa - 1994 will long be remembered as the year two million refugees fled from Rwanda in the swiftest refugee exodus of its size ever recorded. While world attention briefly riveted on the plight of Rwandan refugees, a heartened development received scant attention: nearly three-quarters of a million Mozambican refugees repatriated during the year, as that nation continued to heal itself after decades of war.

The war in Bosnia and Herzegovina continued, uprooting additional tens of