

# BRIEFLY

**Greater US support for UN sought:** UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali said Friday the world organisation needed greater support from the United States, which he said has a muddled view of its global responsibilities, AP reports from Beverly Hills.

"The end of the Cold War has meant that the logic of development assistance is less clear to the United States. 'Donor fatigue has set in,' Boutros-Ghali told an audience of 750 at a luncheon hosted by the Los Angeles World Affairs Council.

**Haitians head to polls today:** Haitians will head to the polls Sunday for the first elections to take place since a US led invasion restored President Jean Bertrand Aristide to power last year, AFP reports from Port-au-Prince.

Voters will select candidates in local, municipal, and parliamentary races as well as decide whether they support a measure by Aristide to dissolve the army.

**World leprosy cases drop by 23 pc:** The number of known cases of leprosy worldwide dropped by 23 per cent in 1994, the UN World Health Organisation (WHO) said on Friday, reporting "considerable progress" in fighting the disease, AFP reports from Geneva.

WHO officials said an estimated 1.8 million people were recorded as suffering from leprosy at the end of 1994. That was 23 per cent less than at the end of 1993, and 67 per cent less than 1991, they added.

**31 militants killed in Algeria:** Algerian security forces killed 31 armed Islamic fundamentalists in operations across the country between June 17 and 21, security police said Friday, AFP reports from Algiers.

Five militants were killed in an operation in Melikche, in northern Algeria, and another five at Oggab in the east, police said in a statement.

**MNLF urges Ramos to end dispute:** Philippines Muslim rebel chief Nur Misuari yesterday urged President Fidel Ramos to take a direct hand in resolving a thorny dispute that has stalled peace talks held this week in the south, AFP reports from Manila.

Government negotiators and a panel of the Misuari-led Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) ended five days of talks in southern Davao city Friday, deadlocked on the issue of a proposed autonomous Muslim government to cover most of the country's south.

**57 die of cholera in Sierra Leone:** Cholera has killed 57 people out of 1,709 who have come down with cholera in the capital of Sierra Leone, according to figures published by the World Health Organisation (WHO), AFP reports from Geneva.

Dr Evarist Njilesani, the WHO representative in Sierra Leone, said that without adequate measures the toll this year could be worse than last year when 10,000 people caught the disease.

**15 slaughtered in Bujumbura:** Some 15 people were slaughtered in their homes in a night of violence in the Tutsi-suburb of Cibitoke, in Bujumbura, Burundi which adjoins the Hutu district of Kamenge, northern Bujumbura, residents said yesterday, AFP reports from Bujumbura.

They charged extremist Hutu "armed bands" had launched "punishment expeditions" against the Tutsis. According to the witness reports, automatic weapon fire was heard through most of the night in Cibitoke adjoining Kamenge, but by this morning, the suburb was calm.

**Khmer rebels kill 2 workers:** Khmer Rouge guerrillas attacked workers at a road reconstruction site north of the capital Thursday night killing two people and wounding four, the second time the site has been attacked in a week, police and government officials said yesterday, AFP reports from Phnom Penh.

Twenty to thirty rebels attacked the site about 55 kilometres north of Phnom Penh in eastern Kampong Cham province at 8:30 pm (1330 GMT) opening fire with rocket propelled grenades and Ak-47 assault rifles, according to Nob Chino, Director of National Security for the Ministry of Interior.

**Blast kills 10 near Belgrade:** Ten people were killed and 10 more injured in a powerful blast at a chemical factory near Belgrade, police said yesterday, AFP reports from Belgrade.

The explosion occurred late Friday in a unit producing Polyvinyl Chloride (PVC) at the Grmec Plant in the town of Zemun. The cause of the blast was not immediately established, but a factory official said the workers were handling an explosive product at the time. Nine workers were killed outright and another died in hospital from his injuries.

**3 shot dead in Egypt:** Police shot dead three Muslim militants in Southern Egypt yesterday after discovering their hide out in a sugar cane field, police sources said, AFP reports from Egypt.

Officers surrounded the field between the towns of Mallawi and Abu Qurqas in trouble-hit Minya Province, 300 kilometres (185 miles) south of Cairo, after receiving a tip-off that armed fundamentalists were hiding there.

**Unofficial truce in Afghanistan:** An unofficial ceasefire has been agreed between forces loyal to Afghan President Burhanuddin Rabbani and the rival Taliban religious movement, a Defence Ministry official said in Kabul yesterday, AFP reports from Kabul.

"The unofficial ceasefire started Friday afternoon," the official said.

**Peruvians protest amnesty law:** About 2,000 protesters marched downtown shouting "neither forget, nor forgive" to protest a new amnesty law that freed convicted human rights violators, AP reports from Lima.

The demonstrators, including many students and victims' family members, demanded Friday that Congress rescind the law signed last week by President Alberto Fujimori. It absolves police, soldiers and civilian officials of human rights offenses in the last 15 years of war with leftist guerrillas.

**Abiola ready to talk with junta, if freed**

LAGOS, June 24: Nigerian presidential hopeful Moshhood Abiola, currently detained on charges of treason, is ready for dialogue and compromise with the Nigerian junta if he is freed, his wife, Kudiratu Abiola, said Friday, reports AFP.

She made the statement to journalists at the end of a meeting here with officials of the central committee of the opposition National Democratic Coalition (NADECO), who paid chief Abiola's family a solidarity visit.

Abiola, widely believed to have won a June 12, 1993 presidential election held and then annulled by the military, was arrested exactly a year ago here for declaring himself president of Nigeria on the basis of that vote.

## Jonas Salk, symbol of great hope for mankind, dies

LA JOLLA, California, June 24: Medical pioneer Dr. Jonas Salk, who developed the first vaccine to halt polio's crippling rampage and later tried to find a treatment for AIDS, has died, reports AP.

Salk, who was 80, died Friday of heart failure at Green Hospital of Scripps Clinic in La Jolla at 12:23 pm, said Anita Weld, a spokeswoman for the Salk Institute. He had been hospitalised earlier in the day complaining of shortness of breath.

"The world has lost a man who was the symbol of great hope for mankind, whether polio victims or AIDS victims," said Bill Otterson, director of San Diego CON-NECT, a research group at the University of California, San Diego.

Salk spent a lifetime stubbornly pursuing his ideas.

and condemning many others to iron lungs, leg braces and years of rehabilitation.

Salk's injectable vaccine was declared effective in 1955, and polio's toll plunged. "What had the most profound effect was the freedom from fear," Salk said in 1995, as he prepared to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the announcement.

Salk moved to California, where in 1963 he established the Salk Institute for Biological Studies in La Jolla, a San Diego suburb.

The institute became a leading biomedical research centre, although over the years it was beset by money troubles, bitter internal rifts and the departures of some top-notch scientists.

Salk conducted research,

on multiple sclerosis and cancer before retiring from his own laboratory in 1984. He continued to maintain offices at the institute and, in 1986, co-founded Immune Response Corp. of Carlsbad, California, to search for an AIDS vaccine.

The vaccine really was a treatment to prevent or delay development of AIDS symptoms in people already infected by the AIDS virus. Salk also hoped to eventually develop a true vaccine to prevent uninfected people from contracting the deadly virus.

Again, there were doubters. Salk modeled his AIDS vaccine after his polio vaccine, using killed AIDS virus. Skeptics argued the approach wouldn't work or carried a risk of making patients develop AIDS symptoms.

Early tests seemed to support Salk's approach, although years of research were expected before its effectiveness could be established or disproved.

Salk promised to be among the first uninfected people to receive his AIDS vaccine, just as he injected himself with experimental influenza vaccine in 1942 and his polio vaccine in 1952.

Jonas Edward Salk was born in New York City on October 28, 1914, the oldest of three sons of a garment industry worker. Salk married Donna Lindsay in 1939. They had three sons, but were divorced in 1968. In 1970, he married painter Francoise Gilot, the longtime companion of late painter Pablo Picasso.

America's worst polio epidemic was in 1952. The next year, Salk announced development of an experimental vaccine.

Salk, his wife and their sons were among the first to receive injections. In 1954, more than 1.8 million school children — nicknamed Polio Pioneers — participated in a nationwide test of the vaccine during history's largest medical experiment.

Salk's name became a household word, splashed across magazine covers and newspaper front pages.

Salk won many awards, but many scientists considered his contribution overrated.

He is survived by his wife and three sons, Peter, Jonathon and Darrell.

Belgrade seeks Delhi's help to rejoin NAM, UN

NEW DELHI, June 24: Yugoslavia has sought India's help to rejoin the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and the United Nations, official sources in Delhi said, reports Xinhua.

Visiting Yugoslav Deputy Foreign Minister Radoslav Bulanic held talks with Indian leaders on the subject and India has assured him of all its help in this regard.

India and Yugoslavia signed a protocol on consultations and mutual exchange of views between the foreign ministries of the two countries here on June 22.

Bulanic visited Indonesia for consultations with the current NAM chairman before coming to India on the same 18-day

# Karadzic threatens to halt aid convoys to Muslim areas

PALE, Bosnia-Herzegovina, June 24: Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic threatened early today to halt aid convoys to Muslim areas unless the United Nations put pressure on the Bosnian army to stop its current offensives, reports AP.

In an interview televised from Pale, the Bosnian Serb stronghold near Sarajevo, Karadzic said he might stop aid reaching the enclave of Srebrenica "unless the United Nations disarms the Muslim fighters" in the region.

He also said deliveries of humanitarian aid to Sarajevo "will only be allowed on con-

dition that the Muslims cease their attacks from Sarajevo against Bosnian Serb forces."

Three convoys reached Sarajevo on Wednesday and one has been allowed into the city since then, according to UN officials in Geneva. The Serbs are holding up two convoys at the entrance to Sarajevo, after accusing Bosnian troops of firing on a convoy destined for the Serb-held part of the city.

Alluding to the mainly French and British Rapid Reaction Force (RRF) for Bosnia, Karadzic said it was dangerous "because of the arrival of more soldiers and weapons" in

an already volatile region.

"We believe the world needs new rapid diplomatic forces here," he said.

The Bosnian Serb leader expressed a desire to talk to the two international mediators, Thorvald Stoltenberg of United Nations and Carl Bildt (European Union) who are now in ex-Yugoslavia.

"All those who want to resolve this crisis must also come to us and talk to us," he said.

"Bildt appears to have understood this and he will probably come to Pale to talk to us too," Karadzic said.

In a reference to a Muslim

offensive underway since June 15, Karadzic said it was "more than necessary for the international community to exert pressure to stop the Muslims."

"We will punish our enemies if they go on attacking us, by seizing territory from them," Karadzic said.

AP adds: Rejecting United Nations assurances that a European force won't target Bosnian Serbs, rebel leader Radovan Karadzic warned the soldiers to keep off his territory.

"We don't see any need for such forces in the region," Karadzic said Friday on Bosnian Serb television.

## DPRK will announce armistice pact

SEOUL, June 24: North Korea has told its Korean War enemies that it will announce the armistice that has kept a fragile peace on the Cold War's last frontier, US military officials said Saturday, reports AP.

That would cap months of attempts by the hardline communist country to dismantle the armistice that ended the 1950-53 Korean War. It has demanded direct peace treaty negotiations with the United States that would snub rival South Korea.

The North has called the ceasefire agreement a "useless piece of paper."

North Korea informed the United Nations Command on Thursday that it will announce the armistice invalid Sunday, the 45th anniversary of the start of the Korean War, news reports said, quoting an unidentified government source.

## Troops kill 35 Kurdish rebels

ANKARA, June 24: In an escalation of fighting between government forces and Kurdish rebels, 35 guerrillas were killed in southeastern Turkey, the regional governor's office said Saturday, reports AP.

Nineteen guerrillas were killed by soldiers in a clash near the northern Iraqi border in the Hakkari province, according to the statement.

Security forces killed 16 rebels in clashes in the provinces of Hakkari, Bitlis, Diyarbakir and Kars over the last 24 hours, it added. One soldier was also killed.

Kurdish rebels have been fighting for autonomy in southeastern Turkey since 1984. More than 16,000 people have died in the violence.

## China executes 56 for drug trafficking

HONG KONG, June 24: Chinese authorities executed 56 drug traffickers in one day in two provinces where authorities say anti-drug efforts are proving successful, newspapers in Hong Kong said Saturday, reports AP.

The offenders executed Friday in south China were convicted of drug offenses, including peddling, smuggling and transporting, said Wen Wei Po, a Hong Kong newspaper backed by China. It did not say how much they trafficked, but possession of just small amounts of drugs can draw a death sentence.

It said 22 people were executed in Yunnan, a lush, mountainous province on the border with Myanmar following a sentencing rally in a sports stadium in the provincial capital, Kunming.

Another 34 people were executed in neighbouring Guangxi province, the newspaper said. From January 1994 to May 1995, Guangxi courts handed 321 drug offenders, a more than 50 per cent increase over 1993, it said. Sentences ranged from five years imprisonment to death, it said.



A Cuban customs official inspects baggage belonging to US high school students who arrived in Havana, Cuba, on Friday defying the US travel ban on the island. The students are protesting the ban despite reported warnings by the US government to prosecute them on their return. The students came from across the nation including Washington, DC. —AFP/UNB photo

# Commission suggests closure of half of US defence bases

WASHINGTON, June 24: California suffered more heavy blows Friday as the Defence Base Closure and Realignment Commission targeted more facilities in the state, handing President Clinton a political hot potato, reports AP.

In wrapping up action, the panel recommended that 90 military facilities — half the 177 bases nationwide targeted for possible cuts — be closed completely or left with only minuscule fragments of their current roles.

"There's nothing but pain," base closure commission Chairman Alan Dixon said.

In a move that will have a dramatic impact on the Pacific island of Guam, the commission voted to close three Navy facilities and re-

align two others. The actions, involving a naval air station, ship repair facility and fleet industrial supply centre, would claim 2,200 jobs and result in the transfer of 6,500 others off the island.

In one of the last actions before finishing its work late Friday night the commission voted to close the Fleet Industrial Supply Centre in Oakland, California, after earlier recommending major shutdowns at the Oakland Army Base, the Long Beach Naval Shipyard and McClellan Air Force Base in Sacramento.

Under the recommendations to go to Clinton next week, California — a state already hit hard by defence cuts and considered by the president's political advisers vital

to his re-election — would lose another 18,000 jobs.

The commission also recommended closing Fort McClellan, Alabama, the Army's main chemical weapons training centre. The training operations would be moved to Missouri.

But the commission said there should be a moratorium on any more base closings until 2001 to give the military and affected communities time to digest the results of four closure rounds since 1988.

Despite the impending presidential election, Dixon, a former Democratic senator from Illinois, predicted that Clinton would accept the closure list.



Anti-nuclear demonstrators rally outside the French Consulate in Sydney Friday to protest French President Jacques Chirac's decision to resume nuclear testing in the South Pacific. The Australian government unveiled a swathe of retaliatory measures including recalling the Australian ambassador in Paris, a clamp-down on military contact and the prospect of raising the nuclear test issue in various international forums. —AFP/UNB photo

# Off the Record

**"Divorce club"**

BEIJING, China's first "divorce club" has opened in the country's honeymoon capital Hangzhou, as modern times mean more Chinese marriages are quickly breaking up, reports Reuter.

Membership in the city's divorced family club has soared from 20 to nearly 300 in its first three months, with men slightly outnumbering women, the official Xinhua News Agency said today.

Although Hangzhou is renowned for the honeymooners who flock to its scenic west lake, Wulin street Women's Association leader Han Neiyin found through a 1994 survey that divorce was on the rise and that most divorcees needed help, Xinhua reported.

The club she founded holds tea parties and monthly dances to ease the newly unwedded through the trauma of divorce and helps with the special problems of children whose parents split up.

## Share your happiest day with Cinderella

ANAHEIM, Calif: Take Cinderella's coach to the magic castle and culminate that fairy-tale courtship with a dream come true, reports AP.

For the first time in its 40-year history, Disneyland has opened its gates to wedding ceremonies.

Michelle Shinn and Mike Consalves of San Jose had a touch of fantasy added to their happiest day when they married on Thursday with the spires of Sleeping Beauty's Castle rising in the background. The bride wore a white tea dress and pearls, the groom a sport coat and tie.

This time, though, the mice didn't turn into horses. Mickey and Minnie Mouse helped cut the cake.

"It's the happiest day of your life," said Shinn. "Why not spend it at the happiest place on earth?"

Since 1993, hundreds have been married among fairy-tale trappings at the Disneyland Hotel, but there had been no room in the 85-acre (34-hectare) theme park across the street, hotel spokesman Joe Aguirre said Friday.

Couples, and their travel agents, pressed Disneyland to break the spell. "For years, couples have been asking, 'Is it possible to get married in the park itself?'" Aguirre said. "We had to identify locations that would work well for a bride and groom and their guests."

Couples may now choose from 25 settings inside the theme park.

Come prepared to pay for the fantasy. Prices range from \$2,000 to \$3,500 for five to 30 people. Cinderella's coach with driver and footman will cost \$1,600, a 24-piece orchestra, another \$10,500. A single Disney character will set you back \$75.

Earlier this month, Walt Disney World in Orlando, Florida, began offering up its park for wedding ceremonies.

## He postponed his own death

JACKSON, Georgia: A death row inmate changed his mind at the last minute on Friday and delayed his scheduled execution in Georgia's electric chair by claiming that he wants to donate his organs after his death, reports Reuter.

An hour before the death penalty was to be carried out, a judge stayed the execution of Larry Lonchar, based on attorneys' arguments that the triple murderer's organs would be unusable if he is electrocuted.

Lonchar said he would drop his petition for a stay if Georgia law was changed to allow another form of execution that would permit organ donation. The judge said he would issue a ruling Tuesday.

Two days earlier, Lonchar had told the same judge that he wanted the electrocution to proceed, despite legal efforts by his brother to delay it. Lonchar had previously said that he preferred death in the electric chair to life on death row.

Lonchar was sentenced to death for fatally shooting Wayne Smith, Smith's girlfriend, Margaret Sweet, and Smith's son, Steve Smith, in suburban Atlanta in October 1986.

He said he killed the Smiths after they threatened him because he owed them a 10,000 dollar gambling debt.

Lonchar described himself on Thursday as a "cold-blooded killer" who deserved no compassion. He said he was ready to have the death sentence carried out.

"I don't want anybody to remember me," Lonchar said. "I'm not scared. I won't miss this society. It's only going to get worse."

## Lamont likely to challenge Major for party leadership

LONDON, June 24: Former Finance Minister Norman Lamont was being tipped today as a likely challenger to Prime Minister John Major in next month's ballot for leadership of Britain's ruling Conservative Party, reports Reuter.

Major stunned the nation on Thursday by resigning as leader of the deeply divided party, saying he was fed up with being criticised and daring opponents to fight him for the top job.

Another jolt came on Friday when Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd said he would retire at the next cabinet reshuffle. It was seen as an act of loyalty to Major as he fought to stave off a leadership challenge by right wing Conservative Euro-sectics.

As MPs digested Hurd's retirement it became increasingly clear that Major would have to fight for his job despite warnings by top Conservatives that a challenge would be futile.

Lamont, who ironically ran Major's 1990, campaign for leader, held talks with another former minister, right winger Edward Leigh, who late said the back biting tearing the party apart would not cease unless Major was challenged by a heavyweight.

It may be Lamont, but it should be a heavyweight person, Leigh said. A source close to Lamont, who was sacked by Major as Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1993, said on Friday. Lamont is saying nothing at the moment.

Political sources said Lamont would announce his candidacy in the next two days unless a more senior contender came forward. They said Lamont would fight on law and order, northern Ireland taxation and the future of conservatism.