

## BRIEFLY

**Drug trafficker held in Mexico:**

Mexican police and army units have arrested a powerful drug trafficker who was wanted in connection with the May 1993 slaying of a Roman Catholic cardinal, authorities said on Saturday. Reuter reports from Mexico City.

Hector Luis Palma Salazar, known as "El Guero Palma", was arrested on Friday in the western state of Jalisco, the attorney general's office said.

**Wanted Mafia boss held in Italy:**

Police said on Saturday they had arrested suspected Mafia boss Leoluca Bagarella, one of Italy's most wanted men, Reuter reports from Rome.

Police from the Elite Dia anti-Mafia Squad arrested 53-year-old Bagarella, reputed to be a leader of the Sicilian Cosa Nostra crime empire, as he drove unaccompanied through the island's capital Palermo on Saturday evening.

**Train crash claims 17 in Prague:**

Seventeen people were killed and six seriously injured Saturday in a train crash about 60 kilometres (40 miles) southeast of Prague, CTK news agency reported, AFP says from Prague.

According to a railway official quoted by the Czech news agency, a single-carriage passenger train collided in the late afternoon with three loose wagons detached from a goods train for reasons as yet unexplained.

**Gambian minister found dead:**

Gambian Finance Minister Ousman Koro Ceesay was found dead in his burned-out car on Saturday, his family said, Reuter reports from Banjul.

They said police had found his Mercedes Benz car with his body inside but it was not yet clear what had happened.

**15 die as jet crashes in Lagos:**

Fifteen people were killed on Saturday when an airliner crashed as it landed at Murtala Muhammed Airport in Lagos, Nigerian state television reported, Reuter says from Lagos.

It said the aircraft with about 80 passengers on board was on an internal flight from the northern Nigerian city of Kaduna.

**Chinese team cancels Sweden trip:**

Chinese politicians cancelled a Saturday visit to a northern Swedish town after learning they would be questioned about China's treatment of orphan girls, AP reports from Stockholm.

The delegation, led by Vice Premier Li Lanqing, was to visit the mining town of Kiruna, 900 kilometres (570 miles) north of Stockholm. They were hoping to expand on contacts with the Swedish mining company LKAB.

**West urged to drop Rushdie issue:**

The death edict against British writer Salman Rushdie cannot be revoked, and Western leaders should distance themselves from the author, an Iranian parliamentary leader said, AP reports from Nicosia.

"A learned clergyman has expressed his views about 'The Satanic Verses' and its author. This is a view that almost all clergymen and Muslims worldwide hold and respect," Mohammad Javad Larijani, a former foreign ministry official, said in an interview published Saturday in the Iranian newspaper Kayhan.

**Chinese PM arrives in Moscow:**

Chinese Prime Minister Li Peng arrived in Moscow yesterday for a four-day visit, part of a gradual thaw in the on-and-off frosty ties between the two huge neighbours, Reuter reports from Moscow.

Li, who was greeted at Moscow Airport by Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin, is expected to meet President Boris Yeltsin, who has said he plans to visit China this year.

**1 killed in Taiwanese quake:**

A strong earthquake jolted Taiwan Sunday, sending down rocks that killed a woman and injured three other people as their car drove through a mountainous area, AP reports from Taipei.

Police said five houses in Sanhsia in suburban Taipei tilted about 15 degrees in the quake, but no one there was injured. The Central Weather Bureau said the quake had a preliminary magnitude of 6.5, the strongest to this island this year. The tremor, at 2:59 pm (0659 GMT), was centred in a mountainous area, 20.5 kilometres (12.7 miles) south of Ilan in eastern Taiwan.

**US launches new N-sub:**

The United States has launched the new generation of attack-class nuclear submarine, inaugurating its Seawolf model in Groton on the construction site of general dynamics, AFP reports from Groton, Connecticut.

The 188-metre (353-foot) Seawolf, which cost two billion dollars to develop and build and which was launched Saturday, is the first new attack submarine to be developed for 30 years.

**Peacekeeper shot dead in Bosnia:**

A British peacekeeper died of gunshot wounds in Vitez, in central Bosnia on Saturday, a British army press officer said, AFP reports from Sarajevo.

The man, who has not been named, was fatally shot at the British UN peacekeepers' base in Vitez, said spokeswoman Fiona Devine.

**Ex-Knight Ridder' chairman dies:**

James K. Batten, who dedicated his life to US newspapers and became one of the country's foremost news executives, has died from brain cancer. He was 59, AP reports from Miami.

He was taken off life support systems Saturday and died surrounded by family. Knight-Ridder spokeswoman Lee Ann Schlatter said. Batten, who joined Knight-Ridder Inc in 1957 as a fledgling reporter at The Charlotte Observer in North Carolina and became the media giant's chairman 32 years later, was diagnosed with cancer last year.

**Israeli troops kill Arab:**

Israeli soldiers shot dead an Arab demonstrator yesterday during protests in the occupied West Bank for the release of Palestinian prisoners, witnesses said, Reuter reports from West Bank.

A Reuters television cameraman at Rafidia Hospital in Nablus filmed the body of Shadi Azam, from Burka village. Witnesses said he had been shot in the head by soldiers.

# Karachi violence toll rises to 52

## Govt to show MPs 'evidence' of MQM's anti-state acts

ISLAMABAD, June 25:

Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto has claimed that the violence in Karachi was caused by a foreign-sponsored insurgency aimed at destabilising Pakistan, reports AFP.

Her comments came late Saturday as clashes which were believed to have involved the Mohajir Qumi Movement (MQM) claimed five more lives in the violence-ravaged port city of Karachi.

"The Altaf Group is foreign-funded, foreign-trained, foreign motivated and involved in an insurgency against the state," Benazir said, referring to MQM chief Altaf Hussain who is living in self-exile in London.

The government said it would soon hold a closed-

door session of parliament to present MPs with "concrete evidence" on the alleged anti-state activities of the MQM. No date has been set for the session.

The MQM, which represents the several million-strong Urdu-speaking settler community made up of migrants who came to Pakistan after the subcontinent's 1947 partition, is blamed by Islamabad for the ongoing unrest.

More than 200 people have been killed in Karachi this month, with the toll for the past six months exceeding 750.

"This an hour of trial for the entire nation and we all have to stand united to fight terrorism," said Benazir, whose statement was also carried by state-run television.

Benazir did not identify the outside forces that she said were backing the MQM, but neighbouring India has been frequently blamed by Pakistani authorities for interfering in Sindh.

President Farooq Ahmed Leghari last week accused India of fomenting the trouble in Karachi in revenge for Pakistan's support for a Muslim uprising in the Indian-controlled Kashmir.

The prime minister has repeatedly said the government wants a political solution to the crisis but has ruled out talks with the MQM until it "lays down arms, surrenders criminals and condemns terrorism."

The Pakistani opposition, led by former Premier Nawaz Sharif, plans to convene a

broad-based conference of political parties in Karachi to evolve a consensus on how to put an end to the violence.

Sharif has said the government should give up its preconditions and talk to the MQM.

AP adds, militants waging a terror campaign against rival Muslims and the government killed 13 people and burned several buildings in the country's financial centre Sunday.

Police said several of the killed had been brutally tortured, their throats slit and their legs and hands tied.

The killings are part of a rampage by members of the Mohajir Qumi Movement (MQM) that began Thursday night and has left at least 52 people dead.

## 15 pupils die in Punjab as school roof collapses

MULTAN, Pakistan, June 25: At least 15 children were killed and 35 injured when the roof of a Muslim religious school in a village in south Punjab collapsed during a rainstorm, officials said today, reports AFP.

Some 90 students were present when the roof of the main hall of the school, called Jamia Faridia Faizul Islam, caved in late Saturday at the village of Shoria in Dera Ghazi Khan district.

Rescuers saved 75 children, including the injured, many of whom were admitted to a hospital, an official said, adding that the roof fell while the students were inside.

The rainstorm broke a long dry spell in the area, which has seen several deaths from sun stroke. More than a hundred fell victim to intense heat throughout Pakistan in recent weeks.

## Russian PM to take charge of talks with Chechens

MOSCOW, June 25: Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin, struggling to defuse a row with parliament, turns his attention to the Chechnya rebellion on Sunday after pledging to take personal charge of peace talks, reports Reuter.

Chernomyrdin was due to meet a Russian delegation which returned to Moscow on Saturday from talks with Chechen rebels in the regional capital Grozny. ITAR-Tass news agency said.

The prime minister, whose government faces a vote of confidence in the Duma, or lower house of parliament, this week, said on Saturday he would be taking personal charge of the talks in future.

## Tigers accuse military of HR violations

COLOMBO, June 25: For the second time in a week, the Tamil Tigers Sunday accused the military of human rights violations in its campaign against them, reports AP.

"While the government is sensitive to such violations in the capital because of the presence of foreign embassies, the east is given to the whims and fancies of the government forces," the rebels said in a statement issued from their London office.

Fighting continues mainly in eastern Sri Lanka after the guerrillas unilaterally ended a three-week truce on April 19. Until then, the military had completed control over the region. At least 890 people have been killed in clashes in the last two months.



The number five man of the Cali cocaine cartel Victor Patino Fomeque is guarded by military police Saturday in Bogota during his presentation to the media. Patino surrendered voluntarily Saturday. The cartel reportedly supplies 80 per cent of the world's cocaine. Patino is the third leader to either surrender or be captured since June 9.

## LTTE preparing for final war against Lankan army

COLOMBO, June 25: Tamil Tiger guerrillas have launched a major recruitment drive ahead of a planned showdown with Sri Lankan security forces in the island's north, travellers from the region said today, reports AFP.

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) went from house to house in the northern Wanni region urging people to join the separatist movement, Tamils who crossed rebel lines and entered the government-held Vavuniya town said.

There are about 300 LTTE cadres involved in a big propaganda drive. They are also going to schools and try to woo young boys and girls to join the movement.

"Parents are living in fear that their children may not return from school. The Tigers are saying they are preparing for the final war against the army," a Tamil resident who did not want to be identified said.

He said the LTTE spoke of setting up a separate state called Eelam shortly and wanted all Tamils living in the LTTE-held northern regions to contribute to the war effort.

The LTTE pulled out of peace talks with President Chandrika Kumaratunga's government on April 19 to resume the protracted guerrilla campaign for independence for the two million Tamil mi-

nority. The Sri Lankan military has been gearing for a major offensive against the LTTE.

## Just for a chicken!

JAKARTA, June 25: A man was beaten to death by a mob after stealing a chicken in the West Java village of Waru Udik, media reports said here Saturday, reports AFP.

Rojali Marul was beaten to death on Thursday night after two villagers caught him red handed stealing the fowl, the Daily Jakarta Post said.

The shouting villagers brought other residents out of their homes, who then chased him and set upon him.



Rohia Shekovich (C), 70, is helped by neighbours out of her apartment on Saturday after her building was hit by a rocket fired from Bosnian-Serb positions overlooking the Sarajevo. Exchange of fire increased in the Bosnian capital during the day with the Bosnian government army trying to break The 38-month old siege of Sarajevo.

## Off the Record

## Columbus knew where to go

OSLO: Christopher Columbus reached the new world in 1492 for the first time, 25 years before he officially "discovered" America in 1492, according to Norwegian explorer and adventurer Thor Heyerdahl, reports AFP.

In an interview with the Norwegian daily Aftenposten, Heyerdahl said that old maps and documents from Danish archives indicate that Columbus took part in a Danish-Portuguese expedition to the Davis Strait between Canada and Greenland in 1467.

According to the 80-year old archaeologist, the experiences from the Davis Strait expedition enabled Columbus to chart his famous voyage to the new world in 1492.

"Everyone said that Columbus landed where he did by chance, that he hadn't taken enough food and water for the voyage and that it was pure luck that he and his crew survived," said Heyerdahl, who was made famous by his own expedition, the Kon Tiki, in 1947.

"But Columbus knew exactly where land was, even if he thought he had found the western passage to India," he stressed.

He sailed deliberately southwards to the Canary Islands, then took a straight path across the Atlantic Ocean to his new goal. Which turned out to be America," he said.

## 'New man' ... a myth!

LONDON: British women think they are losing the battle of the sexes, according to a poll published on Sunday, reports Reuter.

The Mori Poll for The Mail on Sunday found that a majority of 1,000 women questioned felt they were discriminated against and were pessimistic about the future.

Half of working women said they suffered sexual harassment at work. The same ratio believed the "new man", who considers women his equals and helps with housework and children, is a myth.

Sixty-four per cent of women said they do all the housework and 65 per cent cook all the meals.

"Far from feeling victorious after a century of fighting against male oppression, a great many women feel they have achieved very little and have had almost no impact on the chauvinistic perceptions of men," the newspaper said.

## May God bless him

BEIJING: An airline doctor and US charity have come to the aid of a 13-month-old Chinese boy who will undergo surgery in the United States for six kinds of heart disease, Xinhua news agency said yesterday, reports Reuter.

Wang Zhigao and his parents left Beijing on Saturday for Hemayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, it said.

The boy was given no more than four years to live, it said.

A charity organisation in the United States is paying the cost of the treatment, estimated at more than 40,000 dollars and Northwest Airlines has provided free tickets for Wang and his parents, the agency said.

James Hoder, a doctor in Beijing with Northwest Airlines, is paying the living expenses of the family while they are in the United States, it said.

## US envoy in India calls for polls in Kashmir

SRINAGAR, India, June 25: US Ambassador to India Frank Wisner today called for legislative elections in Kashmir, where a Muslim separatist campaign has left more than 12,000 people dead, reports AP.

"A political process should be initiated to elect people's representatives" in the troubled state, Wisner told reporters in brief remarks on the second day of his maiden visit to Kashmir.

"Kashmiri people should start the political process," the envoy added, speaking at a heavily-guarded hotel in this summer capital of Kashmir.

Wisner said the United States had no intention of imposing a solution on India

and Pakistan over their lingering dispute over Kashmir, which has sparked two wars between the arch rivals since their independence in 1947.

"We cannot impose any decision on India and Pakistan, but always ask them to see the reasons for the ongoing conflict," he said.

Wisner, who arrived here Saturday on a four-day trip of Kashmir, had a breakfast meeting today with former State Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah, a pro-India Muslim who heads the Moderate National Conference Party.

Wisner met with local leaders of Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao's Congress(I) Party late Saturday and was to meet with Muslim separatist leaders Sunday.

## RRF mired in confusion, controversy in Bosnia

TOMISLAVGRAD, Bosnia-Herzegovina, June 25: The rapid reaction force (RRF) created to save the United Nations in Bosnia is barely a week old and already mired in confusion and controversy, reports AP.

The rebel Serb leader has warned the 12,500-strong RRF force of British, French and Dutch troops to stay clear of the two-thirds of Bosnia he controls. The Bosnian Croats don't want the force on their land. The Muslim-led Bosnian government worries the troops could interfere with its offensive.

The United States, which will help bankroll the RRF force, is fighting with the United Nations over how tough it should be.

Britain and France, supplying the bulk of the troops, are debating its "robustness," even as the chief UN envoy promised the force will oper-

ate under the same rules that allow Bosnia's 23,000 other beleaguered peacekeepers to use only minimum force.

Meanwhile, 1,700 French Foreign Legionnaires, camouflaged tanks and armoured personnel carriers are stuck in southern Croatia, symbolising the inertia that followed the rush to send them there.

When the Serbs took British and French soldiers hostage last month, the two nations quickly sent more soldiers toward Bosnia, although the forces lacked a mission and even a base.

A British-French team is at UN headquarters in Croatia, trying to formulate more aggressive rules of engagement for the new force, estimated to cost \$4000 million for six months. US funding is linked to its freedom to use force where necessary.

## Iran, Syria hold talks

NICOSIA, Cyprus, June 25: Leaders of Iran and Syria have met in Tehran to discuss Arab-Israeli "struggles" and other issues, the Islamic Republic News Agency reported Sunday, says AP.

Syrian-Israeli peace talks, which resume this week in Washington with a meeting between Syrian and Israeli military leaders, have put a strain on the alliance between Syria and Iran.

Syria and its neighbour Lebanon are the remaining front-line holdouts in the process, after Egypt, the Palestine Liberation Organisation and Jordan signed peace agreements.

Cautiously but steadily, Arab Syria has been pursuing its goal.

## Overfishing, pollution threaten Asia's marine resources

MANILA, June 25: Overfishing, pollution and hard-nosed commercial interests are emptying South-East Asia's rich seas, imperilling marine resources and the livelihood of people in one of the world's most fish-dependent regions, reports IPS.

Concern about precious but dwindling fish stocks is also heightening states' vigilance over their waters, increasing competition and leading to more fishing spats in international and territorial waters.

Australia earlier this year caught two Indonesian vessels fishing off its northern territory. Kuala Lumpur's navy fired on an armed Chinese trawler in Malaysian waters, and the Philippines stopped

four Chinese fishing vessels it said violated its waters in the South China Sea.

But often it is the region's millions of small fishermen who are left holding empty nets crowded out by "large-scale fishing firms or forced to sell their catch to support their families."

"There are simply too many fishers going after too few fish," says John McManus, senior scientist at the Manila-based International Centre for Living Aquatic Resources Management (ICLARM).

Asia's waters are rich in marine resources, making China the world's largest fish producer and Thailand the developing world's top fish exporter. But the ocean's wealth is not infinite, local

fish catch has stagnated in the last five years, warn experts.

The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) says 70 per cent of the world's fish stocks are either fully exploited or severely depleted. Trawlers in Thailand, Malaysia, the Philippines and Indonesia are catching as little as one-fourth of what they used to net two decades ago.

South-East Asian seas yield some seven million tonnes of fish, worth some US \$6.5 billion dollars a year. But the region's waters are getting to be heavily overfished, particularly those off Hainan in southern China, Vietnam, the Philippines, most of Indonesia and the Gulf of Thailand.

ICLARM's Daniel Paul says

studies show the world already extracts the most from what the sea can produce.

"The Philippines is the epitome of what's happening in South-Asia. Virtually all major fish stocks are overfished," says McManus, the archipelago has a 34,600-km-long coastline and ranks 11th among 80 fish-producing countries, but its catch-per-unit effort has been falling by seven per cent.

This due to overfishing, often worsened by improper and illegal fishing methods, encroachment by commercial fishing, pollution, and damage to coral reefs and mangroves.

Unlike developed countries, fishing in developing countries is by no means a luxury. Asian depend heavily

on fish not just for livelihood but for food, and get nearly 30 per cent of their animal protein from fish.

Coastal fishermen, often the poorest in their nations, are forced to go farther out for better catches, as fishing gets harder, they use illegal or improper means of fishing like dynamite, fine-mesh nets or sodium cyanide, which soon fail to work anyway because of damage to the environment.

Commercial fishers and travellers are also going into shallower waters, unable to get as much in greater depths because the bulk of fish in tropical waters is above 40 metres. This in effect makes South-East Asian waters easier to overfish.

Some prescribed solutions, including some by aid agencies, may do more harm, says McManus: "People think giving better gear or low-interest loans for gear will help them get more fish."

But this may simply mean making more people dependent on fast-emptying and unprofitable seas, adding to population pressure that already taxes marine riches.

"The story is that there is no more fish to bank on," he adds. Alternative livelihoods like seaweed farming and others may help wean people away from fishing, he said. Shifting to fish farming and aquaculture may be harmful especially if they are large-scale and "make a single owner,

## Taiwan can't expect to regain UN seat: Ghali

SAN FRANCISCO, June 25: Taiwan cannot expect to regain its seat at the United Nations, and should hold talks with Beijing on how to be represented at the organisation, Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali said Saturday, reports AP.

Speaking at a news conference opening the ceremonies for the 50th anniversary of the signing of the UN charter, Boutros-Ghali was asked by a reporter about how Taiwan could be readmitted to the organisation.

"There is no possibility that Taiwan will be admitted as a member state of the United Nations," he said, adding that the question was addressed by a UN resolution.