Lankan troops launch major

offensive against LTTE

BRIFILY

Kuwait detains 200 Iraqis: Kuwaiti police have detained up to 200 Iraqis seeking refuge on Kuwait's Failaka Is land, Interior Minister Sheikh Sabah said Saturday, AFP reports from Kuwait City.

"Around 150 to 200 refuges have been detained in recent days. Some were sent back to Iraq and the rest are still on the island," the minister told reporters.

2 cops shot dead in Australia: man shot and killed two policeman probing a domestic dispute in a resort town near Sydney on Sunday and then shot himself, a police spokesman said, AFP reports from Sydney

The policemen, both aged 36, were looking into a domestic dispute in the coastal town of Crescent Head and the gunman shot them as they walked from their car to the man's house, the spokesman said.

Benazir ends Malaysia tour: Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto left yesterday for Islamabad after a three-day visit in Kuala Lumpur to garner Malaysian investments, AFP

reports from Kuala Lumpur. During the visit, Benazir witnessed the signing of two pacts to pro mote bilateral investments and to share technological expertise as well as several memoranda of understanding worth 500 million dollars with Malaysian investors.

Egypt to execute 3 more: Egypt's high State Security Court yesterday condemned three Islamic militants to death and sentenced five others to life at hard labour for murder and rioting, legal sources said, AFP reports from Cairo.

The court confirmed the sentences after receiving agreement from Egypt's highest Muslim authority, the Mufti Sheikh Mohammed al-Tantawi for the death sentences which it first handed down against the three members of the outlawed Jamaa Islamiyya on June 6.

13000 Iranians held in 3 months: Security forces in Iran have arrested more than 13,000 people in three months for smuggling millions of dollars worth of contraband including firearms, vehicles and boats, Iranian television reported, Reuter says fro

It quoted law enforcement commander General Reza Seifollahi on Saturday as saying they were arrested for smuggling contraband which included 800 vehicles and 900 carpets.

Serbs abduct 7 Dutch UN troops: Seven Dutch peacekeepers have been taken prisoner by the Bosnian Serbs who over ran three UN observation posts in their attack on the Srebrenica enclave in eastern Bosnia, UN officials said yesterday, AFP reports from Sarajevo.

The seven were taken to Bratunarc, a Serb held town close to the enclave, on Saturday after Serb forces pushed across Bosnian army defence lines using tanks and infantry.

Qatari Emir calls for peace: The new Emir of Qatar, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani, called for peace between Arabs and said he would try to resolve Qatar's border conflicts with Saudi Arabia and Bahrain, AFP reports from Doha.

"It is not easy to repair the damage done by the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait (in August 1990), but to ignore it is not in the interest of the Arab Nation," said Sheikh Hamad who deposed his father in bloodless coup on

2 most-wanted Aum members held: Japanese police yesterday arrested two male members of the domsday Aum Shinri Kyo (Supreme Truth sect) who were on a nationwide mostwanted list for suspected involvement in the Tokyo subway gassing, a police spokesman said, Reuter reports from Tokyo.

Police in Saitama prefecture, 25 km (15 miles) north of Tokyo, arrested Noburu Nakamura and Satoru Hashimoto, members of Aum's "home affairs ministry," on suspicion of murder and attempted murder for the March attack, the spokesman said.

Hassan against free schooling: Moroccan King Hassan II has criticised the principle of free schooling for all children and come out strongly against proposals to make Arabic the sole language used in teaching, AFP reports from Rabat.

In a broadcast and televised speech marking his 66th birthday, the king said free schooling should be retained only "for the sons of poor people" and that other people should pay fees according to how much they earned.

Israeli shells kill 2 in Lebanon: An Israeli tank shelled the south Lebanon town of Nabatiyeh, killing a 16year-old girl and her 11-year-old sister, police said yesterday, Reuter reports from Nabativeh, Lebanon.

They said a Merkava tank at the Israeli fortified post of Ali Taher which overlooks Nabatiyeh fired four shells on Saturday night at the children's

Turkish PM starts C Asia tour: Prime Minister Tansu Ciller flew to Uzbekistan on Sunday in a visit to restore political relations and improve economic ties, AP reports from Ankara.

Her first visit there follows setbacks to relations after an Uzbekistan opposition leader, Muhammed Salih, found sanctuary in Turkey last year. Salih later left Turkey. Ciller said Turkey has extended a 250 million dlrs credit to Uzbekistan. Her next stop in the former Soviet Union will be Azerbaijan.

Congress (I), opposition preparing for polls

NEW DELHI, July 9: India's ruling Congress (1) Party and a divided opposition have begun preparing for general elections next year which are widely expected to end up in a hung parliament, reports AFP.

The main contestants are mapping out battle strategies, looking for allies and making the first moves to frame manifestos which will appeal to the nearly 550 million voters.

"Our preparations are already on," said Ved Prakash, a spokesman for the Congress (1) Party of Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao, who faces the daunting task of retaining power in a tough election.

The opposition is exuding confidence, having trounced the 110-yearold Congress in a series of state assembly elections since November, when the ruling party lost control of

Rao's home state of Andhra Pradesh. "We are fully prepared to face the elections whenever they are held," asserted spokesman M Venkiah Naidu of the Hindu-revivalist

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP, Indian

people's party), the main opposition

Although the next parliamentary polls are due only in June 1996, officials say they are likely to be held in the first quarter of next year to avoid the searing Indian summer heat. Analysts say no party is in a posi-

tion to get a majority in the 545-seat lower house, or Lok Sabha, resulting in a hung legislature which is expected to lead to political instability. The Congress had similarly fin-

ished on top in a hung parliament from May-June 1991 elections marred by the assassination of former Premier and Congress leader Rajiv Gandhi. Rao, however, cobbled together a majority by weaning away opposition MPs.

Analysts say the next elections will witness a three-way race between the Congress, India's oldest party, the BJP, and a coalition of centrist

groups and communists. The Congress has ruled India almost uninterrupted since indepen-

dence in 1947.

(*OLOMBO, July 9: Heavily armed infantry troops backed by an indefinite curfew launched a much-awaited regions. offensive against Tamil Tiger guerillas

in northern Sri Lanka, military sources said, reports AFP. An estimated 10,000 soldiers were involved in the operation codenamed "Leap Forward" to advance into territory held by the Liberation Tigers of

stronghold, the sources said. "We still don't know if they made contract with the enemy," a military source said, adding that aircraft and navy gunboats were standing by to assist ground troops who launched the offensive from their Palaly Army and Airforce Base.

Tamil Eclam (LTTE) in their Jaffna

The military clamped an indefinite curfew across the LTTE dominated Jaffna Peninsula, curfews in Jaffna cannot be imposed by the security forces but it gives pilots an open licence to bomb vehicles violating the no-go restriction.

A military spokesman here said they were awaiting details of the operation which came a day after President Chandrika Kumaratunga said her

government was ready to battle the LTTE and restore peace in embattled

"If peace cannot be achieved by peaceful means, we will resort to any means to restore peace," Kumaratunga said at the launch of a campaign called "White Lotus" to raise 15 million dollars for the welfare of soldiers fighting Tigers.

A front organisation of the LTTE has already threatened to bomb Colombo if the government failed to probe the alleged military use of civilians as human shields in the island's multi-ethnic eastern province.

The warning issued by the Ellalan Force (EF) was received here Saturday by international news agencies barely 12 hours after the expiry of a Friday night deadline set by the group for Kumaratunga to order an inquiry into the claims.

"If the request of the Ellalan Force was accepted by the government before the deadline, the bomb-planted locations will be informed immediately." said the one-page type-written EF letter sent by ordinary mail.

Police said they considered the EF a front of the LTTE and security was being tightened here. The EF had earlier accepted responsibility for last month's failed bomb attack on the Colombo International Airport.

Meanwhile, security was further tightened in the Sri Lankan capital and suburbs today amid fears of revenge attacks by Tamil rebels following a major military drive against them in the north, officials said.

Armed police were deployed at key road intersections, vehicles were checked for car-bombs and buses screened for cadres from the rebel Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), who may have slipped into the capital, officials said.

"We have been on a high state of alert for a long time. But with the new developments we have decided to further tighten security in Colombo and other urban areas," a senior police official said.

The stepped up security followed the launching of major military assaul on LTTE positions in the north and a warning by a shadowy Tamil group.

believed to be a front for rebels, that they would set off bombs in the capi-

Reuter adds; a small bomb exploded in a park in the heart of the Sri Lankan capital, Colombo, today but no one was hurt, police said.

'It was a small blast which left a hole in the ground a few inches deep." Deputy Inspector General of police in charge of Colombo Chandra Fernando told Reuters, 'no one was injured."

The blast came on the day Tamil militants had threatened to bomb Colombo in retaliation for killings of members of the minority group by the armed forces.

Another report says, a Sri Lankan airforce helicopter came under attack by Tamil Tiger guerillas during a major military advance on the rebelheld northern Jaffna Peninsula, mili tary sources said.

The aircraft was hit by a heavy machine gun but it managed to carry out an emergency landing inside the Palaly Army and Airforce Base from where some 10,000 troops launched a predawn offensive on the rebels.

Jihad hails

attempt on

Mubarak

"Let the world witness that sons

Al-Hayat said the statement orig-

In a fax last week, the Jamaa

inated in Switzerland, where the

group's leader Ayman Al-Zawahri is

claimed responsibility for the failed

assassination attempt against

Mubarak in Addis Ababa on June 26,

which Egypt has accused Sudan's Is-

behind the 1981 assassination of

President Anwar Al-Sadat, have led a

violent three-year campaign to over-

throw the Mubarak government which

has left more than 800 dead since

2 receive lashes

The Jamaa and Jihad, which has

lamist government of supporting.

the statement said.

reported to be in hiding.



as he leaves the legislative palace in Buenos Aires on Saturday after being sworn in for his second term. He is accompanied by his daughter Eva Zulema.

- AFP/UNB photo

CAIRO, July 9: The Egyptian militant group Jihad praised the country's other main Islamist cell, the Jamaa Islamiyya, for trying to kill President Hosni Mubarak, the Arab daily Al-Hayat reported today, reports AFP. "It was the warriors of the Jamaa that executed this attack," Jihad said in a statement titled "the strugglers". received by the London-based paper. which is distributed in Cairo. of Egypt committed this holy act,"

In an exemisive interview Imran Khan and his wife Jeminia talk Saturday to Sir David Frost (L) at Jemima's family home in Ham, Surrey. The couple discussed their meeting, - AFP/UNB photo their romance and their future plans.

UN presence threatened as Serbs enter safe area of Srebrenica

GENEVA, July 9: Bosnian Serb forces entered the UN-designated safe area of Srebrenica overnight Saturday in a development that threatens the UN presence in Bosnia, the Bosnian ambassador here Mustafa Bijedic said today, reports AFP.

"If Srebrenica falls, that will be the end of the UNPROFOR (Un Protection Force) mission in Bosnia," Bijedic said. "I cannot imagine what horrors the Serbs might commit among the civilians."

AP adds: Bosnian Serbs overran two UN observation posts in the eastern enclave of Srebrenica, and UN officials said Sunday they did not know the fate of up to 30 peacekeepers.

The attack Saturday night came at the end of a day of heavy Serb tank and infantry assaults on the enclave, in which the rebels seized a UN observation post but then allowed the peacekeepers there to leave.

A Dutch peacekeeper died after he was shot by Bosnian government forces while his unit retreated.

Saturday night, the Bosnian Serbs pushed at least one kilometre (about a half-mile) into the enclave's southeastern part and surrounded two more UN observation posts, said Lt. Col. Gary Coward, a UN spokesman in

Each post usually holds 10-15 peacekeepers, Coward said, but he did not immediately know how many were in the posts when they were attacked. He said one of the units appeared to have been taken to the Bosnian Serb town of Bratunac, just north of the enclave.

We believe one unit may still be

at their observation post, which has been overrun by the Serbs, and we have information that the other group has been taken into Serb-held territory," Coward said.

"We don't know for sure where the peacekeepers area."

It was not immediately known if the peacekeepers had resisted the Serb attacks.

Coward said another Dutch UN observation post in the western part of the enclave came under heavy machine-gun fire from Serb forces around midnight, and its watchtower was damaged. Fighting decreased slightly overnight.

NATO warplanes were called in to buzz Srebrenica briefly during Saturday's fighting, but no airstrikes were requested.

for molesting boy in Pakistan KHYBER AGENCY, PAKISTAN

March 1992.

July 9: Two Pakistanis convicted of raping an 11-year-old boy were lashed today in an Islamic punishment upheld by a tribal council, reports Witnesses said Iran Gul, a 16-year

old labourer, was given 99 lashes with a leather strap. Jadran a 22-year-old hospital gardener, received 70 lashes.

Thousands of people, including the abuse boy and his father. watched the flogging at Bara, in the tribal Khyber Agency near the northwestern Pakistani city of Peshawar.

The crowd had urged the floggers to strike harden. The flogging was ordered in a

Fatwa, or religious decree, by the Tanzim Ittehad Ulema Gabail, a 25member shura, or council, of tribal chiefs and clerics that has 300 armed men at its command.

Islamic punishments, while legal in Pakistan, are only carried out in semiautonomous tribal areas in the north-

Demirel for end of animosity with Greece ANKARA, July 9: President

Suleyman Demirel has called on Greece to put aside animosity and solve conflicts peacefully, it was reported on Sunday, reports AP.

Demirel told the national daily Hurrivet in an interview that the Greeks engaged in provocations against Turkey because of a "Turkish "If you provoke us, then you will

create troubles for yourself," Demirel said, obviously referring to Greek authorities. He appeared to be referring to

the recent meeting of six Greek parliamentarians with the fugitive Turkish Kurdish guerilla leader Abdullah Ocalan in Lebanon's Bekaa

A visit by the head of the Turkish Kurdish parliament-in-exile to Athens further upset Turkey.

Off the Record

He knows the secret

LONDON: An Italian chemist thinks he knows what makes "miraculous" statues of the Virgin Mary appear to weep blood, reports Reuter.

Dr Luigi Garlaschelli said three ingredients were needed for weeping statues that have often attracted the Roman Catholic faithful - blood, a glazed ceramic or plaster statue and something sharp like a nail.

The research chemist said the blood can be poured into the hollow body of a porous statue which then soaks it up. "Scratch off a tiny part of the glazing and the blood oozes out," he said.

"When I put this to the test, this proved very satisfactory, baffling all onlookers," Garlaschelli wrote in the latest issue of Chemistry in Britain. Kieran Conry, of the Catholic media office, welcomed his findings, telling the Sunday Telegraph: "If God wanted to say something to us, there

are more direct ways of doing it. The more research there is the better."

Lucky boy!

FAYETTEVILLE, North Carolina: A ten-year-old boy who spent 10 dollars at a commercial gem mine for a bucket of soil found a 1,061-carat sapphire that experts say is worth thousands, reports AFP.

Lawrence Shields found the large bluish-black stone Wednesday while picking through the dirt at the Gold City gem mine near Franklin in southwestern North Carolina.

Lawrence's father, Larry Shields, said he hopes the stone will help pay for his son's college educations, but the boy had his sights fixed on other "I've decided to buy a fishing boat," he said. "The name is going to be

Experts said the true value of the stone cannot be determined until it is

cut and polished, but the family has had some rough estimates ranging over 35,000 dollars.

Black, white and sexy

PARIS: All black and white? That's how two Italians saw it in early openings of the winter 95-96 haute couture shows Saturday, reports AP. Maurizio Galante went all-out for black and intricate craftsmanship, as Gianni Versace showed off white, razzle-dazzle and glitz.

Always with stars in his eyes (mainly movie stars), Versace showed again on a catwalk over the Ritz Hotel's swimming pool.

Supermodels paraded in his high-tech, tight, sexy clothes - all-white

sizzling silver and sometimes partially transparent. Claudia Schiffer, Naomi Campbell, Helena Christensen and Carla Bruni swanned down the runway, rather modestly enjoying their clothes with a

heavy slant to the Sixties. In fact, with the square-cut mini suits, zips all over the place, silver bootees, boots or pumps, it all looked strangely like a homage to Courreges, who invented this clean look, to Mugler who loves fit and zips, and

Montana who's done it all before, especially in white. For women who like to lunch in style — for a high price, since couture always costs around 10,000 dlrs or so for a simple dress - there are sleeveless dresses in wool gabardine and little shortie suits with miniskirts. Or strapless numbers with coy jackets and sheaths fit to kill, of several lengths but never quite below the knee.

And of course this all goes right on to cocktails and the disco, in zipped white sheaths held up by clear plastic vinyl yokes, dresses and suits with pearls, scooped necks, stretch synthetic silvery mother-of-pearl or all-sequined outfits for the perfectly fit body - sexy but not outrageous siren. like some of Versace's revealing recent collections.

France to bar Greenpeace from reaching N-test site

MURUROA, French Polynesia, July 9: French navy commandos were in place Saturday to intercept any attempt by the Greenpeace flagship Rainbow Warrior II to reach the French nuclear test site in the Pacific, reports AFP. Rainbow Warrior and a sister ves-

sel got within 50 kilometers (30 miles) of Mururoa Atoll still tailed by a French navy frigate, Vendemiaire. Other French vessels were waiting for greenpeace at the edge of the military exclusion zone France has declared 12 nautical miles (20 km) around the atoll. Admiral Philippe Euverte, military

commander on Mururoa, said his anti-Greenpeace force was completed with the arrival of the patrol vessel La Railleuse, which is carrying naval commandos. A smaller patrol vessel, the Revi, was also in place.

He said the commandos would intercept any Greenpeace inflatable zodiac boats that tried to get close to the atoll, where a new series of eight nuclear tests are due to start in

Potential export markets for the

Russian first Deputy Prime Minis-

Commandos were used to stop

Greenpeace activists on a similar mission in 1992. But Euverte has said there was "absolutely no need to use weapons" against Greenpeace, which had shown "purely peaceful intentions" in its actions. Greenpeace has also said it does

not seek a confrontation with the

French navy, but tension was mount-

ing on the flagship. Two other military vessels had appeared on the rainbow Warrior's radar screen, a spokesman said. Activists loaded food and fuel on the zodiacs in preparation for any

operation. Anti-Nuclear banners were also put on the side of Rainbow War-Rainbow Warrior II has been joined by the 12 metre long yacht,

Vega, which has been used in past Greenpeace operations in the South

Mactaggart, a veteran anti-nuclear campaigner, said he was determined to breach the military exclusion zone

KSA, Oman to sign

Chechens free 3 more Russian POWs.

GROZNY, July 9: Chechen officials Sunday turned three prisoners of war over to the Russian delegation at the peace negotiations in Grozny,

news agencies reported, says AP. The three soldiers had been taken prisoner on New Year's Eve, the first day of Russia's assault on Grozny, the Interfax and ITAR-Tass news agencies

They were turned over to the Russian delegation as talks resumed at the Chechen headquarters of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe. They said they were treated well while in confinement, Interfax said.

Russia plans to liberalise policy to boost arms sales MOSCOW, July 9: Russia is plan- Yeltsin's adviser on arms trade, told cent of India's military aircraft co The company is currently assem-Other Russian arms enterprises. pilots with the experience necessary sisted of Migs, which gives Russia a bling 10 Mig-29s to Malaysia in early According to Kuzyk, quoted by

ning to allow major weapons manufacturers to sign deals independently over the coming months in a bid to boost arms sales, industry experts said here, reports AFP.

Rosvooruzheniye and Mig-Mapo, which manufactures the Mig-29 jet fighter, have the right to sign contracts with foreign clients.

Currently the state-owned agency

But Alexander Ageyev, head of strategy planning at the giant Mig-Mapo Aircraft Company, told AFP that more than 10 other arms manufacturers would soon get the green

light from the government to make their own deals. Boris Kuzyk, President Boris

reporters recently that Antei, which makes anti-aircraft systems, would be the first company to receive the right to sign contracts. "There are only a few companies

capital Sarajevo.

with real export potential," he said. Arms sales in the first half of 1995 increased to 1.5 billion dollars, compared with 1.7 billion for the whole of 1994, said Kuzyk. The total for this year was expected to exceed 2.5 bil-

Russia is planning to export up to 200 military aircraft annually.

Ageyev said Mig- Mapo was developing into a powerful multinational company. It already has a flourishing business with around 400 the Kommersant Business Daily, military enterprises in other former Soviet Republic have also expressed interest in joining the developing Mig-Mapo conglomerate.

Gravediggers in Sarajevo's Lion-cemetery lower the casket of one member of the Dorem

family, on Saturday. The whole family, including father, mother and a five-year-old girl,

have been killed by the same mortar during the recent shelling of the besieged Bosnian

Kuzyk said government decisions were being drafted concerning cooperation with them. Foreign manufacturers have also put forward proposals for joint pro-

jects with Mig-Mapo. Negotiations are in progress with India, the Philippines, China and Thailand on sales of Mig-29s, said

18 Mig-29s to Malaysia in early June.

Mig-Mapo completed delivery of

The company is currently assembling 10 Mig-29s for India, Ageyev said, adding that Mig-Mapo's profits

> billion dollars. According to the Daily Izvestiya the contract with India signed in January is worth more than 200 million dollars.

> > The former Soviet Union supplied

Izvestiya said more than 80 per

from arms sales last year totalled 1.5

- AFP/UNB photo

66 Mig-29s to India eight years ago and the earlier Mig-27 series is already produced there under licence. Mig-Mapo is currently working on a new version of the Mig-29.

Malaysia and India. tary trainer, the Mig-At, built jointly

considerable advantage in the battle

The Mig-29 cost India 1.5 to two

times less than rival models produced

by British, French or US companies,

with competitors."

Izvestiya said.

arms market.

Mig-Mapo already has service facilities for its warplanes in Germany, Ageyev said Mig-Mapo's new mili

ter Oleg Soskovets is due to hold talks in the Black Sea resort of Sochi with South African Defence Minister Joe Modicce before July 16, Interfax News Agency said Friday. with the French companies Snecma, **Turbomeca and Sextant Avionique**

Africa.

18, Ageyev said.

Officials at Rosvooruzheniye told would also present a major challenge Interfax Russia would supply Rd-33 engines for the South African airto competitors in the international force's Mirage-5 planes.

new maps today MUSCAT, July 9: Oman and Saudi Arabia finished marking their common border after a 1,350-day study to fly not only Mig-29s but also for-

and are expected to sign the new eign rivals such as the US F-16 and Fmaps on Monday, an Omani official said Saturday, reports AFP. trainer included India and South The two Gulf countries are to sign in Riyadh 600 maps fixing their 657 kilometer (407-mile) border, which

passes through part of the Rubaa al-

Khali Desert, one of the driest in the

world. These maps will be sent to the

United Nations, Arab League and the Secretary General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)," Oman's Deputy Agriculture Minister, Soltan Ibn Hamad al-Bussaidi, told AFP.