# BRIFFIY



The People's Liberation Army Second Artillery troops drill in missile launching procedure in this photo released on Monday by China News Service under condition that the location was not revealed. China issued another stern warning on using military force against Taiwan, with Defence Minister Chi Haotian vowing the army would 'not sit idle' if the island moved — AFP/UNB photo towards independence.

### UNSC extends Haiti mission:

The UN Security Council UNSC voted Monday to extend the UN peacekeeping mission in Haiti until February, when the next president takes office in the impoverished Caribbean nation, AFP reports from United Nations.

A resolution passed unanimously praised the mission for helping the Haitian government maintain domestic stability, protect international workers, pave the way for elections and professionalise security forces.

#### 44 escape Nigerian prison: Forty. four prisoners escaped from a high security prison in Matagalpa on Sunday with the help of one of the wardens police said in Managua Monday, AFP reports from Managua.

Five of the convicts had been recaptured Monday morning by authorities who launched a wide scale search around the city located in a mountainous region some 140 kilometres (90 miles) north of Managua.

### 3 die in Beirut bldg collapse: Three Syrian construction workers were killed and seven

others were injured on Monday when an apartment block collapsed in Beirut's old downtown, Lebanese police said. AFP reports from Beirut.

The workers were tearing down a building as part of reconstruction of Lebanon's shattered capital after the 1975-90 civil war, the police said.

### Rains flood large parts of Bombay Heavy overnight rains flooded large parts of Bombay;

India's sprawling commercial capital. Tuesday affecting road and rail transport and disrupting normal life, officials and residents said. AFP reports from Bombay.

The city's suburban railway, which transports nearly five million people daily, suspended services after rain waters flooded the tracks in low-lying areas, railway officials said.

### Typhoon claims 4 in China: At least four people working outdoors were killed when severe tropical storm Gary struck the eastern coastal areas of southern China's Guangdong province, it was reported

Tuesday, AFP reports from Hong Kong. Three of the victims, who were telecommunication workers, were electrocuted when the typhoon slammed into the country between Shantou and Chaozhou on Monday. The fourth victim was a bridge construction worker, the China-backed Ta Kung Pao said.

## French House okays reform bill:

The French Parliament easily passed constitutional reforms Monday that reorganise parliamentary sessions and reduce lawmakers' immunity to prosecution, AP reports from Versailles, France.

Legislators overwhelmingly voted 674-178 for the reforms, which needed 512 votes for passage. It was the first act of political reform by conservative President Jacques Chirac, who was elected in May.

#### Marcos Junior files appeal: The son of the late President Ferdinand Marcos described his tax evasion conviction as harassment and said he will cut short a visit to London to return home and file an appeal

AP reports from Manila. Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. was convicted Monday of failing to file returns or pay taxes from 1982 until 1985 and was sentenced to nine years in jail.

### Indonesia new UNSC president: Ambassador Nugroho Wisnumurti of Indonesia takes over as president of the Security Council Tuesday succeeding Ambassador Gerardo Martinez Blanco of Honduras, Reuter

reports from United Nations. The post rotates monthly according to the English

## LTTE vows to turn Jaffna into graveyard for troops

International

COLOMBO, Aug 1: The Tamil Tigers have launched a tresh fund-ratsing campaign and promised to turn their Jaffna stronghold into a graveyard for Sri Lankan troops. a rebel paper and Tamil source's said today, reports AFP.

The separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) told Tamil civilians they were seeking 1,000 million rupees (20 million dollars) to boost their war effort against security forces, the sources here said

The LTTE said it wanted to buy more surface-to-air missiles (SAMS) as a defence against aerial bombardments. Tigers have already downed two transport planes and a ground attack aircraft since firing the first missile in

"They argue that the government increased a defence

Rao rules out

early polls

Indian Prime Minister P V

Narasimha Rao, in comments

published today, ruled out

advancing general elections

that are expected in March

son for me to advance the

elections." The Hindu and

other newspapers quoted Rao

as telling a meeting of MPs of

his Congress (I) Party here

could cite 100 reasons to

hold them as scheduled." Rao

widespread speculation in

the media that the premier,

who is also the Congress

President might urge the

Election Commission to hold

the parliamentary elections

Ulysses flies

near the top

of the sun

Aug 1: The Ulysses spacecraft

flew near the top of the sun

on Monday, reaching the

northern most point on a so-

lar voyage that began five

years and more than 1 billion

miles (1.6 billion kilometres)

before," said Diane Ainswor-

th, spokeswoman for the Jet

Propulsion Laboratory, said of

the sun's North Pole.

"It's never been explored

The Ulysses reached

about 80 degrees north of the

sun's equator, having trav-

elled 1.86 billion miles (3

billion kilometres) since it

was launched from the space

shuttle Discovery on Oct 6,

kilogram) craft is owned by

the European Space Agency

and managed by JPL under a

contract with the National

Aeronautics and Space

struments collecting data on

solar wind, magnetic fields

and particles, interplanetary

dust and gas, and cosmic

Scientists urge

France to halt

N-test

than 250 scientists from

around the world have

backed a call to urge France

to postpone its nuclear tests

in the South Pacific until an

assessment of the area can be

done, a British scientist said

Dr Paul Johnston of Green-

peace Research Laboratories,

which is funded by the envi-

ronmental pressure group of

the same name, said the

scientists support its plans

for a three-month study of

the Muruora atoll in French

plynesia to determine the

risks of more nuclear testing

to humans and the envi-

ronment.

on Monday, reports Reuter.

LONDON, Aug 1: More

Ulysses carries nine in-

Agency.

The 810-pound (367-

ago. reports AP.

PASADENA, California.

early, probably this year.

"On the other hand,

Rao's comments followed

"There is not a single rea-

next year, reports AFP.

late Monday.

NEW DELHI. Aug 1:

levy recently but there is no such tax imposed by the LTTE on Tamils in Jaffna." a Tamil source said. 'Now they want Jaffna civilians to make

contributions. He said the LTTE always collected large amounts of money from Tamils abroad but now the campaign has been stepped up following the group's pull out of a truce in April and the escalation of fighting in what is called Eelam War III.

Tigers have been leading a protracted campaign for independence and all previous political and military attempts to resolve the conflict have ended in failure. More than 50,000 people have died in fighting since 1972.

The Tigers have also promised a bloodbath if security forces launch another offensive against Jaffna, the

symbol of Tamil separatism and the capital of a de facto state run by the guerillas over the past five years.

The LTTE's latest moves came as the military conducted a major offensive against Jaffna and claimed capturing 78 square kilometres (31 sq. uare miles) of territory from the LTTE after a week-long

Military losses in the operation, codenamed "keap Forward," were 85 soldiers killed or missing in action while the army claimed killing over 350 guerillas.

The latest issue of the LTTE's officials paper, The Inside Report, received here Monday said that the army was gearing up for another offensive against Jaffna but warned that the guerillas were prepared to meet the

Japanese Foreign Minister Yohei Kono (L) shakes hands with his Chinese counterpart

Qian Qicken (R) during their bilateral talks in Bandar Seri Begawan Tuesday. Foreign

ministers of the two countries are here for talks on security issues under the Association

Security in Kashmir tightened

as Amarnath Yatra begins

to the Amarnath Cave, where

pilgrims worship an ice sta-

lagmite which devotees con-

or phallus.

threats.

sider to be the god's "lingam"

pilgrim is allowed to travel

unescorted," said a govern-

ment order to security forces

following Harkat-ul-Ansar's

previously unknown Al-Faran

group, which has claimed re-

sponsibility for capturing the

Western tourists, has links to

the release of 21 jailed mili-

tants, including three top

Harkat-ul-Ansar members, in

return for the Western hos-

tages. India has rejected the

Indian officials say the

"Please ensure that no

of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) regional forum.

SRINAGAR, India, Aug 1:

India deployed massive secu-

rity for tens of thousands of

Hindu pilgrims who started

an annual trek today through

Kashmiri mountains where

five Western tourists were

militants, reports Reuter.

kidnapped four weeks ago by

Thousands of soldiers and

paramilitary forces threw a

security cordon along the

345-km (210-mile) route

leading from Jammu, winter

capital of India's Jammu and

called Harkat-ul-Ansar has

threatened pilgrims and

taken responsibility for two

bomb blasts this month

which killed 18 people in

A Muslim militant group Harkat-ul-Ansar.

Kashmir state.

Jammu.

Meanwhile, the Sri Lankan army today began a fresh recruitment drive to beef up troops battling Tamil Tiger guerillas in the northeast.

military officials here said. "We are having a good response so far. We must have more men if we are to defend the country from terrorists." a senior army officer said, referring to the rebel Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE)

However, he declined to say how many would be recruited or how many responded to advertisements inviting applications.

Military sources said the recruitment was aimed at filling up vacancies following the desertion of some 25.000 soldiers in the past 15 years. The army's current strength is put at 100,000 men.

— AFP/UNB photo

pilgrimage, under threat by

Kashmiri separatists, began

Tuesday with nearly 40,000

Indian soldiers guarding the

300-kilometre (180-mile)

route to a holy cave in the

As the pilgrimage began,

troops continued a search for

five Westerners held hostage

for four weeks in the same

hills by kidnappers demand-

ing the release of 21 jailed

carrying metal spears and

tridents were among the first

set off in heavy rain in a con-

voy of 255 buses, trucks and

cars from Jammu, the winter

capital of the Indian state of

Jammu-Kashmir, Earlier, ar-

Saffron-robed holy men

Himalayas.

militants.

Al-Faran has demanded group of 4,500 pilgrims who

## Israelis protest peace talks with PLO

JERUSALEM. Aug 1: Thoa long-overdue agreement on usands of Israelis protested against their government's peace talks with the PLO late weeks. on Monday, marching through Tel Aviv with Israeli flags. torches and posters with pictures of Israeli victims of

The demonstrators, chanting slogans against Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin. marched from the site of a Muslim suicide bombing nine months ago to the scene of another attack that took place last week

The demonstration highlighted a campaign by Jewish settlers against the widening of Palestinian self-rule in the West Bank.

Arab violence, reports Reu-

Israeli and Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) negotiators are holding marathon talks on this issue in the southern Israeli port of

An Israeli negotiator said

the West Bank could be worked out in two or three

Police earlier evicted hundreds of settlers from a protest encampment on the West Bank hilltop of Al-Khader near Bethlehem after the two sides played cat-andmouse for most of the day. Some 170 settlers were ar-

Another group of settlers quickly scaled up another hill near the Palestinian town of Ramallah. Settlers said several Israeli army jeeps were poised to stop them.

Setting up tent sites is the latest campaign by the settlers, who oppose the Israeli-PLO talks and are trying to undermine them, saying the occupied lands are the Jews' biblical heritage.

The civil administration. which runs the West Bank. issued an evacuation order against the Al-Khader settlers.

## US Senator tables Bill for sanctions against Myanmar

WASHINGTON. Aug 1: A' US senator has introduced a bill calling for US sanctions against Myanmar, citing continued political repression there, it was announced here Monday, reports AFP.

Senator Mitch McConnell introduced his bill on Friday. saying he had seen "no apparent progress," in the promotion of democracy and human rights in Myanmar. despite the recent release of political opponent and Nobel Peace Prize winner Aung San Suu Kvi. McConnell. a Republican

from Kentucky and chairman of the Senate Foreign Appropriations Subcommittee, indicated July 12 he would introduce the sanctions bill if there were no progress by Yangon on human rights in the following two weeks.

Winston Lord, Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia and Pacific Affairs, last week expressed opposition

to unilateral economic sanetions against Mvanmar, saying they could not be effective unless they had broad international support

Lord also expressed concern that provisions of the proposed sanctions would violate international accords. adding that the United States should not penalise the ruling State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) when positive measure are being taken.

McConnell's proposed 1995 free Myanmar act would require President Bill Clinton to verify that the Myanmar military junta has freed all political prisoners. handed over power to delegates elected in 1990 and implemented an effective anti-narcotics programme me failing which the United States would ban all trade. investment and travel to Myanmar.

## Off the Record

### For a hen only!

CAIRO: Six members of one family drowned trying to rescue a hen that had fallen into a well in their village in southern Egypt on Monday, police said, reports AFP.

Allam Sabet al-Sayyed, his two brothers Sayyed and Ahmed, their sister Zeinab and two cousins perished in the village of Nazlet Emarah, 500 kilometres (310 miles) south of Cairo, the police said.

Allam went into the well first and when he failed to climb out again. Sayved became worried and went down to get him. He failed to come out so a third brother, Ahmed, went down, followed by their sister and two other family members, police said.

Other villagers then alerted firefighters, who recovered the six bodies and the hen, which was uninjured, they said.

### He was preaching to some satans

MOSCOW: Children stole nearly 4,000 dollars from an American missionary while he was preaching Christian virtues to them at a children's camp in Russia's Far East, Interfax news agency reported Monday, says AFP.

The 10 boys and girls, aged 13 and 14, shared out the money among themselves but they were later detained and the sum was returned to the missionary, a US citizen, the agency said.

## Bush nearly drowned during a fishing trip

HOUSTON: Former OS President George Bush nearly drowned earlier this month when he fell into a peat bog during a fishing trip in remote eastern Canada, a spokesman for Bush said on Thursday, reports Reuter.

Spokesman Jim Mcgrath in Houston said Bush was taking a walk through the woods in Newfoundland province when he sank up to his armpits in the bog.

He was freed by secret service and royal Canadian mounted police, who struggled for several minutes before they were able to pull him out. Mcgrath said Bush was able to stop sinking in the much

by the time help arrived. "He said all the ground up there looks the same, it's all

peat. And the next thing you know, you are up to your armpits in it, Mcgrath said. Newfoundland helicopter pilot Craig Dobbin told the

Canadian press news agency that "I'wouldn't be truthful if I didn't indicate he was in very serious situation."

"It was a matter of seconds before he was in over his head." said Dobbin, who as ferrying the Bush entourage on

its fishing trip. Dobbin said Bush was unfazed by the incident and con-

tinued with the fishing trip.

## alphabetical order of the Council's 15 member delegations. Russia to pullout Iran softens anti-US stance for normalising ties

Chechnya soon MOSCOW, Aug 1: Russia will start withdrawing its troops from breakaway Chechnya within 10 days following an agreement to halt the nearly 8-month-old war, a top military commander said Tuesday, reports AP.

Col. Gen. Yevgeny Podolzkin said airborne troops would be the first to leave Chechnya, with motorised infantry and interior ministry troops remaining behind under an agreement signed Sunday with the rebels.

Podolzkin told a news conference, the first troops could be withdrawn within a week to 10 days.

Despite the military agreement, shooting continued in Chechnya.

LONDON, Aug 1: Is Tehmust be viewed against the ran finally backing out of its defiant anti-US stance and showing signs of making up toward Tehran and the detewith Washington? That is what some politi- in Iran.

cal analysts have been asking since Iranian President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani in July called for an easing of tension between his country and the United States, reports IPS.

Indeed, Rafsanjani's move heralds a conciliatory shift in Iran's policy toward the superpower.

At the same time, however, Iran's importance as a test case by which other major powers namely Russia. 'China and India — can challenge US policies in world India.

politics, has not lessened. Rafsanjani's placatory tone matic and public pressure on

backdrop of the hardening attitude of the US Congress riorating economic situation

The US Congress is considering toughening the action President Bill Clinton took against Iran in April when he banned US investment in, and trade with Iran because of what Washington views as Irantan support of international terrorism and harbouring of nuclear arma-

ment ambitions. Elsewhere, Iran has emerged as the touchstone of independence for such leading world and regional powers as Russia, China and

Despite ongoing diplo-

Russia to cancel its 850 million US dollar contract with Iran to complete its nuclear power project started in the late 1970s by the then West Germany, Moscow has refused to do so.

Russia argues that the nuclear reactors it would sell to Iran are the same type as the ones South Korea intends to supply to North Korea under an agreement hammered out by Washington.

. The United States is also pressuring China not to equip Iran with nuclear power plants toward this end, Washington is using the Missile Technology Control (MTC) guidelines as leverage, as US law requires imposition of sanctions against any country that breaks them.

In June, the New York Times reported that the US -central Intelligence Agency (CIA) believed China had delivered dozens of missile guidance systems and computerised machine-tools to Iran. This was done ostensibly to help Iran improve the accuracy of its North Koreanmade ground-to-ground mi-

At 20,700 billion cubic metres, Iran has the world's second largest natural gas reserve. At the current daily consumption rate of 158 million cubic metres, it will take Iran 360 years to exhaust it. Iran's oil reserves stand at 92.9 billion barrels, at the present extraction rate.

Iran's geopolitical importance also figures largely in

these will last 70 years.

the policies of the foreign and defence ministries of Russia, China and India.

Iran is the most strategically located country in the world: It occupies the entire eastern coast of the Persian Gulf, making it for all practical purposes a neighbour of the six oil-rich Gulf states.

It borders Pakistan, Afghanistan, Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Turkey and Iraq, and its shares in Caspian Sea littoral with Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhistan and Russia,

Iran's strategic position enables it to reward those who stand by it. For instance, in the dispute about exploiting the offshore oil fields in the Caspian Sea, Iran sided with Russia against AzerbTehran has declared that the secession of Chechnya, a Muslim-majority autonomous Russian Republic, is an internal affair of Russia's. This has helped Moscow down play the religious aspect of the Chechen conflict.

On the diplomatic front.

While Iran's assets — natural resources and geostrategic appeal - are valuable in the medium term, its economic crisis is immediate. It stems from the low price commanded by its chief export, oil, and the present value of the currency in which it is traded, the US dollar.

Since Tehran has no control over either, pragmatism requires that it should show moderation towards the United States for now.

### Benazir defends Islam at female lawmakers confce ISLAMBAD, Aug 1: Islam is

not to blame for the inequality faced by women in Muslim countries, Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto said Tuesday at a conference of female Muslim lawmakers, reports

More than 100 women some wearing black shrouds, colourful African headdress or western designer outfits represented 35 countries at the three-day conference.

In her inaugural speech, Benazir defended Islam as a religion that preaches equal-

"Unfortunately if women are backward in Muslim countries it is not because of our religion," she said.



Members of Russia's Constitutional Court listen as Chairman Vladimir Tumanor (4th L) reads out the court's decision on the use of troops in Chechnya on Monday. The court ruled that one of President Boris Yeltsin's decrees ordering a massive military crackdown against Chechen separatist last December was "fully in accordance with the constitution". Between 15,000 and 30,000 people have died, according to various estimates, since Russian troops marched into Chechnya December 11,1994. - AFP/UNB photo